

# Watching

*by StormySkize*

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And what does Remus think in return?

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Watching

Part the First: The Watcher

I notice him as soon as he enters the room. He emits an almost palpable aura. It isn't noticeable to others, but I am attuned to it. I've been watching him for thirty years, and I'm always aware of him as soon as he enters my sensory orbit.

Sometimes I smell him before I see him. I am a Potions master and my sense of smell is well-developed. Like me, he still uses the same soap he used when we were both students. However, it is not the soap I smell, but his own unique essence, which underlies the soap. I wonder what faint difference in his scent I would detect if he were recumbent and naked beneath me.

Sometimes I merely overhear a word he's spoken to someone else. His voice is slightly hoarse, probably as a result of his screams during his monthly transformations, but it's not gravelly like Moody's. It's a pleasant gruffness. It's the kind of voice that sends a subtle shiver down my spine. I wonder what my name would sound like if he were to whisper it into my ear in that soft, husky voice.

And sometimes, like tonight, I catch just a glimpse of him from across the room. I recognise instantly the curve of his slightly stooped shoulders or the shape of his hands, the fingers long and tapered, the nails always neatly trimmed. I wonder what those hands would feel like if he were to touch my heated flesh.

It matters little which of my senses is first alerted to his presence. As soon as my brain receives the first clue, I am aware of him and I begin watching.

He doesn't know that I watch, of course. I was a spy for twenty years. I know the delicate art of covert observation. I follow his movements without turning my head. Neither my eyes nor my body language betray my intense scrutiny. I pride myself on my ability to see without being seen.

We're near the same age, and both of us look every year of it, though in different ways. My age shows in my face, which is much more lined than it should be in a man my age. I'm only forty-three, after all. His age shows in his hair, which is almost completely grey now. Almost none of the soft brown is left, though his face is surprisingly unlined.

But grey hair and lined faces aside, it is our eyes that make us seem older than our years. We both have old eyes. We've seen too many horrors. We've borne too much

pain. We've participated in too much destruction. The difference between us, of course, is that I chose my own path, while his was thrust upon him against his will.

I make him the Wolfsbane every month. He goes to the Ministry to get it. I've got a secret or two I've held over Scrimgeour's head for the past several years. I've persuaded (very well, if I must be truthful, I've blackmailed) Scrimgeour into making arrangements for him to come to the Ministry every month to get his potion. He thinks the Ministry provides it, but, in truth, I do. I simply use the Ministry as an intermediary because I doubt he would take it if he knew it came from me.

He hates me, of course.

The reasons for his hatred are myriad, going back to the night I failed to get a warning to Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix in time to prevent Voldemort from killing James and Lily Potter. The fact that Peter Pettigrew betrayed them pales in comparison to my sin of omission. He said he didn't blame me, but I know he did.

I was the one responsible for the death of his best friend, as well. Oh, I didn't use the Killing Curse, but I was responsible nonetheless. I harangued and belittled Black until he ran off half-cocked to the Ministry and got himself pushed behind the veil by Bellatrix Lestrange. If I'd not chided Black for his meagre contribution to the war effort, he wouldn't have felt the need to turn hero and try to rescue his godson.

Then I killed Dumbledore, the man who had protected him since he was eleven years old. It matters little that Albus had made me promise to do it. It didn't even matter that he was dying anyway, and that my doing the deed served to ensure that my place within the Dark Lord's inner circle was secured. My newly-acquired position enabled me to provide the Order with the information that finally led to the Dark Lord's defeat, but in the face of Albus's death, that little fact didn't seem important.

And let's not forget the Potters' son, Harry, the bloody Boy Who Lived. I'd tried to teach the self-centred brat how to defend his mind, but he'd shown no inclination to listen to the likes of me. He'd fulfilled his destiny and brought Voldemort down, but because of his own stupidity, he'd managed to lose his mind in the process. So, of course, it's my fault he's in a locked ward at St. Mungo's, drooling over himself and wearing nappies.

No, I know he'll never forgive me my many transgressions.

But that doesn't stop me from watching him.

He thinks that I hate him, and I've certainly let him believe that is the case. I've never addressed him by his given name, though he always uses mine.

I've never touched him. Not once in all the years we've known each other have I ever felt his skin, not even in a gentlemanly handshake.

I've never smiled at him or ever looked at him with anything less than loathing.

When he came back to Hogwarts to teach, during Potter's third year, I made him the Wolfsbane each month and let him believe that I was doing it only because Dumbledore ordered me to do so. He never knew that, although I didn't invent the potion, I spent most of my free time refining and improving it, hoping to make his monthly transformation a bit easier to bear and a bit less painful. I'd even added a subtle hint of chocolate flavour to the brew to make it more palatable, but I'm sure he never noticed.

I betrayed him at the end of that year. He probably believes I did it to pay him back for the Shrieking Shack incident, back in our fifth year, but I've never blamed him for that. He was as much a victim of Black's malevolence that night as I was. Or else he thinks I did it because he'd protected Black after his escape from Azkaban. I was angry about that, but only because I feared he'd be arrested for giving the escapee aid. It was a relief to find out that Black hadn't actually committed the crimes he'd been imprisoned for.

He doesn't know that the reason I betrayed him was to protect him. Voldemort was going to send Greyback after him again, to teach him a lesson and to prevent him from trying to turn the other werewolves against the Dark Lord. I couldn't let that happen. I knew that if I outed him, he'd have to go into hiding. The Order took him in and provided a haven, just as I'd known it would. He was safe, at least for a little while. At least until I could think of another way to protect him.

But, he doesn't know that.

There's so much about me he doesn't know.

He doesn't know that I've wanted him since I was thirteen years old and I first became aware of my sexuality.

He doesn't know that I loved him then.

He doesn't know that I love him still.

Maybe someday I'll find the courage to tell him. I know he'll reject me out of hand. He's been with Tonks, off and on, for years, so I doubt he's ever even considered that he could be lusted after by another man. I'll be lucky if he doesn't hex me when I tell him that I love him, that I want him.

But, maybe someday I'll be drunk enough, lonely enough, or desperate enough to risk it.

Until then, I content myself with watching him.

Part the Second: The Watched

I become aware of his notice only seconds after I enter the room. It is as if I emit some sort of signal that only he is aware of. I've always been aware of his scrutiny, but I've never let him know that I know. I like knowing he's watching me.

I am, of course, aware of him in return. I am a werewolf. I possess the heightened senses of the animal that resides within me.

Even from across the room, I can smell him. He uses the same soap I use, but the underlying scent is different. There is also the faint hint of various potions ingredients that always clings to him, no matter how much soap he uses. I wonder if the scent is in his clothes or on his skin. I'd enjoy getting close enough to his naked flesh to find out.

My hearing is acute as well. I hear his rich, deep baritone even when he speaks softly to someone sitting next to him while I am in another room or down a hall and around a corner. Sometimes just the far-off sound of his voice is enough to arouse me. When he actually speaks to me, I have to make an effort to hold my desire in check. I'd enjoy hearing that voice lowered and roughened in passion, whispering my name.

My vision, especially my night vision, is excellent. He thinks I don't see him lurking in the shadows, but I do. I recognise his profile even in the dimmest light. I know the shape of his head. I could identify him by simply looking at the curve of his well-muscled arse. I'd enjoy running my hands over those firm globes of flesh.

It doesn't matter whether I smell him first, hear him first, or see him first; as soon as my brain receives the first hint of his presence, I am aware of him watching me.

He doesn't know, of course, that I'm aware of him. He was a spy for twenty years. He knows how to observe without being observed in return. His eyes don't shift to follow my movements. His stance doesn't betray his activity. Yet, I am aware of his surveillance. I never let him know that I know. His pride would be wounded were I to reveal that his secret scrutiny of me is, in fact, blatantly obvious to me.

The years have not been kind to either of us. I'm just forty-three, but my grey hair makes me appear older. His face is lined and weary looking, and he appears older than his years as well. It is our eyes, however, that truly reveal how old we feel. We've seen too many atrocities. We've endured too much agony. We've been a part of too much devastation. I chose to walk along that road when I realised how much I owed Dumbledore for allowing me to attend Hogwarts. He was coerced into following the Dark Lord by the false promises of Lucius Malfoy, a man he'd once considered his friend. He realised his mistake early on and spent twenty years working for the Order of the

Phoenix to try to make amends for that costly error in judgement.

I go to the Ministry every month to receive my Wolfsbane Potion. He doesn't know that I am aware that it is he who makes it for me. Who else could it be? There are only three or four Potions masters in the entire world who have managed to brew it successfully, and none of the others live in Great Britain. I'm not sure what piece of crucial information or potentially embarrassing evidence he holds, but it must be formidable if it has forced Scrimgeour to consent to being the go-between each month. The Minister of Magic has no love for werewolves in general, or me, in particular.

He thinks I hate him.

He believes that I hold him responsible for the deaths of James and Lily. I don't, of course. The blame for that belongs to Voldemort and to Peter Pettigrew, the bastard traitor. I saw the agony on his face when he realised that the warning he'd sent to Dumbledore had arrived too late to prevent the tragedy. I told him I didn't blame him, but I know he didn't believe me.

He believes I hold him liable for Sirius's death, as well. Oh, yes, he was vociferous when he ridiculed and disparaged Sirius's contributions to the war effort, but his only motive was to humiliate Sirius as he'd been humiliated. He warned Sirius to stay where he was and not follow Harry to the Ministry. Once Sirius knew that Harry was in trouble, nothing short of the Imperius could have kept him from going after him. Again, the blame for the death of my best friend belongs to Voldemort and to Bellatrix Lestrange.

He did kill Albus Dumbledore. Albus had been my mentor since I started at Hogwarts, and I loved him like a father. Everyone in the Order knew that Dumbledore was dying, try though he might to hide it. The curse that had destroyed his right hand had begun to spread throughout his body. Poppy had done what she could to slow down the progression of the curse-sickness, but there was no stopping it. Albus was a powerful wizard and a brilliant strategist. He made sure that his death would benefit the Order and help Harry in his fight against the Dark Lord. Of course, to do that, he had to order his spy to kill him. I heard them, the night it was planned. I wasn't supposed to hear, of course, but my acute hearing picked up their voices, even through the closed door of the library at Grimmauld Place. I heard Dumbledore give the order. I heard the spy begging not to be given such an onerous task. But Dumbledore insisted, saying that the action would guarantee the spy's placement in the Dark Lord's inner circle and would lead to Voldemort's ultimate defeat. And it did. But I alone know what that reluctantly extracted promise cost the spy. I alone heard him weeping after Dumbledore left him. And when the deed was done, I alone knew that no blame belonged to the spy.

And then there's Harry. Poor Harry he carried the weight of the wizarding world on his far too fragile shoulders. I know about the failed lessons in Occlumency. That failure rests with Harry. He didn't even try to learn. Dumbledore had ordered the lessons, but didn't impress enough upon Harry how important they were. I tried to teach him what I could, but I'm not that skilled an Occlumens. And, again, Harry didn't seem to take the lessons seriously. We all learned afterwards that no amount of Occlumency skills would have changed Harry's fate. He and the Dark Lord were linked through Harry's scar. The severing of that link resulted in the death of Voldemort and it should have killed Harry, as well. Instead it caused irreparable damage to Harry's mind, and he lies in St. Mungo's, sharing the fate of Frank and Alice Longbottom.

I think he feels that through his actions, he has wronged me somehow and that he should ask my forgiveness.

I've never felt that he needed my forgiveness.

I've always been comforted by the knowledge that he is watching me.

He acts like he hates me. He never uses my given name, but rather scornfully addresses me by my surname alone. I always call him by his given name as if by addressing him so intimately, I can make him understand that I don't hate him at all.

We've never touched. He's never even shaken my hand. He once took an extra week of detention rather than shake my hand after a fight. (Of course, he wouldn't shake the hands of Peter, James, or Sirius, either.)

He never even smiles at me, unless you can call that disdainful curl of his lips a smile. He usually looks at me like something he needs to scrape off the bottom of his shoe.

When I returned to Hogwarts to teach, back during Harry's third year, he made me the Wolfsbane potion every month. He would slam into my office and put the potion down, all the while grumbling about having to follow Dumbledore's orders. I knew he had made changes in the potion. He continues to make changes. I can detect the subtle differences between the potion I take now, and the one I was taking that year I was teaching at Hogwarts. My transformations are easier now and less painful. I sleep most of the night, curled up in my wolf-form instead of pacing and howling, gnawing on my own limbs and clawing my own skin. I've even detected the slight, but unmistakable, flavour of chocolate which he's added to make it more palatable. I can only guess how long it took him to perfect that addition.

When that year ended, he made my condition known to some of the students, and I was forced to resign. I ended up going into hiding with Sirius. Although I was surprised by his actions, I never believed he did it out of spite. I knew there had to be a reason for his actions. It was only later that Dumbledore told me about the plans Voldemort had made for me.

I know that he did it to protect me. He couldn't come right out and warn me that would have jeopardised his position with the Dark Lord. So he had to make it seem like a vengeful act of retribution.

He doesn't know that I know why he acted the way he did.

There's so much about me he doesn't know.

He doesn't know that I've been aware of his desire for me almost since he realised it himself. Those animal instincts of mine are finely tuned. I can see the dilation of his pupils when he becomes aroused. I can hear the change in his breathing. I can smell his desire.

I know that he loved me then.

I know that he still loves me.

Nearly thirty years have passed, but the love endures.

I can only hope that someday he will be able to tell me how he feels. I know he fears rejection. He might not even know that I'm capable of desiring him and loving him in return. He's seen me with Tonks over the years, and I have enjoyed being with her, but there's never been love between us. Tonks knows that my heart belongs to another, though she doesn't know his name.

He probably thinks I'll hex him for daring to tell me he loves me, that he wants me.

I'd approach him, but I know that if we are ever going to have a chance of being together, the first move must come from him.

I can only hope that someday he'll be brave enough, strong enough, or daring enough to take a chance.

Until then, I'll content myself with watching him watching me.

Episode Ended