

# True Love's First Kiss

by chivalric

Shortly before the wedding, Tonks backs out of her engagement with Remus Lupin.  
Left behind, he needs to find someone else he can share his life with.

## One-shot story

Chapter 1 of 1

Shortly before the wedding, Tonks backs out of her engagement with Remus Lupin. Left behind, he needs to find someone else he can share his life with.

A/N: Thanks to my betas, luvsev and Lariope, for taming the wild commas and gerunds. Special thanks to klynie for the final check.

This story is for kittylefish: thanks, love, for everything!

\*\*\*\*\*

It came as a bit of a surprise to Remus Lupin when Tonks backed out of their engagement one week before the wedding. "I'm sorry, Remus," she said, her hair black and limp on one side and glowing red curls on the other a visible sign of her divided emotional state. "It's just... I mean, I'm very sorry, but I, well, sort of found out that you're not... um... my true love."

Remus, who had been working on an essay for *Werewolf Today*, looked at her with wide, disbelieving eyes. "What do you mean, I'm not your true love?" he asked, setting the quill on his desk with a shaking hand. "You were chasing me for more than a year! Right after the war, you convinced me that I'm the one you want; we've been together for more than three years now, and we've even talked about having a baby soon!" Too shocked to remain seated, he got up and raked his fingers through his already quite ruffled hair. "Are you saying that you actually reject me now, that you're dropping me like a hot potato? I gave you my heart, my soul, I... I love you!"

Tonks sat down on the couch. "I know," she murmured, guilt lacing her words. "And it's not that I had this planned or something. Actually, it's all Ginny's fault!"

Remus frowned, but didn't say a word. He couldn't, or he would have started to shout.

"She forced me to go to this agency," Tonks continued slowly, kneading her hands nervously. "You know... the Yenta Livery Company."

Remus gasped. "Yenta! They find perfect matches for spouses, they... But... but... you're in love with me!"

"I was, truly, I really was. I thought I would marry you and have a family and then... Well. I'm so sorry," Tonks replied quietly. The rest of her hair went black. For a moment, with her head hung low, she looked like Snape, greasy strands covering her eyes. "They found out that you're not my true love."

"That's bullshit!" Remus began pacing the room. He would have preferred to shake some sense into the woman on his couch, the woman he had let into his house and into his heart despite better judgement, the woman he loved passionately...

Well, he definitely loved her. However, passion had never played a big role in their lives.

Frustrated, he slammed his hands on his desk or he would have strangled her. He loved her; that was all that counted, passion or not. She'd been after him for ages; she'd even changed her Patronus for him, and although he hadn't been too happy about the idea of someone sharing his life, it had turned out to be a good arrangement. It was nice to live with someone; it was sweet to snuggle with her on the couch, and it was modestly enjoyable to sleep with her. And now she wanted to end it because... "Who is it?" he demanded. "I want to know who is supposed to be your soul mate." He put an extra bit of sneery emphasis on the last word.

Tonks murmured something unintelligible. Her hair, though, began to gain a red, happy shimmer.

"What?"

She looked up at him, unable to hide the small, longing smile on her lips when she said her new lover's name. "It's Kingsley. I went to him straight after I came out of Yenta, planning to accuse him of interfering with my marriage, and before I knew it, we were kissing, and one thing led to another, and... Remus, it was earth shattering! The sex you wouldn't believe how good it was, and you need to go there, too, to find out who your soul mate is! I mean, you must admit, sex was never that brilliant between us!"

Involuntarily, Remus took a step back. *Who's this witch?* he thought. *I don't know her anymore. The real Tonks would have never told me.* "Did you just say you slept with Kingsley?" he asked coldly. "Because if you did, this relationship is truly over. Get out of my house, get out of my life, and don't come back." Hurt and confused, he turned and left his workroom, heading for the kitchen. He needed some tea. Maybe, he even needed something stronger than that.

"Remus!"

He ignored her call. She'd betrayed him, she didn't love him, and she was moving out.

Now the only question was what should he do with the shards of his life?

\*\*\*\*\*

Apparently, one could only spend so much time getting drunk and being depressed before it became tiresome. After around two and a half months, after two transformations during which even the wolf had licked the liquor from the floor, Remus got up on wobbly legs, looked into the mirror and was shocked at what he saw: deep rings under his eyes, sallow skin, greasy hair, a shabby beard and teeth yellowed simply because he hadn't brushed them in ages. He reeked of sweat and unwashed clothes as well as Firewhiskey and burned toast, which had been his only nourishment in the past weeks.

"You're pathetic," he told his image, shed his clothes, and had the longest shower in the history of werewolves. After that, he used a brand-new toothbrush, put on clean clothes, and made himself a proper breakfast.

An empty bottle rested peacefully in the sink. He took it with two fingers and threw it in the bin.

Another two days later, his house was clean again and bottle-free, too.

*Tonks is gone, quite possibly shagging Kingsley right now,* he thought, but surprisingly enough, the thought didn't hurt as much as he'd have expected a little while ago.

Maybe he should check out those Yenta people. Tell them that they had ruined his life. Yes. Good idea.

With a spring in his step, Remus left and Apparated into London, right to the entrance of the company that claimed to find everyone's true love. He'd tell them what he thought of them, and then well, maybe he would set fire to the building.

\*\*\*\*\*

"We've been awaiting you," the friendly young man at the desk said, and Remus had to look over his shoulder, believing the man was talking to someone behind him. He was the only one in the entrance hall.

"Who?" he asked. "Me?"

The young man smiled. "Yes, sir, you. That is you are Mr Remus Lupin? Yes? Then you're at the right place. Your former fiancée, Miss Tonks, consulted us a while back. As it turned out that you and she were not made for each other, it is only natural that you came here to find your own perfect match. Please take a seat, sir. Miss Elise will be with you in a moment."

"Who the hell is Miss Elise?" Remus muttered, but took a seat in the waiting room. Thankfully enough, he was alone he couldn't have borne the thought of being seen here, of all places. Only the desperate ones came here; poor souls who weren't able to find someone to love.

Apparently, though, his ex-girlfriend had come here, too.

Maybe he should pay Ginny Weasley a visit once he was out of here. First, he would tell this Elise-woman what a lousy job she'd done and that she had destroyed his life, then he would find Ginny and tell her the same. Maybe he would even wait another few nights until the full moon. Though the Wolfsbane would render him harmless, he still looked quite threatening in his wolf-form. Yes, perhaps he would give the little bitch a very big fright.

Maybe, he would even rip her to pieces. And eat her up afterwards.

The thought made him smile.

Just when he was about to think of a more detailed plan, an elderly woman came into the waiting room, took the seat opposite, and smiled. "Mr Lupin," she said. "How wonderful to see you here. Did curiosity lead you here, or your wish to kill me for the advice I have given Miss Tonks?"

That took the wind out of his sails. Remus felt himself blush, and he stared at his hands. "The latter," he finally admitted. "What did you think, telling her that... that..."

"That you're not the man she should spend her life with?" Elise chimed in. "But you aren't, Mr Lupin. You aren't at all. Kingsley Shacklebolt is her true love, and as it took her less than a week to tell you so, she must have been convinced enough to make the right decision. I am very sorry for having caused you harm." She leaned over and patted his knee. "However, I am delighted to let you know that we have been able to locate your true love, too, and luckily, he is neither dead nor otherwise engaged."

*He?* Remus wiped a hand over his tired face this meeting was exhausting, he must have misheard, and he wasn't in the mood for any more cruel jokes, anyway. Actually, he should go home and drink some more Firewhiskey.

Miss Elise got up and handed him a folder. "Take a look, Mr Lupin," she said gently. "And don't be shocked. Well, I must admit, I would be shocked, but keep in mind this is your one and only true love, the one person in the world that can make you happy beyond belief. Give it a chance, and... please don't faint!" With that, she nodded her good-bye and left him sitting in the waiting room with the folder in his hands.

Remus stared at the cover. "My one true love was Tonks," he said bitterly. "No one can ever replace her; no one can make me feel like she did." Not overly curious, he opened the folder, dread looming somewhere deep inside him he knew for certain that no one else but Tonks would ever be able and willing to look beyond the lycanthropy, no one else would ever understand and accept him as he was.

Carelessly, Remus opened the folder; nearly bored, he scanned the page for the name of his so-called "true love". Whoever it was, it would be...

What?

Him?

The folder slipped out of the werewolf's numb hands, and a moment later, he followed it, crashing face down to the floor. It was the first time ever that he'd fainted, and of course he couldn't see that outside, behind the counter, Miss Elise and the young secretary shared a knowing look. Vaguely, before he passed out completely, he heard the elderly lady say, "It seems he didn't take the news too well. Would you please go and make sure he rests comfortably whilst he's unconscious, Ryan?"

It didn't matter. Remus was drifting away fast from real world, and he was, at the moment, really grateful for it.

\*\*\*\*\*

The front door of the house at Spinner's End was thick and unyielding, and if Remus had thought about it for as much as a moment, he would have come to the conclusion that his angry banging would hardly convince the man inside to open said door, but he was too far gone with fury and frustration to use his brain. Instead, he banged at Severus's door, willing to break it down with his wand in a moment or two if the Potions master wouldn't answer. "Severus!" he yelled. "I know you're home; you always are during the summer break, so open up, or I swear I'll set fire to your roof!"

"The house is protected against any form of attack. That includes flames," a cool voice said behind him.

Remus jumped and nearly lost his balance as he turned around hastily. "Damn you, man, you scared the life out of me!" he grumbled. "Where have you been? I've been banging on your door for at least ten minutes." A strand of hair dared to fall into his eyes. Impatiently, he wiped it away.

Severus's lips turned into a thin smile. "I know that, wolf. I was in the garden, taking care of my vegetables. I heard you yelling and thought it would be a good idea for you to calm down a bit before I invited you in. Did you calm down?" Mockingly, he raised an eyebrow. In his hand he held a bunch of carrots; under his nails was earth.

*He looks good* the thought came involuntarily, and Remus cringed at his mind's betrayal. Quickly, he shook his head, trying in vain to remove a certain image out of his mind, one he had seen only this morning on a picture that had been part of the folder Elise had handed him.

The image of himself and Severus, locked in a passionate kiss. *Professor Severus Snape is your true love*, the note attached to the picture had said, and Remus had screamed with shock and had landed hard on the floor after his legs had given way. He clearly remembered his disbelief, accompanied by an urge to laugh and cry at the same time. Severus? Hogwarts' Potions master, stone-cold and ugly, aggressive as well as gifted with icy sarcasm? Impossible. Ridiculous. Severus was not an option, and anyway, he, Remus, wasn't gay.

*Then why am I here?* Remus wondered, still staring at the dark-haired wizard, who patiently waited for an answer to his question *Did I calm down?*

Slowly, Remus exhaled the breath he'd been holding. "I apologise for having been rude," he said. "I got some... disturbing news today and wondered if you'd be willing to help me sort out the mess. Clearly, someone made a mistake. I was angry, to say the least. Yes, I did calm down, and would you please give me a glass of water?"

With a nod, Severus opened his front door. "I have water, tea, and cake, if you like, Lupin. It's been a while since I last had a visitor. Actually, I am quite sure no one has been to my house since Bellatrix and Narcissa forced me to swear an Unbreakable Vow. Come inside. I promise, I won't poison or hex you."

"Wait until I tell you what Elise has told me," Remus grumbled, but followed Severus inside.

\*\*\*\*\*

"I know." Calmly, Severus took another sip of his tea. "In fact, I've known that you're my true love since the night the Dark Lord tried to kill me."

Remus opened his mouth to say something and found he couldn't.

Severus grinned humourlessly. "Sorry for the disappointment, Lupin, but no one made a mistake. Elise just told you the truth. Learn to live with it. I had to."

"You... you went to *that* company?" Stunned, Remus ate another piece of cake. It was delicious. Who would have thought that Hogwarts' feared Potions master was an exceptionally gifted cook?

Severus snorted. "Of course not. I know who Elise is, but I've never set foot in her agency. No, Lily revealed your name to me the night of the final battle." His long fingers, wrapped around the warm mug, tightened, and slowly, he lowered his head and closed his eyes. Remus didn't dare to interrupt his thoughts with another question, so he just waited for Severus to continue, lost in memories of the past.

Severus's voice was deeper than before when he began to talk; apparently, the memories were painful, to say the least. "Nagini had bitten me; blood was running out of me as if I were a broken bucket and was soaking the floor. The snake poison thundered through my veins. The Dark Lord had left, the children had run away, and I was alone in the Shrieking Shack, welcoming the thought of leaving this sodding life behind me." Severus sighed deeply. "I had given the boy the memories he needed for surviving the fight with the Dark Lord," he whispered. "I had looked into his eyes, thinking of Lily and cursing myself for pushing her away when we were children. We were friends for a brief time. All my life, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to apologise for what I had done to her."

Throat clenched and eyes stinging, Remus stared at the other man, taking in the hunched shoulders, the long, black strands touching the smooth surface of the table, and the slight tan on the bare hands and forearms that proved Severus spent a considerable amount of time in his garden. He didn't know what to say, and even if he had, he doubted Severus would have heard him.

"Nagini's bite had been surprisingly painful," the Potions master continued somewhat hesitantly. "Somehow, I had assumed that the snake's poison would numb me, but I was wrong. The venom set my nerves on fire, caused my muscles to cramp, and made thinking of counteractions impossible. I had a Bezoar in my pocket; I knew a spell that would have healed the wound profoundly enough to survive until someone would have cared to check on me, even if only to spit on my corpse. However, I wasn't able to do as much as move a finger." He looked up, straight into the werewolf's eyes. "And so I died."

Remus's eyes widened. He hadn't expected his old enemy to share such an intimate memory; he definitely hadn't expected such a crucial resolution. "How can that be?" he asked, careful to keep his voice low. Severus appeared to him as if he were sleepwalking, and Remus didn't want to interrupt whatever made the other man talk. As far as he knew, the Potions master had never told anyone how he had survived the Dark Lord's attempt to kill him. That he did so now meant more to Remus than he cared to admit.

Severus briefly quirked his lips. "I crossed the veil, leaving my body behind and the shards of my useless life, my guilt at having killed Albus, my loathing for the Dark Lord and my part in his horrible plans, and even my hate for Potter. I expected nothing. Definitely not the 'light' so many living people babble about. Maybe I hoped for peace and a bit of warmth after the coldness of my dungeons and the cruelties I had performed as a youth. And as a man, of course." Severus blinked and then took a sip of his tea. "Imagine my surprise when I was greeted by Lily's fist landing squarely on my chin."

Severus smiled. The first real smile Remus had seen on his face for... well... ever, maybe. "Erm... what?" he asked, confused. "Lily's ghost was there, waiting for you? And she had nothing better to do than hit you?"

"Hit me, kicked me, scolded me and used words I didn't know existed," Severus clarified dryly. "She was furious with me. Told me no, ordered me! to go back and prevent my own death. She said it wasn't too late. I was dumbstruck. *So much for my hope for peace*, I thought, and staggered backwards into the Shrieking Shack. You knew her; when she was in the right mood, she could make a stone cry. I stood no chance against her."

Now Remus smiled, too. He had indeed known Lily Evans it was no surprise Severus had done as ordered.

"I went back into my failing, dying body. The pain was excruciating; I could smell my own blood; I could hear the long pauses between each heartbeat, and the darkness scared the life out of me. Every moment, I expected the Dark Lord to step out of the shadows with Nagini at his heel, biting me again, finishing me for good. It is nothing I like to remember.

"When I opened my eyes, Lily was there, too, hovering above me. Ghostlike, fragile like a picture made of mist, but there nevertheless. Like her son before her, she called me a coward. No surprise it had the same effect on me: I became furious. Instead of trying to die again, I embraced the pain. The moonlight shone through one of the broken windows, and I saw my hand tremble when I shoved the Bezoar down my throat. Don't ask me how I did it. Maybe she guided my hand, but what mattered was that I managed to whisper the spell for closing the wound, too. The magic nearly ripped me apart. I remember screaming and crying with pain. In the end, though, I managed to stay alive."

With a swift gesture, Severus brushed his hair out of his face. Remus noticed that it had grown considerably since he had last seen the man. It reached halfway down his back and was clean and still pitch-black, without a hint of grey. *Suits him*, Remus thought and wondered why he had first been so shocked to learn that it was the Potions master who was meant to complete him in every aspect of life.

Severus looked at him, then at the clock. "It's getting late," he said and got up. "Would you like to stay for dinner?"

Remus, who had expected to be thrown out, found that the prospect of having dinner with Severus was surprisingly pleasant. "I'd love to," he answered. "If I may prepare the salad."

Together, they went into the kitchen, side by side, like old friends. Whilst Severus took care of the main course Lupe de mere with herbs, garlic, carrots and potatoes Remus chopped onions for the salad. "So you survived because of Lily," he said after a while. "And she was there when you woke up. Did she tell you why she was so angry with you?"

Severus chuckled, a sound so strange that Remus nearly cut off his index finger. "Oh, yes, she did," the Potions master said. "Apparently, she couldn't stand the thought that I had been about to give up. In clear, unmistakable words she told me that I had to live, that I had to find happiness, and that if I didn't do as she wished, she would make the afterlife a living hell for me. I didn't need long to realise that I didn't really have a choice: she wanted me to live; she had sent me back through the veil, so I had better live. Happily, or, in her words, she'd come and rip my black heart out of my chest one quiet night." He shuddered. "Horrible thought, I must admit."

Remus put the bowl with the salad onto the table that stood in the kitchen. "I don't get it. What you told me is amazing as well as bitterly sad after all, you died alone, you came back, and you had to wait until sunrise before Poppy came and took you into the infirmary but I haven't got the smallest clue what this has to do with you knowing that I am supposed to be your soul mate." In between bites, he poured himself and Severus a second glass of wine. The fish was perfect, practically melting on the tongue; the wine was fresh and chilled, and the candles flickered their warm light into the cosy kitchen. *Why did I think Severus's house would be mouldy, rotten, dark and damaged?* Remus wondered.

His host took a swig from his wine. "It has everything to do with the night I died," Severus said. "The reason Lily was so angry with me was because she hadn't told me a quite interesting bit of information she'd kept to herself for the better part of her life: she knew you and I were made for each other. She'd been at Yenta's a week before my sixteenth birthday, getting me the name of my true love. She didn't know I loved her, didn't even consider it a possibility. They told her you were my soul mate, and Lily wanted to tell me, only things went really ugly after I saw her snogging Potter. I insulted her, and she not only decided to remain quiet, but to end our friendship. As a result, I dove deeply into the Dark Arts, became involved with the Dark Lord, and she didn't dare to get near me for years."

"And then Voldemort killed her before she could tell you," Remus concluded. Just one more glass of wine. This evening was strange, to say the least. The wine was perfect, and it helped him to stay relaxed.

"Precisely. She died without getting the chance of telling me what I needed to know. That's why she waited for me at the other side of the veil and took the opportunity to kick me back into the world of the living so she could share her secret and give me a chance to become happy after all."

"Seems she never stopped being your friend, despite what happened between the two of you."

Severus sighed. "No, she didn't," he said quietly and began tidying up the table.

Remus watched his every movement, admiring the panther-like, silent, precise way the taller man moved. He was, he had to admit, a bit tipsy. Too much wine, and now Severus put a glass of his best Firewhiskey in front of him. Remus took it and inhaled deeply the soft, warm scent. "I love that smell," he murmured. "And I cherish the taste every now and then."

The Potions master raised a mocking eyebrow. "It seems you've been drinking a bit too much, lately. You're too skinny and too pale. I never knew you as an alcoholic. What happened?"

"Everything. Nothing. Doesn't matter, really," Remus retorted bitterly and emptied the glass. He needed to go home soon well, after the next glass, maybe. Accusingly, he pointed his finger at Severus. "Why didn't you come to me and tell me that I'm supposed to be in your bed and not in Tonks's, eh? Why didn't you let me know about Lily's confession?"

Just one more glass. The alcohol exploded in his stomach with delicious heat and helped him to keep his trembling voice under control. Suddenly, he was tired beyond belief, tired and sad and exhausted from too many nights of restless tumbling and turning in his far too empty bed. "Need to go home," he said. "But I want an answer first."

Severus was behind him, helping him up Remus was swaying, or maybe the floor was heaving. "It is obvious, Lupin. I did not come to you because you're in a relationship, and although Tonks is not your soul mate, you can become happy with her. I might be a cruel, cold-hearted bastard, but I do not interfere with other people's love lives. As far as I know, you will be married soon actually, I thought you were supposed to marry three months ago and I will never, ever take you away from the woman who loves you, no matter what Yenta says." Gently, Severus led Remus towards the door, obviously for helping him into his coat.

Remus, though, refused to go. He pressed his hand against Severus's haggard chest and tried to focus on him. "I should have married in May, right," he said, his voice slurred from fatigue and drink. "It's just that Tonks went to those matchmaking fuckers, and they said Kingsley is her true love, and she promptly went to jump him, and anyway, she left. Gone, vanished, a week before the wedding. So much for her loving me. No happy life in the nearby future for me, Severus. Guess no happy life for me at all."

Standing on misbehaving legs wasn't easy apparently, Remus was more drunk than he'd thought. Severus, being half a hand taller than he, held him upright and looked at him with the strangest expression in his black eyes. Not pity; not sympathy, either. Compassion, probably, and fear in a weird way. "I am very sorry to hear that. And I think you shouldn't go home now, wolf," he said soothingly. "You're in no condition to stay on your own. You're anything but sober, and you're too tired to Apparate anyway, so I suggest you sleep in the guest room."

Remus snorted. "In your dreams," he wanted to say, but that was the moment when the walls began to heave as well, and he not only swayed, but lost control over his feet completely.

Severus caught him before he hit the floor. Cradled in strong arms, Remus was carried upstairs, put into a big, soft bed, and covered with a duvet. At one moment, Remus thought he was getting undressed, but that must have been a dream. Surely. Nothing but a dream.

\*\*\*\*\*

When Remus opened his eyes to the morning sun that streamed into his room, his head felt twice its normal size and his tongue had turned into a small, dead, furry animal.

He had a dry throat, a headache, and since when was the sun that bright?

Hang on. Where was he, anyway? At home, in his bed, neither sun nor moon had a chance to shine into his eyes, as his bedroom faced north.

Conclusion: this was not home, and he wasn't lying in his bed.

Carefully, he stretched, enjoying the warmth of the room, the smell of coffee that wafted through the air, the softness of the pillow and the size of the bed itself. His own bed was considerably smaller he had thrown out the double bed after Tonks had moved out, and only now did he realise how much he liked a large bed where there was enough space to kiss and play and...

Erm. Actually, whose bed was it he was lying in?

Slowly, Remus sat up. The duvet slipped down to his waist, revealing his naked chest.

So it hadn't been a dream then. Someone had undressed him. A peek under the duvet told him that this someone hadn't stopped at the shirt, either. His trousers were gone, his shoes and socks, naturally, and his underpants, too.

In short, he was stark naked. And there, in the corner of the room, was a black robe, draped carefully over the back of a chair. Books lay piled up on the small bedside table books about potions, mainly, and one Muggle novel called *Tainted Blood*.

Perfect reading material for a Potions master.

Pale and slightly shaky, Remus took the pillow, pressed his face into it, and inhaled deeply. He could smell flax, feathers, and washing powder; he could also smell the distinct fragrance of his own skin, which was normal, as he had slept in the bed most of the night. Bed as well as pillow and duvet had been freshly changed; still, underneath the linen, another scent lingered, one he'd known since his childhood simply because he had known the scent's owner for more than twenty years.

Severus's scent in his nose. Severus's bedroom, Severus's pillow, Severus's bed.

How arousing. How... Damn!

Burning with embarrassment, Remus dropped the pillow and jumped out of the bed as if the mattress were on fire. The duvet slipped onto the floor, and with it his clothes, which had been laid neatly folded at the end of the bed.

Hurriedly, he clutched them to his chest and looked around in search for a bathroom. There was a door it led to a smaller room with warm, cream-coloured tiles, sink, toilet, and shower.

Getting under the ice-cold stream woke him up completely, and in addition, the water efficiently killed his morning erection, which he had been covering with his garments. Honestly, getting a hard-on in Severus's bed now, how embarrassing was that?

Remus scrubbed his skin thoroughly, washing away his unasked-for arousal, the subtle Severus-fragrance he still had in his nose, and the half-forgotten, weird dreams of the past night. Eventually, when his lips turned blue and his teeth began to chatter, he left the cabin, dried and dressed, and headed downstairs, but not without one last glance back into the bedroom. *Pity*, he thought. *I haven't slept that well in ages*, and then he shook his head at himself. *Had someone told me I'd one day crave sleeping in Severus's bed, I would have said they were utterly mad.*

The smell of coffee became stronger the closer Remus came to the kitchen, and when he stepped into the room, he was stunned to see Severus standing at the counter, leisurely dressed in faded jeans and a loose shirt, buttering toast and whistling along with the music. He looked content, to say the least, maybe happy even, and a lot younger than he had when he was in Voldemort's service.

"Good morning," Remus said hesitantly. He was sorry to disturb the peaceful picture, but he was hungry and uneasily aware of the fact that he was undoubtedly an intruder in Severus's house.

Severus looked up. He'd obviously had a shower, too, as his hair was still damp and there was the distinct fragrance of the soap Remus had used himself just a few minutes ago.

*He's been in the same shower I've used; he's been naked; his hands had touched his skin...and had he been hard, too* Remus wondered and panicked at the same time when he realised that very clear pictures came with the thoughts, pictures of a naked Severus covered with creamy foam, satisfying himself under a rush of warm water. He coughed and tried to keep the blush that threatened to creep into his cheeks under control. Severus flashed him an amused smile as if he'd read his thoughts.

"Sit, wolf, and have some breakfast," Severus said and gestured at the table the same one at which they had had dinner at last night. "You need nourishment, and the porridge is ready."

"Just coffee would be fine," Remus tried to object, but just when he said it, his stomach growled loudly at the smell of porridge and fresh milk, sugar and toast. "Well. Maybe breakfast wouldn't be a bad idea," he finished lamely.

The porridge was delicious, the thick blotch of cream was just what he needed to fill his hungry stomach, and the coffee was as welcome as the silence that permeated the kitchen; Severus seemed to prefer to have his breakfast in peace, as he didn't talk or ask questions.

When most of the toast was eaten, though, Remus couldn't keep his curiosity under control any longer. "Why did you undress me? Why didn't you let me go home? Why did I sleep in your bed, where did you sleep, and didn't you say something about a guestroom?"

Severus leaned back in his chair and looked at him with a strange expression on his face. "You were in no condition to be going anywhere, Lupin," he clarified. "Too drunk; too sad. I could have taken you home, true, but then I would have had to sleep in your flat, and I considered that unacceptable, as you hadn't invited me. Therefore, I carried you upstairs and put you into my bed, as mine is the only bed in the house. Had I told you I would do so that there is no guestroom you might have struggled, and I wasn't in the mood to fight with you over accommodations. I took a nap on the couch in the living room, and I undressed you because you prefer to sleep naked."

To keep his hands busy, Remus took one more piece of toast, buttered it, and added honey. It was thick and golden; he assumed that Severus kept a beehive behind his house. Honey as good as that couldn't be bought in just any shop. "How do you know I prefer to sleep... um... without clothes?" he asked. "That's not something many people know."

Severus smirked. "When we were boys, I once sneaked into Gryffindor tower in a sorry attempt to steal Potter's wand. Didn't make it, but I saw a few things whilst being in your bedroom. You were lying spread-eagled on your bed with the duvet kicked to the floor, and you weren't wearing pyjamas. I considered it likely that you hadn't changed your personal preferences since."

"True," Remus grumbled and lowered his head. "Pyjamas feel uncomfortable. Thanks for... doing that for me."

"It was my pleasure," Severus replied lightly. "I have wanted to see you naked for a long time now. After all, it has been more than three years since Lily told me what you are to me. It took a considerable amount of self-control not to touch you beyond the necessary task of getting you undressed and tucked into bed."

Remus, who had been about to take a bite of his toast, halted his hand in mid air. "You would have... I mean... You thought of... of... having sex with me whilst I was passed out?" he asked incredulously.

Severus raised one mocking eyebrow. "Ah, no, definitely not," he said. "Apart from such an act being highly immoral, I prefer my bed partners to be awake once I decide that they are worth my attention."

"Good to know," Remus managed with a bit of an effort.

A smile tugged at the corners of the Potion master's lips. He leaned forward and stared intently into Remus's eyes. "If I took you into my bed, I would want you to be awake so you could fully appreciate what I would do to you," he purred. "I would want you to moan into my mouth when I first kiss you, when my tongue touches yours. I want you to shiver under my fingertips when I open your shirt, button by button, tantalisingly, cruelly slow. I want to feel your nipples harden when I nick them with my teeth. When I lay you onto my mattress, I want you to spread your legs for me so I can drink you in with my eyes, every inch of your wonderful, naked body. You will be hard, and your heart will be beating fast, wolf, when I close my lips around your length, tasting you, kissing the velvet head of your cock. You will want me with all your might, you will beg me to take you, and when I enter you" his voice became lower, rougher, like silk on skin "when I finally penetrate you, when my cock slowly, carefully slips inside your well-lubricated, tight, hot arse, when I begin to fuck you, you will cry out with desire and lust. You will move with me, meet my thrusts; dig your fingers into my back, urging me on, begging me to make you come. And when I spill inside you after an eternity of pleasure, you will climax, too, crying out my name." Those last words had been just a whisper; now, Severus reached out and tenderly brushed one wet lock out of the werewolf's shocked face.

Honey dripped onto the smooth surface of the table. Remus's mouth hung agape, toast forgotten, time forgotten; all thoughts were wiped from his mind.

Moments ticked by.

"I must admit, I've given this scene a bit more thought than what might be good for me," Severus finally added with a rueful smile. "After all, you're not gay. I assume you're still in love with Tonks despite your fall-out and that you think of me as the greasy git of the dungeons. More tea?"

Dozens of answers rushed through Remus's mind; slowly, he lowered the toast back onto his plate and licked some honey off his fingers. "I wouldn't cry out your name," he finally managed.

Severus frowned. "Wouldn't you? Are you sure? Because I would want you to. I'd want you to enjoy what I do to you and with you, and I'd want you to express your feelings as clearly as possible. Crying out my name would be just sufficient, I'd say."

Remus cleared his throat. "I've never cried out anyone's name when... ejaculating. It's not... I mean, I think it is just not in me to lose myself so completely." He blushed why on earth had he told Severus that juicy little bit of information?

Severus sighed. "I see. And although I'm very sorry for you that you haven't yet found the one you trust enough to give up control, unfortunately enough, neither of us will find out what you might be capable of, as you clearly have no intention of ending up in my bed. You said you wanted to leave after breakfast? Well, that would be now, then." Severus got up and flicked his wand; the dishes began washing themselves, and the table was cleared of butter, honey, and toast crumbs. It was late morning; the sun had continued its way up the sky, and surely, outside some gardening tasks were awaiting the Potions master's attention.

Remus couldn't stand the thought of going home... into his empty flat, the cold, lonely rooms, the quiet, dead silence. He wanted to stay exactly where he was: in Severus's surprisingly nice, cosy house, in his presence, watching him, talking to him, telling him...

What was it he'd wanted to tell him?

"Severus!" Remus called, as the Potions master was already on the way into the garden. In the doorway, he turned around.

"Yes?"

Remus got up, too. "I don't consider you a greasy git," he clarified, glad that his voice was steady. "I know back then you put up a performance for all of us, trying to appear as ugly and ghastly as possible so you could do your job in Voldemort's service. And even if I didn't know it, I only need to look at you now to see that you've changed. Your hair is clean, your teeth are straightened and brushed, and since you're obviously spending time outside the dungeons, your skin isn't that unhealthy pale that it used to be. You look good, Severus, especially in jeans. Actually, you look very good."

Severus inclined his head just half an inch. "Thank you," he said simply. "Still, you're not available. You wanted to marry Tonks; you lived with her, you made love to her, and I cannot believe that you have managed to rip her out of your heart so quickly. Go home, Lupin. Come for dinner whenever you feel like company. Maybe we will become friends one day, if nothing else." He left the kitchen and headed for the back door that led into the garden.

Remus went after him, grabbed his arm, and spun him around. "Are you mad, Severus?" he growled, feeling the other man's body heat and sensing a certain tension in his posture. "You can't talk to me like that and then let me wonder what could have happened if your garden hadn't been more important than me." He forced some air into his lungs. "I stopped loving Tonks when she walked out on me without as much as a second thought. At first, it hurt; now, I'm just lonely, and I can't think of anything else but how horrible it is to be alone and to sleep alone and to wake up alone again. True, I have never slept with a man, but that doesn't mean I'm not willing to try. After all, you're supposed to be my soul mate, and although I might still consider the possibility that all of this may be a big mistake, you could at least try to seduce me for the pleasure of proving me wrong."

"You really shouldn't have said that," Severus replied, and with that, he pulled Remus into a close embrace and kissed him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Remus wasn't inexperienced in kissing; on the contrary he had kissed various girls and even a few boys when he'd been at Hogwarts (Sirius as well as James being amongst the latter), and he'd always enjoyed it. When living with Tonks, he might have even preferred kissing over making love to her. And although he had never kissed an adult man, he would have said he knew how to kiss and that there wasn't anything that could surprise him on that matter.

Kissing Severus, though, or rather being kissed by him, nearly swept him off his feet. Strong arms wrapped around his waist, pulling him into a tight embrace. One hand took hold of his shoulder, squeezing it hard, and a leg was pushed between his knees, parting them just enough to give the arousing sensation of fabric slithering along his trousers.

Heat emanated from Severus's body; his tongue invaded Remus's mouth, asking for a dance. Now that his other hand had found Remus's bum, it caressed, teased, and kneaded.

Remus's cock hardened instantly, and he moaned involuntarily at this most unexpected onslaught true, he had asked for seduction, but he hadn't expected Severus to act so fast and so efficiently.

He hadn't expected this kiss to be so perfect, either. Frankly, he felt as if he'd never kissed properly before, as if all his experience in this field had been nothing but meaningless preparation for this one kiss, given to him by a man he had mocked when they'd been children, feared at times when they'd turned into adults, and learned to respect only when he'd found out what the Potions master had done and sacrificed for their side during the war.

Another moan was that him, or was it Severus? Why did that hand on his arse feel so wonderful; why couldn't he think of anything else but shedding his clothes, and Merlin, was that Severus's cock on his thigh, unbelievably hard and breathtakingly big?

The grip on his shoulder loosened; the tantalising kneading ceased to a gentle caress. Remus took the opportunity to push Severus away.

He just managed to stay on his feet, head down, eyes narrowed, panting and greedy for more. His lips burned from the kiss he'd just received, his heart hammered, and his far too hard cock hurt from lack of action and attention.

Faintly, he could smell arousal; was it his own, or Severus's?

"My apologies," Severus whispered, voice hoarse, and taking another step away. "You better leave now, Lupin. I only have so much self-control."

Remus's nostrils flared, and he felt cold and lonely without the other man's hands roaming over his body, the heat he had radiated, and the overwhelming sensation of that unbelievable kiss. "I don't think so," he murmured and crossed the distance between them. "Can't go home right now. I'm... curious. I want to kiss you again."

Severus raised one eyebrow, but as his eyes were shining with desire and the outline of his erection showed very clearly through the fabric of his jeans, it didn't come across as sarcastically as he might have intended it. "I admit, that comes as a surprise," he murmured. "I thought I would need to court you, persuade you, maybe even wait for you for another few years..."

"Shut up," Remus interrupted him, taking Severus's face between his hands. "Kiss me. I need to find out if it works as perfectly the second time around." Nearly brutally, he pressed his lips against Severus's, who welcomed him, embraced him, and pulled him into the living room.

Kissing, they landed on the couch; still kissing, Severus began to undo the buttons on Remus's shirt, one by one, and as slowly as he'd promised.

He didn't get far. "There are limits to my patience," Remus growled and ripped the shirt off his body. "Touch me. Do what you've promised make me scream."

Severus tightened his grip on Remus's hips and slipped to the floor between the other man's legs. His mouth, warm and skilled, trailed kisses from neck down to belly button and upwards again, making Remus shiver with anticipation for the moment when those very lips would find his nipples, already hard as cherry stones.

There teeth nipped the tender flesh, and Remus moaned, loud and long. One of Severus's hands was high on his legs, dangerously close to touching his erection, and still his mouth was sucking, licking, biting one nipple whilst the second hand twisted the other.

Too much; too slow. Remus pushed his partner's head southwards and tried to wriggle out of his trousers at the same time a useless attempt, as he wore a belt. "Please," he rasped, and Severus opened the belt and the buttons, pulling Remus's trousers down as well as his shorts in one quick movement. And the next moment, Severus had his lips locked around the werewolf's cock, massaging his balls. One hand wandered under Remus's bum, and gods, now he was even begging for more!

Soft lips and sharp teeth and a very skilled tongue; clever fingers, knowing exactly where to press and where to stroke. A small spell, lubricating his entrance as well as Severus's fingers and when Severus pulled back his foreskin and licked over the thin slit at the head of his cock, Remus yelped helplessly, enjoying every single second. Spreading his legs just a bit wider was only the most natural thing to do. Holding Severus's head in position was a necessity, and anyway, he needed to feel those silken strands under his palms they kept him connected to the here and now; they proved this was real, not a dream.

Not that he'd ever dreamed something this hot.

Slick fingers spread his buttocks; his legs dropped further apart to grant the best access, and when Severus sucked hard on his cock and simultaneously entered him with two fingers at once, Remus cried out his lover's name for the first time. His hips bucked, and he dug his hands deep into the couch's leather lest he slip to the floor. Those fingers! They were deep inside him now and caused a pleasure he hadn't known possible.

Slowly, gently, Severus moved his hand; carefully, skillfully, he continued to work Remus's cock with his tongue.

"More!" Remus rasped, unable to think straight, unable to wish for anything more concrete. "Please, Severus... more!"

The mouth around his cock vanished and the fingers, too. Remus was just about to protest he wanted more, not less when Severus moved, came closer, embraced him and kissed him, deep, longingly, and irresistibly. Remus could feel the other man's cock, hard and pulsing, between his legs, brushing along his own length, the barely audible whisper bearing promises of dark, unknown pleasures.

One of Severus's hands moved to Remus's hipbone; the other was between his legs, guiding his cock. The tip was slick *Precome*, Remus thought dreamily, *or maybe lube* and it pressed against his anus, that small, puckered hole where right now all his longing was focussed. "More," Remus murmured, certain that Severus would understand, and of course he did; of course the tall, dark wizard knew what he wanted, needed, and therefore breached the strong muscle that protected Remus's entrance with a smooth, but nevertheless forceful, push. All the way in, slowly, in one long go, which made Remus scream out Severus's name for the second time.

Severus held him tight, didn't allow him to move, but kissed his neck, trailed kisses from shoulder to collarbone whilst he was newly inside him, adding pressure, gentle, tantalising pressure torturing pressure until Remus couldn't stand it any longer. "Move!" he gasped begged, really and groaned when Severus just brushed his lips over his. "Pleasepleaseplease move, fuck me, make me come!"

Remus more felt the smile than saw it. "On top of me, wolf," Severus whispered and pulled him down onto the floor. "Find your own rhythm, your own pace; fuck me, Remus!" Slowly, Severus let himself sink back to the floor, Remus now sitting on top of him, legs spread and straddling Severus's narrow hips. The manoeuvre forced a gasp out of both men the angle had changed; Severus's cock stroked along Remus's pleasure point, and now it was impossible not to move, not to take charge of the body underneath and the cock inside him.

Remus pressed both his hands to his friend's shoulders and experimentally swirled his pelvis.

A double yelp rang through the room.

Slowly at first, but before long, Remus rolled his hips back and forth, riding to a slow orgasm. He'd found his rhythm easily, and the pace, well, the pace was perfect as it was. Fast, but not too fast; hard, but not hard enough to make him come, not yet. Severus's hips came up when he pushed down, fucking him deep now, deeper than Remus would have thought possible only moments ago.

He rasped out his lover's name, like an enchantment, losing count of how often he did so.

Then Severus touched his cock, and Remus lost control. His mind shut off, and his brain didn't know which orders to give. As a result, he stopped moving. His head fell back, exposing his neck; his hands rested on Severus's sweaty chest; his eyes were closed, and he didn't know what he enjoyed more: the cock in his arse or the hand stroking his erection, and he had no idea what to do about either of them.

Severus rasped out his name; he didn't, couldn't answer. The stroking continued; small thrusts into his backside made him groan but weren't as forceful as he would have wished for. Still, he would come soon, very soon, and he couldn't even imagine the intensity of his climax.

Then Severus moved, flipped him onto his back, and was on top of him in a matter of seconds. Remus's eyes snapped open he hadn't expected to land on his back, and he hadn't considered it could be such a perfect position. Severus was above him, inside him, his pale face a mask of ecstasy, sweat beading on his forehead. Severus's lips were parted, and his breath came in harsh gulps. Black eyes, pupils dilated, stared down at him, and with a sudden rush of insight, Remus realised by stopping Severus's orgasm at the last possible moment he'd made his partner highly uncomfortable.

With a grin, Remus locked one arm behind Severus's neck to pull him down and even deeper inside him; he brought his legs up, slung them around his lover's hips, and thrust upwards, greedy for more, greedy for Severus's cock, greedy to come. "Severus!" he groaned when his lover's lower abdomen brushed along his hardness, squeezing it between their bodies, and, "Severus!" he gasped when he finally spilled his seed, feeling his lover slam inside him one last time, finding his own release, too.

\*\*\*\*\*

Silently, they lay on the floor, limbs entangled, minds empty, muscles and various other body parts sore or sated or both. Severus had pulled the blanket off the sofa; it now covered both of them up to the waist.

Vaguely, Remus was aware that someone stroked his head, his neck, brushed fingertips over his lips and across the bridge of his nose. It felt wonderful; he could easily get addicted to his lover's touch. "Did I scream out your name?" he asked, moving his shoulders into a more comfortable position.

"Oh, yes. Repeatedly," Severus answered. There was a tender subnote to his voice Remus hadn't heard before. "As I have called out yours." Rolling over, Severus propped himself up on his elbow. "I do hope I didn't go too far, taking you so roughly at the end."

Remus reached up and cupped his cheek. "I didn't believe it would be possible that sleeping with a man could be so utterly wonderful. Believe me when I say that making love has never been so perfect."

Visibly relieved, Severus briefly closed his eyes. "Would you... do you think you would like to come upstairs with me?"

"Upstairs? What's upstairs?" Disbelieving, Remus experienced the rare sensation of getting hard again very shortly after having had a tremendous orgasm.

"The bedroom is upstairs, wolf," Severus replied dryly. "In the bedroom, there is my bed, as you know. A big bed. Big enough for two; big enough to... play?" Questioning, he raised one eyebrow. Casually, he placed one hand high on Remus's leg, moved upwards, and cupped his balls.

"Bed would be an excellent idea," Remus answered hoarsely. "And playing, too."

\*\*\*\*\*

Early the next morning, Remus was dimly aware of Severus getting up. "Whsit?" he mumbled, too sleepy to manage proper pronunciation. It had been a long night or a short one, depending on which perspective one was using.

"It's only six thirty, but I've got a potion brewing in my workroom, my garden needs some attention, and I need to send a letter to my editor. Go back to sleep. I'll wake you for breakfast in a few hours."

"Hmmm," Remus replied, hugged Severus's pillow, and went back to dreamland until the smell of fresh toast woke him up again. He stretched, yawned, and absently rubbed his right wrist before getting up and pulling on a pair of Severus's trousers his own were still downstairs. *Breakfast*, he thought, quickly followed by the word *kiss* washing through his mind and heart.

Rubbing across his stubbly face, Remus was just about to search for a shirt in Severus's wardrobe when the small hairs on the back of his neck stood up. Something was wrong.

He left the room, barefoot and wearing nothing but a pair of slightly too long jeans. Silently, he went downstairs, checked the living room, but found it empty.

The smell of burned toast wafted through the small house; in addition, Severus's whistling had stopped as well as the music Remus had heard earlier on.

Voices from the kitchen. Guests?

The hallway tiles were cold under his feet; without making any noise, Remus pushed the kitchen door open with his fingertips, just a bit so he could see what was happening inside.

Three people were in the kitchen: Severus, Kingsley, and Tonks. Severus stood with his back pressed against the sink, both hands empty and raised to shoulder level. His long hair was bound back at the base of his neck, and in the depths of his eyes, Remus could see a tightly controlled anger. Both Tonks and Kingsley had their wands drawn.

"Where's Remus?" Tonks asked.

"What have you done to him?" Kingsley added.

Severus raised an eyebrow. "What makes you think I've even seen him? It's a well-known fact that I despise him. Certainly you didn't expect to find him here?"

Tonks rummaged in her bag with her free hand and slammed something onto the kitchen table. A photograph. "Found that in his flat," she spat. "He's gone, your picture was pinned to the fridge, and that's why we're here. He must have sought you out for whatever reason, and I guess you killed him. He was heartbroken by the end of our relationship; he wouldn't have had a chance against you!"

Involuntarily, Remus grinned and stretched his neck. Yes, it definitely had been a long night. In addition, he thought it strange that Tonks still cared for him he needed to listen a bit longer, if only to find out what the woman he'd loved not too long ago had to say about him. Severus, on the other hand, could very well take care of himself, even at wandpoint.

"Tell us where he is, Snape," Kingsley hissed. "Did he come here, did he threaten you did you lose control and kill him?"

Severus's mouth twitched. "You could say I lost control, yes. I didn't kill him, though." Carefully, he lowered his hands neither Tonks nor Kingsley hindered him in doing so. "Had I known you'd called to question me, I wouldn't have opened the door. Now, I would be grateful if you would leave." Taking a step away from the sink, he picked up a towel and began drying the dishes.

"Where is he?" Tonks shouted. Obviously, she still believed that the Potions master had buried her former fiancé in his back garden.

Remus considered it a good moment to interfere. This had gone on long enough, and anyway, he was hungry. "Tonks," he said, satisfied that his greeting made her jump. "Nice to see you. Still isn't this a bit too dramatic for your liking?" Nodding at the wand in her hand, he took another step into the kitchen, expecting her to smile and say 'Hello'.

Her eyes widened, roaming over his naked chest, back up to his face, over his neck and down to his hands. "Remus," she said hoarsely. "Good Merlin, what has he done to you?"

Surprised, Remus looked down his body and saw the scratches across his chest, shoulders, and sides Severus's hands were strong, and his nails, though short, were sharp. There were more scratches on his back, but Tonks couldn't have seen them. Some bruises, too, bite marks here and there, and around both wrists, pale red circles told clearly of the games he and Severus had been playing. Remus grinned, amused by her misjudgement. "He's..." he began, but Tonks's eyes narrowed with a sudden, hot flash of hate, and she raised her wand again, whipped around, and shot a hex at Severus.

The Potions master, caught by surprise and wandless to boot, couldn't block the spell completely. It swept him off his feet, and he gasped in sudden pain, clutching his sides. A few drops of blood seeped through his fingers.

"You damn bastard," Tonks said icily. "You tortured him!"

Remus reacted fast. In a heartbeat, he was next to her, snatching her wand away and throwing it into the farthest corner of the kitchen. He growled, low and deep, and bared his teeth. The wolf inside him came to the surface in a swift move, and it showed in his eyes, in his posture, even in the way he breathed. Stepping between Tonks and Severus, all he wanted was to protect his mate from further harm and maybe to rip the woman in front of him to pieces.

Both Tonks and Kingsley took a step back, Kingsley being wise enough not to raise his wand. Tonks paled she had never seen the wolf inside him before and was visibly scared of him.



"He's my lover, my soul mate. He's *mine!*" Remus growled. "Harm him again, and I'll kill you with my bare hands, Nymphadora."

Tonks's eyes widened in shock. "Remus," she whispered, her eyes dashing from Remus to the man on the floor and back. "Look at you! The scratches, the bruises, the wounds on your wrists..."

"Handcuffs," Severus said calmly and managed to get up. One arm was tightly pressed to his ribcage. "Made him scream, that part. As I have already told you, I did lose control for a while."

Tonks would have attacked him if Kingsley hadn't held her back. "You worthless... damn... horrible..." she stammered, fighting against Kingsley's grip. "I don't know what's going on here, but Remus would never threaten me, he'd..."

"This might be a bit different than it looks," Kingsley whispered into her ear.

Slowly, some information sunk into her mind. Her mouth sagged open. "Soul mate?" she whispered. *Lover?*"

Remus clenched his teeth at the scandalised subnote in her voice, and he took a threatening step towards her. The beast inside him ruled his mind; it was hard to control.

Casually, Severus slipped an arm around Remus's waist, holding him back as Kingsley held back Tonks. "Easy, wolf," he said. "They came here because they care for you."

"She hurt you," the werewolf said flatly.

"She bruised my ribs and cracked the skin; nothing that can't be taken care of by a quick Healing Spell and some salve. Don't tear them to pieces right now, or you'll have to clean up the mess. I say we have breakfast first. All four of us."

Remus took a shaky breath; gradually, he managed to get the wolf under control, mainly because Severus's arm steadied him, because of the warmth he radiated, his calm voice, and the fact that he wasn't injured badly. "You're bleeding," he stated through gritted teeth. "Sit and let me have a look."

Obediently, Severus sat and shrugged his shirt off his shoulders. Two identical gasps commented on the bruises on *his* fair skin, the scratches, the lovebites, and the marks left by the handcuffs, which were currently stored in the bedside table. Remus had found out quickly last night that he liked to top as much as he liked to bottom.

Casting a spell, Remus took care of his lover's ribs, then summoned a salve and spread it on the damaged skin. The wound from Tonks's hex wasn't big; it would heal easily.

Tonks and Kingsley shared a glance. "I guess we should leave now," Kingsley said uncertainly.

Remus shot them a look. "You'll stay. Severus wants breakfast, and I want an explanation for all of this!"

Tonks took Kingsley's hand in hers. "I tried to get in contact, but you refused to answer my owls. I knocked on your door, but you didn't open up..."

"Guess why," Remus snapped, pulling Severus's shirt up and closing the buttons.

"... and eventually, I got worried and used my key and found the picture, and then I told Kingsley, and we figured you'd come here, and Snape..."

"Severus," Remus corrected her coolly. "It was your fault anyway, Tonks. *You* went to find your true love first; you backed out of our engagement *you* left me. I only took the same path. Went to Yenta. They gave me a file, and in it was Severus's name and picture. He's my soul mate, like Kingsley is yours. I think I mentioned it already."

Tonks dared to cast a small smile, and then she sat down at the kitchen table. She poured herself a cup of coffee, added milk and heaps of sugar. "Huh," she said. "Scary thought. I mean, you and him in bed together... but then, who am I to judge on unlikely bed partners." Quickly, she brushed her hand over Kingsley's bum. "Anyway, you're not mad at me anymore that I refused to marry you?"

Remus sat down as well, and after another moment, Kingsley made some fresh toast, his every movement followed by Severus's narrowed eyes.

Remus looked at his lover. His heart decided to skip a beat at the thought of the previous night. Everything had started so innocently with Severus inviting him to tea, and everything had ended so very unexpectedly with him getting tied to Severus's bedposts, legs spread wide, weak with need, and begging for release. "No," he said calmly. "I'm not mad at you at all. Actually, apart from calling on Severus, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. And you were right sex with one's soul mate is truly earth-shattering."

Tonks blushed brightly. "Told you so," she said and began buttering her toast, clearly trying not to stare at Severus and Remus sharing a quite passionate good-morning kiss.