

Year 7

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# Chapter 1

## Summer, 1977

Remus felt strangely untethered, arriving at the Potter's with all of his earthly possessions, moving them into a temporary room. He was going to have to tell somebody what had happened – and soon. If he could just get Mr Potter on his own, maybe... but both of James's parents were busier than ever this year, running in and out of the house on errands, or holding secretive meetings which the boys weren't allowed to attend.

"But we're all of age," James protested.

"You're still my little boy, though," Mrs Potter kissed his head, patronisingly, as she cleared their breakfast plates.

James looked highly insulted by this babying, but Remus's eyes pricked with tears and he had to excuse himself.

They had a week to prepare for the camping trip, and on the very first day set off into the village to purchase a tent. Remus had never been camping in his life, but still found himself better equipped than James, Sirius or Peter, who were in turns distracted, terrified and fascinated by every single item in the shop. It fell to Remus to talk to the shopkeeper about boring things like ground sheets and pegs and rigging. In the end, he settled for two sensible brown and orange two-man tents, ignoring Sirius's pleading that he consider a blue and green psychedelic number.

The next day, Remus had to check they all had appropriate muggle clothes, seeing as they would be using a muggle campsite, then they got a crash course in cooking from Gully the house elf.

"Can't the girls do the cooking?" James whinged, as the foul smell of burnt eggs filled the air. Mrs Potter, who had been watching with amusement came up and slapped him lightly around the head,

"Some man I've raised here," she sniffed, "If you can't cook a young lady breakfast, don't expect her to spend the night."

"Urgh, Mum!" James scowled, repulsed, while Sirius and Remus were bent over laughing.

They filled the rest of the time planning all of the things they would do with their holiday freedom, watching the matinee at the local cinema (there was a Bond film playing, and Airport '77, which was Remus's personal favourite) and of course, flying their brooms. Sirius was very impressed by Remus's recent improvement, and they actually managed to organise a very small scale quidditch game (without the snitch, Peter as Keeper).

There was no sign of Moody, this summer. Mr Potter explained over dinner one night that security measures on their house had been increased, and Moody was back in the Auror's office, managing things there. Remus was relieved - he'd tied Moody and Ferox together in his mind, muddled them all up with the Livia encounter and Dumbledore's cruel single mindedness. All in all, after the year he'd had, Remus was looking forward to a few weeks away from anyone older than him.

It was decided that they would all apparate to Cornwall, except for Peter, who had failed his test. Mrs Potter had kindly offered to take him as a side-along, before disappearing back home, but Peter insisted on taking the Knight bus. This way, he decided, he could collect Dorcas along the way.

The evening before they were set to leave, James, Sirius and Remus squeezed themselves into the red phone box at the end of the Potter's street to coordinate with what Sirius was calling 'the female contingent'.

"Can I press the buttons, Moony?" James asked, running his fingers over the silvery keypad.

"Which bit do you talk into?" Sirius said, holding the receiver up to his eyes for inspection.

"Oh, for goodness sake, you two, calm down..." Remus dialled Lily's home number, snatching the black plastic receiver back. It rang for a bit, and he hoped that Lily would pick up the phone, and not one of her parents.

"Good evening, Evans household?" A young woman answered.

"Lily?"

"Who's speaking, please?"

"Er... Remus Lupin."

There was a very rude snorting laugh, then the person on the other end shouted away from the receiver;

"LILY! It's for YOU!"

Remus waited, shifting from foot to foot, Sirius and James watching him eagerly.

"Thanks, Pet," Lily's voice said on the other end.

"Don't be too long, I'm waiting for Vernon to call."

"Hello?" Lily's voice came louder, directly into the phone.

"Hi Lily, it's Remus."

"Hiya Remus! Sorry, that was my sister. Are you all ready?"

"Yep, I think so. Pete's left already I think. You lot?"

"Mary and Marlene got here just before tea. We agreed one o'clock in the afternoon, didn't we?"

"Yeah, one o'clock, just outside the campsite. I made James get a map."

"Oh good. I think mum's letting me borrow the A to Z."

"Cool."



James was tugging on Remus's sleeve. He sighed, "Er, Lily? James and Sirius have never used a phone before, can you talk to them for a minute so they leave me alone?"

Lily laughed,

"Go on then, it'll wind Pet up."

Remus leaned back against the glass panes and watched James and Sirius fight over the phone, taking turns to shout something at Lily and then press the receiver to their ears and listen with wonder. Night began to fall around them, and if anyone had walked past they would just have seen three village boys mucking about in a phone box, without a care in the world.

\* \* \*

Saturday 9th July 1977

Remus's first time apparating outside of Hogwarts could have gone a bit better, but at least he didn't end up in a tree, like James did. He ended up, in fact, about half a mile south of the campsite, on the beach.

He'd been to the seaside before, on summer trips at St Edmund's – three times to Margate, once to Southend. He couldn't say he'd particularly enjoyed these outings – or at least he didn't enjoy them any more than he would have enjoyed sitting in the back garden at St Edmund's. They were busy, noisy places, full of crying children and barking dogs and strange sugary smells and brightly coloured fairground rides.

This beach was almost deserted, except for a few kids – dots in the distance, really – flying a pink and blue kite. The day was warm enough, the sky was blue and the sand soft and yellow. He knew he ought to start walking towards the campsite, to find the others, but instead he sat down for a few minutes, just to look. The sea wasn't green, or bright blue, like in picture books – it was more of a concrete

kind of grey. Still pretty, glimmering under the midday sun. In the very far distance, Remus could just about make out a long dark shape on the horizon. Was that France? Might be. He could pretend it was.

Remus hadn't been able to relax, at the Potters. He'd felt like a visitor there; someone who didn't belong. He didn't know where he did belong. Now that he was seventeen, he could go anywhere he wanted. Would it be nice to live here, in Cornwall? He had recently discovered he'd been born in Bristol, and wondered what it was like there; that was by the sea, too. Remus had never thought he'd live anywhere other than London. Once, he'd thought he would probably never leave Essex.

Eventually, he felt too guilty and had to go and look for the others. The walk was bracing, and after a year of being confined to Hogwarts, it was a thrill just to be able to go somewhere alone. The campsite itself was halfway up the beach, on a long stretch of flat, neatly trimmed grass. A few families had already pitched tents, and the mothers and fathers were sitting outside them in deck chairs, soaking up the rare English summer sun with cups of tea and newspapers standing by.

Mary, Marlene, James and Sirius were sitting on a picnic bench outside the site office, which was little more than a breezeblock hut. Mary and Marlene jumped up when they saw him,

"We thought we'd lost you!"

"Overshot," he explained, "Landed on the beach - not in the water, luckily."

"We all ballsed it up, a bit," Mary laughed, and they each recounted the strange places they'd ended up. Except for Lily, who had arrived in precisely the place she'd meant to. She was inside the office, booking them in.