

A Heart Beats in Moonlight

by StormySkize

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Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Last time I looked, my driver's licence didn't say JKR. I guess that means that none of these characters belong to me. That also means I'm not making any money. As my grandmother used to say, "Sue a beggar and catch a louse."

I have a wonderful beta, and when this is over, I'll tell you who she is.

Author's Note: This story was written for the Potter Place's Anything Goes Challenge. This is the prompt I chose: 25. It's between Voldemort's disappearance and his return; write a romance between any two canon characters during this period of peace.

A Heart Beats in Moonlight

Remus Lupin unlocked the door to the small flat that was now his alone. He took off his cloak and hung it on the hook by the door. He walked into the tiny kitchen and opened the cupboard over the old Aga cooker. He brought down the bottle of cheap Muggle whisky and a chipped glass. He filled the glass and raised it.

"Here's to you, James."

He swallowed, and the whisky burned a fiery path from his mouth to his belly.

Barely pausing to breathe, he refilled the glass.

"Here's to you, Lily." He swallowed again, but the whisky didn't burn nearly as much this time.

His hands were starting to tremble as he filled the glass a third time.

"Here's to you, Peter." He was inured to the burn of the liquor now and barely noticed its sting as he gulped it down.

By the time he'd filled his glass a fourth time, his eyes were burning more fiercely than his mouth, and he could barely swallow the liquor around the choking lump of grief in his throat.

"How could you, Sirius?" he said as the liquor released the last tenuous hold on his emotions. "How could you turn them over *tohim*? How could you kill them and Peter? It's only by a miracle that little Harry survived. He's your godson and you ... you ..."

His throat finally closed completely, and he could no longer speak. His body shook as though he was afflicted with ague, and his legs would no longer support him. He fell to the cracked linoleum floor and let the tears flow.

He cried for his dead friends.

He cried for James and Lily. They'd been so young and so much in love. They'd been eager to fight Voldemort eager, but not foolish. When it became known that the Dark Lord was after Harry, they'd gone into hiding with him. They were more than willing to risk their own lives, but not Harry's ... never Harry's!

He cried for Peter. Poor Peter he'd always been a bit of a misfit. He'd never quite fit in anywhere except as one-fourth of the Marauders. No one would have ever expected him to be a hero, but he'd surprised them all. He'd confronted Sirius, demanding to know why he'd betrayed James and Lily. And then Peter had also died by the hand of a man he'd believed was his friend.

He cried for Harry. Harry would never know how proud his father had been of him. He wouldn't remember his mother's gentle touch, or know how deeply she'd loved him.

And though he didn't want to, he cried for Sirius. What could Voldemort have offered him that would make him turn on his best friend? How could he have even considered betraying his own godson?

And finally ... finally ... he cried for himself. Ever since he was a small child, he'd been alone. His lycanthropy had isolated him, even from his own family. At Hogwarts, he'd been accepted at least by James, Sirius, and Peter, and later by Lily, as well.

Now he was alone again, and he didn't know if he would be able to bear it.

He cried for what seemed like hours. He cried until his eyes were so red and swollen he could barely open them. He cried until his throat was raw, and his chest felt bruised and battered. He cried until he felt that every drop of moisture had been wrung from his body, and the slightest touch would cause him to crumble to dust.

When the last tear had dried to a salty crust on his cheek, he slept, not even bothering to rise from the kitchen floor and make his way to his bed.

When he heard a noise that sounded like someone knocking at his door, he knew that he was hallucinating. The only visitors he ever had were James and Lily, or Peter. Sirius, of course, hadn't needed to knock.

But James, Lily, and Peter were dead, and Sirius was in Azkaban. He ignored the knocking and fell back into his grief-and-whisky-induced sleep.

He came awake slowly and reluctantly. He held on to slumber the way a drowning man holds on to a life preserver, because he knew as soon as he let himself wake up, he would have to face the reality of a world without James and Lily and Peter. He would have to try to find a way to live in a world without Sirius, who was as dead to him as the friends whose deaths he had caused.

He opened his eyes and then closed them again to block out the bright morning sunlight that flooded through the bedroom's only window.

He didn't remember getting up from the kitchen floor and going to bed.

"I see you're finally awake."

He turned his head toward the voice and immediately regretted it as a wave of nausea washed over him.

A basin was thrust under his chin, but although he heaved until his sides ached, nothing came up.

When the sickness passed, he lay back on the pillow, his eyes closed, his head pounding.

"Sit up and drink this. You'll feel better."

"Who says I want to feel better?" Remus replied.

"Don't drink it then. You're the one with the hangover, not me." His visitor placed the vial on the bedside table.

"How did you get in here?" Remus asked.

"*Alohomora* is a perfectly good spell, especially when the door isn't locked."

"Why are you here?"

"I thought you might need a friend."

"I had friends. They're dead."

"Not all of them."

"Sirius may still be breathing, but he's dead to me," Remus said.

With a trembling hand, he reached out and picked up the vial from the bedside table. He drank it down, shuddering slightly at its bitter flavour.

"I rather thought that *we* were friends. I'm sorry you don't feel the same.

"I'll leave you to your misery and self-pity now. Good-bye, Remus."

There was the click-clack of retreating boot heels on the bare wood floor.

"Wait." Remus spoke just before the bedroom door closed behind his unexpected visitor.

"Yes?"

"You are my friend. Thank you, Emmeline."

Eight weeks later

Remus was startled out of his reverie by the insistent tapping of an owl at his window.

He rose and went to the window, opening it and allowing a large, tawny owl to enter, along with a blast of icy air. He quickly closed the window again.

He untied the small roll of parchment from the owl's leg.

"Here you go, Leander," Remus said as he fed the owl a treat. "Stay and warm up for a bit while I read this."

He unrolled the parchment and read.

Remus ... it's time you rejoined the land of the living. I'll be there at eight o'clock. We're going out to dinner, and then we're going dancing to bring in the New Year. Don't bother trying to decline, I'll not take 'no' for an answer.

Emmeline

He smiled slightly when he read Emmeline's forthright message, but he frowned as he contemplated going out socially.

Other than dragging himself to his Muggle job five days a week, and the one night each month he still spent at the Shrieking Shack, he'd seldom left his flat in two months.

During those first dark days after James, Lily, and Peter were killed and Sirius was hauled away to Azkaban, he'd felt dead inside, as though his heart had stopped beating, and it was only habit that kept his body moving.

And it was during those first days that Emmeline had shown that she was, indeed, a friend.

Besides the vial of hangover potion she'd brought him that first morning, she'd fixed him a bowl of porridge and stood over him while he forced it down, fearing that at any moment it would reappear.

She'd stayed with him all day, asking no questions and offering no platitudes. She'd simply been a silent, supportive presence.

After she'd made sure he drank the mug of soup she'd heated for his dinner, she'd left him, promising to check on him the next day.

And she had.

She'd come back the next day, and the day after that.

After the first week, she didn't stop by as often, but she sent a note nearly every day.

When Leander gave him a reproachful look the third time he'd delivered a message and received no reward, Remus had felt obligated to make a quick trip to Eeylops and buy a bag of owl treats.

Somehow, eight weeks had passed, and the crushing grief had lessened a bit. He found that he could actually go for an hour or two without thinking about what had happened, especially if he was busy with something else. He still wasn't sleeping as well as he could, but even that had improved with time.

He wasn't sure, however, if he was ready for the kind of evening Emmeline had in mind. It wasn't that he wouldn't enjoy a good meal in a nice restaurant. His culinary skills were barely adequate to keep starvation at bay, and the prospect of someone else doing the cooking was appealing. And he'd always enjoyed dancing.

Still, it seemed like a betrayal of sorts. What right did he have to be out having a good time when his friends were dead? Besides, he'd never really been accepted by wizarding society. Werewolves were generally shunned by most people.

In spite of Emmeline's warning that she wouldn't take no for an answer, Remus decided that he just wasn't ready to face the stares and whispers that he was sure to encounter.

He glanced at the wall clock. It was nearly seven o'clock. She hadn't given him a lot of time to decide. It would take Leander at least thirty minutes to get a message back to her.

He sat at his rickety kitchen table and penned a note to Emmeline. He thanked her for the invitation, but politely declined.

He tied the roll of parchment to Leander's leg, opened the window, and sent him on his way.

Forty-five minutes later, there was a knock at his door.

"Emmeline," he said when he'd opened the door.

"I told you I wouldn't take 'no' for an answer," she said.

She stepped through the door and closed it before he could refuse to let her in.

"Look," he said, running a hand through his hair, "I appreciate what you're trying to do; I just don't feel comfortable about going out when ..."

"It's been two months, Remus."

"I know, I know."

His resolve was faltering and Emmeline knew it.

"Get changed," she said firmly. "I'm hungry, and our dinner reservations are for eight-fifteen. It's New Year's Eve if we're not there on time, they'll give our table away."

"Emmeline, I'm not ... accepted. You'll be ostracised as well when we're seen together."

"I've never been overly concerned with what other people think," she said. "We don't have to worry about it tonight, however. We're going to a Muggle restaurant and then to a Muggle dance club."

"Now no more excuses! Go get ready."

Remus wanted to protest, but when he saw the determined look on her face, he realised that this was a fight he wouldn't win.

"Give me fifteen minutes," he said.

"I'll give you ten," she replied.

He was ready in eight.

A few hours later, Remus was glad that Emmeline had persuaded him to go with her.

Although their time at Hogwarts had overlapped by a few years, they hadn't really had more than a passing acquaintance when they'd been in school. Besides the fact that she was a few years ahead of him in school, she'd been in Ravenclaw while he'd been in Gryffindor. When he and the others had joined the Order of the Phoenix when they left Hogwarts, she'd already been a member for a couple of years.

Dinner had been an enjoyable affair the food perfectly prepared, the service flawlessly correct, and the conversation endlessly fascinating. He'd learned more about her in two hours than he had since he'd known her.

And the woman could dance, as well.

The Muggle dance club was a combination of the rock-and-roll style of the sixties and seventies and the newest disco craze.

They'd joined the throng on the crowded dance floor and bumped and gyrated to the pounding beat of the music until they were both breathless and sweaty. They'd paused only long enough to have a drink, and then they'd returned to the floor to dance some more.

A few minutes before midnight, the band switched to a slow song, and before he could even think about it, Emmeline had moved into his arms.

She was a tall, stately woman nearly as tall as he was and when she leaned into him, he could smell the sweet, flowery scent of her shampoo, and the musky, but not unpleasant, odour of her damp, over-heated flesh.

The dance floor was still very crowded, and the press of bodies forced them closer together.

Remus felt himself begin to harden, and he shifted his hips, hoping she wouldn't notice.

Emmeline turned her head slightly and stared into Remus's eyes with a knowing look.

"Sorry," Remus mumbled.

"It's not that I'm not flattered," she said with a small smile, "but I thought you were gay."

Remus flushed. "Uh ... not exactly."

She tossed her head back and laughed softly. "How can you be 'not exactly' gay? Weren't you and Sirius living together?"

"Yes, we were. And yes, we were sleeping together, as well, but although he's gay, my sexual preference is less ... limited."

"You're bisexual," she said with certainty.

"Yes," he said.

"Well, you never gave out that impression. You and Sirius always seemed rather ... exclusive ... to each other."

"Sirius didn't like the idea of my being attracted to women. I tended to downplay that aspect of my life while we were together."

"And, of course, you've been together since you were in school, haven't you?" she asked.

"Since the middle of our seventh year, yes."

"So you've never been with a woman?" she asked provocatively.

Remus flushed again. He opened his mouth as though to speak, but Emmeline lifted a finger and put it across his lips.

"I'm sorry. That's none of my business. But I must say, I'm glad to know that you're ... interested." She moved even closer to him and moved against him suggestively.

"Very much so," he said.

Before they could say anything more, there was a loud burst of noise and a shower of streamers and confetti.

The band broke into *Auld Lang Syne*, and everyone started shouting and clapping.

"Happy New Year, Remus," Emmeline said.

And then she kissed him.

For Remus, the kiss was like the first drops of rain after a drought. He drank in the silky-smooth texture of her lips. He could taste the fruity residue of wine on her tongue as it slid over his.

They gave up all pretence of dancing as he pulled her closer and wrapped his arms around her. He didn't try to shift away from her this time, but let her feel his erection as it strained against his trousers.

Remus could have stood there all night kissing her. He lost all concept of time and place. Nothing seemed to register in his befuddled brain except the taste and feel of the woman in his arms.

It was only after she broke the kiss that Remus realised that they had become the focus of attention. The other couples on the dance floor were no longer shouting and clapping in celebration of the New Year, but in their dubious honour.

Remus looked around ruefully.

"Let's get out of here," Emmeline said in a husky whisper.

"I'm afraid my exit is going to be rather conspicuous," he muttered.

"Do you care?"

"Not particularly."

She laughed softly, and then she moved out of his arms.

"Then let's give them something to talk about."

She took his hand in hers and led him from the dance floor.

"Excuse us, please," she said brightly as she pushed her way through the crowd. "My date's feeling a bit light-headed."

"I wish *my* boyfriend got that light-headed," one tipsy young woman called out as she pointed at the bulge in Remus's trousers.

There was laughter and a few more bawdy remarks, but the crowd parted to let them through.

They retrieved their coats from their table and made their way to the exit.

They walked away from the club arm-in-arm until they found the same deserted alleyway they'd Apparated into earlier.

As soon as they stepped into the shadows, Remus pulled Emmeline back into his arms and bent his head to hers.

"Wait," Emmeline said.

Remus immediately dropped his arms and stepped back.

"I'm sorry," he stammered. "I ... I thought you wanted ... I mean ..."

Emmeline smiled.

"Silly man," she murmured. "I *do* want. I just thought we'd enjoy each other more if we were some place private ... and *warm*."

She shivered slightly as a gust of wind swirled through the alleyway.

Remus looked sheepish.

"You're right, of course." He paused before he continued speaking.

"Uh ... where ..."

"I understand and accept your relationship with Sirius, but I don't think it's a good idea for our first time to be in the same bed that you and he shared."

"You're right again," Remus said. "We'll go to a hotel."

Emmeline shook her head. "It's New Year's Eve. We'd never find a decent hotel tonight. We'll go to my flat."

She wrapped her arms around his waist before he could object and Apparated them away.

They reappeared in a tidy parlour decorated in shades of green.

"This is lovely," Remus said as he stepped out of Emmeline's embrace.

"I let it when I started working at the Ministry," she said as she took off her coat and tossed it over a chair. "I prefer living in the Muggle world, but I can walk to work from here."

She moved to stand in front of Remus. Then she reached out and began unbuttoning his overcoat.

"You won't need this for a while. At least I hope not," she said with a smile.

"No," he replied and allowed her to slip the overcoat down over his shoulders and off. She threw it onto the chair with hers.

"Are you nervous?" she asked as she moved back into his arms.

"A little," he confessed.

"What is it the man always says in those trashy romance novels? Oh, yes ... I'll be gentle."

Remus smiled. "I'm sure I'll appreciate that, but you should know that I'm *not*totally inexperienced with women."

"Another fantasy shot to hell," she said with mock petulance.

"It's been a long time. And I was a completely inadequate lover. Fifteen year old boys are not noted for their sexual prowess ... or their staying power."

"Was it behind the Quidditch stands or atop the Astronomy Tower?" she asked.

He grinned. "Behind the Quidditch stands."

"That's where I lost my virginity, as well. Uncomfortable, hurried, and completely unsatisfying at least for me. It's a wonder it didn't turn me off sex completely."

She reached up and stroked his cheek, running her fingers over his lips.

"Luckily I'm persistent. I kept trying until he got it right."

"I'm a fast learner," Remus said, and then he kissed her.

When they broke apart, Emmeline led him to her bedroom.

They shed their clothing quickly, and in moments they were under the eiderdown quilt, holding each other, touching each other.

Emmeline was gentle with him. And patient. She guided him, telling him with her moans and her sighs what pleased her. She placed her hand over his and showed him how to touch her. She urged him to use his lips and his tongue to bring her to a shuddering climax. And after she came, she urged him to continue.

When she was on the edge once more, she straddled him, supporting herself with one hand while she used the other to guide his cock into her slick depths.

She rocked over him slowly, driving him mad, but teaching him how to pace himself.

When he thought he wouldn't be able to bear it another second when he thought he had to come or die she began to ride him harder and faster. He grasped her hips, slamming her down as he drove his aching cock upwards.

With a keening wail, she came again. The sounds of her pleasure and the spasmodic contractions of her pussy around his cock were the final impetus he needed. With a last upward thrust, he came in great, undulating waves of pleasure.

Lacy curtains covered the small window in Emmeline's bedroom, but there was no shade. High in the cold, clear sky, a small sliver of moon could be seen.

Emmeline sighed contentedly as she began to stroke and tease Remus back to a fevered state of arousal.

Remus responded and sighed in return.

And in the cool, pale light of the moon, Remus felt his heart begin to beat again.

~~Finis~~