Queer Street

by jenny_wren

Summary

James doesn’t like to lose

Notes

It’s the seventies so they were underage then but wouldn’t be now, does that need warning for?

Probably not for James fans

“So,” said James as he yawned theatrically and stretched, school shirt riding up to reveal a sliver of pale stomach, “You’ve convinced me not to give away Remus like you did, Padfoot. But there’s a question that’s always interested me about your Animagus form.” He paused then to draw out the agony.

Sirius twitched uncomfortably and brought his knees up to his chest, curling forwards so he was no longer resting against the side of James’ bed. He’d talked James out of revealing his Animagus form and Remus’ secret to Lily Evans on their third date (on the basis she’d see right through his unsubtle boasting and it would be better to hold the revelation in reserve until he proposed) and now it was time to pay for it. Because James didn’t like losing.

“Well,” prompted James. He leaned back, sprawling across his bed, and nudged at Sirius with his foot until Sirius turned to face him.

“Just get on with it Prongs,” he said tiredly.
“I’m sure it will interest you too, Padfoot.”

“Just ask the damn question.”

“Hey, don’t be like that about it, it’s only a question.”

Sirius very much doubted that.

James curled around on the bed, bringing his face close to Sirius’. Sirius twisted uneasily at the unholy amusement in James’ eyes and his bright malicious smile.

“What’s dog are you?”

“Huh?”

“Dogs have owners, Sirius. So go on, you can tell an old friend, who owns you?”

“Don’t be an idiot, Prongs.”

James shook his head. “I’m never wrong.” He sat up on his bed, slinging his legs down beside Sirius, and patted Sirius’ head a couple of times. Sirius reached up and swiped at the offending hand.

“Oh I know it’s not me. I think I’m insulted actually,” he added reflectively.

Sirius sighed and huddled down.

“Well?” James bounced twice with demented glee. “Shall I start to guess? Should I guess Peter first to get you to lower your guard? Or should go straight for the kill and name Re-”

“All right Prongs,” snapped Sirius cutting him off, “You’ve made me squirm, what more do you want?”

“Oh Padfoot, don’t be like that, I’m only talking about a simple exchange of favors.”

He shook his head feebly. “You can’t possibly…” His voice trailed away as his stomach dropped into free-fall.

“No, it’s definitely simple. See, you’ve stopped me from using the one thing that would have talked Lily straight into my bed.”

Sirius rolled his eyes because that was nonsense and James knew it or he’d have ignored Sirius’ advice and done it anyway.

“So in the weeks ahead I’ll have some tension filled moments that you can help me out with. Just a small exchange, nothing we haven’t done before.” James stood up and used his long legs to crowd Sirius back into his bed.

Reaching up, he caught James’ hips in his hands, shoving him back.

“Leave off Prongs. We agreed we weren’t going to do this anymore. Not since Lily agreed to go out with you.” Sirius bit his lip before he started begging and convinced James he was a girl once and for all.

“No, you suggested we stop. I disagree.” James moved forwards so he stood with his legs either side of Sirius’ feet and thrust his crotch into Sirius’ face. One hand curled bruisingly around Sirius’ jaw. Forcing him to look up at James’ glinting eyes, forcing his mouth against the bulge in James’
“And if you don’t want me to tell a certain werewolf about his dog,” James paused to let Remus’ possible reactions to finding out about his proclivities swirl dizzyingly through Sirius’ mind, leaving him feeling sick and empty.

“You won’t begrudge me this little favor. Quid pro quo.” James free hand ruffled through Sirius’ dark hair before grabbing hold with a firmness that made Sirius’ eyes water.

Beaten, Sirius obediently reached up and started to undo James’ belt.

At the snick of leather, the hand in his hair relaxed and smoothed gently over his scalp.

“That’s better Padfoot,” praised James, “Honestly you do make things difficult at times. Anybody would think I was asking for something life-threatening instead of just a bit of fun.”

Sirius’ hands fumbled as they unbuttoned James’ trousers. Recovering, he carefully slid trousers and y-fronts down James’ lean thighs, uncovering his half-hard cock. Swallowing hard to wet his dry throat, Sirius leaned forward and ran his tongue along the underside. James hummed appreciatively. Sirius nervously licked his lips. Shifting up on to his knees, he steadied himself with his hands on James’ hips, making sure to stroke the soft skin with his thumbs so James wouldn’t push away his support.

Taking one deep breath, Sirius forced himself to relax. Carefully he wrapped his lips around his best friend’s cock allowing it to slide inside his mouth until it hit the back of his throat. James made a pleased noise and Sirius relaxed a little more. Dropping his jaw and stretching his throat as if he was yawning, Sirius swallowed him deeper.

Hands clenched in his hair, dragging his head back. Sirius choked and coughed despite himself.

“Huh? What?” He coughed again.

“Hey, hey, slow down.” The hands eased up and started to pet him as if he really were a dog. “Your enthusiasm is flattering, Padfoot, but come on, we’ve got plenty of time. Relax a little.”

Relieved that James wasn’t mad, Sirius went back to work. As he clearly wasn’t going to be allowed to get away with bringing James off quickly, he settled in for a long haul. Licking his way down James’ erection, he sucked first one ball then the other into his mouth, circling them with his tongue and scraping them ever so gently with his teeth. James grunted with approval. Licking around them, he tried to jab the sensitive spot just behind with his tip of his tongue. James’ hands tightened their grip warningly but Sirius wasn’t foolish enough to venture any nearer to James’ arse.

Pulling back he bathed James’ cock with a series of kitten licks before blowing gently. James shivered with reaction to the sudden cooling and his hips jerked. Taking the very tip into his mouth he flicked his tongue around it until he had to break off to swallow the bitter precum.

“Oh yeah,” moaned James, “That’s a good boy.”

Swirling his tongue around as if he were licking a lollipop, Sirius risked releasing one hand so he could stroke and encourage the burgeoning erection. James took immediate advantage of his vulnerability. Holding tightly to the back of his head, James plunged hard into his mouth. Sirius choked and tried to catch his breath as he struggled to get both hands up to restrain James’ thrusts.

Finally able to draw back, Sirius distracted James with long sloppy laps of his tongue while he recovered himself.
“Come on Padfoot, I want to see those lips around my cock. You know you want to. Here I’ll help, *Glubit Oris.*”

The whisper of magic locked Sirius’ jaw in place before he could protest. His mouth would now stay jammed open until after James came. There would be no accidental biting down; his best friend was very protective of his pride and joy. With a sigh Sirius drew the plump head into his mouth, hollowing his cheeks with the force of his suction.

“Oh Merlin, yes. That’s it. Damn but you look gorgeous like that.”

Sirius rode it out as James’ hips began to pump. He concentrated on bobbing his head up and down, letting James’ cock slide easily in and out of his mouth as he fluttered his tongue along the underside.

“Shit yes,” snarled James. Slapping Sirius’ hands down, he held his head in place with two fists of hair and began to fuck his mouth in earnest. As his body shook from trying to breathe, Sirius focused on trying to swallow and not fading into grey.

With a rush, he came back to himself, doubled over coughing, mouth full of acrid semen. Head hanging, jaw aching, gagging and spitting, he fought to take in air. Finally his throat cleared and his breathing steadied. Limp with relief, he wiped the heels of his hands across his watery eyes. Then, cautiously, he looked up, trying to gauge if James was satisfied.

James paused in the middle of doing up his trousers and flashed him a smile.

“See, was that so bad?” James finished buttoning himself up and redid his belt.

Sirius didn’t move.

James lent over and tucked a damp, tangled lock of Sirius’ hair behind his ear. Sirius couldn’t help leaning into hand stroking him.

James laughed, “You know, you really are a dog. Well since you seem to have your self-control intact.” He directed a look at the lack of a damp patch on the front of Sirius trousers. “I’ll go find Lily and leave you to have fun.” He gave Sirius a suggestive wink and sauntered away. He stopped at the door and turned back,

“Don’t worry your secret is safe with me, for the moment any way,” he grinned mischievously before flitting away. The door clicked shut behind him.

Sirius just knelt there for a moment longer. Moving seemed an impossible task. He hadn’t come in his trousers since the first couple of times he sucked James off. He had stopped wanking afterwards sometime before Halloween. Right now he wasn’t even hard and the mere idea of wanking turned his stomach.

Slowly, because he felt old and exhausted, Sirius levered himself to his feet. Carefully he put one foot in front of the other until he reached his bed. Taking his wand from the bedside table he had flickit twice before the lights went out, leaving him in the sanctuary of darkness. He really wanted a shower but he didn’t think he had the energy to remain standing. Slumping on his bed, he flicked his wand again to shut the curtains. Still clothed, he crawled between the covers and curled up in a small ball. He closed his eyes but didn’t fall asleep.

He wished he’d never given himself away to James in the first place. It had seemed such an innocuous favor. Last summer, after he’d fled Grimauld Place to the Potters for the final time, he’d
been desperate to see Remus. He’d needed Moony’s smile to make the world seem right side up again.

He’d begged James to ask his parents to invite Remus over and James had grinned slyly and asked him what is worth. Seeing Remus was worth anything and Sirius had said so. An edge of something Sirius couldn’t identify crept into James’ manic grin and he proposed to swap a visit from Remus for a hand job. Sirius wondered if that was when he’d given himself away. Had he looked too eager? Because getting James off hadn’t exactly seemed a hardship at the time.

It had been fun. Fun, making James moan and writhe, and watching the blissed-out pleasure in his face when he came. A bit too much fun actually because he’d come all over the leg of James’ pajamas which annoyed James no end. To make up for the sticky mess James had insisted on a blow job, declaring that since Sirius was apparently a bloody queer he might as well be some use.

Sirius sighed and snuggled a bit deeper into his bed. Sometimes he just didn’t understand himself. He should have been glad of the chance to prove his family was wrong when they said he was worthless. But as his summer holiday gave way to the school term he had found he liked being useful less and less.

He could only conclude that he was a selfish arse. He owed James so much for taking him in, it should have been nice to have a way to pay him back. He simply couldn’t work it out, he should be grateful to James, not resentful. He’d finally had to admit to himself that he was more Black than he’d ever wanted to believe.

Of course after he had sent Snape to the Shrieking Shack he was overwhelmingly glad he could manage useful, even if he didn’t like it. Obviously there was no way he could ever make things up to Remus but he could repay James for risking his life and forcing him to rescue Snape.

Then Lily Evans had decided she was impressed with James’ new maturity and agreed to go out with him. Sirius decided it was the perfect solution. James could wander off into the sunset with Lily and he could stop lurching awake in the middle of night terrified the darkness was about to suffocate him.

Now it looked like James would be claiming favors for some time to come and Sirius still couldn’t quite get it. He knew he was queer and James was his best friend. So why did sex with James make him feel so miserable?

The sudden glow of light through the gaps in the curtain distracted him from his thoughts and he tensed.

“What the-” muttered a voice. Sirius strained his ears trying to identify which one of his three friends was there. Footsteps came closer and stopped beside his bed.

“Padfoot?”

Sirius recognized Remus’ voice and curled a little tighter into his ball. He was glad it wasn’t James trying to wake him up for round two but, at the same time, things still weren’t right with Remus after his prank on Snape just before Halloween and that hurt.

“Padfoot? Are you okay?” Remus’ voice sounded so soft and concerned that all Sirius wanted was to crawl closer and wrap himself inside it. But that wasn’t right. He didn’t deserve to have Remus sound so worried for him.

“Padfoot? Sirius? Why are you hiding up here in the dark? It’s not that late.”
Sirius didn’t say anything.

Remus growled something under his breath and if it hadn’t been Remus, Sirius would have said he was swearing. Angry steps stamped away and Sirius heard the springs squeak as Remus flopped down on his bed.

He was sorry he had somehow annoyed Remus but he simply couldn’t face his friend at the moment. Ducking his head beneath the covers, Sirius prayed for sleep.

The scuffing step of James trying to be quiet shocked Sirius awake. Instantly alert, Sirius tried to breathe normally as adrenaline rocketed around his system. Forcing himself to simply wait, he listened intently, trying to work out which bed James was shuffling towards. He had reluctantly accepted that his curtains would be twitching any moment when a voice made him and James jump.

“Hey Prongs,” said a sleepy sounding Remus.

“Moony, go back to sleep.”

Remus yawned, “In a minute Prongs, tell me how things went with Lily. Well, I hope?”

“Yes fine,” said James impatiently.

“That’s good.” The bed creaked as Remus rolled over. “Very good considering how much you’ve had to drink. Your bed is on the other side of the dormitory, Prongs, that one’s Padfoot’s.”

“I know that,” said James sulkily.

“Uh huh. Whatever you say Prongs,” Remus seemed much more awake now. “Maybe I better check with Lily tomorrow just how well your date really went.”

“It went fine.” James was definitely in a strop. He stomped away to his own bed.

“If you say so. Did you do your Charms essay?” Remus sounded as if he was perfectly willing to chatter half the night.

“No,” said James, he was flinging off his clothes now, “Circe, Moony, it’s not due ‘til next week.”

“Yes but it’s a very interesting topic don’t you think?”

“No, and if you don’t shut up I’m going to be charming your mouth shut.”

“Well, would you mind if I turned the light on and wrote some notes down?”

“Of course I would. Merlin, Remus, just lie down and think, quietly.”

“Whatever you say Prongs.” Bed clothes ruffled as both Remus and James settled down for the night.

Sirius smiled tightly. James wasn’t going to be bothering him tonight, he’d be far too scared of being caught in another boy’s bed. He just wished he could thank Remus for his unwitting intervention.

The next morning Sirius was ready to jump straight out of bed and escape to the Great Hall. James
would undoubtedly catch him alone soon but he saw no reason not to put it off as long as possible. Cautiously sliding back his curtains he was surprised to see James and Peter’s beds were both empty. Turning his head, he found Remus was lying across his bed scribbling notes on a piece of parchment.

Becoming aware of his scrutiny, Remus glanced up and smiled.

“Good morning Padfoot.”

“Morning Moony, where is everybody?”

“James decided on an early breakfast followed by Quidditch, Peter went with him.”

Sirius tried not to look too pleased.

“I was waiting for you to get up so I could ask your opinion on the Charms essay.”

“Oh. Sorry Moony, what do you want to know?”

“It’s not urgent. You can have a shower first, you look like you need one.”

Sirius glanced down at his crumpled school uniform and blushed.

“Uh, thanks.”

Remus smiled at him. “Glad to help.” He bent his head back down over his parchment. Sirius took a step towards him before reminding himself sternly that he was not good enough to so much as think of touching Moony. If Remus ever guessed the Sirius’ thoughts, he’d be disgusted.

Grabbing his wash things and a clean uniform, he headed for the shower.

The unexpected pleasure of a hot shower free from the worry of James strolling in and requesting another favor soothed Sirius until he felt very nearly human again. Ready to face the day he bounced out the bathroom and beamed at Remus.

“You’re looking much better,” said Remus, sounding pleased.

“Shedloads,” Sirius agreed. “Can I help you with Charms, now?”

“You want to discuss it over breakfast?”

“Sounds perfect.” Looking into Remus’ warm brown eyes Sirius very nearly said something stupid about Moony being perfect. He had to bend down and gather up his books to give himself an excuse to look away.

Unfortunately Remus and Peter had double Herbology after lunch, which James and Sirius had both dropped at NEWT level. Therefore they had two hours free during which they were guaranteed no interruptions.

Sirius couldn’t face the humiliation of being chased to ground and simply returned to their dormitory. James found him there, failing miserably at writing the essay for Charms.

“Ahh, here you are Padfoot.”
“Yep. Hey, have you done your Charms essay yet?”

“No I haven’t. Merlin, what is up with you and Remus? Don’t answer that. We’ve got two clear
hours, there are more fun things we can do than talking.”

“Look Prongs, I don’t think…”

“Uh-uh,” James wagged his finger in playful reproof, “I said no talking. You don’t talk and I don’t
talk. Sounds fair to me. Unless you want Remus to find out about you. He might not take it as well
as I did.”

Sirius’ head dropped in defeat. The idea of Remus’ being disgusted with him was horrifying enough
but the thought of Remus using his attraction to men like James did, as an easy source of sex, broke
something inside him.

“That’s right,” encouraged James, “Trousers off. Or have you actually turned into a bird and want a
declaration of love before you’ll let me in your knickers.” He grinned and held his arms out
imploringly, “Oh my darling Siri, how I do adore thee.”

“Give over Prongs.” Sirius kicked his shoes off and then slid trousers, underwear and socks off in
one go. Half-naked, he scrambled onto his bed, positioning himself on his hands and knees.

“Here you go, pillow-biter,” James tossed him a pillow. Sirius clenched his fingers in the blankets to
avoid the temptation of throttling his best friend. James should try having something that felt the size
of a beater’s bat shoved up his arse without screaming the place down, he wouldn’t laugh at the need
to bury one’s face in a pillow then.

There was a rustle of clothing as James undid his trousers and then the whisper of the lubrication
spell. James made the mattress bounce as he bounded onto the bed, settling on his knees behind
Sirius.

“Here I come, ready or not.”

Sirius dropped onto his forearms, grabbing the pillow and hiding his face in its softness. The initial
burn as James breeched his body always caught him off guard. Given he was a flaming poofster, he
would have thought he’d have become accustomed to it by now. Unless he was as lousy a poofster as
he was everything else. James grunted and sank in deeper. Sirius’ resolution faded as it always did
and he became the pillow-biter James had accused him of being. It was better than being a screaming
sissy.

Finally after a struggle that was both too long and too short, James was fully embedded inside him.
James gave a satisfied huff of breath and adjusted his grip on Sirius’ hips. Sirius clung on to his
pillow a little bit tighter as James began to move. It didn’t really hurt, not any longer, but it ached
fiercely and there was an indefinable sense of intrusion that made Sirius want to buck James off and
hide under his bed with his back against the wall.

Occasionally, when James was particularly gentle or struck a certain spot, Sirius could believe there
was potential for being fucked to feel very good. Once he had gathered the courage to try and give
directions. James had just laughed at him for fussing so, accusing him of coming over all girly. Now
Sirius simply did his best ignore the penetration of his body, curling in on himself away from James
bruising hands and cock.

He was distantly aware that James’ thrusts were growing erratic. With a final shove that felt like it
went straight through him, James gave a cry of triumph and collapsed over his back. In the sudden
stillness, Sirius felt himself drifting back, becoming aware of the smell of sex, the taste of pillow, the ache in his knees, the heavy sweaty body crushing him to mattress and the cock still lodged inside him pinning him in place. He stiffened but stayed still because James got all insulted if he tried to push him away before he was ready.

Eventually James drew back and pulled out. He slapped Sirius on the rump in appreciation.

“Damn you’re good. I feel like a new man.” James shook himself, jolting the bed. “I’m off to the library to see if I can catch Lily.”

Sirius unclamped his teeth from the pillow.

“Shower,” he mumbled as best he could around his parched throat. Stumbling off the bed onto shaky legs, he tugged at his shirt to pull the clammy material away from his back.

“Yeah? Well have fun.” James wasn’t looking at him as he was occupied straightening himself up.

Sirius waited until he was sure James had left before gathering up his clothes and wash things and heading for the bathroom. He had a long blisteringly hot shower but it didn’t make him feel as good as he did that morning. It was far too early to go to bed so he reluctantly went downstairs to the Common room to sit by the fire.

Cuddled up in one of the red and gold blankets, half hidden by the arms of the sofa, he concentrated on his text book and ignored the rush of Gryffindors returning from classes and heading back out to dinner.

“Sirius! There you are!”

The screech startled Sirius so badly that he jerked, fumbled the book, dropped it and nearly fell off the sofa grabbing it before it landed in the fireplace. Staring round wildly, Sirius saw Peter and Remus. They were watching his unusual clumsiness with wide eyes.

“Merlin, Peter, don’t make me jump like that. You took ten years off my life.”

“Sorry Padfoot, but we’ve been looking for you everywhere. Come on, it’s dinner time. James is already there with Lily.”

“It’s okay Wormtail, you go on ahead. I’m not feeling very hungry at the moment. I’ll stay here and stick with ‘Triplication Jinxes’. I need to get started on my essay.”

“Hmm,” said Remus, “That looks an interesting book. Once you’ve started on your essay, may I borrow it?”

“Sure Moony,” said Sirius, happy to be of help.

“Okay then. Tell you what, I’ll grab some sandwiches and come back here. We can have a brainstorming session and blitz this wretched essay. How about it?”

“Sounds brilliant,” Sirius beamed.

“Okay then.”

“You’re both mad,” said Peter, “It’s not due until next week.”
“Tomorrow’s Friday, Wormtail, it nearly is next week,” said Remus.

“Moo-ny,” whined Peter. “We’ve got the whole weekend. Why don’t you give me a quick summary of your research Sunday night?” he grinned cheekily.

Remus sighed with over the top exasperation. “You want help with the essay, you’ll ask me Sunday afternoon or not at all.”

“Deal,” said Peter, so quickly he had to have been angling for just such an arrangement.

“Looks like you’ve been outsmarted Moony,” said Sirius.

“That’s what you think. It’s far better than panicking around at half past one Monday morning.”

“Moony,” said Peter indignantly, “Would I do that to you?”

“In a heartbeat.”

“The price you pay for associating with genius,” said Peter, tossing his head and fluffing his hair in a very good imitation of James. All three of them giggled.

“Come on Wormy,” said Remus, “Dinner’s calling. I’ll be back shortly Padfoot.”

“Take your time,” said Sirius and returned to his book.

Half a chapter later a quiet voice said,

“Padfoot, it’s me.”

Sirius started and glanced round.

“Moony,” he smiled, “Come over and sit down.” He pulled his blanket more firmly onto his half of the sofa to offer Remus space.

“Thank you Padfoot. Now dinner is served.” He placed two plates on the sofa between them.

“Ooh,” said Sirius happily, “Peach flips, my favorite.” He grabbed for one of the sugary pastries but Remus fended him off.

“No, no, sandwiches first, then pudding.”

Sirius pouted.

“Don’t give me that face. I asked the house elves for turkey and stuffing. I know you like that.”

“Thanks.”

“Just eat them. You haven’t been eating properly lately and I don’t like it.”

“Sorry Moony.”

“Don’t apologize, eat.” Remus shoved a sandwich into his hand and Sirius obediently started to eat. It tasted better than he’d expected and he tore into ravenously.

“Thanks Moony,” he mumbled as he swallowed down the last of the crust and grabbed another. “Hungrier than I thought I was.”
Remus just smiled and pushed the plate closer to him. He was eating one sandwich in his impossibly neat way which involved no crumbs anywhere. Sirius had no idea how he did it. The sandwiches and peach flips vanished in record time and Sirius was guiltily aware he’d eaten more than his fair share.

“Sorry Moony.”

“Hey, quit apologizing. You can do me a favor instead.”

Sirius flinched as if Remus had just struck him. He pressed back against the arm of the sofa but if Remus really wanted… He dropped his head and waited while his stomach churned and his pulse thudded sickly.

“Padfoot? Please don’t look at me like that. Sirius? I don’t know what I said but I’m sorry. Please Padfoot.”

Remus sounded so anxious that Sirius risked a peek at his face. There was no sign of James’ lustful grin so he uncurled a little and asked,

“What sort of f-favor, exactly?”

“Just to explain Triplicate Jinxes to me. But if you don’t want to that’s fine,” he added hurriedly. “If you’d rather we can go and find James.”

“No! I mean no, it’s okay. I’d be happy to. I’m sorry, I was just being stupid as usual.”

“Sirius Black you are not stupid and I don’t ever want to hear you say that again.”

Sirius blinked at his friend’s sudden vehemence.

“But Moony I am stupid. Look at what I did to Snape and – and you.”

“Certainly it was a foolish thing to have done and I would have preferred it if you hadn’t. But Sirius, you lost your temper and made a mistake, that makes you’re human, not stupid. You didn’t mean to hurt me.”

“Never. Never ever Moony, I promise. I didn’t even want to hurt Snape I only wanted him to shut up. He wouldn’t stop saying… well anyway he wouldn’t stop prodding at me. I only wanted him to go away and leave me alone, Moony.”

“I understand Sirius.” Remus put the plates on the floor and shifted closer. “And I’m beginning to think there was even more going on than I originally thought.”

“Huh?” Sirius wasn’t sure what that meant but he didn’t really care. Moony was smiling at him so affectionately that he began to believe he might yet get his friend back. He smiled back and Moony’s smile grew. Under the scrutiny of Remus’ kind, steady brown eyes, Sirius felt truly warm for the first time in months.

“Padfoot, can I ask you a question?”

Sirius blinked and shook himself. “Sure.”

“How, I mean, what do you think about James and Lily?”

“Think about?” asked Sirius cautiously. He wasn’t about to say the wrong thing now, not when he and Remus had just signed a new truce.
“Yes. For example, do you think they make a good couple?”

“Oh.” Sirius grinned, that was an easy question. “Yes I do. They look good together. And Lily’s the only person I’ve met who can stand up to James instead of getting swept away.”

“Can’t you?” asked Remus. He had his analyzing face on, as if he was puzzling out a new bit of magic.

“Can’t I what?”

“Avoid getting swept away?”

Sirius laughed. “Well if you want to extend the metaphor I guess you could say I can sometimes direct the flood if I try hard enough but actually stopping James when he’s decided he wants something, I haven’t got a hope in hell.” Suddenly his most recent failure to defy James’ wishes rose to the front of his mind and he shivered. Tucking himself a little further under his blanket, he muttered, “Wish I could.”

“What was that?” asked Remus, although Sirius was fairly sure he heard him the first time.

Sirius shook his head. “Nothing. I think Lily and James make a great couple. I just hope nothing goes wrong. Prongs would be devastated.”

“So why-” Remus stopped abruptly.

“What?”

“Nothing. It’s just sometimes I don’t understand James at all.”

“No?” A sudden, horrid thought made Sirius’ world spin dizzily, “He isn’t, he isn’t bothering you, is he Moony?”

Remus looked puzzled. “What do you mean?”

Sirius collapsed back against the sofa, weak with relief. Then he kicked himself mentally, of course James wouldn’t bother Remus, Remus was too good and decent for that.

“Padfoot, what do you mean?” Remus’ gentle face tightened with concern

“Nothing,” mumbled Sirius, studying his hands.

“Padfoot, how is James bothering you?”

“He isn’t. He’s my best friend. Everything’s fine.” Sirius wasn’t even sure he was convincing himself but thankfully Remus dropped the subject and began to ask him about Triplicate Jinxes.

Sirius enjoyed himself until, inevitably, James came looking for him when Lily went off to her Potions Club.

“Hey Padfoot,” he caroled, grinning all over his face, “Can I talk to you a minute?”

“Sure,” said Sirius as brightly as he could manage. Reluctantly he began to gather up his pile of notes.

“Hey,” said Remus, “Where do you think you’re going? You promised you’d help me with this essay.”
“Uh?” said Sirius.

“Oh give over Remus, you can spare him for five minutes.”

“That would be fine, if it were for five minutes. If Padfoot goes off with you, I shan’t see him for the rest of the evening and I need to get this essay finished.”

“Come on Padfoot, this won’t take long.”

Sirius knew he should be willing to oblige his best friend but he was warm and comfortable and talking properly to Remus for the first time since he messed up with Snape. He simply couldn’t bear to give it up.

“Sorry Prongs,” he hunched up apologetically, looking up beseechingly at his best friend. “I think I’d better stay.”

“Very well,” said James grumpily, “I’ll let you off this time.”

Sirius breathed again as James ambled across the room and joined a game of poker, Mordred’s rules.

“You can go if you want to,” said Remus quietly.

“No,” gasped Sirius, attention snapping back to Remus, “I’m happy here.”

“You seem more relaxed too, or did.”

“I’m fine.”

Remus shifted around on the sofa until he was facing him and rested one hand on his arm. Sirius leaned into the touch.

“Moony?”

His face very serious, Remus said, “You know Padfoot, if you were in trouble or if someone was, was bothering you, I’d do my very best to help you. I’m the Gryffindor prefect, so we needn’t even mention it to the Professors, not if you didn’t want to.”

Sirius twisted anxiously. “It’s nothing important Moony. What’s a favor between friends after all?”

Remus’ face grew very thoughtful and his brown eyes inspected Sirius in a way that made him nervous. He had already said too much. Somehow being with Remus relaxed all his usual defenses.

“It’s okay Moony, honestly. You don’t need to worry about me.”

“Of course I worry about you. You’re my friend, Sirius, and something is making you unhappy. I thought I knew what it was but I think I made a fundamental error.”

Sirius was still caught up on what Remus had said first, “I’m your friend?”

“Of course you’re my friend.” Remus stared at him, blank astonishment scrawled across his face, “Padfoot how could you think you’re not?”

“Well I was so stupid with Snape. And you’ve been really distant, since, well since this summer actually.” Sirius bit his lip to stop his errant tongue and looked down at his hands. Any moment now Remus was going to start laughing at him for coming over all girly.
He didn’t say anything though. After a moment Sirius risked a quick peek under his lashes. Remus was staring at something in the middle distance.

“Sorry.”

“It isn’t your fault. I was the one who misunderstood.”

“Sorry.”

“Sirius it is *not* your fault. I’ve been an idiot.”

“Moony you aren’t an idiot. You never run your mouth off and say stupid stuff you regret later.”

“Might be better if I did. You really aren’t upset about Lily finally agreeing to go out with James?”

“No, why would I be?” Sirius wasn’t keeping up with this conversation. He had no idea why Remus was so fixated on this point. “I think it’s brilliant. I’m really pleased for James.”

That seemed the wrong thing to have said because Remus’ face grew rigid and there was a distinctly wolf-like gleam in his eyes.

“Maybe I do understand James at that.”

“Remus?” he asked worriedly.

“I need to think about this. Now do you think we need to put anything in this essay about the way anger can amplify the effects of a jinx?”

Sirius was puzzled but grateful for the abrupt change of subject and offered his opinion that it wasn’t really what Professor Flitwick was looking for. Remus accepted this and suggested mentioning the use of foci to channel a jinx. The Marauders pranks often involved charming such foci so it was something they knew a lot about.

Their discussion was a bit wide-ranging for the essay but Sirius had ideas for three new pranks to run past James and he was allowed to watch Remus expound. His friend tried so hard to come across as colorless and unnoticeable but when he was talking about a subject he found fascinating his eyes glowed, his face lit up and even his hair bounced. That was the real Remus and Sirius hadn’t seen him in, oh, so long.

He was concentrating on soaking up as much of Remus’ presence as he could so James took him completely by surprise. Arms suddenly flung themselves around his neck and shoulders shocking him almost out of skin. Fighting his way free of the suffocating hug, he twisted round, teeth bared. James’ cheerful face grinned at him.

“Down boy, down. Geez but you’re jumpy today.”

Heartbeat returning to normal, Sirius resettled himself on the sofa.

“What do you want Prongs?”

“Me and Wormtail are going on a kitchen run. Coming?” James smacked his shoulder encouragingly.

“Nah, I’m not hungry.”
“Oh come on Padfoot. You’re getting boring in your old age.”

“James, he said he was fine.” There was something very close to a snarl in Remus’ voice. Sirius blinked at his friend.

“Yowch,” James jumped back pretending his fingers were burnt. “You’re bloody touchy lately Moony. Even birds don’t get permanent PMT.”

“Prongs,” protested Sirius. Remus just glared steadily at James.

“Fine, fine,” James said, “Come on Wormtail,” he slapped Peter on the back, “We’ll leave the ladies to their gossip.” He spun on his heel and stalked from the Common room. Peter gave Sirius and Remus a helpless little wave and followed him.

Remus closed his eyes and shook his head.

“What’s the matter Moony?” asked Sirius, “You mad at James or something? What’s he done now?”

Remus just looked at Sirius for a moment.

“Well?”

He sighed, “Don’t worry about it Sirius.”

“Sorry.”

“Will you stop apologizing. It isn’t your fault. It looks like everything’s down to James. As usual. But I’ll sort it out.” Remus’ smile was mostly teeth.

Sirius contemplated defending his best friend but decided he could be such a prat at times that he probably deserved whatever Remus was plotting.

“So I guess we’re finished then.” Sirius stared reluctantly at the dormitory stairs and wished he didn’t have to move.

“I think not Messr. Padfoot.”

“What?”

“You have to actually write the essay Sirius.”

“Oh, yes, of course.” Sirius ducked his head and scrawled for parchment and quill.

“Here you go,” said Remus conjuring him a board to rest his work on.

“Thanks. Here use this inkpot it’s got an automatic refill charm.”

“Thank you.”

They sat companionably together, scratching out the requisite three feet.

Somehow Remus took so long putting the final polish to his essay, he and Sirius ended up getting to bed later than James and Peter. As they staggered into the dormitory together, Sirius looked longingly at the door to the shower. He didn’t truly need a shower and it seemed to be tempting
Morganna to risk James waking up, but on the other hand it would be so good to be clean.

“Sirius,” Remus began and then stopped. Shaking his head slightly, he continued, “If you want to grab a shower don’t worry about keeping me awake. I’ll be up for another hour at least. I’ve got some more reading to do.”

“Really?” It would make things much easier if Remus was going to stay up.

“Absolutely.”

“Oh kay then.” Sirius shoved his stuff into his trunk and grabbed his sleeping gear and wash things. At night, with hardly anyone else using it, there was an almost unlimited supply of hot water. Sirius stood under the scalding spray until his hair squealed spotless and his skin blazed pink. Quickly toweling dry, he scrambled into a pair of boxers, then his pajamas and socks before finally struggling into his old dressing-gown that didn’t quite fit across his shoulders anymore.

Sticking his head around the bathroom door, he smiled to see the soft guarded glow of light from Remus’ wand. He went back and collected his wash stuff and uniform. As he passed Remus’ bed, his heart softened at the sight of his friend. Remus was propped up against the headboard, book between his knees, eyes drifting shut. Suddenly Remus’ drooping head jerked upright and he straightened the book on his lap. He was trying to focus on the page but Sirius was pretty sure his eyes were crossed.

“Remus?”

“Sirius.” His whole body jolted and the book slipped, closing with a thump.

“I think your book is trying to tell you something.”

“Huh?”

“It’s time for all good little Professors to be tucked up in bed.”

Remus laughed softly. “Nice shower?”

“Yeah.”

“Good.”

Sirius took a step towards his own bed, hesitated and then turned back. “You know, Moony, if you’re having a hard time getting ahead before the next full moon, I’d be happy to help.”

“What?” Remus looked so puzzled that Sirius took an apologetic step backwards.

“Well, I just meant, couldn’t I at least give you a hand with some of the extra reading? It’s not fair that you have to work so hard and stay up so late.”

“Oh.” For a moment Remus looked guilty and then he smiled, “You know Sirius, I may just take you up on that.”

“Wonderful. Goodnight Moony.”

“Night Padfoot.”
Sirius woke slowly the next day to the sounds of muted conversation.

James was complaining, “Remus are you ever going to move? You hung around the dorm forever yesterday as well.”

“I told you, I’m waiting for Sirius. You can go down without me. I’ll see you in Transfiguration if not before.”

James made an annoyed sound low in the back of his throat. Sirius straightened up in preparation for getting out of bed and scoured his brain for something to divert his best friend. Fortunately Peter spoke up next,

“Ah leave him be Prongs. Didn’t you say you wanted to try out the Kowalski-Triple Pass? Let’s go and round up Campion and McKee and give it a go. Don’t you play Slytherin in less than a month?”

“You’re right Wormtail, and it will be great if we can put one past those slimy bastards. Okay fine, let’s go check the fourth years’ dorms. We’ll see you later Remus.”

“See you later.”

“Bye Moony,” called Peter as they clattered from the room. After that the only sound was Remus’ soft mutter as he made notes on whatever he was reading. Rolling over, Sirius snuggled back under the covers and listened drowsily.

Eventually though he had to get up and face the day. Crawling out of bed, he smiled as Remus’ enquiring face turned towards him.

“Good morning Moony.”

“Good morning Paddy, sleep well?”

“Yes thank you. Can I help you with something?”

“Oh I just wanted to talk to you about the DADA project. I know it’s not due until the end of term but I thought we could make a start on it, if you like?”

“Sure, absolutely. I’ll just have a shower and get changed and I’ll be right with you?”

“That will be fine, Padfoot.”

“Great.”

Remus insisted they go to breakfast. “Most important meal of the day Paddy.”

Sirius would have been quite happy to skip it but Remus couldn’t afford to miss any meals with the full moon approaching so he went with good grace. After breakfast they had a free period so they went to the library to start researching Shielding Spells for DADA. They became so engrossed they lost track of time, then had to run all the way to Transfiguration and were still very nearly late.

“Sorry Professor McGonagall,” mumbled Remus as they sped inside. McGonagall gave them a disapproving stare but they weren’t quite late so she didn’t say anything.

“Hey mate,” whispered James as Sirius slid into the seat beside him, “Wasn’t sure you were coming, thought Moony might have you locked away somewhere slaving over his homework.”
“I…”
“Mr Potter, Mr Black, if it is quite all right with you I would like to start the lesson now.”
“Certainly Professor,” said James gesturing grandly, “Go ahead.”

McGonagall’s stare should have incinerated James where he sat.
“Thank you Mr Potter. Any more humor from you and you will be staying after class to assist the seventh years practice human transfiguration.”

James contrived to look hurt. Sirius kicked his ankle. McGonagall raised her head and ignored them both.

“Right then class, we will begin. Today we are transfiguring buttons,” she picked up a small box that rattled, “Into budgerigars.” She put a small heap of buttons on Remus and Lily’s desk. Turning sharply she approached James and Sirius. “Or in Mr Potter and Mr Black’s case, canaries.” A handful of buttons crashed down on their desk.

“But there’s no sympathetic resonance. It will be about ten times harder,” protested James.

“You think I am unaware of this Mr Potter?”

“No Professor,” said James, almost meekly.

“Very good then.”

“And you wonder why Lily won’t partner you in transfiguration?” hissed Sirius.

James just grinned.

Lily had refused to swap partners and work with him in Transfiguration, claiming the class made him too unbearably cocky and she’d have to hex him after each lesson to even things up. So James had stayed partnered with Sirius while Remus, the only other Gryffindor in the NEWT class, worked with Lily.

Sirius picked up one of the buttons, it was a shiny silver one that he thought might make a pretty canary. Drawing his wand he set about transforming the button into a generic bird, before trying to refine it into a canary.

James set a small black button spinning and flicked his wand twice. The button launched itself into the air on suddenly flapping wings. By the time it reached the opposite side of the classroom it had become a singing canary.

“That’s not bad, eh?” smirked James, nudging Sirius with his elbow. Sirius cursed as his bird collapsed back into a slightly misshapen button. Waving one hand to disperse the magic build up, he started again. James switched his wand to his left hand and sent another canary to join the first. Sirius rolled his eyes at the blatant showing off. James nudged him again; Sirius’ bird wavered but held its shape.

“Have you been avoiding me Padfoot?”

“No,” he said shortly, concentrating on his transfiguration. Unfortunately James appeared to have finished his work for the day and kept talking,

“Because it feels like you are.”
“Prongs, you’re my best friend. Why would I avoid you?”

“Because you’re too busy mooning over Remus.” James sniggered, pleased at his own wit.

Seeing he was in a mood to keep digging at him, Sirius shifted so he turned slightly away and focused on his canary. He needed to finish his class work before he was utterly distracted.

“Ahh come on Padfoot, you’ve been neglecting your best friend for your little crush.”

Sirius finally had a perfect canary, he just needed to animate it. James slid nearer to him and he could feel his heavy presence all along the left side of his body.

“I don’t think it’s fair,” whined James. He was now so close that his hot breath raised the hairs on the back of Sirius’ neck. “Of course if Remus knew about your little crush…” His fingers crawled around Sirius’ waist.

The contact made him jump, his hand shook and his wand sparked.

The canary shot off the desk, performed a fast spiral turn and dived directly at them, claws outstretched. James jumped back, shouting with shock as the claws scored across his forehead. Sirius yelped as the sharp claws yanked at his hair and scraped across his scalp. The manic bird continued on, dive-bombing Walters and Simpson in the row behind.

“Mr Black,” shrieked Professor McGonagall, “In my experience I have not found canaries to be homicidal.” She swished her wand, trying to catch the errant bird.

“Sorry Professor.”

“Don’t be sorry. Solve the problem.”

“Yes Professor.”

It was easier said than done. The canary was fast, furious and in no mood to be stopped in its rampage. Even James, when he stopped laughing long enough to try, was unable to stop it, collecting another set of score marks for his pains.

The classroom was now in complete disarray. Most of the students were hiding under their desks. Several half-formed budgerigars fluttered around, squalling with terror. Animated buttons pinged across the room like over excited jumping beans.

Sirius wiped away the blood that had dripped into his eyes and miserably wondered exactly how many house points Gryffindor was going to lose.

The canary circled the room and then made for Remus and Lily, the only other students not yet beneath their desks. Lily shrieked and ducked. Remus’ hand snapped up and he grabbed the canary right out of the air. Sirius watched in amazement as, unlike most animals near a werewolf, the bird immediately went quiet and still. It even trilled a few notes of song.

“Thank you Mr Lupin,” said Professor McGonagall, straightening her glasses. “Five points to Gryffindor for your quick reaction.”

Remus looked faintly embarrassed and Sirius knew it was because of the reference to his werewolf enhanced reflexes.

“Uh Sirius,” he said, “I think you better come over here and work on its animation before I let it go.”
“Okay,” said Sirius, edging away from James and crossing the aisle to stand by Remus. He looked at the bird. It squeaked aggressively, wings fluttering against Remus’ hand.

“Sssh,” soothed Remus, “Calm down it’s all right.” He stroked the bird’s head with one gentle finger and it slowly stilled. Remus smiled shyly. “It’s kind of nice being able to hold an animal without it trying to bite me.”

Sirius instantly forgave the canary for embarrassing him.

“Maybe if you try changing its color from this rather violent red it will calm down,” suggested Remus.

He looked at the canary and realized he had turned it a particularly lurid red.

“Yeah, good idea Moony, thanks.” Softly tapping its beak with his wand, he pictured a comforting warm golden-brown. The canary did seem much happier in its new colors and even began to sing. Cautiously, Remus opened his hands and released the bird. It hopped a couple of steps and then flew over to sit on the desk where it looked interestingly at Remus’ almost budgerigar.

“Very good Mr Black,” said Professor McGonagall. There was a tone in her voice that suggested she was decidedly not happy. He cringed.

“Since you and Mr Potter have finished the assignment, you may cease disrupting my class, sit back down, and start on your prep essay.”

“Duck everybody,” said Remus in an indiscreetly loud whisper.

Professor McGonagall straightened up like an outraged poker. “Separately,” she added with a snap. “Mr Black, gather up your things and move to one of the spare seats. I have not separated the pair of you permanently because I hesitate to inflict either of you on any other poor soul. But my patience is not inexhaustible.”

“Yes Professor.”

Tucked safely in the back corner of the room, Sirius worked hard for the rest of the lesson. He wrote up the DADA research (twice, once in his and once in Remus’ handwriting) and finished his Ancient Runes translation, as well as the Transfiguration essay. He was just casting around for something else to do, when Professor McGonagall finally dismissed the class. Stuffing his things into his bag he crossed the classroom to rejoin his friends.

He found that Remus had infected Lily with DADA research project bug and so after lunch all four of them went to the library. Sirius gave Remus the write up in his handwriting and received Remus’ ‘I’m pleased but I feel I should disapprove’ look, all pursed mouth and sparkling eyes. He grinned happily back.

Sirius was bending over to search through one of the obscure corners of the Forbidden Section when hands suddenly grabbed his arse. Twisting away, he banged his head against the bookshelf and whimpered with pain.

“Golly Padfoot,” said James, “You are clumsy. No don’t get up, you’re in the perfect position there.” The hands pulled him back against James. One leg slid forward between his thighs, wedging them open and a half-hard cock rubbed against him.
Sirius clutched at the shelf for support.

“Ohh,” moaned James, “You do feel good. You don’t have to worry, Lily’s gone off to dinner and Remus is deep in some boring book. We can have a nice little quickie where you make it up to me for avoiding me.”

“James I don’t think…”

“Then stop thinking,” ordered James as his hands tightened their grip.

“James,” Sirius almost begged.

“Didn’t we go through this?” he said, sounding thoroughly annoyed. “Do you want Remus to know your queer for him? Keep whinging and I might decide it’ll be more amusing to tell him and watch the fur fly.”

“What do you want?”

“Well first you need to get rid of these trousers.”

One hand still clinging the shelf, Sirius reached down to undo his trousers with the other.

“Sirius!” called Remus’ voice from somewhere nearby, “Padfoot where are you?”

James glided away from him and Sirius straightened up.

“I’m here Moony.”

“Hello Padfoot. Hello James, aren’t you going to dinner with Lily?”

“Yeah, just leaving.” James grabbed his bag from the floor and stalked away.

Sirius summoned up a smile as he turned to face Remus. He was grateful for his timing but it was going to be murder when James caught up with him.

Then he got a good look at Remus and all thoughts of James dropped away. Remus’ eyes were huge in his pale face and his arms were clenched around his stomach, as if someone had just punched him.

“Moony, are you all right? What can I do?”

“Padfoot, did James really..? Are you letting him because of me?”

It took Sirius a second to process what Remus was saying and understand what it meant.

“You, you know?” His knees gave way and he scrabbled at the bookshelves for balance. Remus caught his arms and lowered them both to the floor. “You know.”

He had to pant for breath as the world span around him. The only stable thing was Remus’ face and his anxious brown eyes. Reaching out he tried to grab hold of his friend to steady himself. His shaky hand was captured in two warm, firm ones. With something to cling to, his vertigo eased up enough for him to realize Remus was talking softly.

“It’s okay Padfoot, I promise. Just calm down. Please Paddy, I promise everything is okay.”

Letting the rope of words haul him back, Sirius’ choky gasps for breath eased.
“There, that’s better,” praised Remus, “Here sit up a bit. It’s okay Padfoot.”

“You don’t hate me, for, for liking you.”

“Oh no Padfoot. I’m,” Remus shuffled nervously and peeked sideways at him, “Well you could say I’m pleased.”

Everything froze back in place. Remus was still right there but he abruptly seemed a million miles away.

“I see,” said Sirius, because he did.

He extracted his hand from Remus’. With a great effort, he forced his suddenly stiff and uncoordinated fingers to start undoing his trousers.

“What are you doing?”

“Getting naked,” he replied dully. Because he would shatter completely if he heard Remus’ quiet voice asking for a favor. He’d learned his lesson. It would be less painful to just let Remus have what he wanted.

“Sirius! No! Stop!” Remus grabbed his hands. “Stop,” he urged more gently.

“Oh? Don’t you want..?” Confused, he tilted his head to study his friend.

“Well, yes I do.”

Sirius’ head dropped.

“But not like that Sirius. Nothing like that.”

“You want a blow job then.”

“No Padfoot. Not like this. Never like this.”

Sirius gave up on trying to figure things out. He simply huddled back into the wall and wished he could freeze right through.

“Shit,” swore Remus. “After I’m finished with James Potter, they’ll never be able to find all the pieces.”

Remus cursing at James was sufficiently strange to catch Sirius’ attention.

“Mad with James?”

“Yes I’m mad with James. I’m bloody furious with the bastard. I am this far,” he held up his hand, thumb and forefinger so close together Sirius couldn’t see the gap, “From going to Dumbledore and having him expelled.”

“What for?”

“What for!?” Remus shot to his feet and glared down at him. “Sirius look at yourself. And it’s been going on for months.”

“Me and James? But we’re just exchanging favors Moony.”
“That wasn’t an exchange of favors I overheard. That was damn close to-”

“No, no, no,” he broke in quickly. “We’re just exchanging favors.”

Remus sank back down to the floor. “Sirius, you are not ‘just exchanging favors’. If that’s all it was you wouldn’t be so miserable. James should be hung for hurting you like this.”

“No, no Moony. James is my best friend. He’d never hurt me. Honest he wouldn’t.”

“Padfoot,” Remus began gently, taking Sirius’ hand in his.

“No,” said Sirius firmly. He had to make Remus understand. “James wouldn’t hurt me. James is my best friend.” He’d rebuilt his whole life on those two facts. They had to be true.

“Sirius,” Remus tried again.

He shook his head violently and brought his knees up to his chest, wrapping his arms around his ankles.

Remus sighed. “Okay fine. But I know now, right? So you don’t need to exchange favors anymore.”

“Right,” mumbled Sirius, a bit doubtfully. He didn’t really want to try that argument on James.

Remus took a deep lungful of air, paused, and then all the breath rushed out of him like a punctured balloon. He shifted so he was sitting next to Sirius and wrapped one arm around his bowed shoulders. Sirius sighed softly and slumped into his friend’s warmth.

“Oh Paddy, what am I going to do with you.”

Sirius didn’t say anything, just snuggled a little closer to Remus’ bony shoulder. He rubbed his face against the scratchy wool of Remus’ robe and luxuriated in the scent of his friend. He thought that maybe this was what home was supposed to feel like.

Eventually Remus said,

“Come on we need to get up.”

Reluctantly Sirius sat up straighter and arched his back to stretch his cramped spine. Remus pulled away from him and stumbled as he tried to stand up.

“Are you all right?”

“Fine. My leg’s just gone to sleep.”

“Sorry.”

Remus stopped attempting to lever himself upright and fixed Sirius with his fiercest glare.

“If you apologize one more time for something that isn’t your fault, you will regret it.”

“Sorry,” said Sirius automatically.

Remus growled. “Just give me a hand getting up.”

“Sure.” He jumped to his feet and helped support Remus as his ankle buckled again.

“I’m fine. I just need to walk it out for a bit. Come on, we should go to dinner before there’s none
left.”

Sirius baulked.

“Or we could go down to the kitchen and beg something from the house elves?” Remus continued smoothly.

“Kitchen, please.”

“Okay then.”

Remus took them the long way round to the kitchens and they didn’t see anybody on their way there, or on the way back to Gryffindor tower. Unfortunately, when Remus opened their dormitory door, the first thing Sirius saw was James sitting at the foot of Sirius’ bed, long legs propped up on his trunk. His stomach knotted solid and he wished he hadn’t allowed Remus to coax him into eating so much.

James slouched further back against the bedpost and crossed his legs at the ankle.

“Good to see you Padfoot, finally.”

“Uh hi Prongs, Wormtail.” Sirius nodded to Peter who was burrowed in pillows on his bed reading. He glanced up nervously, “Hi Padfoot, Moony.”

Remus didn’t say anything, just hooked his thumbs into the waistband of his trousers and stared at James.

James leaned forwards, bending one knee to use as a prop for his elbow.

“Need to have a word with you Sirius. Moony, Wormtail, if you’ll excuse us.”

“I don’t think so,” said Remus over Sirius and Peter’s muttered acceptance.

“What?” asked James. He cocked his head to one side, puzzled.

Remus straightened up, “I said, I don’t think so. In case you’ve forgotten Prongs, none of us are your personal property.”

“I don’t know what your problem is Moony, I just want Padfoot to do me a favor.”

A violent shudder shook through Remus. Concerned, Sirius rested one hand on his arm.

“You all right Moony?”

“I’m fine.” Remus shook off Sirius’ hand and stepped in front of him. “Sorry Prongs but Padfoot is no longer available.”

“Oh, so what? He’s your property now? Your dog?”

“No, but as he is my boyfriend, I feel some favors are simply inappropriate.”

Sirius stared at Remus, unable to believe his friend was publicly claiming him as a boyfriend. The idea sent a flush of warmth pulsing through him. He tugged at Remus’ shirt sleeve, hoping to hear more. Remus flashed him a quick smile but his head snapped back up when James spoke.
“I don’t think you understand…”

“No James, I don’t think you understand. And I’m fairly sure Lily holds very similar ideas to me on the appropriate behavior of boyfriends.”

James glared, “You wouldn’t.”

“Try me.” Remus folded his arms resolutely. James kept glaring but Remus just hitched his shoulders forward and glared back. Eventually James’ gaze dropped and his lips set into a sulky pout.

“Fine. Come on Wormtail, let’s leave the poofers to it. Let Remus play with his dog.” James flounced out the dormitory. Peter gave a nervous squeak, waved an apologetic hand in Sirius and Remus’ direction, and followed him.

Sirius guiltily realized he had no interest in chasing after his best friend to try and calm him down. He was far more interested in Remus’ declaration.

“Am I your boyfriend now?” He held his breath.

“Well,” Remus rubbed at the back of his neck, avoiding his eyes, “I’m sorry Sirius, I shouldn’t have just announced it like that but I wanted to make James back off.”

“Oh,” said Sirius, his held breath had got caught in the back of his throat and he had to swallow hard.

“You don’t have to agree, you understand? But, uh, if you’d like to be my boyfriend, I’d like to be yours.”

“Really?” Sirius cautiously stole a look at Remus from under his lashes but couldn’t stop a hopeful smile lighting up his face.

“Really, truly,” said Remus. He was smiling too and slid one arm around Sirius’ waist. Sirius sighed happily and burrowed into the embrace.

“Let’s sit down Padfoot.” Remus walked them over to his bed. “You understand that you don’t have to do anything. I don’t want,” he looked away and ran his hand through his hair, “It would kill me, Padfoot, if I thought you were ‘exchanging favors’ with me.”

Sirius shook his head mutely. He didn’t have the words to explain it but sitting here with Remus felt completely different to being with James.

“So you promise me you’ll tell me if I do something you don’t like?”

Sirius nodded his head as that was clearly what Remus wished but he had no intention of ever saying anything. Remus was here, wanting him, he wasn’t going to do anything that might disrupt that.

“Right,” sighed Remus, “Do you at least want to be here with me?”

Sirius nodded his head firmly, sending his black hair flying.

“Well that’s something at least.”

He patted Remus’ hand anxiously and smiled tentatively.

“It’s okay Padfoot. Come on let’s get more comfortable.” He tugged on Sirius’ arm and crawled up the bed to curl up against the headboard. Suddenly feeling too big for his skin, Sirius clumsily
followed him. Remus was watching him intently in a way that made him feel very not-safe but at the same time not in the least scared.

He couldn’t quite look Remus in the eye and so he focused his gaze on Remus’ fine-boned hands. A flood of images from half-remembered dreams of those hands welled up and Sirius blushed fiercely. His fingers tingled with the desire to touch but he wasn’t sure he dared. He glanced swiftly at Remus, appealing for help.

“It’s okay Paddy. From what I’ve guessed James wasn’t very… That is I don’t think he was very reciprocal in his attentions.” He blushed, “So Pads is there anything he wouldn’t let you do that you’d like to try?”

Sirius stared at Remus, trying to gauge his sincerity.

“Come on. I’ll do anything you want, I promise.” Remus slid down the bed until he was lying on his back and held out one hand coaxingly.

“You can tell me Sirius. As I said, I’m up for anything. Whatever you want.”

Sirius thought he saw a whisper of fear in Remus’ eyes before it vanished behind his calm, supportive smile. That was wrong, Moony wasn’t supposed to be afraid. So, gathering up his courage, he leant over Remus and pressed a brief kiss to his unresponsive mouth. Pulling away, he saw Remus was just watching him blankly.

Cringing back on his heels, Sirius waited for Remus’ verdict. He had shifted up onto his elbows and was staring at him with such an arrested expression that Sirius had to bite his lip to stop himself apologizing.

“Oh Padfoot.” Remus’ voice was full of utter dismay and it made Sirius’ heart ache.

“I’m sorry Moony. I didn’t… I mean, I’ll just…”

“Oh my poor Padfoot.”

Remus surged up from the bed. Before Sirius knew where he was, Remus’ arms were round him and he was being held tightly and his face covered with butterfly-light kisses. Remus was crooning under his breath, wonderful words like Mine, and Always, and Love.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!