

When We That Wore the Myrtle

by auberus

Backstory for Destruction Where You Stand, though it works as a stand-alone.

Marauders at Hogwarts -- first year.

first year -- part one.

Chapter 1 of 1

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"When we that wore the myrtle wear the dust,

And years of darkness cover up our eyes,

And all our arrogant laughter and sweet lust

Keep counsel with the scruples of the wise..."

-Edna St. Vincent Millay

one - minerva:

In all her years, Minerva had never expected to see a Black sorted into Gryffindor House. Oh, Andromeda Black had been in Ravenclaw, and so had that old goat Alphard, but they were minor cousins, and both would certainly have been in Slytherin had they been less inclined to study. Thus, when she sees Sirius Black's name down on the list of incoming students, she doesn't give him much thought, just a mention to Slughorn and the certainty that he will be down for Slytherin.

She has the first hint that she might have been wrong when in the entrance hall it is necessary to forcibly separate the young scion of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black from one James Potter. By the time she and Hagrid get them apart, Potter's nose is bleeding and Black is sneering impartially at everyone, despite a split lip and the bruise coming up on one aristocratic cheekbone.

The expression on his face is an echo of his father's cold hauteur done in miniature, but the look in his eyes is one of hot, furious indignation. He kicks Potter in the shin, hard, without waiting for Minerva to turn her back. Potter kicks him back, and the two of them become the first students in Hogwarts history to lose points for their House before even being Sorted.

Black is the fifth student called for Sorting, and his bruised face and swollen lip earn him nearly as many whispers as his last name. The Sorting Hat is silent on his head for a long time, and though the boy's face remains calm, his eyes are increasingly panicked. When at last the Hat shouts, "GRYFFINDOR," Sirius Black's face matches his eyes for sheer terror, and Minerva can see the slight tremble in his hands as he removes the Hat in a silent Great Hall.

When her entire table bursts into simultaneous, enthusiastic applause and a space is cleared for Sirius at the centre of a bench, Minerva is as proud of her House as she

has ever been in her life. She doesn't even wince at the lost points

two - remus:

"Prat."

"Git."

"Wanker."

"Ponce."

It was inevitable, thinks Remus, as the conversation taking place in front of him degenerates into shoving. Sirius Black and James Potter have been at loggerheads since the train, and the aborted fight in the entrance hall has only made things worse.

Remus only heard the edges of the argument on the train, but he heard enough and knows enough about politics to know that Orion Black and Kevin Potter's ongoing Ministry feud has apparently been inherited by their sons.

Not that the subtle political arguments going on between the elder Black and Potter have any similarity to the current struggle going on between those sons. Sirius Black has just poked James Potter a good one in the eye, and Potter has just trod on Black's foot.

The prefect, a tall, sandy-haired boy named McKinnon, reaches them just as Potter, forgoing any attempt at honor, bites Black on the arm. He is somewhat justified, in Remus' opinion, as Black has a good hold on his hair. McKinnon separates them with every evidence of annoyance.

"You two have already lost us ten points apiece," he says, shaking the erstwhile combatants by their respective collars. "One more insult, one more punch, and I'll have the pair of you doing detention in the deepest parts of the dungeon until the end of term!"

The dire threat is enough, though Potter glares fiercely at Black, and Black looks daggers at both Potter and McKinnon. Both of them are silent until room assignments are handed out; then both of them burst into impassioned, fervent protests. Remus is torn between irritation and relief at the idea of being stuck in the same room with the pair of them. As long as they are fighting each other, they are unlikely to notice him.

Thirty seconds and four insults after the door closes behind them, Black and Potter are fighting again. Remus exchanges a glance with the fourth occupant of their room. Pettigrew Remus can't remember his first name sighs.

"They won't stop on their own, you know," he says.

"Likely not," Remus agrees.

"I've known James for years," Pettigrew continues nervously. "He'll keep this up all day, and I don't think Black's planning on giving up any time soon."

Since Black is currently engaged in mashing Potter's head into the floor, Remus can't help but agree.

"All right then," he says. "You grab Potter; I'll get Black." He isn't eager to lay hands on a Black, even one his own age. The whole family is reputed to have been steeped in Dark magic from the cradle. Of course, Black hasn't gone for his wand yet, which Remus considers a good sign.

He wades into the fray or, rather, steps around the two combatants and grabs Black by the collar and his left arm, which is about to descend onto Potter's face. Pettigrew is quicker than Remus had been expecting, and catches Potter by the shoulders as he tries to rise then sits on his chest to keep him still.

Black, after one wild swing which Remus dodges easily, has settled for glaring furiously at everyone and everything. His chest is heaving, and his fists are clenched, his face is nearly as pale as the ghosts at the Feast, and his eyes never settle on anything for longer than a few seconds.

Remus is seven years past the bite now and has settled into a sort of numb acceptance, but he recognizes the terrified, miserable rage that sits in every tense line of Black's face and body. Potter may be angry and indignant, but Sirius Black is sick with fear and fury, and the sudden moment of understanding cuts Remus to the bone. Then Black turns his head again and catches Remus looking at him. His scowl falters for an instant; then his eyes narrow again, and he pulls free of Remus' grip with an angry jerk.

"It's all right," he says, "I won't hurt poor ickle Potter any more."

Potter tries again to get to his feet, but Pettigrew is firmly ensconced on his chest and all Potter can do is hiss threats. Pettigrew's weight is preventing him from shouting.

"Good," Remus says calmly. "McGonagall and McKinnon both looked pretty fed up with the pair of you."

"I can't believe you lost points before you'd been Sorted," Pettigrew says in tones of awe that wring a grudging smile from both Black and the half-squashed Potter.

"First time in the history of the school, McGonagall said," Remus says carefully, watching Black's eyes. They remind him of winter clouds, pale grey and threatening to storm, a quality that does not disappear even as the humor seeps into them.

"I suppose that's something," Black says.

A wheeze from Potter signals his acknowledgement, and Black frowns, his expression one of amused annoyance rather than imminent explosion, the switch lightning-fast.

"Do get up, Pettigrew. You're going to do more damage to Potter by sitting on him than I could with both fists and all night to use them."

Pettigrew flushes, but does as he's told. Potter gets to his feet, and he and Black eyeball each other over Remus' and Pettigrew's shoulders.

"All right, then, Potter?" Black asks.

"I'm fine," Potter says. "You hit like a *girl*."

Remus expects this to be the cue for more violence, but to his surprise, Black just smirks.

"Yeah, well, I didn't want to do any real damage. I've no wish to end up in detention, after all."

If he'd wanted to do real damage, he'd have used his wand, Remus thinks and is ashamed. He's heard stories of Dark wizards for as long as he can remember, and more than a few of them have been named Black. That doesn't mean that the family is bad enough to teach the Dark Arts to an eleven year old boy.

"Can we move now," Remus asks, "or do you plan on going after each other again?"

"We'll be good," Black drawls lazily, "won't we, Potter?" Potter gives him a startled, suspicious look then nods uncertainly, as if he's not sure whether or not Black should be speaking for him.

"Shake on it?" Black offers, and when Potter extends his hand, Black charms his hair magenta.

Remus and Pettigrew - whose name turns out to be Peter - have been ducking stray hexes for two days. Both Black and Potter are from old wizarding families, and their magical education began much earlier than Remus' or Peter's. Remus has been working on a shielding charm, but he hasn't made much progress yet. He is beginning to suspect that Black and Potter are settling in for a long, drawn out feud that might very well encompass the entirety of their school years, and is resigning himself to it when other events conspire to end said feud before it can get properly underway.

On the third day of school, Black gets into a row on the way to breakfast with a fourth-year Slytherin girl that Peter breathlessly identifies as Black's cousin Bellatrix. Distracted from needling Potter, Black is at first coldly civil to the girl, but before long both are hissing threats at each other, violent whispers that attract nearly as much attention as shouting would have. A small crowd gathers, and Bellatrix is joined by a brown haired Slytherin boy of her own year who looks at Black like he's some sort of repellent insect.

"Come along, Bellatrix," he says. "He's nothing more than a child. I pity the House of Black, if this is its heir."

"I'd watch my tongue if I were you, Lestrangle," Sirius sneers. "Otherwise, someone might just remind my father of your squib grandmother. You'll find it difficult to get your hands on Bellatrix's share of the family funds after that."

There are a few gasps. Lestrangle's face turns crimson with fury, and he pulls his wand. Remus doesn't know the hex he uses, but it leaves Black white-faced and shaking. Lestrangle raises his wand again, and Remus finds himself pulling his own wand, while beside him Peter is stepping forward as well. Bellatrix, seeing them, smiles and reaches into her pocket, but Potter has stepped between Lestrangle and Black.

"*Impedimenta*," Potter says, and the next few moments are utter chaos. Bellatrix shrieks and fires of a string of hexes in their general direction as does Lestrangle. A few other students pull wands, and Potter grabs Black by the shoulder and runs for it, pushing Remus and Peter ahead of them as they round the corridor into the Great Hall.

"That was close," Potter gasps, as they try to pretend that they weren't running. Professor McGonagall gives them a funny look, but no one else seems to notice anything. All four of them make their way to the Gryffindor table and sit down. Black elbows Potter, but not maliciously, and after a moment, he mutters something that sounds somewhat like 'thanks.'

"Don't mention it," Potter says. After a moment, he asks, "Was that girl your sister?"

"Bellatrix?" Black shudders. "She's my cousin. That's bad enough, trust me."

Potter and Black spend the rest of breakfast in careful conversation, avoiding any of the subjects they've been shouting at one another over for the past two days. At the end of the meal, the Slytherin table collapses when they walk past it.

Remus is fairly sure that the quiet he will soon experience is worth the points Gryffindor House has just lost, but it doesn't take him long to realize how wrong he is.

three - minerva:

It is less than two weeks before Black is in her office with James Potter in tow. Both boys are sporting rising bruises and a distinctly ruffled appearance, and Minerva doesn't need to be told that they have been fighting again. She raises one eyebrow at Gideon Prewett, who has a distinctly long-suffering expression on his face.

"They got into it with a couple of the Slytherins," the prefect says, his voice as harassed as his expression. "Black here hit Snape with a Probuscus Engorgus charm, and Potter turned Lucius Malfoy's hair pink."

Minerva closes her eyes. She has no doubt as to where Potter learned that particular hex.

"And where are Masters Snape and Malfoy?" she asks.

"I sent them to Slughorn, along with Crabbe and Goyle." His eyes flick over the bruises on the two miscreants' faces.

"Ah." She will have a word with Slughorn. Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle are all fifth years, and such bullying is inexcusable. "Well, Mr. Black? Mr. Potter? What on earth possessed you to do such a thing?"

"They said Sirius was--" Potter starts, but Black elbows him, and he shuts his mouth, hard.

"Mr. Potter?" Minerva presses.

"It was nothing, Professor," Potter says, but his tone is mutinous, and he treads on Black's foot as he speaks.

"Mr. Black?"

"It was nothing, Professor. Really." Sirius Black fixes her with a wide-eyed look of innocence, and smiles winningly. The McGonagalls are not generally prone to clairvoyance, but a shiver of premonition runs down Minerva's spine at the boy's expression. She has a feeling she will see it quite frequently over the course of the next seven years, and that it will never bode anyone any good.

"Well," she says dryly, "since 'nothing' was behind your attack on other students, you shall both serve detention for the next two weeks." She will make sure that Slughorn punishes his Slytherins to at least the same degree.

Ignoring their sudden protests, she adds, "And if there is any more fighting, I shall make sure that both of you are in detention until the end of the term."

Both boys go suddenly quiet.

"That is all," she says. "Prewett, a word, please."

four - sirius:

As the door to McGonagall's office closes behind him, James kicks Sirius in the ankle. Sirius nearly turns around and gives him what-for, but McGonagall's admonition is still ringing in his ears. He settles for glaring at his friend.

"Why didn't you let me tell her what Malfoy said?" James demands, once they are safely out of earshot.

"It's none of her business. Besides, d'you really think we'd ever hear the end of it if we went whinging to our Head of House?"

"No," James says. "But two weeks' detention!"

"It was worth it," Sirius grins. "The look on Malfoy's face when he realized what you'd done to his hair--"

"And Snape's nose," James agrees.

"Face it, mate," Sirius says, "we're brilliant. And our war with the slimy Slytherins must not end here! After all, we've got to get Crabbe and Goyle somehow."

"You heard McGonagall!" James protests, following Sirius up the stairs to the portrait hole. "No more fighting."

"So we make sure that no one knows it's us," Sirius says. "Apricot jumble," he tells the Fat Lady, and they make their way across the common room to the stairs. "We must be cunning as well as brave. After all, we're going after Slytherins."

"Crabbe and Goyle? They're too dumb to worry about," James says.

"But they share a room with Malfoy, and with Rudolphus LeStrange." Sirius throws himself onto James' bed.

"Hey!" James protests, "You've still got your trainers on!"

"So?" Sirius grins and rubs the soles of his shoes on James' blankets.

"Right!" James says decisively and tackles him in a flying leap that sends them both off the edge of the bed and onto the floor. Sirius lands on the bottom, says, "oof," and thumps James on the ear.

"Agh!" James shouts, and Sirius gets an elbow in his gut and his head smacks into the floor and they go rolling around trying to pummel each other for a few minutes before the door opens and someone says "oh, sorry."

Sirius lets go of James' hair and sits up, ignoring any attempts to dislodge him from his seat on James' chest.

"Don't worry," he says, "just giving Potter here the thrashing he deserves."

The intruder is Remus Lupin, who shares the room and is therefore not really an intruder, so Sirius grins at him - or tries to, as James is currently biting him on the knee.

"Ow! Potter, you animal!" He thumps James on the chest, and refocuses on Lupin. "I could hold him down for you while you have a go, if you like," he offers. "I happen to know he's the one who spilled pumpkin juice on your Transfigurations book."

"Black!" James shouts. "*Not on!*"

Lupin smiles, and Sirius smiles back, then yelps with pain as James takes advantage of his distraction to throw him onto the floor. From his new, sprawled position, Sirius looks at Lupin, who looks uncomfortable.

"I can see up your nose," he offers, because as a conversational icebreaker, he thinks that's a pretty good line. Lupin looks startled, then appalled, then settles for another of those careful smiles.

"Is it interesting?" he asks.

"Sort of. I can't see your brain, though. Pity," he observes, hauling himself to his feet.

James has retreated to his bed, where he is lying with his shoes quite pointedly off. Sirius crosses his eyes at him, but continues his conversation with Lupin.

"Maybe if I could, I'd be as ace as you at Charms." Lupin blushes. Sirius grins, delighted.

"Oi, Black, leave off pestering him," James says. Sirius turns wide eyes on James.

"I'm not pestering him," he says. "I'm being friendly. Right, Lupin?"

"Right," Lupin says, and now the smile is definitely playing about the corners of his mouth. Sirius doesn't know him well, despite having shared a room with him for two weeks, but something about that calm, secret amusement makes him think that Lupin might be a bit of all right. Sirius flops down on the bed next to James, while Lupin makes his way to his own bed.

"So," Sirius says, attention turning back to Crabbe, Goyle, and their pernicious behavior, "revenge."

"Revenge is sweet," James says.

"And shall be ours," Sirius finishes, grinning.

Author's Notes: Feedback keeps the plot bunnies from eating each other.