

Damaged

by luvsev

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Chapter 1 of 1

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With crimson-stained, knotted fingers and sleeves rolled above his forearms, he easily pushed past an out-of-order sign hanging on the bolted steel door into the loo. Entering the deserted room, he briefly surveyed his surroundings: dingy, what may have been turquoise subway tile, but it was difficult to tell through the thick layer of grime clinging to it. The flickering, fluorescent light dangling from the ceiling by rusted, rope-like chains didn't help any. Paper towels were crumpled and discarded across the floor, some torn and caked with mud, urine, and Merlin knows what else. It was fitting, given the location: an abandoned petrol station in the middle of what had been a popular city before war ravaged the buildings and inhabitants. Nothing remained but this ramshackle building with busted windows near a former highway. No vehicle trespassed, as was evidenced by tree roots and weeds growing through the split asphalt.

His dragon-hide boots squiggled in the muck on the floor as he gingerly walked to a chipped, porcelain pedestal sink. Grimacing, he gripped the edges of the yellowed bowl and reached for one of the rusty knobs to turn on the water—not that he expected running water, but he hoped all the same. Nothing happened when he fiddled with the knobs until moments later when reddish-brown water splattered forth. While he waited for it to run clear, Bill gazed at his image in the mirror: freckled skin, three deep slashes marring his right cheek and lower lip. He hated the wounds: how they bled and ached, the way people looked upon his scarred visage, pity and disgust in their eyes and voices. He needed no one's pity, or help, for that matter. A curse was a curse, and some just couldn't be broken.

'I'm fucking sick of this,' he said bitterly, then fractured the glass with his fist, further distorting the image before him to reflect how he felt: defeated and poisoned forever. Rivulets of blood blossomed on his knuckles with white-hot pain. 'Goddammit.'

He yanked off the water, then Disappeared.

'Bleeding, I see.' Severus looked up from a copy of the evening *Prophet* whilst he sat in his straight-backed chair by the fire, light from the flames dancing upon the walls and bookcases of their den. 'Been brawling?' he said, thinly veiled contempt colouring his tone.

'No, not exactly.' Bill began searching through a drawer in the hutch nearest the doorway, casting aside parchment and other odds and ends in haste.

'What then?'

'I don't need this again. Not tonight.'

'Looking for this?' Severus asked, holding what appeared to be a rolled cigarette between his thumb and forefinger.

'Yes. Why do you have it? I thought you didn't smoke.'

'I don't,' Severus said simply. 'You do not need this.'

'Who're you to tell me what I need, Severus?'

'Your lover. You need help, not an escape.'

'I don't fucking need anyone to help me!' Bill yelled, leaning heavily against the doorway, trying desperately not to look at Severus—not to look into his eyes and see the obvious, genuine concern.

'I've done this, William. I've tried to escape into that sweet abyss.'

'Maybe you have, but this is different. You aren't cursed to live two lives, not fully in either.'

'I'm not? Or have you forgotten this?' Severus rolled up his slate grey sleeve and pointed at the Dark Mark on his forearm. 'Our paths are not dissimilar, William; we've suffered at his hands. The war may be over, but we still experience their hatred and disgust.'

Bill stood silent, gazing at the ever-fixed mark upon Severus's arm. He, too, was scarred, even if it had been, at first, a choice.

'You do not have to become a werewolf, William. There is another choice.'

'And what's that? Death?'

Severus moved in front of Bill, facing him. 'Potions. Your wounds will bleed less frequently; the cravings for raw meat will cease—'

'The lust for violence and blood on my hands at the full moon, will that stop, as well?'

'I was unaware.'

'I've never said anything because I've managed it on my own. There may come a day when I no longer possess the fortitude to keep my desire at bay. My choices: I either become a werewolf—where I can be restrained—or a murderer, where I destroy families, then rot, albeit deservedly, in an Azkaban cell.'

Severus wrapped his arms around Bill's waist, pulling him close. 'Lupin could help you. He's been a werewolf since he was a child.'

'I know. He's the only one who wouldn't do it for pleasure or torture. He's a good man.'

The best Severus thought, deciding not to say that aloud.

'Come with me?' Bill asked.

'I can't watch you end your life.'

'Fine.'

Severus clenched his jaw at Bill's terse answer, and in an instant, felt cold in his absence. He was once more left alone to stare into the dying embers of the fire.

Bill Apparated to Remus's front stoop knowing that somewhere within, an alarm announced his arrival. It began to rain hard, nearly sideways, and it soaked his clothing through, leaving the fabric to cling unpleasantly to his body.

You're there, I know you are, Lupin. Answer the damned door.

As if on cue, Remus answered the door, his damp, greying, sandy brown hair hanging in his eyes as he smiled. 'S-sorry about that, Bill. I was in the shower. Come in; you must be freezing out there.'

'Freezing, no, though I have been drier,' Bill quipped.

Remus laughed. 'Not that you're unwelcome here, but why the sudden visit?'

'I want, no, need you to change me.'

Remus stood with his mouth agape, watching the rain fall. 'I've... I've never. Why?'

'You know what it's like, Remus: the craving, the pain, the violence. Feeling out of control. Severus doesn't understand. He and everyone else believe I have a choice, that there is another way. There isn't.'

'You'll remain cursed, Bill, damaged.'

'I'm already damaged,' Bill whispered, a tear rolling down his cheek.

A/N: This was written for the Bill Ficathon on LJ for scarysnapey.

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