

# I'll be good

Von mundanewitchbee

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## Kapitel 1: Part One

Regulus remembered the night his brother left his home. He remembered that he felt betrayed and left alone, but he didn't find the courage to speak up.

Sometimes it even haunted his dreams and he woke up with regret.

The younger Black felt jealous when he saw Sirius having fun with Remus Lupin and James Potter and he felt replaced - as a friend first, but as a brother even more. That was where he started to be really mad at James Potter who stole his brother.

He trained hard to beat Potter at Quidditch, at playing the piano and violin, to be better than him in everything and it didn't matter that the Gryffindor was older than him. He still wanted to be better.

But sometimes had changed in the last months. His eagerness to beat him disappeared and he became more impressed of his talents.

He started to notice the elegance in his movements, the curls on his head and the warm colour of his eyes. He started to notice his laugh and his excitement over well working pranks and the way he rolled up the sleeves of his shirt. He started to feel the pain in his chest on the day Lily Evans finally agreed to go out with James. And this was the moment he knew that he was doomed and was probably more like his brother than he had believed.

## Kapitel 2: Part Two

James never used a second thought on Regulus Black. He recognised him as his best friend's younger brother and talented seeker for the Slytherin House team. He knew that the younger one lived up to their parent's expectations and that he avoided his brother after Sirius came to the Potters.

The Gryffindor had been over the top as he became headboy of Hogwarts and it meant to work together with the girl of his dreams, Lily Evans. In the last years he continued to ask her out but it wasn't until a few months ago, that she agreed. And that had made his whole year, to say so.

Everything could have been so easy, but what he didn't expect was to cross Regulus' path more often as the Black became prefect of his house.

He didn't have the chance to ignore how mature and smart the boy was, how eager to learn and be the best. He couldn't ignore how beautiful the contrast of his deep black hair to his very pale skin was and how his eyes were glued on books when he read something interesting.

James Potter literally sat between two chairs - the woman he thought was the love of his life and the boy that woke his interest unexpectedly.

And his hope was that after the school years end this wouldn't be a problem anymore, because he wouldn't see the Black often after his graduation. But what could happen until then stood in the stars.

## Kapitel 3: Part Three

Regulus stood in the hallway and stared at the four boys - no young men rather - sneaking into the castle. It was late at night and therefore they wouldn't recognise him in the dark, but he knew exactly who they were.

Not only because his older brother's voice flew through the air: "Wormtail, move out of the way. Moony isn't heavy but after carrying him for a while he turns into a half mountain and you're not doing me any favour by playing statue."

Peter muttered something that Regulus couldn't understand but moved out of the way. Now the Slytherin saw that Sirius was carrying the Lupin on his back and he caught them more often like this. He knew what was going on as he wasn't stupid. But he didn't tell anyone, because it simply wasn't his business.

"The air is clear. No other people around", James' voice explained as he came down the stairs he just had walked up. Oh how wrong he was.

Reg narrowed his eyes in an attempt to see better. But he couldn't see if they were hurt. Carefully he took a few steps towards them, but he was so focused at the boys, that he ran against an armoured door. The noise was like a bomb in the silent corridor and the older boys froze. The Slytherin held his breath and didn't move either. After a few seconds, James found his voice again: "Go ahead. Remus needs to get to the hospital wing. I'll go back and check the corridor." Sirius just nodded and immediately continued walking.

Regulus tried to slowly walk back as quiet as possible. Suddenly something picked him up from the ground on his neck.

"Oh, who do we have here? Little Black out of the corridor in the middle of the night. Should take away some points, huh?", James grinned at him, amusement in his eyes. The Black couldn't help but to analyse his face for a moment, but he seemed to be fine.

"Would you mind getting your hands off me, Potter?", he asked in his distant voice, "you are out of bed also, so what kind of excuse do you have?"

Prongs didn't lose his smirk, but let the younger one down on his feet. The challenging look of his face amused him and he wondered if he noticed that.

"My excuse? I'm headboy. I'm doing my job", he answered and pushed his glasses up, "why are you sneaking around here like a lost cat?"

Regulus frowned. Did he just compare him to a cat? His face became warmer, but he ignored it.

"None of your business. Just go your way and don't lose track of your idiotic friends."

"You're just jealous", James said with a smugly grin, his hazel eyes laying on the beautiful face of the young one.

Yes. Jealous was a good word to describe how Regulus felt. But not for the reason James guessed.

"No, I'm not jealous. I'm glad to not have the problems such people bring with them."

The Potter's smile faded and his face became serious, a hint of anger flickering in his eyes.

"Watch out for your words, Regulus. I'm nice to you because you're my best friend's brother. But if you start talking shit about them, you have a problem with me."

Reggie dropped his look down at the floor as he was searching for words. He really

didn't want James to be mad at him, but he couldn't admit it without getting real trouble.

"Bug off", he only brought out and turned away, walking down the hall with waving cloak.

James eyes followed him down the stairs. Something was off with the little Black. He shook it off and finally followed his friends to the hospital wing.

## Kapitel 4: Part Four

James arrived at the hospital wing and approached his friends. Remus had been put into his usual bed, pale as the sheets he was resting on. Sirius sat on the edge of the same bed and stared at his partner, face worried and his hands basically wrapped around one of Remus'.

When the Potter appeared at them, he lifted his look: "Who was it?"

James dropped on the chair and ruffled his hair: "You don't believe who it was.. Your brother."

Sirius' eyes widened in surprise, then his face darkened: "Aha. And what did he want? Spreading our parents 'word' and making everyone down?"

Peter took a bit of distance as he heard Sirius voice. His family always managed to make him upset, even though they all knew he cared for his brother.

"Yeah.. Kind of", James agreed and looked at Moony, "I'm worried that he knows what's going on. I mean he's not stupid.."

The Black shook his head: "He doesn't know what's going on, Prongs. He's busy with crawling up my parent's asses. There's no time to notice other things."

"Can you watch your mouth", Remus muffled voice came from the bed. He looked at his friends and especially at Sirius with a strict look.

"Really, Moony? You just have survived another fullmoon and all you care for is my way to talk?", Sirius asked dramatically, "I'm amazing and poetic!"

"You are an idiot and now shut it, Moony needs to rest", James laughed slightly, which caused Sirius to box his shoulder. He then made room for Madam Pomfrey who came to treat Remus wounds.

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Regulus closed the door of his dormitory and fell on his bed. That was close. He didn't like it to talk like that about these boys, he didn't like to upset James, but what choice did he have? He had a reputation to keep up and he didn't want to disappoint his parents. He couldn't befriend them.

The Black opened his eyes as something knocked against the door. With his wand he opened the door and sat up, as he saw one of his parent's house elves, Kreacher, standing there.

"Master Black, I apologise to interrupt your studying. Madame sent me over to bring you a letter, sir", he entered the room, holding up a letter with the wax sigil of the letter.

"Why didn't they send it with the owl?", Reg frowned and took it. Kreacher didn't have an answer to that.

"Thank you, Kreacher", he said to the elf, which took a bow and disappeared again. Regulus stared at the letter. When it didn't come with the regular mail in the morning, it must be something important. Or something secretive and that made him feel sick.

## Kapitel 5: Part Five

Regulus stared down at the letter, his hands were trembling. The fact that he got this late at night was scary, because it meant something was about to happen.

He was about to sink down on his bed again, looking at his roommates, who were sleeping like nothing had happened. But he stopped himself. Suddenly he felt like he wasn't able to breathe and he needed to get out of here. Still dressed in his cloak he left the room as fast as he could, the letter put into his pocket. Also he didn't want anyone to see how thrown off the rails he was right now.

A few minutes later he had arrived the Room of Requirements. Now and then he escaped to this place when everything felt like it would be pushing him under water. Today the room was quite dark, black walls, torches. A heavy red carpet on the ground, a chimney with a warm fire gave more light.

And in the middle of the room a black shiny piano finished the room.

Regulus immediately relaxed a little bit. Being here all alone and in silence was comforting. He wasn't brave. The letter gave him a racing heart and fear and he needed to calm down before he could open it. He sat down at the piano and let his fingers slide over the smooth keys, finally eliciting tones with them. It didn't take long until it turned into a heavy melody and he got lost in the music. Even though playing piano and violin was standard for the Black brothers, he really enjoyed it. It was his safe haven. And it made him forget the fear in his chest.

After quite some time his pale and slim fingers came to an end and he sat there for another minute or two, just watching the flames in the chimney flicker.

He took another deep breath and reached out for the letter of his parents, breaking the wax open and pulling out the parchment.

*Our dearest son,*

*The time has come. I'm delighted to inform you that you will take your right place the upcoming weekend and that you will have the chance to bring good to our name.*

*Be ready on Saturday at 9 am, dress in your best clothes. Your father will pick you up.*

*We are so proud of you.*

*Yours truly*

*Walburga*

Regulus had to read the few sentences more than three times to really understand them. And as he did, his vision started to become blurry. There was the trembling again. His head fell on the keyboard as he started to sob uncontrollably and he fell into this endless hole. That was it. The end of the line he hoped he could escape.

## Kapitel 6: Part Six

James quietly closed the door behind himself, after he had left the hospital wing. Peter left it an hour ago already, as he was tired and Sirius stayed with Moony, as always. He never left his side during the three days around fullmoon and it seemed to really help Remus bearing with it.

The Potter ruffled his hair and sighed deeply. What an exhausting night. He was still slightly confused about meeting Regulus in the middle of the night, still worried that he knew too much about Remus.

The Gryffindor decided to talk a walk through the castle to clear his head, even though it was in the middle of the night - almost early morning - but he didn't mind.

His way lead him up to the seventh floor as he wandered around absentmindedly, and it was the wall carpet that made him realise where he was. Not that it mattered much. He sat down on the stone bench and enjoyed the silence. As much as he loved adventures and such, he welcomed a moment to relax. It didn't last long tho.

After a few minutes the brick wall parted and a slender person stepped into the corridor, not even noticing James, who just sat a few steps away. Even though the boy looked at the floor while waiting for the wall to close itself, he recognised the younger Black with no problem.

"Isn't it funny that I catch you out of bed twice in a row?", the Potter asked half used, half annoyed.

Regulus jerked as James' voice suddenly appeared out of nowhere and he just shortly threw a look at him, not even bothering with an answer and walking off.

The few seconds were enough for James to recognise the even paler face of the Slytherin and the red puffy eyes. For someone who aimed to be emotionless the little Black looked quite upset. After a second of hesitation, he jumped up and followed the younger one.

"I didn't mean it like that, what's wrong, Regulus?", he asked as he caught up to him. Regulus immediately straightened his shoulders and put on his usual pokerface. As if anyone would ever see him weak. And feelings were weak. Crying was especially weak.

"Nothing, Potter. Bug off", he said as dryly as he was able to bring up right now. Somehow he didn't manage to keep a real straight face, the fear was too strong.

His shoulders dropped at the same moment as the headboy sympathetically put his hand on his right shoulder: "Come on, little Black. It's only you and me here. Nobody's gonna judge you."

Regulus took a deep breath, torn between talking to him and just brushing it off. His education won.

"It's nothing. I'm completely fine. Don't be ridiculous.. And please take your hand off of me. Thank you", he said arrogantly and stepped away from the taller boy. Which gave him the weird feeling of doing something wrong. That was nonsense.

"You and your brother.. Your fake pride won't make you guys happy", James shook his head and crossed his arms in front of his chest. He was actually worried about the little Black. Other than Sirius he didn't have friends to support him and he seemed to be always alone. When he thought about what his best friend told him about the home he came from, he was even more worried about Regulus safety.



"I don't strive to be happy. And you don't know me at all. Just.. Just stay away from me, okay", the Slytherin grumbled and pushed James away. But the head boy managed to catch his wrist, giving Reg a stern look which made the younger one's heart race.

"Regulus Black, you listen to me now, you stubborn brat. People are worried about you and want to help you and you act like the whole world is against you. Stop being so egoistic and pushing everyone away. Do you think Sirius will be happy if he finds you dead somewhere? ", James said seriously, forcefully even, his eyes piercing. Regulus' confusion grew. James' behaviour confused him, his words confused him, but the worst, his own feelings confused him. The warmth spread in his body and he became.. Nervous.

Somehow he pulled himself together enough to free himself from James' grip.

"I don't want your help. I can't even stand you. Leave me alone." Before James could grab his arm again, he ran off.

James let his arm sink in confusion and also, somehow, disappointment. The little Black was out of sight within a few seconds, his palm still tingled from the moment he touched Regulus' arm.

It stung his heart a bit that Reg rejected his help. But on the other hand, why was he surprised? They never came along very well. Why did he think the Slytherin would want his help?

"You're such an idiot, Prongs", he murmured to himself and rubbed over his face, before heading off to the Gryffindor tower.

## Kapitel 7: Part Seven

Two days after James' and Regulus' accident meeting, the Potter was standing in the middle of the bedroom and looking at Sirius with a frown.

"Do you really think you should wear that? It looks ridiculous.." The other boy stood in front of him, dressed in red clothing with white fake fur and a smugly grin on his lips. "Isn't that what muggles think that pervert stalker wears?", he asked chuckling.

Peter, sitting on Sirius bed, swallowed his chocolate: "Santa Clause is not a pervert. And he doesn't wear a dress."

James could only shake his head about it. Sometimes his friends really made him question his own taste.

"Wormy, I'm wearing a dress because I have the greatest legs and it makes my hot ass looking even hotter", Sirius explained in a very serious tone and looked at himself in the mirror.

In the same moment, Moony entered the bedroom: "Guys, we need to hurry, otherwise we will miss.. What in Merlin's name are you wearing?" His eyes went wide in confusion as he stared at Sirius.

The Black took it as a chance to turn up even more and wiggled his butt: "Doesn't it look amazing, Moons? Come on, I know you like it."

Remus blushed slightly and muttered something nobody could understand, before pulling his suitcase out of the room.

"He's completely into it", Sirius announced confidentially into the room.

An hour later they sat in a compartment of the Hogwarts Express. The boys convinced Sirius to change into something normal and so he sat on his seat, with a huge pout over his face and didn't want to talk to anyone.

"You're such a child sometimes", Remus announced as he dropped next to him onto the seat. Sirius just grumbled and kept his view at the window.

James has fallen silent also and looked out at the corridor of the train. He wasn't sure if he hoped to see Regulus or if he hoped to see him not.

"Why didn't Lily come with us?", Peter asked as he made himself comfortable on the seat. The Potter flinched with guilt. During his worries about the little Black he almost forgot his girlfriend.

"She wanted to celebrate with her family", he answered and managed to free his eyes from the corridor.

Sirius snorted: "Must be a wonderful celebration with her stupid sister. Siblings are the plague, I can tell you."

James gave him a short smile and took off his glasses, to rub his eyes. He didn't get much sleep recently and hoped the holidays would let him relax enough to change that. The train started to move and he leaned back into his seat.

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Regulus stood by the window in the library and watched the students leave. He also recognised Sirius and James and their friends in the crowd, chattering and being carefree. The naive and childish part in him wished to be in their group too, but the serious and adult part in him shut it down.

When the last student disappeared from his view, he left the window and grabbed his cloak. His father would be here in a few minutes and he hated it if someone let him wait.

He didn't want to go home. His parents never hurt him until now, as he lived up to their expectations and never did something to upset them. But it wasn't because he wanted to. It was because he was scared of them after he saw how they treated Sirius. And this time it would be completely different too. If he survived the holidays, everything would be different. He wouldn't be able to go back. Never again.

Regulus saw a figure stepping on the Hogwarts grounds and quickly made his way downstairs, leaving the castle just in the moment Orion reached the gates of it.

"Good morning, Father. I hope your travel was comfortable", he greeted him politely and respectfully, taking a bow with racing heart.

"We won't waste time, son. Your mother is waiting for you", Orion replied and grabbed his arm, so he could pull the small Slytherin with him.

## Kapitel 8: Part Eight

James found himself worried quite a lot over the winter break. He told Sirius about the night at the Room of Requirements, but the Black just shrugged it off with the word that it wasn't his problem. Regardless of his reply, he saw him being worried too. They still had a very nice holiday, as the Potters allowed the four of them to stay over together, although it wasn't easy to ignore the upcoming war whenever James father came home injured (yes, he's auror in my story, I know he's not originally) or him and Euphemia would disappear behind closed doors whispering.

That was how one night the boys made the vow to stick together after Hogwarts too and to do everything to fight the war.

Christmas passed by with lots of food, snowball fights and almost hysterical laughter when Sirius dared to appear with that Santa dress (he was even handing out the gifts like that).

New Year wasn't that happy. Fleamont was on a missions since three days after the auror who was originally planned for it was in the hospital, fighting for his life. Everyone was worried about it and James also felt a bit down for not starting into the new year with Lily.

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"I can't believe that winter break is already over", Sirius said a bit whiny as the castle came into their eyesight. He wasn't ready to go back to school. So not ready.

Moony next to him only shook his head slightly amused: "Of course it was too short in your taste, you slept for over twelve hours almost every day."

The Black snorted: "I like sleep okay? I need my beauty sleep."

James behind them rolled his eyes.

"You don't need beauty sleep, you're already beautiful", the Lupin blurted out. Peter made a gagging noise: "How much cheesier can you get?"

Sirius looked at him dooming and happily hung around Remus' neck in the next moment: "You're so cute."

They entered the castle and Sirius let go of Remus, with a deeeep sigh. But only six more months until the end. Great, now he felt sad.

"Hey, Padfoot.. Isn't that your cousin Bellatrix with Regulus?", James asked and poked Sirius' side. The Black looked up and grimaced as he saw the curly hair of his cousin: "Yes...what does she want here?" Before the boys could stop him, he already walked over to them.

{Not a good chapter, but it's just a filler haha}

## Kapitel 9: Part Nine

"Bellatrix. What in the devil's name are you doing here?", Sirius' voice echoed from the walls in the corridor as he approached her. Regulus and his cousin stopped talking and looked at him. Regulus face went pale and he immediately pulled his cloak closer around his body.

But Bellatrix seemed to be overly excited: "Oh, Sirius baby! What a pleasure to see you! Are you here to welcome your brother into adulthood?"

The Gryffindor's face became confused and he looked at his brother: "What is she talking about? Regulus?"

The youngest didn't have the time to answer, Bella coiled her arm around his neck, a proud smile on her lips: "He was smarter than you. He's one of us now." With her high laughter she let go off her younger cousin and walked out of the hallway.

Sirius was as pale as his brother now and stared at him: "Tell me that's not true..Regulus, tell me that she lied!" He grabbed his wrist, but the Slytherin pulled away. And that was sign enough.

Something broke in Sirius and his throat started to hurt.

"Why?", he asked quietly, trying to swallow his upcoming anger.

"Because I wanted to, obviously. The Dark Lord is right with his agenda, the mudbloods-", Regulus stopped talking, as Sirius grabbed his collar, pulling him close. He actually looked like he wanted to punch him.

"Shut up, Regulus! I know that's not you, this is not what you really think! I know you better", Padfoot hissed at him. A hand landed on his shoulder and tried to pull him away. James.

"You know me?", Regulus asked sounding sad for a second, "you don't. I don't even remember the last time you talked to me. You left me behind like Im not even existing, you didn't even look back and you're ignoring me since the day I've arrived here! You moved on to something.. Better I suppose, without even wasting a second thought!"

"Regulus-"

"No. This mark here? I wanted it. Because I was terrified, I have nowhere else to go other than you and it was the right thing to do", the young Slytherin replied with his voice shaking. The other boys stood behind Sirius, not sure if they should interrupt them.

Sirius face softened a bit: "You could have come with me, you know."

"Why?"

"You are my brother, Regulus."

"I'm not. Not anymore. Not after you left me behind and shut me out. Seems like Potter is your brother now", Regulus spat out and looked from Sirius to James, a weird look on his face.

"That's not true", Sirius mumbled a bit guilty. But Regulus didn't react to it anymore and just walked down the hall like he had stolen something.

"That didn't just happen.. Right?", Sirius asked hoarsely and looked helplessly at his friends.

Remus took his hand and squeezed it: "It will be fine, Pads. Give him a moment to calm down and then you talk to him again."

James took his hand from his friend's shoulder and sighed.

"We should go to the dorm", the head boy insisted and started to shove his friends through the corridor.  
What a chaos.

## Kapitel 10: Part Ten

Regulus didn't know how he came there, but he ended up in his dorm, breathing heavily and absolutely overwhelmed from the anger in his chest. Usually he didn't experience anger in this degree and he didn't yell; that all was more Sirius' part.

The shocked faces of his brother and friends were stuck in his mind now too, but why? Everything he had said was the truth and nothing else. At least the truth how it felt for him.

He finally managed to sit down on his bed and breathe normally again, the anger slowly turning into shame and sadness. Yes, Sirius was right. He didn't fully support the whole anti muggleborn thing and even less he wanted to hurt people. But what choice did he have?

"None", he mumbled to himself, it didn't matter what his brother said. Coming with him was impossible for the Slytherin. And despite that, it was the best way to help the war. To change something from within. Something he couldn't tell anyone, as it was too risky.

He jerked, as the door was slammed and lifted his head, expecting one of his roommates. But his heart stopped when he saw that it was James.

"What in earth's name are you doing here? This is the Slytherin dormitory!", Regulus blurted out after a second of shock. The last person he had expected was standing right in front of him and looked at him like he was about to break his neck.

"Thank you. I know exactly where I am and it also was my destination", James said with a small smirk and stepped closer to the bed.

Regulus stared back at him: "And what do you want?"

James shortly looked through the room, then grabbed the chair and pulled it to the bed to sit down.

"What Sirius said was the truth. You could have come with him, my parents would have done the same for you like for him", he said seriously, "they would have let you stay with us too. Why didn't you talk to me? Or Sirius? Before doing something that can't be undone."

Regulus was confused and even forgot to be nervous.

"Sure. Why should I talk to a stranger about that? Or with a person who doesn't care at all? Talking to a wall would have had the same effect. And as I already said, I wanted it", he replied with a neutral voice, but the Potter only raised an eyebrow. He didn't believe him. At all.

"I'm not a stranger. And Sirius cares for you. And he's worried in that very moment."

"And that's why he sent his lapdog?", Reggie asked dryly, but it made James laugh, the slight tension leaving his shoulders.

"Sirius is the dog. And no, I'm here because I'm worried about you", he gave back with a smirk, "I mean it, Regulus. You think you are alone, but you aren't. We would always have your back."

The Slytherin didn't know what to say and his throat felt like an orange was stuck in it. He rubbed over his collarbone: "You're an idiot."

"I hear that often, it's part of my charme. I know you can't change what you've done. Maybe we really didn't show you that we are here for you. But we are, if you need someone", James replied and got into his feet, "I'm not bothering you for longer now."

Regulus kept quiet for another moment, trying to figuring out what to feel. "Thank you", he finally managed to say and caught a glimpse of James smile. The Potter wished him a good night and left the room.



## Kapitel 11: Part Eleven

James really hoped that his words reached the younger Black. Not only for the sake of his best friend, but also for Regulus himself.

But for now he couldn't do more and he knew that.

He reached the common room and went straight over to Lily, who was sitting beneath the window and working on homework.

"I hope you didn't forget our date on the weekend", he smiled at her and took her free hand to place a kiss on it.

Lily looked up at him: "Of course I didn't forget it. I'm so looking forward to it. But first you have to survive the Quidditch game." The Potter laughed and let go of her hand to sit down across the desk.

"I won't only survive it, with you watching the game, I will win it. You're my lucky charm", he reminded her and looked through the room. It was quite empty as it was late and the silence was comfortable. He shortly wondered where Sirius went. After Regulus had left the hallway, he had become very silent. The kind of silent that often resulted in impulsive acts of anger. On the other hand Moony had followed him and if someone could calm him down, it was his boyfriend.

James snapped out of his thoughts as Lily kissed his cheek: "Good morning, Prongs. You should go to bed if you're dreaming already."

He smiled apologising and wrapped his arms around her: "I just was in thoughts, I'm sorry. Wanna go to the Room of Requirements?"

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He entered the dorm a few hours later and quietly closed the door behind himself. Peter slept on his bed snoring like a sawmill. Sirius was wrapped around Remus, even in his sleep his face was tense. He caught a glimpse of his swollen knuckles and sighed.

Moony sat leaning against the headpiece of the bed, a book in his hands in the weak light of his wand.

"You're late", the Lupin whispered with a knowing smirk and closed the book.

James grinned back: "Sometimes that happens. Long days require relaxing." He became more serious: "How's he?"

Moony sighed and looked down at Sirius, stroking through his long dark hair: "I tried to keep him from doing stupid things. But you know how he is, when he's angry. Almost broke his wrist when he punched the wall and wanted to go and hex his parents. But he's better now. I managed to make him drink sedative potion."

James nodded and dropped on his bed. Sirius tantrums were difficult to handle, but Moony luckily always knew how to do that, even if not always without damage.

"I was talking to Regulus", the Potter admitted, "maybe I could get to his mind and he will talk to Sirius without...you know, fighting. After all they're still brothers."

"I agree. Sirius always worried about him, but he's scared that Regulus hates him, so he kept it to himself", the Lupin said quietly, "they need each other."

"And we will make them recognise that", James said solemnly and smiled. It surely would make both of them feel better. And he really wanted to get to know Reggie better.

"Can you stop talking?", it came grumbling from Sirius and Remus and James had to laugh.

"Sorry. Good night", James grinned and changed into his sleeping clothes before really trying to sleep.

## Kapitel 12: Part Twelve

Stupid Potter, with his stupid peacemaker attitude and his stupid smile and stupid calming voice and stupid ability to find the right words. Regulus was unable to sleep as he was lying in his bed and stared at the bed above him. His mind kept racing about the whole situation like a brain with damaged brakes.

James bursting into his room and acting like it wasn't even an issue that it was the Slytherin dormitory. For a moment the Black would've bet an arm that he was going to punch him on Sirius' behalf, although he knew it wasn't common for the Potter. And the fact that he knew stuff like this made him uncomfortable enough. They never had to do much with each other and that Sirius was James' best friend didn't change anything on that, since they barely talked at all. And what he had said..that him and his friends would have his back and that Sirius still cared about him..he desperately wanted to believe that. So so much. It even caused some kind of burning feeling in his stomach. But he couldn't. The voices of his parents in his mind were louder and convinced him that the teenagers only wanted to use him for getting informations, now that he was officially a member of the deatheaters. And honestly, that made so much sense, because he couldn't remember one time they have reached out to him until now. So it could only be like that. But James seemed so honestly concerned...His thoughts went back and forth between these two extremes the whole night and he didn't notice that the sun was rising until his room mates started to make the sound of business in the morning - which was a miracle already, because he didn't hear them coming in last night. Like on autopilot he managed to leave his bed and get ready, though the view into the mirror was something he would've liked to avoid at any cost. Unfortunately he had to see what he was doing with his hair. His parents usually wanted him to keep it short and neat and Regulus felt like it was because of his brother wearing his hair longer than Walburga did. Due the winter time he wore hats when he was seeing his parents and that allowed him to grow the hair longer. It started to become a bit wavy as it grew to touch his ears and made him look less strict...less..like he'd be a military guy. Something he liked. But man, the rest didn't look good. The stress of the last days really left its traces...what did he say the last days, it was more since he was the only heir of the Blacks. He quickly looked away and stepped out of the bathroom, before throwing over his jacket. Being such an early bird had the perk of having time to wander around a bit. Except for the ghosts he only crossed ways with very few people when he made his way to the outside. Cold winter air brushed over his face and made him shiver for a moment, but he loved the clear air. It made him feel less under pressure and not like he had to swim against a wave. He walked a few steps through the snow and was almost blinded by it, as it reflected the sunlight so much. It was so peaceful...almost automatically he looked up at the Gryffindor tower as he was close enough and almost expected hanging one of the Marauder's from the window, but nothing to see there. Regulus finished his walk and as he stepped back into the castle, he already felt a bit better about the whole chaotic situation. He entered the Great Hall and looked at the Gryffindor table. Sirius and Remus were sitting on their usual place, the Lupin's face disappearing behind the Daily Prophet, Sirius staring at his breakfast plate with a grumpy expression, like he tried to make it jump into his mouth on its own. Reggie felt a stitch of guilt as his eyes

met Sirius' hands. The redness was visible even from afar and he felt terrible for making his brother upset enough to damage himself. The dark mark on his arm seemed to burn even more after seeing that. That was terrible. "He will be fine", James' s voice appeared behind him, followed from an arm wrapped around his shoulders, "but you can't think that you don't matter to your brother anymore if it bothers him that much." Regulus almost jumped to the side when James touched him, but could hold himself back in the last moment, because he didn't want to seem completely ridiculous: "Potter, can you finally stop to always touch me?" He didn't want that to stop, but what else should he say? James grin was almost smugly enough to make him think that he knew it, but that was nonsense, of course. "Sorry, little Black. I keep forgetting that you won't die of lack of attention and affection like Sirius would", Prongs replied with an amused undertone. But he became more serious in the next moment already again, as he took his arm away: "But you heard what I said? Also what I said yesterday?" A brief moment of silence came up between them, in which Regulus only looked at Sirius. And finally, he nodded almost invisibly: "Yes. I guess...you aren't completely wrong. But it doesn't help the circumstances at all. And I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't keep interrupting my life with trying to play the peacemaker. Some things can't be changed and I know you want to help Sirius, but..help him in other things." "Some things can't be changed, that's true. But you're wrong in one thing: Your situation can. And it would be so easy. You just have to say yes", the headboy said calmly, but also quite determined. And for him this wasn't only about Sirius. He also didn't want Regulus to be in such a situation; it was clearly visible how it affected the younger boy and that it wasn't his own will, no matter how hard he tried to convince himself of it. "The last time I just said yes brought me into my current situation, so thank you, but- ", he stopped talking when he recognised eyes piercing at him from the Slytherin table. Mulciber was staring at him and his chest seemed to squeezed by a rock in the size of a mountain. Blood rushed in his ears and his hands started to tremble. When he was seen talking to James it could have consequences he didn't want to think about. Not good. "I have to go", he pressed out between his lips and gave James an angry look, before disappearing from the hall as fast as he could. James looked after him in full confusion. What in Merlin's name had bitten the Black now? He really didn't understand him. Being used to Sirius' moodswings was one thing, but Regulus usually seemed more grounded. But maybe that was just part of his attempt to stay distant. Who knew.

## Kapitel 13: Part Thirteen

James shook his head about Regulus and walked over to his friends: "Where's Wormtail?" He dropped next to Sirius and grabbed a clean cup, to fill it up with coffee. It was much needed after last night. "On a breakfast date", Remus answered casually, which caused Padfoot to choke on his own coffee and looking at his partner in disbelief. "HE WHAT?!", the Black almost yelled, making other people stare at them in confusion, but as usual he didn't mind at all. As if that was an issue, attention didn't kill anyone so far. "Can you lower your voice a bit? You don't have to entertain the whole room", Remus still pointed out with a smirk, although he knew that his boyfriend almost loved nothing more than having all eyes on himself. "And yes. He has a breakfast date. Apparently a girl from Hufflepuff is interested into him..what's so shocking? He's a nice guy", the prefect went on with his answer and spread some butter on his toast. "How can you sit there and calmly tell us that?", Sirius said way too dramatic for a normal conversation and quickly looked around in the hall, trying to find their friend and the girl. But then it occurred to him that they surely wouldn't have their date in here and his pouting face appeared again. "That's good for him", James put into the conversation and took a sip of his coffee, "He's always been a bit sad for everyone being in a relationship except for him, so maybe that's gonna help it." His eyes looked at the entrance once more, this time looking out for Lily. Maybe she had been here already and was already finished with her breakfast? He didn't know how late it was. "Relationships aren't everything", Moony pointed out, which let Sirius make a noise like someone just stabbed him into the stomach. This time, it wasn't just him being dramatic for the attention and Remus noticed that too, nudging him a bit: "Hey, don't take that in the wrong way. You know that I love you, dramaqueen. I'm just saying it's not the only thing in life that matters, but it doesn't mean that you don't matter." Sirius grumbled something inaudible, but James could see his frown disappear. It was good that Remus always knew what to say. The two of them really found each other and helped each other healing from the past. Sometimes he was so happy for them that it felt like his heart would explode from all the love towards them. "You're probably right. It's still nice for him", Prongs added smiling shortly and caught himself hoping that Regulus would find that someone too. After all he had said about being left behind, he could understand him a bit better and wanted him to see the other side of the coin too. To him, the little Black also counted as a friend. And it was normal to want one's friends happy, right? Nothing unusual or weird. "By the way", Sirius spoke up after being silent for a few minutes, "Euphemia gave me a picture of Christmas and she thought I look absolutely stunning as Mrs Santa, so y'all can't say anything bad about it anymore. I'm officially unbeatable." "You're officially a big idiot, that's what you are", James laughed and nudged his friend. Remus grinned and buried his face behind the newspaper again: "Well, it looked really good, to be fair." And Sirius had his fun, wasn't that all that mattered? That he didn't give much about other people's opinions was one of the reasons Remus loved him. James didn't see Lily before the second lesson began, as they didn't have the same courses, but his face immediately lit up, when he saw her sitting in their potions class, already waiting for him. He immediately walked over and placed a kiss on her cheek: "Hey pretty flower, I've missed you at the breakfast table." The redhead smiled up at him: "Sorry. We had a...girl's emergency with Marlene. She's fine now, tho." The Potter

shortly grimaced as he took out his books: "Glad she's fine, but not having breakfast isn't a good start into the day. I've sneaked a sandwich in my pocket, do you want to have it?" "You're so sweet, but no thank you. Lunch isn't that far away anymore, I will survive it", she replied thankfully for his thoughtful question. James really was a generous person and she kind of regretted that it took her so long to finally give in, when he was actually a great person. Well, to be honest, he wasn't always...until last year he was quite annoying, rude and especially towards Severus really mean. Not that she would protect the Slytherin anymore, after all that had happened, but James wasn't much better in the past. The difference was that he changed and grew up. The Potter nodded and shrugged at the same time: "It's up to you, but my offer stands." Of course it wouldn't change. Once he offered it, he wouldn't take it away. For a moment he looked after Sirius and Remus, who now kept asking Peter about his breakfast date - or more, poor Peter was squeezed out like a toothpaste tube by Sirius, while Remus was politely interested, but without being that annoying. He even tried to slow Padfoot down a bit, with no success, apparently. Wormtail was kind of overwhelmed with so much attention, which made James feel a bit guilty - they really didn't pay enough attention at him and now that he was together with Lily and concerned about Reggie, he often simply forgot about him. Not the nicest way to care for his friends, he really had to work on that..so..good for him that he now got a bit attention." James..Potter..Hey..", Lily's voice reached his ears and relating to her tone, she must've called him more than once already. The Potter blinked and smiled apologising at her: "I'm sorry, darling..what did you say?" "I asked you if you have planned something certain for our date weekend?", Lily repeated her question a bit worried, "but now I'm really concerned, are you okay?" James was quick to nod: "Of course, I've just been in thoughts. And I thought about going to Hogsmeade? I've heard The Funky Healers are playing." He hoped he was right about it and didn't mix it up. He wasn't really up to date with these kind of things recently, but he thought he remembered a poster at the train station. "That sounds like a great idea", Lily replied quite excited, "they're so good. So we better should get a visitation permit the next days." She knew that wouldn't be a problem. Being seen as responsible enough to be head boy and head girl would also mean being responsible enough to go out to the village for a few hours. But in the next moment James already smashed this thought. "Allowance? There are plenty of secret passages leading to the village, my flower. We won't need a permission", the Potter grinned brightly. Now that was literally calling for his special talent. He was a marauder, after all. "James...we can go there legally, why would you prefer it to do the illegal way?", Lily asked with a small sigh and looked at him kind of strictly. "Because, dear Lily, I'm James Potter and doing things just the legal way is a bit too boring at times. Don't you want to get the rush of doing something forbidden?", the Potter asked still with a grin on his face and wiggled his eyebrows. She couldn't say that she'd prefer it more boring, could she?"...Well, not really, to be honest. I'd prefer to go out without getting into trouble for it", the redhead admitted with a small smirk. The Potter seemed to shrink a bit in his chair and stared at the open book on his desk for a moment, pouting. "Fine...the legal, official and boring way then.."

## Kapitel 14: Part Fourteen

The day was...awful, to say at least. Regulus wasn't able to focus at all, the fact that Mulciber saw him with Potter gave him anxiety. Every second of the day he expected someone to walk up to him and..he didn't exactly know what, but he was scared and it gave him a knot in his stomach. After the lessons he quickly made his way to his dorm and dropped on his bed. The first time since the morning he could breathe clearly and let go off some tension. Maybe it was no big deal and Mulciber was convinced of his annoyed acting at the end of the conversation. Maybe nobody cared at all and he could just go ahead. Talking to whoever he wanted, when he wanted. Over this imagination he started to drift into sleep.

Just a few minutes later he was wide awake again, as the sound of an houseelf appearing in his room cut through the silence. Regulus squinted his eyes and his heart stopped for a beat when he recognised Kreacher. "What are you doing here?", the Slytherin asked in an alarmed tone, unconsciously grabbing the sheets of the bed, while his surroundings seemed to play merry-go-round. He absolutely knew what was coming now. He knew it. Kreacher bowed down shortly and then looked up at him: "Master Black demands to see you, sir. Kreacher was sent to pick Master Regulus up. Master Black is upset about something he heard and wants an explanation." Reggie could barely breathe over these words, but he managed to act quite unimpressed as he got off from his bed: "One minute."

He quickly walked to the bathroom to splash his face with cold water, in an attempt to stay calm and also look less taken through the meatwolf. Quickly combing his hair and straightening his clothes, he tried to ignore the ringing noise in his ears and to tell himself that everything would go well and it maybe wasn't even about what he thought it was. When he came back into his bedroom, Kreacher was standing at the same spot he was when Regulus left, patiently waiting. Silently, they left the castle, with curious eyes looking at them now and then, but no questions. It wasn't unusual for him to be in company of the houseelf. As he entered the grounds, his eyes quickly wandered over to the Quidditch field and he caught himself looking out for James to be precisely. Stupid Potter really was only causing problems, but he couldn't even think that to himself without feeling like an idiot, because in the end it was his own fault by giving him attention in the first place. "Master Regulus..Master Regulus!", the slightly impatient voice of the houseelf finally reached his mindset and given the tone of it, he had been calling out for him more than once. He blinked and looked around, surprised they had passed the door of the Hogwarts grounds without him noticing. Odd. He couldn't remember walking that long. "My apology, I've been a bit in thoughts", he replied to Kreacher and took the portkey in form of a literal key the elf had been reaching out to him.

A few seconds later he found himself in the entrance hall of the Grimmauld place. Sometimes it came as a surprise to him how cold this house was - not cold as in temperature, but in missing coziness and homefeeling. It was always perfectly clean, furniture was luxurious and looked good, but..the atmosphere in this house was like entering a mausoleum with living people. He shortly stared at the huge portrait of his father in the hallway; ever since he was little, he could've sworn the eyes of it followed him everywhere although it wasn't a moving portrait. The steps of his real father came down the stairs and Regulus had to hold back not to flinch. The ringing

noise in his ears became louder, his palms were sweating even though he was cold and it was hard to get air in and out of his lungs - a glimpse into the perfectly polished window showed him that he was white as a sheet now too. Nausea and dizziness made it almost impossible to focus, but he just had to. He couldn't show weakness outside of the safety of his dormitory. "Thank you, Kreacher", he spoke to the houseelf, who disappeared into the kitchen after bowing towards Orion and Regulus. The young Black tried to maintain a serious and selfconfident face when he looked at his father: "You wanted to speak to me?" Orion looked down at his son with an expression completely unknown to the Slytherin. It looked like anger, but it didn't and it looked like disappointment, but it didn't. Could it be shame?"I've received a very interesting letter today, saying that you're friends with James Potter?", Orion asked dangerously calm, not even bothering to go to the salon. It was rare that he didn't care for these things at all...and it was worrisome. In his mind, Regulus stumbled over words and was unable to form a whole sentence, but somehow his mouth managed to do it for him: "No, father. I have no idea how someone could be under the impression that I'm friends with this person. He was annoying me and I tried to shake him off. That's all Mulciber saw in the Great Hall. It was him, who messaged you, right? He should let someone check his vision, I'm concerned he might turn blind slowly." Unfortunately, Orion didn't find that funny at all and came closer to his son until they almost touched: "You're becoming like Sirius more and more. I hope we don't have to regret letting you live and treating you well. You're our son. The heir of the family. You have a place to take and a purpose to serve. Don't make your mother and me regret putting our energy into raising you right. Maybe we have been too soft with you in the past. You need to grow up, Regulus. The Dark Lord has big plans with you and you will bring big honour to this family. Don't disappoint us. And do us a favour and cut your hair. You look ridiculous and like a wild." His hand landed on Regulus' shoulder, squeezing it just a bit too much, making it hard for Reggie not to make a pained sound."I won't...I promise, I won't", the young Black responded almost convincing; the only indicator of his fear to not live up to that was a little crack in his voice. But Orion didn't notice that or at least pretended not to. He let go off his son's shoulder: "Good. Would be a pity to have to use a little Cruciatus to bring back your memory of how to behave." These words being spoken let Regulus shortly close his eyes - the very vibrant memory of Sirius' screams under this curse would probably stick with him for the rest of his life. When he opened his eyes again, Regulus was alone. He waited for a heartbeat before walking to the door, hardly holding back the urge to run. As soon as the heavy door closed behind him, he did. Following the imagination that he could escape his life if he just ran long enough, he ran through the street like the devil was after him. He didn't see where he was running, but after a while he was completely out of breath and stopped in the middle of a forest, gasping for the ice cold air to fill his burning lungs. Just now he noticed that his trousers were wet from the shoes to his knees and that he somehow had managed to run through snow. His mind was blank, he couldn't grasp even one thought until he got back some breath. When he started to sob, Reg could only think how ridiculous and pathetic he was to react like that. But he couldn't stop it. The Black felt like he was trapped in a small room with no exit except for the life his parents had planned for him. A life he didn't want and couldn't live. And James' and Sirius' words sounded like mockery in his ears - bittersweet, unaccomplishable mockery. There was no place he could go to. There was no way to escape. And especially not now, after being marked as someone he didn't want to be. The deatheater's mark seemed to mock him too, as the pain



increased. The ringing in his ears was unbearable, his whole body felt like being in flames right now and the last thing he consciously noticed was that he fell into the snow, face first and sobbing.

## Kapitel 15: Part Fifteen

### Two days later...

"Party at the Gryffindor common room! Partytime! Tell everyone!", Sirius' excited voice was carried through the corridors, "only for six year and up, actually." Remus next to him shook his head. He would never really understand where his boyfriend got his enthusiasm for partying from, especially not in these times..but whatever made him happy, as long as it didn't harm anyone.

"Don't you think you've partied enough for the next five years this year alone?", he still couldn't resist to ask, but he did it in an amused voice, because something like enough didn't really exist in Padfoot's vocabulary, that much was clear.

"Definitely not, Moony. Times like these scream for more parties than ever. Should we stop having fun, just because there's a war going on? We'll be busy enough after school with this whole situation", Sirius replied more honest than he usually was. Before Remus could answer to that, James wrapped an arm around his and Sirius' shoulder: "He's right, Moons. We won't live forever, but we need to make the best of it."

"And the karaoke part is really fun", Wormtail added to the conversation and almost ran into an armour, because he didn't look up from his potions book.

The Black shrugged off James' arm and made a huge jump forwards, before turning around to his friends like a Prima Ballerina: "And that are all amazing reasons to have a party, dearest moonshine boy." Grinning he waited for a reaction, but then started to wave like an idiot: "LILY! You have to come to our party too!"

James immediately turned his head around and smiled instantly when the redhead came up to them: "He's right."

"You just want me there so someone sings with you guys", Lily commented and placed a kiss on James' lips before shoving her hand in his, "but of course. I'll bring Marly too and maybe I can get Alice away from Frank for an hour."

"Seems like I'm outvoted", Remus admitted with a small smile, "but I wasn't serious anyway."

"Of course not. I'm Sirius."

James snapped against his brother's head: "This joke is slowly getting old, you idiot."

"Lily, tell your man to keep his hands off me", Sirius whined jokingly and hid partially behind Remus, "he's so mean to me."

"This building is going to be so quiet without us", Peter realised and put the book into his bag, "and now excuse me..I'm meeting my girlfriend, but I'll come to the party a bit later."

"Don't forget to use protection!", Sirius and James said at the same moment, which caused Peter to turn red and tell them they were idiots, while walking down the hallway.

"I'm really happy for him that he found someone..he's such a nice person, more people should give him a chance", the Evans pointed out with a smile. It always seemed a bit like he was standing in James' and Sirius' shadow involuntarily - Remus too, but he chose to be there. So it was even better that someone else saw his worth too.

"That's true", James agreed, "he's definitely one of his kind."

The party was going on for an hour and a half, Sirius and James started with their karaoke show - more or less. They were actually singing and playing instruments, but with covering songs and the others danced to it. They were surprisingly good. James had been playing piano and guitar for quite some while and Sirius grew up with the piano too, but soon found love for electric guitars and he learned fast when he was passionate about something.

And now that was regularly part of the Gryffindor parties. James had his fun and didn't mind the attention - and Sirius even less, clearly. That was why he let him alone after a few songs to get something to drink and actually talk with other people.

"James, come here!", Marly giggled and waved at him. Suspiciously the Potter walked over in a circle of girls - Marlene, Dorcas, Lily and Mary sat together and had a bunch of different nail polish in the middle of them. Now at the second look he also noticed that each of their nails were painted in another colour.

"What are you doing here?", he asked interested and sat down next to Lily, who simply moved over on his lap. He didn't mind that and wrapped his arm around her.

"We are in the middle of creating a safety nail polish", Marlene explained, "Lily made a potion that should react to love potions and similar things and we mixed it with the colours."

"That's a very cool idea", James said honestly impressed, "do they work?" Not that he was doubting Lily's skills, but it seemed like a pretty hard thing to do. And it was a weird place to do that too, but that was just his own opinion.

"That's what we want to find out now", Dorcas replied and held up two bottles of the polish, "want to test it too?"

"Sure, but don't give me the green colour, that's awful", he said grinning and took a dark red instead, "Lily? You have more practice with that."

Lily only laughed and then painted his nails quickly. And as expected, it looked way better than he ever could've done it.

"And now?", he wanted to know and looked into the round. Marly pulled a mug out of nowhere it seemed and put it into the middle: "Just a drop of the liquid should be enough to change the colour of the nail polish to white. That's why we don't use white ones."

A moment of silence, when she put drops of the cup on every nail with a pipette. For a minute, nothing happened, for no one. And then, suddenly: "It changes!" All heads were turned into Marly's direction for a moment, before turning back to their own hands and really: The polish slowly changed to white.

"Incredible", Lily said a bit breathless, "it really works!"

"That's really, really cool. Good job", James grinned. He absolutely was impressed on more than one level. How great was that? It was bad that such a thing was needed, but unfortunately he knew how often girls were tricked into taking love potion and other things..so that was a really great thing.

"It needs a bit of fine tuning, but I didn't expect it to work so well", the redhead admitted a bit shyly, but excited and visibly proud. James kissed her cheek and she let him stand up.

"You, Lily Evans, are absolutely amazing", he grinned and squeezed her hand. He let the girls alone and walked to the portrait, so he could leave the common room to get some food from the kitchen.

He didn't come far. Just out of the little tunnel, he almost collided with someone. And to his surprise, it was Regulus. The younger Black stared at him like a scared fawn into

the lights of a car. And without wanting to sound rude, James just could think of how much worse he looked than just two days ago. The circles around his eyes seemed to have gotten even darker and his lower lip looked like it was cut. His hair was pure chaos and even though he wore his school uniform, it was a complete mess. This absolutely didn't look like Regulus Black.

"What are you doing here? That's the Gryffindor tower", James finally spoke out after his confusion disappeared a bit and made room for being worried. The party just next door was completely erased from his mind at the moment.

Regulus stared at him for even longer and didn't seem to know what to say..or how to use words to begin with, because he tried a few times, but nothing came out. James softly pulled him aside and made him sit down on the bench, after the Slytherin almost lost his balance. Regulus sank into himself and for a few minutes they just sat in silence. James really wanted to know what was going on and every second that passed without a word being spoken, he became worried more.

"Did you fight against a bear? You look like you did. Or was it a hippogriff? Did you walk through the whomping willow?", the Potter shot some questions, because it didn't seem like he would get any answers otherwise.

Regulus shook his head slowly and twisted his fingers and finally found some words:

"You said I should come to you, if I..if I need..help."

Suddenly, the world seemed even quieter.