

# Trust me if you can

Von viv-heart

## 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."

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"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.

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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.

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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.

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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.