

Hope Springs Eternal

by peskipiksi

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Imposter Syndrome. It's when you don't feel up to your job, and you feel sure that, any second, someone is going to unmask you for the incompetent you know yourself to be. I was feeling a pretty sizable dose of it as I knocked on Dumbledore's office door. Of course, I did have a reason for feeling as I did: not many people get their first job aged thirty-three. Welcome to the wonderful world of lycanthropy.

'Come in,' called the Headmaster cheerfully, and then as I opened the door, but hovered on the threshold, 'Ah, Remus, my dear fellow. Come in! Come in! What can I do for you?'

I entered the room and shut the door, feeling like a first year again. 'Um... I've got a favour to ask. There's... there's a Boggart in the staff-room wardrobe,' I blurted out.

'I see,' said Dumbledore kindly. 'And you wish for my assistance in removing it.'

He knew. He understood how terrifying it was for me to face my full-moon-Boggart. My body responded automatically, and it took every ounce of willpower I possessed to convince myself that it was not real, that I didn't need to change. But this time I didn't want to Vanish it.

'No, it's not that. I wondered if the staff would mind leaving it in there. Just 'til tomorrow,' I clarified hastily, seeing Dumbledore looking doubtful. 'So I can teach my third years about it.'

'Your third years,' he repeated looking even more grave.

I suddenly understood what was worrying him. 'I know Harry Potter's in that class,' I assured him quickly. 'I won't let him face it. I don't relish the idea of Lord Voldemort materialising in the staff room.'

'Indeed,' agreed Dumbledore. 'However, there is another student who cannot be allowed to face the Boggart. Miss Hermione Granger.'

'Hermione? But the staff say she's the cleverest witch in her year. Some say the entire school!'

'And it is precisely that quality which makes her so dangerous. She is in possession of a Time-Turner.'

I stared blankly at the Headmaster. In the limited research I had had time to do before taking up my post, I had not come across the term.

'To use a Muggle phrase,' said Dumbledore, smiling slightly, 'It does exactly what it says on the tin – it turns time backwards. Miss Granger uses it to study rather more subjects than a conventional timetable allows. I did explain this to the rest of the staff,' he added, 'but you were indisposed. I was just on my way to see you when, fortuitously, you knocked at my door.'

I gaped at him, my amazement slowly changing to excitement and then joy as I realised what this "Time-Turner" could be capable of. I could go back to my childhood, to the day I got...

'No.' The word, resonating around Dumbledore's office brought me out of my daydream. 'I know what you were going to ask me,' said Dumbledore softly, 'and I'm sorry, Remus, but no. You cannot go back in time and stop yourself being bitten. It is *one of the most important wizarding laws. Nobody's supposed to change time, nobody!*

My face fell, and I despised myself for nursing the hope for even a second.

'If I could have gone back in time and prevented your suffering, I would have done so before now,' Dumbledore told me gently.

I felt stupid. Of course if it were possible to change time, Dumbledore would have stopped Voldemort's reign of terror, stopped my best friend dying.

'Remus.' Dumbledore interrupted my thoughts again. 'The Time-Turner must remain a secret from the students. Otherwise they will all be trying to steal it from Miss Granger in order to cheat on their exams. Chaos looms, Remus!' His rueful smile faded at my woebegone expression. 'Remus. I am trusting you. You understand?'

I nodded emphatically. Dumbledore had said those exact words to me when he allowed me into school as a boy and I had betrayed him. It would not happen again. I would keep his secret, and hopefully, one day I would stop feeling as if I didn't deserve this job or his trust.

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A/N: Lupin explains to Harry why he didn't let him face the Boggart, but Hermione is never told why she is prevented. This is what I think happened, altered a little in response to reviews.