

## Chapter 15 - Back to The Past

After a while, Lily released Remus. He had to admit, he began feeling much better now. He was himself. Hearing Emma say that he wasn't to blame was alright, but he needed this talk with Lily. He wiped his eyes and got up.

"I think you owe Caitlin an apology now," Lily said softly.

Remus nodded. He'd apologize to her first thing in the morning. Lily and Remus headed off to their separate dorms.

Once Remus realized his head was a lot clearer, he also figured out that he did like Caitlin, but as a best friend, too. His mind kept reminding him that werewolves mated for life and he still loved Michelle. He was a bit more cheerful now as he climbed into bed and pulled the covers up. He was soon fast asleep.

In the morning, he headed back down to the Great Hall. Caitlin was sitting with the Marauders. He guessed she was still having trouble with the Hufflepuffs. Emma looked up at him and beamed. He gave her a big grin and sat down next to Sirius.

"Morning, guys," he said brightly.

"You seem a lot more cheerful," James said, grinning at him. "Everything okay?"

"Everything's great," Remus said honestly.

James nodded and winked at Lily before turning his attention back to his breakfast. Remus turned to Caitlin.

"Hi," he said softly.

Caitlin ignored him and continued to butter her crumpet.

"Sleep well?" Remus ventured gingerly.

"I'm fine," Caitlin replied coldly. "Why are you talking to me anyway? Aren't you afraid that I might pull some kind of joke on you?"

Remus cringed. He felt really guilty about snapping at her like that yesterday. He knew that she wouldn't have lied like that. He was just so upset and his head was clouded, that he didn't mean to be so gruff.

"I'm sorry, Cait," he apologized earnestly. "I didn't mean to snap at you or talk to you like that. I was just so upset. I know you wouldn't lie like that."

“Duh,” Caitlin scoffed, rolling her eyes.

“But I hope that you can forgive me,” Remus pleaded. “And we can still remain best friends? I was just upset over something’s and I wasn’t thinking clearly.”

Caitlin fell silent.

*I guess he might not feel like you toward him. You like him, but it appears that he just wants to remain best friends. That’s okay. I can handle that.*

Caitlin smiled.

“Of course,” she said, nodding. “I can understand how you’ve got a lot on your mind.”

Remus nodded and grinned.

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They headed to History of Magic class and Remus sat beside Emma.

Emma dipped her quill into the ink bottle and wrote her name at the top of the page. Remus was also writing next to her, copying down the notes. All that could be heard was the scratching of quills on parchment. Emma glanced up at Remus before turning her eyes onto the front of the classroom. Professor Elmens was sitting behind his desk, reading.

Emma’s chocolate brown eyes shifted to the wall behind him. She was just about to write when her hand froze over the parchment. The quill dripped ink onto the parchment in little orbs. Her eyes were wide and her breathing sped up slightly. Standing behind him was the girl with hazel eyes and chocolate brown hair. She was dressed in a beautiful white dress with spaghetti shoulder straps. Her hair was layered and brushed outward. She realized that the girl looked like her and that this was probably Michelle...her sister.

Michelle’s eyes shifted onto Remus before they moved back to Emma. Michelle vanished into thin air. Emma finally was able to move.

“Emma? Are you alright?” Remus’ voice broke through her stupor.

Emma jumped slightly as though her body was touched by a live wire. She turned and looked at Remus. She hadn’t realized her parchment was spotted with ink puddles.

“Huh? Oh, yeah,” Emma said quickly.

Remus raised his eyebrow at her.

“You saw something...didn’t you?” he whispered quietly as he kept his eyes on his parchment as he continued to write.

“I saw Michelle,” Emma whispered quietly. “She was standing behind Professor Elmens.”

Remus now looked at her.

“No talking,” Professor Elmens scolded as he stood in front of their desk. “Mr. Lupin and Miss Carlson. I want you to remain after class.”

*Blast.* Remus thought, and they remained quiet.

Remus was still sitting with Emma. Professor Elmens had given them each thirty lines of “I will not talk during class”.

He had left the classroom, leaving them alone.

“I wonder why she’s appearing all of a sudden,” Remus mused curiously as he finished his 30<sup>th</sup> line.

“I don’t know,” Emma said as she finished her 20<sup>th</sup> line. “But I have a feeling she was the one who attacked me in the bathroom.”

“She also attacked Caitlin,” Remus said gravely. “She pushed her down the stairs.”

Emma looked at him shocked. “Is that what happened? My God. Why is she doing all of this?”

Remus couldn’t answer that at all.

Professor Elmens came in about thirty minutes later and saw that they were finished with their lines. He dismissed them and they headed back to the Gryffindor common room.

They found Sirius, James, Lily, and Caitlin, whose hair was caked with mud and the uniform and robe.

Emma took a seat next to Sirius. Sirius draped an arm around her shoulders and began whispering something in her ear.

“What on earth happened?” Remus demanded as he dropped his bag beside the couch.

“The Hufflepuffs,” Lily said seriously. “While Caitlin was in her dorm getting something, they had bewitched a bucket to drop from the ceiling. It was filled with mud and dirt. She can’t stay in her dorms. They’re really starting up on her now.”

Caitlin reached up with both hands and wiped off a large wad of mud.

“Sure,” Remus said. “She can stay here with us. She’ll have to sleep in the common room though.”

“That’s fine,” Caitlin said. “Listen, I’m gonna head out for a shower and clean off.”

“You can borrow a pair of my clothes,” Lily offered brightly as she rushed into the girls’ dorm and came back with a pair of jeans and a white shirt. Caitlin took them gratefully and left the Gryffindor common room.

Remus sat down on the couch next to Sirius.

“Does this remind you of anything?” Remus asked quietly.

“Yeah,” James said. “Michelle, last year.”

“Why are they picking on Caitlin, anyway?” Lily asked curiously. “They never did it before.”

“It’s probably because she’s hanging out with us,” Sirius said, turning from Emma and facing them. “Anyone who hangs out with us is dubbed a ‘freak’. It all stemmed from Michelle last year. They picked on her for no reason, too.”

“Why is everyone so mean this year?” Remus demanded angrily, punching at the couch arm.

Sirius knew what he meant.

“I don’t know,” he said slowly. “But rest assured that they WILL stop.”

Caitlin came back dressed in Lily’s clothes. They fit her nicely. Her hair was damp and hung around her shoulders in gentle waves.

They headed to the rest of their classes. Caitlin explained to Professor Dumbledore what happened and he agreed that it would be best if Caitlin stayed with them. Plus, he was going to have a word with everyone the next morning about their disgusting behavior toward their fellow classmates.

Sure enough, Dumbledore scolded everyone the following morning at breakfast. The Hufflepuff table was especially quiet as realization of turning on one of their own house mates hit them head on. Apologies were sent to Caitlin right then and there. Caitlin forgave them and things were back to normal. No one tormented anyone anymore...well, except for the Slytherins, but that was normal for them.

There was going to be a trip to Hogsmeade the following afternoon. Caitlin was staying behind at the castle so it would be Remus, Emma, Lily, James and Sirius heading off. Lily and James headed off once they hit Hogsmeade and made a bee line straight for The Hogs Head Pub. Sirius asked Emma to go with him to Honeydukes, but Emma saw Remus’ expression as he glanced toward the Shrieking Shack and told Sirius that she wanted to keep Remus company. Sirius gave her a kiss on the cheek and headed off to Honeydukes. “You didn’t have to stay,” Remus said to her, tearing his eyes off the Shrieking Shack. “You could’ve gone with Sirius.”

“I know,” Emma said softly. “But you seemed lonely, so I decided to stick with you.”

She grinned up at him and linked arms with him.

They took a walk. Remus found himself walking past the Shrieking Shack.

“I heard that place was haunted,” Emma said, glancing up at the shack.

Remus smiled. “It’s not. It’s just a silly rumor. How about I show you?”

Emma nodded, feeling a bit scared, but brave.

Remus led her into the shack. It was the same way it had been last year. His eyes immediately shifted to the door that led into the room where he and Michelle had been intimate in. His mind flashed back to that night:

*Outside, the thunder boomed and lightning flashed. The rain pelted against the shack sounding like little firecrackers going off...the warm blanket that encircled them as they were lying on the floor. Remus saw himself looming over Michelle. He saw himself staring into her beautiful hazel eyes...Michelle was smiling lovingly up at him. Remus remembered how they’d moved and how wonderful and amazing it had felt. The flash vanished...*

Remus’ body jumped briefly as though he had been startled. Emma was walking around the shack, just looking around.

“Emma? I’m sorry...” he said quickly. “We-we have to go.”

Emma nodded, and let Remus escort her out. They headed back to the main section of Hogsmeade.

About an hour later, they returned to Hogwarts.

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Emma sensed that Remus had been uncomfortable and sullen when they had been in the Shrieking Shack, so she pulled Lily aside as the boys played a game of Wizards’ Chess in the common room.

“Lily, when Remus and I were in the Shrieking Shack, he seemed very sullen and depressed. Did something happen in there bad?” Emma asked with concern. Lily’s expression grew somber.

“Well, something did happen in there, but it wasn’t bad. That place is kind of a tender spot for him right now,” Lily explained gently and slowly.

“What happened?” Emma prodded curiously.

Lily hesitated. She wasn’t sure if she should be the one telling Emma about Remus’ private life. Especially something like that.

“I think we should let Remus tell you,” Lily said quietly. “It’s not really my place.”

Emma nodded and realized that maybe she was pushing the envelope. "I gotcha. It's okay. Something sentimental, yeah? Poor Remus," She said, heading over to the guys and just watched them play the game. Sirius pulled Emma close to him and hugged her, then whispered something in her ear that caused her to blush furiously. (God only knew what Sirius had said.)

Lily smiled and shook her head. She glanced at Remus next. He seemed lonely, so she went over and pulled him aside, too.

"Remus," she said kindly. "I can see you're lonely. Why don't you ask Caitlin out?"

Remus looked at Lily. "Werewolves mate for life," he said quietly. "Regardless if Michelle's not here, I'm still in love with her."

Lily put a hand on his arm. "I know," she said softly. "But do you honestly think that she would want you to be lonely? I understand that you're not ready yet...that's understandable...but please don't not be ready forever."

She winked at him before heading over to James.

Remus stood, watching the four of them laugh and he did miss the company of a girl. Michelle had been the only one he had wanted to become intimate with. Now the very idea of doing that with a stranger, someone who wasn't Michelle, bothered him.

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The next morning, Caitlin was sitting at the Hufflepuff table, talking with her friends like nothing ever happened. They had apologized for dumping the mud on her. Things were back in the circle.

Caitlin looked over at Remus. They caught each others' gaze and smiled at one another. Caitlin took her eyes off Remus and turned back to her friend.

Suddenly, Remus turned to Sirius.

"Sirius," Remus said slowly. "Remember how Peter had the footage of Michelle and I's intimate moment?"

Sirius looked at Remus deadpan and gravely and replied, "How could I not? That was really cruel what he pulled."

"First of all, we never found out how he managed to get that footage," Remus said, looking at Sirius.

Sirius looked thoughtful. "Yeah, you're right. It had to be something in the shack, right? I mean, where else could he have gotten that from?"

Remus nodded.

Sirius' dark eyes twinkled mischievously as he replied, "I say we go back to the shack and snoop around."

"Count me in," James said leaning toward them grinning.

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Once everyone had gone to bed, James, Sirius, and Remus under the cover of James' invisibility cloak, snuck out of the castle and headed toward the Whomping Willow. As Peter was not around anymore, hitting the knot at the base of the tree was nearly impossible. Sirius changed into the black dog and carefully snuck toward the tree. After several tries, he finally managed to place a paw on the knot, and the tree stopped moving. They crept down the entrance to the shack and shortly arrived in the basement of the space. They climbed up the stairs and entered the room.

Immediately, Remus was hit with a flood of emotions being back in the same room. It looked the same as it did last year. They slipped off James' Invisibility cloak and laid it across the sofa. James caught and sensed Remus' expression and put a hand on his shoulder, giving it an understanding squeeze. They began closely searching around.

"We were in front of the fireplace," Remus said. "So it would have to be behind us."

"In the book shelf?" Sirius asked as the three of them stood in front of the bookshelf that was dusty and filled with old books. They pulled several of the books from the shelf, but found nothing.

Then, Sirius saw something silver and shiny toward the back stuffed behind several old volumes. He reached over the books and picked up the object. He cradled it in his hand as James and Remus stood on either side of him, peering over his shoulder.

"My God," James said. "I didn't think those worked in the magical community."

"Apparently, they do," Remus said bluntly.

It was a Muggle camcorder.