Lily hears a laugh, a loud clank and then the sound of something breaking. That is followed by a curse, and then the hasty footsteps of students trying to make a quick but quiet retreat; after six months as Head Girl, and two years as Prefect before that, it’s a sound she knows well.

She sighs and draws her wand, but before she can round the corner, James does.

Lily frowns, because it’s past curfew and she’s on patrols with Hestia Jones tonight, not with him, so he really ought to be in Gryffindor tower. She glances around the corridor; it’s also unusual for him to be without Sirius or one of the other two.

“James? Why aren’t you in the tower?” Then, she thinks that maybe he and his mates are responsible for the noises she just heard and opens her mouth again, but he lifts a finger to his lips, expression oddly serious. “What-?"

He shakes his head and passes her to open a nearby door, gesturing for her to get inside. She does, because she’s worried now. It’s a broom cupboard, barely big enough for the two of them, especially when he steps in after her and pushes the door closed.

“Lumos.” Gentle white light blooms from the tip of his wand and he sets it on the nearest shelf.
“What’s happened?” Lily asks in a whisper, because there’s a proper war going on outside the school, and a smaller one happening inside the school, so it’s not hard to imagine the worst. “Is everything all right?”

James hums, plucking her wand out of her hand and placing it beside his. His hands settle on her hips, warm even through the fabric of her shirt. Behind his glasses his eyes are unworried, bright with their usual mischief, and there’s a small smile playing at the corners of his mouth. He tugs her a little closer.

Lily sighs, fighting a smile.

“James,” she says, exasperated. “I’m on duty.” Ignoring that, he moves into her space and leans down, so she turns her head to the side. “James.”

He’s undeterred, the point of his nose running along her jaw, and then he ducks his head, lips finding her neck.

His mouth is hot and slow, a mix of open-mouthed kisses and gentle sucking - he knows better than to leave marks where a teacher might see them - and the occasional graze of teeth.

“She says. “Duty, and- and anyone could find us here - we can’t.”

His nose nudges her earlobe and she draws in a shaky breaky, shivering even as she covers his hands with her own and eases them off. He lets her but doesn’t pause in his ministrations until she twines their fingers together and gives them a squeeze.

Even then, he only pulls back an inch or so, lifting his head so their noses brush together, his breath warm on her face. Their lips aren’t touching, not quite, but he’s close enough that she wouldn’t even have to lean in to kiss him, only stop leaning back.

“Hmm?”

“We can’t,” she says, trying for stern and failing completely; the skin on her neck is still tingling where his mouth has been.

“Can’t we?” he murmurs, pressing his forehead to hers, trailing his thumbs over her palms.

“No,” she says, and lifts her chin to give him a quick peck on the lips in apology.

A vaguely disapproving noise escapes the back of his throat and his mouth chases hers, fingers tightening around her own to keep her where he wants her. It’s a gentle press of lips, quick, chaste and close-mouthed, and she allows it, amused again. He gives her another, and another, and she doesn’t realise they’ve been moving until her back hits the door with a gentle thud.

James kisses her again, this time lingering when she expects him to pull back, and then his lips begin to move, slowly, coaxing.

It’s impossible not to respond so Lily does, parting her lips with a sigh. James’ next breath is almost a groan. He crowds in, solid and warm, his mouth firm and insistent on hers.

She eases her hands free of his, flicking up the ends of his shirt - already untucked because it’s after hours and because he’s never particularly good at keeping his uniform tidy anyway - so she can trail her fingers along his warm skin, over the ridges of his hip bones.

“I thought we couldn’t?” he asks against her lips, pushing into her touch. She can feel him smiling,
pleased with himself.

“Shouldn’t,” she says, letting her head tip back against the door. He picks up where he’d left off on her neck, one hand twining itself into her hair, the other plucking open the buttons of her shirt so he can slip his hand into her bra. He nips at her neck, flicks his thumb over her nipple, and Lily’s back arches, fingers tightening on his sides.

She slides one hand up his back, and the other down the back of his trousers, pulling him closer. He comes willingly, pressing her further into the door, one leg slotting between hers, and she can feel him, hard against her hip. She shifts to give him a little friction and a low sound escapes him like he’s just been punched, hips jerking involuntarily.

She huffs a laugh and he nips at her neck, harder than before, tweaks her nipple once, then slips his hand free, moving it down, down, down between them and under her skirt.

It doesn’t take him long at all to find his way into her knickers; his thumb brushes over her clit - this time it’s her who jerks - and his fingers run over her wet lips before he presses two in.

“Ohhh,” she says, and then his mouth is back on hers, hot and hungry, swallowing the sound. His thumb moves in quick circles and his fingers scissor gently while she adjusts to them, then begin to stroke and curl inside her.

“Ohokay?” he asks, and she lets out a shuddering breath, nodding, forehead against his shoulder, arms around his neck to keep herself upright.

The heat in her builds, inching from where his fingers are moving, through her chest and into her arms, into the tips of her own fingers, and down her legs, into her toes.

She’s close, so close it’s almost unbearable and then she’s going still and tight, and then she’s falling apart, shuddering and biting his shoulder to keep herself quiet.

“Fuck,” James says, thumb and fingers still moving, but lighter now, working her through it. She slaps weakly at his arm when it becomes too much and he slides his hand free, wiping it on his shirt, kissing her sweetly, desperately. “Lil,” he murmurs, kissing her again. “Lil.” His hands are working frantically at his trousers, hers at his tie, then at the buttons on his shirt, shoving it open so she can trail kisses up his chest and neck, so she can get her hands on his skin again.

He shoves his trousers down, and she pulls down his pants. He’s leaking and impossibly hard and she wraps her hand around him, stroking, meeting his eyes in the dim wandlight.

“Shit,” he says, and jerks. He grabs her wrists, pinning them above her head, and grips the base of his cock with his other hand, breathing rough. Lily gives him a moment and when she thinks he’s on less of a hair-trigger, leans forward to kiss and suck at his neck, hands burying themselves in his hair.

He laughs, low and breathy, and then his hands are on her hips again, tugging her skirt up, and peeling her knickers down.

She steps out of them, kicking them away, and then he’s sliding hands over her bum, lifting her, pressing her against the door.

She wraps her legs around his waist, loops her arms around his neck, and smiles; they’re the same height like this.

He gives her a crooked grin back, looking utterly debauched - hair tousled, glasses askew, pupils
blown, and she knows she can’t look any better. His gaze drops and he bends his head to place
scorching, sucking kisses over her breasts.

He moves, repositioning himself and her, and she can feel the tip of him nudging her. She shifts in
his grip, trying to line herself up with him, trying to sink down, but he keeps her where she is,
seemingly content to rub himself over her, through her wetness.

He’s teasing her, she realises. And, not only is it working, but he knows it is, his grin growing
wider and wider each time she tries to wriggle herself onto him and fails. He gives her a nipping,
playful kiss on the mouth, then eases her down onto him, inch by excruciatingly slow inch.

It’s torturously good, the stretch, the intimacy of it, and he’s not as in control as he’s pretending to
be; by the time he’s fully sheathed in her, he’s flushed and his eyes are a little unfocused.

Lily clenches around him deliberately and his hands spasm on her bum. When she laughs at that, he
sucks in a breath, cock twitching inside her. He positions her more firmly against the door, draws
out, then rock his hips forward. That stops her quiet laugh, turning it into a surprised little gasp.

“Fuck.” He rocks forward again, a slightly harder this time, and the door rattles. Lily freezes but
James merely spins them around, pressing her against the stone wall opposite. It’s cooler and
rougher through her shirt, but not in a bad way, and then James moves again and she forgets all
about the wall.

His kisses her open-mouthed, his tongue hot and slick against hers. She curls her fingers into his
hair, runs her other hand over his chest, his shoulder, up his neck to cup his jaw, his stubble
prickling her palm.

He rolls into her, slow and deep, and then again and again, still deep but faster now as he finds his
pace, her arching into him each time. He twists his head, breaking their kiss briefly so that he can
kiss her palm, and then his lips are back on hers, a little more urgent now, his grip on her a little
tighter.

“Lil,” he says, in a ragged whisper. She kisses him hard, feeling warm and full and slips a hand
between them so they might finish together. He surges up into her, the tip of his his nose sweaty
against her cheek, gasping against her mouth, his kisses quick, desperate little things, and between
each one he’s whispering her name: “Lil, Lily, fuck , Lil-”

Heat is pooling in her abdomen again, beginning to spread, his cock thick and hard and incredible
inside her, and she’s gasping now, breath catching in her throat, James’ name and all sorts of other
nonsense tumbling from her mouth: “James, there, there, yes, please, there, James, like that, don’t
stop, don’t- James-”

“Shh,” he breathes, and tried to swallow the sound with a kiss, but they’re both breathing too hard
for it to last. “Lil, shh, fuck .” His cock and her fingers have found the perfect rhythm and she’s so
close, back arching into the wall. Her eyes find James’ and she’s babbling:

“I’m- James, I- James-” One hand tightens on her, the other comes up to cover her mouth, and he’s
perfect, they’re perfect and then she’s shattering, trembling in his arms, eyes still locked with his.
James’ pace falters and he jerks once, twice, a third time, cursing, groaning, eyes screwing shut.

She can feel him pulsing inside her, and he removes his hand from her mouth so he can use it to
hold her up, even as he sags against her. His breathing is heavy against her neck, hair sweaty
against her cheek, forehead resting on the cool stone above her shoulder.
For several long moments, they just breathe.

Then, James lifts his head and kisses her cheek, her nose, the corner of her mouth. She turns her head so she can better kiss him back, fond and unhurried. Lily feels warm and tingly and full and also rather like someone’s vanished her bones.

Eventually he pulls away and she gets a quick look at his expression, which is equal parts drunk and smug, and then he bends slightly to pull out of her and set her back on her feet.

Lily sighs at the sudden emptiness and then scrunches up her face as warm, sticky wetness begins to trickle down her bare thighs.

James tugs his pants and trousers back up and pulls a handkerchief from his pocket. He wipes himself off, then tucks himself away and kneels to clean Lily, kissing her just above the knee when he’s done. She does her best to smooth his hair down, but it’s even more of a lost cause than usual.

“I have the best ideas,” he says, grinning, as he gets to his feet.

Lily’s not sure if he means the handkerchief or their tryst, so she just shakes her head, amused, combing her fingers through her hair, then giving up on that and putting it up in a messy bun that she won’t have to deal with until she gets back to her dormitory.

She and James fix their shirts and ties, and James retrieves her knickers - which are draped over a stained, splintery bucket - and offers them to her.

“No, thanks,” she says, grimacing; James arches an eyebrow but tucks them into his pocket - knowing full well she has nowhere to put them because whoever designed the girls uniforms designed them without pockets - and pulls the door open for her with a flourish. She rolls her eyes and steps out into the corridor, James behind her, just as Sirius, Remus, and Peter step around the corner.

“Well, well, well,” Sirius said, waggling his eyebrows. “What have we here?”

James - the prat - just grins and runs a hand through his hair, looking sheepishly pleased with himself. Lily, mortified, and uncomfortably aware that her knickers are in James’ pocket, pretends that this is not at all the case and draws herself up to her full height (a full three inches shorter than Peter, who is in turn the shortest of the boys).

“What are you lot doing here?” she asks. Sirius always looks rather smug, and Remus has the best poker-face she’s ever seen, but Peter looks immediately guilty. Realisation dawns on her. “It was you lot I heard!” She rounds on James. “And you-!” He’d distracted her, doubtless to give the others time to clean up whatever mess they’d made. She’s not sure who she’s more cross with - him, for trying it, or herself, for letting him succeed. She scowls. “I ought to dock points and give you all detention.”

“For what?” Sirius asks, cocking an eyebrow. “You can’t prove anything.”

“I can prove you’re out after curfew,” she says, gesturing at him. Sirius’ expression sours, but Remus places a hand on his arm.

“Don’t be mad with her, Padfoot,” he says. “She’s our Head Girl, she’s bound by duty to uphold the school rules.”

“Thank you,” Lily grumbles.
“And I sympathise, Lily, I really do,” Remus continues. “You see, as a Prefect, I am similarly bound to punish transgressions and misdemeanours.” He sighs as if this is some great burden, and then abruptly straightens, giving Lily a pointed look, eyes twinkling. She sighs. Sirius cackles. James sidles closer and drapes an arm over her shoulders but she shrugs him off.

“Bed,” she says tiredly, pointing down the corridor to the staircase. “Now. Or I really will dock points.”

Remus smiles, amused, and Sirius has a speculative glint in his eye, but Peter grabs them by the elbows and steers them away before either of them can say anything else; Peter has always had the best self-preservation instincts. He calls a goodnight over his shoulder.

“You too,” Lily says, frowning up at James.

“Are you coming with?” he asks. She gives him a withering look. “Patrols ended five minutes ago.” She checks her watch and sighs when she sees that he’s right.

“Fine,” she says, and sets off after the others.

“You’re not mad, are you?” James asks, falling into step beside her.

“Only a little,” Lily says, because she’s known James for seven years now, and therefore knew exactly what she was getting into when she agreed to go out with him and so shouldn’t have expected anything different. “And probably more at myself than you.”

“Don’t be,” James says, tucking her against his side. “Stronger witches than you have fallen prey to the charms of James Potter.”

Lily crooks an eyebrow.

“Not recently,” he says. She waits. “And- well, actually, you’re probably one of the strongest, most stubborn witches I know, so- you know what, disregard all of that.” A reluctant smile escapes Lily and he grins down at her, eyes warm. “Except the part where you shouldn’t be mad - at either of us.”

“Give me another reason I shouldn’t be, then,” she says.

“Because I love you?” He’s clearly going for casual, but his cheeks have turned pink and he’s suddenly a bit tense against her, like he’s nervous about how she’ll respond. It’s actually a bit adorable.

“That so?” she asks, deciding she’ll torture him a bit, though her chest feels warm and fluttery. He gives her a wary look.

“Is… er… is that a good enough reason?” he asks, face still red.

“Do you think it’s a good enough reason?” James blinks, expression shifting from wary to panicked, so Lily takes pity on him; she wraps a hand around his tie for leverage, tugging him down to her level so she can kiss him, slow and smiling. “I love you too, you know,” she says, and feels something unknot inside her; she’s almost blurted it out several times in the past few weeks only to catch herself fearing it might be too soon, or that she should wait for a more significant moment than watching James use his cutlery to explain a Quidditch manoeuvre to Sirius at the breakfast table.

James’ eyes crinkle at the corners and he kisses her again, his almost bruising enthusiasm at odds
with the reverently tender way he’s cradling her face and neck. Lily presses herself closer to him, hands creeping up to bury themselves in his hair-

Someone clear their throat.

Lily tenses and pulls away from James but it’s only other boys - Sirius exasperated, Remus amused, and Peter pink cheeked and not looking at either of them - peering over the banister of the staircase, one level up.

“Curfew…?” Sirius says rather pointedly. “Bed…?”

James raises his middle finger good-naturedly and Sirius barks a laugh that echoes through the stairwell and makes several nearby portraits grumble about the time.

“Good night, Sirius,” Lily says, equally pointedly, but begins to walk again.

“He’s got a good point, actually,” James says in a low voice, head bent close to hers. “About bed.” He noses at the side of her head, nips her ear, twines his fingers with hers. “Don’t you think?”

“You really do have the best ideas,” Lily says, bouncing up onto her toes so she can kiss his cheek, and then gives his hand a little tug.

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