

Remus' Feet

by nastygrl

The price Remus is willing to pay for freedom.

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There are parts of himself that he hides, that he is still ashamed to show me. But late at night, on those rare occasions when he is not working undercover and I am not on duty, when we can share a bed, his feet press up against me. Whether it is for warmth or the comfort of soft skin, I am not sure. He is ashamed of his feet. Every visible part of him is disguised in one form or another: he can easily heal the cuts and scrapes on his hands and arms; the same can be done for the bruises on his face and chest. But his feet cannot lie; they tell the truth of who and what he is.

My husband is a werewolf. He deliberately transforms a fortnight every month to spy for the Order. And for the one week a month during the full moon when the wolf takes completely over, he is locked in the basement at Headquarters, safe from himself and the death and destruction he could heap upon society, if left unchecked.

For one week a month I have him all to myself, and we make love and talk and eat and pretend we are normal, that we're not living through a war of horrific proportions. In our little flat north of London, we pretend, but his feet cannot lie.

The cuts and abrasions and calluses decimating his feet tell his story. Friends and colleagues alike forget that his bones break and mend with each transformation, and it is only Severus who reminds him to put up his feet and take his shoes off. My husband cannot walk without limping these days, but it is not from his bad back or his slowly deteriorating hips; no, it is his feet, his very foundation, that are being battered and shaken, so much that on some nights, when he is weeping and howling from pain, he will let me tend to him.

On those nights, I gently clean his feet with a flannel, then soak them in dittany. After the dittany heals his wounds, I wrap his fragile feet in a warm comfrey poultice that Severus has prepared for him. The poultice will not only heal his fractured bones, but will also regenerate cells. He falls asleep easily on those nights, weak with relief from his constant pain.

When we are curled up in bed and his feet have found comfort next to my skin, I will catalogue his feet; my toes follow the curves and arches and discover every new cut, every new scar and callus, every new calcium buildup where his bones have not mended properly after transforming. If I should rub too hard or graze over some new sore spot, he will whimper, and I hold him tighter in my arms, reassuring him quietly that he is safe and sound.

For the past few months now, after I've tended his feet and we have made mad, desperate love, we will lie in our four-poster. As I lightly trace his feet with my toes, he will begin sleepily reciting their history: "That scar I got when I was ten, it was an awful transformation, and I'd..." or, "The bone never quite healed after getting caught in that wolf's trap. I was terrified I'd have to start gnawing..." and I will shudder and feel tears welling. He will hold me close and place a hand on my swollen stomach, comforting me; telling me his feet are a small price to pay to keep his humanity, for if Voldemort wins the war, he would surely give werewolves free reign. He is willing to give more than his feet to keep our unborn child safe from such tyranny, and I fall in love with my werewolf all over again.

A/N: Sending thank yous to my fantastic betas who make all things possible :)