

Chapter 12 - Déjà vu

Part II-The 7th Year

Remus stood on platform 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ the following September. He leaned against the trolley that was loaded with his luggage and trunk. His features had sharpened greatly, and he was a lot leaner and far more agile than he was last year.

His parents were crushed when they learned what had happened to Michelle. They knew how much Remus had cared for her. Michelle's parents had indeed buried her properly. But Remus suspected that they were somewhat relieved that now they could concentrate on nothing but themselves. That only made him irate.

Suddenly, someone bumped into him from behind. He managed to catch himself from falling by gripping the trolley's handle.

"Oh! I'm so sorry!" a girl's voice cried out in upset. "Are you alright?"

Remus looked up and froze. He swore he was looking at Michelle. He shut his eyes briefly and then opened them. Nope. The girl was still there.

"Um...yeah, I'm fine," he stammered, still completely stunned.

"Ugh, where are my manners," the girl said brightly extending her hand out. "My name is Emma Carlson."

Remus took her hand and shook it.

"Remus Lupin."

Emma's chocolate brown eyes twinkled. "Nice to meet you. I'm such a retard. I hope I didn't hurt you in anyway?"

Remus shook his head and replied, "No, seriously I'm fine." He studied her intently before continuing on, "Are you new to Hogwarts?"

Emma nodded. "Yeah. My parents just moved here and I got the acceptance letter. I was originally in Ireland and had 6 years of magical study so I just transferred here for my seventh year."

Remus nodded.

Just then, he caught sight of Caitlin. She certainly looked even prettier than last year. She spied him and waved at him. He smiled and waved back. He suddenly realized Emma was still talking to him.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” he apologized, feeling bad. “You were saying?”

Emma grinned at him. “Is that your girlfriend? The blond girl?”

Remus shook his head. “No, she’s just someone I knew from last year. My girlfriend died last year in a fire.”

Emma’s expression changed to sympathetic. “The fire in the Great Hall? Yeah, it was all over *Witch Weekly* and the *Daily Prophet*.”

Remus was amazed.

“Did they say what actually caused it?” he asked innocently.

Emma shook her head. “No. They aren’t sure.”

Remus felt a bit of relief flood over him.

Together, they boarded the train and entered an empty compartment. The pistons of the steaming locomotive began slowly pumping and gradually the train picked up speed. Remus stared out the window at the scenery passing by. Moors stretched endlessly for miles on either side. The sky was cloudy and grey.

Emma was sitting across from him. He noticed that she looked a lot like Michelle. His heart gave a sad wrench.

“Um, I’m sorry to ask you this, but who are your parents?” Remus asked curiously.

“Oh,” Emma said brightly. “You can ask me it’s alright. Both my parents are wizards. I was actually a—”

Emma froze. She couldn’t just tell him the truth, although he seemed totally trustworthy. There was just something about him that set Emma at ease. But before she went blabbing the truth about her family, she wanted to get to know him first.

“I was actually astonished that I’d gotten the letter of acceptance to Hogwarts,” Emma finished carefully. “I’ve heard what a great school this was. My parents had gone here too.”

Remus nodded and sensed that there was more to what she wanted to tell him, but for some reason decided against it.

“It’s just that you look so much like my girlfriend,” he said, giving her a watery smile.

Emma’s eyes filled with remorse. “Oh. Look, if I bother you, you can just kick me out. I’ll stay away from you if it bothers you that much.”

She stood up and went to leave, but Remus shook his head and lightly grabbed her arm.

“No, stay,” he said. “I’m just feeling sorry for myself. That’s all.”

Emma nodded and took her seat again.

Just then, the compartment door opened, and a 7th year Slytherin boy stepped in and froze when he saw Emma and Remus.

“Whoa,” he said, looking at Emma. “This is definitely déjà vu.”

Emma looked at him puzzled.

“Why’s that?” she inquired.

“Because you look like the freak from last year. She died in the fire, thank God,” the Slytherin boy said cruelly.

Remus bristled and felt all his emotions starting to boil inside. Emma’s eyes filled with coldness and she stood up.

“That has got to be the cruelest thing I’ve heard anyone say to me,” she said stiffly. “No wonder you’re in Slytherin. Snakes have cold blood. They’re vile and they make a great meal over a barbeque.”

Remus looked at Emma stunned.

The Slytherin took a step toward her and got in her face.

“You really should shut that big mouth of yours, bitch,” he said icily. “You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“I think I do,” Emma said defensively. “I had snake a few months ago. Tasted really good, I might add.”

The Slytherin went to hit her, but Remus stood up, narrowing his eyes, and stepped in-between Emma and the Slytherin student.

“Leave the compartment, now, while you can still walk,” Remus growled in a low dangerous tone.

The Slytherin boy turned and with a scowl thrown at Emma, finally left the compartment, and Remus and Emma sat back down.

Just as Emma was about to thank Remus, the compartment door opened again. Emma felt her body tensing up in case it was a Slytherin again, but instead, it was two guys, and a girl with light auburn hair and emerald green eyes. One of the guys had untidy jet black hair and blue eyes, which were behind a pair of thin black-rimmed glasses. He was dressed in Gryffindor robes. The other guy had short, wavy thick black hair and hazel blue eyes. He and the girl were also dressed in Gryffindor robes.

“Remus! How are you pal?” the boy with the glasses asked as he took a seat next to Remus. The boy with the hazel blue eyes took a seat next to Emma as did the girl with light auburn hair.

“Fine, James,” Remus replied softly. “Emma? This is James Potter, Sirius Black, and Lily Evans.”

He gestured to each of them in turn, starting with the boy sitting next to him. “Emma Carlson,” Emma beamed brightly at them.

“And Remus, you made a mistake,” the boy named Sirius said giving him a deadpan expression. “It’s not Lily Evans anymore...well, it’s more like Lily Evans Potter.”

Remus looked at James. “You asked her to marry you?”

James nodded. “And she accepted! Look!”

Lily held out her left hand. On it was a beautiful diamond engagement ring. Emma beamed at Lily.

“Congratulations,” she said.

Sirius caught the look on Remus’ face and slapped Lily’s hand down as Remus took to staring out the window.

“Hey,” she hissed at him, but with a nod of his head toward Remus’ direction, Lily immediately understood and fell silent.

“So, Emma,” Sirius said, turning to her. “Are you new here?”

Emma nodded. “I just transferred here from Ireland actually. I had six years of magical study there, so we moved here and I got the acceptance letter.”

Sirius nodded as he noted a subtle trace of an Irish brogue laced in her speech. He thought it sounded pretty. In fact, he found Emma to be rather pretty herself. Her shoulder length, dark brown hair was hanging around her shoulders in gentle waves, and her coffee colored eyes were bright and lively. She was dressed in a tan skirt and a wine colored shirt with a winged collar. Around her neck was a small butterfly necklace and in her ears were matching earrings.

Sirius also knew that Emma looked almost exactly like Michelle. He thought it had to be killing Remus inside, as he knew how completely devastated he’d been over Michelle’s death. He’d actually had to spend a month in St. Mungo’s Mental Health division because of it. He’d been so depressed over Michelle’s death that he simply stopped eating, but this time, it was for a more than a week. Sirius, James, and Lily had gone to visit him each day. Little by little, with support from everyone, he came around again and was somewhat back to himself. But there was still that gap missing in his life.

Remus listened to Emma talking to Sirius, James and Lily. He caught the way Sirius was looking at Emma. He knew right away what Sirius was thinking. Sirius had somehow changed since last year. He became a lot more serious in his work, and normally, he loved flirting with all the girls. Now, he stopped flirting and became a lot more serious with his relationships. Even though he only had one serious girlfriend in all of his years at Hogwarts, he told Remus that he wanted to find 'the right one', much like Remus had with Michelle. James and Lily had certainly taken the next step. He was happy for them, really.

Emma thought Sirius was extremely handsome. She felt herself blushing whenever he'd wink at her. She never had a boyfriend back in Ireland. On one hand, she was hoping this new school would open up new opportunities with schoolwork and new people.

They continued to talk for the remainder of the trip.

When they hit Hogwarts, Emma was immediately in awe over the size of the castle. A witch dressed in maroon robes greeted them as they disembarked.

"Miss Carlson? Please come with me," she said pleasantly. "I'm Professor McGonagall."

Emma glanced back at her new friends. Remus caught her scared expression.

"It's okay," he said reassuringly. "She just wants to bring you to the Headmaster so he can see which house you'll be staying with. Since you're not a first year, it makes no sense to use the Sorting Hat."

"Mr. Lupin is correct," Professor McGonagall said kindly. "You'll see them in a few minutes."

Emma nodded and followed Professor McGonagall.

Remus, James, Sirius and Lily climbed into the carriages drawn by Threstrals. He was now able to see them. They looked mostly like horses, but more so like dragons.

When they arrived at the castle, they took their seats at the Gryffindor table. The Sorting began for the first years. Remus sat at the Gryffindor table scanning the entire Hall. It looked normal now, but Remus swore he could still smell the scent of burning flesh and the smoke. He realized he really hated being in here now.

Remus leaned close to James.

"James can you smell that?" he whispered as "Alans, Becky" was made a Gryffindor.

"Smell what, pal?" James asked softly.

"Smoke and burning..." Remus' voice trailed off. He couldn't finish the sentence, but luckily James knew what he was talking about.

“No,” James said, shaking his head. “But naturally your sense of smell, hearing, and whatnot is ten times sharper than mine.”

Remus sighed. He wanted to get out of there as fast as possible. His gaze shifted to the Hufflepuff table now. He spied Caitlin sitting there, whispering to her friend. Her friend shook her head at something Caitlin had said, and then, to Remus’ shock and amazement, her friend gave Caitlin a scowl and scooted away from her. Caitlin had a stunned expression on her face. Her hair was slightly wavy now, and the fact that some of her hair was pulled back with a barrette and some of the shorter strands had come loose, made her look even prettier. Remus shook his head, clearing his head of thoughts like that. He missed Michelle so much...but still, he couldn’t seem take his eyes off Caitlin. Her coffee brown eyes were filled with disbelief. Then, one of the Slytherins got up from their table and stood behind Caitlin just as the Sorting finished. The Slytherin girl picked up her dish and dumped the food all over Caitlin.

James and Sirius saw this and burst out laughing. Lily just scowled.

Remus was able to hear what the girl said from across the Hall.

“You’re a freak just like that Gryffindor last year,” she snickered and took her seat again.

Caitlin stood up, covered with gravy, mashed potatoes, and meatloaf. It was also sticking in her hair and streaking down her cheek.

Everyone in the Great Hall saw her and laughed. Remus glared at James and Sirius. Just then Emma entered the Hall and took a seat at their table.

“Professor Dumbledore said since I already know you lot, I can stay with you,” Emma beamed.

“That’s great!” Sirius said enthusiastically. “Check out that Hufflepuff.”

Emma’s chocolate brown eyes moved onto the girl standing covered in food. She felt bad for her.

“What happened?” Emma asked. “The poor girl!”

Sirius immediately put on a remorseful expression. “Oh, yeah,” he nodded in agreement.

Remus just rolled his eyes scornfully. Ok, Sirius had been a lot more ‘serious’ about his relationship, but he was still the same old Sirius underneath. Even though he wasn’t flirting anymore. He was more than likely showing Emma his soft side.

Remus gave Sirius a smirk.

“Why don’t you go help Caitlin, then?” he asked in a sickly sweet voice, knowing that Sirius would have to admit to helping her if he wanted Emma to like him.

Sirius gave Remus a death glare, but Remus kept his expression polite.

“Why don’t you join me?” Sirius smirked back.

“Sure,” Remus grinned at him.

Emma looked at Sirius with big eyes. Sirius and Remus got up and went to head toward Caitlin, but Caitlin left the Great Hall and didn’t even look back at them. Sirius shrugged and sat back down, but Remus headed out after her.

Caitlin was walking back to her common room. Her robe and uniform were filthy, sticking with gravy, mashed potatoes, and pieces of meatloaf. Her hair was full of potatoes and some streaked down her cheek. She couldn’t believe that her friend wanted nothing to do with her because she was associating with Remus and talking about him. She said that only ‘freaks’ associate with the Marauders and that the girl, Michelle Matthews, had been the biggest freak of all, and caused several bad things to happen and rumored to have started the fire in the Great Hall but Caitlin knew Michelle hadn’t meant to start the fire. Of course she didn’t tell anyone this.

She had just hit the open corridor, the opened archways lining each side of her, when she heard someone jogging up behind her.

“Cait?” a voice said behind her, and she felt someone gently but firmly grabbing her elbow turning her around to face the person speaking. It was Remus.

Remus had a concerned expression on his face.

“What happened?” he asked, looking at her with his beautiful green eyes.

“One of the Slytherins decided to share their dinner with me,” Caitlin said dryly. “Remind me to thank her later.”

Remus reached over and wiped a wad of mashed potatoes off the shoulder of her robe.

“With your friend? I saw her scooting away from you,” he said.

“Oh, you mean my ex best friend, Jenna? She didn’t want to associate with a ‘freak,’” Caitlin said bitterly. “As I talk to you, she thinks that the Marauders are blind because they associate with ‘freaks’. Like poor Michelle, last year.”

Remus bristled. “That’s not right. You have a right to hang out with whomever you choose to.”

“Yeah, that’s what I told her. And the Slytherin overheard it as well. She said that if I want to continue to hang out with her, then I have to stop talking to you,”

“If you have to stop talking to me, I’ll understand,” Remus said.

Caitlin smiled. “Naw,” she said, shaking her head. “I listen to my own voice of judgment. *I* determine who I hang out with.”

Remus nodded.

“Besides,” Caitlin said softly. “You seem really sweet and I hope we can become friends.”

Remus nodded again. “Sure.”

Caitlin gave him a smile. “Good. I’m gonna go take care of this mess. I’ll see you later.” She turned and continued to head down the corridor. Remus stood there, feeling his heart lift a little before he, too, headed back into the Great Hall.