

Summary: Snape is sent to bring Lupin back to health, but the tables are soon turned on the potions master when Lupin learns of a few interesting secrets.

Categories: [Harry Potter](#) Characters: Albus Dumbledore, Lupin/Black, Remus Lupin, Severus/Remus, Sirius Black, Snape/Black

Genres: Slash

Warnings: Adult Situations, Aggression, Alcohol Abuse, Anal Sex, Angst, Brain-Insane, Character Death, Coercion, Complete, Dark Themes, Death of Mate, Dubious Consent, Forced Sex, m/m, Major Character Death, Partner Betrayal, Slash

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Series: Adjustments

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Story Notes:

Not suitable for minors!! OotP Spoilers.

Written for the Master and Wolf Fest and answers Challenge #51: Lupin finds out that in a moment of madness brought on by having been cooped up in the house for so long, Sirius had sex with Snape. Now Snape is having the baby that should rightfully have been Lupin and Sirius'. (The story is told mostly from Lupin's pov, but occasionally from Snape's.) American spelling.

1. [Chapter 1](#) by Nikita

Chapter 1 by Nikita

X O X O X O X

Severus Snape tugged his robes to drape strategically over his abdomen to better hide the changes in his body. It was becoming increasingly difficult to hide his unwieldy bulk. At one time he had worn his robes open over trousers, shirt and vest. A style that, if asked, he would assert was for greater ease of movement, not for the greater billowing effect this provided when stalking towards students, that was just a perk.

It was a manner of dress that he had worn during all his years of teaching at Hogwarts and a style that had always shown off his rather trim form, which was his one point of vanity amongst the other professors of Hogwarts. He might not be the most handsome of men, nor the most popular...but he was fairly young and fit compared to his older and stodgier colleagues.

But that slender form was no more.

As he adjusted his robes one last time he felt a sudden push against his hand. Pressing the palm of his hand over the movement he stilled and waited. He was rewarded with another insistent kick and felt the corner of his mouth turn upwards by its own volition.

It was an exceedingly odd state of affairs he found himself in and yet, no matter how distasteful or embarrassing of a position he found himself in, he still could not bring himself to wholly regret it. No doubt his attitude would change drastically as the event's climax neared, but for the moment...he was almost content. Or he would be if he were left a moment's peace.

How like Dumbledore to send him on this fool's errand. Hadn't he petitioned for his leave of absence months in advance? Hadn't he taken great care in selecting the most suitable replacement possible for his position? Hadn't he done everything in his power to make sure that no one else's precious convenience was impinged on? Why couldn't the same courtesy be extended to him in return?

Snape huffed to himself as he headed along the last path to his destination. Why did Albus insist upon interrupting his peace in this manner? He'd made it quite clear that he needed this time for

delicate research and experimentation. The headmaster had assured him that he understood and accepted Severus' need for seclusion at this time - never mind that Snape hadn't informed him of the real reason for the sabbatical.

But then again the all-knowing-headmaster probably knew the truth of his condition. Severus had never been able to slip anything past that wily old wizard before. And as snoopy as Albus was...he must also know all about the conditions under which he got in this situation in the first place. Which must be why he was being sent here in the first place. What better way to punish him for not telling his Headmaster the truth?

Snape steeled his spine and double-checked his wand placement out of habit before entering Number 12 Grimmauld Place once more.

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Every day seemed to grow drearier and colder in Black Manor without a living Black left to inhabit it.

Lupin shivered and wrapped his ragged woolen robes tighter around himself as he shuffled down the stairs. There were still relations of the Blacks who might have been interested in the large house in its earlier days of splendor, but now it sat in neglect...practically abandoned except for its last resident who only lived there out of lack of other options. Sirius' rather meager will had deeded the house over to Lupin and Harry in the event of his death, but he likely hadn't really expected either to want to live there. It was mostly a gesture and a need to give his loved ones 'something', considering the fact that he had little left to give them after the ministry emptied his coffers.

Not that that mattered...all the gold and property in the world could never replace his lover. He and Sirius had such little time together. All those wasted years of misunderstandings and Azkaban had robbed them of their life together. And this past year they had finally been able to be together.

Granted, it had been a stressful time and Sirius hadn't born the isolation well. But it was still time spent together - at least when Lupin wasn't on one of the Order's missions. Sirius had clung to him during Lupin's off time. They slept together, ate together and had sex in every room of the house - anything to help make Sirius feel better - anything to help him feel closer to another living person and to the world outside his dismal childhood home.

Lupin paused at the threshold of the kitchen as he remembered just how depressed his lover had been during those months before continuing towards the teakettle. Yes, Sirius hadn't been quite himself the last year, but then again, who was? Voldemort's return and the actions of the ministry had put a terrible strain on all of them, especially Harry.

Poor Harry...he had been stuck in that awful muggle house the past summer and he'd been so hopeful to be able to live with Sirius by now. It was such a shame. In another life, another reality, Sirius would have been a good father to Harry. He'd had so much love to give... Remus had looked forward to having a hand in raising Harry as well - the boy was quickly growing up into a man, though. Harry was now sixteen, after all. A bit old to want two new parents and the adjustments that went with a new life like that.

Lupin stared sadly into his steaming cup of tea. It was too late...too late for Harry to grow up in a stable loving family and too late for Sirius to give him that. Too late for the three of them to be a family...

There was a brisk knock on the front door and Lupin was startled out his reverie. "Coming," he called and quickly rushed to the front door, wand in hand.

A quick spell revealed Severus Snape's identity and the werewolf lowered the wards as he wondered at the potion masters' presence at his front door. No one in the Order had seen Snape for the past three months - he was supposedly on some top-secret mission for Dumbledore. His substitute at the school, Hector Eneas, was reportedly filling his position adequately, but he was not included in the Order business and they had felt the lack of Snape's insider information in Voldemort's circle. Was he finally returning?

The door was finally opened and Snape's dark stare was focused on his forehead. "Severus, welcome back. Please, come in. Do you have word from Dumbledore?"

Snape stepped past him and into the parlor. "I have no time for chitchat, Lupin. Albus has interrupted my important duties with an inane mission concerning your health."

Lupin closed the door and gestured for Snape to sit down on one of the dusty, but comfortable, couches as he sat on the sunken armchair nearest to him. "My health? What of it?"

Snape eyed the couch before deftly skirting it in favor of the other armchair opposite of Lupin's. He sat gingerly, perched as if he didn't want to stay any longer than necessary, which obviously he didn't. "I assume my replacement, Professor Eneas, has been preparing your wolfsbane promptly for your changes?"

Lupin nodded, "Yes, I was quite relieved to find that he is adept in making the potion."

"Do you think I would allow an inferior potions master take my place in my duties during my absence?" Snape retorted with a sneer.

"Of course not, Severus. He's been quite competent in taking over your potions and teaching duties. The Order has missed your other talents, however." Lupin knew it was futile to hope Snape would take the compliment as intended.

The potions master sneered at this. "Yes, I'm sure you've all pined for my presence these past months. I'm not here to listen to platitudes, Lupin. Describe your symptoms so we can get on with it."

Remus sighed and looked down at his hands, "Well, I suppose I have been a bit rundown..."

"You have a gift for the understatement - you look like hell," Snape snapped. Remus glanced up in surprise as Snape continued on in a business like manner, his eyes sweeping over his form with calculating disdain. "Your skin is gray, your face is thin, and the bags under your eyes are quite pronounced. You look ill - not that you were ever a picture of health to begin with. Have you been taking the potion on time and as directed?"

"Of course. It works the same as always...though I suppose I feel the effects of the change a bit more. It takes longer to recover and I don't seem to have much energy..." Lupin shivered, "And I can't seem to get warm."

Snape nodded absently, his expression distracted. He shifted once in his seat as if uncomfortable. Lupin watched as the potions master's hands made an aborted movement towards the front of his robes, long pale fingers nearly touching the black cloth before jerking back to the arm chair once more. "I shall ask Professor Eneas for a sample of the potion to test for anomalies. I should also observe the effects of the potion on you during the change."

It was now Lupin's turn to shift in his seat, uneasy at this news. "You will? Does this mean you will be staying? Here?"

Snape glowered as he rose from his chair. "I'm no happier than you are, Lupin, but it is necessary. Dumbledore wants you in full form in order for you to complete your duties. Now if you will show me to my rooms..."

Lupin ended up putting him in the room he considered Harry's. It was one of the more nicely furnished rooms and the most private - situated in the furthest point of the house away from the shrieking portrait of Mrs. Black before returning to his own room.

It was the same one he's shared with Sirius and it was still made up exactly as it had been the day Sirius died. The sheets and coverlet were clean, but the rest of the room was a bit grimy and the dim light coming through the window shown on the floating dust in the air. Lupin sat on the bed and stared at the chest of drawers across the room. The mirror above it had several pictures stuck in the frame. He and Sirius had dug up an old box in the attic from Sirius' school days and the pictures depicted young Remus, James and Sirius flying brooms, playing tricks and sticking their tongues out.

The one that always caught his eye these days was the one of just the two of them. Sirius was sneaking up behind a studious looking young Remus about to drop a slug down the back of his robes. Remus sat and stared at that mischievous younger version of his lover. Sirius had been so young...so full of fire and life...so carefree. So unlike his final years.

He stood and walked over to the mirror, pulling the pictures out and shuffling them in his hands as he walked back to the bed. Lying down, he spread them out in his hands once more. There were no images of Peter here - Sirius had destroyed any trace of the traitor from his photos. Just as Remus had destroyed the family tree tapestry downstairs - and any trace of the more evil remainders of the Black family.

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Snape paced his temporary bed chamber with increasing agitation. He was stuck here for as long as it took to nurse the bloody werewolf back to health. How nauseating to be playing nursemaid. And in this house of all places. But it wasn't like he could take Lupin back to his own home; the nosey git would probably sniff out his secret in minutes.

This line of thought brought him to another problem at hand...Lupin's sense of smell. It would be growing stronger as it neared the full moon - he'd have to do something about that. He pulled his trunk out of a pocket in his robes and set it on the floor to unshrink. A flutter of wings at the window distracted his attention; a large raven was perched on the windowsill.

"About time, Mordecai. I have two messages to go out immediately." The raven cocked his head to the side in acknowledgement and watched as his master restored his belongings to normal size before pulling out a quill and parchment.

The first note was for Dumbledore.

//Having arrived and assessed the situation as we discussed - I concur that the subject is indeed ill and the situation *may* require my presence and attention. I will stay until I am satisfied as to the outcome of the next cycle before returning to my leave in expectant solitude. SS//

The second message was to Prof. Eneas requesting a sample from his new batch of wolfsbane and notes on previous batches of the potion. Mordecai left with the messages with all due haste and Snape returned pacing his room with unease.

The room was abysmally small and the windows were far too large, letting in a great deal of light. He hated it - hated this room and its red curtains and red duvet. He longed for his dungeons at Hogwarts or his rooms at home.

Quiet.

Dark.

Safe.

This room was too exposed. He reached out and closed the curtains with a sharp tug and spun around to look at the room again. The curtains might be red, but at least they were a dark red and they shielded the light out and veiled the room with shadows.

Better.

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The next few days before the full moon were spent in relative quiet and avoidance between the two occupants of Grimmauld Place.

Lupin found that Snape was all too happy to stay out of sight in his room or in the kitchen when Remus wasn't there. Exactly *what* Snape did, he wasn't sure, but the man sure knew how to sink into the shadows of the old house.

The only hint of his presence was the meals left on the stove for him to eat. It seemed as if the other wizard took his charge to look after his health seriously. Nutritious, strength-fortifying soups and stews were left steaming in large pots with terse written instructions to 'Eat!' Otherwise Snape kept to himself.

As for him...he returned to his old behaviors as quickly as he'd risen from them. He dreamed of Sirius at night and sifted through memories and wasted opportunities during the day. He did some work for the order, went through papers and did research for Dumbledore on occasion - there were a great many useful tomes in the Black library - but mostly he had all too much time on his hands...time to dwell on things past.

It was only on the day of the full moon that Snape finally approached him during one of these bleak moods. Lupin was ensconced in one of the large dragonhide chairs in the main study when the potions master appeared in the doorway.

"Professor Eneas' potion has arrived and I can find nothing wrong with it, nor with his process, he followed my notes to the letter."

Remus hastily closed his book and sat up at Snape's voice. "Oh...then I guess it's just me, then." He wedged the book into the chair cushion before standing up to face the other man.

Snape nodded, his eyes traveling around the study, studying the bookshelves. The study had once been Sirius' father's and it contained some rather Dark books and knickknacks. "Indeed...it is possible that your chemistry has been altered by repeated exposure to the wolfsbane or that your transformations have somehow effected your health. I will have to monitor your status during and after the change."

Lupin watched him closely, but Snape showed no sign of finding this an uneasy prospect. Still, he knew the other wizard must have been dreading this occurrence. There was a long silence as both men contemplated the long night before them and the strength it would take both of them to face it.

"All right then...I'm going to go take a nap. I don't usually get much sleep on these nights." He left Snape behind in the study as he headed up to his room and therefore didn't see when the

potions master pulled his book out of its hiding place.

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As the evening wore on, the wolf grew stronger within him. His senses began to sharpen and his restlessness increased until Remus could no longer lie still in the bed, but instead threw off his covers and paced the room.

He hated this - had always hated it. Only his friends in school had made this time bearable, joining him in their own animagus forms. After school he'd been on his own for many years without company during the nights of the full moon. But then he had come to live here with Sirius and Sirius had taken his old role once again - joining him in the basement of the old house. Together, the two canines had romped the rooms or slept curled up into one large huddle of fur. Sirius had made it bearable once more. But since his lover's death - he'd returned to the old dread and hatred of the change with even greater intensity than before.

Lupin paced, waiting for night to draw closer. The wolf would soon take over his body and mind, but not his control at least - he could thank the potion for that.

There was a knock at the door and as if he had read his mind, Snape entered with the potion at that very moment.

"It's time, Lupin. Here is the potion."

"Thank you," Remus murmured as he took the goblet and drained it as quickly as he could. The burning feeling in his throat and stomach took his attention for a few moments as he fought the familiar struggle to settle his stomach before he vomited it back up. When he finally felt that the potion would stay where it should, he opened his eyes and handed back the goblet.

It was only when the foul potion smell was gone from the room that Remus realized there was another, equally strong smell coming from the man before him. It was an odd combination of smells; garlic, cloves, and some other unidentifiable strong odor assaulted his nasal passages as he wrinkled his nose in disgust. Merlin, but the man stunk.

"Something wrong, Lupin?" Black eyes glittered as they stared back at Remus and he had the distinct feeling that the other man was thoroughly enjoying his reaction to his odor.

"Yes, you stink," Remus answered bluntly, "Couldn't you have bathed before coming in here from whatever it is you were doing?"

Snape's eyes narrowed to slits as he glared at the werewolf, but there was still an unusual glint to the man's eyes. "The time is drawing near, Lupin. Perhaps you should show me where you normally go during the change."

Lupin did so without grumbling, but only because he was trying to breathe through his mouth. He led the way down the back stairs into the large cellar, lit with candles and largely empty except for a few overturned empty crates.

As he turned around to face the man entering behind him, he suddenly realized he was about to appear naked before those scornful, critical eyes.

"Er...this is where I normally change - plenty of room to run around..."

Severus sat down on one of the crates and crossed his arms, wand in hand. Lupin continued to stare at him, hands fidgeting at his sides.

"Are you waiting for something, Lupin?"

His ears burned, but he still didn't move to undress. Perhaps he should demand Snape leave until the change was complete.

"Only moments left 'til full moon, Lupin. If you don't want to tear those worthless robes to shreds, I suggest you disrobe. Unless you have something to be embarrassed about..."

The mocking tone made him grit his teeth and rip at the closures of the garment. Bare as an egg and shivering in the cold, he lifted his chin up defiantly, looking the other man straight in the eye.

One black eyebrow rose, but other than that there was no response. Before Lupin could say a word, the change was upon him and he was grinding his teeth once more, this time in pain. Try as he might, he still could not resist one hoarse scream as his bones snapped and ground together, shifting form and muscles. His eyes were clenched shut, but he sensed the magical barrier that Severus must have put up between the two of them without opening his eyes.

Finally, as the final shudder ran through him, he opened his eyes and looked up at the tall human standing before him. Wide eyes stared down at him and there was a faint scent of fear noticeable just beneath the potent herbal stench. For a moment he was tempted to bare his teeth and get a little of his own back, but he resisted and instead sat on his haunches and opened his mouth to let his tongue loll out: a picture of innocence.

Apparently the harmless act worked for Snape slowly relaxed his stance and lowered the magical barrier between them.

"So...was the transformation the same as usual?" There was a faint quaver in the man's voice and Remus felt his anger drain a bit. Watching the change must have been a terrifying thing for Severus...it was quite brave of the man to do so.

Lupin nodded his head in answer to the question and then got up and took a step toward the potions master. Snape took a sudden step backwards, but then attempted to cover his action by sitting down on the crate behind him, his hand still nervously clutching his wand.

'It's all right,' he thought to the other wizard as he took another cautious step forward, his tale wagging slightly. He continued to approach the nervous man until his nose was touching the covered knee before him. Nudging it slightly, he then sat down next to the crate, content to sit there near the warmth of another living being. He still missed Sirius' presence. If Padfoot were here they'd be racing around the room, knocking crates over and nipping at each other playfully.

Snape simply pulled out a small journal and quill and began to take notes. It was quiet and still in the room and only the flickering of candlelight seemed to offer any interesting stimulation.

After a few moments, Severus snapped the book closed and tucked it back into his robes as he stood up. "I guess there's no further need for my presence until dawn."

Lupin's head shot up at those words and he found himself whining before he realized the sounds were coming out of his own throat. He stopped as soon as he realized it, but couldn't help the pleading look he knew was in his eyes. It was horribly pathetic, but he couldn't stand the idea of losing what little company he had...

Snape seemed irritated by his actions, but instead of leaving he sighed heavily and began shifting another crate next to his own against the wall. Without a word, he lay down on the hard wood with his arm tucked under his head and closed his eyes.

Happy that the other man had decided to stay, Lupin curled up on the floor next to him and soon

felt his eyes grow heavy as he joined him in slumber.

Hours later, he had no idea just how many, Remus woke and stretched. There was a soft sigh next to him and he turned his head to see Snape still asleep, his mouth slightly open and his brow smooth and wrinkle free. He looked like a small child, his thin lips were pink and soft and one arm was still safely tucked under his head as the other trailed over his stomach, hand flat on top of it.

As Lupin looked at the arm, he became aware of something distinctly 'wrong' about what he was seeing. He stared harder at the spot where the hand lay and tried to discern just what exactly was bothering him. There was a fuzziness to the black cloth beneath the hand - a wavering in the lines and folds of the robe...something that signaled a magical discrepancy.

A charm of some sort? He wouldn't have noticed it in human form, but his wolf form sometimes lent him a sixth sense about these things. Without a wand or a human voice, he couldn't break the charm, but the fuzzy image gave his mind plenty to wonder about. Just what 'was' Snape hiding?

Not only was there the charm, but that horrible odor - the same odor that bothered his nose even now. Glancing up at the sleeping man's face, he shifted closer and sniffed the man's robes. The stench was terrible, how the other man could stand to live with it was beyond him. But as he took another careful sniff...he began to notice another smell just beneath it. Curiosity peaked; he leaned in still closer, his nose millimeters from the black cloth covering the torso sniffing delicately. It was something...earthy. Not soil, but something sweeter...something disturbingly familiar. But just what it was he couldn't pinpoint.

There was a sudden snort and Remus jumped back just in time before the black eyes flew open and caught his gaze.

"What're you staring at?" Snape grumped. "Go fetch a ball or something."

With morning came the change and Lupin woke in his usual heap on the cold floor of the cellar. He opened tired eyes and saw that Snape was sitting on the crate once more, scribbling in his journal. At Remus' movement he looked up and closed the book and stood.

"I assume you would rather sleep off the effects in your bed if you can manage the stairs now."

Lupin nodded and struggled to his feet. His robe slid off his body as he did so and he realized that Snape must have covered him sometime after he'd changed back. The trip up the stairs was as difficult as it always was the morning after, but it was with unexpected gentleness that Snape took his elbow after the first step and supported him up the flights of stairs to his room.

Alone and curled up in his delightfully warm bed; he sleepily pondered the secretive and unpredictable Severus Snape.

The next two nights of his transformation were spent the same. Snape watched the transformation take place and took notes quietly in his journal as Remus sat quietly nearby, watching him. When the potions master finally fell asleep on his makeshift bed of crates, the wolf would creep up and press his nose to the man's robes, trying to decipher the odd smell beneath the potent herbal ones that failed to fully conceal it.

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Remus woke sometime past noon the day after his final transformation. His body ached terribly as it always did - his joints popped and creaked as he stretched and climbed out of bed that Snape had helped him into hours before. Even the soles of his feet hurt as he put weight on

them. Lately he had been spending the days after the full moon in bed - not bothering to get up until the pain and weariness faded, but he knew that Snape was prowling around somewhere nearby and that fact alone was enough to get him up.

There was no response to his knock on Snape's door, but he opened it anyway. The room was empty, but he couldn't resist taking a look at the room that the other man was occupying - curious as to how such a secretive man lived. The curtains over the windows were drawn tightly shut so not a sliver of light escaped them and the bed was as neatly made as it had been a few days ago. Only a pair of boots set primly at the foot of the bed gave evidence of anyone staying in the room - there were no stray garments or books laying about. Either Severus was terribly exacting in his tidiness or paranoid enough to leave no trace of his habits and activities.

Remus next checked the study and library, but both were empty and he began to wonder if Snape had left all together. A thought that filled him curiously with a feeling of disappointment - he was getting used to the other man's presence it seemed. It was only as he neared the kitchen that he caught a whiff of brewing potions from under a closed door just off the kitchen. He knocked on the door and quickly let himself in at the irritated, 'Enter or go away!' from within.

Remus stood watching quietly as Snape continued to stir a simmering cauldron without looking up at him. The potions master had turned the small room into a makeshift laboratory complete with numerous bottles, cauldrons and a large chopping block. The room was hot from the steam rising from the various boiling concoctions on the burners, but Snape still wore his outer robes closed and his hair unbound; the greasy tendrils covered his face from view.

"What is it, Lupin? I'm a bit busy as you can see."

"Uh, yes...I just wondered if maybe you wanted help? I'm not so good at brewing, but perhaps I could chop or-"

Snape tilted his head up for a moment and sneered. "I've no need for mangled roots and beetles, thank you. I have the task well in hand."

Lupin nodded in response, but Snape was no longer paying attention to him as one of the bubbling liquids had begun to pop noisily and required his attention. Remus found his eyes roving over the other wizard's robes as he pondered the odd impressions he had had as the wolf the past three nights. What was Snape hiding?

The earthy smell...the fertile, almost female scent on the other man...was Snape seeing some witch secretly under his roof? Remus remembered how Snape's room hardly looked like he occupied it, much less a woman. And other than Snape, he hadn't smelt another person's presence in the house. Perhaps the man wore a love token of some sort? It was odd to think of Snape having a romantic relationship with someone.

Would that be something Snape would want to keep a secret, though? Perhaps. Other men would boast of a love affair, but Snape seemed to actively encourage his reputation for being callous and uncaring. If it became known at the school that Snape had a girlfriend...well, the gossip and jokes would be embarrassing to the man, obviously.

It was an interesting possibility and he considered it as he watched Snape work, wondering at the identity of the witch. The potions master, meanwhile, was busily attending the cauldrons and seemed to have forgotten his presence. It was a chance he couldn't pass up...pulling out his wand; he quietly muttered the incantation to break the charm on Snape's torso.

The spell was a simple 'notice-me-not' charm and easily broken. The slight tingle of magic being done on his person obviously startled Snape and the man jerked back, looking down his person. Lupin had only seconds to see what the charm had concealed when there was a sudden

explosion on the table as the nearest cauldron erupted.

Lightning reflexes and the fact that his wand was already out and ready were the only reasons Remus was able to shield Snape from the shower of boiling liquid as he lay on the ground stunned.

"Severus! Are you all right?!" He rushed to the prone man and with a growing panic and guilt. It was his fault that Snape had been distracted - possibly even his own magic had upset the temperamental potion's stability. Merlin...what had he done?

"I'm FINE, no thanks to you!" Snape viciously tore his arm out of Remus' grip and pushed himself to his feet with the help of the table leg. A quick spell cleaned up the mess and there was a new cauldron replacing the ruined one within moments. Lupin watched all this quietly as he felt his panic fade slowly, grateful that the accident had been so minor, though he still felt guilty for what he'd done. At this thought his eyes quickly returned to Snape's midriff. Had he really seen what he thought he'd seen?

Snape turned at that moment and looked down to where he was staring, seeing the broken charm. Instead of getting angry, as Lupin might have expected, there was a sudden look of horror as he stared down at the robes that had parted slightly after his tumble. Lupin stared at the same spot, not in horror, but in complete wonder. He reached a hand out cautiously, to touch it...

"What do you think you are doing?!" Snape batted his hand away and jerked his robes shut with one motion as he glared at him.

Lupin was oblivious to the glare as he continued to stare at the bulge that was all too noticeable now that he'd broken the concealment charm. Snape's robes were dark and billowing, but the outline was still noticeable.

"I'm - I'm sorry, Severus. I was just - how is it you are pregnant?" he finally blurted out. There was a long silence.

Just as Remus was sure he wasn't going to answer Snape drew himself up to his full height, and said with great dignity. "The men of my family have the magical predisposition towards pregnancy, though it frequently skips a generation or two." he then turned to inspect one of his potion bottles with extreme interest.

Remus felt a small smile tug on his lips, "And you didn't think you had that predisposition, did you?"

There was no response.

"So who is the lucky fellow who knocked you up?" He couldn't help it - the situation was just too funny.

Snape, unsurprisingly, didn't share that opinion. Slamming the potion bottle onto the table with unnecessary force, he turned back to the cauldron simmering before him with a swirl of his robes. "THAT is most definitely none of your business. I'll have a restorative potion for you by the end of the day - IF you leave me to my work. Get out."

Appropriately admonished, Remus left. He was so busy mulling contemplating the mystery of Snape's secret lover and his unborn child that he didn't even notice when Mrs. Black screamed at him as he passed her portrait on the stairs.

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The door was closed and Lupin was long gone, but Severus still felt as if there were eyes on him. There were no portraits on the walls of the pantry he had appropriated, but he still found himself scanning the shelves and cupboards for prying eyes. He felt horribly exposed.

Trust a Gryffindor to stick his nose where it didn't belong - the bloody werewolf still acted like a Marauder. He must still be snickering about it in his room. Probably planned to announce it at the next meeting of the Order.

And that was what truly upset him - not that he would be laughed at, but that the secret was out now.

This wasn't supposed to happen. This couldn't possibly have happened... The one thing he tried so hard to avoid. The one thing he feared most right now - and it was all Dumbledore's fault.

He finished the potion and set it to cool for drinking.

One hand went to his mid-back as the ache grew intolerable after too many hours standing. He rubbed at the spot as best he could, but it was obvious that he needed to lie down. His ankles were swollen, too. The indignities of pregnancy...

Cleaning up his mess, he then poured the potion in a goblet and headed up the stairs for Lupin's room. He'd leave it for the werewolf and rest in his own room before sending another note to Dumbledore. He'd done his duty and was ready to go home - let the old coot send someone else to nursemaid.

He knocked briskly on the door and entered without waiting for a reply. Lupin looked up from a thick book in his lap as he sat in a chair by the window.

"Drink this and eat something afterwards if you experience nausea." Snape set the goblet down none too steady and the contents sloshed, but he was beyond caring. He ached abominably...

"Severus, wait!" Lupin rose and crossed the room before he could close the door. "I'm sorry. I behaved dreadfully earlier and I never should have intruded on your privacy like that. And performing magic on your person...well, I am doubly sorry for doing so considering your condition. I hope you can forgive me."

Severus paused and then nodded jerkily, trying not to grimace as the pain grew. Apparently it was obvious for the other wizard suddenly looked concerned.

"Are you all right, Severus? You look dreadful...perhaps you should sit down?"

"No, I was about to go to my room-"

"You look ready to fall down any moment. Here, sit..." Lupin's hands were urgently tugging on his arms and he found himself reluctantly giving into the other man's insistence.

The chair was still warm from Lupin's body and he found that oddly comforting. A sigh escaped his lips before he realized it and he clamped his lips shut to prevent any further embarrassing noises from escaping. Lupin noticed, though and gave him a tentative smile.

"Better? Should I fetch some tea? You shouldn't be working this hard - all those meals you've been making for me...and the potion..."

"Oh sit down and shut up, Lupin. Quit hovering, I'm perfectly fine."

Lupin gave a relieved snort at that and plopped down on the foot of the bed, as it was the only

other padded surface around. "Yes, well...still, you shouldn't have been taking care of 'me'. I'll owl Albus and tell him-"

"You'll do no such thing." Snape glared at him, but it was tempered by his own tiredness. He draped an arm carefully over his stomach and closed his eyes for a moment.

If he could just get a moment of rest...

"Severus? I took the liberty of scrounging up some references on wizard pregnancy in the library as I wasn't all too familiar with the occurrence..."

And apparently he wasn't going to get it.

Lupin continued, "...and I found it is not a commonly discussed subject because it is so rare. There are a few interesting Dark hexes and potions that are associated with it, however."

There was a pause. Long enough that Snape finally lifted one eyelid to look at him. "Yes...?" he prompted in what he meant to be a dry voice, but he feared it came out rather tired instead.

Lupin leaned forward earnestly. "And so I wanted to let you know that I understand your desire for secrecy because of it. I won't tell anyone."

Snape didn't believe a word of it, but he closed his eye once more and tried to capture some semblance of peace.

"However..."

Damn the man...

"...does Albus know?"

Severus sighed and opened his eyes for a moment. "I haven't told him...but there is precious little that escapes his attention, now is there?"

Lupin smiled at that and chuckled. "Too right."

Snape felt his lips twitch in answer, but it was repressed easily enough and he rested his head against the cushions once again and closed his eyes.

"But what of the baby's father?"

Severus jerked his head up and opened his eyes to glare at him. "What?!"

Lupin had the grace to look sheepish at his response, but persisted. "I meant...the 'other' father, rather. The one that..." he made an exaggerated gesture to Snape's belly. "Does he know?"

That was the last straw. Heaving himself out of the chair was harder than he'd reckoned with, but he managed to get up and head towards the door with sufficient speed. Lupin was nattering on about the question behind him, but he was oblivious to the words - his only thought was to leave the room and seek his rest elsewhere.

Reaching his room he quickly slammed the door behind him and warded it before settling down on the bed and staring at the ceiling.

XOXOXOX

Remus stared at the door that had been slammed in his face several moments earlier. He thought back to his abysmal attempt at an apology with regret. First he apologized for intruding on the other man's privacy and then he interrogated the man on the very same subject. What had happened to his social skills, anyway? Not that he'd ever been much of a people person...not like James or Sirius...but he used to know how to hold a conversation...and his tongue. He was acting horribly. Is this what happens to a person that is shut up alone in a house for too long? Is that what happened to Sirius?

No, he really couldn't blame it all on being stir crazy...the fact was he'd always been fascinated by Snape. As a student, Severus had always been a mysterious and secretive child. Remus often wondered just what was going on behind the inky eyes and thin-lipped scowls. There was no doubt of his intelligence - he'd competed with James, Sirius and Remus for top marks in all of their classes...it was obvious that he studied and enjoyed his schoolwork. But at the same time his personality was the polar opposite of James and Sirius.

Those dark eyes watched everything around him and his prickly exterior kept anyone from getting close. Anyone approaching him with friendship was quickly shot down with a few well-aimed barbs on their inadequacies. He never seemed to have any friends...he was a loner. And in that respect...he interested Lupin.

Remus, on the other hand, had had friendships...he'd been close friends with the other Marauders and he was pleasant to other students and his professors. He always made a concerted effort to be friendly, courteous, well mannered and polite. In short, he'd done everything he could to put others at ease. For he had always felt outside of normal society - he was a werewolf and as such - he was an outsider and something to be reviled. He had to hide any hint of his nature and try his best to blend in.

But he had still been a loner many ways. James, Sirius, and even Peter had been his closest friends, but even they did not truly understand him. They had done their best...included him in their pack, kept his secret when they discovered it, and became animagi to keep him company...but even so, they had never truly 'known' him. Never really understood the fear he lived with about being discovered, never comprehended his feeling of being 'different'...never understood how much he resented those feelings.

As for Severus Snape, he wasn't a werewolf and he certainly wasn't friendly or polite...but in other respects he was a lot like Remus feared he could be. He was reviled as Remus would be reviled if his secret were known. He had no friends. No allies. No one cared if he was picked on. And most importantly of all...he didn't even 'try' to make friends. He never cow-towed to others or put on a false politeness...he did everything that Remus was afraid to do.

And that both fascinated and scared him. What would he have done if he hadn't had the Marauders? If his secret had been known? If he'd had to live with the boldfaced loathing that came with it in wizard society? Would he have been as strong? As uncompromising?

Or would he have continued to bow and scrape to others...desperately showing his belly in the attempt to please?

Lupin growled at that thought and looked down at the book in his hand. Self-pity never did anyone any good. Whatever choices or mistakes he'd made in the past were over and done with - he should leave them behind and quit brooding.

And what he 'should' be focusing on was apologizing - really apologizing - to Severus for what he'd done. He was only pushing the man farther away from him and that was the last thing he wanted to do.

What he really wanted to do was help Severus - one thing that he'd learned in his hurried

studying was that male pregnancies were very high-risk and dangerous for both wizard and child. Of the few reported male pregnancies, nearly half lost the child before birth. He needed to minimize the stress and physical exertion as best he could.

Well, the first thing he could do was follow Snape's orders by taking his potion and making some dinner. He was sure the other man needed to eat as well - after all, wasn't he eating for two? He hurried down to the kitchen and surveyed the ingredients and staples there. Where had all this food come from, anyway? There were hams and chickens, sausages and lamb chops, an assortment of vegetables and several loaves of bread. Where they expecting to feed an army? The Order rarely used the house for large meetings anymore. And when had Snape had all this delivered, anyway?

Lupin stared at the food for several long moments as he tried to think of something fairly simple and nourishing to make - he wasn't a gourmet cook by any means, he'd lived alone far too long and with limited means. He thought back to the stews and soups that Severus had made for him - the man didn't seem to have exotic tastes or expectations either - his food had been simple fair, though spiced well and extremely nourishing. Probably the best thing for a pregnant person, anyway.

An hour and a half later he put the finishing touches on the tray and carried it carefully up the stairs to Snape's door. The door bristled with wards and there was no immediate answer to his careful knock. He was just about to set down the tray and leave when there was a muffled curse and the door suddenly swung open.

"What do you want, Lupin?" Snape glared at him from within the doorway, he looked even more haggard than when he'd left Remus' room earlier.

"I made some dinner - bit late, but I thought you might be hungry." Remus held up the tray complete with steaming bowls of soup and thick French bread.

There was a brief moment of hesitation before the door opened further and Severus gestured brusquely for him to enter. Feeling both nervous and triumphant, Lupin hurried in and set the tray down on the bedside table. The room was just as neat as it had been before, but there was a slight mussing of the sheets and an indentation where the other man must have laid.

"What is it?" Lupin glanced up and saw that Snape was hovering by the door as if unsure if he were going to stay.

"Cock-a-Leekie soup - one of the few things I know how to make." He held out the bowl and spoon with a small smile. Snape stood where he was, but his nose twitched and his gaze was directed on the steaming bowl offered before him.

"Go on, I won't bite."

Severus' eyes narrowed, but he took the bowl without a word and perched on the edge of the bed. Lupin felt his own smile threatening to grow further so he took his own bowl and settled on the small chair on the other side of the room and pretended to be engrossed with his own food as he watched the other wizard with hooded eyes.

Snape sipped the soup delicately at first as if deciding whether it was edible. Apparently it was for he quickly followed the first taste with a heartier appetite. The soup disappeared quickly enough and the potions master was soon reaching for the bread on the tray as well. Lupin watched all of this with contained amusement and pride. He must have let it show, however, as he soon found his scrutiny returned.

"What are you so smug about?"

Remus shrugged and returned his bowl to the tray alongside Snape's empty one. "Just glad you liked it. I wanted to return the favor after all those meals you made for me. I've really appreciated your help, Severus."

Snape seemed surprised, but covered it with his familiar sneer. "I never said I liked it. You haven't the slightest idea how to season, it was nearly tasteless."

"I see. Then I guess you don't want any more?" Lupin picked up the tray and headed towards the door.

"I didn't say that, either."

Remus snorted and soon returned with a second bowl of soup, which the pregnant man quickly began to wolf down without a word. Sitting down on the chair once more, Remus watched in silence for a few moments as he considered his next words carefully. He was hesitant to speak at all, but he knew the matter needed to be addressed properly before he could rest easily. Steeling his resolve, he cleared his throat.

"I wanted to apologize -- properly this time. I didn't mean to interrogate you before- "

Snape's spoon paused in mid air, but he didn't look up.

Lupin plowed on ahead, speaking rapidly, " - especially not on something that is, as you said, none of my business. I can't imagine what you are going through. But I do understand your desire for secrecy and... I worry - I only hope that you have someone to help you through this...someone you can trust. Having said that, I will not question you on the matter again. Only know that if there is anything I can do...you have only to ask."

At those words, Lupin stood and walked to the door.

A soft voice halted him at the door. "The father is dead...he never knew."

Remus turned back, but Snape was eating his soup once more with absorbed interest, ignoring him. Remus searched for something appropriate to say.

"I'm sorry," he said quietly, and closed the door behind him.

XOXOXOX

The next morning Remus woke feeling better than he normally did so soon after the full moon. He hurried down to the kitchen, hoping to make breakfast for both them both, but found that Severus had beat him to it and there was a steaming bowl of oatmeal waiting for him.

"You didn't have to do that, Severus. I would have made breakfast..."

Snape looked up from a pot he was stirring and sneered. "I don't need your mollycoddling, Lupin. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself - and my duty right now is to take care of 'you.' Now sit down and eat before it gets cold." He then turned back to the stove and continued to stir.

Remus sat obediently and began to eat, but noticed that his bowl was the only one in evidence. "Aren't you going to join me?"

"No." Potion-stained hands continued to stir the large pot on the stove.

Lupin reached for the small bowl of raisins on the table to add to his oatmeal. "You've already

eaten? You certainly are an early bird."

"I'm not hungry." Snape continued to stir, but his motions seemed rather erratic.

Remus frowned around a spoonful and swallowed quickly. "You should eat something-"

Snape whipped his face around with a look of extreme irritation, "I don't need lectures on health from 'you.' I'm. Not. Hungry." Snape gave him a final glare before turning back to the stove, but his knees suddenly buckled and the spoon clattered on the ground as he caught himself on the counter.

Remus leapt to his feet and helped the taller man to the closest chair. "Are you all right, Severus?" His heart was racing as he looked at the pale face before him - Snape was always rather sallow, but there was an unhealthy green tinge to the skin that worried him.

Snape waved him off with one hand as the other clutched his stomach. "I'm fine! I just lost my balance."

"You don't look fine. You look like you're going to be sick," Remus observed with not a little concern.

Snape's black eyes glared up at him with pure malice, but any verbal abuse he may have spewed was held back by tightly clenched lips as his face turned greener.

Remus grabbed the nearest empty bowl and held it before the sick man as he rubbed the hunched back in gentle circles. "Breathe, Severus...it's okay...just focus on breathing in and out..." he talked softly as he continued to rub until there was a gradual easing in the other man's shoulders.

With a shaky breath, Snape lifted his head finally - looking relieved at having been spared any actual retching.

"Are you okay now?"

Snape nodded silently and set the bowl back on the table with a sigh. "Better. Just bloody morning sickness..." but he continued to sit there rather than stand again.

Lupin set the pot aside and put out the flame. The simmering liquid seemed to be a simple anti-nausea infusion so he poured a small bit into a cup and set it down in front of Snape as he continued to stand anxiously next to him. "Maybe you can manage a bit of that now. Do you want some bread?"

The potions master eyed the cup warily, but picked it up and took a cautious sip. After the first taste he closed his eyes and waited, but it seemed inclined to stay down so he took another sip. Lupin watched him slowly drain the cup before setting it down. One pale-fingered hand rested on the swell of stomach and Remus found his gaze drawn to it.

He was startled when Snape spoke.

"Seven months."

"What?" Lupin blinked and lifted his eyes guiltily to the other man's face. Snape was staring right back at him, but his face no longer contained hostility - more like grim humor.

"You were wondering how far along I am - seven months. Seven - LONG - months, actually." He shifted in his seat and tore chunks of the bread Remus had given him and stuffed one in his

mouth and chewed. Swallowing, he gave a small sigh and looked up again. "Morning sickness usually fades after the first few months, but I seem to be one of the lucky few that keeps it."

Remus gave him a sympathetic smile and sat down next to him, careful not to invade too closely into the other man's space. "Must be difficult." He wanted to say more - that Snape was brave to go through it alone...and that he shouldn't have to - but it was impossible to say so without opening up the whole secrecy issue once more.

Snape was looking at him oddly, before Remus could attempt to decipher the expression, the other man cleared his throat. "Yes - well, I have things to attend to..." The pregnant man stood with a bit of difficulty, placing one hand at his back to support the weight in front.

Remus watched the kitchen door close with a sense of loss...

XOXOXOX

Severus left the kitchen as quickly as he could and headed straight for his room. He needed to get out of here - the house was becoming altogether too small for him. Merlin, how he longed for his dungeons back at Hogwarts...those familiar walls and his private laboratory... But that was impossible. He could never return there. His only refuge was his own childhood home, which - though he'd never liked it much growing up - was still his and his alone.

He longed for that solitude...being around Lupin was driving him insane. The bloody werewolf wouldn't leave him alone. Just now in the kitchen - he'd been so close, hovering... And he'd touched him again - helped him into a chair and rubbed his back. Those hands had felt...good. Too good. Being touched like that...it was opening desires and cravings he didn't care to think about.

"Bloody hell!" he snarled as he paced the room in irritation. He'd call Mordecai and send his final notice to Albus this instant and pack his trunk. Lupin was on the mend and if Snape brewed a few more restorative potions for him to take - surely the werewolf could handle taking those alone.

Severus could leave today if he hurried...

XOXOXOX

With Snape holed up somewhere in the house for the rest of the day, Lupin found himself wandering the house without a purpose. None of the books in the library or study captured his interest so eventually ended up in his room with the vague idea of tidying. The room was just as dusty and unkempt as he had left it...or rather how Sirius had left it. He really hadn't straightened the place once since that day...it really wasn't healthy behavior and he knew it. He picked up a few robes from the chair by the window and looked at them. They were Sirius' and when he held them up to his nose...they still smelled like him. No...he wasn't ready to get rid of them. The very idea scared him. But he could put them away at least, right?

He walked over to the wardrobe and opened it, revealing an assortment of empty hangers. Hadn't Sirius ever put his clothes away? Lupin's own lay in his trunk at the foot of the bed, put away with care. Of course, Lupin had always had to take care of his clothes - he rarely had money to replace them. Sirius, on the other hand, seemed to have kept up his childhood habit of taking clothes for granted. He'd grown up with enough pocket money to replace his school robes regularly back then and he'd gone through them quickly enough with all of his physical activities and pranks. Apparently his troubles during adulthood hadn't managed to improve that attitude.

Lupin shook his head at his lover's obstinate ways and hung the threadbare robes on the wooden hangers with care. Once done, he decided to poke around in the drawers below and see what Sirius 'did' keep in his wardrobe. The first few drawers he opened were empty and he was

reminded that this hadn't originally been Sirius' room, but a guest bedroom and so it was unlikely he'd find anything of interest anyway. He was just about to give up when the final drawer handle he tugged on refused to budge. Curious, he jiggled the handle and then examined it closely. It was locked.

Pulling his wand out, he tried 'Alohomora,' but it still didn't open. He ran through all the more advanced locking spells he could think of before he finally remembered one of Sirius' favorite lock spells and the drawer popped open revealing a shallow stone basin heavily decorated with runes. A Pensieve.

Remus stared at the swirling silver contents with growing excitement and dread. The bowl was obviously an old heirloom - the Black family motto was emblazoned on the side: 'Toujours Pur'. The Pensieve may have belonged to anyone in the Black family and could contain memories from more than one ancestor, but the fact that it was locked in a room Sirius had been using and with his favorite locking spell made it highly likely that it contained at least a few of Sirius' memories.

Remus stared at the contents and wondered if he dared look into them...Sirius had kept it secret and hidden it, after all. But as he stared at the silvery threads, he felt his curiosity and his need grow...he missed Sirius terribly. Missed talking to him, laughing with him...sharing experiences. He and Sirius would never share an experience again...except perhaps in dwelling in the Pensieve. Lupin would be able to observe and share his lover's memories and even see him again - as close he would ever come to seeing him in the flesh once more...

His hand was touching the silvery mass in the bowl before he was consciously aware of it - there was a sudden sharp tugging sensation and a swirl of black as he was pulled into the Pensieve. He landed with an almighty thump that he knew would leave a bruise and realized he was sitting on the floor of the kitchen. Remus was climbing to his feet when he noticed two pairs of black boots under the table.

"I told you - he's not here. Leave the potion and get your greasy hi'e out o' my kitchen."

Remus slowly stood and was greeted to the sight of his now-dead lover drunkenly clutching a glass of firewhiskey as he leaned heavily on the kitchen table. A slight movement of black cloth caught his eye and Lupin looked over at the owner of the other pair of black boots - Snape. The potions master was looking more trim and austere than he had when he'd seen him this morning. Both men had looks of extreme distaste on their face as they eyed their nemesis across the room.

"Drunk again, Black? What a wonderful role model you are for young Potter. If only your friend could see what a fit guardian you make for his only son."

"Shut up, Snivellus! There's no one to stop me from hexing you this time - get out of my house!"

"As if you could even find your wand in this state. You're a disgrace. No wonder Albus can't trust you with the simplest of missions..."

Sirius' face turned a mottled red at that. Lupin was well aware of just how much of a sore point the whole issue was with his lover and how much Severus delighted in pushing his buttons. Still, he could hardly fault all of Snape's observation when Sirius fumbled clumsily for his wand, his coordination hindered by his inebriated state.

"Experllramus!" Snape shouted as he pointed his own wand.

Sirius' wand went flying as he was catapulted backwards to land on the china cabinet with a terrible crash.

"Slimy bastard!" Sirius was up and tackling Severus with a sudden rush. Snape had no time to react as twelve stone of maddened wizard slammed into him. Both men scrabbled for the advantage.

Remus watched helplessly - wishing desperately that he could intervene before one of them was seriously injured, but it was pointless - it was just a memory. Sirius' memory and one that he had removed. Why? Had something terrible happened? Snape didn't seem to be suffering from any permanent injury and he wasn't aware of any scars or limping from Sirius before the veil...

His thoughts were interrupted as the struggles and sounds suddenly changed from the two men on the other side of the room. Curious, Lupin walked over and listened closely. Sirius was holding Snape pinned against the wall and had suddenly stilled, his body pressing the potions master against the wall. Lupin noticed a sudden triumphant sneer blossom on Snape's face.

"Frustrated are we? What's the matter, Black? The werewolf not interested in- "

"Shut up!" Sirius growled and when Snape opened his mouth again he lunged forward and thrust his mouth upon the other man, shutting him up physically.

Lupin could hardly call it kissing, Sirius was doing his best to force his tongue down the other man's throat and while Snape didn't seem to be biting it off, he didn't seem to be enjoying it much either. Snape pushed at Sirius' shoulder, struggling against his weight. Sirius ground his hips against Snape's in response and pinned both slender hands up over the potions master's head with his own. Rather than anger the potions master - it seemed to suddenly spur a response in him and it was his turn to ravage Sirius' mouth, giving as good as he'd gotten and more.

Both men moaned and humped each other with increasing urgency. With a sudden movement, Sirius broke the kiss and yanked Severus away from the wall and onto the kitchen table, bending him backwards so that he lay like a sacrifice. Only then did Sirius let go of the other man's hands as he tore at the black robes, exposing shockingly pale white skin. Snape's own hands tore at the fastenings of Sirius' charcoal robes and soon both were naked and writhing on the tabletop.

Remus watched in horror as his lover thrust into Severus with abandon - his face was suffused in animal lust and triumph. The sounds of slapping flesh and grunts from both men filled the room. He didn't want to watch this...he didn't want to see this...didn't want to witness this horrible violation of his trust and love...

And yet - he couldn't turn away. Couldn't summon the strength and energy to release himself from the Pensieve and deal with the aftermath of his knowledge. And so he stayed. Watching.

Sirius continued to pound away; his face flushed a dark dusky red with the effort in which he was pounding away. It wasn't sex...it wasn't even fucking...it was a violent act. But Snape wasn't protesting and he was far from being passive. His hips bucked and pushed back with every thrust - driving each movement with violent force. Black hair that had curtained his face soon turned sweaty and matted as strands clung to his face in sticky tendrils. His eyes were clenched shut, Lupin noticed, and his mouth moved in half formed words - nothing that Remus could make out.

And as soon as it started - it was over. With one last triumphant roar, Sirius thrust deeply and clenched his hands tight around Severus' bony hips and was followed quickly after with Severus' own shout.

Sirius pulled out and slumped on the table on his side as both men struggled to catch their breath. Within seconds, Snape sat up and grabbed his wand from the pile of robes next to him. Remus noticed Sirius tense, but there was only a muttered cleansing spell before Snape began to pull on his clothes. He dressed silently and efficiently and without a glance - left the room. Sirius lay on the table and stared at the doorway where Snape had disappeared before slowly

looking down at his own body still smeared in come and sweat - a look of growing horror blossomed on his face at the realization of what he'd done.

There was a sound from the front door and Sirius suddenly stood up with a whispered 'Remus!'. Hurriedly, his lover cleaned himself with a scouring spell and reached for his robes.

Remus turned from the sight - he'd seen enough. There was a powerful tug upwards and he landed back on the floor of guest room with the Pensieve in front of him. The swirling strands of silver glinted back at him, but the very sight sickened him. What else had Sirius hidden from him? He remembered that evening when he'd come home from running errands. His wolfsbane potion had been waiting for him on the kitchen counter and Sirius had been rather tight lipped when he'd asked him about Snape bringing it by. Had it happened more than the once? Not likely - he'd been there every other time Snape had brought the potion and there'd be little excuse for the two to be alone other than that.

So perhaps it 'was' just a one-time thing. A mistake, if Sirius' look had been anything to judge by in those final moments before he'd heard Remus at the door. He'd loved Sirius so much...

He didn't want to hate his lover...he wanted to be able to understand what had happened. Wanted to confront him and express his anger and his hurt. And he couldn't - Sirius was beyond such confrontations.

But Severus wasn't...

XOXOXOX

He found Snape in the library where several books were spread out on the table before him. A glance showed that they were the same books Lupin had looked through when he'd first found out the other wizard's secret. Remus spared a moment to wonder if Severus was more nervous about the pregnancy than he let on, but his thoughts quickly turned to what he'd come to say.

"I know about you and Sirius." He'd meant his voice to be cold and even, but it came out rather high and cracked. Remus swallowed, trying to regain control.

Snape had been making notes in his leather journal. At Lupin's words his writing halted, but he quickly began writing again without looking up. "Excuse me?" His own voice was unruffled - distracted. It didn't fool Remus for an instant.

"You heard me. I know about you and Sirius - I saw it."

The quill was thrown down and Snape finally looked up at him. His face was placidly composed, but his eyes showed a glint of fear. "What are you blathering about, Lupin? I'm trying to work. Unlike some people."

Remus felt the anger building in him, how could the bastard come into his home - the one Sirius and he had shared and pretend nothing had happened? "Don't you dare deny it! You two had sex! On the kitchen table of all places! Don't you dare deny it! He left his memory in the Pensieve!"

Snape's face drained of what little color it had. Then, slowly, spots of red blossomed on his cheeks as his face twisted, but still he didn't say a word.

Lupin was surprised to find his hands were shaking. "Why didn't you tell me? That's Sirius' child isn't it?" his voice was quiet now, but he was far from calm.

Snape suddenly exploded, standing up as he slammed his palm down on the table with a loud bang. "What do you want me to say, Lupin?! That he fucked me? That he cheated on you? That

he was drunk? That he mad? I saw his eyes, Lupin...it wasn't just the alcohol - he was crazed, I know the look!" Severus' voice suddenly dropped to a harsh whisper, "My own mother had that look in her eyes in the end. She spent the last of her days in St. Mungo's stark raving mad. Maybe it was this house, or maybe it was Azkaban...no man can stay there that long and leave sane. All I know is that it is over and done with. It doesn't matter," he said firmly.

There was a long silence as both men struggled with their emotions. Finally, Remus spoke up again. "You realize you carry the last of the Black line, don't you? Your child should inherit this house. Sirius would have wanted that if he'd known-"

"Known what? That he'd left a love child with me?" Snape sneered, one hand clutching at his belly. Lupin noted that the gesture was rather protective. "Black thought nothing of the consequences of his actions - the story of his life. He never envisioned this result of his madness and even if he had...he never would have let a child that was half a Snape inherit anything of his...he would have avoided his own child like the plague rather than admit the other half of its parentage."

Remus shook his head viciously at that and slammed his own fist down on the tabletop. "No! I won't have you say such things of him! I can't defend his actions during his last few months living in this place, but you cannot say that Sirius didn't care for his own! He loved Harry like his own child and we once talked about adopting a child of our own one day."

He struggled to keep talking, tears were running down his cheeks, but he barely noticed. "Family was important to him...he never really had one of his own, but he wanted one. He vowed to do better by his own children than his family did to him. He never would have turned his back on any child of his - you and Sirius may not have gotten along, but he would have found a way - some - way to support and help raise his child the best he could... I know Sirius...he was a good man - not perfect - but a good man, nonetheless. Same as you."

Severus stood there, stunned, his mouth slightly open as he continued to cradle his stomach. Lupin snorted and wiped at the wetness on his cheeks before shaking his head again, this time in chagrin. "Problem is...you two were just too bloody alike. Proud, arrogant and unwilling to bend. If you'd just been able to step outside yourselves...see your similarities and work past your animosity... Maybe not... Perhaps you were meant to be as you are. Well, you've both paid for your arrogance, haven't you?" he sighed, feeling exhausted.

The last comment seemed to finally pierce Snape's shock. Drawing himself up to full height, he dropped his hand to his side and lifted his chin in defiance. "You're in no position to lecture me on shortcomings. You are wallowing in your own self-pity and grief. You want to know why you are sick? You don't get enough sun, exercise or nourishment. You spend all day moping after your dead lover like that will bring him back somehow. Which, perhaps, you are planning to do?" Snape pulled a leather-bound book from a shelf behind him and slammed it on the tabletop. It was the book he'd been reading in the study when Severus had brought him the wolfsbane potion the first night: 'Necromancy: An Obsessive Study by Mordred Quincy III.'

Lupin stared at the book in shock. He'd had no idea Snape had found the book in the chair. "It's not...I found it on one of the shelves in the study one day...it's not..." he trailed off as he continued to stare at the book.

"You have no business mucking about in such a dangerous subject on some melodramatic whim of fancy." There was a pause before Snape continued in a quieter voice, "You've studied the dark arts almost as much as I have, Lupin...you know there is no bringing him back. You would only raise a soulless being...and far more trouble than you could imagine. Let him go, Lupin."

The room grew silent except for the faint crackling of the fire. Remus continued to stare at the book, though he no longer saw it. His vision was turned inward as he thought for the first time

what Sirius would want him to do...to focus on the future and his happiness. Snape was right - there was no bringing his lover back. His grief was destroying him and his selfishness was endangering the Order. It was time to let Sirius go...

He lay in bed that night as images sounds from the Pensieve played over and over in his head. The thrusting hips, the bowls falling from the table. White skin bared in sharp contrast to black fabric...Sirius grunting and coming with a roar as Severus' tossed his head back and came with a shout - "Lupin!"

XOXOXOX

There was an awkward truce between the two men the next day as both decided to ignore the issues brought up during the confrontation the day before. Snape informed him that as there was no evidence of anything wrong with him besides exhaustion and nerves he was no longer needed and would take his leave of him that day.

Severus' raven sent the message on to Dumbledore as the potions master packed his trunk and bottled the last of his restorative potions for Remus' use. Lupin was at a loss as to what to do - he dreaded Severus' departure, but he couldn't think of a way to make the man stay or even tell him of his regret.

Snape was eager to go and had just shrunk his trunk and headed towards the door when the raven flew in with a message. Severus reached for the note, but Mordecai deftly avoided his hand and flew over to Remus' shoulder and held out his leg importantly.

Severus scowled, but waited as Lupin read the note quickly.

//Remus,

I am delighted to hear that your health is returning as best as can be expected. I fear that your solitary presence at Black Manor may have hastened to your ill health and suggest that a change of location is in order to hasten your healing. I do believe that Snape could use some assistance in his personal research, especially as he has been delayed long enough from it during his stay with you and I feel it would be mutually beneficial if you were to accompany him to his home at this time. Perhaps you will have the opportunity to return the favor he so recently bestowed upon you.

A.D.//

Equal measures of relief and annoyance warred for dominance as Remus handed the message to the impatient wizard beside him.

"What?!"

Apparently Snape had no such trouble. Remus shrugged at Severus' demanding glare. "I'm no happier than you are, Snape...just show me to my rooms." He grinned at Snape's resultant glare. It was several moments of fuming and protests before the potions master finally conceded.

XOXOXOX

It was revenge - pure and simple. Albus was exacting his revenge on Severus' secrecy by making him spend even more time with the werewolf and this time in his own home! Severus waited as Remus packed his trunk and fumed over just 'why' the headmaster was offering up his house as a holiday getaway for the wretched dark creature.

The provided excuse was an utter lie - even if Dumbledore did want Remus out of the house,

there were plenty of other places for him to stay and people who would welcome him into their homes. No, the real reason must lie in Albus' need to keep tabs on him and his pregnancy. Likely the nosey buggler wanted him to have another wizard nearby during the labor - not that Lupin would be much help should things go wrong. Male pregnancies carried far more dangers than normal ones and the birth itself was tricky.

Well, damn the man and his meddlesome self. He'd decided early in the pregnancy that he would either handle it himself or fail - he didn't want anyone's help. Much less Lupin's.

Snape was mightily tempted to simply Apparate without the other wizard, but he knew that Albus would take stronger measures should he prove obstinate. Likely show up at his door with a whole medi-wizard maternity unit to deliver the baby.

"Ready!"

Severus looked up to see Lupin bounding down the stairs with a smile and more enthusiasm than he'd seen displayed in Snape's entire stay at Black Manor.

Perhaps there was something to be said for Albus' official reason as well.

XOXOXOX

Remus was surprised by the sheer size and richness of Snape Manor - it made Grimmauld Place look like a shack.

The main hall dwarfed the two wizards as they entered the front door. Lupin trailed after the pregnant man as he tried to take in all that he was seeing. Large tapestries decorated every wall and brightly colored Turkish rugs littered the floors beneath his feet. There was no trace of the dust and neglect that plagued Black Manor - the floors gleamed and the expensive vases and magical artifacts gracing the shelves and tables were polished to a high shine. Obviously 'someone' took great care of the place.

"Are you going to gape around all day or are you coming? There's someone I want you to meet." Snape led him through a series of halls and doors until they came to a large room with many portraits and statues. There, a small house elf was dusting industriously until it was startled by Snape's throat clearing.

"Master Snape, you is home."

"Lupin, this is Frizzy." Snape nodded gravely at the house elf and Lupin was surprised to see an equal graveness in the house elf's demeanor as it nodded back. "Frizzy is prepared to nurse and raise the child here with Dumbledore acting as godfather. Once I tell him, that is."

This caused Remus to tear his eyes away from the solemn elf and turn to Snape in surprise. "You're planning to leave the baby to be raised alone by a house elf?"

Snape ignored his outburst and dismissed the elf, which hurried off to prepare their rooms.

Alone once more, the other wizard's eyes averted from his gaze and turned to look up at the large portraits of Snape ancestors adorning the walls. "Many wizards of the most noble houses are brought up by house elves to a certain age. My own mother was rarely present at our house - she traveled with my father. I was raised by Frizzy's mother, Mimsy."

"But, wouldn't you rather raise your child yourself? Are you planning to go back to spying so soon?" Remus suddenly wished he could reach out and touch Snape without being rebuffed.

Snape closed his eyes briefly as if in pain. "I must. The Dark Lord will be expecting my return and a promised potion in his hand in 4 months. That is how I have bought my time away from his presence - with the belief that I am developing a powerful poison for him. One that will kill all mudbloods, but spare the pure." The last word was said with a derisive snort.

"What will he do when you fail to bring the potion?"

Snape looked him levelly in the eye and answered smoothly. "He will kill me. He does not accept failure, especially one this large."

Lupin stared at him in growing horror. "You're going to go back just to be executed?! What good will come of that? Dumbledore wouldn't let you-"

"Dumbledore may think what he likes, but my usefulness as a double agent is quickly coming to an end. There is no way around my failure to the Dark Lord and he will know of my treachery if I fail to return to him."

"But you would be safe at Hogwarts! Or you could go into hiding-"

"And when he discovered it was all a ruse - that I never planned to make the potion at all...he would wonder **why** I was in hiding all this time. He would find out about the babe and that I carry the genes for wizard pregnancy - it is a powerful trait and quite useful in a number of ways in dark magic. I don't fancy carrying the Dark Lord's off-spring or some other form of demon. And I can't risk the child's life, either. The child could carry the genetic trait...or at the very least be used to wage a petty revenge on me."

Severus looked down at his belly and placed a hand gently on its curve. "No...I shall go back to the Dark Lord and tell him I cannot brew the potion. I will die and this incident will remain a secret," he said softly.

XOXOXOX

Dinner was served on the finest china and crystal. His wine glass was filled with a delicious red wine while Severus' held cold milk. Neither man spoke during the meal; only the clink of silverware disturbed the silence of the large dining room.

Snape ate with great gusto, cleaning his plate twice while Remus picked at his own - the food tasted like ashes in his mouth and what little he did manage seemed to stick in his throat and threaten to choke him.

Severus then bade him a good night and disappeared down one of the large halls as another house elf led him towards his room in the guest wing. He tossed and turned in the large bed all night, unable to rest - his mind in turmoil.

Snape couldn't go back to Voldemort for his death. That was no answer. It was a waste of human life and that of a child who would grow up without a living parent. Another orphan made because of this bloody war that would not end and an evil monster that would not die.

The injustice of it all burned within his gut and made the wolf within him snarl and tear at the sheets with clawed fingers and sweaty palms. It wasn't right...it wasn't fair...

He couldn't lose another person he cared for...

X O X O X O X

To Be Continued

End Notes:

Author's Notes: Written for the Master and Wolf Fest and answers Challenge #51: Lupin finds out that in a moment of madness brought on by having been cooped up in the house for so long, Sirius had sex with Snape. Now Snape is having the baby that should rightfully have been Lupin and Sirius'. (The story is told mostly from Lupin's pov, but occasionally from Snape's.)

I've wanted to write a SS/RL for some time, but never really found a story that just cried out to be told until I stumbled upon this challenge. Thanks so much to the Fest for the chance to write this story!

Timeline: This fic takes place a few months after The Order of the Phoenix.

And Finally: I'd like to dedicate this fic to Juxian Tang whose great fic never fails to make me shiver with anticipation before I've even read a word.

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