You're My Kaleidoscope
by orphan_account

Summary

When Remus wakes up to find a baby on his doorstep, he has no idea what to do. Especially when it turns out the baby has come from a drunken one-night-stand. With no idea what to do, Remus is surprised the moment his two neighbours decide to step in and help him raise the baby. All is well--for a year, until Teddy's birth mother's sudden return, and then the fight for Remus to keep his family together begins.

Notes

So this came from a prompt by hiddenbookshop who wanted a sudden Single Dad Remus who doesn't know what to do about raising a baby, and in steps his two adorable neighbours to help.

Somehow that idea turned into this monster fic which I have been working on for absolutely AGES, and I've just had time to sort out the ending. I feel like maybe I rushed the end so I'm sorry if that bit is complete shite.
Also as I've never had to deal with custody/contact issues with my kiddo, or the legal system, please take the representation with a huge grain of salt. I did some research, but not loads. So half of it is probably wrong. But with how busy I am, I couldn't be arsed to go back and make sure it was all correct, so just think of it like some Television Courtroom Drama or something.

Also if any of these issues trigger you, like custody or misgendering, or prejudices against LGBTQA+, please take caution.

x

Violets and purples
Diamonds and circles
You're my kaleidoscope
I love every minute
You've got me in it
You're my kaleidoscope
-A Great Big World

***

“…weren’t supposed to die you bastard. You weren’t supposed to leave me.” “You know they say talking to yourself isn’t a good sign.”

“Yeah well, nothing in my life has been a good sign so…might as well, yeah?”

“…I think I like that attitude. Can I get us a couple drinks?”

“Make it a dozen and you’ve got yourself a deal.”

***

It was the most of that night Remus Lupin actually remembered. That was eleven long months ago and he didn’t really think about it often. He’d come off the first anniversary of losing his boyfriend and managed to wander into some pub in Soho. He recalled a cascade of dark hair and dark coloured eyes, and a really low-husky laugh, but that was about it.

He’d gone out to get black-out drunk—which he accomplished. He’d woken up in a strange flat, alone in a bed, and managed to scarper without being seen. He was still half-drunk and had a pocket full of cash, but had left everything else upstairs and didn’t realise it until he was at home without his keys.

Unfortunately he’d escaped so fast he couldn’t even begin to remember where he’d been, only that he’d had to spend thirty, nauseating minutes on the tube. Luckily his landlord was home and offered to make him a new set of keys for the small price of fifty quid added to his next month’s expenses.

He shouldered the cost as he didn’t have a choice. He’d have to replace everything he’d lost but that was better than the walk of shame back to the random person’s flat to retrieve what he’d forgotten.

Instead he put his last remaining photo of Ben away in the box he kept under his bed, and decided to get on with his life.
It worked out fairly well for the most part.

Until the day it didn’t.

***

It had just gone six in the morning late September when the furious pounding on his door woke him from a heavy sleep. He’d gone to sleep early the night before from a violent migraine induced by too many revisions as he’d been ill the week before and was desperate to catch up. He’d forgotten to eat all day, so his blood sugar had crashed and shovelling down a sandwich before passing out didn’t do him any favours.

His neck hurt, like he’d pinched a nerve, and he wanted to violently murder the person who thought they should keep pounding on his front door.

“The bloody fuck could anyone want at this hour,” he groused, swinging his legs to the floor. He padded through the flat in nothing more than boxers and a t-shirt—honestly anyone who wanted to disturb him at this hour deserved an eyeful of potential bits—and he threw it open.

There were a hundred things Remus could have expected to see sat at his front door. A person delivering something, a scout, solicitor, Mormon Missionary, even. Maybe a clown delivering balloons. Hell, even an axe murderer would have been less surprising to find a pram, a baby nestled in a heavy, fleece blanket, and a stack of papers on top of the little bonnet.

He blinked, then glanced up and down the corridor, but there was no one there.

Obviously the small infant didn’t knock, so maybe the parent of this child had forgotten something downstairs? Or?

He glanced at the stack of papers and saw his name scrawled across the top. They were encased in a cream coloured envelope, and the handwriting was shaky at best. But that was absolutely his name.

The child whimpered after a second, and Remus reared back in horror. “What the bloody fuck is happening.”

Almost as though he was afraid the child was some sort of elaborate prank—his across the hall neighbours were known for doing weird, barmy shit to the others in the block—he picked up the envelope and opened it. Several, rather legal-looking forms were in a neat stack, with a small note written on too-yellow paper.

Remus,

I’m not sure if you remember me, and the only reason I was able to find you was from the things you left back at mine. I’m not even sure how to write this letter, or what to put in it. I cannot keep this baby. I know it’s unfair of me to drop him on you like this, but I didn’t know what else to do. I’m leaving the country and don’t think I’ll be back. Enclosed is all of the paperwork and even the name of a lawyer if you want to put him up for adoption. Also there’s the information for you to have a DNA swab done, although you were the only person I’d had sex with in several months so there’s no chance he isn’t yours.

I think I’ve signed everything I need to, but you can always file for abandonment. He’s been fed and there are a few clean nappies, some bottles, and his formula in the bottom of the pram.

His name is Edward Lupin—I gave him your name, not sure why.
I am sorry about this.

Take Care,
Anna

Remus stared at the letter, reading it another dozen times before the small baby in the pram let out a whimper. Remus finally gave the infant a proper look, and although his entire being wanted to reject the idea, the child looked like him. Almost exactly. He’d seen enough of his baby pictures and under the small cap he could see a few, dark errant curls.

Shaking, he took in a breath but before he could do anything else, the child let out a massive wail. He panicked, slamming the door, then realised that whatever else he was going to do, he couldn’t just leave the child in the middle of the corridor and hope for the best.

He wasn’t a monster.

Swallowing, he opened the door again, and with trembling fingers, hooked them round the front of the pram and wheeled it inside.

When the door was shut, the baby continued to wail and he continued to stare at it without any idea what was supposed to be done.

There was a baby. His baby, apparently, created from some black-out one-off and now sat on his doorstep. Who the hell, who the ruddy hell did something like this?

Anna, apparently. Whoever she was. The phantom pub woman with the dark hair and light eyes.

Taking a breath, willing himself to find the little piece of him that was a bloody adult, he lifted the whimpering babe into his arms.

The child did not calm down like it would have in the movies. Oh no, the baby actually got more upset and started to arch his back and wriggle.

Terrified he might drop this thing, he shuffled over to the sofa and sat down, holding the baby awkwardly against one arm. He couldn’t figure out how all those parents actually did this. He couldn’t get the baby comfortable and the more he cried the more Remus wanted to cry, and if he was getting upset, he couldn’t think what he was supposed to be doing.

Remus lost time. He didn’t mean to, but the thing is, nothing in the world could have possibly prepared him for this. He had no idea what to do. He’d never touched a baby in his life, let alone had any idea how to make one just stop screaming.

He continued to hold the small thing awkwardly between both hands, somewhat perched sideways on his knees until there was a violent pounding at his door. Thinking maybe, just maybe, the mother suddenly changed her mind, or she’d left the baby by mistake—or had been the subject of some violent, fever-induced hallucination, he jumped up and ran for it.

He still had the baby clutched awkwardly between his hands, and he managed to balance him on his shoulder whilst fumbling for the knob.

It was not, however, the mother.

It was his two, disgruntled looking neighbours wearing similar scowls, arms crossed over t-shirted chests.

“Mate,” said the taller, Indian bloke whose normally messy hair was even worse. He was squinting for lack of glasses, and he did not look happy. “We’re not entirely sure why you suddenly have a
baby, but it’s been an hour. Any chance you know how to stop the screaming?”

“An hour?” Remus choked out, his voice going high and cracking a bit.

The shorter one looked a mixture of concerned and amused. “Yeah, man. An hour. And no offence to the whole babysitting job you’ve got, but it sounds like you’re shit at it and we had a really late night. We’d like a little sleep.”

Remus froze, then without meaning to, burst into tears. Ugly sobs tore from his chest and he was shaking, his knees going suspiciously weak. He tried to calm himself, but everything in the last hour came crashing down and the next thing he knew, the baby was swept from his arms by the shorter one, and the taller bloke had an arm round his shoulders, guiding him to the kitchen table.

Remus thought maybe he should look over to see what the shorter one was doing with the baby, but suddenly the crying stopped and his kettle was on, and there were three mugs of tea with bags poking out over the side.


“Soya, but it’s a bit dodgy,” Remus said, his voice hoarse with the sudden outburst of emotions.

“Black it is then. What’s your name, by the way? We’ve not properly met.”

Swallowing, he took a breath. “Er. Remus.”

“Remus. Well I’m James, and the apparent baby-whisperer over there is Sirius.” James tilted his head round the side of the wall and peered into the lounge. “Si? What the bloody fuck did you do?”

“Changed a nappy. Also save some of that water, Jamie. I think this kid needs a feed.”

James looked over at Remus. “You’ve not changed or fed this kid? No offence, but who lets someone like you babysit.”

“I’m not,” Remus said, and his voice went all wobbly again. “It’s not…” He licked his lips. “I’m not babysitting.”

James’ eyes widened as he plonked the tea in front of Remus. Sirius entered the kitchen a second later with the baby on his shoulder, a bottle with a yellowish looking powder at the bottom, and he filled it with half cold water, and half hot from the kettle. He gave it a shake, then grey eyes flickered between Remus and James.

“Have you stolen this baby?” James asked after a second. “Look, I’m involved with law enforcement so you should probably tell me. I’m sort of obligated to…”

“No,” Remus said in a rush. “No I…it just appeared on my doorstep with some…some letter,” he spat, his head shaking. “She left a sodding baby on my doorstep with a letter and she fled the bloody country.”

Sirius looked down at the baby who was now nestled in the crook of his arm, the bottle being sucked down hungrily, and then he looked back at Remus. “This your kid? I mean it actually does look like you a bit and…”

“So she says,” Remus muttered, putting his hands over his face and taking in a shaking breath. “Bloody hell.”
James looked incredibly concerned as he curled his long fingers round his mug. “I think you ought to start from the beginning. Sirius’ has got the kid all sorted so deep breaths. And tell us what happened.”

So Remus did. He started from the beginning. From losing Ben to a sudden infection, leading to his black-out night at the pub, to his quick scarper the next morning. He then went on to talk about his migraine, and waking up that morning to find a baby in a pram on his doorstep.

James and Sirius listened to the entire story, then James was up searching for and finding the papers. He came back to the table, taking a seat close to Sirius as he emptied the envelope and started to go through everything.

Remus watched carefully out of the corner of his eye, sipping his tea and wondering how the hell Sirius was so good with the baby, and how he’d fucked up so bad in the short time the infant had been in his flat.

“You’re well fucked, mate,” James said after a long pause. “I mean, I could have someone in my office look over these forms, and I can easily get someone sorted for that test. You ought to be sure. You’ve no legal standing over this child and technically social services should be taking him.”

Remus felt something unpleasant twisting in his gut. “Wouldn’t that put him…somewhere unpleasant.”

“Maybe, though it’s not hard to find homes for infants,” James said carefully.

Licking his lips, Remus looked fully at the baby who had now fallen asleep in Sirius’ arms, and he felt his throat constricting. “Fuck. I don’t even know what I’m doing. I don’t know how to hold a baby, or change a nappy. I don’t…I haven’t…”

“Hey,” Sirius said very softly, reaching out the hand that wasn’t cradling the infant to touch his arm, “it’s alright. Really. We can help, right, Jamie?”

James gave a determined nod. “Absolutely.”

Remus let out a choked laugh. “This is mad, you realise. Abso-fucking-lutely mad.”

“More than,” James agreed. “But listen, I’m a lawyer and I have some connections, alright?”

Remus barked out a harsh laugh. “I’m a student, mate. I’m…I…” He looked at the baby again and had a sudden, harsh realisation that it was his baby and was he seriously considering thinking of abandoning it just as carelessly as the mother did. “Could I erm…”

Sirius’ face softened instantly, and he nodded. “Come on, to the sofa. It’s more comfortable there.”

Remus rose and followed the shorter one into the lounge, plonking himself down against the arm of the sofa, and Sirius carefully leant over him.

“All right just…your arm like this,” he positioned Remus carefully, then eased the baby down into the crook of his elbow. “Support him like this,” Sirius said, and pushed Remus’ arm slightly under the baby’s back. “Not so hard, yeah?”

Remus cleared his throat and looked down at the sleeping infant who hadn’t budged. “Yeah. Not so hard.”

Remus expected them to go after that, but instead James made a call and Sirius took a seat on the
cushion directly next to him. He looked down at the baby, his long, thin fingers reaching out to tug on a baby-soft curl.

“Looks like you, you know.”

Remus let out a rough laugh. “Yeah. I noticed that.”

Nudging Remus with his shoulder, Sirius tried for a smile and Remus felt his stomach twist. Sirius was incredibly good looking—something he hadn’t noticed before in all the madness that was trying to reconcile having a baby dumped on his doorstep.

But he absolutely was. Long, thick black hair in a plait hanging down his back. His face was thin, eyes a sharp grey and narrow, lips full, round nose. His teeth were very bright, turned in at the canines just a little, and he worried his bottom lip a bit with them.

“So, I have to say Remus, this is the maddest thing I have ever seen. And my teenaged years were reckless as hell. So congratulations.”

Remus barked a low, tense laugh. “Thanks. I er…try? Honestly my life is so incredibly dull, I’m not sure I can actually do this.”

Sirius leant his head on Remus’ shoulder and stroked his hand over the baby’s hair. “Do you want to?”

“I don’t know,” Remus admitted. “I never thought about having children. I mean, I’m starting University in my late twenties, for fuck’s sake. My boyfriend died two years ago, and I’ve not had a relationship since then. I can barely manage myself, and now this kid?” He looked down at the small, round nose that was exactly like his, and he closed his eyes tight. “But how can I abandon him? How can both parents just…throw him away.”

“You know, giving him to a family who wants him isn’t throwing him away,” Sirius said, still stroking the curls. He pressed his cheek a little harder to Remus’ shoulder. “But I do know what you mean.”

“Just,” Remus breathed, “one of his parents ought to love him.”

Sirius hummed. “You know, neither of my parents loved me very much and I turned out okay. In the end.”

Remus eyed him for a second. “You turned the entire water supply green last month. And you put rotting bacon in flat H’s post box.”

“Mostly okay, then,” Sirius said with a tiny snicker. “Besides, flat H deserved it. She…said some rude things.”

Remus hummed. “Rotting bacon worthy, rude?”

“Told me I was going to hell and should stop dressing like a little girl when she spotted me going out in my new dress.”

Remus swallowed. “Ah. I disagree with the bacon, Sirius.” When his neighbour eyed him, Remus said, “That’s more of a rotting fish type of comment.”

Sirius buried his face in Remus’ shoulder so his laugh didn’t wake the baby. “Next time I’ll come to you, then.”
“Good.” Remus felt like something in his chest was unknotted as he sat there with the baby, and with Sirius at his side. He didn’t know either of them except a handful of hello nods passing by in the last month, but something had very clearly changed. “Why are you two here?”

One of Sirius’ expertly groomed eyebrows lifted. “Like existentially or why are we in your flat right now?”

“The latter.”

Sirius huffed a laugh. “Because you had a screaming baby and we were trying to sleep off all the vodka we stupidly drank last night.”

Remus’ eyes went wide. “You both have hangovers?”

“Tiny ones, no worries,” Sirius said. He nuzzled Remus’ shoulder sleepily. “I’m not fussed.”

Remus licked his lips, then looked over at Sirius who seemed very at home cuddled up like that. “Could you erm…show me how to do all that…nappy and bottle stuff? I mean, how’d you learn all that? Have you got kids?”

Sirius barked a laugh, then winced when the baby pulled a face. He settled back down again as Remus bounced him, and Sirius beamed. “See, you’re a natural already. And I learnt it from babysitting my cousin, Nym. She’s fourteen now, but her mum and dad were both at Uni when she was born, and I wanted to escape my shit parents so I’d go over there and mind her so they could get revising and everything done. Learnt a thing or two.”

Remus let out a slow breath. “I’m going to be complete pants at this.”

“Maybe,” Sirius said very quietly. He returned his long fingers to the baby’s curls and smiled. “But I think most new parents are. And anyway, you’ve got me and Jamie now.”

Talking of, James chose that moment to walk back in the lounge, and he allowed a small smile across his lips at the sight of Remus, Sirius, and the baby cuddled up together. He sank into the armchair and breathed out. “So you’ll be alright to keep the baby if you like. Or we can have social services come. They can’t get a family lined up straight away, but they have group homes…”

“What’s that? Like an orphanage?”

“They’re not called that anymore,” James said.

Remus felt his gut twist at the thought of this helpless baby lying in a cot all day, no one to hug or comfort him when he was cold or lonely or frightened. It really didn’t matter how he’d come to have this child, or what mistakes he’d made, he wasn’t going to let a baby suffer.

“No,” he said fiercely. “No I…I mean I don’t know what the bloody fuck I’m doing but…”

“Well I’ve also looked up a couple of shops nearby that sell baby things,” James said, now grinning openly. “So we ought to go and pick up some supplies.”

Remus was shaking his head though. “Look, I’m not destitute but I’ve not got the money for…”

“We do,” Sirius piped up. “Jamie’s bloody loaded, and my uncle left me a rather impressive inheritance. So let us.”

“Look that’s nice of you but…”
“Mm, no,” Sirius said decidedly. “You can either come with us and pick out the things you’d like for your son, or we can do it for you. But I’m not entirely sure I’d trust James’ taste in things. I mean, look at him. Just look.”

James scowled. “My fashion taste is perfectly fine, thank you.”

“You think you can wear red and maroon together,” Sirius said with a wave of his hand, managing to nuzzle closer to the baby and Remus. “No. Remus, trust me, you want to come along in all this.”

Swallowing thickly and trying not to think too hard about how he’d got to where he was right then, he nodded. “Alright, then. But I’m going to pay you back the moment I can.”

Sirius wrapped a small baby curl round his index finger and gave a distracted hum. “Whatever you say, Remus. Whatever you say.”

***

Sirius dragged James back to their flat after Remus was sorted with the baby so they could get ready for the day. All traces of hangover were forgotten in the midst of this sudden plan to rescue the neighbour and his sudden child, but James wasn’t entirely sold on the whole process.

“Listen, Pads, I just…do you really think it’s a good idea to get so involved?”

Sirius, who was fiddling with the kettle, did a slow turn. “Sorry? What?”

“I’m only saying,” James replied, his tone very careful, “that this is the bloke you’ve not had the bollocks to chat up in the lobby for the past two months, and suddenly now you want to co-parent his random child?”

“First of all,” Sirius said, holding out his hands to tick things off his fingers, “I don’t have any sort of bollocks anyway, which is well good because they’re far more fragile than my vagina.”

James rolled his eyes at that. “Right.”

“Secondly,” he said, touching his delicately polished middle finger, “it’s a really good vagina.”

“Are we really talking about your vagina right now? Or are you deflecting?” James asked, crossing his arms.

Sirius rolled his eyes. “Thirdly,” he said pointedly, “I just needed a really good reason to chat him up. Fourth, he clearly needs our help. He’s hopeless.”

“That he is,” James said, his voice weary. “Dad thinks the whole thing is barmy and we ought to call social services in on it, but I think if we can get him to have the DNA swab, we can bypass the whole issue. We’ll still need to attempt to find the mother.”

“The bitch who dumped her baby on someone’s doorstep and ran?” Sirius asked, his eyes wide and incredulous.

“Protocol,” James said, running a hand down his face.

Sirius handed over a cup of tea and then sipped his own. “But you’re on board, right, Jamie?”

“Yes,” James said with a sigh. “I’m on board. I think I’ll be too close to represent his case if we need
one, but we can call Reg in on it.”

Sirius quirked a brow. “Oh that’s going to go over well. I can’t wait to see the look on his face when he finds out what we’re doing.”

“Well he needs cases so…” James trailed off and shrugged. “Anyway you should go shower and get ready. I don’t think that baby’s going to be content for much longer.”

Sirius nodded, hurrying off for his shower to scrub the smell of old vodka off his skin. He hadn’t really slept, and he hadn’t quite worked out all the liquor he’d consumed the night before, but thinking about Remus’ distressed face and the tiny baby curls all over the infant’s head, it seemed to make it not matter much at all.

Fifteen minutes later James was in his shower, and Sirius was pulling on his binder instead of his sport’s bra. He went with an old, thread-bare Carpenter’s t-shirt and a pair of jeans. He was just tying up his hair and smearing a bit of lip gloss over his bottom lip when there was a knock on their flat door.

He smiled, knowing exactly who it was, and rushed for the door. Remus was there, looking a little concerned. The baby was awake, hiked up on his shoulder and quiet, but rather alert. Remus blinked, then the tips of his cheeks went flushed. “Er. I was…well he’s awake you see and we haven’t gone over that whole nappy business.”

Sirius chuckled. “Right, yes. Let me just tell Jamie to meet us at yours. Hang tight a second.” Sirius turned and privately took a moment to appreciate Remus. Even petrified and dishevelled, he was adorable. He was incredibly tall, broad in the shoulders, with darker olive skin, freckled along his cheeks. He had wild, dark curls which Sirius knew the baby would share eventually, and wide amber eyes. He couldn’t tell if the baby shared Remus’ big nose, or the slight overbite, but he hoped so.

Rushing down the hall, Sirius paused to grab his boots, then poked his head into the bathroom. “I’ll be at Remus’, alright? Meet us?”

“Go on,” James said.

Sirius turned and found Remus hovering just inside the door, bouncing the baby a little. He gave Sirius a sheepish smile. “He er… seems to like this.”

“Yes that’s actually good. You really are a natural, you know.” Sirius put his hand at the small of Remus’ back, and ushered him across to the other flat. Inside, Remus had taken apart the pram, and had all the supplies the mother had left spread out on the floor.

“So er. I mean I think I get the basic idea.”

“It’s not complicated,” Sirius said. He reached his hands out, and Remus handed over the baby. “What’s he called, by the way?”

“Well his birth records said Edward.”


“Teddy’s sweet,” Remus said. He stroked down the baby’s chubby cheek with one finger.
“I think he likes it,” Sirius said, grinning.

The baby was watching with dark, wide eyes, not fussing at all which was a miracle after all the wailing he’d done before.

Sirius watched Remus watch his son for a moment, his heart thudding hard against the insides of his ribs. He’d fancied Remus from afar since the moment they moved into the flat, and this was just making it worse.

“Alright, so just watch carefully and you can do the next one. I mean, it’s never going to be exactly pleasant,” Sirius added as he sorted the wipes, “but eventually you just get over it.”

Remus nodded, looking vaguely apprehensive as Sirius pulled the tabs off the nappy and peeked inside. It was mostly clean, just wet, and Remus sighed. “He’s not cut.”

Sirius blinked at him. “Cut?”

“Circumcised. If my parents were alive and they knew I’d skipped a bris, they’d have my bollocks.”

“Oh. Oh you’re…”

“Jewish. Yeah,” Remus said, running his fingers into Teddy’s curls as though he couldn’t stop himself. “Not really practising but…” He sighed as he watched Sirius give the baby a swift once-over with a wipe, then switch the wet nappy for a dry one. “I probably won’t. Such a barbaric custom.”

Sirius smiled. “You like that, don’t you Teddy? Not having your bits all cut on?”

Teddy stared up at him, and both Remus and Sirius laughed.

“I think he agrees,” Remus said. He reached out and lifted the baby, cradling him like Sirius had shown him before. He was getting better at it, more natural, and Sirius had to force himself to move away before he did something stupid, like lean over and kiss him.

“I think so as well.” Sirius disposed of the nappy, then went back to lounge on the floor next to Remus. He pulled a face as he sat too sideways and his binder shifted a little, telling him it was getting too stretched and he was going to need a new one soon.

“You alright?”

Sirius huffed, “Bloody fucking binder’s too loose.” He froze then, realising he hadn’t yet come out to Remus. Sure he’d only been in his sport bra that morning, but with all the commotion, it was likely Remus hadn’t noticed.

Remus merely raised a brow. “Ah. You’re…?”

“Trans?” Sirius offered, a slight shrug and trying not to hold his breath because the very last thing he knew he’d be able to stand was that rejection, or transphobia. He liked Remus.

“Maybe you can find a new one if we’re going out,” Remus suggested, his face going back to passive. Teddy had one of Remus’ fingers now, clenched in his little fist.

“Mm, they’re more of an online thing. It’s no worries,” Sirius said. He looked at Remus again, but if the other man was bothered, he didn’t show it. His face was passive, almost in awe as he continued to stare at the baby. When he looked up at Sirius after a moment, his cheeks flushed again, and a tiny
smile played at his lips. Sirius felt butterflies in his belly, and he took a breath. “Well James should be ready soon. You want to feed him before we go?”

“You reckon I should?”

“Unless you want scream-y-pouty baby on your hands,” Sirius warned.

Remus paled at the thought as Sirius picked Teddy up and cradled him. “Good point. Erm. So. Where do I begin, exactly?”

Sirius chuckled a little and pointed at the supplies now spread out on Remus’ small table. “Go on. I’ll walk you through it.”

***

It was one hour, one very messy nappy, a change of clothes for Remus and Teddy, and a second bottle before the three men and one small infant were ready to go.

James sorted the pram down the stairs, confused how the mother had got the baby up there in the first place with everything, but he decided not to question it. “She was determined to leave a baby on your doorstep like Moses in the fucking reeds,” James groused.

Sirius threw his head back and laughed. “Moses in the fucking reeds?” He held the door as Remus put Teddy in the pram and James pushed it out the door to the street. “Where the fuck do you come up with this?”

“Remember when I dated Gideon that summer?” James said, waving one hand impatiently. “He kept dragging me to those bible classes on Wednesday nights and they kept telling these barmy stories about Moses and raining frogs and shit.”

Remus snickered. “The ten plagues. That’s…an interesting choice.”

“He was an interesting man and it was a very interesting church,” James said. “I’ll stick to Hindu, if it’s all the same. At least we’ve got several mad gods to choose from instead of just the one.”

Sirius rolled his eyes, then linked his arms with Remus as they started off toward a small shop which boasted the best reviews on baby items. It was called Lily’s, and it was only a few minutes away from the flat which would work very well if Remus needed anything else later.

The three of them entered the shop, immediately met with a soft, tinkling version of Mozart playing on speakers, and a very faint scent of lavender. The shop was meticulously decorated, shelves bustling with baby items, racks upon racks of clothes, furniture along the far wall, and a sales desk where currently no one was sat.

There was a call from a back room, “Be right with you!” and the men shrugged as they began to browse.

“Alright so, clothes, nappies, more formula. You’ll need a cot,” James was saying as he looked round.

“That’s…an awful lot,” Remus said.

The two were pointedly ignoring him. Sirius picked up what looked like an incredibly colourful scarf. “Oh a wrap! These are good. Promotes bonding and it’s hands-free.” He banged it into the trolley he’d grabbed, and Remus noticed James had already put something called a Baby Monitor,
and several packages of bottles and dummies.

“Sirius, really,” Remus started to protest, but fell silent when Sirius gave him a pointed stare. “I mean, let’s not go too baby mad, alright?”

“You can’t go too baby mad. See the thing is,” Sirius said, and pulled Remus close, “it’s already too late for James.” He nodded over to where James had taken Teddy out of the pram and was attempting to show the baby a hanging mobile as though the baby might actually have an opinion on such things. “So…there’s no stopping him.”

“…or do you like this one?” James was asking Teddy. The baby squirmed, not making a noise, and James nodded. “Hm I agree. We should go with the red, black, and white.” He picked up a box and grinned as he walked over to bang it into the trolley. “We’re making progress. Teddy seems delighted.”

Remus felt something warm rushing through all his limbs and was still confused how this had all happened? He’d gone from solitary University student who lived completely alone—hardly a friend to speak of, to having these two barmy men shopping for a spontaneous infant who was now his.

How?

He couldn’t wrap his mind round it, and he had a feeling there would come a moment where it crashed down on him. For now, though, Sirius was holding his elbow—which he very much liked as he’d rather fancied Sirius from the moment he’d seen him moving in—and they were perusing clothes.

“He’ll need stuff for warm and cool, and not just what fits him now,” Sirius was saying. He pulled a little outfit with ducks on it. “God, this is so cute.”

“Hi there,” came a sudden voice, and the three of them turned slowly. It was the shop girl, tall, curvy, with dark red hair, a smattering of freckles, and wide green eyes. She looked a little confused by the sight of them, but she was grinning. “Is there anything I can help you find?”

James immediately straightened and preened. He held Teddy a little tighter with one arm, and the other went straight to his hair, mussing it up. “Ah no, just need some supplies. We’re sadly unprepared.”

Lily frowned, but shrugged. “Well, we have it all, you know.”

Sirius looked between the shop girl and James, then huffed and strolled over, plucking Teddy from his arms. “Why don’t I take him, and you can sort out the bigger things Remus is going to need. Cot, swing, all that?”

James’ grin widened and Remus was almost embarrassed for him. “Does your shop deliver?”

Remus didn’t hear the answer as Sirius pulled him along to fetch more clothes. They got plenty of little pyjamas, a bunting in case they travelled anywhere cold—in spite of Remus protesting that he never ever left London—and far too many socks.

“Oh. This. Please, Remus.” Sirius was holding up the most adorable pair of pink and purple striped bottoms with little bunnies where the feet go.

Remus grinned widely. “You’re buying him too much. He doesn’t need all this.”

Sirius shook his head as he put several more outfits into the trolley. “There’s no such thing, alright.”
His eyes then went wide and he tore across the store, ripping what was a tiny little leather jacket from a rack. “This. Oh. Oh Remus say yes before you break my heart.”

Remus felt his stomach bubble with warmth as he shrugged. “Yeah, alright. But you’re taking him out in it.”

“Trust me, I do not need to be convinced.” Sirius leant over the pram and ran his finger across Teddy’s cheeks. “Do I, tiny thing?” Sirius’ eyes went wide and he snapped back. “Remus, get over here immediately. He just smiled.”

Remus broke away from the trolley, rushing to the pram where Sirius was bending over, still stroking the baby’s cheeks. At the present time, Teddy’s dark eyes were wide, fixed on Sirius.

“Can you do it again? For your daddy? Hmm? Or me? Smile for Padfoot?” His voice rose up at the end, and after a long second, the baby’s lips quirked up in an unmistakable grin. Sirius threw himself back. “Oh my god Prongs!”

The pair turned to where James was leant on the counter talking animatedly with the shop girl, and he looked over. “What?”

“He smiled,” Sirius crowed.

In spite of him clearly trying to have a letch, James rushed from the girl’s side, across the room so Sirius could show him the smile. It took several tries, but eventually Teddy rewarded James with the same grin.

“He likes me best,” Sirius declared.

“He just thinks you’re weird and funny, mate,” James said, clapping him on the back.

Sirius gave him double Vs as James went back to the front, and Sirius grinned up at Remus. “Sorry, that was just really brilliant.”

“Yeah,” Remus said, feeling strangely out of breath. “Pretty brilliant.”

***

By the end of the spree, the three of them had far too many things to haul back to the flat, but somehow managed it. Lily, the shop girl, said she’d have the bigger furniture delivered the next day, and all was well until Remus came to a sudden realisation back at the flat.

“I have lectures tomorrow. I’m missing my lectures today!” He sank into his chair as Sirius paced the kitchen floor with Teddy who was feeling a bit overwhelmed by the previous outing. “Oh god. I’m never going to…how am I going to…”

“Easy, Re,” Sirius said, laying one hand on Remus’ shoulder. Amber eyes drifted up to Sirius’ passive face. “We’ll work it out.”

“How?” Remus moaned. “I’m going to have to stop again—God I am never going to get through this. How can I…”

“Hey no, you’re not,” Sirius said. He eased Teddy into a cradled position and put one of the new dummies in his mouth. Teddy frowned round it, sucking with extreme protest, but the cries stopped. “There’s three of us, yeah? And James and I know people. My timetable is whatever I want it to be, so we can work it out.”
Remus blinked up at Sirius. “Okay that’s too much. We don’t even know each other. We’re all-but strangers. And hell I didn’t even know I had a baby twenty-four hours ago. How can you offer…I mean…I don’t even know what you do, Sirius.”

Instead of being insulted, Sirius just smiled quietly. “I own an art gallery. And I have two assistants who can run day-to-day stuff if I need them to. Honestly Teddy can even come along if he wants. Don’t you? And I resent the stranger implication. Besides, Teddy likes me. He wants to come along. Don’t you?”

Teddy spat the dummy out and gave a pitiful cry.

Remus sighed, but Sirius merely shook his head and shifted Teddy so his legs were lengthwise along Sirius’ thighs, his thumbs under Teddy’s shoulders, palms and fingers cradling the baby’s head. “Now now, none of that. How about a song, yeah? Chang chang chang chang chang,” he sang quietly, melodic, heavily accented, “nong koi hen chang reu plow, chang man duua dtoh mai bao, ja-mook yaaao yaaao riak warng wong…”

Teddy instantly quieted, and Remus interrupted the song, “What is that?”

Sirius looked up, a faint blush across his cheeks. “It’s the Elephant song. My darling mother would never ever lower herself to sing nursery rhymes to me, but I had an aunt who did in secret. And look, he’s quiet now.”

Teddy was staring up at Sirius with wide eyes.

Taking a breath, Remus clasped his hands on the table. “I appreciate the offer, but you do realise this is my problem to deal with.”

“Yes, but it also takes a village, Remus. You were left with a sodding baby on your doorstep, and no one should ever have to experience that.” Sirius looked down at Teddy and sighed. “Also I like you. And Teddy. I’m not doing this because I feel sorry for you, you know.”

Remus blinked. “But why? Do you like me, I mean,” he blurted. “I mean…you’re all…and I’m just…”

Sirius barked a laugh which startled the baby, and he jumped up again, going into another verse of the Elephant song until Teddy calmed again. “You’re more than you think you are, Remus. So really, what do you say?”

Licking his lips, he sighed. “I…suppose. If you really want to. But if at any time it’s just too much, or you get tired or…”

“I know how and when to say no,” Sirius assured him. “Now, why don’t you fix the mini’s bottle and we’ll see about getting him down for the night. He’ll have to sleep in your bed until the cot gets here.”

“Which I can sort out,” came a voice from the door. James strolled in with yet another sack from Lily’s and he laughed when Sirius gave him a pointed look. “I forgot he needed more blankets.”

“You forgot you needed to finish your letch,” Sirius pointed out.

James muttered something under his breath in Hindi, then rolled his eyes toward Remus. “Alright, mate? Looking a little green round the gills.”

“Oh fine. Just you know, processing the whole I have a child abandoned by his mother on my
doorstep.”

James laughed, clapping Remus on the shoulder. “Well luckily you have two very attractive, very attentive neighbours who really like babies.”

“And redheads who run baby shops,” Sirius said.

James sank into one of the chairs and held his hands out for the baby. Sirius quickly passed him over, and Remus rose to mind the bottle, trying not to think too hard about how these two really did seem to enjoy this. James was a natural, in fact. Sirius might have got Teddy to stop crying, but James was incredibly soft round the edges every time he saw the baby, and used any chance he got to give Teddy a little snuggle.

Remus was still feeling apprehensive, like if he wasn’t absolutely careful he’d drop him or… something. He couldn’t imagine being any good at this, and the thought of settling in for the night without Sirius and James there made him feel like his stomach would escape out through his toes.

But he had to work it out. He was choosing to do this. The thought of his son being sent to some orphanage with no one was too much to bear.

“Oy, just got a text off Nym and she said she’d be happy to mind the baby if we ever need her when she’s on her school hols.” Sirius beamed as he looked up from his mobile. “You’ll love her. She’s really great.”

“She is, that,” James said, nosing Teddy’s chubby cheek. “Anyway, Remus, I’ve got your DNA appointment sorted for tomorrow, if you can come by my office at noon.”

Remus licked his lips. It would mean missing another lecture, but the sooner he could get everything sorted, the better. “Yeah, I could. Is it far?”

“Nah,” James said. “You can meet Reg as well. Sirius? You want to come along and terp? I would but I’ve got a meeting at half noon that dad absolutely insists.”

Remus blinked as Sirius was nodding. “Terp?”

“Reg is Deaf,” Sirius said with a wave of his hand. He plucked the bottle from Remus’ hands, tested the temperature, then handed it off to James who immediately cradled Teddy. “He’s really good, works in tandem with Bill Weasley, one of the junior Lawyers at the firm. He’s fucking vicious, so you’re lucky. Nepotism and all that.”

“Ah,” Remus said. He looked at his son who was furiously sucking down his feeding, and he sighed. “Alright well…I guess then we’ll…start the process.”

James looked up at him carefully. “If you’re having second thoughts…”

“No,” Remus said in a rush. “It’s all just very overwhelming. I’m not sure how I’m going to be able to actually do this. I’m not…I’m no good at well…much of anything.”

Sirius walked over, dropping a hand onto Remus’ shoulder. “Well you’re not alone, you know.”

Remus lowered his eyes. “Yeah, I know.” But that was the problem. Remus had not been alone before, and the Universe had ripped everything away from him. After Ben died, Remus had cut off friendships and relationships with nearly everyone he knew because he refused to feel that kind of pain again. He couldn’t grieve if he had no one left to lose, and it was better this way.
But it seemed like the Universe had different plans for him now. Whether it was to punish him for being alone for so long, or to reward him for all he’d suffered well, he wouldn’t know until it all came crashing down.

Or until it didn’t.

The fear wouldn’t go away, but for now, he decided to take it as it was.

***

Remus had arranged pillows from both his flat and from James and Sirius’ round the baby like a castle wall to make sure Teddy couldn’t go anywhere. There was a space for him to sleep, though he doubted he would get any at all with worrying that Teddy might somehow escape. Or wake up and he wouldn’t know. Or stop breathing. Or any hundreds of crisis scenarios running through his head.

He stood there for a very long time, watching the baby slumber—dry and fed, swaddled the way Sirius had showed him how to do. The flat was so quiet now, with the other two gone, and he felt a thumping inside his head. How had his life come to this? What led to this?

He knew the obvious steps which had taken him there, but to have a baby? To have a baby abandoned by his mother out of sheer panic and whatever it was going through her head.

Remus would be the biggest liar if he hadn’t said secretly he’d always wanted a family. To raise a child, love them—provide support in a way he never received growing up. His parents had loved him alright until they learnt he wasn’t straight, and he wasn’t going to stay Orthodox. Then he realised how conditional it had all been.

By the time his mam had passed he had been separated from them for so many years. When Ben died, their memory offered no comfort.

But in spite of the fear, and the worry, still being half-convinced he couldn’t make this work, he wanted to. Looking at that small, helpless form he helped create, yeah. He wanted to.

Just before he reached for the bed, he heard a soft tapping at the door. Thinking maybe Sirius or James had forgotten something, he quietly padded through the lounge to the door and opened it. Sirius was stood there in a too-big t-shirt and socks, his hair a bit in disarray, his face scrubbed clean and sleepy.

“Er. So I was thinking,” Sirius said, picking at his thumbnail a bit, “maybe you could use some company tonight. Babies wake up a lot and we could trade off. I’ll take the sofa or…”

Remus acted without thinking, reaching out and grabbing Sirius’ wrist to pull him inside. Sirius let out a surprised laugh, but let Remus lock the door behind him.

“James thought it might be a good idea, until you’re used to the whole thing. I know if it were me, I’d probably have Jamie in the bed with me. Not that he isn’t half the time and…”

“Thanks,” Remus breathed, stopping Sirius’ flow of words.

Sirius grinned. “Look, your bed should be big enough, unless you’d prefer me on the sofa.”

Remus shook his head, leading the way back to the bedroom where Teddy was slumbering. They rearranged the pillows so there was enough space for Sirius on one side, and Remus on the other. They looked at each other over the baby’s head, both wearing a soft smile.
“You doing alright?” Sirius asked in a low whisper.

Remus licked his lips, then nodded. His hand abstractly went out, ghosting over the baby’s curls without putting any pressure on them. “I think I am. I mean, it’s not sunk in yet. Not really.”

“Well you’re doing better than most, you know,” Sirius said. He lifted his arm and draped it across the pillows, reaching for Remus who automatically reached back. Their fingers met, and Remus tried not to read too much into the gesture, or the quiet, content look on Sirius’ face.

“I suppose I could be taking it a lot worse. I just think…” He was thinking, had thought a few times during that day, what Ben might say if he decided to bail on this. He could picture the look on Ben’s face at the very suggestion, though Ben had never ever been one for children.

“Think what?” Sirius pressed.

Remus closed his eyes and took a shaking breath. “I’m scared. I’ve fallen in love only once and he died. And I’m afraid to love anyone like that again. But I already really love this kid and it terrifies me a little. Like what if it’s just something else the universe is going to take away.”

Sirius squeezed his hand gently. “That’s one way to look at it. Another might be that you were out that night because you missed him, right? A lot. And your actions led to this baby. So maybe—and forgive me if this is out of line but—maybe he was giving this to you. Maybe he was tired of seeing you lonely.”

Remus felt his entire chest clench hard, and he swallowed so loud it clicked in the back of his throat. “Maybe,” he said brokenly.

Sirius squeezed his fingers again. “Hey, it means I finally caught your attention and I’m rather pleased about that, you know. Been wanting to for ages.”

Remus couldn’t help his eyes flying open. “You…what?”

Sirius grinned. “Well obviously I noticed my incredibly fit, but incredibly antisocial neighbour and well…now look at us. All cuddled up.”

Remus blinked, then grinned. “Oh my god, Sirius.”

Sirius laughed very quietly and loosened his fingers, letting their palms press together gently, soothing. “What? It’s true, isn’t it? I’m just saying maybe this isn’t the Universe trying to punish you. Maybe it’s trying to make up for how shite things can be. And if it involves me, well I’m all for it.”

“Youre ego astounds me,” Remus said dryly.


***

With the sun woke two incredibly sleepy men and a surprisingly amiable infant. Teddy slept better than they expected him to, though he was up every three hours for a change or a feed. Sirius and Remus took turns with him, although they both woke the moment Teddy let out even the smallest peep.

Teddy had a small fit of crying around three that morning, during Remus’ turn, and after twenty minutes of pacing and bouncing the baby a little, Sirius was up, holding Remus by the waist and singing a song in Thai very quietly until Teddy soothed.
He was re-swaddled and placed back in his cocoon of pillows, and slept that way until six.

With the sun, Teddy looked to be up for a while, so the pair got up, bleary-eyed and stumbling a little. Sirius went across the hall after realising Remus was out of tea and toast, and came back with a huge spread James had gone out to get with his morning run.

There were pastries and coffee, along with tea and some fresh soya, and a bowl of chopped fruit with a sprinkle of cinnamon.

James looked far more rested than the pair who’d been up with the baby, but all three were chipper enough and Remus felt better after getting food and caffeine.

“Alright so you should be able to make it to at least one of your lectures before the noon meeting,” Sirius said, looking over the timetable Remus had scribbled down. He was adjusting a sling round his shoulder, and tucking Teddy into it. “So I’ll meet you er…”

Remus gave the location to his lecture building which wasn’t far.

“Perfect. We can take the tube to James’ office and Reg will be waiting. We’ll get you the paperwork sorted and get the DNA swab done. Then we just wait for the results, get you listed on all the birth records, and I think that’s it. Jamie?”

James, who was blowing raspberries on Teddy’s cheeks and getting no reaction from the baby at all, looked up. “What? Oh…yeah I think so. I’ll go over everything tomorrow after everything’s filed. Dad’s excited about meeting the baby as well. He’s always wanted a grandchild.”

Remus blinked. “Grandchild?”

“Well, he adopts random people,” Sirius replied with a lofty wave of his hand. “Adopted me straight out of my shite parents’ house—did the same with Regulus years later, and trust me he’s going to take one look at you and immediately make you his son. Which of course makes your mini his grandson.”

“You ready to meet your new daadaa today?” James asked, smooshing his nose against Teddy’s cheek.

Remus felt his throat go tight at just how he was being drawn into something he had avoided for so damn long—and god he hadn’t realised how much he wanted it. He smiled, reaching for Teddy and pressed a kiss to his cheeks before passing him to Sirius for the sling.

“Alright. You’ve got my mobile so if anything at all turns up…”

Sirius eased Teddy into the sling, took a moment to adjust him, then grinned as the baby instantly closed his eyes and drifted off. “This is brilliant.”

Remus took a moment to appreciate the sight of Sirius with a bright purple sling tucked heavy over his black shirt and ripped jeans. His hair was up in a high bun, and he looked tired but strangely content.

“Ohay I have to…” Remus glanced over at the clock. “Thanks for the erm…”

James put his arm round Remus’ shoulders and tucked him in to a hug. Pressing a kiss to Remus’ temple, James smiled at him. “It’s going to be fine. I’ll see you soon.” James stopped to press a kiss to Sirius’ mouth, then a little tap on Teddy’s nose before hurrying back across the hall to get ready for his day.
Remus looked at Sirius, unsure how to even depart, when Sirius opened his arms to Remus and he went easily. It was an awkward hug with the baby between them, but Sirius cupped Remus’ cheeks gently.

“It’s going to be alright. Go to class, enjoy your lecture. Relax. Teddy and I are going to have a really good day. I promise.”

Remus licked his lips, then nodded and stepped out of Sirius grasp reluctantly and carefully. “I’ll see you soon.”

He took his takeaway mug of coffee and with that, he left the flat.

***

If he assumed he’d be able to concentrate on his lecture, he’d be wrong. All the while the professor was going on and on, Remus’ mind was elsewhere. Trying to picture Sirius at the gallery with Teddy. He envisioned a hundred scenes of the infant wailing, making a mess, throwing up, leaking nappies, driving Sirius so mad that by the time Remus met up with him, he’d have the baby thrown at him and the request to never call on him again.

Logically he knew it was unlikely. James and Sirius seemed incredibly invested. But how could they be, really? How could it not be conditional at some point?

He was a mess by the time the lecture was over. It was ten til noon and he walked out of the building, surprised to see Sirius already there. He had Teddy out of the sling, cradled, and a couple of girls were cooing over the adorable sight.

Remus could see why. Sirius was attractive as it was, but the sight of him with a baby looking like a proud parent did something to Remus’ insides. Especially knowing that was his baby. Especially knowing Sirius would be leaving with him.

Remus walked over and Sirius immediately brightened. “Ah ladies, I’m afraid the sprog and I must leave you. Hot date, you know.” He winked at Remus and the girls looked very disappointed. Not that he blamed them for that, either.

Remus smirked as he walked up to Sirius’ side and took Teddy from him. He was profoundly relieved to see Sirius in a good mood still about the whole thing, and he nudged him playfully. “Hot date, is it?”

“Well…maybe after,” Sirius said with a grin.

Remus blushed hard as they made their way to the tube. They sat very close together, Remus holding Teddy cradled in his arms as the infant slumbered away. He kept catching Sirius’ eye, feeling his stomach erupt into butterflies, but he stamped it down.

He couldn’t imagine Sirius being properly interested. Not before, and especially not now. Sirius may have enjoyed helping to take care of Teddy, but investing in someone like Remus was something else entirely. And Remus was still petrified. Even the thought of feeling pain the way he had when Ben died—it was almost too much to even think about.

Sirius beckoned Remus along at their stop, and they carefully made their way to the street. The Potters’ law offices weren’t too far, and Sirius breezed in, waving to the secretary at the front. He had a small pass which he swiped at the lifts, and didn’t push a button, though it zoomed up several floors, opening to a massive lobby.
It was less crowded than Remus expected, though there were a few people walking here and there, a secretary desk, and Remus immediately spotted James leant over the older woman at a computer, pointing at something on the screen.

James looked up the moment the lift doors dinged open, and his face broke out into a wide smile. “You’re here! I’m heading off to a meeting soon but I was hoping I’d get to see you before.”

James hurried over, his hands open for Teddy, and Remus carefully relinquished the infant who was now starting to wake up. Teddy’s small bottom lip pouted out and he started to cry a little, but as James bounced him, he settled.

“He could probably use a change and feed,” Sirius said as he leant up on his toes to kiss James’ cheek. “Where’s Dad?”

“On a conference call. He’ll be out in a few,” James said, nuzzling Teddy’s cheek. A few people walking by stopped to coo a little, and Remus shuffled his feet, feeling a little out of place. “Come on, we’ll use my office.”

Sirius grabbed Remus’ hand, squeezing tight and comforting as he dragged them both along a narrow hallway. They stepped into an office, smaller than Remus thought it might be, but it had a sofa which James immediately dropped onto as he began to prepare a nappy change.

Sirius began to sort out a bottle, and Remus stood by, still stunned by how quickly these two slipped into taking care of this small, sudden child.

“How was your lecture?” James asked as he pulled a face at Teddy, making him smile.

Remus shrugged. “I took some notes, but concentrating was…well…impossible. I reckon it’ll get easier.”

“It should,” James said. He grinned and smooshed Teddy’s cheeks with his fingers, laughing at himself. “I showed photos round of you all day,” he said, affecting a voice for the baby. “Everyone thinks you’re just the cutest.”

“Because he is,” Sirius said, and made grabby hands for the baby. When James hesitated, Sirius rolled his eyes. “You’ve got a meeting, you twat. What if he spits up on you?”

James huffed, but swapped places with Sirius so Teddy could get his bottle. Standing up, James dropped a hand on Remus’ shoulder and squeezed. “Really though, doing alright?”

Remus nodded, and ran his fingers into his curls. “Reckon I’m as well as I can be considering.”

James’ hand on his shoulder squeezed a little tighter, almost like he wanted to pull Remus into a hug, but hesitated. “Well it’s going to be alright, you know. Regulus will be here in a few minutes and we’ll get all the papers sorted. Then you can get your swab done—Sirius, you’re going with him for that, right?”

“Absolutely,” Sirius said with a nod. “Andi is handling everything for me, and Marly’s going to be there later. I don’t have to be in until Tuesday next.”

Remus blinked. “Tuesday…but that’s like six days away.”

“Mm,” Sirius said, patting the sofa next to him where Teddy was eating. Remus carefully moved over, sat close to Sirius, and he reached out to thread his fingers into Teddy’s curls. “Like I said, my hours are whatever I make them. I’ve a showing next week for some London artist—fucking
egomaniac shithead but he brings in good money so…” Sirius shrugged, disturbing Teddy’s position enough to make him wail before he grabbed back on to the bottle furiously.

Remus laughed a little at the small frown on the baby’s face. “Well I…appreciate it. More than I can say.”

“Alright, where is my grandchild?” The door swung open, and a tall man walked in. There was no mistaking him for James’ father. They shared the same dark skin, wild hair, and even wore similar glasses. When he smiled, it was James’ smile, and the only real difference was that he was much older, with streaks of iron grey in his black hair.

James grinned, clapping his dad on the back. “Didn’t I tell you he was the cutest thing?”

Fleamont Potter walked over to Sirius, looking down with a very soft expression. “Oh. You’re right Jai. When are you going to make some of these, hmm? Before I’m dead, I hope.”

“Here’s hoping,” James muttered with an eyeroll.

Sirius rose carefully, easing the baby into Fleamont’s arms, and stepped back. “He’s been anxious to meet his daadaa all day, you know.”

Fleamont grinned, not looking up from Teddy’s face except to glance at Remus who was still seated. “And you? You made this bundle of cute?”

Remus’ cheeks pinked. “It seems so. I erm…your sons have been…”

“Oh I’m sure they have been,” Fleamont said with a grin as he bounced Teddy a bit. “James has always been baby mad, you know. It’s the Potter curse. Infected Sirius when we took him in.”

Sirius rolled his eyes, but was grinning widely. “Yeah, you gave me several curses. Contagious, the lot of you.”

Remus rose, realising he was being impolite, and cleared his throat a little. “Well…thanks. I mean really. For everything. I don’t know what I would have done if…”

“Ahh no worries,” Fleamont said. He passed the bottle to Sirius, then put Teddy on his shoulder and rubbed his back until he let out a small burp. A bit of milk dribbled out, and Remus’ eyes went wide.

“Bugger! Your suit!”

“Ah bugger my suit,” Fleamont repeated. “If anyone takes issue because my new grandson put a little spilt milk on my shoulder well…they’re not worth knowing, are they?”

He then passed Teddy off to Remus and took a small flannel from Sirius to mop up his shoulder.

“We’d better be going. But come by after, yeah?” James grabbed his briefcase from his desk, and his mobile, shoving it into his pocket. “We’ll get some take away.”

“Mummy says you’d better be planning a visit soon,” Fleamont said, grasping Remus’ shoulder, then pulling Sirius in for a hug. “She’s going be in a strop when she finds out I got him first.”

Sirius rolled his eyes. “She’ll make up for it, I’m sure. If you see Reg, tell him we’re sorted.”

James and Fleamont were gone, and Remus carefully went back to the sofa, sinking down and looking into his son’s bright eyes. He didn’t say anything, but Sirius came to sit next to him, reaching out and touching his knee.
“I realise the Potters can be a bit overwhelming. I’m including myself in that.”

Remus blinked, then looked over and sighed. “I’ve spent the last two years isolating myself, you know? From everything. So…it’s a bit…much. Not that I don’t appreciate it because I do. Meant what I said when I told you I wouldn’t know what I would have done.”

Sirius’ hand moved from his knee to the back of his neck, squeezing very softly. “You deserve whatever it is you need, Re.”

Remus swallowed and looked back down at his son. Somehow this tiny thing had catapulted him into a family he hadn’t even realised was waiting for him—one he hadn’t realised he even wanted. And it had been less than a full day and already he knew he couldn’t live without them.

Before he could ponder too long, the door swung open and another man walked in. There was no mistaking him for Sirius’ brother. He was a few inches taller than Sirius, if that, and his hair was clipped neatly, a little longer in the front than in the back, styled professionally but definitely trendy. His face was strikingly like Sirius, eyes grey but a shade darker, and his mouth just a little thinner. But they shared the same jawline, round nose, and air of arrogance that could only be achieved by growing up very wealthy and somewhat neglected.

Regulus’ eyes flickered between Remus, the baby, then Sirius before he lifted his hands and began to sign sharply. Remus knew the alphabet if it was signed very slowly, and a handful of phrases but nothing more, and he was instantly lost.

Sirius, however, slipped into casual sign, leant back against the sofa, his fingers flicking almost lazily. “I’m going to terp,” he said, then signed it. “So just talk to him as usual. I’ll speak for him, and I’ll let you know if we’re switching to me. You following?”

Remus nodded, looking at Regulus who was glancing between Remus and Sirius. “Yeah, no worries.” Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Sirius’ fingers flying. “It’s nice to meet you. I really appreciate all this.”

“Well I think Sirius is a damned fool for getting involved, but…I’m not surprised.”

Remus was impressed Sirius spoke the words about himself like that without even a change in inflection. It made him smile, and he shook his head. “Well I can’t argue there.”

He did get a light smack from Sirius at that one, but there was no pause as Regulus’ fingers continued on. “I’ve got the paperwork in my office. Just need you to sign it, agreeing that we can use the results to determine custody. It shouldn’t be a problem so long as there’s not a mother contesting, and from everything she signed, it should be an easy case. I’ll file everything once I get the results in, and if you need to make a statement, I’ll let you know.”

Remus licked his lips. “Is there any chance they’ll want to erm…to take him?”

Reg’s eyes flickered back to Remus. “There’s always a chance at that, but you haven’t given any reason to. Expect at least a visit from social services, but if I know Potter—and I do, unfortunately—he and my brother will have you sorted long before they get there. You have income?”

Remus nodded. “Yeah erm. I work, and I’ve got my monthly living wages from my loans.”

“So long as you can prove you can support the baby, there won’t be a problem.”

Remus looked down at Teddy who was starting to doze on his arm, and he unconsciously began to rock him back and forth. The idea of someone coming in to take him was terrifying, and he
swallowed thickly. Suddenly there was a hand on his shoulder, and he glanced at Sirius who was wearing the most determined expression he’d ever seen on anyone.

“No one is going to touch him,” he said, then signed for Regulus.

Regulus made a small, derisive noise in the back of his throat, rolling his eyes a bit, but he nodded anyway and Sirius interpreted the signs. “When my brother is determined, nothing can stop him. So let’s get going, yeah?”

***

Regulus was far colder than his brother, but he offered to take the baby whilst Remus signed all the papers, and Remus was amused to see him soften immediately. He wondered how it was that so many people could be immediately turned into jelly over something so small, that cried so much.

He went over everything with Sirius, watching as Regulus sat on his office chair and made small signs at Teddy, grinning every so often when Teddy offered one of his tiny smiles.

Just as Remus was sorting out the last page, there was a small noise which startled both him and Sirius. A small laugh. It sounded almost involuntary, but both their eyes snapped to Regulus who was signing something with one hand, and Sirius was nodding.

Regulus pulled his face again and made a sign, and Teddy did it again. The tiniest laugh.

“Holy shit,” Sirius breathed. “My brother the bastard,” he paused to sign it, “can make a baby laugh.”

Regulus shoved his V up at Sirius—no interpretation needed for that.

Remus laughed, then took the baby back as Regulus took over the papers, and they headed down where a car waited to take them to a lab.

The whole process was quick, though Teddy found it the most unpleasant thing, having his mouth scrubbed by a rather terse woman in purple gloves. He wailed the entire ride back to the office, but was asleep by the time they pulled up to the front.

Regulus signed something with a smirk before getting out, and Remus turned to Sirius with a curious brow raised.

“He said one of the many, many times he’s glad he’s Deaf. He’s such a prat.”

Remus laughed, then gathered Teddy out of the car seat and into his arms again. They went up to wait for James and Remus tried to quell the nerves in his stomach knowing that this was it. The process had begun, and there was no stopping it.

***

Late that night, James was triumphant after getting a text off Lily—the girl from the shop—who agreed to go on a date with him that weekend. He paraded Teddy round the flat in a victory dance before he had to—quite reluctantly it seemed—head back to his to finish up for an upcoming case.

It left Sirius and Remus sat in the lounge, Sirius sorting out the swing which had been delivered along with the cot and several other pieces of furniture that needed to be put together, but they decided to put off until the weekend when James was free.
Sirius grumbled as he tried to locate a few missing screws, Remus banished to the sofa after putting two of the legs on wrong, so he helpfully pointed out where they’d rolled off to as he rocked Teddy over his knees.

“Alright I think I just…” Sirius clicked a bar into place, and sat back in triumph. “Aha! Hell yeah, look at that!” He put all four fingers to his lips, kissing them, before flinging them wide in an arc in front of him. “Shall we give it a go, Mini-Remus?” He quickly plucked the baby from Remus’ knee, and slid him into the little seat. It reclined back, and Sirius did up the buckles before pushing the button. Soft, tinkling Mozart came out of a little speaker as it began a gentle rocking motion.

Teddy started to fuss for a moment, but Sirius popped the dummy into his mouth and Teddy’s little hands curled into fists on either side of it. He sucked on it furiously as he did with everything, his brows dipped low in a frown, and eventually his eyes got heavy.

“I am a genius,” Sirius said.

Remus laughed. “Reckon you are. I guess this’ll be a help when I’ve got revising.”

“Mm, or when you want to just sit and put on the telly and rest,” Sirius pointed out. He arched his back, then rubbed it with his hands. “Remus, would it bother you too much if I took off my binder?”

Remus’ eyes went wide. “Bother me? Of course not!” He froze and his brows dipped in a perfect mirror of Teddy’s frown. “Did you sleep in it last night?”

Sirius’ cheeks blushed a little. “I didn’t want it to be weird and I…”

“Sirius, it doesn’t bother me. It doesn’t make me think…” Remus trailed off, not sure how to express himself. “It’s alright,” he finished lamely.

Sirius smiled gently, then got up and headed off to the toilet. He came back a few minutes later looking far more relaxed, his shoulders slumped, t-shirt hanging low and loose. “Look, I love the hell out of who I am. I’m not ashamed of my body, and normally I don’t care if people are uncomfortable.”

“So you shouldn’t care if I am,” Remus pointed out.

Sirius laughed. “It’s a little bit different with people you like.” He flopped onto the sofa and put his head on Remus’ shoulder, getting comfortable.

“Don’t you think,” Remus asked very slowly, “that people you like ought to just accept you for who you are?”

“Don’t bring logic into this, Remus Bartholomew Lupin.”

Remus lifted a brow. “It’s John.”

“Well that’s not very Jewish, is it?”

Remus snorted. “It’s very Jewish, thank you. And anyway, my entire name is boring.”

Sirius sat up. “Boring? Your entire name is Wolfy McWolf. I’m surprised you don’t howl at the moon.” He stopped, grinned. “Moony.”

Remus choked on air, pulling back. “Did you see my tattoo? Is that why you…”

“What tattoo?” Sirius crowed, then clapped his hand over his mouth when Teddy gave a tiny cry.
The swing soothed him back down, and Sirius took the opportunity to pin Remus by the shoulders. “What tattoo?” he hissed.

Remus licked his lips, then carefully lifted up his t-shirt to reveal a phases of the moon tattoo in a circle on his left pectoral. “I dunno why I did it. It was... god I was so fucking young and ridiculous.”

Sirius looked at it in awe, running his thumb round each phase of the moon. His eyes were bright when he looked back up at Remus’ face. “Moony. It’s settled. We’ve all got them you know. The nicknames. James is Prongs, I’m Padfoot.”

“Regulus?”

“Well he’s got a sign name,” Sirius showed him. “Sorted that when I was nine, you know.”

Remus smiled softly as Sirius settled back into his side. “So the Potters took you both in?” His hand absently went into Sirius’ hair, and began stroking through the soft locks.

“What?!” Sirius said quietly. “I came out as trans—well didn’t have much choice since some of my cousins learnt I was in the boys’ dormitory. Huge row, they pulled me out of school just before the hols and well...”

He swallowed audibly. “Anyway when I refused to concede, they accused me of trying to take Reg’s inheritance, and threw me out on the streets. The Potters eventually got custody of me—my parent’s didn’t exactly fight them, you know. Reg and I quit speaking which was... well my biggest regret.”

“Was he always Deaf?” Remus asked.

Sirius nodded against his shoulder. “My parents were livid about it, you know? The boy they’d finally got and he’s damaged,” he spat the word. “S’what they kept saying. I remember them dragging him to doctor after doctor to get cochlear implants but he never qualified because his auditory nerves were non-functioning. Eventually they found some bastard doctor to do the procedure in spite of the fact that it was pointless. He was six, and they dragged him in kicking and screaming. The whole thing was a mess, he was hospitalised several times after because of violent headaches and when he was eight they had to have the procedure reversed.”

“Christ,” Remus breathed. “That’s... God Sirius, that’s horrible.”

Sirius hummed against Remus, nuzzling a little closer. “He was soft enough to swallow the rubbish they fed him. Trying to avoid sign even though he was always such shit at speech-reading. He really believed them when they said they were grooming him to take over for my father. Such shite. After I left, he learnt they planned on marrying him off to some cousin and having him kept away from the public to function in name only. He realised then what rubbish the whole family was and he just left. Just packed up and left and of course the Potters immediately took him in. Fleamont had the entire family enrolled in BSL levels, and helped Reg with his degree.”

Remus closed his eyes and took a long breath. He had no trouble at all picturing Fleamont doing those things. Remus had never experienced family like that but he could tell why Sirius had needed it. Hell, he was wondering if he did, and how he’d let himself accept it.

Before he realised it, he was dropping off and his eyes flew open abruptly. “Shit. I’m sorry.”

Sirius chuckled, then got up and extended his hand out to Remus. “Come on, Moonbeam. You’re going to bed.”
“But…” He let out an oomph as Sirius hauled him to his feet.

“Nope. No. You’re going to get some sleep. We’ll trade off later, but you have lectures and probably homework you’re missing out on. So sleep. Now.”

Remus wanted to protest, but Sirius had his hand on the small of his back and was propelling him toward the bedroom. His body was aching from the stress and anxiety, and he found himself incapable of telling Sirius no. He reminded himself that Sirius would have said if he didn’t want this—it wasn’t his child, after all. He wouldn’t be doing this if he didn’t want to be.

Falling into the bed, Remus buried his face in the pillow and heard Sirius laughing softly. There was a warm hand on the back of his neck, brushing up into his curls in the most soothing way. Remus groaned and turned his face toward Sirius.

“Why?”

“Are we really going through this again, Moonshine?” Sirius knelt by the side of the bed and put one palm against Remus’ cheek. “I quite fancy you, and I rather like that little sprog of yours. So just… accept it for what it is. Get some sleep.”

Remus murmured something into the pillow, but his eyes were closing and sleep was claiming him.

***

A week passed before Regulus got the results back. Remus Lupin was absolutely, without a doubt, Teddy’s father. Paperwork was filed to have all the birth records amended. His name would be changed to Theodore John Lupin—at Sirius’ insistence with the middle name.

“It’s not boring, Moony. I mean unless you want to make it Moony?” he added with glee.

Remus sighed and went with John. Regulus instead he’d take care of filing everything, and at the end of that week, they were invited to the Potter’s for Sunday Lunch where they gathered round, Regulus in the kitchen helping Euphemia, and James and Fleamont absolutely losing it over the baby.

James brought Lily as well, to everyone’s surprise, who immediately took to Teddy. “I just love babies,” she said, snuggling him into the crook of her arm.

“I should hope so,” James said with a chuckle, leaning over her shoulder to stroke Teddy’s cheek. “Running a baby shop and all.”

Lily laughed. “Well it was my mum’s you know. She passed away a year and a half ago and I thought about selling but it seemed wrong. And I get to see all the cute babies all day.”

“And maybe one of those babies lead you to a very handsome lawyer who thinks you’re incredibly lovely.”

Lily glanced up at him, her green eyes narrowed in mirth. “Hmm. Maybe.”

Sirius rolled his eyes and dragged Remus away from all the “hetero-flirting”. They twinned their fingers together, and slipped down a well-worn path which led to a massive field on the property.

“It’s gorgeous here,” Remus said, taking in a huge breath. He looked out along the massive field, and wondered what it would have been like to grow up here. Wales had been absolutely beautiful, but it lost some appeal with the abject rejection by his parents for his choices and preferences, and there
were very few pleasant memories he had of there anymore.

“It is.” Sirius carefully moved his hand from Remus’, to his waist, pulling him close. “Moons, can I ask you a question?”

Remus turned. “Yeah, alright.”

“Do you fancy me? I know you’re… I mean… I know you’re stressed and maybe this is the most shite time in the world to approach this topic but I just… I can’t tell.”

Remus lowered his eyes. “I do fancy you, but…”

Sirius started to pull away, and Remus caught him suddenly, not wanting him to move away. “But…?”

“I’m… I’ve been afraid. After losing Ben I swore I’d never put myself out there again. But I keep thinking about what you said. How Teddy led us to each other. I just… doesn’t it seem strange or difficult? I mean, do you wonder ever if maybe it’s because of Teddy that…”

“Look,” Sirius said, “I had a crush on you the moment I met you. And the only thing I’d worry about is that maybe you fancy me because of my help with Teddy.”

Remus wanted to deny that immediately, but he forced himself to stop and think about it. “I always thought you were fit,” Remus said finally, a shy smile crossing his face. “I used to hope we’d run into each other on the street or in the hall. Every time you’d smile at me, my knees would go all wobbly.” He shifted just a little closer. “Part of me thinks we should spend more time getting to know each other but… maybe with everything the way it is, we ought to just dive right in.”

Sirius was looking at him, a vague smile of disbelief on his face. “Moony… what are you saying?”

Remus turned fully, cupping Sirius’ cheek gently and stroked the skin there with his thumb. “I’m saying I fancy you and I’d like to properly date you. Even if those dates are covered in baby spit-up and nappy changes. And I think I’d like to kiss you right now.”

Sirius looked stunned for a second, then his fingers fisted in the front of Remus’ shirt and tugged him forward. “Fuck. Really?”

Remus’ soft, shy smile spread into a full grin. “Yeah, really.”

Sirius tugged him even closer so their noses were pressed together, and Sirius licked his lips. “Then I think you probably should.”

Remus closed his eyes, and then he did.

Oh he did.

***

By summer, they’d settled into a routine. Sirius spent more time over at Remus’, which worked out well enough as Lily started spending most of her nights at James and Sirius’. James bought out Lily’s shop every few months as Teddy got bigger, the spent weekends at the Potters’, and Sirius and Remus somehow made it work.

Remus walked in the door that July to find Sirius sat on the floor. Teddy was stood up, gripping the edge of the low table, and he turned the moment the door opened. “Dada!”
Teddy was close to walking, had a handful of words in both speech and in sign, and was madly in love with all four of the people actively raising him. He turned, letting go of the table, took three steps, then fell on his bum. He giggled, turning to all fours as he rushed across the floor, and Remus bent low, picking him up and swinging him wide.

Bringing him down, he pressed kisses across his cheeks until the almost-toddler giggled and shoved Remus’ face away. “How was your day?”

“How was your day?” Teddy pointed a chubby finger at Sirius who hadn’t got up from the floor, but was smiling softly.

“We had a good day. Nym came to visit the gallery and she and Teddy did a finger painting to hang up.”

Remus spotted an errant curl covered in green acrylic, and he tugged on it. “I see. Will you show me later?”

“It’s at the gallery now. I’m thinking of displaying it for the art critics and letting those twat-faces try to describe the meaning behind the tortured artist.” Sirius pushed up to his feet, then crossed the room, cupping Remus’ face in his hands for a slow, languid kiss. “Also James and Lily are cooking and they said they’d bring tea here tonight.”

“How was your day?” Remus pointed at Sirius who hadn’t got up from the floor, but was smiling softly.

“We had a good day. Nym came to visit the gallery and she and Teddy did a finger painting to hang up.”

Remus spotted an errant curl covered in green acrylic, and he tugged on it. “I see. Will you show me later?”

“It’s at the gallery now. I’m thinking of displaying it for the art critics and letting those twat-faces try to describe the meaning behind the tortured artist.” Sirius pushed up to his feet, then crossed the room, cupping Remus’ face in his hands for a slow, languid kiss. “Also James and Lily are cooking and they said they’d bring tea here tonight.”

“Perfect,” Remus said. He blew a little raspberry on Teddy’s face before passing him back. “Alright I’m going to change.”

Sirius slipped a quick kiss onto Remus’ cheek before Remus hurried off to slip into something more comfortable. When he came back to the lounge, Teddy was on the floor playing with a stack of wooden blocks, and Sirius was sat on the floor nearby watching. Remus plonked himself in between Sirius’ legs, turning his face to kiss him gently.

“Missed you today,” Remus murmured.

Sirius ran his fingers into Remus’ curls. “Mini and I missed you. So much. Oh and James and Lils said Saturday if we want a date night, they’re in. She wants practise.”

Remus grinned. Lily was now four months gone pregnant, the whole thing rather a surprise, but welcome as she and James were almost inseparable. They were considering a wedding, but Lily wasn’t a big fan of marriage and James didn’t seem to be fussed about anything other than having another baby round.

Teddy watched the pair who had quickly become his parents before crawling over and plopping himself in Remus’ lap. He played with his blocks from there, not one to be left out of any sort of cuddles, and the two men laughed.

Ten minutes later, there was a knock at the door, and Remus frowned. If it had been James or Lily, they wouldn’t have bothered. Carefully shifting Teddy, Remus rose and walked over, throwing it open.

He was surprised to see Regulus there, giving him a quick salute of hello. ‘Busy?’

Remus shook his head. ‘No. Come in.’ He hadn’t had the time for a proper BSL class, but having spent more time with Regulus than not, he was picking it up quickly. He was slow still, unable to follow Sirius and Reg at Deaf speed, but he was proud of his progress.

Regulus strolled into the lounge, grinning when Teddy spotted him and the baby quickly made
grabby hands at the lawyer to be picked up. Regulus wasted no time in swinging the almost-toddler into the air, getting a slight laugh before he was kissed and set on Reg’s hip.

It was funny to see the stoic, younger Black brother go wobbly about the face over a baby. No one expected it, though Teddy seemed to do that to most people with his big doe eyes and wild curls. He put a big, open-mouthed baby kiss on Reg’s cheek.

‘How you?’ Reg signed with one hand as he took a seat, Teddy on his knee.

Teddy’s small hands curved round the signs. ‘Play toy.’

Reg looked over at the blocks, then kissed Teddy’s forehead before letting him slip back down. Teddy used the edge of the table to walk round toward the blocks. When he was nearly there, Reg leant forward and knocked on the table with his knuckles, getting Teddy’s attention.

‘Walk. Here,’ he signed, and flashed something Remus missed.

Teddy’s eyes went wide and he suddenly let the table go, taking the toddling steps over to Reg who looked very smug and very triumphant.

Sirius immediately flew to his feet and signed something far too fast for Remus to follow. Reg responded in kind and it was then Remus saw the younger slip a red lolly to the boy.

“He cheated,” Sirius said, pointing an accusing finger at his brother. “The filthy cheat!”

Remus laughed, then took the lolly from Teddy’s hands, sitting on the ground, and beckoned Teddy over. Teddy looked at Reg, then over at Remus, and toddled over, still a little wobbly, but making every step.

“My brilliant, clever boy,” Remus said into his hair.

James and Lily arrived not long after, Regulus quickly boasting about getting Teddy to walk. Sirius and Remus were too busy making Teddy perform his new skill, clapping loudly every time he made the distance between them, to pay attention to Reg’s smug story. Lily thought it was hilarious, and James rolled his eyes before sorting out tea.

‘Not stay. Busy. A lot work,’ Reg signed after a bit. ‘See you tomorrow?’

They all said their goodbyes as he left, and everyone went back to their tasks.

Five minutes later, as Sirius was turning Teddy round, there was another knock. “I bet he forgot something,” he muttered. “Lils, love? Can you get that?”

Lily muttered something, walking to the door, and a few minutes later she stepped into the lounge with a small frown.

“Who was it?” Remus asked.

“Er, wrong flat, she said.” She shrugged. “Anyway, James says it’s ready.” She swooped in and picked up Teddy putting him on her hip. “It’s aloo and some steamed runner beans for you, mister.”

“No!” Teddy shouted.

Lily rolled her eyes. “Well you tell everyone no, don’t you?”

Teddy’s eyes flickered over to James and he put his arms out. “Pons!”
James grinned as he took Teddy, sitting him in his chair and served him whilst everyone got sorted. Remus tucked in, glancing round the table at their little makeshift family. By this time next year there would be another baby round, but he couldn’t imagine it being any different. This was happiness, he decided. And, he realised, he had stopped being afraid.

***

Come Saturday, Remus was looking forward to having a date night with Sirius. They didn’t get a lot of time alone, and whilst normally that would take a toll on a new relationship, it worked for them. They were both madly in love with Teddy, and although they hadn’t even got to the I Love You stage of their own relationship, they were happy.

Practically married, he realised on some days.

Finishing up at the café, Remus hung his apron, gathered his things, and headed out the back door. He was reaching for his mobile when he heard a strange noise, almost like a shutter sound. Glancing up, he spotted a blue car across the street, and he swore for a second the man in the seat was holding a camera. A moment later, a woman with blonde curls was chatting to him, neither of them paying him any mind, so he let it go.

Shaking his head, he went on his way back home.

Sirius was already there, Teddy gone to James and Lily’s already, and he was met with warm arms and soft lips against his neck. “I got us a table at a very nice place,” Sirius muttered, kissing him slowly. “Then we’re going to come back here and have a drink and get incredibly naked.”

Remus laughed softly, turning in Sirius’ arms to kiss him properly. He cupped Sirius’ cheeks, deepening the kiss, pressing the front of their bodies together. “God, you’re the best. Let me go shower and get ready, alright?”

Sirius hummed, reluctantly letting Remus go. He made it quick, of course, physically missing the feel of his lover’s arms round him, and he was ecstatic to find Sirius waiting on his bed when he padded into the room.

Dropping his towel, he laughed when Sirius’ eyes went dark. “Come here immediately right now,” Sirius demanded.

Remus licked his lips, then put one knee between Sirius’ legs, using his hand to gently push his boyfriend back against the pillows. “Right now?” he whispered.

Sirius wrapped his hands round the back of Remus’ neck and kissed him. “Yes, right now,” Sirius muttered against his mouth. “We have plenty of time.”

Remus let his hands wander, and before long, Sirius was missing his own clothes, and they were panting into each other’s mouths as they slowly got off.

It was exactly what Remus needed.

When it was over, he turned in Sirius’ arms, cupping his cheek lightly, and stared into those wondering grey eyes. “You’re something else, you know that?”

Sirius’ grin widened. “Yeah?”

“Yeah, I erm…” The words danced on the tip of his tongue. They’d avoided them, both still afraid their relationship had been affected by parenting, by jumping into things head-first, but Remus knew
what he felt. He stopped being so afraid of losing all the time. The anniversary of Ben’s death was coming up, and for the first time Remus didn’t feel like he wanted to drown in a bottle of scotch. It would still hurt—it would always still hurt—but now he felt loved. He felt safe.

“Re?”

Remus realised he’d been quiet too long, and he flushed a little as he let his thumb run across Sirius’ cheekbone. “I love you, Sirius.”

There was a long pause, Sirius looking absolutely stunned, and Remus felt panicked after a second. Like maybe, just maybe, Sirius wasn’t there yet. Or never would be. Then a smile broke out over his face, sunny and blindingly bright. He reached out, grabbing Remus and mashing their mouths together hard and furious. “I love you,” he mumbled against Remus’ lips. “I love you so much.”

Remus felt the words wrapping him like a warm blanket, holding him tight, needy. He closed his eyes and let their foreheads fall together again, basking. “I can’t get enough of you, Sirius. I just…you’re everything.”

Sirius feathered kisses across Remus’ cheeks and nose. “I could say the very same about you, my Moony. You and Teddy both. I had no idea how empty I felt until you let me in. I just…it’s so much. And I couldn’t live without you.”

***

The pair got to their table late, but it didn’t matter. They were giddy, they were madly in love, stopping every few feet to kiss each other silly before reaching the small, intimate restaurant. The table was tucked back in the corner, near a window. Sirius immediately ordered wine, and sipping on that, they played with each other’s fingers as they chatted, waiting for the food.

Sirius was in the middle of talking about his latest dealings with Gildeory Lockhart when Remus noticed a flash outside the window. He frowned, glancing over, and saw a too-familiar blue car. After a second, Sirius noticed his gaze, and squeezed his fingers.

“Moons?”

Remus sipped his wine, still watching. “That car…” He squinted, but couldn’t get a good look through the glass. “I swear I saw it earlier on my way home from the café. I thought…” He trailed off. “I thought it took a photo of me.”

Sirius narrowed his eyes, then shrugged. “Doesn’t look familiar to me.”

“Just…keep an eye out, would you.” He had a funny, sinking feeling in his gut that wouldn’t go away.

Sirius hummed his assent, and the pair decided to ignore it in favour of enjoying their rare date night. Knowing Teddy was safe, knowing things were good between them, Remus was able to relax.

At least, he was until their cake arrived when Sirius’ mobile began to go off. He frowned at the screen as Remus picked up a spoon to dive in. “It’s James.”

Remus waved for him to take it, and watched with a small frown as Sirius’ face went from curious to concerned.

“Woah mate, slow down,” Sirius said. “Alright. Alright where are you now? And he’s…okay good. Do you need us to…? Yeah alright, we’ll wrap it up. Go over to Moony’s and stay there. Okay.”
Sirius rang off, and his face was pale. “Some woman showed up at James and Lily’s claiming to be Teddy’s mum. She tried to take him, but James was able to stop her.”

Remus felt panic welling in his gut, and it took everything he had not to rush out of the restaurant immediately. He took several deep breaths as Sirius took care of the bill, and together they rushed out. Hand-in-hand, they didn’t bother with the bus, tube, or taxis. They navigated the streets until they reached the flat, and they took the stairs two at a time.

Remus half expected to run into the woman in the corridors, maybe waiting for him, a chance to snatch Teddy from his grasp, but the stairwell and hall were empty as they approached the door. With shaking hands, Remus fumbled with his keys until it was open, and they came in to find James and Lily sat on the sofa alone, both holding tea.

James was immediately on his feet, going straight to Remus, and took him by the shoulders. “He’s in his cot sleeping,” James said. “She didn’t get anywhere near him, I swear.”

Remus sagged a little, and let James drag him into a fierce hug. “I just…I thought…”

“No one is going to touch that baby. If she thinks she can walk out of his life for a year, leave him abandoned on a doorstep, then have some claim over him…” James trailed off, pressing several kisses to Remus’ temple.

When he let go, Lily drew Remus to the sofa and put her arms round him. “James was brilliant. He didn’t let her set foot in the flat, and Teddy didn’t even know she’d come.”

Remus breathed. “Thank you for taking care of him. For protecting him.”

“We love you both so much. We’re not going to let anyone harm either one of you,” Lily vowed.

***

Remus was at work when he got a text off James. Can you come home early? Sirius had to switch up his T and is feeling poorly, and there’s...something you should see. Really important.

Remus stared at his mobile screen, sighing lightly before walking up to Dori at the espresso machine. “So there’s a slight crisis at home. D’you mind if I skive off for the day? Is William in?”

“No he’s got some interview with some foodie magazine or something, said he probably won’t be back for the day,” Dori replied. “Everything alright?”

“Dunno,” Remus admitted. “But Jamie wouldn’t have texted if it wasn’t important.”

“Go on, then. I’ll ring up Mary and see if she’s available.”

“You’re a doll,” he said, quickly grabbing his things and heading out.

He didn’t think about strange blue cars with cameras this time round as he hurried from the café back to his flat. He took the bus which was agonisingly slow, but eventually he was climbing the stairs two at a time, and found James in the corridor.

“He’s inside on the sofa, but I want you to see something first,” James said, his tone low.

Remus was surprised to see James home during the day on a Thursday. His workload was busy at the best of times, so if he was skiving off, it was serious. Walking into James’, Remus was pulled to
the kitchen table where a copy of the Daily Prophet was sat.

“You should read this,” James said. “Just so you know where everything’s at.”

Remus licked his lips then lifted the article and began to read. “We have the wonderful opportunity to sit down with Rodolphus Lestrange, conservative MP and aspiring Prime Minister. He and his wife have joined us here at the Prophet for a candid interview…” Remus read on for a while, until he realised what James was getting at. “It hasn’t always been easy,’ Bellatrix said with a small frown. ‘My family has been involved in some scandal which we’ve had to accept. There was the issue of my cousin…” Remus immediately trailed off when he realised what it was. The article listed Sirius’ dead name, and the wrong pronouns over and over.

He dropped it and looked at James who was wearing a sombre expression. “It came the same day the T switch caused him to have a period. It started up early this morning, right after you left. He saw this as well, so he’s a little…upset.”

“Buggering fuck,” Remus said, sinking into a chair. “Do you think this has to do with Anne?”

James frowned, shaking his head. “I can’t say. I have one of or PIs on it right now, trying to get information about her from the documents she left when she left Teddy. This isn’t the first time Sirius’ family has done something horrific though, and public, so I don’t want to jump to conclusions.”

“Why would they do this to him? Why not let it alone?”

“Well,” James said slowly, “when he left it was a big scandal. My father went public about the Black’s lack of support for their son. And all this is coinciding with Sirius’ upcoming show.”

Remus had all-but forgotten about Sirius’ current project with his gallery. He was doing a massive event highlighting trans artists from around the globe, and a good part of the proceeds were being donated to trans-inclusive domestic violence and care shelters and organisations. It was getting a decent amount of both good press and criticism, but Sirius had been planning it for the better part of a year.

“You think they’re upset about the showing?”

“Maybe. All the attention it’s getting. Either way, just…be patient with him if he’s moody, alright?”

“Of course,” Remus breathed, rubbing a hand down his face. “And if this is my fault, if this is her…”

“It still wouldn’t be your fault,” James said swiftly, almost angrily. “If it’s her, then we deal with it. She cannot drop a baby on your doorstep for a year, then return and expect to have any rights.”

Remus nodded. “I just…worry, is all.”

“Don’t though,” James said, and pulled Remus up and into a firm hug, pressing a kiss to his temple. “Teddy is our family too. No one is taking him away. No one.”

Remus gave James one more quick hug before heading across the hall to his own flat. He put the key in the door, and walked in as quietly as he could. In the lounge, Sirius was curled up on the sofa in the foetal position, one hand tucked tightly round his midsection, the other up above his head. He had his eyes unfocused, watching Teddy who was sat on the floor with his blocks.

When Remus walked in, Teddy brightened and threw his arms up. “Dada!”
Sirius glanced up. “You’re early.”

“Jamie texted,” Remus replied, taking Teddy in his arms and swooping him up for several smacking kisses to his cheeks. He giggled and squirmed until Remus put him down, and he toddled back over to his blocks.

Sirius groaned, shifting a little as Remus approached and knelt down beside his boyfriend. “He shouldn’t have.”

“Yes he should have. You look bloody miserable, love.” Remus reached out, cupping Sirius’ cheek and kissing him on the tip of the nose. “Can I get you anything?”

“Paracetamol?” Sirius asked in a pained voice. “Was holding off til you got home.”

“Daft git,” he said fondly, and hurried off to grab the medicine, along with some water. Sirius gulped down a couple pills quickly, then flopped back over and nuzzled into the cushion as Remus settled onto the floor between his lover and his toddler. “He showed me the paper.”

Sirius let out a growl and scoffed. “Those fuckers. I’m not surprised but you’d think after all these years they’d just let that shit go.”

Remus leant his head down next to Sirius and pressed a kiss to the underside of his chin. “Are you alright?”

Sirius shrugged. “Between that and the period I think I’m a little dysphoric today, but I feel better with you here.” He eased one arm round Remus’ shoulders and nuzzled into his curls. “Wanted to take Ted to the zoo today.”

“You should rest,” Remus insisted. He turned to the side and lifted Sirius’ shirt up over his abdomen. Pressing warm hands to the slightly puffed belly, he leant his head down and kissed just below the belly button.

Teddy scrambled up when he saw his dad doing that and pushed Remus’ face aside. “Pada,” the toddler said, and mimicked Remus’ actions.

Sirius grinned widely as he motioned for Teddy. “Come here, Mini. Give me a kiss.”

Teddy giggled as he clambered over Remus to put a wet, wide, baby kiss on Sirius’ cheek.

“God you two are my everything,” Sirius whispered after Teddy went back to his blocks.

Remus hummed, twisting so he could rest his cheek against Sirius’ chest and his eyes closed. “Just know I’m here for you, okay? Whatever you need.”

***

An hour later, Sirius was up, getting tea, looking much better than he had when Remus had come in. “Alright, I think I’m up for a zoo trip now.”

Remus lifted a brow. “Really?”

“Yes. Besides, I promised Mini, didn’t I?” he said, grinning at the almost one year old who was sat in his little chair at the table pinching cheerios between his tiny fingers and throwing them off the tray.

Teddy looked up at Sirius, pointing one little finger at him. “Pada!” he declared.
Remus laughed. “I guess he’s on board. You really up for it though, love?”

Sirius set his mug down and walked over to cup Remus’ cheek. “I am. I want a day out with the two loves of my life.”

Remus rose, kissing Sirius before pulling Teddy from his chair. “Alright, you. Let’s get dressed.”

“No!” Teddy cried, and laughed happily.

They went into the bedroom, Sirius right behind them, and Remus let Teddy slip to the ground. Walking to the wardrobe, Remus rummaged round and pulled out a pair of jeans, and a pair of Teddy’s pink and purple leggings with tulle frill on the bottom. “Which one do you want.”

“Preeee!” Teddy said, tugging on the leggings.

Remus banged them over to Sirius who quickly flipped Teddy onto the bed, blowing a raspberry on his bare belly before changing his nappy, then slipping on the leggings. Remus grabbed a black t-shirt Sirius had found online that read, “Two Dads Is Punk Rock,” and walked to the bed to slip it over Teddy’s curls.

Sirius used a wet flannel to mop up Teddy’s face, then sorted out his socks and shoes. “Alright, I think we’re sorted.” He grabbed the sling from the hook on the cupboard and Remus took it.

“Bleeding uterus,” Remus scolded. “I’ll carry the Mini.”

Sirius rolled his eyes, but acquiesced, even going as far as to put the bottle of paracetamol in with Teddy’s nappies, in between his change of clothes. “If you get tired though…”

Remus leant over and kissed him. “I won’t. Come on though, it’s getting late.”

The pair headed out after, quickly heading for the tube and found clear seats straight away. Remus pulled Teddy out of the hip sling to perch on his knee, and Sirius opened up an email.

“Something from Reg about the PI progress,” Sirius muttered, scrolling through.

A moment later, Remus heard Teddy giggle, and he looked over to see a woman with blonde curls pulling faces at him.

“What’s her name, and how old?” Remus blinked.

“Ah. His name’s Teddy.”

The woman blinked, but looked somewhat unfazed. “His?”

Remus nodded. “We’re using those pronouns until he’s old enough to decide for himself,” Remus said, giving Teddy’s curls a fond ruffle.

“But what is she? Er…he? I mean, you know…under the nappy.”

Remus pulled a face, glancing over at Sirius who was still absorbed in Reg’s email. “I don’t really think that matters. He’s a baby. You really think his genitals are any of your business.”

Her cheeks pinked. “I’m only saying, don’t you worry dressing him up like a girl is going to confuse him? Or you know, turn him gay?”

At that, Sirius did look up with a frown. “What,” he said with a harsh laugh, “you think gay is
catching? You think pink spreads the gay? That must’ve been where we went wrong, Moons.”

Remus leant a little closer to Sirius as the woman shrugged, her face going hard. “I think that the more people like you who have children, the more there’s going to be disturbing trends.”

“Disturbing trends, right,” Remus said harshly. “Like what, tolerance? Unconditional love for children. Support for their choices and identity. If my child comes to me and tells me he’s a boy, then I accept that and will be happy. If he comes to me one day and says, Daddy, I’m a girl, I will love and accept that and be happy.”

“Dada!” Teddy said.

“I only think…”

“I don’t recall asking you,” Sirius snapped at her. “So you can kindly fuck off.”

She huffed, but rose, smoothing out her skirt before moving as far away as empty seats would allow.

“Sodding bitch,” Sirius muttered.

“Bisss,” Teddy repeated.

“Ahhh sprog, don’t listen to your Pada,” Sirius scolded, going a bit pink in the cheeks. He held his arms out, and Teddy dove into them. Pressing a kiss to his curls, Sirius leant into Remus. “Don’t you worry, Mini. We won’t let people like that hurt you, alright? You just be you.”

“Pada,” Teddy said happily, poking his finger up Sirius’ nose.

With a laugh, Sirius pulled the hand down and pressed a kiss to Teddy’s palm.

Remus watched the entire exchange, then grabbed Sirius by the chin and kissed him. “God I love you. I mean, I…I have for a long time but there are moments I’m profoundly aware how lucky Teddy and I are to have you.”

“Thank you,” Sirius murmured.

Remus kissed him again. “No. Thank you.”

***

Sat next to Sirius who was curled up on the bed, Remus watched Regulus and Teddy who were on the floor with Teddy’s new Lion Stuffie. Regulus was making the lion kiss Teddy on his voice, and the almost-toddler was giggling hard.

“What name?” Regulus signed, then pointed to the Stuffie.

Teddy frowned, then raised his little hands and made his sign for Regulus.

Regulus raised his eyebrows, repeated the sign, then touched the lion.

“Ya!” Teddy cried, and smacked the lion out of Regulus’ hands and threw himself at his uncle. Regulus laughed, getting up with Teddy, and retrieved the lion. Turning to Remus, his eyes flickered toward Sirius and he pulled a face.

‘Teddy home with me tonight? Sirius rest?’
Remus worried his bottom lip for a minute, glancing back at Sirius who had his eyes shut, face a bit peaky from the blood loss and pain. ‘You okay one night?’

Regulus nodded firmly. ‘We okay.’

Remus stood up and held his hands out for Teddy. “You want to stay with Uncle Reg?”

“Ya!” Teddy cried again, and smacked Remus on the face.

Laughing, Remus turned toward Reg and shrugged, passing Teddy back so he could pack his little overnight case. It wouldn’t be the first time Teddy spent a night away from Remus. Lily and James took him all the time, and Reg had taken him for long days before. He knew it would be good for Sirius to have a break from responsibility until the pain was a lot less, but Remus was all nerves. Things were strange lately with the articles about Sirius and Teddy’s birth mother lurking round.

But maybe everyone could do with a short holiday from responsibility.

After getting Teddy sorted, Regulus took him into the lounge whilst Remus shook Sirius by the shoulder. “Hey love.”

“Mm?” Sirius cracked one eye open, and offered a half-smile at Remus.

“Reg is going to take Teddy for the night. Give you some time to feel better. You alright with that?”

“If you are,” Sirius muttered, sounding hoarse and low.

Remus brushed Sirius’ fringe away from his forehead and kissed his cheek. “Well this way I can fawn over you and spoil you a bit, yeah?”

Sirius huffed a small laugh into his pillow. “My Moony…”

Remus felt his heart swell a little with just how damn much he loved this man. Kissing him again, he straightened up.

“I’m going to see them off. If you want to shower or something after they’re gone, I’ll give you a massage after, alright?”

“You’re a dream,” Sirius muttered.

With a last smile, Remus headed back into the lounge where Regulus was sorting out Teddy’s hip sling, and talking with James who had a folder in his hands. Remus frowned, but neither of them seemed to be bothered, so he assumed it was work.

Remus held his hands out for Teddy, giving him several kisses. “You be good for your uncle, you hear me?”

“Nooooooo!” Teddy cried.

Regulus shook his head as he shifted Teddy into the hip sling. Teddy grabbed his Regulus Lion and clutched it tight to his chest. ‘I text later. If you need, you text, okay?’

Remus nodded, then showed Reg out. When the door shut, he turned back to James. “Alright?”

James looked vaguely worried, but nodded anyway. “Yeah. How’s Sirius?”

“Hurting,” Remus said. “I’m hoping he’ll get in the shower and then sleep. He insisted on the ruddy zoo today and I know it made him feel worse.”
“Yeah well, anything for that kid,” James said with a laugh. “Just come on over if he needs anything. Lils and I are having a night in. Oh and…” He stopped as he was halfway to the door. “Erm, come by the office tomorrow if you can. The both of you?”

“Sure,” Remus said slowly. “Is something wrong?”

James bit down on his lip, then shook his head. “No worries, Re.”

Remus knew he was lying, but with Sirius so poorly, he decided not to push it. Whatever it was, he didn’t want to be stressing out with Sirius in so much pain. Whatever it was, it could wait. He locked up after James was gone, and just then, he heard the shower start.

With a grin, he sat down at the kitchen table, opened his mobile, and began to research period pain relief. He’d never dated anyone with a uterus before, so it was all new, but within a few minutes, he had a few home remedies he wanted to try with his lover.

Slipping into a pair of boxers and a t-shirt, Remus walked into the bathroom and saw Sirius behind the glass door with his head against the tile, the warm water cascading down his back. In the sink was a small plastic cup which was covered in blood, and Remus frowned.

“Hey love, what’s this thing in the sink?”

Sirius turned his head and then shrugged one shoulder. “Period cup. I’m going to wash it when I get out.”

“Shall I?” Remus asked. “Have you got anything special for it?”

“Oh Moons, it’s a bit gross,” Sirius protested weakly.

Remus rolled his eyes. “Love, considering where I have put my tongue inside you, I don’t think a bit of blood is going to put me off.”

Sirius snorted, rolling his eyes. “Alright, fair enough you shit. There’s a wash on the sink, just there.”

Remus spotted the bottle, and quickly got to work as Sirius finished washing up and relaxing. He set it to dry on a bit of kitchen paper, then got the fluffiest towels they owned to wrap Sirius up the moment he stepped out.

“All right I’m getting spoilt now and you know this isn’t good for my giant head,” Sirius warned as he leaned into Remus’ vigorous rubbing.

Remus pressed a kiss to Sirius’ face. “Look, you’re in pain, I’m going to take care of you. So stop whinging and just enjoy it, you prat.”

Sirius’ cheeks pinked, but he didn’t argue as Remus left him to finish dressing. Heading into the kitchen, Remus started up the kettle for herbal tea, and when it was ready, on a little tray with chocolate biscuits and honey, he found Sirius back in bed wearing nothing but one of Remus’ massive t-shirts and a loose pair of boxers.

Remus smiled fondly as he passed over the food, and the pair of them ate and drank in silence. When they finished, Remus set everything aside, and pulled out a small bottle of Sirius’ lavender oil he used for his migraines. “Alright, massage time, my love.”

Sirius rolled his eyes a little, but laid back with his arms behind his head as Remus started around his collarbone.
“Can I rub here?” Remus asked, hovering near Sirius’ small breasts. “If they’re too tender or if it makes you feel dysphoric…?”

“It’s fine,” Sirius mumbled.

“Just tell me, okay?” Remus pressed. “I’ll stop if it’s too much.” Very gently, he used slow, soothing circles and the smell began to sink into them both, relaxing the atmosphere and Sirius’ shoulders began to unclench. His eyes drifted all the way closed as Remus massaged the ache in his breasts, eventually moving down his sternum to his lower abdomen and made careful, gentle circles.

Sirius groaned, shifting his hips a little. “You’re the best fucking thing that has ever happened to me.”

Remus chuckled and eased himself fully onto the bed, leaning in toward Sirius’ ear. “I love you, Sirius.”

Sirius cracked open one eye, reaching a hand up to the back of Remus’ neck, and pulled him down for a soft kiss. “Where’d you learn all this, eh?”

“Googled during your shower,” Remus admitted with a short blush. “I’ve never dated anyone with a uterus before so I wasn’t sure but…it’s helping?”

“Mn,” Sirius hummed, pressing their foreheads together. “Just you being here helps.”

“Well ah…I also read that orgasms do as well. I could…just on the outside,” Remus said, his hand drifting lower, but pausing and waiting for Sirius’ consent.

“I…I mean it could be…” Sirius hesitated.

“It’s for you,” Remus said very softly. “I don’t want to do anything that will make you feel worse.”

Sirius licked his lips, and shifted his hips. “Yeah, alright.”

Remus grinned, and wiped off the lavender oil in favour of a dollop of their usual lube. He stretched out next to Sirius, pressing dull, sucking kisses along his neck as his hand dipped low into his boxers and ran gentle circles over his clit which swelled and throbbed. Sirius’ breathing quickened and his hips shifted toward Remus’ hand as he kept going.

Sirius began to groan, pushing his neck into the kiss, pushing up harder against Remus’ hand until his entire body went flush and he let out a small cry. He shook with the orgasm, shifting into Remus who held him tight and kissed him hard on the side of the face.

“Not sure how long it’s supposed to take to kick in,” Remus murmured, “but I’m thinking with a couple more paracetamol and one last cup of tea, it should get you to sleep.”

Sirius rolled completely on his side, taking Remus by the face, and kissed him firm and needy right on the mouth. “You are fucking amazing.”

Remus flushed. “M’not really. Just…you’ve always done so much for me and our boy and…” He froze, stopping, and liked his lips. The slip hadn’t been intentional. They had carefully skirted the idea of what Sirius was to Teddy, in spite of him being there the entire time. He wasn’t sure Sirius really wanted it, not that role, but it was out now.

Sirius was staring at him with wide eyes. “Moony I…”
“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean…it’s only you just…” Remus cleared his throat. “Did I fuck up here?”

Shaking his head hard, Sirius pushed himself to sitting just as Remus did. “Moons I…I…of course you didn’t. I love him like he was my own. I just didn’t want to cross any lines and…”

He couldn’t finish, as Remus had dragged him in for a hard kiss. “You are my everything. You and Teddy. And I couldn’t live without either of you.”

Sirius cupped his cheek. “If I have anything to say about it, you’ll never have to.”

***

Sirius was curled up in the armchair with a hot cup of tea when the front door banged open one hour after Remus left for work that morning. Remus walked in, his face drawn and hands shaking, and Sirius immediately got to his feet.

“Moony?”

“I was sacked,” Remus spat, throwing his coat down on a kitchen chair. He dragged his fingers into his curls and let out a frustrated growl. “My boss said…said I had too many outside obligations. That he was informed by someone that I would no longer be able to maintain my responsibilities, and that my lifestyle was no longer conducive for public service.”

Sirius gripped the armchair, his eyes wide. “What the hell does that mean?”

“I don’t know,” Remus spat. “But how the bloody fuck am I supposed to prove I can support my son if I can’t even keep a café post, Sirius?” He took in a shaking breath. “He wouldn’t tell me who said what, but this is…there’s something going on.”

“I think you’re right,” Sirius replied. “Let me get dressed. We’re going down to the office. Reg said he’d meet me there in a couple hours anyway, and I want to know if James knows what the hell is going on.”

As he left, Remus sank into a chair and put his hands over his face. It was all becoming too much, and he wasn’t sure he’d be able to bear this weight. But he knew he didn’t have a choice. He could not love Teddy. He’d been thrown this baby out of the blue, and now he couldn’t fathom a world where Teddy wasn’t in his.

Sirius was ready shortly, and they hurried over to the Potters’ offices where James was sat at his desk. He didn’t look surprised to see either of them, only motioning for them to shut the door as they stepped inside.

“Remus was sacked today,” Sirius said, glancing over at Remus who was sinking into one of James’ chairs.

James licked his lips, then sighed. “I was afraid of that.”

Remus looked at him for a long moment. “You know something, don’t you?”

“Last night,” James said slowly, “I got the information from the PI. Anne Rosier has filed for an urgent order to have contact.”

Remus blinked. “What does that mean?”

“It means that if she can get the order signed, she’ll have legal visitation with Teddy. Likely
“weekends,” James said, “as a way to try and prevent you from leaving the country with Teddy. We also believe you’ve been followed, recorded, and photographed,” James added.

“Buggering fuck,” Remus swore. “How can she come back after all this time and try to take him!”

“Relax,” James said. “I’ve already spoken to my dad and he’s transferring your case.”


“Because your current lawyer is the brother of your live-in boyfriend,” James pointed out. “But please don’t worry, Remus. We’ve got one of the top Barristers in the country on your case.”

Remus swallowed. “James,” he said in a low voice, “I was just sacked. I can’t afford…”

“If you think,” came a voice from the door, and Fleamont walked in with Teddy on his shoulders, “that I’m going to allow one of my sons to pay because someone is trying to take away my grandchild…”

Remus felt his throat go tight, and was only distracted when Teddy kicked his legs and shouted, “Pada!”

Sirius was up immediately, reaching his arms out for Teddy who slid into them. He pressed several kisses to Teddy’s cheeks, making him squeal with delight before passing him over to Remus. “I’m going to have a chat with Reg, see how last night went.”

James exchanged a look with his dad as Sirius left, and Fleamont took Sirius’ vacated chair. “Trust us, would you?” James begged.

Remus sighed. “I appreciate it, I do. But…”

“No,” Fleamont said. “I know I can come on a bit strong, but you boys are everything to me. James was our miracle baby and through him we’ve now gotten all the children Effie and I could have ever dreamed of. And you’re part of that, whether you like it or not.”

Remus blinked, trying to keep his emotions at bay. He held Teddy, burying his nose in the toddler’s curls as he tried to process what Fleamont was saying. He had, somewhere deep inside him, assumed that once James had his own baby, the older man would stop fawning over Teddy. But that didn’t seem to be a thing, and Remus wasn’t sure how to process it. He’d gone from having absolutely no one to an extended family he couldn’t have even dreamt of. One who accepted him as he was, and everyone else as they were.

“Also, you’re not unemployed,” Fleamont said.

Remus blinked. “No, I am. I was sacked this morning.”

Ignoring Remus, Fleamont reached for a biro and a scrap of paper from James’ desk. He scribbled something on it, then looked up at Remus. “We’re short of PAs round here. I think this salary should be sufficient, and several of our PAs are university students, so you absolutely qualify.”

Remus stared at the numbers on the paper. “This can’t possibly be the salary.”

James snorted. “Mate, I think you’re forgetting who you’re now working for. The Potter name does more than boast a reputation. We’re filthy rich. And our company can absolutely afford your salary.”

Biting down on his lip, Remus sighed. “Alright. I’m…I want to say no because it feels like too
much, but right now I don’t have a choice. I can’t lose him.”

“You won’t,” James insisted. Leaning back, he put his hands behind his head. “Now, you need to be prepared for what’s coming. The information we have isn’t any good. The Rosiers have hired on Riddle’s firm—Tom Riddle. Their reputation is known for being rather…racist and bigoted. Very conservative. They’ll attack your character based on you being gay, and most definitely you being in a relationship with Sirius.”

Remus felt his breath catch. “You mean they’re going to come after him? Like the article published earlier?”

“I’m afraid so. It’s going to get ugly, but Sirius is prepared. He’ll endure anything for you two. You’re his family now,” James said, and Fleamont nodded.

“Minerva will be representing you. She’s vicious and fierce, takes no prisoners. She works closely with Albus and they’ll have a special understanding of your case,” Fleamont said.

“What’s that?” Remus asked, trying to keep the bitterness in his tone to a minimum. How could anyone possibly understand?

“She’s a trans woman, and Albus was one of the first openly gay barristers in the UK,” James replied. “Our greatest challenge is to ensure we get the proper judge for the case. There’s a list here—mainly Crouch and Fudge, that Rosier is going to be pushing for, and pulling as many strings as he can being an MP. But I think we’ve got a better chance than he does. I’m hoping to pull Kingsley for it.”

Remus had no idea who any of these people were, but he decided to put his faith in the Potters completely. “Alright. So what comes next?”

Minerva already has your case and she’ll be appearing and filing a motion to send your case to mediation before the Urgent Order is signed. So with any luck, there won’t be any contact, or it’ll be supervised owing to the fact that Anne abandoned Teddy on your doorstep and hasn’t seen him since.”

Remus swallowed thickly. “Right. Okay.”

“You’ll be visited by an officer from Cafcass,” James said with a sigh. “They will not side with you, we can be sure of that. But you just need to remember what goes in their report is not law. It will only be as important as the judge lets it be, and that’s why we have to ensure we get a decent one.”

Fleamont nodded. “I have faith, Remus.”

Remus looked down at Teddy who was sucking on his dummy and leaning against Remus’ chest. He ran his fingers into his son’s hair and sighed. “But she’ll probably get him some of the time, won’t she? What I’ve got now, it’s…it’s over, isn’t it?”

“I don’t know,” Fleamont said. “Chances are you will, unless we can find something that truly proves she’s unfit to take care of a child.”

“You would think,” James said sharply, “that leaving a baby on a doorstep without even verifying if a person lived there would be enough.”

“The courts allow people to make up for their past mistakes,” Fleamont said mildly. “We don’t really know what’s in Teddy’s best interest until we have more information.”
Remus wanted to argue, to rage and scream that it wasn’t fair, but he knew it was selfish. He didn’t know what kind of person Anne had been, or who she had become. So he held his tongue and knew his only chance was to wait.

***

Heading into the office corridors, Remus made his way toward Regulus’ office where he knew the brothers would be. The door was cracked open, and when Remus poked his head in, he saw them signing furious at each other.

Hands were flying too fast for him to follow, but Regulus’ face was a mask of fury, and after a second, he stomped his foot hard and shouted, “Bullshit!”

The sound was so loud, it startled Teddy whose mouth dropped open, dummy falling to the floor. His tiny bottom lip stuck out and immediately he started to cry. Sirius froze, and Regulus followed his brother’s gaze to the wailing baby and immediately he looked regretful.

Waving his hand to get Teddy’s attention, Regulus signed, ‘Sorry, baby, sorry.’

Teddy carefully held out his hands, and Regulus’ shoulders relaxed as he took Teddy into his arms. The almost-toddler buried his face in his uncle’s neck and Reg looked up at Remus. ‘Sorry.’

Remus waved hand. ‘Teddy fine.’

‘Lolly?’

Remus sighed, but smiled a little and Regulus hurried off to find a sweet for the stressed baby as Remus turned toward his lover. “Bad day, is it?”

“He’s…” Sirius sighed, rubbing the back of his neck as he searched for the words. “He told me what Dad and James are doing with the case. He understands why, but there’s a part of him that’s afraid, I suppose, that he’s losing the case because they’re afraid he’s not capable enough.”

Remus shook his head. “That isn’t it.”

“I know, and he knows it. But growing up Deaf in a world of hearing people…” Sirius trailed off and shrugged.

“I want no one besides Regulus on my case,” Remus said fiercely. “I don’t trust anyone, but I… I guess I get it. I’m not happy about it, though.”

Sirius walked over to Remus and cupped his face between his hands. “It’s going to be fine.”

Remus pursed his lips, but sighed and nodded. “I know. This is just getting really horrible. I never thought… I never thought it would come to this.”

Pressing a kiss to the corner of Remus’ mouth, Sirius held him tight. “I know. But I’m not going anywhere, and we’re going to be fine. I swear it.”

Remus pressed his face into the crook of Sirius’ neck and nodded, but the truth was, he wasn’t sure he believed that. LGBTQA+ rights were gaining leverage, but the world still wasn’t friendly to them. They didn’t favour gay parents over straight ones, and even with a decent judge he knew there was a chance he would be down to weekend contact with his son instead of getting to raise him as he’d been planning to do all this time.
Remus was a nervous wreck the day of his mediation. He’d had two meetings with Minerva McGonagall who put him at ease with her straight-forward, no-nonsense nature, and the fact that it was incredibly rare for her to lose a case. She didn’t alleviate Remus’ fears about him not being the sole parent for Teddy—as it was likely he would have to share equal custody with Teddy, but she was confident that his success in parenting would not be ignored in the eyes of the court, no matter what the Cafcass report said.

Being that no lawyers were allowed to be present during the mediation, Remus asked James to come along as a friend and caregiver to Teddy, leaving the boy for the day with Sirius and Regulus.

The mediator was a woman called Amelia Bones, which James assured Remus was a good thing. “She’s very neutral, not very conservative, so she’s not going to be swayed by the whole gay is a sin and dangerous rubbish.”

Remus nodded, taking several breaths before he got out of James’ car and made his way toward the building. James was immediately at his side, giving his hand a reassuring squeeze. “This is going to be fine, right? No orders today?”

“All right,” James said with a nod. “This is an attempt to come to a mutual agreement between both parties. Bones will write up a report if there is an agreement, and you and Anne both can use that if you end up going to any more custody hearings.”

Remus nodded, then held the door open for James just to give himself something to do. James quickly excused himself to the loo, and Remus agreed to wait. He started to pace, heading toward the lifts, and he was so distracted he nearly bumped into a tall woman wearing a very sharp suit, with a shock of chin-length blonde hair.

“So sorry,” he said, helping to steady her.

She gave him a friendly smile. “No harm done.” With that, she smiled and pushed the button to get into the lift, and was gone.

Running his fingers into his hair, Remus tried to calm himself and by the time James arrived back, he was composed. They headed to the lifts, and into a corridor to wait until they were called. There was no one there, and Remus wondered what he’d do when he saw Anne again. He had only vague, foggy memories of her left, just dark hair, and a husky laugh. But he wondered what would come back the moment he set eyes on her. He wondered, almost cruelly he supposed, how much Teddy looked like her.

James squeezed his fingers again until they were called into a small meeting room, and it was there Remus froze.

Sat on the opposite side of the table to Remus was the woman from the lobby. The tall blonde, and she looked almost as startled to see Remus as Remus was to see her. But the expression was fleeting. She schooled her features neutral before anyone else noticed, and she turned to look at who Remus assumed was her husband.

Frozen there, Remus didn’t move until James pressed on the small of his back. “Come on, love,” James whispered.

Remus sucked in his breath and nodded, taking a seat, but he couldn’t stop staring at her. Anne? He had absolutely no memory of her looking like that. But he couldn’t trust himself. Could he? He had
been so drunk and the memories were so distorted.

“Mr Lupin, Mrs Rosier?” Amelia, the petite woman at the front of the table clasped her hands.

The two parents looked at her expectantly as she went through her speech of what to expect. It was very professional and calming, but it didn’t last. The moment Anne presented her desires, the entire meeting devolved.

“You’re out of your mind,” James said. “You are not going to be the primary caregiver?”

“And you expect him and his…partner,” she spat the word, “would be the better parent than a morally sound, married couple?”

“Considering you left him on my doorstep,” Remus hissed, “with nothing more than a note and a handful of nappies, yes. I do think we are far better equipped to care for my son.”

“Edward,” she began.

“Theodore,” Remus corrected. “You have copies of his records.

Her eyes narrowed. “I named him for my father.”

“And I wasn’t to know that since you rang my buzzer and fled before I could get to the door,” Remus said, “with naught more than a scribbled apology about your inability to care for the child.”

Her jaw went tense and she took a breath in through her nose. “Theodore, then,” she muttered, “will grow up better with decent role models.”

“Yes, god forbid he grow up with two parents who love him,” Remus barked.

Amelia, up to this point, had said very little, and continued to do so.

“If you cannot agree,” Anne said primly after a moment, “we shall be forced to move forward with a hearing. And I want immediate contact.”

Remus shook his head, but James cut in. “Supervised,” he said and when Anne moved to interrupt, he continued, “he doesn’t know you and it would traumatise him to be thrown into an unfamiliar environment.”

“So his own mother is unfit, but a disabled…”

“If you are referring to his Uncle,” James said, his voice low and dangerously vicious, “then he is not disabled. Deaf is not disabled.”

Anne scoffed. “That’s just the sort of liberal, social justice rubbish I’d expect from a Potter.”

Remus blinked in surprise, glancing at Evan Rosier who was smirking, but hadn’t said a word so far. “I will agree to supervised contact one day a week until we have a proper hearing.”

“No,” Anne said. She turned her nose up again, and again Remus was struck by a strange feeling in his gut. Who was this woman? Nothing about her was familiar. And there wasn’t a drop of resemblance between her and Teddy.

“Fine. Then this was all entirely pointless. Urgent order or not, expect Mr Lupin and his Barrister to be there for it,” James said, and rose. Remus quickly followed, and the pair hurried out without a formal dismissal.
“Should we have erm…spoken to Miss Bones or…”

“No. There was nothing to be done there,” James said impatiently. “What a twat. What a pair of…”

“James,” Remus said, pulling on his sleeve. Off in the distance, Anne and Evan were heading to their car, and he couldn’t shake the feeling. “James, I don’t know her.”

James turned to him slowly. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” Remus said, choosing his words carefully, “I don’t think she’s the woman I slept with. I know I was blackout pissed but I remember some things and I don’t remember her. And Teddy looks nothing like her at all. I…there’s something strange.”

James watched them go with a frown. “I believe you, Moony.”

Remus swallowed. “What about erm…what about requesting a DNA swab for her? I had to take one as well? I mean, what proof have they got about her giving birth to Teddy? Do they have her hospital records?”

“McGonagall likely has all of that. I’ll ring her up. And yes…yes I think a DNA swab would be absolutely reasonable. I’ll see if Minnie can get in a court order for one.”

Remus felt a little better, but he wouldn’t be able to relax until he was at home with his lover and his child. Because it wasn’t home until it was with Sirius and their baby.

***

Before the Urgent Order could be processed, Anne’s Barrister contested the DNA swab request, so there would be a hearing for that as well. Anne’s claim was that Teddy had been a homebirth with a midwife, so the records they had were minimal and shoddy at best. It would work in their favour, Minerva insisted, at least as far as the DNA swab was concerned.

The only thing Remus had to worry about was the Cafcass interview which was scheduled for that week. Their officer was called Dolores Umbridge, and James immediately warned Remus about her reputation for being completely horrid.

And she was. When she arrived, she pranced about their house, muttering about immoral activities, repeatedly misgendered Sirius—ignoring both men’s attempts to correct her, and in the end her report was that Remus be offered supervised contact once a month and that Sirius would not be allowed to see Teddy again.

Even with James reminding them that the Cafcass interview was only as solid as the judge let it be, it didn’t feel good.

They spent their night before the first hearing to potentially order the DNA swab in bed together. Teddy was sat straddling Sirius’ belly, giggling and poking him in the face. Remus was lying next to his lover, gently running his fingers up and down his ribs, just basking in the feeling of his family.

“Sirius,” Remus said very softly.

“Hmm?” Sirius turned his head as Teddy poked his mouth with a laugh, pressing several kisses to Teddy’s fingers.

“I want to marry you.”
Sirius froze, blinking. “You…what?”

“I know it’s mad. We haven’t been together a year and all this has been…one of the worst things I’ve gone through. But I bloody love you more than I have ever loved anyone else besides Teddy and…I just. I just.”

Sirius put his hands on Teddy’s waist and held him tight so he could press his mouth hard against Remus’. “Yes,” he mumbled against Remus’ lips, then laughed and kissed him again. “I want to marry the hell out of you, Remus Lupin.”

Remus felt his eyes well with tears as he kissed back, then lifted his head to look at their son who was staring at him with wide eyes. “What say you, Mini? Shall Pada and I get married?”

Teddy looked at Remus, then at Sirius. “Yea.”

Sirius beamed. “Yeah? You want me to be your daddy too?”

Both men expected a no, as Teddy’s favourite thing was to shout it, but instead he grinned. “Yea. Dada.”

Sirius reached up and stroked his knuckles down Teddy’s chubby, dimpled cheek. “Alright, then. I think we will.”

Teddy gave his soon-to-be second father a very serious look, then stuck his finger up Sirius’ nose.

***

An hour before they were getting ready to drop Teddy off with Lily and James, the door to their flat flew open and James looked wild-eyed and out of breath. “Did you…news…hear…fuck,” he gasped, grabbing the back of a chair. “Ran…ran up the…stairs.”

Sirius walked over to James’ grabbing him by the shoulders. “Catch your breath, Prongs, then tell us what the ‘fuck you’re on about?’”

Remus, who was easing Teddy into his chair, looked over feeling anxious and near to vomiting all over his shoes. “Everything alright?”

James waved his hand. “Hearing’s off.”

Remus’ head snapped up from where he’d bent to do Teddy’s buckle. “Sorry? What?”

“Anne wasn’t…she…” James took a breath. “She and Rosier were arrested for tampering with death records.”

Remus blinked. “Death…records?”

“Anne Dickerson—the birth mother to one Edward Lupin—died shortly after her infant was born from a misdiagnosed infection. The baby was given into the custody of her cousin who disappeared shortly after.”

Remus blinked. “Are you telling me…?”

“Dad’s ensuring they do the DNA swab just to be on the safe side, but the PI found out she’d tampered with the death records to show that the cousin—something by the name of Mculiber, I think it was—had some contact through Rosier swap the death records from the hospital.”
“So Teddy’s mother died?” Remus asked, feeling suddenly confused and numb.

James’ face fell, his gleeful look replaced by one of caution. “Remus…fuck. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to tell you like this. I was just…it means that no one can take him from you.”

Remus nodded, sinking into the chair as it all hit him. “So what…I mean what happens today?”

“The hearing’s called off,” James said slowly, sinking into a chair as Sirius busied himself with Teddy’s morning porridge. “Anne and her husband are now facing fraud charges, and they can’t come near you.”

Remus frowned. “I don’t understand why they’d…”

“There’s a trust,” James said.

“Oh,” came Sirius’ quiet voice.

“It was left to Teddy, and it stated that only the birth parents of Teddy could use it—no guardian could have access to it.” James clasped his hands on the table.

“So she…” Remus’ voice faltered and he glanced over at Teddy. The thought struck him then. Teddy was his, completely. No one was fighting to take him away. His hand reached out and ruffled Teddy’s curls as the boy dug into the porridge with a big, plastic spoon, grinning toothily at his dad.

“Dada.”

Remus looked over at James. “So that’s… that’s it, then?”

“You’ll probably be called as a witness in her trial—if there is one. I’m not sure. But she won’t be able to touch him again. And you’ll have the money so…”

“I don’t care about the money,” Remus whispered. “Leave it in the trust for him, for school or—whatever. It doesn’t matter.”

James’ eyes were gleaming. “Alright, then?”

Remus swallowed thickly. “I think so. We are, aren’t we? Alright now?”

James leant over and pressed a kiss to Remus’ face, then a sloppy one to Teddy’s to make him giggle. “Yeah, Moons. Anyway, I’m going to tell Lily and I’ll give you three a moment to process, yeah?”

“Thanks,” Remus said.

James squeezed Sirius’ shoulder on his way out, and shut the door with a click.

The moment they were alone, Remus was up, crowding Sirius back against the counter and kissing him hard. Sirius let out a muffled laugh before kissing back, then carefully pushed Remus away.

“You still want to marry me?”

Remus laughed. “You still want to keep asking the stupidest questions?”

“Probably,” Sirius said, kissing the tip of Remus’ nose. “I can’t wait to be your husband, you know.”

Remus dragged his hands up and down Sirius’ sides. “And I can’t wait to be yours.”
One Year and Six Months Later

Unmindful of the funny stains on his suit jacket, Sirius spun round the dance floor with a giggleing Harry on his hip. He looked over at the kiddie table where Teddy was sat scribbling on the pristine white tablecloth, and knew their deposit was forfeit, but he didn’t care.

It was his wedding day. He was married to the love of his life, and he and Remus had just bought a little cottage down the street from where James and Lily had bought theirs.

His gallery was a success, Remus was enjoying his job still at the Potter’s firm and, as he’d mentioned before to himself about a hundred thousand times, he was married.

Thin arms snaked round Harry’s waist, pulling him away, and Sirius grinned at Lily. “I think your husband is looking for you.”

Sirius’ heart soared at the word, and he turned to see Remus leant on the bar with two glasses of wine in his hands. Making his way through the crowd of people smiling at him, Sirius slid up to the bar.

“Mm, you’re rather fit. You come here often?”

Remus rolled his eyes, but grinned. “Only on my wedding day.”

“Shame,” Sirius said, running his knuckled along Remus’ jaw. “I hear the rooms are really decent though. Sturdy beds and all that.”

Remus slid up close. “Oh yeah? Shall we put them to the test later?”

Pushing his face against Remus’, their mouths met and Sirius slid his tongue along his husband’s slow and soft. “I fucking love you.”

Remus chuckled, nuzzling his nose into Sirius’ cheek. “Well wouldn’t you know it? But I feel the exact same way.”

Sirius felt like his face would crack in half for all the smiling he’d been doing. He took a long drink of the wine before setting his glass down, then taking Remus’ away. “Dance with me.”

Remus laughed as Sirius dragged him onto the dance floor, spinning him in ridiculous moves which didn’t match the beat of the song, but neither cared. The only thing that mattered were arms around each other, faces too close, lips meeting and parting and meeting again. What mattered was knowing this was it, this was forever.

“So, honeymoon? I hear that Cabo’s really nice this time of year.”

Remus laughed, cupping Sirius’ cheek. “See if we can get some colour into this pasty, half-English skin of yours.”

“I’m also half-Thai. I tan extremely well. You’d just never know it for all this ridiculous English fog.”

Remus kissed him again. “Have I told you how happy you make me?”

“Repeatedly,” Sirius said, and put his face in the crook of Remus’ neck. “But I never get tired of hearing it.”
“Good,” Remus replied, and cupped Sirius’ chin, looking into his eyes. “Because I'll never get tired of saying it.”

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!