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Yule Ball by Emma

"So...." he teased, a grin broadening his face as he repeatedly poked Lily in the shoulder with his wand, bouncing in front of her, hopping from foot to foot.

"Alright then..." she grinned in return, a small stutter of a laugh escaping her lips as she watched him beam in delight. Ecstatic, Sirius pounced forward; wrapping his arms around her, enclosing the red-head into a huge bear-hug.

Laughing, she pushed him away playfully and watched as he grinned a few more times before beginning to walk away, pointing his wand at her while winking. "You won't regret it Lily. You'll see. Flowers, chocolates, the works. I promise." he smiled with a swift wink before disappearing up the stairs to the dormitory.

Sirius entered the boy's dorm, punching his fist in the air, jumping onto his bed, apparently extremely pleased with himself. Simultaneously Lupin, Pettigrew and Potter opened the curtains on their beds, peeking out at the noise-maker.

"This has been the best day, ever! Seriously, everything today has gone my way. First off, McGonagall believes me when I tell her one of the mandrakes ate my homework. Then I see Snape at lunch having food stuffed down the back of his jumper. And, as I was coming up here, I saw Filch dragging one of Snape's cronies out of the toilets having flushed his head down the bog!"

"That does sound like a good day," smirked James, shifting to the edge of his bed, noting Lupin flinch as he attempted to prevent himself from taking the moral high ground.

"Oh, but you haven't heard the best bit yet!" proclaimed Sirius, grabbing the pillow from the top of his bed, stroking it as if it had a head.

"Do put us out of our misery..." droned Peter who was sat with his arms folded, looking positively bored. Black ignored Pettigrew and burst, "Lily Evans is going to the Yule Ball with me!"

"She's what?!" replied James instantly, his tone astonished, shocked, his expression clearly gave away that this news was the last thing he was expecting to hear.

"I'm going with Lily..." repeated Sirius, thinking his friend had perhaps not heard him properly.

"But why Sirius? I mean, sheesh, you don't even like her!" protested James, beginning to realise he should've perhaps masked his emotions a bit better.

Remus looked from James to Sirius, catching Black's eyes and looked to the floor, his expression sad but silent.

"Who says I don't!" argued Sirius, jumping off the edge of the bed, approaching James, prodding him in the chest.

"You never like the girls you ask out! Not really! The way you talk about them. Look, Lily isn't like those other girls. You shouldn't hurt her." James stuttered and stammered, slightly scared by the look in Black's eyes but refusing to back down nonetheless.

"What are you trying to say Potter?" sneered his friend, eyes flaring.

"What I'm saying is, maybe you shouldn't go with her. Seriously Sirius, plug your brain into gear, you go through more girls than you do underpants! You've never truly loved a girl in your life!"

"How do you know I haven't, eh? How do you know this isn't different?!"

"Because I know you Sirius. I know what you're like. And I know what someone acts like when they're in love and they definitely don't act the way you do."

"Oh, I get it..." sneered Sirius once again, striding around James with arms folded, looking down on the boy. "You're jealous. You like her, don't you? And now you're jealous that I've got her. You're jealous that I've actually got the balls to ask girls out whereas you haven't."

Remus, who'd been watching silently with Pettigrew up until now, stood up and put himself between the friends.

"I think there's far too much testosterone being thrown around here. Cool it. What do you think Lily'd make of you two if she saw you like this? Fighting over her as if she's a possession you can simply lay claim to...."

Both boys looked to their feet as Remus spoke. He always seemed to instigate calm, reason, into the most wildest of situations. Lupin looked to both of them, catching each of their eyes, giving them a meaningful look.

"Sorry Sirius," mumbled James, looking at his hands rather than his friend. "I guess I should've told you. It's not a problem, really. All's fair in love and war, right? Besides, you got there first..."

"I suppose I'm sorry too..." muttered Sirius however he sighed as he saw Lupin giving him a 'that's not good enough' look.

"OK, so I am sorry. I'm sorry that you like her and forgot to tell your best friend." Lupin gave him another look. Sirius sighed for the second time.

"I'm sorry. Really. If I'd have known, I wouldn't have asked. But I can hardly take it back now. You said you didn't want me to hurt her and telling her I can't go with her would do exactly that."

Despite what Sirius had said earlier, he found himself sat in the common room around Midnight, waiting for Lily to come back from the Library like she usually did at this time. He found it slightly unnerving that he cared so much about a girl that he noticed the little things about her. It was highly unusual, given the fact that James had been right earlier, he was a ladies man. But somehow, for some reason, Lily was different. Yet he knew more than anyone (with the family he had) that friendship was worth more than any girl. Besides, he could have any girl he wanted; it'd always been that way. Perhaps he was like that because of his family, because he had never really been loved. Perhaps he was seeking love in the wrong place through dating as many girls as he could lay his hands on.

His thoughts were disturbed as Lily entered the common room, laughing with her friend Maria.

"Lily, I need to talk to you." stated Sirius, a grave look on his face, announcing his presence before she'd even had a chance to see him. Saying goodnight to her friend, who gave them a shifty look before heading up the stairs, Lily walked over to the sofa where Sirius was sat and stood before him.

"I can't go to the Yule Ball with you..."

"Oh, I see..." replied Lily in a faint voice. "Don't tell me, it's because you've found another girl to go with, right?"

"No, not at all," responded Sirius rather too quickly, wondering whether he ought to have said yes.

"Has it got something to do with James?" she demanded, reading Black like a book.

"No, it's got nothing to do with him, I mean..." he railed on, however she interrupted him.

"I knew it must be him! He's so selfish!"

"James just didn't want me to go with you and as his friend, I respect that."

"But why?" she pressed. "Why doesn't he want you to go with me? It's just one stupid Ball!"

Sirius shrugged. "I guess to him, it isn't just that. Besides Lily, you know what I'm like with girls. Do you really want to end up with a broken heart too?" whimpered Black, absorbed in his self-mocking.

"Well, I suppose thanks to James, now we'll never know. Night Sirius." she replied coldly, speedily vanishing

up the stairs, disappearing into the girls dorm.

James thought he'd heard raised voices. Emerging from the boy's dorm, he watched as Sirius cancelled his date with Lily. He silently watched from the balcony as she stormed away. Making sure she'd gone, Potter slowly walked down the stairs, catching the eye of his friend.

"You owe me one." mumbled Sirius, pointing at the boy as he lit up a wizarding pipe, perching on the arm of the sofa.

"What do you think?" asked Sirius, turning away from the full length mirror to face James who was trying, in vain, to flatten his unruly hair.

"Ravishing." he remarked without bothering to look, growing steadily more frustrated that his hair would not do what he wanted it to.

"You're not even looking, Potter!" complained Black, spinning the guy around by the shoulder. James nodded approvingly, staring jealousy at his friend's shoulder-length tidy hair, the stubble around his lips and chin. "You look so manly. I just look like a kid trying to be grown up." James whined, turning back to the mirror grumpily.

"Relax. Lily's not going to be bothered what you look like. She'll just be chuffed she's going with you." James avoided Sirius' eyes and didn't say anything.

"You are going with her, aren't you?" pressed Sirius, putting himself between James and the mirror. His friend's expression said it all.

"I tried. Honestly. But I couldn't."

"You mean to tell me, I turned down the prettiest girl in our year so you could have her, only for you not to bother? Sometimes you can be so pathetic." Sirius mocked, shaking his head disapprovingly. Lupin and Peter, who had both been ready for the past hour, were sat on their respective beds, watching.

"I'm going with Lily." spoke Lupin quietly, almost flinching as both Black and Potter turned to look at him. James frowned whereas Sirius, unable to stop himself, bent over laughing. Peter rolled his eyes and left the room as James tried to pick Sirius up off the floor.

"She asked me. After you failed to ask her." continued Lupin, looking a little pained at Sirius' laughter. Realising his mistake, Sirius perched on the bed next to his friend and enveloped him in a brotherly hug. "I'm sorry mate, really," he said, wiping the tears of laughter from his eyes. "It's just the way you said it. Sounded funny. I wasn't laughing at you. Really."

Lupin looked as if he knew better but didn't press the matter. "Point is, you can dance with her if you want James. You too Sirius. I don't mind." he offered generously. Both James and Sirius clapped their friend across the back in gesture of friendship as they all left the dorm and the common room before heading down to the Hall where the festivities had apparently already begun.

As soon as they arrived, Sirius was immediately on the dance floor, with Emily Sangton on his arm. James, however, only had eyes for Lily, who he saw standing with a group of friends near the drinks table, laughing with her wide dazzling smile. She saw them and approached the pair, reaching out for Lupin's hands. Remus bent his head slightly to hide a blush and was suddenly lost for words. "There you are. I wondered where my date had got to. James stole you I see." she mused jokingly. With a cheeky smile, she tugged on Lupin's hands, "Let's dance!" she whispered, grinning. Remus, looking flustered, took Lily's lead and headed toward the dance floor.

James couldn't help but feel jealous though admittedly it felt less so than if it was Sirius she was dancing with. There was a big difference between the two; being that one was a womanizer and the other a perfect, if shy, gentleman.