

# Trust me if you can

Von viv-heart

## Inhaltsverzeichnis

<b>Kapitel 1:</b>	.....	2
<b>Kapitel 2:</b>	.....	8
<b>Kapitel 3:</b>	.....	14

## Kapitel 1:

Minerva woke up to pounding echoing through her little house at the outskirts of Hogsmeade – somebody was at her door! She didn't even bother to put on her dressing gown, those precious few seconds could save a life at times of war, and rushed down the stairs to her front door.

"Who's there?" she asked and the pounding ceased immediately.

"Sirius, Sirius Black. Please let me in. It's important," Sirius said, desperation clear in his voice.

Minerva checked her wards quickly, making sure that the visitor wasn't using Polyjuice Potion or the Imperius curse, before she opened the door and Sirius rushed in after a last glance over his shoulder.

"What happened?" Minerva asked as she led Sirius into her kitchen. "Are you alright?" Sirius collapsed onto one of the chairs and Minerva finally noticed his red, swollen eyes and the bundle in his arms.

"The Potters are dead," Sirius whispered and cradled the bundle closer to his chest as it moved.

It was a child, Minerva realized with horror.

"This is their son, Harry, my godson," Sirius explained when he saw where she was looking. "He's the only one who survived."

"How?" Minerva asked and sat down as well.

"I have no idea," Sirius sighed. "But there's this weird scar on his forehead."

They fell silent as Minerva processed what he had said. "Why are you here?" she asked finally.

"A lot happened," Sirius said seriously. "Please hear me out before you jump to conclusions."

Minerva nodded carefully. If Sirius Black was serious, a lot of things had to be very very wrong and it had to be important.

"As you surely know, the Potters went into hiding some time ago. Dumbledore suggested them to use the Fidelius Charm and I convinced James to make Peter his secret keeper instead of me," Sirius started, his breath hitching. It was obvious, that it was hard for him to talk about it. "Today, I figured out that Peter was the spy we have suspected within our ranks, but it was too late. He had told Voldemort everything before I found him and we got into a fight. He killed muggles before turning into a rat to make it look like I killed him. He's an animagus, we all are. Well, except Remus, but you know about that," he laughed dryly. "I ran away and went to the Potters to warn them, but it was too late. So I did the first thing I could think of and grabbed Harry before running away once more. I didn't know what to do, so I came to the only person who always has an answer: you. Please, help me, Minerva! I am Harry's last caregiver! His only family! You know they won't allow Remus to take care of him even though he is listed in the will right after me! And Merlin only knows what will happen to Harry if this isn't solved! Especially as Pettigrew is still out there!"

Minerva pinched the base of her nose. "Why am I not even surprised that you lot are unregistered animagi?"

"It seems our questions haven't been as subtle as we thought," Sirius smiled weakly.

"I believe it was the rot of a Mandrake under your tongue," Minerva replied when a knock echoed through her house – she had enchanted the house to deliver knocks and

voices at her door to her wherever she was in the case of an emergency. It proved useful the second time in one day.

Minerva stood up. "It's Albus. He has this unique way of knocking."

Sirius froze at that and she gave him a questioning look.

"He can't find me here!" Sirius said with wide eyes. "I am pretty sure he thinks I am guilty and he will take Harry away!"

Minerva crossed her arms. "He will listen if you try and explain everything to him."

Sirius let out a low laugh. "Sure. Because he didn't suspect Moony and me the most. Because he cared when Regulus disappeared without a trace. Because he likes Blacks so much. Even though I can't exactly blame him for that."

"Fine," Minerva pressed her lips together just as another knock echoed through the kitchen. "Go upstairs and hide there. I'll talk to him and see what his visit is about."

"Thank you."

Minerva watched Sirius walk up the stairs to the first floor of her small house before making her way to the door.

She opened it to Albus Dumbledore standing at her threshold just as she had expected, his right hand risen to knock yet again.

"I am sorry that I woke you up, Minerva," he said with a glance at her sleeping gown.

"But this is urgent."

Minerva let him in and they walked into the kitchen where they sat down. "What happened?"

"The Potters are dead and Voldemort disappeared, but so did the little Harry," Dumbledore sighed. "I suspect Sirius Black abducted and possibly killed him after he killed Peter Pettigrew who confronted him and several unfortunate muggles who got in the way."

Minerva frowned. Sirius had been right, Dumbledore was assuming the worst about him. "And where do you suspect Black is now?"

"I hoped you could help me to figure that out," Dumbledore answered. He looked very tired and Minerva asked herself how long this was already going, considering Sirius hadn't looked any better, probably even worse despite his young age.

"For that, I would need more details and a clearer account of what happened," Minerva ran a hand over her face.

"Black was the Potter's secret keeper," Dumbledore started as Minerva stood up to make some tea. "He must have told Voldemort the location of their house yesterday and Voldemort himself came to kill them. He managed to kill Lily and James, but something went wrong when he attacked Harry and he vanished."

Black had been confronted by Pettigrew in the meanwhile, you remember him, right, and blew up the poor guy together with his surroundings and onlookers. They didn't even find Pettigrew's body, only a finger."

Minerva placed a cup of tea in front of Albus and took one for herself before she sat down again."

"How do you know that Black was the Potters' secret keeper?" she asked carefully.

"Everybody knew! They were like brothers," Dumbledore replied.

"Wouldn't that be a reason to choose somebody else and let everybody think it was Black?"

"What are you getting at?" Dumbledore frowned.

"I don't think it makes sense for Sirius Black to betray James Potter," Minerva said calmly, deciding to believe Sirius version of the story if Dumbledore didn't offer her any kind of proof soon. That way she could keep Harry safe as well. "You said it

yourself: they were like brothers."

"But it's obvious, Minerva! Black killed Pettigrew!" Dumbledore protested.

Minerva pinched the back of her nose. "Let's look at what we know for sure, before jumping to conclusions. Somebody betrayed the Potter's. Pettigrew and Black got into a fight and muggles died while Pettigrew disappeared. The Potters died and Voldemort disappeared. Somebody took Harry. Is there any evidence? Photographs or films?"

Dumbledore pulled out a photograph from his robes and placed it on the table in front of Minerva silently.

She took it and watched carefully as Sirius yelled at Peter before both drew their wands and everything exploded. It was not clear who said the spell and something about the photograph unsettled her. She watched the scene unfold again and again, studying the people in the picture carefully. After she watched it for the sixth time, it hit her. Sirius had said that Peter was an animagus and had transformed during the explosion. And indeed, his shadow was missing in the smoke, but more importantly, one could watch it shrink if one paid enough attention.

"Albus, look at this," Minerva said and pointed out her observation to Albus, who watched the scene unfold for several times before speaking up.

"That's no proof that Pettigrew's alive," he said. "Or that Black is innocent. Pettigrew might be in hiding in fear of Black and hadn't come to us because of it."

"Maybe you should ask Mister Lupin if he has been contacted by Peter Pettigrew then," Minerva said. "And ask him what he thinks has happened here."

"He might not be of any help and be in this together with Black," Dumbledore sighed. "After all, he's..."

"A werewolf. I am aware," Minerva cut him off. "But that doesn't mean he isn't a good man. You wanted my advice and here it is: go and talk to Mister Lupin tomorrow. And when you are done, send him here. I would like to talk to him myself."

"You could come with me," Dumbledore said.

"I am not a member of the Order, Albus. I am going to help you, but I will do it my way and that is getting information over a nice cup of tea and offering consolation to those who need it. Mister Lupin certainly will, as he has lost all of his closest friends in one night."

Dumbledore nodded and drank out his tea. "I will be going then," he said. "It's been a long day and tomorrow will be equally exhausting if not worse."

Minerva accompanied him to the door and made sure he left, before going upstairs to talk to Sirius again.

As soon as she entered the guest room, Sirius, who had been dozing off in an armchair startled awake, almost dropping Harry whom he was still holding. The baby was unfazed by that and continued sleeping peacefully.

"How did it go?" Sirius asked.

"You were right," Minerva sighed and sat down on the edge of the bed. "He really thought the worst of you."

"But you believe me?" Sirius sounded hopeful.

"For now. Albus showed me a photograph that had been taken at the moment of the explosion and it looks like Pettigrew has either disappeared or transformed just like you said. Albus doesn't think that, but he is going to talk to Mister Lupin and will send him over tomorrow."

Sirius nodded and leaned back, the relief clear on his face.

"I am glad," he said.

"What will you do now?" Minerva tilted her head.

"No idea," Sirius confessed. "As I've already said, I came here for advice as I didn't know what to do."

"I need to think," Minerva said after a short pause. "You should stay here for now, get some sleep and take a bath, get something to eat. And we need to get something edible for Harry as well. Do you know how old he is exactly?"

Sirius shot her a grateful smile. "You are the best, Minnie."

ooo

Minerva woke up to a child crying and groaned. While she was used to being woken up at the oddest times in the case of an emergency, it was way too bloody early for this, but she had learned that Sirius had no idea how to care for a child the previous evening. Besides, he wouldn't be feeling very well as the events of the previous day would probably have hit him hard. If she was right, he hadn't fully processed what had happened due to adrenaline and the fact that he had to act. She would be lucky if he got out of bed and didn't go completely berserk and self-destructive. She had witnessed it way too often in people who had lost their loved ones during the past few years.

Minerva stood up and walked over into the guest room, where Harry was lying in a transformed crib. To her surprise, Sirius was already leaning over him, looking at him with a sad expression on his face.

"What's wrong with him?" she asked softly and Sirius looked at her in surprise.

"I think his nappies need to be changed and he is hungry," he replied.

"Take him downstairs and I'll join you in a moment," Minerva said and Sirius nodded.

They took care of Harry together, Sirius listening and watching carefully to everything Minerva said and did in an attempt to learn. Unfortunately, most of it was improvised as Minerva didn't have anything child related at her house, why would she, and was struggling to remember what her mother had taught her once upon a time.

Occasionally, Sirius was falling silent and didn't react to anything Minerva said and her concern for him grew. While he was trying to pull himself together as much as he could, he was clearly everything but fine.

"You should try and get some more rest," she said when she couldn't watch it anymore. "I'll take care of Harry and get you when Remus arrives."

"Thank you," Sirius mumbled, kissed Harry gently on the forehead and went upstairs, leaving Minerva to ponder over what to do.

Sometime around noon, knocks echoed through the house once again and Harry started to cry. She rushed upstairs, to give him into Sirius' care, who wasn't looking like he had slept at all, and went back downstairs. They had agreed that it would be better to see Remus' reaction before telling him that Sirius and Harry were hiding at her place. It would be of no use if he ran to alert Dumbledore.

"Hello, Remus," Minerva tried to smile at him as she opened the door, but her smile froze on her lips as she took in his appearance. He had dark circles under his eyes and was way too thin to be healthy, not to mention his ragged clothes.

"You wanted to talk to me," he said weakly, his voice raw.

Minerva tried to remember if there had been a full-moon any of the previous nights, her concern growing when she realized that it hadn't.

"Come in," she said. "Do you want a cup of tea or something to eat?"

"Tea would be great," he said as he followed her into her kitchen.

Minerva placed a cup in front of him, accompanied by a plate of small sandwiches before sitting down as well.

"I am sorry for your loss," she said. "And I am sorry, but I have to ask you a few questions, even if this is the worst time to do so."

"Thank you," Remus said, staring into his tea.

"What do you know about yesterday?" she asked and Remus repeated what Dumbledore had told her the previous night and Minerva told him that.

"Well, he told me earlier," Remus shrugged. "I don't know anything for myself, I am sorry. I still can't believe Sirius would do something like that. I trusted him," his voice broke.

"You know quite a lot," Minerva said. "And I don't think Mister Black is guilty."

Remus' head shot up and he looked at her with hope in his eyes. "Excuse me?"

"Your friends all became animagi, didn't they?"

"How do you know about that?" he asked in shock.

"They hadn't been as subtle about it as they thought," Minerva replied. "Isn't it possible that Peter transformed and is hiding in his animal form now? As he is not a registered animagus, nobody is looking for him like that."

"That might be, the photograph... I thought it was wishful thinking!"

"So you have noticed it too, haven't you?" Minerva gave him an encouraging smile.

"But that's not all. Do you know for sure that Sirius was the secret keeper? Couldn't that be just bait?"

Remus fell silent for a moment. "James said that he wanted Sirius to be his secret keeper, but neither has ever confirmed that Sirius was it indeed. For all I know it could have been anybody..." his eyes widened in realization. "You think Peter is the traitor! But why would he do that? But it would be a logical choice... While both Sirius and I have been suspected by Dumbledore throughout the war, he hadn't. Oh my god. Peter betrayed James and Lily. And he's alive. I can't believe it."

"At least that's what Sirius has told me," Minerva replied and Remus' jaw dropped.

"Sirius has told you? Was he here?"

"He still is," she answered. "And so is Harry. I am sure he will be glad to talk to you, but we wanted to make sure you wouldn't run to Dumbledore and the Ministry first thing when you saw him."

Remus nodded in understanding. The caution was understandable, considering one of their best friends had betrayed them just the previous day.

They walked upstairs together and Minerva gently knocked on the door to the guest room before entering.

"You believe I am innocent?" Sirius asked when he saw Remus come in as well.

"I want to hear your side of the story," Remus said before moving to Harry's crib. "Is this...?"

"Yeah, that's Harry," Sirius confirmed.

"May I hold him?"

And like that, Minerva listened to the events of the previous day for the fourth time and watched the two young men in her guest room carefully.

Sirius was obviously struggling to tell the story while Remus was looking at the small boy in his arms, refusing to look anywhere else.

When Sirius finished talking, Remus asked the obvious. "What are you going to do now?"

"I have no idea," Sirius said once again and looked at Minerva with expectations.

"You should both stay here," she said without thinking. "Being on the run with Harry isn't an option, and he doesn't have any other relatives."

"Technically he has," Remus chipped in. "Lily had a sister, Petunia. She's muggle

though."

"The worst muggle you could imagine. The only way she'll rise Harry is over my dead body," Sirius snarled.

"Thn it's settled, you will stay," Minerva stated. "And you should too, Remus. It will be less suspicious that way as I am at Hogwarts during the day."

"I can't accept that, Minerva. I have a flat and..." Remus tried to protest.

"And you are broke and not eating," Sirius muttered. "It's painfully obvious."

Remus glared at him.

"I can understand that you don't want to be a bother, but you'll be of great help if you stay here. I fear for Harry's health if Sirius is his only caregiver through the day. Besides, the Potters wanted you to take care of him in the case anything happened to them, too," Minerva said.

Remus didn't look too happy, but Harry suddenly tugged at his jacket, demanding his attention. When Remus saw his smile, his features relaxed.

"Alright," he said. "I'll stay for Harry. But only till we solve this mess."

"And I will pay you back as soon as I have access to my vaults again," Sirius added.

## Kapitel 2:

Remus stared out of the window of the room he was now to share with Sirius and Harry. While Minerva had argued that Harry should sleep in her room because she wanted them to have more space for themselves, Sirius had agreed with him, that Harry should stay with them, allowing Minerva to get enough sleep. Harry tended to wake up in the middle of the night, crying, probably from his nightmares. As Sirius had trouble sleeping, it didn't bother him too much, but Minerva had to teach during the day and needed the rest.

"What's wrong?" Sirius stepped next to Remus, Harry on his arms, trying to reach Sirius' hair that was out of reach in a ponytail. Sirius had learned rather quickly that Harry enjoyed pulling on it.

"Nothing," Remus answered and turned around to look at the room. He had moved in the previous day on Minerva's demand and had already unpacked all of his things – not that he owned much.

"Sure," Sirius muttered, not believing his friend for even a second.

"Pads, it really is nothing. I am fine," Remus crossed his arms over his chest.

Sirius let out a low laugh at that. "Yeah, sure. Because we all are fine."

Remus glared at him. "Is the great Sirius Orion Black admitting that he isn't feeling well now? What has the world come to?"

"My whole world crumbled in front of my eyes," Sirius returned the glare and leaned down to kiss Harry on the forehead. Lily had told him that small children needed to get attention and physical contact from their caregivers when he had visited them once and Sirius planned to give Harry all he needed.

Remus sighed. "Do you know when Minerva will be back?"

"Sometime in the evening," Sirius said uncertainly. "I don't live her any longer than you do as you know so how the hell am I supposed to know?"

"Watch your mouth," Remus muttered. "There's a child in the room. And technically, you live here two days longer."

"Doesn't change the fact that it is the first day of school." Sirius retorted. "And he won't remember it."

"When his first word is 'fuck' I don't want to be there when Minerva finds out."

Sirius rolled his eyes.

Ooo

Remus was sitting in the living room, reading a book about child-care Minerva had bought, when the fireplace lit up and Minerva stepped through.

He took in her face and slowly closed the book, before putting it aside. "What's wrong?"

"Where is Sirius?" she asked.

"Upstairs, probably asleep. He didn't sleep much last night and when Harry started to get tired he brought him upstairs and hasn't returned since."

Minerva sat down next to him on the couch. "Dumbledore is pulling all strings to catch him and wasn't too happy with you moving in."

"Neither is really surprising," Remus muttered.

"It isn't. I had to tell him, that I did it to keep an eye on you before he stopped questioning me."

Remus sat up a bit straighter. "That's not all, is it?"



"Unfortunately not. You have to go to the Shrieking Shack on full moons," Minerva explained with annoyance and Remus shrugged.

"I would have gone there anyway."

"No, you would not," a voice came from behind them. "And you will not. We will go into the forest, just as we used to. I'll watch over you," Sirius said, his hands on his hips.

"I could too," Minerva offered after a short moment.

"No," Sirius shook his head as he walked around the couch and sat down on Remus' other side. "You have to stay with Harry. Besides, Dumbledore would make sure that Remus moved out if you got even the tiniest of scratches."

Minerva pressed her lips together but didn't argue, knowing that he was right.

"What's your animagus form anyway?" she asked instead.

Sirius grinned and Remus rolled his eyes as he watched him transform.

"A black dog?" Minerva raised an eyebrow. "Sirius Black the black dog?"

"I didn't choose it," Sirius shrugged, his most charming smile on his face, after he transformed back.

"But you would have, if you had the choice," Remus gave him a pointed look and Sirius winked at him.

Ooo

After the first few days, they fell into a routine rather quickly: Minerva would feed Harry before she went to work and the two men would watch over the boy during the day. When Minerva came back in the evening, she would wash him with whoever's turn it was and after Harry went to bed, they would sit in the living room and chat until one of them fell asleep.

That was, until the fullmoon came.

Remus felt worse and worse with every passing day and Sirius was on edge because of it. It would be the first time he would be keeping watch on Remus alone.

"I am not sure that this is a good idea," Remus repeated for the umpteenth time.

"There will be children!"

"There won't be any children as they stay safely tucked away at school. Besides, they were there when we went to school too! Hell, some of them went to school with us!" Sirius shot back.

"But it wasn't just the two of us back then!" Remus said and Sirius' face fell.

While Remus was managing to keep up a facade thanks to years of hiding his secret, Sirius froze at even the slightest mention of James or Peter. It was quite surprising that he could even look at Harry, not to mention to care for him. But that was Padfoot to you – he got shit done.

Minerva had told Remus, that she was astonished how well Sirius was coping, considering his history, but he wasn't fooled. He was sure, that Sirius would explode at some point.

"Please, just trust me," Sirius ran a hand through his hair. "I *will* make sure that no one gets harmed!"

"Not even Snivellus?" Remus raised an eyebrow in challenge.

"Not even him," Sirius pressed through clenched teeth.

"Fine," Remus sighed and slumbered onto the couch, before glancing at Harry who was playing with some wooden bricks on the carpet in front of the fireplace. "I believe he needs changing."

Sirius sighed and picked Harry up so he could sniff at his butt. "You are right. As always."

Remus smiled weakly and watched silently as Sirius took care of Harry, before his eyes wandered to the huge clock on the wall and from there to the window.

"Sirius," he called out in alarm. "We have to go!"

Sirius caught on immediately with what was going on and picked Harry up from the table he was changing him on. "What about him?"

"You stay here," Remus said and stood up. "I'll go to the Shack."

"No! That's not an option! Where the hell is Minerva?"

"Watch your language!" Minerva stepped out of the fireplace and Sirius stopped his pacing. "This little one will understand you soon enough! I am sorry I am late, but Dumbledore wanted to talk to me. Now give me Harry and go!"

Sirius didn't hesitate and put Harry into her waiting arms and transformed.

Remus gave Minerva a quick nod before following Sirius out of the door.

Ooo

The next morning, Remus stumbled back into the house followed by Sirius, who was still in his animagus form.

Minerva was already fully awake and bustling around the kitchen to make Harry's breakfast. The boy himself was sitting in a transformed baby-chair, babbling happily.

"How bad is it?" Minerva called over her shoulder when she heard the steps in the hallway.

"Everything fine," Remus called back, but didn't enter the kitchen and Minerva frowned.

"It isn't. But it could be worse. Or better," Sirius peaked inside and waved at Harry, who started squealing happily at the sight of him.

"Do you need anything? Bandages? Or should I take a look at the wounds?" Minerva asked and placed a plate with mashed fruit in front of Harry.

"I don't need anything. Everything is fine," Remus repeated from the hallway and Minerva crossed her arms over her chest.

"If everything is fine, come in and let me take a look at you," she demanded.

Shuffling could be heard from the hall and Remus finally walked in, his face bruised and the bags under his eyes darker than ever. "See, not so bad," he muttered and turned to leave.

"You call that not bad?" Minerva raised an eyebrow. "You look as if you've been in a pub brawl."

"Trust me, it is fine in comparison to how I look when I am alone on such a night," Remus sighed. Minerva was about to protest but Sirius cut it. "He is saying the truth. It really is not as bad as you think."

"Let me at least heal the worst of it," Minerva said.

This time, Remus wanted to protest, but didn't get the chance as smashed fruit suddenly landed on Minerva's cheek and she let out a surprised squeak.

The adults all turned to look at Harry, who was staring at them angrily, his hands in his breakfast. He took some more and threw it in Remus' direction, but didn't hit him as Remus was standing too far away. At that, Sirius started laughing uncontrollably and Harry threw another load at him.

"It seems he doesn't like when we argue," Remus commented dryly and Minerva glared at him as she wished the food from her face.

"Than do us all a favour and let me heal you so we don't upset Harry with further arguing," she said.

Remus rolled his eyes but walked towards her and Minerva took out her wand to take care of the worst of the bruises and cuts.

"Why were you late yesterday?" Sirius asked from where he sat next to Harry, trying to feed the little boy who wasn't really willing to cooperate this morning. It seemed he didn't take well on spending the night with only Minerva around.

Minerva sighed and put her wand away. "I am sure it would be better to talk when Remus had some rest."

Sirius frowned. "Why do I think we won't like what you are about to tell us?"

Remus ran a hand through his hair. "Sirius, if you are right, I want to get some sleep first. Usually I would be in bed right now."

Sirius grumbled something under his breath but didn't protest and Remus walked out of the room.

When he was out of earshot, Sirius looked expectantly at Minerva.

"I am not telling you right now," she said.

"If it is something important, I want to know right now," Sirius crossed his arms over his chest. "And it must be something important if Dumbledore kept you at Hogwarts for so long. Unless he wanted to make sure you were that late because of Remus. And considering how he had treated him during the war I wouldn't be surprised about that either."

"We will talk when I come back," Minerva replied. "But I have to go now or I will be late for work."

"Could you at least bring me the newest Prophets when you come back, please?" Sirius asked and Minerva looked at him for a long moment. She had the Daily Prophet delivered to Hogwarts as she read it during breaks and the meals.

"I will," she said and walked out of the room to get ready.

Sirius stared at the spot where she had been before turning back to Harry who had gone quiet during the conversation.

"Everything alright, Harry?" Sirius turned to the boy. "Just ignore our adult crap. Trust me, you don't want to get involved with it."

Harry looked at him with big eyes before splashing a fist of smashed fruit into his face and Sirius froze before laughing again.

"I wish I could deal with things I don't like the same way you do," he muttered and picked up Harry from his chair, going to see Minerva off and check on Remus.

Harry pulled on his eye and Sirius cursed. The boy was really angry with all of them and he couldn't even blame him. It truly hadn't been a stellar morning.

The day got slightly better even though Sirius was tired to death as Harry slowly calmed down and pulled him through the whole living room as he ran through the room.

Sirius was incredibly relieved when nap time finally came around and he collapsed on his bed, falling asleep immediately.

Unfortunately, the break ended soon when Harry woke up again and Sirius spend the remaining time altering between reading to him and playing with wooden bricks.

"How do children have so much energy?" he mumbled to himself for the umpteenth time when Remus finally walked downstairs.

"There's some soup in the refrigerator," Sirius called his shoulder and caught Harry just in time to save him from falling over.

Remus walked back with a bowl of soup and sat down on the couch to watch them play. "What do you think Dumbledore told Minerva?" he asked after a while.

"No idea, honestly," Sirius replied without looking at his friend. "I've asked Minerva to bring us the Prophet. If she or Dumbledore have left out something, it might be in there. I just hope there haven't been any more deaths."

Remus hummed in response and continued eating his soup in silence.

It took another hour for Minerva to come back and Sirius was ready to explode. Curiosity and worry were slowly killing him and it was obvious enough for Harry to get fidgety to that point that Remus had brought him to bed early to calm him down.

When he returned, Minerva was already home, standing in the kitchen and making tea.

"How are you feeling?" she asked when he walked into the kitchen.

"Better. Still weak but this time really was fine. The healing helped," he shrugged and sat down next to Sirius.

Minerva placed a cup of tea in front of each of them and joined them at the table. "Is everything else fine? Did you have any trouble?"

"Everything fine," Remus replied calmly while Sirius was glaring at her.

"I believe you wanted to tell us something."

"Indeed," Minerva said flatly. "It's about the trials. Three days ago, the first Death Eaters were condemned to Azkaban, small fish, really."

"Whose trial was yesterday?" Sirius hissed. "Bella's? Malfoy's? Is this what it is about? My family?"

"Yesterday was the trial of Severus Snape," Minerva ignored Sirius. "While he admitted to be a Death Eater and was convicted of several crimes, Dumbledore vouched for him."

Remus' mouth fell open while Sirius roared with rage.

"You have to be fucking kidding me!" he shouted. "That has to be a joke!"

Minerva glared at Sirius and hissed, "Keep your voice down or you'll wake Harry! He isn't going to Azkaban, and it really isn't a joke," she put the newest Prophet on the table, where Severus Snape was staring at them from the front page. "But that's not all. He has offered him the position of Potions' Professor starting next year when Slughorn retires and he accepted."

Sirius jumped from his chair and started pacing in the kitchen while pulling at his hair, while Remus sat there, skimming the article with disgust all over his face.

"How can he do that? Has he gone completely crazy? Allowing a convicted Death Eater to teach? At Hogwarts? Especially Snivellus? That's insane!" Sirius continued raging and Minerva watched in silence, hoping that the walls were thick enough for the child sleeping upstairs to not wake up.

"Why did he want to talk to you about it?" Remus asked when he finished reading.

"He needed to tell me so I don't look for another Potions Professor. And because he wants me to make sure that all the other Professors won't make any trouble," Minerva replied, frowning. "I just hope he doesn't get another Death Eater to teach Defence."

Sirius stopped his pacing. "What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"Lucius Malfoy has been declared innocent today," Minerva explained darkly. "Narcissa hadn't even been charged as she technically wasn't a Death Eater."

Sirius roared and punched the wall closest to him, leaving a dent in it and his hand bleeding.

"Corrupt bastards! Idiots! Racist scum!" he shouted and both Remus and Minerva jumped up from their chairs to stop him from doing more damage to himself and the furniture.

"Sirius calm down," Minerva held his upper arm in a firm grasp. "It is certainly not fair but we have to accept it."

"If those well-known Death Eaters have been declared innocent, maybe Sirius should

turn himself in," Remus said carefully when Sirius' breathing slowed.

He turned to glare at him and Minerva shook her head. "No. Dumbledore has said that while those cases were open, a trial for Sirius won't be necessary as it is clear what had happened and there is more than enough evidence that he committed a mass-murder."

Sirius shook with anger and Remus looked from him to Minerva. "Then we have to prove his innocence first and catch Peter," he practically spit out.

## Kapitel 3:

Sirius sat down on the couch next to Remus, who was reading a book and watching Harry play.

"What are we going to do?" he asked.

Remus sighed and put his book away. If Sirius wanted to talk, he wouldn't go away until they talked. "What do you suggest?"

"That's the point. I don't know," Sirius leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest.

"We can hardly go and take a look at every rat in the whole damn country."

"Do you think he has fled to the muggle world?" Remus asked, frowning.

"Not really. But I didn't think he would betray James either."

Remus sighed and ran a hand over his face. "I don't think he is hiding in the muggle world either. While he would be able to live as a human there as nobody would recognize him, he wouldn't be able to survive. He doesn't know much about the muggle world and he wouldn't be able to use magic as it might alert the authorities," he mused. "Besides, he would need money. He can't access his funds at Gringotts and doesn't exist in the muggle world... The only way would be getting it from the other Death Eaters, but those would all look rather suspicious if they tried to change their galleons to pounds and the Ministry would automatically assume, that they were supporting someone in hiding."

"What's the alternative? Spending the rest of his life as a rat?" Sirius grunted. "While it would fit his character, I can't imagine it would be very pleasant to eat scraps and live in a trash can."

"Sirius," Remus glared at him.

"What? He isn't our friend anymore. I can be as rude as I want to. I just wish, I had noticed his ratty character earlier."

"You are not helping!" Remus muttered and glanced over at Harry, who was completely oblivious to the talking adults. "We need a course of action to find Peter! We can't stay here forever and we won't be able to move until we find him!"

Sirius scowled but didn't say anything.

"Do you think he might have returned to Hogwarts? It's the place he knows best and it would offer him a rather comfortable shelter and food. It's not hard to steal from the kitchens and we both know how good Peter was at that."

Sirius' expression changed into a grin. "You might have a point there, Moony," he said. "And we have the perfect tool to search the castle. All we have to do, is to get you on the grounds, but that shouldn't be hard."

"We don't have the cloak," Remus reminded him. "It will be hard to use the Honeydukes entrance without it and getting in through the Weeping Willow is impossible without Peter."

"There are still other tunnels," Sirius protested. "We can use them."

"Or we could simply tell Minerva about the Map. It will be easy for her to retrieve it from Filch and she is there all day anyway," Remus suggested.

"You can't be serious."

"I am," Remus said. "It's our best shot."

"But what if he isn't there and she changes her mind and decides I am guilty after all. I'll be fucked. She knows about my animagus form and if she finds out about the Map, I won't be able to go to Hogwarts ever again," Sirius stood up and started pacing.

"Do you think she would change her opinion?" Remus asked quietly.

Sirius looked at him. "Honestly, I don't know. I don't know whom I can trust, who is a friend and who will stab me in the back."

"And yet you chose to come here of all places," Remus replied and Sirius ran a hand through his hair.

"Are you angry at me?" he asked finally and Remus rose an eyebrow.

"Why should I be?"

"Because I came here and not to you," Sirius stopped pacing and stood in front of his friend. "Are you angry at me, Remus?"

Remus studied Sirius for a moment before speaking. "Do you trust me?"

Sirius closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Yes," he said flatly. "I trust you. If I can't trust you, I can't trust anybody."

"Then give in for once and let me show Minerva the map. You can trust her too. She could have alerted Dumbledore the moment you appeared on her doorstep with Harry, but she didn't. She's with us."

Sirius nodded slowly and Remus smiled up at him.

"And now go and play with Harry," he said. "I want to finish this book."

ooo

"Harry is finally asleep," Sirius said as he entered the living room, where Remus and Minerva were drinking tea.

"Do you want a cup?" Minerva asked and Sirius shook his head.

"We need to talk," he said and looked at Remus, who slowly placed his cup on the coffee table.

"Did you come up with a plan?" Minerva put her cup down as well, looking between the two men with interest.

"Kind of," Remus confirmed. "We suspect that he is hiding at Hogwarts."

Minerva's face fell. "Are you sure?"

"No. But we strongly suspect it. We talked about his possibilities earlier, and it makes the most sense," Sirius put his hands behind his head. "And luckily, we have the means to find out if he does. Provided, he hasn't snatched it yet."

"Do you think he would?" Remus arched an eyebrow. "Filch's cat is around there quite a lot and he won't be able to use it anyway."

"Stop," Minerva spoke up. "What are you talking about?"

"Well," Remus scratched his neck, "there is this tool we made during our time at Hogwarts. It's quite extraordinary."

"It's a map," Sirius clarified. "It shows you where everybody is in the castle at any given moment, revealing true identities even though the person might be under Polyjuice or in their animagus form if you know that they are. And as you now know that Peter is an animagus, you will be able to see him if he is there."

Minerva gaped at them. "I've never heard of such a tool."

"Well, most people don't think big enough," Sirius grinned and Minerva had to suppress a groan.

"We could check it out occasionally and maybe Peter will appear on it. If he does, it won't be that hard to catch him. If he doesn't, he isn't in Hogwarts," Remus finished the explanation.

"But back to the map," Minerva was still looking between them as if she saw them for the first time. "How is it possible that we never caught you?"

"It's protected by a password. Basically, you can turn it off. When it's on, there is the map, when it's off, it looks like any other parchment," Sirius said. "You should find it

among the stuff Filch confiscated. We let him take it on our last day in hopes that some other students might take it and uncover its secrets one day. Use it for their own mischief. Legacy and all that.”

“Plus, James owned an invisibility cloak. I wonder what happened to that...” Remus trailed off.

ooo

Minerva glanced over her shoulder one last time, making sure that nobody saw her, and unlocked Filch’s office swiftly before walking in. She closed the door behind her and looked around.

Her eyes stopped at the drawers and Minerva smirked. For once, Filch’s affinity for order was actually useful, as he had put tiny labels on all of them, telling her where she should look.

Minerva opened the drawer with the title “Confiscated and highly dangerous” and took out the sole piece of parchment.

As she had made sure that Peeves was going berserk at the other side of the castle, she knew that she had enough time to take a quick look at the map and plan her way back to her own chambers – that is if the map really worked the way Sirius and Remus had described.

She tapped the parchment with her wand, whispering “I solemnly swear that I am up to no good,” and watched in awe as the fine lines, names and dots appeared and spread over the whole parchment.

Minerva looked for Filch’s office on the map, just to make sure it really worked, when she saw his name moving down a corridor not too far away.

She closed the drawer quickly and tapped the map again. “Mischief managed,” she whispered before tugging the once again blank parchment away into her robes. She hurried out, locking the door and started walking away just as Filch rounded the corner.

“Good morning,” she said calmly and Filch muttered something she didn’t catch in return, but it didn’t seem like he had noticed her exiting his office.

Minerva willed herself to walk slowly as long as she was in his sight, but sped up as soon as she turned around the corner. While she was sure that he wouldn’t check if anything was missing – why should he – she was still pretty nervous because she just broke into the quarters of one of her coworkers or because the map really worked the way Remus and Sirius described to her and she couldn’t believe that a bunch of underage students had managed to make it work, one of which she had to catch now that he was an adult.

It reminded her of her days in the Magical Law Enforcement.

Ooo

Minerva didn’t have time to check the map again until she returned home with other teachers and students demanding her attention. As Dumbledore was busy with Ministry business and the trials, everybody sought her out instead as she was Deputy Headmistress and therefore the one responsible for the school in his absence.

It would be an understatement to say that she was exhausted when she finally flooded home, thinking about a cup of tea and a good book.

As soon as she stepped out of the fireplace and saw the expectant faces of Sirius and Remus, she knew that she could forget her plans. Their anxious and somehow still over-eager faces told her that they had a lot of discuss.

“Do you have it?” Sirius asked, reminding Minerva of an oversized dog. Given his animagus form, it wasn’t that surprising and quite fitting. She remembered reading a



book that said animagi adapted some traits from their animal form if they spend a lot of time in it. Sirius certainly did.

Minerva pulled the map from her robes with a smirk.

Remus relaxed at the sight of it, almost becoming one with the couch he was sitting on while Sirius reached for it, but Minerva moved it out of reach.

"We need to talk about a few things first," she said in her best teacher voice and Sirius let his hand fall to his side. He had learned long ago that that voice meant trouble and listening to what she had to say was the better alternative to what else she had in store and Minerva knew it.

"You will have to explain to me how this works!" she said and the men exchanged a quick look but nodded. "And I will keep it."

"How are we supposed to watch it and search for Peter if you have it?" Sirius asked sharply, crossing his arms.

"Why?" Remus asked, studying Minerva carefully.

"Have you considered what would happen if he," she motioned to Sirius, "would find Peter when neither of us was looking?"

Remus grimaced at that and it was clear that he understood what she meant. Sirius on the other hand, wasn't very pleased with her words.

"You are impulsive," Minerva said. "You can't deny that. Think about what would happen to Harry if you went and killed Peter! You would end up in Azkaban and he Merlin knows where!"

Sirius froze at the for Minerva very uncharacteristic display of emotions.

"We've already lost too many! So pull yourself together and act like the adult you are supposed to be! You are a parent now so get used to it!"

Sirius' face fell at Minerva's words. She knew that she had been hard, but she believed that they needed to have that conversation finally. Sirius was running away from reality and while she understood, she couldn't tolerate it any longer. A lot was at stake. She cared for him, for Harry and for Remus too much for that.

"Sirius," Remus reached out to him, but Sirius shook his head.

"You can't imagine how it is," he said looking at Minerva. "This war has cost me so much. My friends, my family, I dare to say my sanity. How am I supposed to take care of a kid? It would be much better if I got rid of Peter and freed you of the burden of my presence. Both of you," he glanced at Remus. "The only reason I am staying is because I can't find him on my own."

He stood up and marched out of the room, leaving the stunned Remus and Minerva behind.

"Oh my," Minerva whispered, covering her mouth with her hand in shock. His words had certainly caught her by surprise.

"I should go after him," Remus said and she nodded, sinking into an armchair. She had a lot to think about.

Ooo

Remus didn't bother to knock and pushed the door to their shared bedroom open.

"Why did you run away?" he asked, leaning against the door to prevent Sirius from fleeing again. "It's not like you can go anywhere."

Sirius turned around to face him, but stayed at the window. "You don't have to remind me of that," he said bitterly.

"Why did you say those things?"

"Because they are true."

It was strange for Remus to hear Sirius, the passionate, over-articulate Sirius, to speak

with so much detachment in his voice. But that was what a war and grief did to you.

"They aren't," he said and Sirius snorted.

"I am responsible for James' death!" Sirius shouted. "I told him that he should make Peter his secret keeper! I told him I would lure them away so they would be safe! James had asked me and I have turned him down! I killed my best friend!"

Remus' eyes widened. He hadn't known that but it didn't change much for him. He took a deep sigh and walked over to Sirius carefully, as if he was approaching a wild animal.

"It's not your fault," he said. "You couldn't have known. Neither of us could have."

Sirius shook his head and his lower lip quivered. "That's not true. Had I just agreed-"

He didn't get to finish the sentence as Remus cupped his face with his hands and forced Sirius to look at him.

"It is not your fault," he repeated. "And I will repeat it until you understand."

Sirius opened his mouth to protest but Remus wasn't thinking anymore and closed the distance between them, pressing his lips against Sirius' and silencing him effectively.

As soon as he realized what he had done, he pulled away, his eyes wide and practically ran out of the room and straight into Minerva who had just exited her own bedroom after having checked on Harry.

She stumbled backwards but managed to keep standing, looking at him in shock.

"What is going on?" she asked but Remus shook his head and hurried to the stairs, but he had underestimated her. She caught his arm before he could reach them and hold on with an iron grip.

"I always took you for a level-headed man, Remus. Don't disappoint me. Whatever happened, you have to sort it out."

"It's not like you can go anywhere," Sirius said from behind them, repeating Remus' words from just minutes ago.

Minerva looked between them, her brows furrowed but let go of Remus' arm.

"Do you need me for the talk?" she asked and Sirius shook his head.

"I will be downstairs, guarding the door. The windows are charmed." With that she ascended the stairs, leaving the two men to stare at each other.