

Chapter 33

Remus John Lupin

Most of us really like Remus John Lupin. He's a very good teacher, and he's kind to Harry and Neville. He teaches Harry a charm that saves his life several times: the Patronus. He is extremely flawed, which makes us sympathise with him, but at the same time fills us with revulsion: he's a werewolf.

Have you ever noticed how often Jo Rowling mentions his greying hair? It's five times, actually, plus once when she mentions his "grey face". This is what gave me the clue that he's the equivalent to the grey king in *The Chymical Wedding*. This king is described as "a very old king with a grey beard". There, the grey king personifies the opposite force to the black king. That's Snape, whom I discussed in the previous chapter. If Snape personifies our shadow side, it's obvious that Lupin personifies the opposite.

Why is he grey? Grey is the symbol of ripeness of experience. The microcosm of a person going the Path of Liberation has an extremely long journey behind it. It's "old" in terms of having been through every possible kind of experience and having learned a great deal from that.

Grey is also the opposite of black here. In this time-spatial universe nothing is pure white, i.e. good in the absolute sense. Everything here, no matter how good, is flawed. We know that Lupin is extremely flawed. Through no fault of his own he was bitten by a werewolf as a child. I will explain the meaning of lycanthropy in a later chapter. Suffice to say for now that he is not in control of his biological self. He cannot control his animal nature. This is the flaw in every human being, no matter how good.

Once a month Lupin turns into a wolf, and this works extremely effectively in plot terms. James was a stag, Peter a rat, and Sirius a dog. The symbolism is quite ingenious. James had the ability to turn into a stag, which is the symbol for the longing for liberation. Peter being able to transform into a rat was extremely effective, as his physical presence on Ron's body really emphasised his attachment to the old earthly personality. Making Sirius a dog was very suitable for allowing him to escape from prison and to sneak around Hogwarts, and the dog is obvious from Sirius' nickname as the "dog star".

Lupin is very flawed, as is every type of goodness on earth. For one thing, there is no definition of what is "good". It's very subjective and usually we define as "good" whatever promotes our desires and "bad" as whatever thwarts them. In fact, we can only get a clear idea of goodness by comparing it with evil. Without evil, there would be no good. Good and evil really hold each other in balance in this world.

However, the main point is that we're all living in a "prison" outside of the real world. Our destination is not INSIDE the prison but OUTSIDE of it! Hence whatever we do inside the prison is only of temporary benefit. The prisoners can help each other or make things even more miserable than they are, but their one and only task is to get OUT of the prison.

If our task is to get out, but many do-gooders in the prison are working to make life as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, trying to forget the bad conditions, trying to forget the radiant world of sunshine, fresh air and glorious FREEDOM outside of the prison, then is that not actually bad? In the opinion of the prisoners these do-gooders are making life in the prison less unbearable, and so they're considered good but, in actual fact, they're "drugging" the prisoners into forgetting about liberation, which is their one and only purpose. So doing good may seem wonderful from one point of view, but very bad from another. And so that's another aspect of the grey king in every seeker.

Fortunately, this is one thing Lupin doesn't do! For does he not teach Harry to invoke the Patronus? In the alchemist, Remus John Lupin personifies the force which realises the impotence of its goodness, the flawed nature of itself, and so encourages the new soul to long for the fresh, cool, clear Living Water, which will refresh it, give it new courage, and drive off the forces that oppose it.

And so we can see that Remus has the lightest shade of grey possible in this world. He was a friend of James the stag and Lily the priceless flower of eternal life. He cares greatly for their son, the new eternal soul, and helps him as much as possible. He teaches him to concentrate his longing for liberation so much that it becomes an all-conquering force that can overcome the soul's attachment to the astral plane of the fallen universe. This longing for liberation comes from a strong desire for a goodness which has no opposite as it does in this world. The Good in the Real World has no opposite; it is not bipolar but leads to the Absolute Life in the ineffable heights of the Father, the Potter of the Universe.

The grey king in *The Chymical Wedding* has a wife who is very young and vital. This symbolises the wonderful new opportunity the good side of the candidate has, to surrender itself to the new soul and so enter permanent Good.

In *Harry Potter* Lupin marries Nymphadora Tonks, who is also much younger than he is.

In *The Chymical Wedding* both the black king and the grey king and their wives voluntarily submit to decapitation, just as Snape and Lupin and Tonks both die in the final battle. This symbolises the end of relative evil and relative goodness in the candidate. However, their death is the same as the death of the phoenix: it is followed by a glorious resurrection of a new human being,

the Son of the great Architect. This is the homecoming of the prodigal son to the Father, who shows greater honour to the one who has fallen than to the one who stayed at home!