

Harry felt like he couldn't breathe, the unpleasant possibilities swirling through his head making him question things he never imagined that he would. It couldn't be true, it couldn't. There was no way that...

"Harry, there's something you need to know," Hermione said, her chocolate brown eyes filled with worry and concern as she dragged him into the nearest empty broom cupboard she could find that morning.

"Hermione, I was just about to head to Hogsmeade," Harry grumbled. "Dora's already waiting for me."

"That's why I had to stop you first," Hermione explained. "It's about Tonks."

He marched through the streets of the small wizard village, too distracted by the ugly, terrible thoughts swirling around his head to take in how lovely it truly was. No one noticed him, because he was completely hidden by his invisibility cloak. Had he been unable to trick his uncle into signing the permission slip for him to attend Hogsmeade, this would have been his only way to see the village. Meeting Dora had changed that, as the beautiful metamorphmagus had changed so many other things in his life in the short time that they'd known each other. Word of his relationship had spread by now, and he had had to get used to envious looks from other boys over it, something that he wasn't truly used to despite all that he had going for him in life.

"And it might all be a lie," he thought to himself, letting out a shaky breath as he reached the Three Broomsticks.

Things had been so much simpler before he told Ron and Hermione about Tonks, not that he was under the illusion that he could keep that hidden forever. As he reached for the door handle, he remembered that first conversation.

"So what was it that you wanted to talk to us about?" Hermione asked as she sat down on the nearest desk in the empty classroom the three of them had ducked into.

"Yeah, mate, what's up?" Ron asked.

"I..." Harry trailed off, not entirely sure how to word what he planned to tell them. It wasn't as though dating Dora was something shameful or anything, but with him still not entirely convinced how he'd managed it, explaining it was going to be potentially difficult.

"Is it about the basilisk? Because I really don't think you should have done that in the Great Hall," Hermione admonished. "I'll admit that hearing Malfoy scream like a five-year-old was fun, but you terrified more than a few first years."

"Bloody worth it to see the look on the ferret's face, though," Ron laughed. "How'd you rope that metamorph girl into helping you, anyway? I'm blanking on her name, but the twins have mentioned her before."

"Tonks, her name's Tonks," Harry replied, seizing on the easy segueway. "Nymphadora Tonks, actually, but never call her that or she'll hex your mouth shut. She's what I wanted to talk to you two about. We met over the summer and..."

“How?” Hermione asked, her brow furrowing in confusion.

“She tripped and fell onto my relatives’ lawn, actually,” Harry replied, chuckling at the memory. “I helped her up, we got to talking, and we just kind of kept meeting up. She’s really cool and wicked with her wand and funny, and we kind of started dating.”

He let that last part slip out and watched as his closest friends both let their jaws drop.

“D...dating?” Hermione stammered. “But she’s...”

“Old,” Ron blurted out. “Well, not old, obviously, but...she’s Fred and George’s age. How the bloody hell did you pull that off?”

“Don’t know, really,” Harry chuckled. “We kept meeting up over the summer, and for my birthday, she took me rollerblading, in this abandoned former safe house that she knew about. We had so much fun, and at the end of the night, I kissed her. Thought I’d buggered up royally, but...I hadn’t. Dora’s brilliant, really brilliant, and I...I really like her.”

“Bloody hell,” Ron muttered, seemingly still confused.

“Harry, it’s great that you’ve met someone that you really like,” Hermione said cautiously, “but...I’d really suggest that you be careful.”

“Careful?” Harry asked, confused. “I’m not in danger from her, Hermione.”

“I don’t think that you are, but she’s older than you,” Hermione replied, “significantly so, and that means that she’s experienced in ways that you aren’t. I just don’t want to see you rush into something that ultimately hurts you.”

“We haven’t rushed things,” Harry assured her. “Looking back, we flirted with each other for weeks before we even started dating, and we have been taking things slowly. She’s very aware of the age difference.”

“And you’re sure she’d not just...” Hermione trailed off, looking reluctant to speak at all, and Harry narrowed his eyes at her.

“Not what?” he asked, his voice tinged with a hint of defensiveness.

“Please don’t be angry with me, but I have to ask, how sure are you that she isn’t just using you?” Hermione sighed, tensing as Harry’s eyes flashed with anger. “You’re rich and famous, Harry; that’s a consideration you have to take into account that most wouldn’t.”

“Right, because she couldn’t possibly just fancy me,” Harry hissed. “What the hell, Hermione?”

“Even if she is, every boy in our year is going to be jealous as hell, mate,” Ron chuckled, not quite noticing how offended Harry was. “The girl’s a smokeshow who can look like anyone she wants.”

“That’s not what I meant,” Hermione sighed, glaring at Ron for a moment. “You’re eminently fanciable, Harry, but I’m just worried, is all.”

“For the record, the twins like her well enough, and I’d trust their judgment,” Ron added, finally noticing Harry’s mood.

“Just give her a chance, please,” he sighed, swallowing his irritation with both of them. The truth was that there was still a part of him that couldn’t believe Dora was really interested in him, and while he didn’t think she was using him or anything, Hermione’s words had struck a nerve anyway.

“Of course,” Hermione smiled, relaxing visibly. “I am happy for you, Harry, my initial concerns notwithstanding.”

“So, I guess you took her down into the chamber,” Ron mused, recalling how she’d been the one to pull the basilisk corpse out of her pouch. “Not exactly a hot date spot.”

Harry tried not to blush at that, unable to stop himself from remembering how that ‘date’ had ended.

“It was worth it, though,” he said, not quite meeting their eyes. “We had a chance to look around, something made much easier when you don’t have a fifty-foot-long murder snake after you, and found a hidden room that Voldemort didn’t.”

“Oh?” Hermione asked, perking up. “What was in it?”

“I think it was Slytherin’s private retreat,” Harry replied. “Having the chamber be that never made sense when it wasn’t even mildly comfortable. There was a chest full of books that...”

“Oh boy,” Ron muttered, rolling his eyes as Hermione’s lit up like she’d just been told she won the lottery.

“Salazar Slytherin’s private library?” Hermione asked excitedly. “Harry, each of those could be utterly priceless.”

“Probably dark as a dementor’s robes, the lot of them,” Ron muttered.

“You’re not wrong” Hermione grimaced. “They could contain exceptionally dark magic, but the idea of accessing knowledge that might have been lost entirely for centuries...At the very least, we should show them to Professor McGonagall or even the headmaster.”

“It wouldn’t do any good,” Harry replied. “They’re enchanted so they can only be read by parselmouths. I’ll work on translating them when I have the time, and with Christmas coming up in a few months...”

“Eee!” Hermione squealed, hugging him, “Thank you.”

Harry chuckled, relieved to have gotten the both of them focused on something other than his relationship with Tonks. He figured that Hermione would have reservations about the relationship and actually thought that Ron would be more jealous than he was, but he knew that once they got to know her, that would change.

It seemed to change, and their introduction went rather smoothly, as did his introduction to Dora’s friends. He knew that Hermione would investigate her even with her being as bizarrely busy as she was this year. He could have tried to stop her, but he figured that she wouldn’t listen and hoped that, once she’d done her digging, she’d relax and they could go from there. Never in a million

years did he think that she'd actually find anything truly objectionable. Alas, there did turn out to be one thing about her that both hadn't known and couldn't fathom.

"What about her?" he'd asked, exasperated from the start.

"She seemed really nice from our first couple meetings, and I didn't really have any reason to think that she might have untoward intentions regarding you, but you know me, and I've never been able to resist digging into things when..."

"Hermione, please get to the point," Harry replied, wondering what on Earth she could have found that would make her look so nervous.

If this was anyone else, he'd assume that she had simply heard some bizarre rumor that sounded really bad and was probably less than half true, but Hermione wasn't one for gossip, nor was she someone to just take someone's word at face value if what they said sounded odd.

"What has she told you about her parents?" Hermione asked.

"She's a half-blood, like me," Harry replied. "I know her parents are named Andromeda and Ted, but I haven't met them yet."

"Andromeda's maiden name was Black," Hermione sighed, and he furrowed his brow in confusion, "as in Sirius Black."

"What?" Harry breathed, feeling his heart lurch, "No, that..."

"I did some digging and found out that she was one of three sisters born to Druella and Cygnus Black, a pair of pureblood cousins who both went here and were sorted into Slytherin," Hermione continued, looking reluctant to speak at all. "Her eldest sister, Bellatrix, was one of Voldemort's most fanatical followers and is currently in Azkaban. Sirius Black is their first cousin."

"That's...she..." Harry stammered. "She married a muggleborn! How is that..."

"That part gave me pause," Hermione admitted, "and I wondered if perhaps I had the wrong Andromeda, or if indeed, she was just very unlike the rest of her family. After realizing that she was who I thought she was, though, I began to wonder if I was wrong about both ideas. I take it Tonks didn't tell you any of this."

"No, she didn't," Harry replied, his mind spinning. Tonks was the one who told him about Sirius' connection to his parents and about his betrayal of them. She had calmed him down when he raged at the man and promised to train him to defend himself if he attacked. Why would she not, in all this time, have told him that she was so closely related to the man?

"Harry, you said that you met her when she fell into the Dursley's lawn," Hermione continued, "and that she just happened to be in the area and came over because she thought you looked familiar, but what if it was more planned than that?"

"What are you saying?" Harry demanded.

"I'm saying that it seems pretty weird that, just weeks before Sirius Black did something that no one else in history has ever done, and broke out of Azkaban, a cousin of his just happened to stumble across you," Hermione sighed. "What if that isn't a coincidence?"

“That’s not possible!” Harry snarled, trying to convince himself more than anything. “Why would a the daughter of a muggleborn work with a Death Eater?”

“I’ll admit, that does sound weird,” Hermione replied, “but the whole story of how you met is kind of weird too. There are so few of us compared to the muggles that the only benefit of you staying with the Dursleys is that it all but guaranteed that the Death Eaters can’t find you. Even without moving you to another country, you were made a needle in a haystack, and yet somehow, in a country of tens of millions, one student from our school just happened to stumble across you?”

“You think she tracked me down?” Harry asked. “We spent so many hours alone together, though. If she wanted to hand me over to Black, she could have easily.”

“Like I say, I don’t know,” Hermione admitted, “but her admission is suspect and I think you should be car...Harry?”

She called after him as he whipped around and rushed out of the classroom, hissing, “I need to be alone.”

Knowing that she would object and potentially rush off to seek a professor if he admitted that he planned to go straight to Tonks and confront her, he’d lied, but there was no way that he was waiting even a moment to get his answers from her. His heart hammered in his chest; the mere idea that perhaps the girl he was falling in love with had used him this whole time was too painful for words. He didn’t think that she might actually be working with Sirius Black, if for no other reason than the fact that she had a muggleborn father, and he served Voldemort, but Hermione had put enough doubts in his head otherwise that he knew he needed answers. Hoping more than anything that he wasn’t about to learn something painful, he pushed the door open and rushed inside.

“Ahh, I needed this,” Hestia sighed as she sipped her butterbeer and relaxed at the booth they’d chosen. “Merlin’s balls, I hate potions.”

“You think that man was born a prick?” Tonks muttered.

“He’s worse this year,” Chiara murmured, “and I think Professor Lupin is the cause.”

“Really?” Tonks asked, cocking an eyebrow. “What makes you say that?”

“He refuses to look at him,” Chiara replied. “Snape scowls and sneers at virtually everyone, but I’ve never seen him go out of his way not to look at someone before.”

“You think he...knows?” Hestia asked, leaning in.

“I think if he knew, he’d have blabbed far and bloody wide by now,” Tonks replied. “Again, prick.”

“Dumbledore would have to know,” Chiara replied, “and Snape might not be willing to risk pissing him off.”

“Because so genial normally,” Tonks snorted. “Do you think they knew each other in school?”

“Lupin looks older than him, but that can happen,” Chiara said conspiratorially.

“Gwenog was here when Snape started teaching, so we can figure he’s in his early thirties from that,” Hestia said. “Maybe they were old rivals.”

“Which gets back to my earlier question: was he always this much of a prick?” Tonks replied. “I can’t imagine him as a kid.”

“I don’t know anyone that miserable to everyone, so possibly not,” Hestia replied. Changing the subject, she asked, “So your boytoy is coming, right?”

“Will you ever stop calling him that?” Tonks muttered.

“Nope,” Hestia replied with a grin, popping the p. “You two stick it out and get married; I’ll still be calling him boytoy at your wedding.”

Tonks grumbled at that and took a sip of her butterbeer, recalling when she first told them about her and Harry.

“Okay, so spill,” Hestia grinned as the three of them sat on her bed, taking full advantage of both their free period and how few Hufflepuff girls there were in their year, “how on Earth did you end up shagging the boy-who-lived?”

“Pretty curious about that myself,” Chiara replied. “You once asked me if being a werewolf enhanced my eyesight enough to be able to tell how well-hung guys were through their robes. Isn’t he a little...little for you?”

“If it did, you’d have the answer to that,” Tonks huffed, and Hestia snorted.

“Seriously?” she asked. “What, is he just hiding a third leg under there?”

“He’s...amazing,” Tonks sighed, smiling happily.

“Oh, so just how serious are things here?” Hestia asked, surprised.

“We’re dating,” Tonks replied. “I was going to tell you today, after the display with the basilisk and...”

“Wait, is that what...did you seek that boy out purely because of what I told you about the basilisk?” Hestia asked.

“First off, he’s no boy, and not just because he spent the better part of two hours shagging my brains out last night,” Tonks replied. “You saw that thing, and he killed it with a sword. He has a scar from where it bit him too. If not for Dumbledore’s phoenix, he’d be dead.”

“Wow,” Chiara breathed. “At least now I know what that weird smell I picked up on all last year was. It didn’t really seem snake-like, so I wouldn’t have guessed it was basilisk at all.”

“To answer your question, yeah, I sought him out because of the basilisk,” Tonks sighed, “but I ended up just really liking him. The two of us spent a lot of the summer hanging out and

he's...sweet, funny, and mature in a way that really didn't make sense until he started talking about all the awful shit he's been through through the years."

"There's more than the basilisk?" Hestia asked. "I mean I know what happened to him as a baby, but there's no way he remembers that."

"You remember the troll that got in here in our fourth year?" Tonks asked. When they nodded, she said, "It attacked his friend, Hermione. The three of them fought it off and ultimately knocked it out by dropping its own club on its head and that wasn't even the only life-threatening situation he ended up in that year."

"Wow," Hestia said, "and here I thought he was just annoyingly good on a broom."

"And with his broom, apparently," Chiara quipped, making the brunette giggle. "Anyway, what are we talking about here? Toy broom, training broom, pro broom?"

"Beater's bat," Tonks replied. "No metaphor meant, he's as big as one of your bats, Hes."

"Ow...I mean wow," Hestia replied, and Tonks cackled.

"You're not wrong," Tonks sighed. "If I wasn't...what I am, I really don't know if I'd be able to take him. As it is, though, he was every bit as intense as I always figured a genuinely huge guy would be."

"Well, I'm happy for you," Hestia smiled.

"To be honest, part of me feared that you wouldn't understand," Tonks sighed, "because of the age gap and all."

"Three years is up there but isn't gross," Hestia replied, "and if your sexes were reversed, few here would even think twice about it."

"Some will poke fun because he's younger, though," Chiara pointed out.

"Fuck em," Tonks muttered. "Anyway, I figure I can introduce you two to him at dinner tonight, but I was thinking that we could meet up with him and his friends on the first Hogsmeade trip and get to know them."

"That works for me," Hestia shrugged before casting tempus. "Defense starts in a little while, so we should probably get going."

"Before we do, there's something I should tell you two, but I need you to promise me that you won't breathe a word of it to anyone. Not even Harry, Tonks."

"You haven't been this serious since you let us know about your extra monthlies," Tonks commented. "I'll keep it to myself."

"You know you can trust me to keep my mouth shut," Hestia added.

"Professor Lupin is...like me," Chiara replied, and both of their eyes went wide as saucers.

"Seriously?" Hestia asked.

“You’re sure?” Tonks asked, though she knew the question.

“Oh yeah,” Chiara replied. “He’ll know about me for the same reason. It absolutely doesn’t make up for the downsides, and sometimes it is yet another curse, but my condition gives me a nose like a bloodhound.”

“It’s never steered you wrong before,” Tonks nodded. “We’d be able to hear my bitch aunt’s reaction from here if she learned about that.”

“I can’t imagine anyone here knows, other than Dumbledore, of course,” Chiara sighed.

“I guess that’s why he looks kind of...rough,” Hestia commented. “You don’t, but we have no idea how long he’s been dealing with it.”

“The rough, kind of scruffy look is common to those who really fight their inner beast,” Chiara replied. “I’ve always tried to accept it as much as possible without outright embracing it, but that isn’t an easy line to tread, and plenty don’t even bother.”

“He can’t be any worse than Lockhart,” Tonks sighed, “or that stuttering idiot.”

Neither one disagreed.

“I’ll be back in a tick,” Tonks said as she downed the rest of her butterbeer and made her way towards the bathroom.

She peed quickly and washed her hands, but as she opened the door, a voice made her pause in her steps.

“Were you ever planning to tell me you were related to him?” Harry asked, and her heart jumped into her throat.

She was about to chew him out when she realized how hurt he sounded and realized that there was only one person he could be referring to.

“To be honest, I hoped he’d be captured by now,” Tonks sighed. “This conversation would have been easier then. I take it Hermione found out.”

“What makes you say that?” Harry asked, his voice just as tense as before.

“Because it was one of the three of you and she seems the most likely,” Tonks replied. “Look, this probably isn’t something we should talk about here. We could go back to the castle, or if you’d prefer, the Shrieking Shack is closer.”

“Hurry along, would you?” Pansy asked, scowling as she turned around the corner and found Tonks standing there, seemingly alone.

“All yours, princess,” Tonks muttered, stepping aside and letting her in the restroom.

“How close?” Harry whispered.

“In the village close,” Tonks replied.

“Fine,” Harry muttered, and Tonks sighed before leading him along.

“Hey, I need to run for a bit,” Tonks said as she reached her table.

“What’s up?” Hestia asked as Chiara sniffed the air and smirked at Tonks.

“I’ll fill you in,” the werewolf said before Tonks could reply and she let her make her assumption.

“Um, did she know I was there?” Harry asked as soon as they were out of the pub.

“Chiara’s very observant,” Tonks replied. “Come, it’s not far.”

She led him quickly, thankful that it wasn’t snowing yet, as someone may very well have noticed the second pair of footprints behind her. Chiara used the shrieking shack during her monthly ordeal, and Tonks and Hestia had spruced the place up mostly as a show of support during their third year. It didn’t mean much to the wolf she became during the nights of the full moon, but the gesture helped her accept that they didn’t have a problem with her and she usually smiled at the memory of how her silver eyes had lit up when she saw what they’d done. Smiling wasn’t something she felt like doing just then though.

“I should have told him sooner,” she grumbled mentally.

She’d known that this conversation was likely going to be difficult, and had hoped that the aurors would just find Black soon so Harry’s anger at him would diminish some, but that hadn’t happened and she had put this off too long as it was. She led him to the Shrieking Shack and the pair of them quickly ducked inside, with him taking off his cloak the moment she shut the door.

“It’s true then?” he asked, his eyes full of wariness and confusion. “You’re related to Sirius Black?”

“I am,” Tonks sighed. “You are too.”

“Huh?” Harry asked.

“My mum’s the white sheep of a really dark, really fucked-up family, but she’s not the only one in semi-recent history who wasn’t a complete nutter,” Tonks replied. “Your grandmother Dorea was a Black before she married your grandfather Charlus.”

“I...wait, how closely are we related, exactly?” Harry spluttered.

“Not very,” Tonks replied. “I think we’re second cousins once removed or something like that. Mum told me when I started asking about you, but that shit has always gone in one ear and out the other. I think we’re no more related than the queen and Prince Phillip are, and by pureblood standards, we might as well be from different planets.”

“I guess their children aren’t too fucked up,” Harry muttered, feeling relieved at the thought that he hadn’t shagged a close relative.

“Princess Anne’s cool at least,” Tonks shrugged. With a smirk, she added, “It’s a little early to be thinking of kids, though.”

Even a day ago that would have made Harry blush and flounder like a fish, and when he simply flushed a little, she sighed.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Harry pressed.

“Because it’s not the easiest thing in the world to talk about, okay?” Tonks replied. Sighing, she added, “I’m directly connected to some really, really awful people. That blonde tool in your year is my cousin, and he’s probably my least embarrassing close relative.”

“Wait, what?” Harry asked.

“My aunt Narcissa is married to Lucius Malfoy,” Tonks sighed. “My other aunt is one of Azkaban’s most notorious prisoners, and then there’s Sirius. I swear I was going to tell you all about this soon enough, but I really hoped the aurors would have picked that son of a bitch up by now.”

“I understand being related to shitty people, Dora,” Harry muttered. “You know that.”

“Petunia and Vernon Dursley are awful, but they’re not notorious serial killers,” Tonks scoffed. “If I told you about half the shit Bellatrix was convicted of you’d be sick. This would have been a difficult conversation in general, but with Sirius on the run and you understandably furious with him, I just...I didn’t want this to change how you saw me.”

Her hair turned brown and listless as she looked away, and Harry swallowed thickly, not used to seeing her look so vulnerable.

“How’d your mum turn out so normal?” he asked, and his heart fluttered in his chest as her hair gained pink highlights.

“She fell in love,” Tonks replied. “Her family had wanted to marry her off to some psycho pureblood like they did for her sisters, but she met my dad instead. The two of them fell in love and ran off together, defying that pack of rabid dogs. She was banished, but she didn’t care, seemingly happy to tell them all to bugger off. I think I’ve seen Narcissa three times in my life, and each one was in Diagon Alley in passing.”

“I still wish you’d told me, but I can understand something like this being a weight on you,” Harry sighed. “Goodness knows I don’t go out of my way to talk about the Dursleys, and, as you said, they’re awful but not that awful.”

“There are students here whose relatives were tortured to death by my aunt,” Tonks muttered. “I’m really grateful that my mum’s the Black in the family, you know?”

“No one thinks anything of the name Tonks, huh?” Harry replied.

“After getting to know me, they come to associate it with the word klutz, but that’s about it,” Tonks chuckled.

“How did your mother react when the news about Sirius broke?” Harry asked.

“Harry, to be honest, my mother has never accepted that he did what he did,” Tonks replied. When he stiffened up, she quickly added, “You have to understand that no one saw his betrayal coming at all. I call my mother the white sheep of the family, but he apparently outright joked that that was

what he was. She left the family and married a muggleborn, but she was still sorted into Slytherin and played the part of the pureblood princess for years. Sirius was sorted into Gryffindor and openly defied his family for his entire life until he turned to Voldemort. Mum rarely mentioned him, but she went into detail a few times over the years, and she'd just never understood it."

"That must be why my parents trusted him," Harry scowled, his fist clenching as the same dark rage that had claimed him each time he'd thought about the traitor since he first learned the truth did again.

"I don't know," Tonks sighed. "From the way Mum's spoken about him, we don't know how long a con it really was, or when he turned on them. In the end, it doesn't matter; he did what he did and if he comes for you, I swear I'll kill him if I have to, distant cousin or not."

"I know," Harry whispered, wrapping his arms around her. The tension in her body melted out of her at his touch and she let out a shuddering breath.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner," Tonks whispered.

"Just don't do it again," Harry replied. "You told me all about him the moment you realized that I didn't know, and you don't know how much that meant to me. Almost everyone else has tried to protect me by keeping me in the dark, and I hate it. Mister Weasley was the only other one who bothered to let me know about him."

"He's a good man, from what my father's said of him," Tonks replied. "I've mentioned before that he's a solicitor. The two of them have worked together a few times over the years."

"They're great," Harry smiled as he pulled back.

"So, I was right about Hermione being the one to figure things out, right?" Tonks asked.

"As if it could be anyone else," Harry chuckled. His face fell as he recalled that conversation again, and he added, "She worried that you might have actually been working with him, though she admitted that she thought it was unlikely, given your father."

"Yeah, no," Tonks scowled, before sighing. "She's smart, that one, and she cares about you. That's the kind of person you want in your corner, and I'm glad you have her. Out of curiosity, was our blood connection the only reason she had for why I might have been working with that prick?"

"She also just thought it was an odd coincidence that I happened to meet a relative of his just weeks before he broke out," Harry shrugged. "Coincidences do happen, though, and it's not like you specifically sought me out, right?"

Both Tonks' face and hair paled at that, and Harry's face fell. He looked down for a moment before muttering, "Is there anything else you haven't told me?"

"I'm not working with Sirius Black!" Tonks swore. "I did seek you out, though."

"What?" Harry asked as that same insecurity from before that their relationship might have been less genuine than he desperately wanted crept back up. "What does that mean?"

"At the start of the summer, Hestia told me that she'd heard from the twins what tormented us all last year," Tonks began. "The idea that a giant frigging basilisk was the cause of the petrifications

seemed too fantastical to be real, but she said that Fred insisted. When she added that you had apparently left the thing's corpse down there, I started to form a plan."

Harry felt his heart break in his chest, and for a moment he swore that he couldn't breathe.

"I asked my mum casually about you, and she remembered the names Dursley and Little Whinging, and that was enough to track you down," Tonks continued. "You had left probably hundreds of thousands of galleons down in the chamber, and I figured that if reached out and let you know, my finder's fee could be enough of the hide for a suit of armor for when I become an auror."

"I can't believe this," Harry whispered, not trusting his voice just then as he turned around and went to leave.

"Harry, wait!" Tonks exclaimed, grabbing his arm, and he wrenched it out of her grasp, whipping around and glaring at her.

"Was any of this real?!" he shouted, his voice breaking in a way that would have embarrassed him if he'd been less hurt and angry. "Were you just using me from the start?"

"No!" Tonks exclaimed, her hair turning a sickly green at the thought that he could actually believe that. "Harry, when I was dreaming about getting into fights in a badass suit of basilisk armor, I pictured you as a stupid kid. I had barely paid attention to you since you were sorted, and in my mind you were still that little first year. Instead, you turned out to be this cute, funny, amazing guy, and I...I didn't even think of the stupid basilisk for a month. The first day, you seemed so desperate to escape your relatives, and you'd been so sweet that I didn't hesitate to help you out with that because I knew what it was like to be related to assholes and couldn't imagine what it would have been like to live with any of them. From there, we just kept seeing each other, and it was good; it was really good. Getting to know you was the highlight of my summer, Harry."

"I felt the same way," Harry sighed, "but how can I trust any of it now, knowing how much you lied to me? From the moment you actually fell into my life, I've felt in a way that I've never felt in my life, and I hate that I'm questioning that."

"You know damn well that the fall was real," Tonks muttered. Her hair turned orange as she added, "When I was planning to help you seize a fortune you left to rot, sleeping with you wasn't in any of that, unless you think I go around shagging blokes for cash."

Even as upset as he was, he could recognize from the look in and color of her orange eyes that he'd best tread carefully on that one.

"Of course, I don't think that, but how the hell can I trust that this is real when you've lied to me about so much?" he asked desperately.

"Because I'm falling for you, you berk!" Tonks shouted and they both went still as statues.

"What?" Harry asked, deeply impressive, with himself that his voice didn't squeak just then.

"I...I'm falling in love with you," Tonks stuttered, simultaneously paling and blushing as she realized what she'd let slip. "You're not the only one who's never felt this way befo..."

He was on her in an instant, capturing her lips with his own and pouring all the feelings he couldn't hope to express in words into the passionate kiss. The raw hurt from the day, desperate hope that he

could truly trust her, and unspoken love he'd been feeling grow within him for months now radiated from him as their tongues dueled for dominance in their mouths and she walked back, grunting as her arse hit the wall. He'd nearly said it the first time they had sex weeks ago and had been tempted since, but held himself back for fear that it was too soon and he's both make himself look as young as he was and scare her off.

"Say it again," he nearly begged, whispering in her ear as he broke the kiss.

Tonks cupped his cheeks and pushed him back a little so she could peer into his eyes as she said, "I love you, Harry Potter. Please, trust that."

"I love you too," Harry replied, and she smiled widely before kissing him again.

"Upstairs," Tonks grunted, breaking the kiss only long enough to get the word out.

The two of them continued making out frantically as she led him towards the stairs and up them, each hoping that sex might fix things after their fight. Tonks knew better but hoped that she would assuage his fears anyway and swore that she'd make up for everything. She hated that she'd made him question her at all and promised to herself that she'd be fully open with him in the future.

"What is this place?" Harry asked as they reached the bedroom. "It's clearly empty, but it looks lived in."

"People say it's haunted," Tonks replied, "and most avoid it. My friends and I came out here to investigate and found that it was just a normal place. We fixed it up and even managed to repair some of the broken furniture so we could hang out when we felt like it."

"They're not going to come by, are they?" Harry asked.

"Why? Afraid they might see something?" Tonks asked, grinning as he blushed. "Chiara already knew that we were sneaking off together and would have assumed this was the reason."

"How exactly did she know that?" Harry asked.

"I promise that I'll be an open book with you when it comes to my life and secrets from now on, but some aren't mine to tell," Tonks replied.

"O...kay," Harry replied, frowning his brow.

"Now, do you want to talk about my friends or fuck my brains out?" Tonks replied. "Think very carefully about your answer to this one."

"No need," Harry rumbled, drawing his wand.

He undressed them both with it and kissed her again as she pressed her gorgeous, curvaceous form against him. She fell back onto the bed and pulled him down with her, moaning into his mouth as he immediately started grinding against her. She was as hot as ever but not yet very wet, too bothered by their fight to have become that aroused from the simple heated embrace as they made their way upstairs, and he knew that he had to fix that.

"You're friends are lovely, but you're nuts if you think I could even picture them with you in my arms," Harry rumbled as he nibbled on her earlobe and cupped one of her large, full breasts.

“Oh, I don’t know about that,” Tonks smirked, and before Harry could ask what she meant by that, she transformed into a perfect copy of Chiara.

He jerked back in shock, and she cackled at him, stretching her arms above her head and showing off the other girl’s form. Her hair had grown longer, falling nearly to her shoulders, and turned silver. Her eyes were blue, a color she rarely kept them generally, and her skin had turned paler, as her nose grew slightly longer and her lips less plump. The older Hufflepuff girl was quite pretty, he hadn’t been able to avoid noticing, but seeing her fully nude made it clear just how gorgeous she truly was.

Her breasts were smaller than Tonks generally kept hers, but very perky, capped by two of the palest nipples she’d ever seen. Her belly was flat and toned, and her narrow waist gave way to wide hips that promised a very round arse that was currently pressed against the mattress. Between her legs lay a full, untamed silver bush, quite unlike how Tonks generally kept her pubic hair, and it was as his eyes reached her sex that his brain finally came back online enough for him to close them.

“Dora!” he exclaimed.

“Oh, relax,” Tonks chuckled, her voice sounding like that of the other girl’s for a moment before returning to her own. “You can open them again, stud; I’m me again.”

“Isn’t that...wrong?” Harry asked as he looked at her.

“Chiara doesn’t mind me using her likeness,” Tonks replied. “Girl’s a bit of an exhibitionist, to be honest.”

“I see,” Harry replied and she laughed again at his choice of words.

“You haven’t asked me to turn into anyone else yet, which I really appreciate, by the way,” Tonks smiled. “If you want me to use my powers to change myself a little more in bed than I usually do, I am willing.”

“This isn’t something you’re offering to make me feel better, is it?” Harry couldn’t help but ask.

“Nope,” Tonks replied, popping the p. “That’s what anal’s for.”

Harry choked on his own spit and she giggled.

“I’ve meant to have you bugger me for a while, but you just feel so fucking good in my pussy,” Tonks sighed, and he swore his cock became painfully hard at her words. “How about it, Harry? How’d you like to break in a hole no one else has ever had?”

“Never?” Harry asked.

“Never,” Tonks confirmed. “I’ve never been with anyone else I felt like giving my arse to.”

“You talked about anal that night in the chamber,” Harry pointed out, and she sat up, cupping his cheek and smiling.

“I already knew you were different,” Tonks whispered, kissing him again.

He kneaded her breasts as she dragged him back down, moaning into his mouth again. The pair of them gave into their passion and Harry grunted as Tonks flipped them both over. Pulling back, she slid her body upward along his, letting her breasts brush against his face, and moaned when he captured one of her pebbled nipples with his lips.

“Mmm, just like that,” Tonks sighed, grinding her increasingly wet cunt against his throbbing length. “I’ll take you in here first, get you nice and wet, and then let you plunder my tightest hole.”

“Is there a spell to lubricate you back there?” Harry asked. “If not, I can lick you.”

“Fuck,” Tonks shivered, recalling very well just how bloody good it felt to have him licking her sensitive asshole. It wasn’t as good as when he ate her out, but it still felt lovely. “There are charms, luv, but I wouldn’t say no to that.”

“You never do,” Harry grinned, reaching around and tracing circles around her puckered hole with his finger, making her gasp. “It’s a wonder we didn’t do this sooner, considering how hard you always cum when I play with it.”

“Fuck,” Tonks whimpered. “You were already hot before you became this confident. I’ll have to beat the other girls away with a stick soon.”

“There’s only one I want,” Harry replied, “and why use a stick when you could just hex them?”

“What stick did you think I meant?” Tonks replied, and he snorted. Flipping them over, he shifted down along her body and, fisting his cock, started rubbing the bulbous head between her folds, making her gasp. “Fuck me, Harry.”

“Oh, I will,” Harry grinned, “but you smell fucking delicious, and I want a taste.”

Tonks just whimpered at that and spread her legs wider, more than eager for his talented tongue. Even if he hadn’t been hung like something out of her wildest size queen dreams, his tongue alone would have been enough to keep her coming for more. She quivered with anticipation as she felt him kiss a hot trail down along her toned, flat stomach, and she ran her fingers through his hair, grazing his scalp lightly with her nails. He shivered at that, and she smiled, knowing how much he loved it when she scratched his scalp.

“Mmm, so wet,” Harry sighed, spreading her labia apart and grinning at the wetness running out of her.

“How could I not be?” Tonks grinned.

Harry smiled and kissed her triangle of short pink curls, making her shudder. She went back and forth between making her mound completely bare and growing out a carefully trimmed triangle of hair to crown her sex. He liked it either way, as she always made sure that hair didn’t grow on either side of her pussy, but after seeing the full bush she’d grown while taking on Chiara’s form, he couldn’t help but wonder what that would be like. He’d ask about it another time, though, as in that moment, all he wanted to do was lose himself in her and forget about the difficult day they’d had.

“Oh, fuck!” Tonks sighed as Harry began lapping at her slick folds. “You’re so bloody good at that, even without Parseltongue.”

“I should be after all the practice I’ve gotten,” Harry chuckled, and she just smiled.

“You haven’t complained,” Tonks grinned.

“I never will,” Harry replied.

Not only did Tonks suck his cock almost daily, being every bit as giving a lover as he was, but he’d come to enjoy eating her out. The taste didn’t bother him in the slightest, his jaw didn’t really get too sore or tired anymore, and seeing the raw pleasure on her beautiful face without having to focus at all on holding back his own orgasm was a treat in itself.

He glided his long, dexterous tongue across her pussy, kissing and sucking on her folds periodically as well, and grinned when he felt her soft thighs tighten around his head. He avoided her clit for the time being, something that he generally did to draw things out a bit. When the taut little nub grew longer, though, poking well past its protective hood and bumping against his lips, he chuckled.

“Call me crazy, but I think you might want me to focus on your clit,” he quipped, giving it a firm lick that made her scream and pull it back to its normal size.

“And people say Hermione’s the smart one among you three,” Tonks chuckled, gasping when he sucked gently on her throbbing pearl.

Her grip on his head tightened and she threw her head back, moaning loudly as she soared towards her peak. He had played her body well up to now, teasing her slowly towards her peak, but as much as she liked being teased a little bit, she was too turned on to take that. He alternated between sucking on her clit and licking the nub just the way she liked, and she was soon a whimpering, moaning wreck in his hands.

“Oh, God, don’t stop!” Tonks cried, shaking at how bloody close she was.

Every lick and kiss made her see stars and she was so enthralled by the pleasure that she didn’t even notice he hadn’t started fingering her yet until he pushed two of his thick fingers inside her and she screamed. He curled them upward, seeking her g-spot, and though she didn’t need to anymore, she expanded the sensitive patch inside her cunt anyway, greedy for more.

“Yes, yes, yes!” Tonks cried, her eyes locked onto his.

The suspicion and hurt she’d seen in them earlier had made her feel terrible, and though there were still hints of those emotions in his eyes, they were overshadowed by the lust, hope, and affection and love that she knew was reflected in her own eyes. She whimpered, moaned and cried out in pleasure, and just as she was going to suggest that he lay down she could ride him, she heard a faint hissing sound and her world went white.

“HARRY!” Tonks shrieked at the top of her lungs and Harry grinned as a geyser of fluid erupted from her pussy, drenching his face.

He pulled back, wiping his face as best he could while continuing to pump his fingers in and out of her spasming tunnel, prolonging her orgasm. She writhed and convulsed in pleasure, her eyes rolling back, as it coursed through her, and when it finally ended, she collapsed on her back, panting for breath and staring at the ceiling with glassy eyes and a wide smile. Unable to hold himself back any longer, Harry took a moment to line up with her still fluttering cunt before pushing inside in one long thrust.

“Fuck!” Tonks panted, clinging to him as she felt him fill her up.

Her insides were still quivering, her powers making her vacillate between being tighter and looser than she normally kept herself as she recovered from her orgasm. The feeling of being filled to the brim shocked her back to normal, and she took a moment to mold herself to be a perfect fit for him, grinning as he groaned in pleasure.

“You’re fucking perfect,” Harry moaned as he started fucking her, building up to a steady pace quickly.

He had gotten a lot of practice fucking her over the past several weeks and had proven himself to be as much of a fast learner in the bedroom arts as he was in his magical studies. He had adjusted well to the heavier class schedule that she had suggested back in the summer, as she figured he would. Though he had both her and Hermione to help him, his growing confidence in himself, combined with the greater attention he was paying to his studies, was turning him into one of the top students in his year.

It turned out that goofing off didn’t hold quite as much appeal when he had a girlfriend who rewarded him for excelling by letting him fuck her brains out almost daily.

“You feel so good, baby,” Tonks whimpered, crying out as he hit a spot inside her that made colors go off behind her eyes.

“So do you,” Harry groaned. “You’re heaven itself, Dora.”

She kissed him the tenderness of his words and the love in his eyes, making her heart soar, though as she pulled back, she smirked and said, “You can’t imagine anything feeling better than my pussy, can you?”

“No,” Harry replied, picking up his pace. He was so lost in the pleasure of her that what she was hinting at didn’t even occur to him until she rolled them over and grinned down at him.

Letting her nails rake softly across his increasingly muscular chest, she grabbed his shoulders and started rolling her hips, riding him sensually. She clenched her inner muscles around him each time she rose up along his shaft, milking him hard, only to relax as she descended back down, and his pleased moan made the growing pressure in her core spike.

“You feel that, Harry?” Tonks asked as she squeezed around him again.

“Yes, shit, you’re tight,” Harry grunted, and she giggled.

“Damn right I am,” Tonks smirked. “I should show you what I can do with a ping pong ball sometime.”

Harry barely heard her, too busy enjoying the sublime pleasure of her tight tunnel. As she rode him harder, her massive breasts started to bounce on her chest, and he watched, hypnotized by the sight. She had started keeping them bigger since they started dating, enjoying the way the swelling of her chest never failed to draw his eye, even if she was wearing robes. He wasn’t about to complain and happily reached up to cup and knead the gorgeous mounds.

“Yes!” Tonks moaned as he sat up and brought one of her hard nipples to his lips, sucking on and gently biting it before switching to the other.

Her hips were a blur as she rode him harder and faster, soaring towards her peak. She kept her eyes on him, delighting in the look of pleasure and adoration in them, and just as she felt herself getting close, she let him slip out of her and, as it fell onto his abdomen with a wet plop, she ground herself against him.

“Uh, Dora?” Harry and she giggled.

“Ready for the next part, Harry?” Tonks asked and he shivered in anticipation.

Reaching for her wand, she cast the lubrication charm on herself, wincing at the sudden cold feeling inside her as she was cleaned out and lubed up. She rolled off of him and turned around before crawling over and straddling him, showing off her dripping quim and newly lubricated arsehole. Harry grinned and grasped her arse, digging his fingers into her big, round cheeks.

“You’re so fucking beautiful,” he sighed, letting his hands ghost over her hips and thighs. “Every inch of you is gorgeous.”

“You’re gorgeous too,” Tonks sighed. “Now pick up that massive cock of yours and line it up with my ass. I’ll do the work from there.”

“Luckiest guy in Hogwarts,” Harry mumbled under his breath as he did as she asked and she smiled.

When she felt the thick head of his cock press against her tight asshole, she froze for a second, a touch nervous despite the fact that she really wanted to do this, and then pushed down, groaning as she felt him pop inside. He groaned as well, and she’d have laughed if she wasn’t busy shoving what felt like a fist up her ass. He was so damn big, something that she was very aware of already, but she had underestimated just how much bigger he’d feel back there. Even with her powers, she knew this would be a challenge, and she was really glad for the lubrication.

“Holy fuck, you’re so damn tight,” Harry groaned.

As she continued to push down onto him, he realized that her ass was simultaneously tighter and looser than her pussy. The tight ring of her anus was like a closed fist, almost painfully tight around his shaft, while the rest of her was more overwhelmingly hot than anything else. His grip on her hips tightened, and he watched with rapt attention as she swallowed up inch after inch of his cock.

“You’re part bloody giant,” Tonks swore, her eyes clenched shut as she bounced on him slowly, taking a little more of his cock each time she descended.

“Not as far as I know,” Harry replied through gritted teeth, as she enveloped even more of him inside her molten depths. He couldn’t say that this was better than her pussy per se, but it was definitely incredible, and he hoped that she enjoyed it as much as he did. “Are you okay?”

“It hurts a little, but not much,” Tonks replied. “I managed to loosen myself a little.”

“I didn’t even notice,” Harry chuckled.

When she finally got relatively used to him, she decided to try taking the rest of it in one slow descent and pushed down, almost crying out in triumph when she finally felt his hips against her arse. She had done it; she had taken the biggest cock she’d ever seen inside all three of her holes,

and she laughed at the accomplishment only to moan when Harry sat up and started kissing her neck.

“Take as long as you need to get used to me,” he whispered in her ear, wrapping his arms around her. “Just being inside your hot little ass is amazing.”

“Lay back, stud,” Tonks purred. “I want you watch me bounce on your cock.”

As he did so, she braced herself on his legs and rose up along his shaft, shuddering at the feeling of him moving within her, only to push back down. She set a gentle pace to start with, allowing both of them to get used to what was very new to both of them. Harry groaned in pleasure, and she quickly got a sense that he wasn't going to last quite as long like this. His staying power had improved a lot since they first had sex, but he was still rather new to it, and anal was quite different. It wasn't quite as good for her, as her ass wasn't as sensitive to pleasure as her pussy, but the sheer taboo of it, combined with Harry's sexy groans and how bloody full she felt, was really nice, and she could still rub her clit.

“Fucking hell, I wish you could see how stretched you look right now,” Harry grinned, knowing full well how much she got on his size.

“Really?” Tonks asked, feeling her pussy flutter at the idea.

“Oh yeah,” Harry replied. “If you weren't you, I'd fear you might never close back up.”

“Fuck,” Tonks whimpered, rubbing her clit in tight little circles.

“You like that?” he asked through gritted teeth as he felt his orgasm fast approaching. “You like the idea of being fucked loose by my big, fat cock?”

“Merlin,” Tonks whimpered, only to scream as she spanked her ass.

He would have made a comment about not wanting to hear another man's name on her lips, as she'd enjoyed that sense of possessiveness in the bed before, but spanking her made her squeeze around him involuntarily, and he groaned at the tightness. When he felt like he wasn't going to hold on much longer, he pulled Tonks back against him and rolled them over, his hips not slowing at all as he continued to pound her. She pushed herself up onto her hands and knees and nearly screamed when she felt him reach under her and start rubbing her clit.

“I'm gonna cum,” Harry groaned in her ear, and she whimpered.

“Do it,” Tonks moaned. “Cum in my ass, baby. Fill me up.”

“Not until you do,” Harry replied, barely holding on.

He cupped one of her swinging breasts under her and kneaded the sensitive mound as he leaned forward and started kissing and nipping at her pulse point.

“Fuck!” Tonks cried, gripping the sheets under her until her knuckles turned white. “Harder!”

Harry picked up his pace, fucking her hard and fast, and his eyes nearly crossed when she started throwing her ass back against him, matching his rhythm perfectly. The wet sound of flesh slapping flesh filled the room, drowned out only by Tonks' screams, and when Harry changed his angle

slightly and managed to brush against a sensitive spot inside her through the thin barrier between her pussy and arse, she shrieked.

“Right there!” Tonks screamed, shifting her inside around to make it easier for him to hit that spot again and again. “More, more, more!”

“Cum for me,” Harry almost begged, barely holding back his orgasm at all by that point. “Fuck, Dora, I’m so close.”

“Just a little more, just a little more, please,” Tonks begged, her whole body flushing a crimson red as she felt what she knew was going to be an extraordinary orgasm building inside her rapidly. “I’m gonna...gonna...HARRY!”

She squealed as she came, squirting for the second time that day, and Harry let go the second he felt her start to spasm around him. Her ass was vice-tight already, but as she convulsed in pleasure, it became almost too tight to move. He came hard, filling her bowels with rope after thick rope of cum, and barely managed to catch himself on his forearms as he fell forward. The two of them writhed together, riding out the highs of their titanic climaxes, and fell together in a heap as they ended. Harry managed to roll them onto their sides and pull her sweaty back against his chest, clinging to her like she was the most precious thing in the world.

“That was...cosmic...” he panted, unsure if he’d ever cum that hard in his life. When all he heard in response was sniffing and whimpering, he furrowed his brow in concern and looked over, only to find her crying. “Dora? Are you okay?”

She nodded, and he pulled his softening length from her ass before rolling onto his back and pulling her over. She continued to weep as she settled on his chest, and he wrapped his arms around her, running his fingers through her hair, trusting her to speak when she could. Her hair was still a bright pink, so he assumed she wasn’t unhappy or hurt, and he smiled as she grew it out so he had more to run his fingers through.

“Fuck me, that was amazing,” Tonks sighed when she’d finally calmed down. “Sorry for crying like a bitch; you just made my soul leave my body for a second.”

“Does that make my cock a killing curse?” Harry asked, making her snort and slap his chest.

“I’m sorry I didn’t fess up about Sirius and everything else sooner,” Tonks sighed, and he kissed her softly.

“I’m still not happy about any of that, but I understand,” Harry replied. “You don’t have any other big secrets I should know, right?”

“None about me,” Tonks replied, and he recalled what she’d said earlier about her friend Chiara.

Given the fact that she’d shown him what the silver-haired girl looked like naked and let him know that she was into having her show her off, he wondered what kind of secret the older girl could have that would top that. Figuring that he’d find out in time, if he got to know her well enough, she let it go and kissed her again.

“Do you want to head back to the pub?” Tonks asked. “Not yet, of course, because we should shower and I can’t feel my legs at all, but soon?”

“Yeah,” Harry replied, kissing her forehead and feeling his heart soar as she smiled at him. “Wait, there’s a functioning bathroom here too? Who owns this place?”

“No clue,” Tonks replied, “but it’s both abandoned and fully usable.”

“Well, we certainly made it live up to its name,” Harry quipped, and she barked a laugh before lying her head back on his chest.

In truth, he was still annoyed over what she’d kept from him, but his initial fears had been assuaged somewhat. He hadn’t believed for a moment that she was working with Sirius Black, but the idea that she might have just been using him had played upon his insecurities and made him doubt. Seeing the genuine adoration in her purple eyes as she told him she loved him, though, not to mention the way they lit up when he replied in kind, had helped. He’d be a little tense for a bit, but he did trust her despite everything, and as he lay there, cuddling with her as the two of them basked in the afterglow, he recalled what day it was and paused.

“Getting into a fight with Tonks wasn’t fun, but I’ve had worse Halloweens,” he thought to himself, wincing as he realized how stupid he was to let that thought cross his mind.

“So that’s not going to be that regular a thing,” Tonks muttered as she limped next to him.

“I’d apologize, but…” Harry went to reply only for her to cut him off.

“Don’t you dare,” Tonks grinned. “A limp and needing to sit on a pillow for the next couple days is a small price to pay for cumming that hard.”

Bark!

The two of them whipped around at that, and their jaws dropped at what they saw. Standing on the edge of the woods outside the village, staring up at Harry with an oddly proud look on his face was, unless he was mistaken, the large black dog that he’d seen at Private Drive during the summer.

“Holy shit!” Harry exclaimed as the dog padded over to him. “Dora, it’s that dog. Hi, boy.”

He knelt down and let the dog sniff his hand before scratching him behind the ears, earning very happy-sounding pants from him.

“You’re looking better,” Harry smiled. “Sorry, buddy, but I don’t have any more bolognese sauce, but I’m sure the house elves could whip up…”

“*Stupefy!*” Tonks hissed and a moment later a red beam of light hit the dog right in his left flank.

“Dora, what the hell?!” Harry exclaimed, glaring at her, only to pause as he saw how white her hair had gone. “Dora?”

“Harry, open the door to the shack, and then open the door next to the stairs,” Tonks instructed as she levitated the stunned dog. “I’ll explain in a minute.”

Harry nodded and did so, and as he opened the second door, he saw that it went down to the basement. He went downstairs, followed closely by Tonks and the dog, and as he looked around the

room, he found it bare, with odd claw marks on the walls. Tonks conjured heavy metal spikes in the walls and pulled manacled chains from her pouch to hang from them. As she started tightening the manacles around the dog's front paws, she finally spoke.

"I had an opportunity over the summer to listen to a lecture from one of the most famous aurors in the country," she began. "He spent the whole time seemingly convinced that the organizers were plotting against him and seemed to think that the whole thing had been a trap, but a number of things he said were really fascinating. He said that the most important thing an auror can possess is situational awareness, and that practicing constant vigilance is often the difference between living and being killed in their line of work."

"What does this have to do with this dog, and will those manacles even hold?" Harry asked, figuring that his paws could slip out with ease.

"I enchanted them to keep him from moving his arms at all," Tonks replied. "They were something I created for my runes O.W.L. As for your other question, constant vigilance is the difference between thinking that this might just be a dog who followed you all the way from bloody Surrey to the Highlands of Scotland because you're a really good cook and thinking that something else might just be afoot. Moody, the auror who gave that lecture, said something else that I didn't even consider before now. Dementors are nightmares for humans to deal with, but they have little effect on animals. You'd expect dogs to go bloody nuts over them, but they usually don't, and the wretched creatures don't seem to even notice animals."

"Still not quite getting it," Harry prodded.

"Sirius Black did the impossible," Tonks continued. "He escaped from a prison no one has ever escaped from before, and no one knows how he did it. The Dementors should have chased him down the second he got out of his cell, and the idea of him managing to swim to shore while being hunted by the soul-suckers is ludicrous, but they found no body. What if the reason for that was because he was an animal? *Enervate!*"

"An animagus?" Harry breathed, his wand flying into his hand as he stared down at the dog in shock.

The dog howled in protest, staring at Harry and whining pitifully, but he couldn't move past the chains and couldn't pull his paws from the manacles at all, as Tonks had said. A boom sounded from the metamorphmagus' wand, and the dog went still and silent, staring up at her in fear.

"Listen to me," Tonks hissed, her voice as deadly serious as Harry had ever heard before. "I know what you are; I know who you are, and I have questions. Transform, and we can speak, or I can hand you over to Dumbledore now."

As Harry watched in muted shock and horror, the dog transformed, going from the shape of a grim to that of a very haggard-looking man, dressed in rags. From his wild black hair and beard to his crazed grey eyes and pale skin, there was no mistaking who the man was, and Harry's grip on his wand tightened.

"Sirius Black," he growled, and the man had the nerve to look right at him.

"Hello, Harry," Sirius sighed.