Nymphadora's Beau
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Summary

In the summer prior to fifth year, Andromeda Tonks finds out her daughter Nymphadora has set her sights on Remus Lupin. She's not happy with this, and tricks Tonks into going for Harry Potter instead. What starts out as a way to "get back" at her parents, turns into an uncommon romance...

Notes

Canon until the start of Book 5 'Order of the Phoenix'.
Chapter 1

Andromeda Tonks, “Droma” to close friends, walked through Knockturn Alley with her shopping bag in hand. Despite the alley's deserved seedy reputation, the shops there were simply the best place to get some of the more rare potions ingredients, and as a Slytherin alumnus (and bearing a very close resemblance to her deranged sister Bellatrix), nobody bothered her. Nearing the exit leading to Diagon Alley, she accidentally bumped into someone.

“Pardon me – oh it's you Nymphadora!” Andromeda smiled as she recognised her daughter, clad in Auror gear, standing watch.

“Muuuum, don't call me that!” the young Auror complained. “Not a word Perkins, unless you want your knees to face backwards,” she bit off to her partner, who was sniggering.

“Good day madam Tonks,” Perkins greeted Andromeda, and she gave him a nod in return before inspecting her daughter.

“You look well Nymphadora dear. It's been a while since your father and I last saw you, why don't you come over tonight? You can bring your beau, that Boyce fellow wasn't it?” Nymphadora had a... troublesome dating history. She liked to go for the 'bad boys', and after her tumultuous affair with Charley Weasley had broken off following his graduation, she had dated several other young man. The last one Andromeda knew about was Gerald Boyce, one of Nymphadora's fellow Aurors.

“We're no longer together,” Nym said in clipped tones. “And mum, please call me Tonks?” The last was asked with puppy dog eyes – literal in her metamorphmagus' daughter's case.

“Nonsense dear, Nymphadora is perfectly fine name. Very well then I must be off, I'll expect you for supper around six dear!” Shooting a smile at having annoyed her daughter – teasing was a long standing Black family tradition – Andromeda Tonks continued on in the main shopping alley.

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“It's a shame you're no longer with Gerald, he was a fine young man. I liked him a lot,” Theodore 'Ted' Tonks commented to his only child. The Tonks were sitting in the kitchen, having just finished the light evening meal.

'Exactly why I dumped him,’ Nym thought to herself. She forced a light smile on her face, “It just
wouldn't work out daddy. Gerald was so... boring.”

“Boring? But Nymphadora dearie, didn't you say you were attracted to him at first because he rode one of those Muggle motoric bicycle things?” Andromeda added.

“Motorcycle mum,” Nym rolled her eyes dramatically, “and yes he does ride one, but otherwise he was as boring as you folks.” Realising what she just said, she flushed, “No offense intended mum, dad.”

“That's all right dear, I'll be the first to admit I like the easy life,” Ted laughed. “So, got your eyes on someone new then?”

“Maybe...” Nym smiled. “With the Order stuff and all I've been hanging with Remus a lot...”

“Remus Lupin?” Andromeda sounded surprised. “I remember him from Hogwarts, he was an adorable little Gryffie. I heard he grew up to be a fine young man, despite his... problem.”

Nym stared at her mother with wide eyes. “His... problem?”

“Oh yes dear, we Prefects all knew Remus Lupin was a werewolf. Just in case, you know. I heard he was a teacher at Hogwarts two years ago? I must say, I'm glad you're finally setting your eyes on someone with a little stability.”

“But... but... so you approve of Remus and I?” Nym squaked out. This was not as she expected! She was sure her mother would hate the idea of her girl with an older man, and a werewolf to boot!

“Oh definitely,” Andromeda answered her. “In fact, why don't you invite him over for dinner here soon? Ted and I would love to have a chat with him.”

“Right you are Droma,” Ted smiled at his wife.

Nym sat there fuming a bit, then soon after made excuses to leave. Just before she went to the back door to apparate away, her mother called her back for a final chat.
“Nymphadora, I am so happy you're thinking about settling down. For a moment I was afraid you'd do something stupid like trying to hook up with that Potter boy.”

“Potter?” Nym's mouth dropped in surprise. “Harry Potter?”

“Yes, him,” Andromeda nodded. “With you watching him at those awful Muggles he's staying at, your father and I were afraid you'd set your eyes on him. I can't tell you how much of a relief it is that you've decided to go for a mature, respectable older man instead.”

“I... I see mum. So you'd definitely not like me to be with Ha– someone younger than I?” Nym carefully asked.

“Well a younger man... boy even is scandalous of course, but on top of that, someone as troublesome as the Boy-Who-Lived? Nymphadora Drusella Tonks, you stay far away from him!” Andromeda glared at her daughter. “Now off you go. I expect to see you and your new beau for dinner some time in the coming month. Give Remus my greetings when you see him, ta!”

And with that, she more or less pushed her daughter out the back door.

Nym stood outside a bit, fuming. ‘If mum thinks she can tell me who to date, she's got another thing coming! Let's see... I’ve got guard duty at the Dursley home tomorrow from four p.m. until nightfall... and Dung has the shift after me. I bet he'd be happy to let me take over, that'll give me until late the next morning to work on Harry. He has filled out nicely, and I'm sure he'll appreciate an older woman helping him “cope” with the stress...’

Nym focused, and increased her bust size just a bit, so her shirt strained nicely. ‘I think I'll “forget” my bra tomorrow... oh yes Harry, you're gonna be mine!’

And a loud crack signalled Nym apparated away to her own appartment.

“Think she fell for it Droma?” Ted embraced his wife from behind. They were standing near the back window, and had been watching their daughter pace about.

“I hope so Teddy, really Remus Lupin of all people? I don't understand what my daughter is thinking half the time. That... man... is a cowardly slacker, and would probably try to run out on her if she let herself get knocked up by him!

“No, Harry is a much better prospect, despite his young age from what I heard he is very mature. If anyone can ground our little wildcat, it will be him.”

“Poor boy won't know what's coming,” Ted smirked.
Chapter 2

One of the first things any Auror learned was never to go into a new situation unprepared, or as their most hard-core instructor put it: CONSTANT VIGILANCE!

Therefore Nymphadora Call-Me-That-Again-And-I-Hex-You Tonks made her way to the Black Town Home at Grimauld Place early the next day.
“Wotcher all, it's your favourite –” suddenly the troll-leg umbrella stand, which Nym swore had been standing on the left side of the door only two days before, was in her path, and she tripped over it.
“Oh bollocks!” Nym crashed against the curtain hiding the painting of her evil grandaunt Walburga.

The painting took in Nym, and began screaming: “Filth! Blood traitors! Half-blood scum! Kreacher, take out the trash!”

“Dammit who set her off?” Sirius' voice sounded, as he ran into the hallway. “Hey Nymmie. Go on in, I'll silence the old hag.”

“Worthless traitor! Disappointment to the House of Black!” the painting changed its ire to Sirius. Nym glared at her first cousin once removed for use of the name, and walked into the relatively quiet kitchen which doubled as the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix.

“Wotcher Remus,” Nym greeted the werewolf. She looked him over critically... Remus was wearing old and slightly torn clothes, but still very respectable ones. 'No wonder mum has no objections to him, he looks like my dad like that!' Nym reasoned, mentally putting Remus in the 'friend zone'. How had she ever thought she could get into a relationship with someone who dressed like they were fifty – or from the fifties even?

“Oh hello Tonks,” Remus looked up from his newspaper. “What brings you here? Don't you have Auror duties before your shift at Privet Drive?”

“I took an unpaid vacation,” Nym replied, opening the fridge. “With Fudgy Wudgy pretending the big noseless one is not out there there's little to do for us Aurors anyway so Bonesie didn't mind.” She pulled out a carton of milk, and raised it to drink from it.

“Oh no you don't!” Molly Weasley placed her arm on Nym's, preventing her from actually
drinking. “You can take a glass like the rest of us civilized folk, Nymphadora.”

Nym glared at the Weasley matriarch. “It's Tonks! How many times do I have to tell you lot?”

“No need to get upset dear,” Molly took the milk, and poured a glass for the young Auror. “Here you go. Drink up dear, you can use the vitamins.”

Nym glowered at the obnoxious woman, but drank her milk as Molly started berating Remus for leaving an ink smudge from the paper on her table. Meanwhile Sirius came back in.

“Merlin, my mother is even more annoying as a painting than she was in life. So Nympha – Ack!”

Nym interrupted him by sending a wordless stinging hex his way.

“Err... hey Tonksie,” Sirius sheepishly amended. “Not that I mind seeing my only sane relatives, but what brings my little cousin here today?”

Nym enlarged her chest, until she had DDs. “Little? I'll show you little,” she grinned. “Anyway I'm here to check on the schedule for Harry Watch, and check up on everyone here. Is Molly's brood upstairs?”

“Schedule is on the board,” Sirius indicated a cork board next to the fridge. “And yeah, they're upstairs doing god knows what. Hermione is also here – Hermione Granger that is, Ron and Harry's best friend – she's reading in the library.”

“Sirius, what were you thinking letting that girl in the library by herself? Don't you realise how dangerous the books in there can be?” Mount Molly exploded over the hapless prison escapee. Nym decreased her breast size to what it was before – still a nice and full C – and inspected the schedule.

July 10th midnight to 8am Sturgis P.
8am to 4pm Kingsley S.
4pm to midnight N. Tonks

July 11th midnight to 8am Mundungus F.
8am to 4pm Remus L.
4pm to midnight Arthur W.
“Hey Remus, do you mind if I take your shift tomorrow?” Nym called over the din of Molly berating Sirius for being irresponsible.

“Harry watch? No I don't mind, why though?” Remus didn't look up from his paper.

“I've got nothing better to do,” Nym lied. “Might as well babysit the Chosen One.”

“Sure, fine with me,” Remus sounded relieved. “It's a full moon on the 12th so I can definitely use the rest. I'll take one of your shifts some other day.”

“Thanks wolfie,” Nym grinned, thinking to herself: 'Score! That gives me a full day to work on Harrykins!’

“If anyone needs me, I'm gonna chat with the kiddos a bit okay?”

“Fine with me,” Remus nodded. Molly and Sirius didn't seem to hear her over their fight.

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Nym entered the Black Library, and immediately saw her target sitting there. Hermione Granger sat curled up on a large chaisse longue, her legs wrapped below her and a pile of old musky books on the adjacent coffee table.

“Wotcher Hermione,” Nym greeted her, taking a seat in one of the sofas.

“Mmm mmm,” Hermione answered, not stopping her reading.

“Whatcha' reading there?” Nym bent closer to see the title. “Invoking Eros: Sex-based Rituals Through the Ages?”

“Whaaaat?” Hermione squeaked, her face rushing to a full blush, as she dropped the book. “No! It's... it's just for study!”

“That's all good,” Nym grinned. Wow was the girl easily flustered! “Hey now that I've got your attention, I wanted to ask you some things about Harry.”
“Harry? Why?” Hermione was still blushing.

“Oh, just out of interest. I'm stuck on Harry watch in a few hours, so maybe you can tell me a bit about what kind of boy he really is?”

“Tonks, you know Professor Dumbledore said we're not to contact him. He needs time to cope with Cedric's death,” Hermione chastised the older girl.

Nym frowned in distaste. And this was supposed to be his best friend? *Let him cope with death all by himself, oh yes that's what every boy who got into a traumatic event needs, brilliant decision Granger.*

Plastering on a fake smile, she interrupted Hermione's mini-lecture: “No worries Hermione, I know what the Headmaster's orders are. But you can still tell me about Harry right? What kind of things is he in to?”

“Erm... Quidditch I guess,” Hermione mused. “Oh and chess, but that's only with Ron. Really, other than flying he doesn't seem to do much outside of school.”

“I see,” Nym frowned again. This was his best friend? “And what girls is Harry in to?”

“Girls?” Hermione looked baffled for a moment. “Oh... er... I guess... Asian ones?”

“Asian?” Nym was genuinely confused. “How that?”

“Well, he had a little crush on Cho – Cho Chang, Cedric's girlfriend, she's Chinese – before the ball, and he eventually asked out Parvati Patil, and she's Indian. Can't think of anyone else really.”

“Thanks Hermione, you've been a big help,” Nym put on a fake smile. “I'll let you get back to your smut.”

Hermione blushed again, and hid behind the book. Nym left the library.
“Wotcher Ron, Ginny,” she greeted the younger Weasleys. Ron was beating Ginny in a chess match, which neither seemed to pay much attention to. Ginny was reading a copy of Witch's Weekly at the same time, and Ron was eating a sandwich.

“Hi Tonks,” Ginny smiled at the Auror. Nym smiled back. She liked the young ginger, the girl had spirit.

“Hey I've got Harry Watch in a few, can you tell me a bit about him?”

“Mmmhwa mmmwhw mmmwhw?” Ron spoke with his mouth full. Both Ginny and Nym looked away in disgust.

“Chew before you speak you Neanderthal,” Ginny bit at him. To Nym: “If you want to get to know Harry, first thing to remember is that he's nothing like the Boy-Who-Lived legend. And don't buy into the crap in the papers either. Harry's selflessly brave, determined, and loyal to the end, but at the same time can be a bit of a moody git,” Ginny said with a smile. “It took me until the ball to get over my crush on him, but I now realise we really have little in common except for Quidditch.”

“He's rich,” Ron added. “And he hates Slytherins. And Potions. Oh, and Snape.”

“Thank you Ron,” Ginny rolled her eyes. “I'm giving up, you've won this game,” she turned over her king. As Ron beamed at his victory, Ginny stood up. “Tonks, can you come with me for a sec?”

Nym followed Ginny out of Ron's bedroom, and into the girl's room. Ginny closed the door, then pulled out a letter from her trunk. “Can you give this to Harry please? I know the Headmaster has ordered us not to write back to him, but you should see the letters he sent us! He's going crazy there, and thinks we've all forgotten him!” Pleadingly, she held it out to Tonks.

“I'll hand it to him, promise,” Nym assured the younger girl. “Hey Gin... are you really over your crush on him?”

“Oh, definitely,” Ginny nodded. “Harry's nice and all, but I don't think he's the one for me... don't let mum hear that though. She has it in her mind that I'm to marry Harry one day, and Ron marry
Hermione, so we can be one big family...

“Ron and Hermione? Wow... talk about your bad matches,” Nym said, surprised.

“No kidding. Anyway I'm sure Harry can find a nice girl other than me.”

“So what kind of girl is Harry in to then?”

Ginny sat on her bed, and thought. “I think... Harry just wants someone he can relate to. That's why he wanted to ask out Cho to the Ball last Christmas, since they're both Quidditch Seekers.”

Nym's face dropped a bit. Not seeing this, Ginny went on: “And I guess why he ended up asking Parvati. They're both Gryffs... although I doubt she'll give him another chance after the way he ignored her at the ball. I told you he can be a mopy git,” she added without venom.

“So you think he could go for any girl then, if he got to know her?”

“Probably,” Ginny shrugged. “As long as they remember to think of him as Harry, and not some fairy tale prince Boy-Who-Lived. That's a lesson I learned a little late I guess. “I think the most important thing is that you never should lie to him. Harry will forgive a lot of things, but he doesn't forget... Ron is too dense to see it, but Harry was really hurt when Ron abandoned him last year, and I doubt they'll ever be as close again as they were before.”

“Thanks Gin, you've been a huge help,” Nym hugged the younger girl. A little surprised, Ginny hugged back.

As Nym got up to leave, Ginny spoke up: “Make him happy for me okay?”
Nym froze, and turned back, wondering how much of her plans the younger girl guessed, but Ginny had started reading her magazine again.

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At a quarter to four, Nym apparated to a back alley near Privet drive, and imitated a bird call. Two minutes later the big black bald head of her colleague and fellow Order Member Kingsley Shacklebolt appeared from under the hood of an Invisibility Cloak.

“Password,” he asked her. Nym didn't need to see his body to know he'd have his wand trained on
her.

“Rebirth,” she gave the correct one for the day, and Kingsley relaxed.

“You're early. Not much going on, the Dursleys are on holiday with Vernon's sister apparently.”

“Harry isn't here?!”

“Oh no, they left him behind alone,” Kingsley said with a frown. “Not that the kid's been doing much, he hasn't come downstairs all day. I've seen that owl of his fly in and out the window though so he's probably up there.”
Kingsley took off the rest of the cloak, and handed it to Nym.
“You set for the night? Doubt the kid will be trouble, but you never know.”

“I'm good Shack, thanks,” Nym said, concern in her voice. That didn't sound like a normal teen to her, brooding or not. “I'll head on over there now, you go home to the missus.”

“Hah! The kneazle you mean,” Kingsley let out a small laugh. “Take care Tonks, see you later.”
He apparated away, and Nym disguised herself with the cloak, then went to the Dursley home.

It was as quiet as Kingsley had said, nothing going on in the sleepy street except for the usual nosey neighbours. Nym cast a 'Homenum Revelio' on the house, which indicated a single presence in one of the upstairs rooms.
’Harry, what have you been doing?’
Nym sneaked in the back door with a silent unlocking charm, then crept up the stairs. She took off the cloak in front of the door to Harry's room. ‘So many locks, and a cat flap? Weird. I thought Hedwig was the only pet in the home?’
Slowly, she knocked on the door. “Harry? Can I come in?”

Quick as lightning, the door was pushed open, nearly hitting her. Nym took a quick step back to avoid getting the door in her face, but was bowled over from the impact of someone jumping on her. Next thing she knew, she had a boxer-clad Harry Potter sitting on top of her chest, his wand nearly pushed against her head.

“Wo... wotchey Harry,” Nym stammered. “I... I'm from the Order.”

“What Order? How did you get in here?” Harry looked dangerous, she thought. ’Very hot as well,’ a
Or... Order of the Phoenix. I'm with Dumbledore!” she squeaked out, as Harry's wand tip seemed to be glowing.

“You're with Dumbledore? You're a witch?” Harry raised his wand a bit, and looked at her critically.

“Y– yeah... I'm a friend. You wouldn't hurt a little girl like me would you?” Nym morphed her face so she had cat-like features, causing Harry to startle.

“Oh... sorry,” he sheepishly said. “I... I wasn't expecting company you see. At least, not this kind. How... how did you change your face like that?”

“I'll gladly tell you, as soon as you stop squishing my tits,” Nym dead-panned, changing her face back to normal. “Unless you like that kind of thing, in which case I'd prefer it if we made it into your bedroom first.”

This time Harry yelped, and he got off her quickly, then sheepishly gave her a hand to get back up to her feet. “Sorry, I... I wasn't thinking,” he tried to look anywhere but at her. Nym took advantage of his avoiding her by increasing her bust size a little more.

“No need to apologize Harry, it's good you're trying to protect yourself. Might be more intimidating if you put on some clothes first though,” she sniggered.

Harry looked down, and paled as he realised he was only wearing oversized boxers. “Eep!” He darted back in his bedroom, and disappeared out of sight. “I'll be right outside! Err... wait please?” Not waiting for an answer, he closed the door on her.

Okay Harry,” Nym secretly cast a spell that replicated the effects of Moody's eye, and the wall became semi-transparent, giving her a clear view of the Boy-Who-Lived as he stood there, breathing hard. Nym dropped her gaze down a bit, and realised that not just his breath was hard... ‘Impressive for his age,’ she licked her lips as Harry got out of the boxers he was apparently using as sleeping clothes, and dressed in fresh underwear, and other clothes. ‘Tonks, you hit the jackpot this time,’ Nym mentally congratulated herself, admiring his toned Quidditch-muscled torso. The various scars on his back worried her though, those looked awfully
much like belt straps.

A little later, the door opened, and she quickly cast the counter-spell. Using her metamorphmagic abilities to hide the blush from her face, she stretched just as Harry opened the door, making him come face-to-face with her chest.

“Woah...” Harry mumbled, but Nym picked it up.

“Hey again Harry. So, since I was so rudely interrupted before,” she shot him a grin to make it clear she was not serious, “I'm Tonks, and I'm with the Order of the Phoenix. I'm here for you.”

“Err...” Harry shook his head to clear his senses. “Err... hi Tonks. You're here for me?” His voice cracked a bit at the last word.

“Maybe we can go into your room to talk?” Nym suggested. “Unless you like standing in the hallway, I can be flexible.” ‘Score! He was staring at my chest at that,’ she congratulated herself once more.

“Err... okay... it's a bit of a mess though,” Harry stammered. Nym pushed past him, and took in the room for real this time.

“Oh, that won't do,” she frowned. She waved her wand, and the desk was repaired, and the bed changed to something that looked closer to one of the beds in the Hogwarts dorms.

“You can't use magic here! I'll get a warning!” Harry yelled out as he saw her cast spells.

“Don't be silly Harry, that's not how the trace works,” Nym corrected him... only to stare in amazement as a screech owl flew in the window and dropped a roll of parchment on the newly expanded bed.

“Huh?” Nym picked up the letter, which read:

Dear Mr Potter,

We have received intelligence that you performed a Reparo spell as well as performed advanced transfiguration at sixteen minutes past four this day in a Muggle-inhabited area.

This is a breach of the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery as per Section 13 of the International Confederation of Warlock's Statute of Secrecy. As this is your second official warning, your presence is required at a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Magic at 9
a.m. on the fourteenth of July.

Hoping you are well,

Yours sincerely,

Mafalda Hopkirk

Improper Use of Magic Office

Ministry of Magic

Harry had been reading over her shoulder, and paled.
“That’s really weird, the trace is really not supposed to work that way,” Nym mused, reading through Harry’s warning from the Ministry again. “It’s only supposed to react to your wand. Why is it picking up my magic as if it’s yours? And a second warning? Someone’s been a bad boy,” she turned to smile at Harry, but found him ashen pale and sitting on the bed.

“Harry, what’s wrong? Talk to me!”

“Second warning... I'll be expelled for sure!” Harry nearly panicked.

“Harry, listen to me! This is some kind of mistake, I'll fix it!” Nym hugged him, smothering his face in her ample chest. Fortunately this worked – Harry stopped struggling and hyper ventilating, and seemed to calm down.

“Listen Harry, we're going to take care of this right now.”

“But... but Professor Dumbledore said I was to stay here and not have contact with anyone, it was for my own safety?”

“Pish posh that, making sure you're not expelled is more important. I'm an Auror Harry so I know the law. You, mister, are going to sit right there, calm down, and tell me about this first warning while I send off an owl to my boss, understood?”

“Yes ma'am,” Harry said in a small voice, and after a bit of thought told Nym about how Dobby had gotten him a warning before his second year at Hogwarts.
Nym meanwhile was writing a letter on some parchment she had with her.

“Okay, got it. Harry, may I use your owl?”

“Sure... her name is Hedwig by the way.”

Nym looked at the beautiful owl, who had flown to the footrest of the bed while Harry was talking. “Oh you are a pretty bird aren't you,” she praised the owl. Hedwig preened under the attention. “Can you take this letter to the Ministry, to Madam Bones right now Hedwig? It's important,” Nym asked her.
Hedwig looked over at Harry, who nodded. With a bark, she accepted the letter, and flew off.

“Now what?” Harry asked, still sounding a bit worried.

“I don't know about you, but I can use a shower. Here, I got a letter for you from Ginny,” Nym took it from her pocket. “Why don't you read it while I get lathered up?”

Harry blushed again, accepting the letter.

“If Hedwig comes back, or any other owl, just call for me okay? I'll not be long,” Tonks smiled at the boy, and got off the bed. ‘I am not going to let some filing error ruin my plans for the day,’ she promised herself. The shower trick never fails, and it'll help him get his mind on other things... Tonks, you're a genius!

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Walton Fitzroy had been a guard at the Ministry for Magic for close to ten years, and thought he was used to everything by now, but the sight of an owl flying down the elevator shaft unattended was new to him. He was even more surprised when the owl flew up to him, and landed on his desk. “What's this then? How did you get down here?” Walter reached for the letter attached to the owl's leg, but the owl nipped his hand with her beak.

“Bloody bird,” Walter mumbled, but he could make out the addressee. “For Madam Bones is it? You want to deliver it yourself?”

‘Prek’, the owl answered him.

Walter scratched behind his ear. There was no protocol for this, not that he knew anyway... Ministry post was usually collected elsewhere, and was delivered by low ranking employees throughout the day. “Fine with me I suppose, err... you know the way?”

The owl looked at him as if he was a mouse, and Walter cowered a bit in his chair. “Lift's back there, have a nice day?”

The owl flew off, and Walter stared after it.

Reginald Cattermole was a clerk in the Magical Maintenance Department, or in other words, a janitor. As such he was pretty used to weird sights in the Ministry, but having an owl fly into the open lift and settling on his shoulder was a new one.
“Err... what floor?” He asked the bird, for loss of another question. The bird inspected the plaque with the floors, then barked twice.
“DMLE it is,” Reginald shrugged, pressing the button. The owl looked pleased, and barked a friendly sounding prek.

Amelia Bones was drumming her fingers on her desk slowly, waiting for the clock to go faster. Business was slow, too slow, all thanks to her useless boss. It was not as if there weren't crimes to solve or criminals to arrest, but she was absolutely forbidden from going after any suspected Death Eaters, and no matter how much she hated this, the Law was the Law, and the Minister wrote said Laws.

She looked up in surprise as a snow-white owl landed on her desk.
“Hello, how did you get down here?” She reached for the owl's leg, and took off the letter, addressed to her.
“Hmm, written by Auror Tonks I see. Err... did you want to wait?” she asked the owl, getting a nod in reply.
“Dawlish!” Amelia called one of her subordinates, “go fetch some owl treats and some water.” As the Auror rushed off to comply, Amelia read the letter, a frown appearing on her face and deepening as she read on.

“What the devil is going on with the I.U.M.? Err... wait here please,” she instructed the owl, feeling a little silly as she did so, but the owl apparently understood her.
'Must be someone's familiar... Potter's I bet. No normal owl is that intelligent,' Amelia thought as she rushed to the lifts to go up one floor.

Hedwig patiently waited, preening herself and enjoying the water and owl treats a nervous Auror placed in front of her. A while later Amelia Bones came back to her desk, still looking angry, and she began writing a letter.
“Thanks for waiting,” she spoke to Hedwig after completing it. “Please take this to Auror Tonks.” Hedwig allowed the letter to be tied to her leg, and flew towards the lifts, leaving staring Aurors behind.

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Harry had a small smile on his face as he read Ginny's letter. In it, she apologized for not sending one by owl – apparently Professor Dumbledore had cast a spell on the place she was in that only allowed Hedwig through, and he intercepted all her letters first —, and she also told him a bit about how the summer had went so far. Harry was not happy to learn that Hermione was also at the same place – weird how Ginny never mentioned a name or address – since Hermione hadn't mentioned anything about it. He could understand Ron not saying anything, following the past year he had been reassessing just how good of a 'best mate' the ginger was anyway, but he hadn't expected Hermione to clam down like that.

He also didn't like that Ginny mentioned the Daily Prophet had apparently started a libel campaign against him. Nothing in the papers he had read had even indicated something like that, leading him to the conclusion that not just his mail, but also his news papers were being censored by someone. A certain bearded individual was at the top of Harry's suspect list.
Ginny made up for the bad news though, telling him about the little trivia of the place, how Molly kept them busy cleaning, and that she was looking forward to seeing him soon.

Just as he neared the end of the letter, he hear Tonks' voice call: “Harry! I need your help!”
In no time, the door to the Dursley's bathroom was pulled open, and Harry stood in the door frame, wand in hand... staring directly at a perfectly nude Nymphadora Tonks, with her eyes shut, standing in the shower cabin with the water turned off, and only the shower curtain to hide her body from view... except for a good half of her chest, which 'accidentally' was revealed.
“Oh thank you Harry,” Nym said, pretending not to realise what view she was giving him. “Please, I need a towel, I have soap in my eyes and don't want to open them yet. Can you get me one?”

Harry was lost for words, and turning red in the face as he could not look away. Nym got a small smirk on her face, watching through very slightly opened eye lids, as Harry obviously responded to her.

“I... I'll be right back,” Harry's voice cracked, as he was finally raised from his stupor and rushed to the cabinet where Petunia stored the towels. Taking one, he tried to hand it to Nym while looking away.
“H... here,” he stammered, holding it out with stretched arms and near the Auror's reach.

“Thank you Harry, you're my hero,” Nym said, taking it from his hands, and 'accidentally' brushing her hands over his. “I'll be right out. Close the door please?”

“Err... yes... of course,” Harry stepped back, and closed the door... leaving it ajar, Nym realised much to her amusement, as she spotted his face peaking through the gap. A wide smile on her face, she decided to reward her audience, and opened the curtain, stepping out. Ever so slowly she towelled off, stretching far more than was necessary. Then she wrapped the towel around her, and made it clear she was going for the door.
The footsteps made it clear Harry was rushing towards his room, trying not to get caught. Nym smirked mischievously, as she entered Harry's bedroom, clad only in a slightly too small towel wrapped around her, and sat down on the bed. Harry sat in his desk chair, gaping at her with open mouth.

“Sorry Harry, I didn't realise I had the shower curtain open a bit,” Nym said in a sweet tone. “Hope you didn't accidentally see something?”

“Ack... no... that's fine,” Harry was heavily flushed, his eyes fixed on Mia's décolleté, that was only partially covered by the towel.
“Err... how... how was the shower?”

“Wet and hot, and oh so comfortable,” Nym shot him a wink, causing Harry to fluster even more, and press his legs together hard to hide his reaction from her. Fortunately for him the torture stopped before it began, as Hedwig flew back in the window.

“Letter for me?” Nym asked, and getting a nod in reply, she took it.
“Oh Harry, this is wonderful!” She got up, and pulled Harry into a hug. Forced to rise, Harry couldn't prevent her from pushing his body against hers.
“Madam Bones has frozen your suspension, and is willing to take your testimony in person tomorrow!”
Nym released Harry from the hug, and to his immense relief she sat down on the bed again instead of on his lap. He couldn't help but notice she had her legs spread slightly apart though, and he could just... see...

“Tomorrow!? She's coming here?” Harry tried to focus on anything other than the nearly naked woman in his room. 'Focus Potter... she is an Auror, not interested in you even a little...'

“No silly, I'm taking you over there. I'm here to take care... of.. you, remember?” Nym shot him a smile. A genuine one, she realised exactly where Harry was looking when he thought she didn't notice. 'Hook, line, and sinker, score one more for the shower trick,' Nym beamed.

Harry felt like he was being tortured... but it was almost the exact opposite of the Crucius. “Oh... that's all right then,” he answered, not really paying attention to Nym's words. It took all his willpower not to let out a moan of disappointment as she shifted her position a little, closing her legs.

“I'm wet,” Nym suddenly declared. Harry's eyes went wide as saucers. “Whaa?”
“The towel, silly,” Nym said with a laugh. “Don't go anywhere. I'm going to see if my clothes are dry, then you can cook me dinner.”
Teasing him with by rising ever so slowly, Nym seductively walked to the door. She didn't need to look over her shoulder to know Harry's eyes were fixed on her form as she stepped out.

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Harry's heart was trying to escape his chest as he served up the simple chicken dinner he had prepared for the two of them.

“So Harry, I was meaning to ask... just what were you doing, lying on your bed in your underwear when I came in? Naughty dreams about girls?” Nym sat down to his left at the Dursley dinner table, and her arm brushed against his as she reached for her fork.
“Err... no... I was, erm, sleeping,” Harry admitted. Nym had dressed, but he could easily see the outline of her breasts through the thin fabric of the summer shirt she was wearing.

“Sleeping late eh? Man I'm jealous, my mum never let me,” Nym laughed. “Breast Harry?”

“Whaa?” Harry flustered again, then looked at where Tonks was pointing, her plate. “Errr... yes... chicken breast. And... I'vebeenhavingbaddreamsokay,” he mumbled.

“Sorry Harry, didn't quite catch that,” Nym scooted her chair closer, and their hips were now touching. Harry desperately tried to focus on his plate.
“Haaa reee...” Nym waved a hand in front of his eyes, and Harry looked up sharply.

“I've been having bad dreams okay?! I was in the middle of a bloody nightmare when you knocked on my door, for a minute I thought you were him!”

“Him? Oh Harry...” Nym paled a bit, as she realised Harry meant Voldemort. Dropping her fork on her plate, she embraced him with both her arms.
“I'm so sorry for not realising. But I'm here for you now. Nothing bad can happen to you, Nym is here for you...”

“You... you mean it?” Harry looked up at her face... and Nym lowered her face to his, until their lips met.

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His teachers at Hogwarts, except for one greasy haired vampire wannabe, would all agree that Harry was a quick learner, if he set his mind to it. Had Nym been able to sit in on one of the teacher meetings she would agree, and tell them Harry deserved extra credit.
Of course he was a lousy kisser at first – it was painfully obvious she was his first kiss. But Harry needed only a little instruction before he figured out he could breathe to his nose, and if he froze up when her tongue licked his lips while they were kissing, she definitely could not complain on the speed at which he had learned to not only allow her tongue to enter his mouth, but use his own to almost wrestle hers for dominance.

And the way his arms had wrapped around her, proved to her that Harry could easily have been a chaser, the way he handled her Quaffles...
“Chicken's cold,” Harry mentioned calmly as he swallowed. They had been snogging... no, making out for what seemed to be forever. His lips still tingled, and he swore never to was his left hand again... in the last ten minutes of their make out session, it had somehow made its way inside Nym's tight jeans.

“Let me hero,” Nym smiled at him, and cast a warming charm on their food. “Tastes really good.”

“Glad you like it. I've been cooking dinner since I was six,” Harry answered.

“The food is good as well yes,” Nym grinned. “I meant your kisses, hero.” Harry blushed again.

“Nym...” Harry trailed off.

“I like it when you call me that... but only you, Harry. Everyone else has to call me Tonks,” Nym took his right hand in her left. “I don't know how you did it Mr. Potter, but you have me falling for you hard.”

Harry blushed again. “Nym... what are we going to do now?”

“I could do for some more making out,” Nym suggested. “Then we need to have a little chat I think. Sound good?”

“Very! Very good,” Harry nodded as if he were Dobby.

“Easy there lover boy, I'm not going anywhere,” Nym grinned. She waved her wand, and the dirty plates hovered over to the sink. Another wave, and the dishes and pots were getting magically scrubbed clean.

“Are you sure I won't get into any trouble for that?”

“Positive. Bonesy, I mean Madam Bones, my boss, has made that Hopkirk woman shut your sensor down. It's obvious your trace is malfunctioning somehow, it should not be possible for it to pick up my magic as yours. Let alone a House Elf's. Tomorrow we're looking into that, and we're getting your earlier warning removed at the same time.”

Nym stretched, acutely aware of how Harry's eyes were fixed on her chest again. “Soooo... where do you want me?” She winked, and let her chest expand just a little.
Harry stood there open-mouthed, as Tonks' shirt began to bulge a bit more. “Urhg?”

“What was that Harry? Bedroom? My you are a fast one,” Nym stepped closer to the boy. “Very well then, shall we?”

“Cooch! I mean couch! I want you on the couch!” Harry yelped out.

“You want me? Naughty boy,” Nym teased him further. Giggling, she walked to the living room, and took in the décor. “Modern English Lack of Taste, I see,” she sniffed disapprovingly. “We can do better than that,” a swish of her wand, and the pink-and-cream sofa changed colours to a deep brown and gold, and expanded in size. Alluringly she sat down on the expanded sofa, and beckoned Harry over.

“Come hero, don't be afraid... I don't bite... hard...”

To his credit, Harry didn't hesitate long before sitting down next to her, and the next thing he knew he was lying half over her, kissing deeply.

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Nym was lying half on her back on the sofa, her legs over Harry's lap as he sat next to her. Both their clothes were rumpled, Harry's shirt was pulled up to his arm pit almost on one side, and Nym's pants were unbuttoned, revealing just the top of her panties if one were to look. She had a wide smile on her face as she twirled her wand around. Harry seemed to be stunned again, but had an equally wide smile.

The clock chimed nine times, and Nym sat up. “You with me hero?” She snuggled close to Harry, pulling his right arm around her. Harry's hand automatically found its way to her breast, she noticed with pleasure.

“Wow... that was... bloody amazing,” Harry slowly spoke. Who knew making out could feel so good?

“For me as well hero,” Nym kissed his cheek. “We should talk a bit now.”
“What about?” Harry ever so gently rubbed Nym's right tit through her shirt, enjoying her slight gasp as he started.

“Later, lover boy,” Nym said with a small laugh. “Talk now, play later.” She took the sting out of it by kissing him on the mouth briefly. “I'm apparating you to the Ministry tomorrow morning, for our talk with Bonesie. Something is seriously wrong with your trace, and we need that taken care of. We don't need to give Fudgy any excuse to get you in trouble.”

“Ginny mentioned something like that in her letter,” Harry recalled. “What is going on with the Ministry?”

“Fudge is...” A naughty hand squeezed her breast again. “Stop that Harry, or I'm retaliating,” she grinned. “Fudge doesn't want to accept You-Know-Who is back. He's been slandering you in the press, well you and Dumbledore both, but you most of all.”


“I think he's afraid,” Nym speculated. “By painting you as deranged, they're making sure nobody will take your words seriously. What I don't get, is why Dumbledore doesn't simply use the pensieve evidence to convince the Wizengamot.”

“A pensieve? You mean that bowl thing Dumbledore has in his office?” Harry asked.

“Yup, it could show your memories of that night to the entire Wizengamot, proving You-Know-Who is back... or at least demanding an investigation. I suppose you could use a fake memory instead,” Nym stared off a bit.

“I'm not lying!” Harry shouted out.

“I know hero, but they don't know that necessarily,” Nym soothed him. “That's another reason we're talking with Bonesie tomorrow. You can give her your memory and she can confirm it is a genuine, unaltered memory.”

“But... then she has to read my mind?” Harry shuddered. “I... I don't want that.”
“No honey, she only needs to get that single memory,” Nym kissed him again briefly. “No-one is going to read your mind unless you allow them to, I promise.”
Thinking back on what she had seen through the wall when she first arrived, Nym carefully asked: “Harry... you're not really happy here, are you?” Harry stiffened.
“You don't have to tell me if you don't want to,” Nym quickly added. “But just know that I don't really see why you're staying here... it's not as if you have nowhere to go.”

“I suppose...” Harry started. “I suppose I could go the Burrow.”

“Ya goof,” Nym softly punched him. “What about my place?”

“Your place?” Harry looked at her quizzically. “Nym... what are we exactly?”

“Hot and beautiful, and strong and handsome, respectively?” Nym's grin was spread ear-to-ear.

“Not what I meant, you minx,” Harry grinned back, and squeezed a bit with his right hand.

“That's *it* mister! Payback time!” Nym twisted in his arms, and began tickling him. Soon, hysterical laughter sounded in the Dursley living room, probably for the first time since the house had been built.

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The clock chimed eleven times, and Nym disentangled herself from Harry's arms. Following the tickle match, which she swore she'd won and that wasn't just because she could move her nerves away from the skin surface if she focused, they'd ended up curled in each other's arms again, and began kissing once more.

The only interruption other than bathroom breaks had been when she had sent a Patronus message to Mundungus Fletcher, telling him she'd be taking his shift. She knew from experience Dung was unlikely to show up in the first place, but Sod's law declared that if she would *not* send a message, chances were he'd disturb her fun around midnight and cause problems if she was not outside waiting for him.

“Bed time hero, we should make it an early day tomorrow, just in case.”
“Oh... gotcha,” Harry yawned a bit. “So, will I see you tomorrow then? It's been fun today, more fun than I've ever had in the summer.”


“But where will you sleep?” Harry rushed after her, and found her entering his bedroom. “Nym?”

“Yes Harry?” Nym raised her shirt over her head, thankful for the momentary obscuring of her face, as even her metamorphmagic ability could not prevent a blush. Harry looked on wide-eyed as Nym took off her shirt and threw it on the desk chair, then began wiggling out of her pants. He held his breath as she stripped down until she was only wearing her knickers, and climbed under the cover of his new bed.

“Harry? You coming?”

Harry gulped deeply, and faced away from the bed. Nym watched him strip down to his boxers, and frowned again at the many scars on his back. Then Harry in a practiced move hit the light switch, and ducked under the covers.

“N... Night Nym,” he mumbled, facing away from her as he lay on his side.

“Night hero,” Nym answered back. She placed her wand on the night stand next to her, and lay still, watching his back and shoulder slightly move as he breathed. For over half an hour she just listened to his breathing, until Harry finally fell asleep.
Deep in the night Harry woke up from a feeling he had never felt before. He was hard as a rock – well that wasn't exactly new, but the other feeling was – he was not alone in bed, and in fact felt his arm was trapped under another person's body... a very female person's body. Where exactly was his right hand, and why was it so warm and soft on his knee... Harry took in a deep breath as he realised exactly how he was positioned, or better said, how Nym was draped over him. Slowly he tried to move away from her.

“Harry... please... don't move yet,” Nym's voice came from beside him. Her voice was husky, and she grunted slowly. Harry realised she was moving against him.

“Nym! What are you doing?” Harry half whispered, half spoke.

Nym didn’t reply directly, but her grunts and soft moans increased in pace, until she grunted even louder, and Harry felt her shudder. He, too, went over the edge at that.

“Sleep, baby,” Nym whispered a little later. She had finally moved of his leg, and now half spooned him. He felt her breasts against his back.

“I... I need to visit the bathroom,” Harry said after a moment's pause, then inhaled sharply as a soft hand touched his boxers and gently felt around.

Nym let out a giggle, “is that because of me? I'll take care of it...” Somehow keeping her hand in place, Nym twisted her torso a bit. “Evanesco,” he heard her say the cleaning charm, and with a slight shock realised that not just the mess, but his whole boxers were gone.

“Nym!” Harry breathed, shuddering as her hand came into contact with is most sensitive spot... and gave it a very gentle touch.

“Sleep, hero... we can have more fun later,” Nym giggled.

“I can't sleep like this!”
“Do... do you want me to help you?” Nym's voice sounded different. “Or... do you... want to... do it?”

Harry breathed in sharply, as her soft hand ran up and down.

“I... Nym I never...”

“Ssssh baby... leave it all to me...” Nym kissed him deeply, moving her body onto his. As her hair framed his face, Harry felt no more need to talk after that.

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“I thought I'd feel different, you know?” Harry said to no-one in particular as he took in his room. It was early in he morning, and the July sun was doing its best to warm up the area. It looked to be a hot day. Vaguely Harry recalled hearing on the weather service that July could be record-breaking warm this year if the temperatures kept rising as they had.

“Mmm? Did you say something hero?” Nym was standing near the window, naked as the day she was born, and was looking outside while stretching a bit. For a moment Harry lost his train of thought as he watched her shapely legs and bum. She looked different this morning, her facial structure was the same, but her hair had changed from a pink pixie cut to shoulder-length dark hair. As she turned to face him his gaze spotted to the neat little triangle topping the junction of her legs. Harry felt his face flush.

“After last night, I mean. I thought... I'd feel it somehow,” he voiced his thoughts.

“You were great baby,” Nym stepped away from the window, a wide smile on her face. “I am so happy this morning, I could sing.”

Harry blushed. “Yeah... well yeah, I am happy, but still...”

“Silly man,” she bopped him on the head softly. “We should get dressed, then we can grab a bite to eat in London before Bonesy expects us.”
“We have time, don't we?” Harry said in playful tone, and his grabbing hands managed to pull her on the bed with him.

“Haaaa reeee....” Nym mock-protested, but Harry soon had her on the fully on the covers. Thank Merlin for teenage stamina!’ she thought as she let him push her down.

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“I could watch that all day,” Harry said in a soft tone as he watched Nym bend over to pick up her clothes from last night.

‘Tonksie, you got laid, you got laid good!’ Humming a happy tune, Nym picked up her shirt and pants, and sat on the foot end of the bed – out of reach of those inviting, grabby arms, and began to put on her shirt.

“Hey Nym, I was meaning to ask... you look different this morning.” Harry was making no move to get dressed, content with watching her.

“Oh, I guess I do at that,” Nym shrugged. “You know what a metamorphmagus is hero?”

“Not really.”

“Erm, well... I’m a natural shape shifter. I can change most things about my appearance if I concentrate, although I usually just change the hair like this, see?”

Her luscious black locks disappeared in her skull, and in its place came the pink pixie cut from the day before. Harry sighed a bit, the short cut did fit her, but he loved the way the longer hair had framed her face.

“I can also change the size of these,” she lifted up her breasts, making them just a bit bigger as she held them, “and play a little with my height. Too many changes are hard to hold though, so I usually just do the hair and Quaffles.”

“Quaffles? Oh!” Harry blushed as he realised what she meant.

“Harry, have you seen my knickers?” Nym looked under the bed, not seeing them on the floor.
Harry held them up with a grin, “Maybe. But you'll have to come here to get them.”

“You're not getting me in your bed again mister! Keep them them, souvenir for your first time.” Nym winked, and began to wiggle into her tight pants. “I'll just go without for today. “Now get washed up and dress lover boy, thanks to you we don't have much time left!” Giggling, she went downstairs and searched the kitchen for coffee, but none was to be found. “Heathens, these Dursleys,” she commented out loud.

“Oi Potter, if you don't get your scrawny arse downstairs right now, I'm coming to get ya!” she yelled up a bit later. The shower had stopped running, so Harry was obviously ready.

“Coming, coming!” Harry yelled back. “Or maybe I shouldn't, what are you gonna do to me?” A playful tone entered his voice.

“How would you like a disguise Harry?” Nym yelled back up. “Platinum blonde, like a twin to Malfoy?”

“Evil witch!” Harry ran down the stairs, finding Nym standing there smirking.

“Yes, but your evil witch, ya goof,” Nym gave him a quick peck. “Got your wand?”
Harry nodded, padding his back pocket.

“Idiot,” Tonks said in a soft tone. “Never carry it there, what if you fall and break it? Here, hold out your arm.”
She took out a small strip of leather from one of her pockets, and placed it against his arm, then put her wand tip against it. “Erm, let me see... Engorgio,” Nym spoke. The leather expanded, and guided by her magic became a kind of holster.
“Put your wand in there. This should hold for a few hours, after we get done at the Ministry you can get a real one from Ollivanders. You can get me a gift from Belinda's Baubles while we're there, you're my rich little boy toy after all.”

“Should get you a gag for that mouth of yours,” Harry muttered, but there was no anger in it. Nym heard it, tittered, and embraced him.

“Don't get any ideas mister, this is simply because you never apparated before, I think,” she told him, then Harry felt the most awful sensation as if his entire body was being crushed in a tube, it briefly went dark, and when next they appeared they were in a great underground hall, with fireplaces on all the walls.
“Looking a little green there hero, you okay?” Nym looked at him carefully.
Harry had to hold back the bile rising up in his throat. “Is... is every magical way of transportation so... unpleasant?”

Nym laughed again, “You'll get used to it. Kudos for not spewing hero, most people do the first time they are side-along apparated.
“Welcome to the Ministry of Magic,” she said, doing a mock curtsy. “We're in the atrium now, that's where everyone enters, either by floo,” she indicated the fireplaces through which indeed people were arriving in a steady pace, “with the lift,” she indicated the back wall, where a shaft rose up out of sight, “or by apparition, as we did.”

“Looks... impressive.”

“Does, doesn't it? Now normally you'd have to check in with a guard, but since I'm a super awesome Auror, you get to come with me without all the hassle,” Nym smiled, taking his right hand in her left and pulling him towards the far wall.
“Wotcher Walton,” Nym greeted a guard who was sitting there.

“Hello Tonks,” Walton Fitzroy greeted her. He was looking around a bit nervously. “Err... seen any owls about?”

“Not in here,” Tonks shrugged. “Harry here's with me, okay?”

“Sure, sure,” Walton nodded. “You know the way. Sure you've not seen any owls?”

Nym walked past him, pulling Harry with her into the lift that arrived as soon as they got there. “Walt's a bit... unique,” she explained to Harry. “Good man though.” Harry just shrugged.

“Ahem,” someone cleared her throat theatrically. Nym turned around, and sheepishly said: “Err, wotcher, Madam Bones.”
“Morning Auror Tonks,” Bones said in a dry tone. “And Mr Potter, pleasure to meet you,” she added.

“Pleasure, ma'am,” Harry spoke. Despite how intimidating the woman was, nothing could ruin the great mood he had woken up with.

“As you'll have guessed, I am Madam Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. You may call me Madam Bones, or Madam Director. Let's not use 'Bonesy,'” she glared at Nym, who had the good sense to flinch.
“I wouldn't normally get involved in a case like yours, but someone sent an owl directly to me about it,” another glare at Nym, who tried to half hide behind Harry, “and I agree that the case is a weird one. Now that we're all here, let's go up to Madam Hopkirk's office,” she waved back to the lifts, and followed Nym and Harry into a car.

Going up the one floor took little time, and she preceded them through the hallway to the Improper Use of Magic Office. “To your right is the office of the Minister,” she clarified for Harry's sake, as they took a left. “And here we are, the IUM.” Bones knocked on the door, and stepped through at a yelled “enter!”

Mafalda Hopkirk was a small witch, with scattered grey hair. She looked to be very nervous in the presence of Madam Bones. 
“Oh, Madam Bones! I have been investigating the Tracker all day yesterday following your report, but I just can't find the error!”
She spotted Nym and Harry, “Merlin! It's Harry Potter!”
Harry was flummoxed as the wispy witch rushed towards him, and began shaking his hand. “I am so sorry Mister Potter, just doing my job you see, it's an honour to meet you do, I never believed all the articles in the Prophet, will you sign my copy of 'Harry Potter and the Smallest Giant' ? It's for my niece you see, she is a huge fan, and –”

Madam Bones scraped her throat, and Madam Hopkirk sheepishly dropped Harry's arm. “Right, sorry about that Mister Potter. Erm, may I have your wand?”

Harry looked to Nym who nodded, and he took it out of the holster.

“Auror style holster Mister Potter?” Madam Bones nodded approvingly. “Good to see at least some students know not to keep it in their back pockets. My Susan still does.”
Nym stifled a snigger, which Bones ignored. “Well Mafalda?”
Harry changed his attention to the small witch, who had stuck Harry's wand into a slot in front of a large crystal, and was frowning.

“I don't understand Madam Bones, the trace is on there as it should, set to expire on July 31st of 1997. Everything appears to be in order.”

“Hand Mister Potter his wand back,” Bones suggested, then, “Mister Potter, please cast any spell.”

Harry held out his wand and clearly spoke: “Orchideous!” A bouquet of roses appeared at the tip, which Harry caught, and handed over to Nym without a word. Madam Bones raised the eyebrow of her left eye, the one without a monocle, but didn't further comment.

“Well Mafalda?”

“Checking,” Madam Hopkirk put her wand on the crystal, and intoned, “Report Potter, Harry James.”

Nothing happened. “Most strange,” Madam Bones commented. “Auror Tonks, please side-along Mister Potter to his home, and have him cast another spell, then return here. I'm granting you permission to apparate directly to this office.”

“Yes madam,” Nym nodded. “Harry? Take my hand.” Harry took her hand (back, he had let go to cast the spell), and they popped away, re-appearing in the Dursley living room.

“That went a little better,” Harry looked somewhat less green than when they had apparated to the atrium.

“Told ya you'd get used to it,” Nym answered him, then scoffed him on the head. “Ya goof! Are you trying to get us caught?”

None too intelligently, Harry replied: “Huh?”

Nym placed the roses on the table next to them, “Roses Harry? Very romantic, but hardly the time or place. Now cast something else, so we can get back.”
“Aguamenti,” Harry said with a smirk, causing a spray of water to make Nym’s shirt translucent.

“Horndog,” Nym grinned. “Exsicco,” she cast the drought charm on her shirt making it normal again, and hugged Harry to her. With another crack, they re-appeared in the IUM office.

“Report Potter, Harry James,” Madam Hopkirk put her wand on the crystal again, and this time two lines of text appeared in red.
“Let’s see, you cast the Water-Making Spell followed by a Drought Charm, correct Mister Potter?” Madam Hopkirk read out.

“Erm... no madam,” Harry carefully said. “I cast the Water-Making Spell, but Tonks here did the charm.”

“What?” Madam Bones rushed closer, “Auror, give me a Wand History.”

Nym cast “Prior Incantato,” and ghostly images of the last few spells appeared: a Drought Charm, the Engorgement Charm from earlier that morning, the Vanishing Charm, and she dropped the spell.

“You as well Mister Potter, same incantation,” Madam Bones instructed him. Harry focused, and cast. Out came the Water-Making Spell, followed by a long pause, and then finally the Pimple Jinx Furnunculus.

“Erm... we were fooling around a bit on the Hogwarts Express,” Harry tried to justify it as the dropped the spell.

“That's quite all right Mister Potter, we were all young once,” Madam Bones smirked. “Well it's obvious your trace has been tampered with, it's not reporting your wand at all, and is instead reporting all magic cast at your home as yours! In light of this evidence, I am inclined to belief your claim about that House Elf.”

“If it helps, I can call him here,” Harry suggested.

“No need Mister Potter. Non-human creature testimonies are not accepted in any court as it is.” Madam Bones took her monocle out of her eye, and began polishing it, stalling for time as she thought.
“Mafalda, can you repair the trace?”

“Im- impossible Madam,” Madam Hopkirk spluttered. “It is tied directly to Mister Potter's life line as well as his wand, the only way to recreate it is to give Mister Potter a new wand!”

“Not a good solution,” Madam Bones mused. “Very well then, in that case... please turn off the reporting charm for Mister Potter completely. Better to have no trace at all, than a broken one.”

“But –” Madam Hopkirk's protest was cancelled at a glare by Madam Bones, before the dominating woman turned to face Harry directly. “Mister Potter, once you are removed from the reporting charm, it will be as if the trace is lifted. However, this does not mean you are allowed to freely cast magic from now on, even though you can. Am I clear?”

Harry gulped, “Crystal, madam.”

“Good. Because let me assure you, I will not hesitate to snap your wand personally, should you be found breaking the law.” Done intimidating the Boy-Who-Lived, Madam Bones gestured to Madam Hopkirk, “Well? Get on with it.”

Madam Hopkirk took out her wand again, and placed it on the crystal. “De... delete. Potter, Harry James.” A red light flashed through the crystal, and it stilled again.

“Thanks Mafalda,” Madam Bones said. “Now I believe we had something else to discuss Mister Potter, Auror Bones?”

“Yes Madam,” Nym answered. But before they walked out the door, Harry took the book Madam Hopkirk silently pressed towards him, and with a flourish signed her fantasy novel, ‘for her niece’.

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Ashen pale, Madam Bones rose up from her pensieve. “Mister Potter... this... this is explosive material. Why didn't you say you had concrete evidence of Death Eater identities sooner?”

“I did,” Harry protested. “I told Professor Dumbledore everything, including that You-Know-Who
called Malfoy and others by name!”

“No wonder the Minister is trying to suppress this,” Madam Bones paced about, then shook herself to clear her mind. “Auror Tonks, your vacation is hereby recalled.”

Nym started to protest, but was silenced by the follow-up: “As of right now and until you receive further orders, you are to guard Mister Potter with your life. He is the prime witness in the case I'll be building to clear up this mess. Am I understood?”

“Yes ma'am,” Nym beamed. “I'll not let Harry stray from my sight for a second.”

“Now off with you both, I have a huge mess to deal with here,” Bones said with a sigh, dismissing the two.

Nym waited until they were in the lift. “You okay hero? That memory was intense...”

“I'm all right,” Harry shrugged. “You know, tonight was the first night since... since the tournament... that I didn't have a nightmare.” He smiled at her.

“Then I'd better make sure you don't have any nightmares this upcoming night either,” Nym breathed in a husky voice, her right hand grabbing Harry's bum.

Slightly flustered, Harry made to step out of the lift cabin as they arrived at the atrium, then something caught his eye. He bent down, and came back up with a white feather. “Huh, looks like one of Hedwig's.”

“Don't be silly hero, owls can't get in underground lifts,” Nym bopped him softly on the head.

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Once they arrived in the atrium Nym hugged him to her again, and with a crack they disappeared, only to re-appear in Diagon Alley. Hand-in-hand they walked to the end of the alley where the wand maker was located.
“Why is everyone looking at us?” Harry asked in a soft voice. Nym looked around, and noticed some glares on people's faces.

“Ignore them hero, fools just believe the Prophet. They don't matter.” She squeezed his hand, as they arrived at Ollivander's.

“Harry Potter, holly, eleven inches, and a phoenix feather core. And Ny— Miss Tonks, Mountain Ash, fourteen inches with a unicorn tail hair. Excellent for protection. I trust you are both well?” Ollivander was as creepy as ever, appearing from behind them as they entered his shop.

“We're both fine, thanks,” Nym answered for them. “Harry here needs a wand holster, Auror style if you have one available.

“Ah yes, I was wondering when he'd pick one up. One cannot keep their wand in their sleeve... or back pocket all the time,” Ollivander mused, disappearing in the back and coming back out with what looked like a comfortable looking leather bracer. “One wand holster. Will there be anything else?”

“Nosir,” Harry said.

“Then that will be one galleon, three sickles.”

Harry paid, and then Nym took off the make-do holster, and wrapped the real one around his arm. “You slide your wand in gently Harry, get a feel for where it fits perfectly, then push it all the way home,” she instructed him. Harry blushed deeply, a blush that remained on his face as they exited Ollivander's shop.

“Where next?” he asked once he could trust his voice again.

“You are buying your awesome guardian a gift,” Nym giggled. “How much do you have on you?”

“Dunno, a galleon or two I guess. What's left over from the train ride home.”

“In that case hero, we're off to see the goblins first.” Nym directed him to the big marble building nearby. They walked past the surly looking guards, and got up to a free counter.
“Yes wizard?” the bored-looking goblin asked.

“Mr Potter here wants a trip to his vault,” Nym spoke for him.

“And does Mr Potter have his key?”

“Yes.” Nym held out her hand, “Key Harry?”

“Erm... I don't have it,” Harry shrugged.

“What?” Nym spoke loudly, “why not? What happened to it?”

“I gave it to Mrs Weasley the summer before last year, she wanted to get our school supplies while we were at the Quidditch World Cup,” Harry recalled.

“Ya goof, you don't just hand your vault key over!” Nym cuffed him on the ears, then faced the bored-looking clerk again.
“Apologies Mr Teller. Apparently this idiot here doesn't have his key, so we need to have his current key recalled, and a new one made.”

“And is Mr Potter aware this will cost four galleons”

“Mr Potter is right here,” Harry sulked. “And yes.”

“I need to confirm your identity, hold out your hand,” the goblin instructed. Quickly he took out an athame, and cut a shallow wound across Harry's palm. Harry flinched slightly, but didn't make a sound.
The goblin wiped the blood on a piece of parchment he had lying in front of him, then nodded as some runes appeared.
“Wait here,” he ordered them, and walked off. Nym shrugged, as Harry sucked on the wound to stop the stinging.
The goblin returned five minutes later, and held up a key. “This is your family Vault, number 687. The locks have been changed now, and all other keys have been invalidated. If you wish more keys, they can be made for a Galleon each.” He dropped the key in Harry’s hand, accidentally-on-purpose directly on the cut. Harry winced.

The goblin ignored him, and put away the knife that was still lying there somewhere. “Your blood will be sterilized from the knife now as per Ministry,” the word was almost spat, “regulations. The amount of four Galleons has already been taken from your trust vault. Do you want to visit your Vaults now human?”

Harry was glaring at the goblin for hurting him, so Nym took the initiative: “We’ll be visiting Mr Potter's Vault yes, if that's okay.”

“Your decision,” the surly goblin grunted. “Griphook!” he called to the back, and another goblin stepped forward out of the shadows.

“If Mr Potter and his companion would follow me?”

“Move ya goof,” Nym pushed him a little. Harry's eyes lit up as he recognised the goblin: “Griphook! You were the goblin that took me around four years ago!”

“Was I?” Griphook shrugged. “This way to the carts.”

The ride down was exciting in more than one way. Harry liked the thrill, but he liked Nym sitting on his lap, and him holding on to her tightly. He was all too aware she was only wearing her jeans that morning. Although he could do without the screams of fear next time, he thought.

“Vault 687, Potter Vault,” Griphook said once the cart stopped. He held out his hand for the key, and Harry gave it him, letting the goblin open the vault. “Make it quick human, some of us are busy today.”

Ignoring his surliness the duo walked inside, and Nym let out a whistle. “Whoo-ee hero, you're loaded! You'd better buy me a really nice gift now!”

“It's just my parents' money,” Harry mumbled, feeling uncomfortable with the idea of having so much money, having grown up with the idea he had nothing. “How much should I take out?”
“Take ten Galleons to be sure, a hand of Sickles, and two or three hands of Knuts,” Nym suggested. “That way you won't need to come back here when your school book list arrives.” Harry shovelled in the round coins in his magical money bag, then he and Nym stepped out again.

“Thanks for the service Griphook,” Harry dropped a sickle in the creature's hand. Nym sat in Harry's lap again, placing his hands around her waist for support. That those hands slid up a bit as the cart rushed through the tunnels, cupping her breasts, was not mentioned by either.

“Gringotts customer floor. Get out,” Griphook grumbled as they arrived. Nym took Harry's hand, and they stepped back into the Alley.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: In this fic, I've decided to follow the convention that a Galleon is worth around £50, almost ten times as much as in canon. Therefore G1 = £50 or ~€60 or ~$85, a Sickle is worth around £3 (€3,60 $5) and a Knut is worth around ten pence (€0,12 / $0,17). Prices in canon make a lot more sense that way.

I don't like the common fanon idea of a self-refilling “trust Vault” that the eeevil Weasleys or Dumbles can rob blind, and a family Vault holding even more money. In canon, the Potter's vault is already described as holding a fortune. So in this fic the Potters have a single, normal Vault.

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New A/N (2018): I still see most fanfic writers write Goblins as friendly and helpful. Never agreed with that as this fic makes clear.
“Where to next?” Nym held Harry's hand as they walked down the stairs of Gringott's.

“Belinda's Baubles, right? I was gonna get you a gift.” Harry squeezed her hand.

“Oh Harry, you don't have to. I was just kidding before,” Nym beamed at him.

“But I want to. And I won't take no for an answer.”

“Okay then. My hero.” Nym gave him a quick peck on the cheek, as they walked on.

——

“Good morning, how can I help you?” The woman behind the counter called as they came in.

“Just browsing for something for my girl ma'am,” Harry called back. Nym beamed at him for that.

Hand-in-hand they walked through the aisle, looking at the various jewelry on offer.

“What about that one?” Harry indicated a beautiful ring.

“Thinking of buying me a ring already? Mister Potter, you are a fast mover,” Harry began protesting, and Nym kissed him to shut him up.

“A-hem,” the saleswoman scraped her throat a little later. “May I help you two?”

Flushing heavily, the two split apart. “Erm... could we see your necklaces ma'am?” Harry hated the sound of his voice cracking, but if the lady noticed, she did not comment.

“Of course, right this way,” she lead them to the counter. “Are you looking for something formal, or something for every day wear?”
Harry looked at Nym for the answer, “Something for every day,” the blushing witch answered. She looked over the display on offer, and found a beautiful silver necklace with a pendant at the end, a stone set in it.

Harry noticed her looking, “You like that one Nym?” Getting a nod in reply, he pointed it out, “How much for that one, ma'am?”

“Two Galleons and twelve Sickles,” she answered. “What is your girlfriend's birth stone? I have this item in all variants in the back.”

“Opal, for October,” Nym answered. “Harry, that's a lot of money, I can get something cheaper instead,” she added.

“Hush Nym, I can get my hot girl a gift if I want to,” he squeezed her hand. “We'll take it ma'am.” She got in the back, and came out with a small box containing the necklace. Harry handed over three Galleons, and after he pocketed the change, he took it out.

“Allow me?” Nym bent forward a little so he could reach better, and let him clasp it around her neck.

“Beautiful,” Harry breathed out, as it fell on her chest, resting just above the valley of her cleavage.

“You are so getting lucky later mister,” Nym whispered in his ear, and gave him a quick kiss.

Harry thanked the saleswoman, and they got out into the Alley. Seeing the glares from some of the shoppers, Nym wrinkled her nose in distaste.

“What say you we grab a bite in Muggle London? It'll be my treat.”

“Sure, fine with me,” Harry answered. He wouldn't mind getting out of the Wizarding World a bit. Hand-in-hand they walked to the Leaky Cauldron, and quickly passed through it. They walked through the quiet shopping street filled with book stores and entered a side street, arriving at a small lunch-room.

“Table for two dears?” the waitress asked, Nym nodded and they were lead to a small table on the side.

“Two BLTs with potato wedges please,” Nym ordered, and they waited. Harry was admiring how the necklace caught the scattered light, when he felt a soft foot slide up against his leg. He inhaled sharply, as the foot began going higher.
“Here you are, will there be anything else?” The waitress placed two plates with sandwiches on the table.

“Not for now thanks,” Nym spoke. Meanwhile her foot crept up further, and rubbed on the inside of Harry's leg now.

“Nym! What are you doing?” Harry hissed.

“Eating lunch hero, what else?” Nym had a mischievous look, as her foot continued tormenting Harry.

Somehow Harry made it through their lunch without embarrassing himself, but not for lack of his girlfriend's trying.

“You evil minx,” Harry growled as they exited the restaurant. “Did you enjoy teasing me like that?”

“It's not teasing, it's a promise,” Nym shot him a wink. “I'm impressed, I was sure I could get you to... give me some extra sauce,” she giggled.

Harry grabbed her other arm, and pushed her up against the wall. “You are going to get it now,” he mashed his face onto hers, and kissed her deeply. Nym responded by wrapping her arms around him.

“Ahem,” someone cleared their throat. Nym opened her eyes, which had been closed as she was enjoying her French kiss with Harry, and saw a police constable standing near them. “You two may want to head home now, right?”

Blushing, they broke apart. “Yessir,” Harry mumbled, not daring to catch the PC’s eyes. The officer nodded, and walked on.

“Such a bad boy you are Harry, assaulting little helpless me in public,” Nym giggled. Hand-in-hand they walked to a more empty side street.

“I didn't exactly hear you complain,” Harry countered. Nym looked around and found they were alone, and hugged Harry to him. A moment later they disapparated away.
Once they re-appeared in the Dursley kitchen, Harry began pawing at her pants.
“Eager are we hero?” Nym playfully pushed his hands away. “Maybe in a while. First, we need to talk a bit.”

She led Harry over to the Dursley living room, and sat down on the couch, padding it. Harry sat down next to her.
“Listen hero, my babysitting shift will be over at four, and we need to figure out what to do before then.”

“Don't need a babysitter,” Harry grumbled. “And I'm no hero, I'm just a normal guy.”

“Well to me you're my hero,” Nym smiled down at him. “Handed me a towel and all, and made me very happy last night and today.”

“I guess, but can't you call me something else?”

Nym seemed encouraged. “Big boy?” “No!” “Potty?” “Nym...” “Sir Loves-a-lot?” “Nym... quit it.” “Captain Biggus Di – Eek!” Harry twisted around, and his hands grabbed Nym's sides, tickling her sensitive spots. Nym didn't exactly fight hard as she let him strip off her jeans.
Showing once more he was a quick study, Harry made her scream shortly after.

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“What time is it?” They were cuddling on the living room couch. Nym reached for her wand, lying on the floor near them, and cast a Tempus spell.

“Oh crap! Half past three? You made me lose track of time, hero!” Nym scrambled to her feet, and began dressing.

“What's wrong?” Harry started looking for his own clothes.

“The next Order member will show up soon ya goof! Unless you want us to get caught?”
“Are you ashamed of being found with me?” Harry said in a small voice.

“Oh Harry, that's not it!” Nym stopped buttoning up her shirt, and rushed over to him, hugging him. “If that's what you want, we can face the Order together. I'm simply afraid a certain bearded teacher may get the wrong idea and try to force us apart.”

“Do you really think he would do that?” Harry sounded worried.

“Do you really want to risk it?” Nym hugged him again. “Tell you what hero, I'm going to figure something out. You just wait until I get back, and no moping okay mister?”

“Fine,” Harry said with a sigh. Nym gave him a deep kiss, then quickly buttoned her shirt.

“Harry, I'll be back tonight okay? Stay vigilant!”

“Okay Nym,” Harry sighed as he watched her walk to the kitchen and the back door.

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Arthur Weasley apparated to the back alley near Privet Drive that was the arranged handover spot for the Order, and found it empty. Carefully he took out his wand and cast a revealing spell, but no-one was there. As he was trying to recall who had the shift before him, and if it was the unreliable Mundungus Fletcher again, a flushed Nymphadora Tonks came running into the alley.

“Tonks, you're late!” Arthur chastised her. “Phoenix feather.”

“Hah... hah... hah...” Tonks was panting. “Phoenix wha?”

“Today's password, you're supposed to check if it's really me?” Arthur looked at her critically. “Why are you late? Why aren't you under your invisibility cloak? Come to think of it... why is your shirt not buttoned correctly?”

Nym blushed deeply. “I lost track of time Mr Weasley, but don't worry, everything is fine! Harry is
Nym opened the fridge, and took out the milk. With Molly upstairs she didn't bother getting a glass, and drank directly from the carton as Ginny answered her.

“She found Ron in our bedroom, going through Hermione's trunk,” Ginny said with distaste in her voice. “Ron claims he was just looking for some quills, but mum isn't happy.”

“Boys,” Hermione huffed. “Ginny, I'm about done with my Transfiguration essay now. Do you want me to go over yours?”
“In a minute Hermione,” Ginny replied. “Tonks, how is Harry? Has he said anything?”

“Don't bother her Ginny, you know she isn't allowed to talk to him,” Hermione interrupted. “Professor Dumbledore said we are to leave Harry alone.”

“He looked happy,” Nym replied to Ginny, rolling her eyes a bit at the brunette's interruption. “Your dad is watching him now, so he'll be fine.”

“Thanks Tonks,” Ginny beamed at her. “Okay Hermione, here's what I have so far... want me to look over yours?”

“No need Ginny, you can get started on your Potions summer homework while I edit.”

Nym left the two girls to their work, and walked past the shouting match of Sirius and his mother's portrait to the Black family living room, finding it empty. Once there, she headed to the floo and threw in some of the powder, “Hogwarts Headmaster's Office,” and crouched down in the flames. “Professor Dumbledore, are you there?”

A moment later the floo opened for her, and she looked in on the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore was sitting at his desk, paperwork in front of him. “Nymphadora, I wasn't expecting a floo call. Is everything all right with Harry?”

“It's Tonks sir,” Nym said with a grumble. “And Harry is fine. May I come through sir? I have some rather urgent questions.”

“Oh course, of course,” Dumbledore assented. Nym got back on her feet, and stepped through. “Would you a lemon drop?”

“No thank you,” Nym sat down in a chair. “Sir, it's about Harry –”

“Ah yes young Harry. I'm glad the lad can enjoy his summer in peace.”

“Err... sir, are you aware the Dursleys are on holiday? And Harry was left behind alone?”
“Yes, I know. I am sure he appreciates some time by himself,” Dumbledore nodded.

“But wouldn't it be better if he were at Headquarters with the Weasleys and Hermione? So he has some friends to talk to?”

“I think not Nymphadora, Harry needs to be by himself now.”

“It's Tonks sir, I asked you several times before,” Nym looked annoyed. “And I think you're making a mistake with Harry. What possible reason can you have to keep him away from people that care about him?”

“I have very good reasons I assure you,” Dumbledore said sagely. “If that is all?”

“No, that's bloody well not all! Sir... Albus... please, is there no way you can allow Harry to come to Grimmauld Place before the end of July?”

“Absolutely not.” Dumbledore looked directly at her. “It seems you are unsuited to deal with the stress of watching young Harry. I will take your name of the Harry watch roster starting directly. I thank you for your effort thus far, now if you'd please leave? I have to try to find a new teacher for Defence Against the Dark Arts for the upcoming year, alas Alastor is unwilling to return.”

“You're making a mistake Headmaster,” Nymphadora said, but seeing the look in his eyes she stepped to the floo. “Harry is a human being with feelings, and you should ask him what he wants!” Glaring at the older wizard, she flood out.

Dumbledore took off his glasses and polished them. “What do you think Fawkes? Can she be right?”

His phoenix familiar twittered, cocking its head. “Yes, Harry was quite upset indeed... but the risk of contacting him is too large. Tom may be using the connection and influencing his feelings. No, I think it's best if he is kept away from others as long as possible after all.” Dumbledore nodded, put his glasses back on, and read through profiles of potential teachers.

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Nym was fuming as she returned to Grimmauld Place, and nearly knocked Sirius over as she stomped out of the room.
“Easy there Nymmie, people are walking here,” Sirius grinned at her.

“Pungo!” Nym whipped up her wand, sending a stinging hex to her mother's cousin. “Dammit Sirius, it's Tonks! How many times do I have to tell you!”

“Watch it!” Sirius dodged the spell, then took her by the arms. “Easy there Tonksie, what's got you so upset?”

“Bloody Albus Too-Many-Names-Goat-Screwing Dumbledore is what,” Nym grumbled. “I tried to talk to him about letting Harry out of his isolation, but whiskers thinks he knows best as usual.”

“Is something wrong with Harry?” The joker was out of his voice, and Sirius sounded serious for a change.

“Not directly, but it's the whole situation... come on, I can't be the only one to see that it is just wrong to lock Harry up in a place he hates, all alone with no-one to talk to, and that after he was tortured by You-Know-Who!”

“A place he hates? Aren't you exaggerating a bit?” Sirius guided Tonks to a seat, then handed her a drink to calm her down more.

“Sirius, I'm sure he hates being there. And the Dursleys hate him in return. You heard about how the Weasley boys had to rescue him in the summer prior to his second year didn't you?”

“The bars locking his window? I thought they were joking?”

“Sirius, I saw the remnants of them on his bedroom window. Dammit, I'm certain Harry has been abused by them in the past!”

Sirius paled. “That would explain why he was so looking forward to live with me two years ago... me, a man he had no reason to trust! How sure are you about this abuse?”
“I saw the scars on his back, and he still flinches a bit when you hug him,” Nym sighed. “His instincts took over after a while fortunately, but at first while we were snogging he seemed afraid I’d hit him... hang on a bit.” Nym looked at her drink critically. “Fuck. What did you just give me you jerk?”

Sirius carefully stepped back a bit. “A single drop of veritaserum and some modified babbling potion...”

Nym debated taking out her wand and hexing him, but decided against it. “Shouldn't have let my guard down around you. Bastard. Why? Are you gonna turn me in to Dumbledore now?” Nym felt tears welling up in her eyes.

“No, no no!” Sirius spoke quickly. “Crap... I was just planning to find out the name of your latest lover, to tease you, and maybe a little info on Harry... nobody's telling me anything here... but man I wasn't expecting this.” He knelt in front of Nym and took her hands in his. “I'm on your side cousin. Harry deserves someone to be there for him. And if what you told me is true, he needs to get out there fast.”

“You're still a – sniff – jerk,” Nym said with a sad smile. “Dumbledore said he'd take me off the guard roster Sirius... but I'm not giving up on him yet!” Resolve returned to her eyes. “Screw Dumbledore! Madam Bones gave me the order to be Harry's bodyguard, and that's what I'm going to do!”

“Easy there Tonks,” Sirius got back on his feet, and started pacing. “What is this about Madam Bones?”

“Give me the antidote to this potion crap and I'll tell you,” Nym poured the rest of the potioned drink over a plant.

--------

After recounting how she had taken Harry to the DMLE to deliver his memory on Voldemort’s resurrection and resolve the issue with his Trace, Sirius was thinking out loud.

“That Trace business doesn't make sense... unless...” He paled.

“Well what? I've gone over it as well, and I can't see the purpose?”
“It would make perfect sense if someone wanted to hide any spells Harry might cast from the Ministry. Didn't you say that the first false report was in the summer following his first year?”

“When he got into trouble due to that Elf, yes... where are you going with this?”

“Think! What happened at the end of Harry's first year?”

“He fought of his teacher... who was possessed by You-Know-Who...” Nym paled.

“Exactly. I bet, our someone is expecting Harry to face another situation like that, or the resurrection ritual, and wanted to make sure the Trace was not on his actual location, but only his home.”

“Well... crap.”

“Couldn't have said it better myself,” Sirius nodded. “Damn now I need a real drink...” He paced about a bit, then his eyes lit up. “Got it! Cousin of mine, you're going to love me,” he let out a small laugh.

“I'm more likely to hex you, if you don't tell me what you have planned,” Nym countered.

“Easy there Hexing Queen! Tell me... do you know about simulacrum?”

---------

Arthur Weasley was hanging against the front wall of Number Four, when he heard the pop of apparition from the back garden. He took out his wand, and crept to the back under his cloak, when he spotted Tonks. “Password?” he demanded, his wand aimed at her.

“Phoenix feather Arthur, phoenix feather,” Tonks blurted out.
Arthur dropped the cloak hood, revealing his face. “Oh good it's you Tonks, for a moment I was worried. Why are you back? Did something come up?”

“In a way Arthur, hey, what's that?” Nym pointed to his back. Arthur turned quickly... then felt a spell hit him in the back and things went dark.
“Sorry Arthur, I don't have time to talk things out now,” Nym apologized as she put him in a comfortable position, and aimed her wand at him again. “I'm just gonna delete the last minute or two from you now okay? You'll not notice a thing... Obliviate.” She winced a bit as her spell erased their encounter from the stunned wizard's mind, then stepped in through the back door.

“Wotcher Harry! It's your hot girlfriend, come out to play!” she called up. She heard a door fly open upstairs, and Harry came running down.
“Easy there hero!” Nym laughed, as he embraced her in a hug.

“I missed you,” Harry beamed at her.

“Missed ya too, goof,” Nym smiled back, then here face sobered.
“Hero, it's decision time. Do you want to stay here, or come with me to another place?”

“I can leave this place?” Harry sat up.

“Unless you want to stay here,” Nym offered. “I'm taking a huge risk here, but I really don't think this place is right for you... and I can watch you better there anyway.”

“Sorry, where do you mean?” Harry asked.

Nym looked away. “Errr... I'll tell you in a moment if you still want to go that is. You should really decide now, I don't know how much time we have.”

“Will you be there as well? I mean can we still...” Harry trailed off, watching how the necklace she was wearing diverted his focus to her décolleté.

“Focus, ya goof,” Nym softly hit his arm. “Of course we can. You're mine Potter, and I'm not letting anyone take you from me!”
“I'll go then,” Harry nodded eagerly.

“Well then, why don't you start packing? Take your wand and your summer homework only, and Hedwig of course. I'll need to prepare some things in the mean time.”

“Will do,” Harry beamed, and ran up the stairs.

Nym smiled after him, then began to unpack the bag she had with her, taking out a wooden beam of about four feet tall, and a foot wide. Magically expanded bag of course. 'Good thing we took care of that Trace issue... this is pretty dark magic,' she reminded herself, as she began chanting. Before her eyes, the wood began to slowly change shape.

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Nym made her way upstairs and found Harry had made a pile on his bed, which he was now beginning to shovel into his trunk. “Let me hero,” Nym waved her wand, “Pack!” The items trembled, and began flying into the trunk.

“Handy spell,” Harry offered.

“I'll teach you that one later,” Nym beamed at him. Then she spotted one left over item. “Don't forget your souvenir here,” she threw her wadded up panties from the morning to Harry. He caught them and blushed, putting them in his pocket, much to Nym's pleasure.

“Is that everything?”

“I guess,” Harry shrugged. “Erm, what about the rest? And the bed and desk?”

“Oh, they'll revert back in a few days. Why do you care?”

“Won't the Dursleys –”

“Harry, to be blunt... I don't give a dime about them. We'll have a chat about them later, but if it's up to me – and I can be a very stubborn witch – you're not coming back here.”
“But Professor Dumbledore said that –”

Harry was shut up as Nym kissed him deeply. “Harry, who do you trust more? Old whiskers, or your hot, sexy, amazingly cool girlfriend?” She kneaded his bum, before letting go. Harry was flushed all over. “That's what I thought mister,” Nym giggled. “Okay, one more thing... promise me you won't freak out?”

“Why? What do you have planned?” Harry sounded suspicious.

“Nothing bad love... look, you promise not to freak out, and later we’ll –” she leant in real close, and whispered something in his ear. Harry went beet red in a second.

“Promise,” he blurted out, his voice cracking.

“Okay Harry... come downstairs with me.” Nym cast a feather-light charm on his trunk and let Harry lift it with one hand, took his other hand in hers, and led him down. Harry froze at the entrance to the kitchen.

“Is... is that a dead body?” Lying on the kitchen table was the unmistakable form of a naked young man, rather short for his age... Harry tentatively stepped closer, and saw the dead body had dark hair like his... and even a scar like he did... “Is... is that me?” His voice seemed to rise an octave.

“Easy hero,” Nym took his arm. “That, Harry, is your decoy, so the Fried Chicken Club doesn't realise you are gone... it just needs a final touch before it works.”

Harry just stared, so she continued: “I'm going to need to drain some of your blood hero... afraid this may hurt. Harry... please?”

Harry looked to his side, and saw Nym's eyes seemed to have grown larger, as she was pleading at him.

“Is it... is it alive?” he croaked out.
“No, it's a simulacrum Harry,” Nym said. “A kind of puppet. It will seem to breathe and can respond to simple questions, but it is not you. Once I get a bit of your blood on it it will activate, and we can leave. No-one will know you are gone.”

“But what about the Dursleys?” Harry wavered. This seemed wrong somehow.

“They'll just think you're a morose teen who refuses to leave his room. It won't need to last that long, just long enough until Old Whiskers will officially let you leave here. Come on Harry, I don't think we have that much longer... please?” she pleaded again.

“Do it,” Harry nodded.

“Thank you hero,” Nym gave him a quick kiss, then took an athame from her bag. “Hold out your arm over its face?”

Harry did so, and Nym took a breath to steady herself, then cut a deep gash in Harry's arm. Harry winced as the metal shred skin, but held his arm steady as blood dripped down.

Tonks removed the knife, and immediately cast, “Vulnera Sanentur”. The wound started healing quickly.

“That's enough love,” she hugged him to her. “I'll make it up to you later, promise. You were great.”

“Hello, what am I doing here?” Harry's voice sounded from beside them. Harry stiffened, as the simulacrum sat up.

“One final step...” Nym took a memory string from her head with a wordless spell, and dropped it on the puppet's head. Fake Harry blinked as he processed the info, then his expression dropped into a deep sulk.

“I'll be in my room. I want to be left alone,” he said in a sad voice, and got upstairs.

“I don't sound that whiny,” Harry complained to Nym. She smirked, “Sure you don't hero. Now hold me close, and we're leaving Durskaban for greener pastures.”

Arthur Weasley woke up twenty minutes later, wondering how he had nodded off. 'Best make sure nothing is wrong,' he thought to himself. A “Homenum Revelio” later he affirmed Harry was in the house all alone, in his bedroom, and nothing seemed to be wrong. Arthur continued the watch.
Nym and Harry popped back into existence in a cluttered room. Trying to catch his balance, Harry stumbled forward, bumping into his new girlfriend. Nym took a step back, bumping her ankles against a suitcase lying on the floor, and fell backward. She reached out with her hands for support, and ended up pulling Harry on top of her.

“Ouch, I bet you did that on purpose,” she complained.

“I didn't! It was an accident!” Harry defended himself.

“Well, if it was an accident, mind getting off me? Or did you plan to have your way with me right here?” Nym shot him a wink. Harry blushed – Nym felt pleased it was still so easy to embarrass him – and scrambled to his feet. He held out his hand to help her to her feet. “Thanks love,” Nym gave him a kiss on the cheek.

“Where are we? It's a mess here,” Harry looked around. They were in a long room with what looked like another room build on top of it, there was a ladder running up. To the side were some doors, Harry assumed leading to the outside and other rooms.

“Oi hero, this is my place, I'll have you know,” Nym bopped him on the head. “My own little flat.”

“Is it hidden under all the rubbish?” Harry teasingly asked.

“Oh you! You should feel honoured to be here ya know, I've never taken anyone home before,” Nym waved her finger at him.

“I'm kidding, just kidding,” he said with a grin. “Cool place. Whereabouts is it?”

“Bethnal Green, that's in East London,” Nym clarified. “Daddy bought it for me as a graduation gift when I finished Hogwarts, there's Muggles all over but nobody suspects a thing. My neighbours think I'm in college,” she grinned.

Harry walked around the scattered piles of clothes and books and took the room in. “No floo?”
“Nah, I apparate everywhere,” Nym followed him to the 'living room' end. “The window's spelled to let owls through so I can get my post, so you can let Hedwig out now if you want. Nobody should notice her fly in and out, there's a mild Notice-Me-Not on it as well. Keeps people from looking in, too.”

Harry wrinkled his nose as he came close to an open pizza box. “Let me guess, you're not too fond of cleaning up?”

Nym got a blush, “Err... not really. I'll clean up some in a bit though, really haven't been back here too much recently with watching over a hot young man though.”


“Wow Harry, you're a good House Elf, too?”

“Oi, I'm no Dobby,” Harry said back, with a laugh.

A 'pop' sounded next to him, and Harry and Nym both turned to see the House Elf in question standing there. “The Great Mister Harry Potter Sir is calling Dobby?”

“Dobby?” Harry blinked, “What are you doing here?”

“Dobby heard the Great Mister Harry Potter Sir calls Dobby's name, so Dobby is coming,” the Elf replied, bobbing his head quickly. “Oh! This room is being a mess! Does Mister Harry Potter Sir wants Dobby to clean up?”

“Err...” Harry turned to Nym, who looked on bemusedly.

“Dobby was it?” As the Elf nodded quickly, Nym smiled at him. “Oi 'Great Mister Harry', you could have told me you have an Elf!”

“I don't, Dobby's free,” Harry shrugged. “Err yeah Dobby, if you could help us clean up, that would be great. How much do you want to be paid?”
“Dobby is takings no more than one Knut!” The Elf declared.

“Ten Knuts,” Harry countered.

“Two Knuts, and Dobby is workings here every day!”

“Seven Knuts, one for each day?”

“Five Knuts, and that is being Dobby's final offer!”

Harry shrugged, then held out his hand. “Okay Dobby, five Knuts. Deal?”

“The Great Mister Harry Potter Sir is shaking Dobby's hand...” the Elf looked on in awe, then nodded. “Five Knuts per month is deal! Dobby is beginning working now.”
In a blur, the Elf rushed through the room, and the dirty dishes and other filth began to disappear.

“I meant per week, Dobby...” Harry looked after the Elf as he became a blur of activity.

“You've been holding out on me mister,” Nym poked Harry's chest. “But I guess I'll keep you. Helps me clean up, buys me a gift, and shags me rotten... my hero.”

“Nyyymmm...” Harry whined.

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The two sat on Nym's couch, watching the now clean room. Dobby had rushed through it and somehow left a room behind that looked like it was only just furnished, and was now cleaning the adjacent toilet and kitchen.

“Harry, I think I know what I'll do with you this summer,” Nym decided. Harry winked suggestively and pawed for her, but she slapped his hand away softly. “Not that you horndog... well not just that. You, mister, are getting trained by little old me.”
“Trained? What, you mean summer school?” Harry frowned.

“No magic allowed remember? You're not seventeen yet,” she grinned. “Well okay I'll teach you some tricks later... but first we're working on your condition.”

“I'm in fine condition,” Harry grumbled. “Quidditch is a demanding sport.”

“Sure it is love,” Nym humoured him. “So how often have you flown last year?”

“Err...”

“That's what I thought. You're getting a pass today since it's closing on the evening, but tomorrow morning we're going to Victoria Park early, and you're going to start jogging.”

Harry looked at her disbelievingly. “Jogging? Are you serious?”

“Nope, Sirius is your godfather,” Nym said with a laugh. “I'll start you off easy with a single loop, once you make good time we'll start on the real stuff.”

“Jogging?” Harry repeated.

“Oh don't complain ya goof, it's not even 3 miles. Shouldn't take you more than 25 minutes. There's something in it for you as well.”

“Oh?” He perked up.

“Yup... you get to watch me in tight training trousers running ahead of you,” Nym grinned.

Not too long later Dobby popped in the main room to tell them he was finished cleaning the flat, but found them kissing deeply. He'd left them dinner under a Keep-Warm charm for later so he just left, feeling happy the Great Mister Harry Potter Sir was having a good summer for once.
“Waking time love,” Nym spoke in Harry's ear. Harry opened his eyes and saw her long black hair framing her cute heart-shaped face as she stood next to the bed. She was dressed in stretch leggings and had a tank top on.

Harry reached out for her, but she darted out-of-the-way of his hands. “Ah ah Harry, not this morning. You're gonna need your energy for your training,” Nym shot him a grin. “You're gonna take a quick shower now, then come to the kitchen for your breakfast – that wonderful Elf of yours prepared just the right thing – and then it's time to see just how out of shape you are.

“I put your clothes out for you,” Nym blew him a kiss, and climbed down the ladder to the main floor.

Harry sighed as she escaped his grasp, and got up a little later. Showering and dressing – she had laid out his loosest jeans and a shirt of Dudley's that wasn't too bad on him – he came into the kitchen.

“We've got to go shopping for you today,” Nym commented as she drank from the milk carton. “You need to show off that bod of yours, make all the girls jealous of me.”

“Sure,” Harry agreed, not having experience of clothes shopping with girls yet. “Hey Nym... you changed them today?”

Nym looked at where he was staring, “Oh my boobs? Yeah, smaller ones are more comfortable running,” she grinned. “Don't worry hero I'll make them bigger for you later on, if you do well,” the last bit was punctuated by a wink.

“Now finish your brekkie, and it's off to the park.”

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Harry wheezed as he leant against a tree. Nym hadn't been kidding... she'd made him do some light stretches as they arrived at Victoria Park, then lead him on a brisk jog around the park perimeter. After ten minutes Harry felt the burn, and the last mile had been more walked than ran, as he was simply out of breath.

“Pathetic performance,” Nym teased him as she stretched in front of him, teasing him with her movements. “You're gonna have to step up love, if you want more nookie.”

Harry glared at her as he tried to catch his breath.

After he had finished the route and Nym helped him stretch his tired muscles they went back to her flat to shower – individually much to his regret – and then she took him shopping for proper clothes. The horror of clothes shopping with an enthusiastic girlfriend took a spot in his nightmares quickly...
To further the 'torture', Nym made him take out his first year textbooks from his school trunk, and went over all spells from the year with him. Harry was ashamed to have to admit he had trouble casting some of them, and had forgotten others.

By the time evening came he was tired, embarrassed, and no little frustrated as he had not got more than a single kiss from Nym all day. Luckily Dobby had made dinner for them both, since he was in no mood to cook, and Nym didn't seem the type.

'At least she's not making me sleep on the couch,' Harry thought as he climbed into bed next to her.

Harry had dozed off a little when he felt Nym nuzzle his neck, and her hand roaming over his body. “I'm not punishing myself just because you can't even run twenty minutes, but you'd better do a better job tomorrow,” Nym said before she kissed him, and climbed on him.

After a day of exercises, school work, and a gruelling shopping trip, Harry was not going to complain.

This set the stage for the coming days. Each morning Nym took him to the park, and they ran the route. Harry had to admit it was getting easier, and when after four days he was able to do the circuit within half an hour Nym rewarded him by joining him in the shower for some fun. This of course only inspired him further.

Following their shower and a quick lunch it was back to school revisions. Nym was watching Harry brew some Potions he should have had in third year according to the curriculum – Snape had skipped a lot of basic instruction, she found as she went over Harry's school years with him – when Hedwig flew in.

“Note for me girl?” Harry looked up.

“Oi! Pay attention to the fire ya goof,” Nym chastised him. “I'll take that Hedwig, mister Explosion there needs to watch out he doesn't hurt himself.”

Hedwig barked out something that sounded suspiciously like a laugh as she landed near Nym and let her take the letter off her leg.

“'News' from Headquarters,” Nym said in a sarcastic tone. “Well at least they're writing you now, seems my rant had a little effect. Should I put them aside for later?”

“Nah you read through them, tell me if there's anything interesting,” Harry decided. The Wigenweld Potion was not particularly difficult, but like all Potions it needed constant attention during the initial brewing phase.
Nym opened the first letter, “Ron complains he is in trouble with his mum, she's making him disinfect the doxies on the second floor,” she read out loud. “He's also angry Hermione is giving him the cold shoulder and nobody else wants to play chess with him.”

“That's it?”

“Yup,” Nym popped her lips at the last 'p', then opened the next letter. “Hmm, Hermione is reminding you you need to do your homework, and she'll go over your essays later.”

“Imagine that, a girl telling me I need to do school work,” Harry commented and shot her a wink.

“Keep working you,” Nym shot him a grin back. “Oh this is better. Apparently Ron still can't get the Unlocking Charm to work. She put the Locking Spell on her trunk – I told you Ron was caught with his grubs on her stuff before right? – and they caught the red-haired idiot failing to cast it as he tried to get back in her stuff. Apparently he forgot the incantation. Guess that explains why Ron's in trouble again,” Nym laughed.

“He forgot Alohamora? Man, Hermione used that one in her first year!” Harry sniggered. “Anything else?”

“Eh, she's telling you not to feel bad over last year, and that she hopes she can see you soon. Not a word on where she is though, guess she is still following the Headmaster's orders there.”

“Well at least she's telling me something,” Harry shrugged. “Okay this Potion needs just a few more stirs and I'm done.”

“Last letter is from the little firecracker,” Nym read through it. “Ginny is upset with Ron as well, and mentions she wishes you were there. Apparently she had a bit of a fight with her mother over talking back to Dumbledore over you being locked at Durskaban. Molly has her cleaning up the carpets for that, but she says it was worth it. Good on her!”

“Yeah, she's proving to be a good friend,” Harry smiled. He put out the flame charm below the cauldron, and began cleaning up the ingredients.

“All done then Mr Great Harry Potter Sir?” Nym put the letters away for Harry to read in full later, and walked to her beau to inspect his work.
“All done Auror Nymphadora Tonks Madam,” Harry joked back.

“Harry... remember what I said I'd do if you used the name?” Nym growled.

“Oh crap... you'll have to catch me first!” Harry yelled, running out the door. A wide smile belying her mock anger, Nym gave chase.

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Another couple of days later Harry was beginning to feel the effect of working out. He felt stronger and healthier than ever before, even more so than when Oliver Wood was driving the Quidditch Team hard. Nym definitely seemed to appreciate his enhanced stamina as well.

The revisions of his school work also meant that he found it easier and easier to cast spells, and with Nym instructing him in Potions he finally understood why it made a difference in what direction you stirred, what kind of ladle you used, and how the ingredients were chopped, sliced, or diced – something Snape should have taught him but never bothered to. To his surprise, Harry found he actually liked making potions now. It helped that his current instructor liked to reward him with kisses rather than detentions...

As they were lounging on Nym's couch later that afternoon watching a film – ‘The Princess Bride’, one of her favourites – a brown owl flew into the window. Nym accepted the letter, and read through it, then paused the VCR.

“Bonesy wants to see us tomorrow love, she has some more questions on the memory I guess.”

“I was wondering about that, nothing happened so far. And the Prophet is still slandering my name.”

“Don't worry hero, only idiots believe that,” Nym reassured him.

“So that means ninety percent of Hogwarts at least,” Harry grumbled.

“Oi you're... well... okay you're right,” Nym apologetically said. “Don't see what we can do about it though, there are no libel or slander laws on our side so the only thing you could do is send in a letter with your side of the story, but they might not even bother to print it. I think the Minister is behind this, Fudgy is terrified of You-Know-Who really being back.”
“But doesn't Madam Bones have my memory now? They have actual proof now!”

“I know, and Bonesy knows, but it's not like she can just take Fudgy by the collar and force him into her pensieve. Although that would be funny,” Nym laughed. “We can ask Bonesy tomorrow.”

“I guess,” Harry sounded a bit morose. “I'd hoped it would all be over once she got the memories, don't tell me I'll have to go talk with the Minister himself again at one point. He ignored me after the Third Task, and also when I helped Sirius escape.”

“That's why Bonesy is taking it slow ya goof, she's taking the official path,” Nym bopped him on the head. “Now sit back down and let me rest between your arms. I want to watch my film with my boyfriend.”

“More Muggle Studies it is,” Harry smiled.

They skipped their morning run the next day since Madam Bones had requested an early meeting. Just before nine, Nym side-along apparated Harry to the Ministry Atrium, and they made their way past the guard. Harry noticed a new sign hung on the wall, 'No owls past this point'.

The lift cabin was already occupied by several people, one of them a rather short and fat woman wearing ugly green clothes with a pink cardigan on top. She wrinkled her nose in distaste as Harry stepped into the cabin.

They rode up to the second floor, then got out. Harry looked back at the lift before the doors closed, and saw the rather toad-like woman glare at him.

“What's that woman's problem?” Harry asked Nym after the doors closed.

“That's Madam Umbridge, the Senior Undersecretary to Fudge,” Nym said with a shudder. “She's bad news Harry, best avoid her if you can.”

“She looks like a toad,” Harry offered.
Nym winced, “Don't let her hear you say that or she'll make your life a living hell. Smidge, that's one of my fellow Aurors, he said something like that in the lunch room here and she heard him. The next day he was permanently reassigned to Azkaban.
“She does look like a toad though,” Nym giggled.

They walked past the Auror desks and a few smaller offices until they arrived at Madam Bones' door. Nym knocked, and they were let inside.
“Auror Tonks, Mister Potter, thanks for coming,” Madam Bones greeted them. She indicated the two chairs waiting for them and sat down behind her desk.

“Nym said you had more questions Madam,” Harry spoke.

“Nym?” Madam Bones raised an eyebrow. “Mister Potter, I have reviewed your memory extensively, along with Auror Proudfoot, one of my top men. We believe that this is sufficient evidence to bring the matter to the Wizengamot, and call in the named 'former' Death Eaters for questioning.”

“That's great! Serves Malfoy right, after that diary stuff and all he got away scot free,” Harry beamed.

“Diary? You'll need to tell me about that later mister Potter,” Madam Bones sounded intrigued. “Now if I may continue uninterrupted,” Harry blushed a bit, “Unfortunately almost all the men named are considered upstanding citizens, and some of them are 'personal friends' of our Minister. As such, it will take a lot of time to prepare the case. I don't want to risk moving too early, and have them find out. At this stage they could easily force me to drop it still.”

“Understood madam,” Harry frowned a bit. “And what about Voldemort?”

Nym tensed, Madam Bones winced. “Please do not use that name mister Potter. I understand you were raised to be ignorant, but those of us that survived the war still remember the Taboo on it. That name is not offered in civilized company,” she rebuked him.

“I apologize Madam,” Harry dropped his head. “Headmaster Dumbledore told me that I should use it as fear of the name is giving more power to him.”

“Dumbledore is an idiot sometimes,” Madam Bones nearly spat. “Now Mister Potter, we've been able to successfully identify nearly everyone in your memory, except for this 'Wormtail' fellow.
From your interactions with him, it seems you know who he is.”

“Wormtail is the betrayer of my family,” Harry growled. “I nearly had him in my third year.”

Madam Bones blinked, “Sirius Black? Was he under polyjuice at the time?”

“What? No!” Harry looked confused. “Wormtail is Peter Pettigrew! Sirius Black is innocent, as I told the Minister two years ago.”

“Mister Potter, tell me everything.” Madam Bones took out a self-writing quill, and sat back.

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“Unbelievable, that man!” Madam Bones had stood up after Harry finished retelling the events of the Shrieking Shack and after, and was pacing around, her monocle dropped and dangling from its chain.

“Who do you mean Madam?” Nym asked. She had sat silently as Harry told his story, holding his hand for support.

“Dumbledore! He is supposed to be the Chief Warlock and Merlin knows what other possible influence he has, but he doesn’t lift a finger to help an innocent man?”

“But the Minister ignored us,” Harry defended his Headmaster.

“Mister Potter,” Amelia sat back down. “I can understand that you have a skewed view of the Ministry, and I don’t blame you, but he is still the Chief Warlock. He could call a trial for Mister Black today, and the Minister would be forced to give him one. If your godfather is as innocent as you believe he is, he would be a free man by the end of the day.”

“Then... why hasn't he?” Harry insecurely asked.

“If wish I knew that Mister Potter.” Amelia put her monocle back in, and read through Harry's
story a bit. “I want that memory as well before you leave. You should have brought this up last time, this will take at least as much time as the other business. I hesitate to ask, but do you have any more interesting tales for me?”

“Erm, what do you know about the Basilisk?” Madam Bones paled.

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Madam Bones looked to have aged a few years as she took her head out of the pensieve. Harry had given her the memories of the end of first, second, and third year, and she had watched them all in succession.

“A class one possession and a proscribed magical artefact. Then the next year you kill a class-5 fifty feet magical creature. And then you scare off a hundred Dementors. If I didn't see these memories I'd...” Madam Bones went silent a bit, and closed her eyes to clear her head.

“He must be going senile. I refuse to believe the alternative,” she said to herself.

“Erm boss? You okay?” Nym sounded worried. She too was shocked, having viewed the memory along with her boss and her boyfriend. She now hung on to his arm for support.

“Auror Tonks, no I'm not okay,” Madam Bones let out a sigh. “I just had to find out that Hogwarts, supposedly the safest place in Britain, was home to at least two class-5 wizard-killers, has had You-Know-Who walking around while possessing a teacher, has employed another teacher who liked to obliviate his students – and as soon as Lockhart can do more than drool he's going on the docks for that -, has a member of the Wizengamot prepare to cast a bloody KILLING CURSE on a student, and that's just the first two of Mister Potter's years! And all the time Dumbledore hasn't even told anyone!”

She rubbed her monocle. “Auror Tonks, new assignment. You're to get yourself hired as the new DADA teacher. I want eyes and ears inside Hogwarts. No scrap that, I want Hogwarts closed, Susan and Harry at Beauxbatons and Dumbledore either in chains in Azkaban or being treated for severe dementia at St. Mungo's, but I can't have that yet. So for now, you'll just have to be my woman on the inside.”

“Yes ma'am,” Nym nodded. Joy at being able to stay closer to Harry began to override the shock of seeing what Harry had gone through.

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“Yes ma'am,” Nym nodded. Joy at being able to stay closer to Harry began to override the shock of seeing what Harry had gone through.

“Mister Potter, I know my Auror has been training you,” Madam Bones focused on Harry again. As he began to splutter she glared at him and Nym. “Don't bother to deny it. Now officially, I don't know she is doing this and can't support it. Unofficially, I hope she's doing a damned good job, and
is also teaching you the messenger Patronus. Because the next time you are in any way in danger at that death trap masquerading as a school, I expect you to send me your stag so I can get my Aurors over there and do my damned job, am I understood?"

“Yes ma'am,” both answered.

“Good. Now Mister Potter, go outside for a moment, I need to talk to my Auror in private.”

“Go on hero, I'll be right out,” Nym smiled at him. Harry stood up and walked out the door.

“So what do we need to talk about boss?” Nym had watched Harry exit and now turned back, and found herself under Madam Bones' glare.

“Auror Tonks, what is the age of consent in Magical Britain?”

“Err...” Nym shrunk back in herself under the glare, but had to answer. “Fourteen for girls, and fifteen for boys, madam. Err... why?”

“And what is Mister Potter's birthday?”

“July 31st madam,” Nym answered quickly. “Oh... crap.”

“Oh crap' indeed,” Madam Bones said in a dry tone. “Dammit Nymphadora, I should arrest you, you know. But you're having a great influence on him, he's looking much better than the last time I saw him, and I don't want him to slide back into depression. Really, couldn't you wait until August before hopping in his bed?”

Nym had the decency to look guilty.

Madam Bones sighed. “You're lucky I like you, Auror, so I'll have to let it slide. But for magic's sake, DO NOT GET CAUGHT before August, am I clear?”

“Yes ma'am,” Nym gulped.
“Right. Now get out of here. Make sure you leave Mister Potter somewhere safe, and then go make Dumbledore hire you as a teacher. Officially you're now on an extended assignment working directly for me, I'll smooth things over with your squad leader.”

“Yes ma'am, thank you ma'am,” Nym blurted out.

“Get out of here already,” Madam Bones waved her off.
'Droma' Tonks hadn't heard from her daughter in a few days, not in itself that unusual, but usually her daughter would at least send a note about her new love interest by owl.

'Could she really have gone for the Potter boy?' Droma thought to herself. Deciding to check for herself, she apparated to Bethnal Green late that afternoon. She and Ted both had a key to Nymphadora's flat, 'just in case', so she let herself in... and found herself stopped by an unfamiliar House Elf in the small entrance hallway.

“Who is yous? The Master and Mistress is not being ready for guests,” the diminutive being spoke.

“I am Andromeda Tonks, Nymphadora's mother. Who are you Elf? My daughter didn't tell me she had bonded one,” Droma said in a stern tone. Her parents had had House Elfs, but she and Ted had never taken one into bondage. Ted felt it was wrong somehow.

“I is being Dobby, servant to The Great and Powerful Master Harry Potter Sir,” the Elf said proudly.

“Oh... so Harry Potter is in here with my daughter?” Droma got a smile on her face.

“Master Great Harry Potter Sir is making little wizards with Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks,” Dobby nodded. “Should Dobby tell Master Great Harry Potter Sir and Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks Madam that Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks Madam's mother is being here?”

“Making little wizards?” Droma raised an eyebrow, then let out a small laugh. “Oh no Dobby, don't interrupt them! Just tell my daughter that she and her beau are expected for tea this weekend.”
“Dobby is tellings them later... they is makings a lot of noise now,” the Elf apologized. Laughing softly, Droma left.

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Privet Drive, Little Whinging

“I say Pet, the Boy has been rather quiet,” Vernon mused as he was reading his newspaper. The Dursleys had arrived back home the previous day to find their home as they had left it, and the Boy had been in his room.

Petunia snorted, “As long as the Freak doesn't bother us, I say we let him be. The last thing I want is tongues wagging about how sad he looks.”

“Quite right Pet, quite right. Shows how rotten that branch of your family is, if you don't mind me saying. Now Dudley, that is a fine young lad!”

Up the stairs, in Harry's room, the simulacrum was staring at a wall. It had limited intelligence and only a vague copy of the real Harry's memories, but looking at the plaster felt nice.

In the back garden, Sturgis Podmore hid under an invisibility cloak. As far as Order assignments went, this one wasn't too bad: all he had to do was check on the Dursley home and see if anything was going on. And other than the whale, giraffe, and baby hippo returning, everything was fine. Harry stayed in his room, and no other wizards or witches were anywhere near.

A few streets of Wisteria Walk was a small park, which once had been a nice place to play for the children of Little Whinging. Dudley Dursley and his gang were currently in the process of breaking the last swing into pieces. Just as Dudley got a nice kick in that splintered the wood, Piers called over: the joint he had been rolling was ready.

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Bones Manor, Yorkshire
Amelia had a rare day off, and was catching up with Susan. Susan's best friend Hannah was staying over as well.

“Susan, I was hoping Hannah and you could tell me about the end of your school years so far,” Amelia asked the girls.

“What do you want to hear auntie?”

“Just what happened at school, as far as you know.”

“Oh, well as I recall, first year ended with the snakes winning the House Cup, but at the last moment Professor Dumbledore gave an immense number of House Points to his favourite Gryffindors for no reason,” Susan offered.

“They were dead last before, but ended up winning. Sure, they beat Slytherin, but it was hardly fair,” Hannah added.

“I see. Didn't they explain why?”

“No, just some vague stuff about 'a good chess game', and 'bravery','” Susan recalled. “Other than that, not much I can think of. Unless you count Professor Quirrell disappearing.”

“And he was never found,” Amelia nodded. “And your second year?”

“Well, there was the whole Chamber and Heir thing, as I wrote in my letters,” Susan looked over at Hannah.

“We thought Harry Potter was the Heir for a bit, as he turned out to be a Parselmouth, but then that Granger bint got petrified, and we know Harry'd never hurt a friend. Did we ever apologize to him for that Susie?”

Susan winced, “No... anyway auntie, Professor Dumbledore got suspended, then we heard a student had gone missing, but the next morning Professor Dumbledore was back, and the year ended as normal.”
“Except that Professor Lockhart was taken to the hospital,” Hannah added.

“Yes, he's still in St. Mungo's,” Amelia checked with her notes. “And third year?”

“Susan got her first kiss,” Hannah blurted out.

“Hannah!”

“Oh? Was it that Macmillan boy?” Amelia said with a smile.

“Erm... yes...” Susan blushed, so Hannah took up the tale. “Other than that, that mass murdered Sirius Black apparently was in the school, although nobody outside Gryffindor ever saw him. There was some trouble with the Dementors,” both girls shuddered, “and they nearly killed Cedric and Harry during the Hufflepuff-Gryffindor Quidditch match.”

“Oh, and at the end of the year the rumours said Professor Snape had rescued Harry Potter and his two friends from Sirius Black and a werewolf, but nobody had any details,” Susan offered. “At the closing feast Professor Lupin was gone, and they said in the train that he had been the werewolf and had helped Black escape.”

“Who said that?” Amelia asked.

“The Head Boy, Percy Weasley,” Hannah recalled. “Not sure where he got his info from.”

“And fourth year?”

“Well there was the tournament, and the Yule Ball,” Susan and Hannah both got dreamy smiles as they remembered the magical dance. “Harry cheated somehow and got into the tournament, and actually did very well.”

“Cedric was great though,” Hannah said in a sad tone.

Susan nodded, and continued, “The tasks were a bit boring other than the first one. We sat at the lake for over an hour and saw nothing, and the third task we were just looking at a maze. There
was a lot of panic when Harry returned with Cedric de– dead...” she trailed off.

“That was horrible,” Hannah shuddered. “The rest was confusing. Professor Dumbledore said Cedric had been murdered by You-Know-Who and that Harry had fought him off, and then Professor Moody was suddenly in St. Mungos, and everybody was scared and confused.”

“The Prophet says Harry and Professor Dumbledore are liars,” Susan stated. “Aunty, do you know the truth?”

“Not yet girls, but I'm starting to find out,” Amelia took out her monocle and rubbed it. “Be careful though. There are many signs Harry may be telling the truth. “Now, why don't you two go to the back garden and work on your tan? Susan, you want Eddie to be drooling over you when you get back, don't you?”

Susan's face suddenly got as red as her hair.

———

_Grimauld Place, London_

Ronald Weasley had overheard his twin brothers earlier that summer:

“Oi Fred, got into Angelina's knickers yet?”

“Not yet George, but she'll give up her charms to this wizard soon enough,” Fred had laughed. “How about you, any luck with Alicia yet?”

“A gentlewizard never tells, but I did get to see the treasure she has in hers,” George had boasted. Sadly Ronald had not gotten any more information as then was when his mother had found him listening at his brother's door, and had set him to work.

It was not fair that girls got to hide treasure in their underthings! He had never had more than two Knuts to rub together, and now he found out that all girls got stuff for free!

Two weeks ago he had almost found Hermione's, he was sure. He had been rummaging through her trunk to find what she was hiding, but only found her bras so far. What she used for them
puzzled him, so he had been trying how to wear it when his mother had come in the girls' room. Apparently it was not allowed for him to wear Hermione's bra on his head, but how else was he supposed to find out if they could serve as ear muffs!

And last week he had been caught again. He had been trying to get back in Hermione's trunk, but she had locked it somehow. And the bloody unlocking spell wouldn't work, no matter how hard he yelled 'Open the door-a!' Come to think of it, all that yelling might have been how he got caught...

But this time he would not fail. While cleaning the house he had found a knife, and now here he was back in the girls' room, and used it to pry open the lock to Hermione's trunk. Revealed before him were her clothes, the treasure would be his! Ron reached for her clothes to move them out of the way and reveal her knickers... but as soon as his hands reached inside, he was blasted straight up in the air, and stuck to the ceiling of the room.

A loud noise started from the trunk: “Panty raid in progress! Panty raid in progress!”

Ron didn't need to be genius to know he was in deep trouble now.

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“Thank you boys,” Hermione beamed at the twins. The new alarm system they had designed for her had worked perfectly: Ron was now stuck cleaning up the ceiling room that doubled as the hippogryff's pen, after an hour long screaming rant by Molly, and Arthur had promised him a long chat after Ron was ready with his first of many tasks.

“Our pleasure Hermione,”

“And we really don't want that git,”

“We unfortunately have for a brother,”

“To make you think all Weasley men are pigs,” the twins said in tandem.

“Honestly, I don't know what got into him,” Hermione grumbled. “Why on earth is he so intent on getting in my trunk?”

“Well...”
“That is to say...”
“It's not *that* strange;”
“Not really...”

“Oh? Why on earth not?” Hermione sounded intrigued.

The twins looked at each other, and communicated silently.
“Hermione Granger,”
“Our brother may have only realised recently,”
“But to some of us it's always been clear you're a girl.”
“And not just any girl...”
“But a girl any bloke would be lucky to be dating,”
“We just failed to teach him how to properly woo you.”

“Woo me?” Hermione blinked twice. “You are making fun of me, aren't you? There's no way any boy'd be interested in me like... that.”

“For such as supposedly smart witch,”
“You sure can say the stupidest things,”
the twins said in a soft tone.

“Oh this is just *perfect,*” Hermione rolled her eyes. “As if it's not enough Ronald keeps trying to get his paws on my clothes, now I have you two make fun of me as well? Honestly, are all men in this family disgusting pigs? I really should – Hmmhf!”

Her rant was broken as one of the twins' lips met hers. Hermione stiffened, but after just a slight hesitation relaxed, being held by the one brother as the other kissed her still. Finally he let go.

“Oh... wow...” Hermione softly brushed her hand over her lips.

“You're an amazing kisser... and a seriously sexy young woman,” Fred-or-George said in a serious tone for once. “Any bloke that you decide to let close will be a lucky one.”
“Just open your eyes and accept it Hermione,” the other twin said, walking around her. “Merlin I'd love to see if you and I could work myself, but Angelina and I are getting serious...”

“And I apologize for kissing you out of the blue, but I just had to do it,” the first twin said with a smile on his face. “If I weren't trying to date Alicia, I'd go for you in a heartbeat Miss Granger.”

Hermione stared after the two as they left her room, feeling more confused than she'd ever been in her life.

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_Malfoy Manor, Wiltshire_

Snape rushed up the stairs to the Master Bedroom, Potion flask in hand.

“I'm here Master,” he breathed out as he rushed through the doors. Propped up in the Malfoys' bed was the Dark Lord Voldemort, looking miserable. Narcissa Malfoy stood by the bed acting as a nurse, and was keeping his head cool with wet cloth.

“Did you bring me Headache Potions Severus?” Voldemort weakly asked.

“Yes Master, the strongest ones I can brew. May I?”

Voldemort nodded, and Snape poured the one he had been holding down the not-so-impressive-looking Dark Lord's throat.

“Severus... I know this is Potter's doing,” Voldemort said in a weak tone. “He has found a way to turn our connection against me... I've been feeling immense pain through it for the past fortnight. You will find a way to sever the link for me...”

“Yes my master,” Snape bowed. “If that will be all?”

“Leave me,” Voldemort whined. As Snape got out of the room he couldn't help but compare
Voldemort to his godson... both seemed to be little more than whiny brats at the moment.
Harry noticed Nym had something on her mind when they left the Ministry, and asked her “Nym, everything all right? What did Madam Bones want?”

“Everything's perfect hero,” Nym said with a smile. “Let's go home.” She took him by the hand, and apparated them back to her flat.
“Dobby?” Nym called out as soon as they re-materialized.

“Yes Great Master Harry Potter Sir's Miss Nym?” Dobby popped up next to them.

“Ugh... just call me Tonks,” Nym looked down at the Elf. She saw Harry suppressing a grin, and mock-glared at him. “Dobby, I need to head out for a bit. I trust you to keep my Harry safe – if anything happens, pop him back to Privet Drive, okay?”

“Yes Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks,” Dobby piped up, nodding energetically. “If Great Master Harry Potter Sir is in troubles Dobby do.”

“Nym? What's going on?” Harry took her by the hand.

“Nothing love, but I want to be certain you're safe. I need to go to Mumble Mumble and maybe Hogwarts, so I don't know how long I'll be out.” She answered, squeezing his hand with hers.

“You're going where?” Harry was sure she had said something, but for some reason he hadn't been able to hear it.

“Oh... I forgot you're not in to the secret yet,” Nym looked a bit embarrassed. “Dumbledore's the secret keeper so nothing I can do about that. I'm off to Order Headquarters. Do you want me to tell your friends anything while I'm there?”

“Some friends,” Harry grumbled. “Nah, better not... as far as they know, I'm stuck in Privet Prison and you're no longer a guard, remember? I'll write Ginny a note to send with Hedwig later.”

“You do that hero,” Nym leant in and kissed his cheek. “Also work on your binding spell a bit.
When I get back, I'm going to see how well you hold up against a trained Auror in a duel.

“Where are you going to find an Auror who knows how to fight then?” Harry grinned mischievously at her.

“Git,” Nym said lovingly at him. “I'll be back soon, stay safe!” She saw Dobby nod, and apparated away to reappear on the doorstep of number 12 Grimmauld Place a little later. She knocked on the door, and waited for someone to let her in.

The door opened to how Severus Snape. “Nymphadora... you are not expected here,” the cantankerous Potioneer said with a sneer on his face. “Password?”

“Lux Invicta, and it's Tonks!” Nym bit back at him. “What are you doing here?”

“Step inside silly woman, do you want us to get caught?” Snape glared at her, as he made room for her to pass. Nym was glaring back at him, and so didn't pay attention to her feet... and crashed straight into her nemesis, the troll leg umbrella stand. It fell over with a loud clang, and the curtain in front of Walburga Black's portrait shot open.

“Now look what you did, infuriating woman!” Snape insulted the Auror, yelling to be heard over the portrait's stream of insults.

“What in Mordred's Name is going on here?” Sirius rushed in from the far door. “Snivellus, stop bothering my cousin!” Sirius looked angrily at Snape as he took in the situation.

“You'd do well to remember your place, mutt,” Snape said back in a sharp tone.

“Right... err... I'll be back,” Nym softly said, backing away from the two enemies. She rushed to the kitchen, closing the door behind her with a sigh of relief... and saw almost the entire Order looking at her.

“Errr... wotcher all,” she said in a cheery tone. “Thought I'd drop by.”

“Well, you were unexpected, but are always welcome Nymphadora,” Dumbledore was the first to speak. Nothing in his demeanour indicated he was in the least surprised to see her.

“It's Tonks sir,” Nym rolled her eyes as she corrected him again.
“Ah, forgive an old man,” Dumbledore nodded. “Do sit down dear girl. We were just discussing the need to secure the Hall of Prophecies.”

As Nym sat down, the discussion the Order members had been having started back up, with people arguing the benefits and disadvantages of staging a guard in the Department of Mysteries. Nym was not in possession of all the facts, so kept silent as the others talked on. Snape and Sirius entered the room as the discussion went on, sitting back down on opposite sides of the table, Sirius taking his seat back next to Nym. Finally Dumbledore decided that a guard was needed, and all but ordered Arthur Weasley to find a way to get access to the access corridor to the Department of Mysteries for himself, and the other Order Members.

“With that decided, I think we can call this meeting to a close. I am sure we all have other things to do?” Dumbledore's eyes were twinkling as he looked over the table at his loyal followers.

“Actually there was one thing sir,” Nym spoke up as she noticed the others kept silent. “But it's regarding Hogwarts, not really Order business,” she added as she saw some of the others roll their eyes. Apparently the meeting had been going on for a while now.

“Will we be needing Severus and Minerva for this?” Dumbledore asked her.

“No sir... or maybe Professor McGonagall,” Nym amended herself. McGonagall was the Deputy Headmistress after all.

“Very well. Everyone other than Minerva then, thank you for coming. We will be meeting again next week.” The room cleared out, even the Weasleys and Sirius leaving, letting only Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Nym behind. “What was it you wanted to discuss Nym-- Miss Tonks?” Dumbledore sat back in his chair, looking relaxed.

“Well, actually, I had a favour to ask sir,” Nym haltingly started. “You see, with the cutbacks in the Auror budget and all, Madam Bones called me in today and said she would have to put me on unpaid leave for a while... I'm still a junior Auror, and it's pretty much last one in, first one out...”

“I see,” Dumbledore stroked his beard. “That is unfortunate. I would normally not hesitate to lend you some money my dear, but in the current situation that is –”
“I'm not asking for money,” Nym quickly interrupted him. “Sir, the last time you mentioned it, you said you were still looking for a Defence teacher for the upcoming school year. Is that still the case?”

Dumbledore actually looked surprised, but quickly took on a neutral expression again. “Alas, my only candidate was Remus, but the Board of Governors rejected his application citing he was a known werewolf. I am therefore still looking.”

Nym smiled, that was what she was hoping. “Well then sir, if you'll take me... I'd like to apply for the job.”

“You want to be the next DADA teacher?” Professor McGonagall sounded happy. “Albus, accept her! Miss Tonks was near the top of her NEWT class, and Pomona has nothing but good words for her.”

“I will trust your judgement Minerva,” Dumbledore nodded. “Very well then Miss Tonks, or I should say, Professor Tonks, you have the job. Please get your book list for all seven years ready as soon as possible, we were only waiting for your position to be filled. Minerva can fill you in on the details, I really need to get back to Hogwarts now.” He stood up, and extended his hand. A little hesitatingly, Nym shook it. “I am looking forward to working with you,” Dumbledore said as he squeezed her hand, then exited the kitchen.

“Oh this is wonderful,” Minerva beamed at Nym. “Don't tell Albus this, but I was afraid that if he hadn't found someone by mid July, the Ministry would step in. Merlin knows who they'd send to us...” She trailed off a bit, then shook her head to clear her senses. “Do you have lesson plans yet? If there is anything I can do to help, let me know all right?” Energetically she started telling Nym all about the teacher's responsibilities, and when she had to be at the castle, and other details.

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Nym felt a bit of a head-ache coming on as she exited the kitchen, leaving a happy McGonagall behind. Finding the entrance hallway empty and the curtain fortunately closed, she stepped into the library. Her face lit up as she found Sirius reading there.
“Just the escaped criminal I was looking for,” she teasingly said.

“Hey, it's my cousin's brat,” Sirius said back with a grin. “What did you need to talk with Dumbledore about?”
“Err, can you raise a privacy ward?” Nym said as she walked further in, and took a seat.

“Sure,” Sirius agreed, raising his wand to cast the required spells. “There, that locked the door and should stop eavesdroppers.”

“Great,” Nym relaxed. “Harry and I went back to Bonesy, she had some more questions about Harry's memory. When she saw Pettigrew Harry brought up you were innocent, and that he had proof – he gave her his memory of your escape from the Shrieking Shack and all.”

“Woah...” Sirius breathed out sharply. “So... I am going to be a free man?”

“She's working on it,” Nym said encouragingly. “Harry also gave her other memories... to but it bluntly, Hogwarts is a death trap for my man. Madam Bones ordered me to stay close to him, so—”

“I bet you just hate that assignment,” Sirius threw in with a laugh.

“Shut it you,” Nym blushed from head to toe, even her hair turning red. “An... anyway, so I am the new DADA teacher...”

Sirius whistled, “Damn, my godson is a lucky lad! Not even I got one of my teachers in my bed at Hogwarts!”

“Should I call in Professor McGonagall, oh ladies man you?” Nym decided that teasing back was probably the best way to get him to stop.

“Errr... not quite,” Sirius answered, and barked out a laugh. “You should talk to Remus, he's upstairs in the Trophy Room. I bet he would let you use his lesson plans.”

“Thanks, good advice,” Nym appreciated the help. “The simulacrum worked out perfectly as well. I bet the Dursleys don't have a clue, let alone the Order babysitters.”

“How is Harry otherwise? You got him over his sulk yet?” Sirius desperately wanted more time
with his godson... but Dumbledore was insistent on not getting Harry to Headquarters until his birthday at the soonerest.

“Did I ever,” Nym started to blush again. “I've been training him a bit, nothing major, but starting Auror stuff. With his rotten luck he'll need the experience for the upcoming year.”

“And I bet getting him all muscle-y and toned up is a nice benefit as well,” Sirius couldn't resist. As Nym started to blush again, he burst out in laughter.

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Nym apparated back to her flat and found Harry lounging on her couch watching the television. ‘Can't have that,’ she thought to herself, and raised her wand at him. “Pungo”, her Stinging Hex flew over to the couch... and hit the back of it, as Harry rolled out of the way.

“Incarcerous!” the young wizard yelled, and Nym had no time to dodge, as ropes bound her. “Well well well, look what I caught,” Harry said with an amused tone.

“Yes well done Harry, now let me up,” Nym grumbled. “Quick moves there, I thought I had you. How did you know I was there?”

“I heard you pop in,” Harry said as he walked over to her. “Look at you, all tied up and at my mercy.”

Nym felt a light shudder of delight as he put her in a sitting position. Where is the timid boy I took from Privet Drive?” she wondered to herself.

“Okay hero, you had your fun, let me up,” she said out loud.

“Nah, I think not. I earned a reward didn't I?” Harry shot her a wink. He put his arms around her, and somehow lifted her up in his arms.

“Harry? What are you planning?” Nym tried, and failed, to keep the anticipation out of her voice. She was not used to not being in control, but by Morgana, she liked it with him!
“You’ll see,” Harry placed her on the living room table so that her legs were dangling over the side. With the ropes still tying her arms against her body, Nym was unable to move much so had no choice but to let him manipulate her into position. “I think you're wearing far too many clothes,” Harry whipped his wand out of his arm holster again, and pointed at the tied up Auror. “Evanesco,” Harry cast, and Nym felt more than saw her jeans disappear.

“That was my favourite pair! You're so going to pay for that mister,” she complained, but her heart was not in it. “Harry? What are you doing?” Her boyfriend knelt down before the table, and put her legs on his shoulders. “Harry? Oh!” As he began laying kisses on her thigh and working his way up, Nym stopped her complaining.

Later that afternoon Nym was lying on the floor, her arms and legs still wrapped around Harry, as he had almost dozed off. His head was resting on her chest when he woke up a little and raised his head. “So... what did you have talk about with the Headmaster anyway?” he asked her, then put his head back down and gave a lick on the nipple he saw in front of him.

“Enough of that love,” Nym said with a giggle in her voice. “Time enough for that later. Don't you want to hear my news?”

Reluctantly Harry got up, and helped her to her feet. They began gathering their clothes and re-dressing. “So, are you going to tell me or what?” Harry asked her as he put his T-shirt over his head.

Nym wriggled into a new pair of trousers then took a pose. “Ask me again,” she instructed him.

“Okay... what's your news Nym?” Harry sounded amused by her antics.

“That's Professor Tonks to you mister,” Nym said in a stern tone, but her eyes were shining with delight.

“Whaa?” Harry looked at her stupidly.
“And here I thought you were smart,” she let out a giggle. “I told you I wouldn't let you out of my sight again hero. This next year, I'm your Defence teacher!”


“Just imagine it luv... lots of late night detentions with me,” Nym stepped closer, and hugged him to her again. “Now won't that be a nice change from before?”

“Oh wow... that is good news. And I think I can see the benefits of it,” Harry mischievously answered, wrapping his arms around her and kneading her bum.

Before they could get into any further celebration, they were interrupted by Dobby popping back in the room.
“Is Great Master Harry Potter Sir and his Miss finished makings a mess in the room?” he asked them.

Harry blushed, leaving Nym to answer that yes, they were.

“Then Dobby is startings the cleanings. Oh, and Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks' mother said that she is expectings her and Great Master Harry Potter Sir for tea this weekend,” Dobby informed them.

Nym blanched, “Was... was she here Dobby?”

“Yes Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks,” Dobby nodded. “Dobby is tellings her Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks and Great Master Harry Potter Sir is busy makings little wizards, so Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks' mother is leavings.” Dobby drooped his head a bit, “Did Dobby do wrong?”

“Oh no Dobby, you are a perfect Elf,” Nym assured him quickly, then turned to her boyfriend. “Err... well love, how do you feel about meeting my parents this weekend?”

Harry looked like he'd rather be back at the Little Hangleton graveyard than right beside her just then.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Time skips in this chapter, hopefully it's all still clear.

“Ted, how do you feel about a little payback for our dear Nymphadora?” Andromeda asked as she was preparing the table for tea.

Ted looked over at his wife. With her current expression it was easy to see the resemblance to the infamous Bellatrix Lestrange, and he mentally sighed with regret that his sister-in-law had gone insane. “What do you have planned Droma?”

“Nymphadora probably thinks she is so clever in doing the 'opposite of what I want', but I think Harry is good on her. Do you realise this is the first time she's not contacted either of us in over two weeks over some minor problem?”

Ted thought back. Previously, their daughter would come around at least once a week, usually complaining about a bad date, or the lack of any dates, or the fact that the man she had been infatuated with only a few days earlier turned out to be not right, or worse, that he had asked her to take on a specific appearance for him...

“You're right love,” Ted agreed. “Can it be little Nymphadora is finally growing up?”

“Hah! It'd be about time,” his wife said with a laugh. “So here's what I think we should do...”

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“Harry stop fidgeting, you look fine!” Nym was getting impatient. Who ever heard of a man taking longer to dress than his date?

“They're going to hate me,” Harry muttered. He pulled on his collar again. The new clothes he now had were nice, but he was used to clothes that were several sizes too large, so to him they felt constricting.

“Relax hero, mum and dad will love you,” Nym bent her head down and gave him a heated kiss.
“If you do well... I've a special reward in mind. Something I've never done for anyone before.”

“Oh?” Harry perked up. “What is it?”

“Wait and see lover, wait and see,” Nym's smile was present on her entire face. “Ready then?”

“Erm, Nym, are you going with your hair like that?” Harry hesitatingly asked. His girlfriend-slash-trainer had her hair in a bright green pixie cut.
“Not that there is anything wrong with that you always look great!” he quickly added as she frowned.

“Oh I guess you're right... Mum always wants me to look natural,” Nym frowned. Her hair lengthened, and turned jet black, and got curled as it turned frizzy, much like Hermione's hair tended to do, Harry noticed.

“I won't mind it wear it like that more often,” he offered. “It looks good on you.”

“Thanks lover,” Nym answered. “But there's a reason I don't go out like this... I look too much like my mad auntie, you see.”

“I only see the most beautiful woman in the world,” Harry said.

“Smooth mister, keep that up and you'll get your reward for sure,” Nym said with a little laugh. “Okay, no more delaying... ready to face the parents of the girl you've been shagging?”

Nym have him no more chance to reply, grabbed his arm, and apparated them away.

They re-appeared in a small yet formal room with a loud crack, facing two people with stern expressions on their faces.
“Err... hi? Mr Tonks, Mrs Tonks...” Harry hesitatingly said.

“Oh Nymphadora dear, he is simply adorable!” Andromeda Tonks exclaimed. She rushed closer, and pinched Harry's cheek. “Look Ted, isn't he a cute one?”
“Oi!” Harry complained, overlapped with Nym's loud complaining: “Mum!”

“Sorry dear, I just weren't expecting such a cute young boy,” Andromeda 'apologized' to Harry. “I must have words with that Elf of yours Nymphadora dear, quite a prank he played on us. Here I was expecting you to bring your latest conquest over, and instead it turns out you're simply babysitting young Harry there!”

“Babysit? What... what?!” Harry spluttered.

“Mum! Stop embarrassing Harry like that!” Nym cried out.

“Nymphadora, watch your tone young lady,” Ted answered her. “Hi there Harry, don't mind the wife,” he held out his hand. Tentatively, Harry shook it.

“Good to meet you lad. So my daughter is watching over you this summer?”

“Errr, yessir,” Harry answered. He looked to Nym for support, but she didn't catch his eye, she was too busy glaring at her mother.

“Oh, where are my manners,” Andromeda broke the tension between her and her daughter.

“Welcome to our humble home Harry, as hopefully Nymphadora has told you, I'm Andromeda, and my husband is Theodore. You may call us aunt Droma and uncle Ted.”

“Hi,” Harry simply said.

“Shall we adjourn to the kitchen then? Droma has prepared some sandwiches,” Ted suggested. Hesitantly Harry and Nym followed.

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“I know what we can do, time for pictures!” Andromeda exclaimed. They had just finished the bread and tea, with only idle chatter going on. Neither of Nym's parents was bringing up their relationship, and Harry and Nym definitely weren't volunteering.

“Pictures?” Nym paled. “No... Harry doesn't want to see that mum!”
“Nonsense dear, he'll love them,” Andromeda quickly walked off to the other room.

“I think we should go now,” Nym said in clipped tones to her father.

“But you only just got here, Nymba,” Ted replied.

“Daaaad! Don't call me that,” Nym whined.

“She used to have problems saying her full name, so from the time she was five to about seven she said her name was Nymba or Nymfa,” Ted clarified for Harry. “She was adorable back then.”

“Here, look Harry, little Nymphadora aged two,” Andromeda had re-appeared, and dropped a photo album on the table in front of him.

Harry looked, and saw a magical picture of a naked little girl running through grass. He looked to his side, and saw Nym sitting there with a mortified face.

“She used to hate keeping her clothes on!” Andromeda said with a laugh. “Here, this was her at three, painting.” The next picture showed the same naked girl covered in paint smears sitting on a sheet equally covered in paint, proudly working on some abstract painting, or child's drawing (same difference).

“Mummy! Why are you showing him those?” Nym whined.

“Don't complain dear, it's simply family photos. You've nothing to be embarrassed about,” Andromeda said.

“I can't believe you, you've never shown those to anyone before,” Nym complained some more.

“Oh, but you've only ever brought your boyfriends over,” Andromeda said in an elated tone. “Look through it Harry, lots of cute pictures of young Nymphadora,” she added in an aside to Harry, then back to her daughter: “You should have told me you were babysitting Harry here, I would have
gotten some toys.”

“Oi! I am nearly fifteen you know?” Harry raised his voice.

“I know sweetie,” Andromeda patted his head. “You just keep looking at the photos while the grown-ups have a chat, all right?”

Nym saw Harry getting worked up. “Mum, I really should go,” she tried again.

“Oh, such a short visit? Well if you must...” Andromeda theatrically sighed.

“Nymphadora, I’m proud of you,” Ted spoke up. “Setting aside your busy social life to be a bodyguard to young Mr Potter here, I’m glad you’re not doing, well, your usual things.” He offered her a smile.

“Yes, thanks dad,” Nym glared at her parents. “Come on Harry, we have to go.”

“Erm, bye Mr Tonks, Mrs Tonks,” Harry said. He couldn't deny being glad to leave.

“Aunt Droma and Uncle Ted Harry,” Andromeda corrected him. “Nymphadora dear, if you need a different babysitter some time soon so you can go on a date with someone like that good Lupin fellow, we’ll watch over little Harry for you,” she offered, a smile on her face.

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Nym spoke through her teeth, then roughly grabbed Harry's arm and they apparated out.

“You, my dear, are evil,” Ted put his arms around his wife. “She and Harry absolutely hate you now.”

“You were really good yourself,” Droma said, then laughed shortly. “Knowing our daughter, Harry is in for a long, hard time now. Hope he has Pepper-Up Potion!”

“I'd rather discuss our own sex life than our daughter's,” Ted breathed in his wife's ear. “Get thee
upstairs, wench!” He gave her bum a soft slap.

Giggling, Droma ran to the master bedroom.

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Nym and Harry re-appeared in her flat. “Dobby!” Nym yelled.

“Great Master Harry Potter Sir's Just-Call-Me-Tonks is callings?” Dobby asked as he appeared out of nowhere.

“Dobby, you have the day off. Harry and I will be... busy and don't want to be interrupted, got it?” Nym heatedly spoke.

“Dobby understands,” the Elf nodded, then popped out.

“Thinks she can make fun of me does she? Well I'll show her,” Nym grumbled. She turned around and walked determinedly towards Harry. “Oh I'll show her indeed,” she licked her lips as she watched her boyfriend.

“Nym? What do you have planned?” Harry wondered. Then she pushed him back against the living room table, and began fumbling with his belt.

“You just stand back hero, and thank the Founders your hot girlfriend is not going to let her stupid parents change her mind,” Nym said as she freed him from his pants. “I've never done this before... tell me if I'm doing it right okay?”

“Do what?” Harry stupidly asked... then her mouth engulfed him. “Ooooh...”

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There had been no Pepper-Up Potion in Nym's medicine cabinets earlier that day, but Dobby sneaked back in and placed several bottles he had bought in Diagon Alley.
Harry was grateful for them as even teenage stamina runs out after a few hours...

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Later that week Hedwig flew into Number 12 Grimmauld Place, and landed on the breakfast table in front of the Weasleys and Hermione.

Ginny was closest, and took a bit of bacon to give Hedwig, as she took the letter of the owl's leg.

“Oh look, Harry sent a letter,” she needlessly informed them, then read out:

Hi Ginny, Hermione, Ron, and twins (yes I know you're reading this),

Summer's been okay so far. I wish you guys would tell me a little more, for some reason I'm only getting the Daily Prophet every few days here and obviously the television isn't showing news from our world. Not that the Dursleys would let me watch it.

I've done all my homework, yes Hermione even my essays, and am really getting bored. What's going on with you guys? Are you still all at the same place? Can you tell me where it is now?

Maybe I shouldn't complain, but I'm really, really, really getting bored here. Ron, I'd even prefer de-gnoming the Burrow garden with you over just sitting here, at least that way I'd get some fresh air and we could fly. You know Quidditch is starting up again this year right? We're going to need a new Keeper, maybe you could try out? You're pretty good mate.

Write me back okay guys?

PS: Ginny, have the twins ever told you the map password?

“See Ronald? Even Harry did his homework,” Hermione commented to her other male friend.

“Wown Swee waw's whe wmig wealw,” Ron blurted out with a full mouth, bits of food and spittle flying out.

“Eew! Swallow before you speak, you Neanderthal!” Hermione punched his shoulder.

“Ouch! What're you hitting me for, you mental?!” Ron cried out after he swallowed. “All I said
was, 'Don't see what's the big deal', we have like a month and half left before the train comes don't we?"

“Ron, Hermione, we should really ask Dumbledore if we can't write back in more detail,” Ginny tried to stop them from fighting. Hermione was starting to get worked up again.

“We should do what the Headmaster says Ginny, you should know better,” Hermione actually wagged her finger as she chastised the younger girl.

“Whyeh Wiwwy, whliwthen two whew,” Ron agreed with Hermione, again with a full mouth. Nobody had even seen him stuff in another piece of bread.

“Ronald Billius Weasley, you disgusting slob!” Hermione rounded on Ron again.

Ginny took Harry's letter and stood up. She shared a look with her older twin brothers and left the kitchen for a more quiet room.

“Okay Fred, George, what's the map password Harry mentions at the end here?”

“I think that”
“Young Harrykins”
“Is trying to tell our baby sister”
“something he does not want the others to know,” the twins said in their tandem speak.

Ginny stamped her feet. “Tell me, or do I need to see if I can hit two people with the bat snot spell at once?” she glared at her older brothers.

“Easy there firefly!” the left one quickly said.
“If Harry did what we think he did, hold your wand to the paper and say 'I solemnly swear I'm up to no good',” twin two added.
“And say 'Mischief managed' to blank it again,” the first one added.

Ginny held her wand against the letter, “I solemnly swear I'm up to no good.”
More text started to appear:

*Hey Gin-Gin!*
If the twin terrors are still there, thank them for their help and ask them how the store is going okay? The rest of this letter is for you only, but you can tell Gred and Forge and Sirius about it in private if you want.

.

.

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Okay, they gone yet?

I wasn't lying, I really do miss you and the others a bit. But of course I'm not with the bloody Dursleys... I'm being worked to death by an evil Auror.

The handwriting suddenly changed:

Hey Ginny, this is Tonks. Harry's unable to keep writing on account of being tied up and plastered to the ceiling. Evil Auror indeed... someone needs to learn another lesson!

Anyway as Harry should have told you, we're going on a small holiday starting today. Can you believe his relatives never even took him to the sea? We had a favour to ask you. Can you watch over Hedwig, and send her back to us with a warning if the whiskered one suddenly decides to get Harry from Durskaban?

The handwriting changed back to Harry's chicken scrawl:

Oi Gin, you heard yet that Tonks is going to be our DADA teacher? Well let me warn you now... don't piss her off! Anyway we're off for now, I just wanted to than you again for being a real friend... your brother and Hermione really let me down. I hope I'll get to see you in person this summer, if not, let's chat on the train okay?

Love, Harry.

PS: remember, Mischief Managed

Ginny hid the text with the Marauder's closing words, and smiled. She'd have preferred it if Harry could be there with them all, but at least he was having fun – a whole lot of it – with Tonks.
Blackpool may not have been a tropical holiday spot, it was still Britain's domestic favourite holiday resort. Nym had booked a room in the Imperial Hotel on the North Promenade, which had a whole secret floor only visible for and accessible to wizards. The staff had several Muggleborn wizards and squibs on it, and all the wizarding rooms were sound proofed by default... which the two lovers took full advantage of.

Besides soaking in the sun, and teaching Harry to properly swim without Gillyweed, they learned several things that week:

Harry learnt to cast the Muggle repelling charm, which allowed them to have a private beach section;
Nym learnt how not to scrape him with her teeth, and suppress her gag reflex;
Sex on the beach was a great cocktail, but a horrible idea, as sand literally got everywhere...;
and that they could simply enjoy walking hand in hand over the promenade, enjoying each other's company.

All too soon the week ended and they had to go back. Harry's training regimen under Nym's guidance continued, and he really was getting into good shape.

He sent a few more letters to Headquarters holding no info about what he really was doing, Ron and Hermione sent nothing back.
Ginny wrote a few short notes, but couldn't write much as her mother or Dumbledore inspected all outgoing mail.

Before they knew it, July too was drawing to a close. Nym had worked out lesson plans for the upcoming school year with Remus's help and sent them off to Hogwarts, and it was one week to Harry's birthday when they got a summons from Madam Bones. Tuesday, the 25th of July, the two apparated to the Ministry just after 9 in the morning and went up to the DMLE Head's office.

"Harry, Nymphadora, thank you for coming so quickly," Madam Bones greeted them. "Take a seat."

"I was wondering when we'd hear from you boss," Nym said.

"It's been a busy month Auror," Madam Bones let out a sigh. "I am being stonewalled at every point. I tried to build a case against the Death Eaters, I really did... but it turns out that former Minister Bagnold actually gave them all a full amnesty for any crimes committed, not just a pardon!"
“What does that mean exactly ma'am?” Harry took Nym's hand in his as he asked this, it didn't sound good.

“Unfortunately Harry, it means that even with your memory as evidence that people like Malfoy and Macnair are still active Death Eaters, until they are caught actually committing a crime, I cannot do anything against them.” She looked guiltily at him.

“But they were there! With Voldemort! You can see their Dark Marks!” Harry cried out.

“Harry... please don't take this the wrong way, but there is no actual evidence that the person you saw was the Dark Lord,” Madam Bones carefully said.

“I was bloody there for the bleedin' ritual! I fought him!” Harry would have stood up, but for Nym's arm holding him in place.

“Harry, I know that,” Madam Bones stood up, placing both her hands on her desk in an imposing picture. “But you know what would happen if I take this before the judicial court? They'd claim that yes, you did see a ritual, and yes, the person in question claims to be You-Know-Who, but there is no factual proof. It could be someone under polyjuice or a glamour.” Madam Bones sat back down, and took out her monocle to clean it, stalling. “I am annoyed with this as well Harry, but this is not just speculation. I asked an old friend of mine, Tiberius Ogden, who is one of the most senior members of the Wizengamot and someone I trust to be perfectly honest in all cases, to give me an oath of secrecy. After he agreed, I let him look over your memories and discussed the possibility of a trial with him. He was the one to bring up the possibility that they'd dismiss it all, and I'm afraid that's exactly how it would go.”

“Fine!” Harry looked as annoyed as he sounded. “So what's next? We know the Dark Wanker is skulking around, but you won't do anything about it?”

“Hold your tongue young man!” Madam Bones calmly, but loudly answered him, then continued in a softer tone: “I am doing what I can Harry. You have to understand, the law is the law... even if it doesn't work in our favour. All my Aurors are under orders to watch the confirmed Death Eater like a hawk, and the first time any one of them steps out of line, we're on them. “As for You-Know-Who himself... my most trusted Aurors know he is back now. I cannot tell everyone, as I have reasons to believe some of them are affiliated with the Death Eaters... or too loyal to Dumbledore...” she looked at Nym, who winced a bit.

“Harry, the truth will come out. We are lucky in that the Dark Lord has not made a single move so far. We're watching the werewolf packs, the vampire covens, and I have asked our friends on the Continent to watch for people going to the Giant tribes, but nothing seems to be happening. Whatever You-Know-Who is doing, it's not recruiting from outside.”
“Sorry for my outburst,” Harry said after a pause. “Okay... so I guess the Voldemort business is on hold. What about my godfather though?”

Madam Bones looked annoyed again. “Fudge,” she simply said. “That... imbecile has it in his head that Sirius Black is You-Know-Who's right hand man, and is behind the trouble you had last year. I have raised the issue that he never had a trial, and that there may be evidence he is innocent, but Fudge refuses to allow me to call back the Kiss-on-Sight order.”

“Just bloody great,” Harry grumbled. “So even though you know he's innocent you're still going to murder him.”

Madam Bones winced a bit. “Mister Potter, if any of my Aurors capture your godfather, I will do all I can to keep him safe in a Ministry Holding cell until he can be brought before the Wizengamot court... but you have to understand, Minister Fudge could demand him to be brought before a Dementor at any time.”

Harry looked pensive a bit. “I'm not impressed by what passes for justice in the Ministry. So basically you're telling me that Sirius is best off trying to stay hidden?”

“Under this Minister, yes,” Madam Bones admitted. “Harry, I am so sorry but there's nothing I can do about it. Minister Fudge is a corrupt bastard, but he is immensely popular with the Wizengamot... and unless he is caught with his pants down, so to speak, there is no chance we can get rid of him now.”

“Yeah yeah,” Harry let out a deep sigh. “Thanks for trying at least ma'am, and for being honest with me. That's more than I get from Dumbledore.”

Harry was still annoyed when Nym took him home, at least until she managed to cheer him up like only she could.

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Minister Fudge read over the latest report from his Undersecretary. A frown appeared on his face and he called her in. “Dolores, what's this about Hogwarts? Don't you understand how important it is we get that school under control?” He demanded of her.
“Minister, I wasn't expecting Dumbledore to find someone this late in the year,” Umbridge said in a sweet tone. “You know Hogwarts is not under obligation to report to us, so I only found out this week when I applied.”

“But without you keeping an eye on the Headmaster, he can continue his foolish campaign against me!” Fudge looked worried. “Even with the Prophet reporting on that Potter boy being a liar prone to bouts of fantasy and Dumbledore losing his marbles, people are asking questions!”

“Don't worry Minister, I did not go in without a backup plan,” Umbridge smiled. Flowers would have wilted, if Fudge had had any on his desk. “Under Educational Decree Number Seven, dating back to the 1700s, the Ministry preserves the right to replace any teacher who is not qualified to teach,” she continued.

“That won't help,” Fudge muttered. “That's the province of the Wizarding Examinations Authority, and even though Binns has been dead for several years now, he still manages to get his students to pass with an Acceptable on Average.”

“Oh, but he's not the worst teacher at that school,” Umbridge really looked disgusting now as her smile went wider. “Dumbledore actually employs someone who has not even passed his own NEWTs, and therefore is fully disqualified to teach! And that's not even going into the fact the position is held by a demi-human creature...”

Fudge looked up pleased. “He made a simple mistake like that? Perfect... then that means...”

“That means I will simply show up at Hogwarts on September 1\textsuperscript{st}, and demand to take the position of Professor of Care of Magical Creatures, as it has not been filled since 1993,” Umbridge beamed.

“Dolores, I could kiss you!” Fudge exclaimed. Umbridge nearly swooned. “I see just one problem,” Fudge said after a pause. “Care is an optional class, so there is a chance that Potter brat could simply drop it.”

“I've thought about Potter,” Umbridge's smile turned more sinister. “Tell me Minister, how troublesome would it be if Potter had... an accident before Hogwarts?”
Chapter 10

Harry was sleeping in. He thought he was dreaming and remembering his summer so far, when he felt himself grow hard and felt soft lips engulf his member. Harry let out a moan: “Nym...” The sensation from his lower half intensified as he clearly felt more than heard someone giggle. Harry opened his eyes, and saw a head covered by an electric blue Mohawk bobbing over his lower half. “Oh Merlin... that feels so good Nym,” Harry groaned.

Nym released his member from her mouth, catching it in her right hand, and winked at him. “Morning lover,” she said, then took him back in.

“I'm... getting close...” Harry warned her. Nym intensified her ministrations, and Harry let out a groan as he came.

“A girl could get used to this taste,” the cheeky Auror said after she finished swallowing. “Happy birthday hero,” she leant in for a kiss. Harry hesitated a moment but Nym would not be deterred, and she snogged him deeply. “Go take a shower and get dressed, Dobby has prepared breakfast,” she said with a smile. “I've got a fun day planned for my fifteen-year-old hero.”

“Oh? What exactly?” Harry asked her.

“You'll just have to wait to find out,” Nym said in a sing-song voice, and moved off the bed. “I'm going to get dressed quickly, then I need to run a brief errand. I'll be back before you know it babe.”
Harry smiled at her, then went down the ladder to go to the bathroom.

Harry took care of his morning duties and returned to the main room, where he found a breakfast prepared for him with all his favourite food, including treacle tart with clotted cream. “Thanks Dobby, this looks great,” he called to the air.

Dobby appeared with a pop: “Happy Birthdays Great Master Harry Potter Sir, Dobby is being happy he is likings it,” the Elf said in a happy tone, and disappeared again. Harry chuckled briefly. By now he had learned that House Elfs preferred not being seen as they went about their duties,
which explained why they were seldom seen at Hogwarts. He sat down and started his breakfast.

Half an hour later the front door opened, and Nym returned, carrying a bag. Harry had just finished his breakfast, and was enjoying the last bit of treacle tart.
“Welcome back,” he called out.


Harry turned to look at her. Nym was not wearing pants, he immediately realised: she was wearing a black skirt that didn't reach her knees, and a pink shirt with a unicorn stallion on it. She was also blushing slightly.

“Wow! You... look hot!” Harry exclaimed.

“Thanks honey,” Nym said, smiling back. “I thought I'd do something different for you today... you even get to choose my look... how do you want me?”

Harry looked up in sharp surprise and asked: “You're letting me choose your look? But I thought you hated it when people asked you to take a specific form?”

“I don't like it if others ask,” Nym admitted, “but I am offering you today. A little extra present.”

“Then... I want you to be your natural self,” Harry decided. “Long hair and all.”

“Sure you don't want me to do something else?” Nym morphed, taking on the appearance of an actress from a film they had seen the day before. “You can have me be anyone you want, you know...”

“I want you, not some stranger,” Harry affirmed.

“You're much too sweet for me,” she smiled back, and took her natural form. “Oh! Present!” Nym grabbed the bag, and threw it over to Harry. His Seeker reflexes quickly caught it and he opened a small package.
What is it?” he asked, turning it over and unpacking it. “A razor?” he asked quizzically.

“You're starting to need one lover,” Nym smiled at him. “It's a mechanical one, but it's been spelled with an ever-sharp enchantment on the blade so you'll never need to replace it.”

Harry beamed at her, “thanks! So what are the plans for today? More running?”

Nym shook her head, “Not today. Instead, we're going to Surrey.”

“Surrey? Why would I want to go back there?” Harry asked.

“You'll see,” Nym smiled enigmatically. “Go get your coat mister, we have a train to catch.”

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Surrey turned out to not just hold a particularly dislikeable village, but also was the location of a theme park called Thorpe Park... the first theme park Harry had ever went to. By coincidence, they were now within six miles of Little Whinging, but neither cared.

There were more types of rides than he dared imagine possible, but he particularly liked the roller-coasters... at times they made him feel like he was flying on his broom.

Having a hot girl cling to your arm as she screamed was a nice bonus as well!

Following a day full of attractions and overpriced bad quality food, they stayed until 6 pm. when the park closed and made their way back to the railway station. The train was not that crowded, so Harry looked up in surprise as Nym sat down on his lap.

“Nym? What are you doing?” he asked her softly.

“I had a great time today hero, hope you did as well?” his girlfriend asked.

“Definitely,” Harry smiled. “This summer has been the best one of my life so far!”
“Mmmm... glad to hear it,” Nym said.

The train started riding, and Harry was getting very distracted as his girl bounced up and down on his lap, in the same rhythm as the train on the tracks. It didn't take more than seconds before he was growing rock hard.

Nym obviously felt it as well. “Harry, can you see anyone watching us?” she asked in a soft voice.

“Not right now,” Harry said, trying his hardest not to think of just how little fabric was separating the two of them now. “Why?”

“I have one more gift for you,” Nym answered him. Quick as a Seeker, she reached between her legs, and unzipped his fly, freeing his member.

Harry's eyes shot wide as the cold air brushed over his tip. “Nym! What are–” he began to protest, then it became obvious what his girl was planning, as she shifted her knickers to the side, and moved forward a bit.

“I wish I could have given you my cherry hero, but that's long gone... but there is one place I've never let anyone get to,” Nym nearly whispered. She sat down... letting Harry's member push through her rosette.


Harry stifled a moan. “Oh Merlin... love you too, Nym...”

Slowly she gyrated on his lap, using the train's bouncing to guide her own movements further. Harry looked around them frantically, desperately trying to find out if anyone was watching them.

Harry groaned some more as he felt himself getting close. Nym turned her head back and looked at him grinning widely, her face as flushed as his. “Do it hero... make me yours...” she softly said, then leant in with a kiss.

As their lips met she bounced up, then down hard... and Harry went over the edge with a loud: “Oh Nym!”
The train rattled and squeaked as it came to a stop at the station. Nym let out a loud laugh as she moved off his lap, pulling her knickers back in place, and darted out the door. Harry quickly placed himself back in his fly, and followed her.

“You minx!” he called out once they were on the platform. “We could have gotten caught!”

“Relax hero,” Nym said with a giggle. “I cast a Notice-Me-Not on us before I entered the train, bet you didn't notice eh?”

“You mean we weren't in any risk at all?” Harry asked dubiously.

“Was hot believing we could be caught, right?” Nym giggled again, reaching down to shift her underwear. “I need to change now, you bad boy. So... how does it feel hero, claiming my last spot?” Her eyes twinkled a bit.

“Come here you, and I'll show you what it feels like,” Harry said with a laugh, and reached for her. Laughing, Nym darted out of the way, running to the platform exit.

---------

Two hours earlier, Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic Dolores Umbridge stood on the cold shore north of Smoo Cave near Durness, Scotland, the closest mainland location to the Wizarding Prison of Azkaban. She had two Aurors with her and a warming charm cast on her, but still she was shivering.

The cause of this was not the cold, but rather the two demonic entities hovering in front of her... called from their home of Azkaban, two Dementors had come to shore.


The closest Dementor nodded, its hooded head slowly moving up and down.

“Af– After, go straight b– back to Azkaban, you hear?” Madam Umbridge ordered, and the Dementor nodded again. “Well, off you g– go then!” she shrieked, and the Dementors flowed away.
Still shivering, Madam Umbridge took out her wand, and cast: “Point Me, Harry Potter!” She nodded in satisfaction as it pointed straight to where she knew Surrey to be.

“Well? What are you two standing here for? We're going back to the Ministry!” she ordered the Aurors. She didn't need to worry about them talking, she had enough blackmail material on the both of them. 'Still, perhaps it's best I call in a favour with that Obliviator, and have their memories of today wiped,' Madam Umbridge thought to herself. An evil smile broadened her toad-like face even further as she imagined the Potter boy lying on his bed, soul-less, and causing no more problems for her Minister.

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Meteorologists would wonder the next day how a weird cold front seemed to have formed in the north of Scotland and moved almost in a straight line down to south England, disregarding any known weather patterns. The occurrence was marked off as a measurement error.

The real cause was of course the two demons flying in search of their prey. Dementors were not fully bound to this plane of reality, and could move with incredible speed through the air. Wherever they went, they brought immense cold with them, as well as a feeling of dread.

They came from the Ninth Circle of Hell, the Traitor's Circle that was permanently frozen over. In ancient days a descendant of Cadmus Peverell, Judas Gaunt, had summoned them to the living world and had tied their service to the Warlock's Council. This compact had been inherited by the Ministry from the old, and so they were bound to follow the orders of the Ministry, at least until an heir of Judas Gaunt would arise. They had flown to Lord Voldemort's banners because he was this heir, but until he called for them, they would follow the Ministry for now.

In Little Whinging, in a worn down play-park near his home, Dudley Dursley was kicking a broken down children's swing. Summer just wasn't fun, with Harry not coming out of his room even if he taunted him with being a cowardly crybaby, and his gang had abandoned him as well: Piers had found a girlfriend somehow, Malcolm had been arrested for smoking weed and was in serious trouble with his parents, and the other hangers-on just weren't fun.

Dudley pulled up his coat as he began to shiver. 'Where's this cold coming from?' he wondered. He didn't make it four steps before he slipped on some ice. 'Ice? In Summer?' Dudley stupidly wondered. The fear got worse, and he was shivering more from it than the cold now, when he felt but did not see bony fingers raise his chin. His vision grew dark as a shadow seemed to appear out of nowhere, and take the form of an immense blackness somewhat shaped like a hood...

Dudley opened his mouth to scream, but instead of a sound, a silver stream came out, and as all the bad memories in his life passed before his eyes, Dudley's soul was sucked up by the Dementor.
The fat boy dropped to the ground as the Dementor released him, his eyes staring up at nothing. The Dementors glided forward to Privet Drive, and their target. The boy had been a nice snack... he smelted like their target, so was free food. Two demons approached the house... and hit a ward line.

Mundungus 'Dung' Fletcher was a member of the Order of the Phoenix, but more usually a common thief. He tended to get caught now and then, and sometimes had to spend up to a month in Azkaban. He was also the current guard of Privet Drive, although he used his guard shift as sleeping time instead. Covered under the Order's Invisibility Cloak, he was napping in the back garden. The moment the first Dementor hit the ward line, a gong was heard. Dung woke up with a start, and soiled his pants when he saw two Dementors hover in front of the wards protecting the house.

"E –Expecto Patronum," he somehow managed to cast his Patronus, and a silver Ferret appeared. With a loud hiss, the Dementors moved away from the wards, as the magical protector rushed towards them.

Dung was not the only one alerted. The Harry Potter simulacrum which had spent all its time in the boy's room sat up straight as the gong went off. Tonks had created an alert system in it, tied to the House Wards, so she would be notified if a wizard tried to contact Harry directly, or if the house was under attack. The simulacrum gave off a bright light, as it turned back into the wood it had transfigured from, and burnt up in a magical fire that was contained to only burn it, and not impact the room. Before Dung had even cast his Patronus, the simulacrum was gone.

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Harry and Nym were standing just outside the train station, kissing. He had his hands on her bum, and she was wrapped around him. Suddenly Nym jumped away, complaining: “Ouch! Hot, hot!”

Harry watched her pull out her wand, holding it carefully between two fingers only. “Nym? What’s wrong?” he asked.

“My wand just heated up as if it was on fire... strange...” Nym said, inspecting it. Suddenly she paled, “Harry, we need to get you back to the Dursleys, now!”


“You go inside, quick! Call Dobby, and have him bring over all your stuff!” Nym pushed him to the front door.

“Oh for Morgana's sake...” Nym saw the silver glow of what could only be a Patronus out back. “Harry, it's Dementors! No time to waste, just do as I ask, okay? Please... it's very important you are inside, with all your stuff, as soon as possible!”

“O... okay,” Harry said. Nym rushed off around the house, and Harry hesitated one more moment before opening the front door and stepping inside. Luckily the Dursleys often had the door unlocked.

“Dudders? Is that you dear?” his Aunt called. She saw Harry, and her face distorted into a deep frown and she addressed him: “You! When did you leave your room? And what's that you're wearing?”

“No time Aunt Petunia, I've got to hurry!” Harry yelled, and bounced up the stairs. He threw open the door to his room and rushed inside. As soon as he caught his breath, he called: “Dobby!”

With a pop, Dobby appeared, as well as Harry's school trunk, some loose books and essays, and Hedwig's cage. “Dobby is hearing Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks givings instructions to Mister Great Harry Potter Sir and has Mister Great Harry Potter Sir's belongings,” the Elf blurted out. “Is Mister Great Harry Potter Sir in troubles?”

“Dobby, you're amazing,” Harry let out a sigh of relief. “Where's Hedwig?”

“Owlie is out hunting,” Dobby said, pulling his ears. “Dobby is not findings her... Dobby is sorry.”

“That's all right Dobby, you did great,” Harry smiled at the owl. He saw a flash of silver lighting outside, and rushed to the window, calling over his shoulder: “Dobby, please disappear or whatever you do, I think we have company coming!” Dobby disappeared, as Harry threw open his window and looked to the back garden.

Nym and a wizard he did not know both had their wands out, and two silver Patronuses were keeping the shadowy forms of Dementors at bay: his Nym's hare, and a ferret. Then with a loud crack four other wizards appeared: Harry recognised his Headmaster, Remus Lupin, Arthur Weasley, and a fourth man, big and black and bald. They all cast their own Patronuses, and the
Dementors shrieked, and flew off.

“What the devil is going on here boy!” Vernon Dursley kicked open the door to Harry’s room, and stamped inside. “We had a deal, boy! You were to stay inside, and we wouldn’t bother you! Now what is going on down there?”

“Uncle! I... I can explain,” Harry startled.

“You'd better boy, or you'll regret it,” Vernon threatened him.

Harry heard a door slam open downstairs, and his Aunt cry out in protest, then multiple people coming up the stairs.

“Harry my boy! Thank Merlin you're all right,” Dumbledore said as five wizards rushed inside the room. Harry thought Nym looked tired.

“What is the bloody meaning of this! Out of my house you!” Vernon bellowed.

“Oh shut up you disgusting slob,” Nym whipped out her wand, and cast a silencing spell at Vernon. He continued yelling, but nothing could be heard, and the presence of several adults prevented him from taking action.

“Thank you Nymphadora,” Dumbledore said, “Harry, did you cast any spells tonight?”

“No sir,” Harry answered.

“Arthur, Kingsley, please take Harry to Headquarters... oh and Nymphadora too. Dung and I are going to the Ministry, to find out what two Dementors were doing here,” Dumbledore said. “Nymphadora, we'll have a chat later on why you were here... not that I mind you protecting Harry and Dung.”

“I'm going to Headquarters? Is that were Hermione and Ginny are?” Harry asked.

“Yes Harry,” Arthur replied. “Tonks, Kingsley, can you help Harry pack?”

The black Auror and Nym nodded, and began picking up Harry’s belongings... which Dobby had deposited there only minutes before.

“Here Harry, read this,” Arthur gave him a note from a pocket. The note was handwritten, in what Harry recognised as Dumbledore's scrawl. It said:

*The Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix may be found at number twelve, Grimmauld Place, London.*

“What's the Order of the –?” Harry began.

“Not now, lad,” Arthur cut him off. “Tonks, Kingsley, we ready?” The two Aurors nodded, and Arthur took Harry by the arm. “Off we go then lad.”

The four disappeared out of Harry's bedroom, leaving a still silenced and very furious Vernon Dursley behind. Petunia was shrieking bloody murder downstairs, she hadn't dared follow the four upstairs.

And in a park just a few streets off, a fat boy lay on his back staring upwards but seeing nothing.
Arthur and Harry re-materialized in a quiet cul-de-sac Harry didn't recognise at all.

“What are we doing here? I thought we were going to Head –” he began to ask, but Arthur shushed him.

“Harry, think of the note you just read!” he insisted. Behind them, Tonks and Kingsley popped into being, with Harry's trunk.

Harry focused on the words, and before him the houses numbered eleven and thirteen seemed to move out of the way, with a third house appearing in the middle. Despite all the row houses being the same, something about number twelve made it look sinister. It wasn't just that there was no light behind the windows, but an overall feeling of unpleasantness hung about it.

“Quick Harry, get in,” Arthur ushered him. Harry moved forward and made to ring the bell, but Arthur's hand stayed him. “Just go in, it's open,” he said. Harry went inside, and found himself in a dark hallway with a large curtain hanging on one wall. He made to reach for it but again Arthur stopped him. “Just go past, down the stairs,” he said in a whisper.

Harry made to step forward. Suddenly a loud clanging sound came from behind them, and Harry half turned just in time to see Nym trip over a troll's leg umbrella stand that Harry swore had been standing in the corner a second before, but was now straight in front of the door. Nym fell forward and he rushed to catch her, only for her to land on top of him and them both crashing to the ground.

The curtain rushed open, and Harry looked up to see a painting of a sour-faced woman glaring down at him. She took a deep breath – weird, Harry thought for a moment, that paintings seemed to need to breathe at all – and then let loose:

“Filth! Fornicating Mudbloods! KREACHER!”

“Mistress Walburga calls?” A nasty looking House Elf came skulking out the door across from the painting, and glared as it looked at Harry and Nymphadora. “Kreacher is takings out the trash,” it muttered nastily.

“Oh Merlin who set her off this time?” Sirius' voice sounded as he came running up the stairs. “Oh, Nymphadora, I should've known.” Sirius grinned as he saw the two of them on the floor. “Hey cousin, if you want to get busy with birthday boy there, save it for the bedroom all right?” He barked a brief laugh, then glared at the Elf. “Kreacher, you good for nothing little shit, get
“lost,” he bit to the creature. “As for you mother, SHUT UP!” he yelled at the painting.

Harry and Nym got to their feet, helped by Arthur and Kingsley. “Erm, well, just go downstairs Harry, Tonks, we'll be down in a bit,” Arthur said.

“Is it always this... mental here?” Harry asked softly to Nym.

“Pretty much,” his girlfriend said. “Sorry about just now, I swear that thing is cursed to hate me...”

“I don't mind you jumping me Nym,” Harry stepped into the stairwell leading down, and Nym followed after him, a wide smile on her face.

The stairs exited in a small kitchen and dining room. The table was filled with Weasleys: Fred and George were eating some bread, Ginny was reading some book, and Ron was – no surprise there – bickering with Hermione.

Ginny was first to notice them: “Harry! Happy birthday!” she exclaimed, dropping her book and rushing to hug him.

“Hey Gin-Gin,” Harry said with a smile on his face as he hugged the red-head.

“Been working out have we? Nice muscles there,” Ginny said. “She's good on you it seems,” she whispered before letting go and moving to say hello to Tonks.

Ron and Hermione stopped their fighting when Ginny rushed forward.

“Oi mate, good t'have you here,” Ron said. Hermione looked at Harry and her jaw dropped open a bit... Harry had turned into a hunk! Gone was the scrawny kid, this Harry had some nice muscles, and was wearing well-fitting clothes. She was lost for words.

“Hello Ronald, Hermione,” Harry cordially nodded. “It's nice to see you after all the letters we exchanged... oh wait.”
Hermione winced as the message hit. “Harry, you have to understand, Headmaster Dumbledore said –” she began to explain herself, rushing to her feet.

“Save it Hermione, no need to explain yourself to me,” Harry said. “You look well. Have you been here long then?”

“Harry, really, it's all because the Headmaster said –” Hermione began again. This time she was interrupted by several people coming down the stairs: Sirius, Arthur, Molly, and Remus.

“Harry dear! Happy birthday, it's so nice you're here!” Molly rushed past Tonks to crush Harry into her, as he experienced her hugs. Tonks let out a small grunt as the large woman pushed her against the wall accidentally.

“Hey there pup,” Remus said once Molly let go of Harry.

Sirius had a mischievous smirk on his face as he entered the room, standing next to Tonks. “Hey cuz, was getting Harry here easy? Or was he a pain in the bum?” He gave her a small spank on the rear, causing Tonks to let out a small shriek.

“Are you quite all right dear?” Molly asked concernedly.

“Y– Yes Molly... I just pulled a muscle during exercise,” Tonks said through clipped teeth. Her eyes promised murder on Sirius.

“Well, now that we're all here...” Molly stepped over to the pantry, and took out a large cake: “Happy birthday Harry! We're so happy to have you here with us!”

“She's been working on it –”
“Ever since we heard you were in trouble again –”
“Harry,” the twins spoke.
“Good you're here,”
“Gin-Gin was going crazy,” they continued.

Harry laughed and took a seat next to Ginny, Tonks sitting down on his other side – with an extra pillow – and a small birthday celebration began. Throughout Harry noticed Hermione couldn't stop staring at him.
Dumbledore and Dung appeared in the Ministry atrium. Dumbledore had Dung still by the arm as he stepped quickly to the security desk. The guard saw them approach, and rose from his seat.

“Erm, do you have an appointment Headmaster?” he asked.

“You're no longer in school Walton,” Dumbledore said in a genial tone. “And no, I don't. I need to see Madam Bones or another high ranking DMLE Member ASAP though.”

“Err... right, sir,” Walton said. “Let me send a message now. Please wait here.” He scribbled something on a note, and cast a spell that caused it to take the form of a paper aeroplane, and threw it in the direction of the lifts.

Dumbledore waited, outwardly calm, still holding onto the arm of Dung, until Amelia Bones herself came down, less than five minutes later, flanked by an Auror.

“Chief Warlock, what brings you here that is so urgent?” she asked.

“Amelia, there was a Dementor attack in a Muggle area not fifteen minutes ago. Mr Fletcher here with the assistance of another witch held them off until I could come for support. I need you to send an Auror to Azkaban straight away and find out if any are missing.”

“Merlin...” Amelia paled a bit. “Were there any casualties?”

“Not that I could see, but we need to sweep the area and perhaps involve the Obliviators. The Dementors fled once they were repelled.”

“Right,” Amelia nodded. “Mr Fletcher, my Auror here will take you up to take your statement.” To the Auror: “Hurry up Williger, and send a squad to Azkaban as well as an investigation crew and Obliviators to – where are we going Mr Dumbledore?” she asked the Headmaster.

“Little Whinging, Surrey,” Dumbledore said. “They can floo to 'Arabella Figg', she's a squib with an active floo living nearby.”
“Got that?” Amelia barked at the Auror, then nodded at Dumbledore. “After you?” Dumbledore turned and moved for the floos, Amelia and her Auror in tow.

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In the mean time someone had come across Dudley. Finding the teen alive but unresponsive, they called 999 from a nearby home, and an ambulance was called. Before Dumbledore even stepped out of Arabella Figg's floo, Dudley was loaded on a stretcher that was rushing to the hospital.

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At Grimmauld Place the cake was eaten, and small gifts given – Hermione apologized, stammering a bit, that she hadn't counted on him arriving yet so hadn't had chance to shop. Molly decided it was time for the 'children' to retire to bed now.

“Where am I sleeping?” Harry asked.

“You're with me mate,” Ron started.

Sirius overheard them, “Top floor Harry. Hope you don't mind taking my brother's old room.”

“Sirius! I hardly think it's proper,” Molly protested.

“Molly, it's my house, and you know the room is clean” Sirius said. “Besides, I've got the room next door. You wouldn't deny me a chance to chat a bit with my only godson in private?”

“I suppose not, but surely Harry, you want to stay with Ron? Have a chance to catch up?” Molly tried.

“I'll stay with Sirius,” Harry said. “Ronald and I can talk enough during the school year as it is.”
“Fine! That's settled then,” Sirius said with a smile. “Tonksie, why don't you show him where it is? You've been there before. I'll be by in a bit.”

“Stay quiet in the stairwell please,” Molly pleaded.

Harry waved bye to the Weasleys and others, then followed Tonks up the stairs. “You okay love?” he asked in a soft voice.

“I am going to kill your godfather, just so you know,” Tonks grumbled. “No idea how he sniffed it out that fast, but I really am a little sore down there...”

She pointed out who was staying on the various floors as they went up, then they came to the fourth floor. “Second door is Sirius', I guess you'll be staying here,” she said as she opened the door.

Harry looked in, and found a room that seemed to be frozen in the 70s somehow, all in green and silver.

“Slytherin eh?” he asked.

“All Blacks except for that scoundrel were,” Tonks said. She went in with him, and pushed the door closed.

Harry looked around a bit more. “Not really my style, but better than bunking with Ronald the snore machine. Did you notice he didn't even wish me happy birthday? And what was up with Hermione's weird glances all the time?”

Tonks let out a giggle, “isn't it obvious hero? Seems like Little Miss Bookwork has a crush on you... too bad for her you're taken.”

Harry blinked twice, then let out a laugh himself. “Oh man, just what I need... well tough, for her. I have exactly who I want, my little Nymmie...” He moved closer to her, and snaked his hands around her and hugged her close. Tonks lowered her head and kissed him deeply.

“Oh Merlin it's going to be so lonely without you,” she mumbled as she just held him. “Not how I planned your birthday to end hero, I was foreseeing a sappy film on the couch and maybe a
massage later...” She let out a giggle as she felt something familiar press against her leg. “Oh my poor hero, need me to take care of that?”

“Think you could? Won’t we get in trouble?” Harry asked her, looking at the door.

“I’ll just have to be quick then won’t I?” Tonks knelt down, and began undoing Harry’s pants.

“Love, I’m not sure about this... oooh.” Harry’s protest ended as she licked across his tip, and sucked his head inside. She hummed around him as her tongue went to work, and her skilled technique quickly brought Harry to the edge. With a loud cry of “Nym!” he erupted in her mouth. Tonks had only just swallowed when someone knocked on the door. Harry fumbled with his pants to get dressed again as Nym stood up and used her metamorphmagus skill to fight her blush. Just in time, as the door opened and Sirius stepped through carrying Harry’s bag.

“Merlin you two, at least use a silencing charm, I heard you from the next floor down pup,” Sirius barked a laugh as he saw Tonks standing there, her hair turning as red as the blush that crept back.

“You... you’re dead!” Tonks glared, fumbling for her wand.

“Easy there cousin!” Sirius raised his hands in surrender. “Before you kill me, let me show you a little something...” he stepped past them into the room, and pressed a knot on the far wall. A small passage opened.

“Where does that lead?” Harry looked in, intrigued.

“Up to the attic... and a place where someone could apparate in or out unnoticed,” Sirius said with a grin. “Just remember to use silencing charms and a locking spell on your door pup... and your little girlfriend here can, well, ‘cum’ and go as you like, without anyone knowing...”

Harry and Tonks shared a meaningful glance, then Tonks spoke up. “Okay, you can live for now.”

“I’ll let you get to it then,” Sirius shot them a wink. “I’ll tell the others you left, Tonks, and that Harry is tired and went to bed. Gnite!” He closed the door behind him.
“Well, looks like you're not rid of me just yet,” Tonks smiled.

“I believe you promised me a massage?” Harry waggled his eyebrows.

“Let’s break in that bed then hero...” Tonks started stripping, Harry quick to follow.

Outside the door, Sirius shook his head and cast a silencing and locking charm for them. As he turned to go back down, he saw Kreacher glaring at him.

“No Good Master is letting them use Master Regulus room?” the House Elf actually growled.

“Yes Kreacher, I am,” Sirius said. “I haven't told him yet, but I've made Harry my heir in everything, understood?”

“Nasty Half-blood Potter is the Black heir?” Kreacher sounded surprised. He looked conflicted for a moment, then let out a sigh. “Kreacher will allow the Black Heir to make little Wizards with the outcast's child then. The Family must survive. Kreacher hopes No Good Master has the courtesy to die soon so he has a better Master to serve.”

Chapter 12

Late at night Kreacher crept into Master Regulus' room. He looked at Master Regulus' bed, and saw the nasty Half-Blood – no, the Black heir – and the outcast's child entwined in each other's arms lying on top of the covers.

“Kreacher hopes Young Heir does his duty soon, Family is needing more members,” the Elf muttered to himself. He waved his hands in a circular pattern, and a brown glow softly appeared over Tonks' stomach area.

“Not good, not good at all,” the Elf muttered. “Kreacher will take care of that.” He waved his hands once more and the blanket softly rose and covered the coupled pair, then left the room.

The next morning Tonks woke in her favourite position: wrapped around her lover, and feeling his hardness press against her leg. Tonks smiled wide as she repositioned herself over Harry, and guided his hot rod back where it belonged. With a groan of content she lowered herself over him, and began softly rocking back and forth.

“Oh Nym...” Harry moaned while he woke up. His arms reached up to embrace his lover and he pulled her down for a deep kiss.

“Morning... love... oh Merlin this is how I always want to wake up,” Tonks panted.

“I'm... fine with that...” Harry's expression hardened, he let out a deep grunt, and released himself in her folds.

“Mmm... I love the feeling of you inside me lover,” Nym cooed down at him as she softly rocked back and forth waiting for him to finish.

Tonks was lying half on top of Harry, their lower halves still connected, and they both dozed off a little again. Then they were woken by a knock on their door.

“Harry? Breakfast will be ready in a bit,” Sirius' voice sounded. Then, sound a bit amused: “If we have any guests... it's best if they come in through the front door okay? See you in a bit pup.”

Harry looked at her and grinned, “Well my lady, join me for breakfast? Or do we have time for some more fun first?” He wiggled his eyebrows.
“Nice try hero, but I need to quickly pop by my flat and change clothes, or someone'll ask,” Tonks said with a soft laugh as she got up. “But if you're good, I'll 'show you around' here later in private okay?’”

She got up from the bed, put her clothes on quickly, and hit the knot on the back wall to open the secret passage. Harry watched her leave, then with a sigh got up from the bed. Someone had placed a towel near the door so he grabbed it, and went out the door to take a shower in the fourth floor bathroom.

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Harry had the towel wrapped around him as he stepped back into his room, and saw someone standing there. He didn't need to see her face to know it was Hermione. His Gryffindor year mate had his shirt from the previous day in her hands, pressing it up to her face as he walked in.

Harry cleared his throat, and Hermione turned on a dime, a deep blush rising on her face.

“Mo... morning Harry!” she blurted out. “I... I came to see if you were up.”

“Hello Hermione,” Harry said calmly. “Why do you have my shirt?”

“Err... I... that is...” Hermione looked almost pained as she looked for words. Then she blurted out: “Why does it smell so weird in here? Have you been doing something? You should at least air the room out Harry you know, this is Sirius' home and he is gracefully allowing us all to stay here, the least you could do is—”

“I get it,” Harry interrupted her, a little curtly. “I'll open a window before I leave. Now I'd like to get dressed okay?”

“Get dressed?” Hermione looked him over, and her blush intensified. “Oh!”

Harry noticed her eyes were roaming over his body, taking in every detail. A little amused, he said: “Are you going to leave, or do you want to watch me?”
“Watch you?” Hermione asked, then shook her head. “I... I’ll be downstairs. We’re eating in the kitchen, in the basement Harry.” She rushed out the door, throwing it closed behind her.

“Oh boy,” Harry let out a small laugh. “She's got it bad.”

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Tonks showed up during breakfast. “You know, this is the first time that bloody umbrella stand didn't trip me,” she mentioned as she plopped down across from Harry at the breakfast table.

“You with your conspiracy theories Tonks dear,” Molly laughed. “Pumpkin juice?”

“Yes please,” Tonks said. “Morning kiddos,” she greeted Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny. Fred and George had grabbed some toast and left before she arrived.

“Strange, where is it?” Molly looked in the pantry but couldn't find the juice. There was some noise from the boiler room, but she ignored it. Kreacher kept his room there, and sometimes he made a fuss.

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Two House Elfs stood glaring at each other in the boiler room.

“I is Kreacher of the House of Black, who is you, Elf?” Kreacher demanded of the intruder, who was holding the flask with pumpkin juice. The intruder had popped in just as Kreacher was preparing to pour in a smaller phial, and had snared it from his hands.

“I is Dobby, servant to the Great Master Harry Potter Sir and Great Master Harry Potter Sir's Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks. Why is Elf Kreacher puttings Potion in drink of Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks?” Dobby defiantly answered, hiding the juice behind his back.

“Kreacher is serving The Family. Half-blood Potter is Black Heir, and is mating with outcast's child. Outcast's child is using Potion to stop pregnancies. Kreacher is givings her anti-dote,” Kreacher explained.
Dobby frowned. “Why Elf Kreacher wants giving Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks antidote?”

“Kreacher wants Black Family to grow. Black Heir needs to be making little wizards with mate. Mate must be fertile,” Kreacher explained.

“Dobby is not sure Great Master Harry Potter Sir will be likings this,” Dobby said. “Will Elf Kreacher swear Potion will not be of harm for Miss Just-Call-Me-Tonks if Dobby gives Elf Kreacher the juice?”

Kreacher scoffed, “Elf Dobby is insulting Kreacher! Kreacher will never harm Heir to Family or Heir's mate. Now Elf Dobby will hand over juice or Kreacher will get angry.”

“Dobby will bes watching Elf Kreacher,” Dobby glared back. “But Dobby also wants Master Great Harry Potter Sir to be happy, and wizards makings little wizards are happy.” He handed the flask back over.

Kreacher snapped it back with a triumphant look, and poured in the phial he had been holding. “Now Kreacher wants Elf Dobby to leave. If Kreacher sees Elf Dobby again before Master calls Elf Dobby, Kreacher will punish Elf Dobby.”

“Dobby will be leavings, but will be watching Elf Kreacher,” Dobby glared back, and popped out.

“Elf Dobby is no good insane Elf,” Kreacher muttered. Then he snapped the fingers of his free hand, and invisibly popped back into the kitchen. He placed the pumpkin juice on the kitchen counter.

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Molly turned around and saw the pumpkin juice. “Weird, I could've sworn...” she muttered to herself. “Never mind. Here's your pumpkin juice dear,” she handed the goblet over to Tonks.

“Thanks Molly,” Tonks smiled. She took a deep sip. Kreacher, watching her while invisible, nodded with satisfaction and popped to the top floor. With that taken care of, he could get to work cleaning the house. He would not clean for his No Good Master, but would clean Master Regulus’
room for the Black Heir. Even if the Black Heir was a nasty Half-Blood, he still had Black blood through his grandmother.

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Following the late breakfast Tonks was roped into cleaning duty along with the others, and she, Ginny, Hermione, and Harry were busy in the library, dusting off piles of books and the shelves.

Molly entered the room. “Tonks dear? Headmaster Dumbledore has arrived, there is a small meeting. You can join us if you like.”

“What meeting?” Harry asked.

“Order business Harry, you and the girls just keep working here all right? The kitchen is off-limits for now,” Molly said. Tonks shot him an apologetic look, and followed the Weasley matriarch.

“Quick Harry, with me,” Ginny said. She took him by the hand and pulled him to the stairwell, then they crept down to the ground floor. Hermione followed. Fred, George, and Ron were already there, lurking near the stairwell. The twins were lowering two cords down, then they saw the three newcomers, and lowered another string.

“Here Ginny, you and Harry take this one,” one of the twins tossed what looked like an ear on a string to his sister. The red-head caught it, and waved Harry closer.

“What's this? Why are we here?” Harry asked.

“Hush Harry, or we'll all get caught,” Hermione chided him. “The twins call them Extendable Ears... they are spying in on the Order meeting this way.”

“Not like you're complaining much 'Mione, you know they're not telling us nothing,” Ron complained. “This way at least we stay informed Harry... just don't let them find out okay?”

Harry nodded, and crouched down next to Ginny as they listened in on the meeting in the kitchen. Despite her words disavowing the spying, Hermione made sure she, too, could listen in.
“Nymphadora, good of you to join us,” Dumbledore said. He ignored the frown on Tonks' face as he waited for everyone to sit down. Everyone being himself, Tonks, Sirius and Remus, Molly, Professor Snape, and Dung Fletcher. The other Order members were either at work, or couldn't make it for various reasons.

“Did you learn more about the Dementor attack on Harry?” Tonks asked.

“I'll get to that in a little while,” Dumbledore answered. “First, Severus has a report on Voldemort I believe.” Several people flinched at the name.

Snape cleared his throat and waited until he got everyone's attention. “The Dark Lord has been suffering from some kind of malady recently, which is why I believe there have been no structured attacks. I am called to his bedside almost daily, and have to invent new pain killing potions.”


“I do not know, nor particularly care,” Snape spat at the wolf. “Just know that for the time being, he is down and I'm doing my best to keep it that way.”

“Why don't you just poison him and get it over with? Seems like you have a perfect opportunity,” Sirius offered.

“Typical Black, speaking without thinking!” Snape yelled as he glared at Sirius. “Think for a moment, imbecile! The Dark Lord is a skilled legilimencer, if I were to go there with the intent to kill him he'd find out before I even made it through the door. He may be ill, but he's still more than capable of killing me with a thought.”

“Little loss there,” Sirius said.

Before Snape could say something back, Dumbledore coughed. “Thank you Severus. We will have to see if an opportunity to take Voldemort on will arise from this, please keep us informed. Now then, on to the Dementor attack.”
Everyone snapped to attention, including the spies one floor above.

“The good news is that we have insurmountable proof that there were at least two Dementors present. The DMLE investigators found their traces, and two of their number were missing on Azkaban at the first count.”

“First count?” Tonks asked.

“Yes, it seems they slipped through Azkaban's wards and returned some time after. The Aurors counted ninety-eight at first, but a later count found the full hundred. Which, as far as we can know, is the full extent of their number,” Dumbledore answered her. “The bad news is that we could not find out any reason why they were sent after Harry. There is no record of any order to send them away, but the Dementors claim they were following a direct order. This is very concerning as it appears that whoever decided to attack Harry has managed to cover their tracks. I tried to convince Cornelius we need more guards to keep track of the Dementors at all times, especially since they are likely to side with Voldemort should he openly return, but sadly the Minister still refuses to see reason. I fear he may be trying to oust me at the Wizengamot before the summer ends,” the Headmaster concluded.

“Don't you think we should tell Harry then? If his life is in danger, surely he deserves to know?” Tonks spoke up.

“No, I think not,” Dumbledore said in a stern voice. “With Harry's situation being as it is, it is best he is kept far away from any news on Voldemort. We can't risk him learning what we know.”

Upstairs, several eyes focused on Harry, who could only shrug in reply. He had no idea what Dumbledore meant.

“Which brings us to the evening of the attack itself. I tried asking the Dursleys for their memory of the evening, but sadly when I returned to them they were not at home. A neighbour informed me Harry's cousin had some kind of accident and was hospitalized, and the Dursleys had gone to be with him,” Dumbledore recalled. “Nymphadora, while Dung here is grateful for your help in securing the wards and holding the demons off, your presence there was unexpected. Would you care to explain?” He stared her down.

“Well... err.. I was concerned about Harry,” Tonks said. “I know you ordered me not to contact him, but he's still family, you know? So I was nearby, just in case.”
“I see,” Dumbledore stroked his beard. “But you have not been inside the Dursley home?”

“No sir, I only went in after the attack” Tonks truthfully answered. It was true... the wards were already under assault when she and Harry had gone there.

“Good, good,” Dumbledore swallowed the half lie. “I know you see him as family Nymphadora, but Harry needs to be as isolated as possible this coming school year. Can I trust on you to be strict with him?”

“May I ask why, sir?” Tonks frowned.

“The Minister is refusing to see the truth about Voldemort's return still,” Dumbledore said. “He is also continuing his libel campaign against both me, and young Harry. We cannot risk the existence of the Order becoming general knowledge, too many people already know as is, therefore it must appear as if Harry is no more than a student to you.”

“But sir! Surely just being friendly to Harry won't be a problem?” Tonks protested.

“It is nothing I did not ask Remus two years ago,” Dumbledore countered. “Perhaps you can take some advice from Severus on how to deal with Harry?”

Snape grimaced at the idea, and Tonks frowned.

“Well with that settled, we should talk about the guard at the Ministry. Hestia is currently disillusioned there and I believe Arthur is to take her spot, right Molly?” Dumbledore asked.

Upstairs, the twins began raising the ears. “Best we stop now, usually they end the meeting after this topic,” one said.

“Oi Harry mate, what is that 'situation' of your Dumbledore mentioned?” Ron asked.

“I have no idea,” Harry admitted. “Wish I knew... maybe it'd explain why Dumbledore is so
insistent nobody contacted me before I got here. Good thing my real friend here ignored his orders,” he hugged Ginny, while glaring at Ron and Hermione.

Hermione looked away guiltily, Ron didn't seem bothered. “Don't know why you think it's such a big deal mate. He is the Headmaster, you know.”

“That's fine Ronald,” Harry said calmly and got up. “Well, I'm going back to work before Mrs Weasley finds out. I suggest you do the same.” He walked off.

“Ron, you really are stupid,” Ginny said, sounding annoyed.

“Oi Gin-Gin, watch your words,” Ron protested. “What did I do?”

The twins answered for her: “Well little brother,”
“If you are too dense to see why Harry is annoyed,”
“We think Gin-Gin is right.”
“Perhaps you should have been named mo-Ron at birth,”
they finished.

Ron glared at them. “Oi! You're my brothers, you're supposed to take my side!”

“Little brother,”
“It is our sworn duty,”
“As your older and wiser siblings,”
“To point out your mistakes,”
“And to punish you when necessary,”
the twins said, a twinkle appearing in their eyes.

“You wouldn't! I'll tell mum!” Ron protested.

Ginny and Hermione shared a look and got up, leaving the Weasley brothers to their starting row. Ginny opened the door to the formal dining room, and waved Hermione in.

“We need to talk,” she said to the older Gryffindor girl.

“About Harry?” Hermione sounded a bit sad. “I know he is angry, but the Headmaster specifically
“And you're supposed to be smart?” Ginny sighed. “Listen, I know you like to follow the rules... well when you're not spying with the rest of us,” she smiled a bit. Hermione brightened a bit as well. “But you've got to realise, you really were wrong when you decided to ignore Harry's letters,” Ginny continued.

“Surely Harry understands it was Professor Dumbledore's orders?” Hermione protested.

“Argh listen to yourself! Who is your friend, the Headmaster or Harry? What if Professor Dumbledore came to you and said that you had to marry Draco Malfoy for some reason, would you do it?”

Hermione turned green, “Marry Draco? Never!”

“So you wouldn't just follow any order then? Why then did you pick the Headmaster over Harry? I thought he was your best friend? Do you want to lose him? Because you're doing damned fine job of driving him away!” Ginny railed in on her.

“No, no, I... I don't know,” Hermione weakly protested. “Oh what can I do? He hates me now...”

“Silly girl,” Ginny hugged her. “Just apologize to him and promise never to betray him again... and really don't do it then. He'll forgive you this time.”

“I... I'll do that,” Hermione said with determination. “Can... can you make sure we have some privacy? Harry'll be in the library, so I'll do it now... no chance like the present eh?”

“That a girl,” Ginny beamed at her. “Go get your friend back. I'll stand guard.”

Hermione shot her a grateful smile as they left the formal room. They passed Ron, who was tied up against the wall and painted purple and white – apparently the twins had decided an object lesson was in order – and went up the stairs. No comment was needed, a shared grin told them both what they thought of Ron learning his lesson.
Ginny stood guard in front of the door, and Hermione went inside. She found Harry placing books back on the boards, and stood there a bit gathering her thoughts.

Harry noticed her, “Hey. I’ve got this side, why don't you start over there?” His tone was neutral, without the warmth he usually had in it.

“Harry...” Hermione said, trailing off. Harry turned and looked at her, raising one eye-brow in question.

“Harry... I am so sorry for being such a bad friend and not contacting you just because the Professor said so and I feel really bad and I know I was wrong and I won't ever do it again and I hate how lonely you must have been and I hope you can forgive me?” she blurted out.

Harry blinked twice... “Err... what?”

“Oh Harry!” Hermione rushed towards him, hugging him close. Despite his mixed feelings on her, Harry accepted the hug, and soon had the air squeezed out of him.

“I'm sorry, I'm so sorry,” Hermione sobbed on his shoulder.

Harry hugged her back, and said, “It's all right, I forgive you.”

Hermione looked up at him, her large brown eyes wet from tears. “Really?” she asked in a small voice.

“Of course,” Harry smiled at her. “You're my friend, and friends forgive mistakes.”

“Oh Harry!” Hermione moved her head closer to his, and kissed him.

For a moment Harry just stood there, as his probably best friend mashed her lips onto hers, then he pulled his head to the side, and gently pushed her away. “Let's not go there all right?” he commented.
“But... but...” Hermione was flustered, and unwilling to meet his eyes. Then, in a small voice, “Don't you think I'm attractive?”

“Merlin no, you're beautiful,” Harry quickly said.

“Then... then why don't you want to kiss me?” Hermione softly said. “Is it because I listened to Professor Dumbledore? Because... I'll do anything to make it up to you Harry, anything!”

With a shaking hand, she began to unbutton her blouse.

Harry's eyes grew wide as she saw her bra revealed, and realised what she was doing. “Hermione, stop!” He placed his hands on hers before she could go further, and caught her eyes.

“Listen... I would have loved to try and date you if things were different... but I am already with someone,” he said gently.

“Who is it?” Hermione asked softly. “Ginny? She could have said so if it's her...”

“No, it's not Ginny... it's not any of our classmates,” Harry assured her. Hermione let out a sob, and he hugged her close again. “Shhh... no need to cry. I still love you... as a friend, okay?”

“Don't... don't mention this to the others okay? I can't stand being teased over this,” Hermione said, sounding miserable.

“Promise,” Harry agreed. Hermione held on to him closely as she tried to come to grounds with her conflicting emotions.

On the other side of the library door, Tonks nodded, pleased to herself, and she cast a charm to remove the one way see-through effect she had placed on the door.

“You're so lucky with him,” Ginny commented. “Weren't you worried, when Hermione confessed?”

“Nah, she's got a nice rack, but I know my Harry,” Tonks stated with conviction. “Hopefully with this out of the way, they can become friends again. Merlin knows my hero needs them.”
“Will you be staying for lunch Tonks dear?” Molly asked. She looked around the library approvingly, it looked much cleaned up compared to the day before. Harry and the girls had been working hard.

“Gladly,” Tonks smiled at her. “And I was thinking, why don't I we split up the group after? Harry and I can clean up the fourth floor, you can let Ginny and Hermione do the first floor.”

“Good idea,” Molly agreed. “I haven't yet gotten to the beds yet, the twins pulled a nasty prank on Ron and it took us some time to get him back into shape. The poor dear is in the kitchen recovering with some comfort food.”

“Shove some food in his mouth and Ron is fine, that's a constant,” Ginny quipped. Molly *tsked* disapprovingly but otherwise did not comment, the fact that Ginny had apparently been working hard earned her a slight reprieve.

Following lunch Harry followed Tonks upstairs. “So, where should we start? Sirius room or mine?”

Tonks smiled at him, “Do you need to ask, hero?” She opened the door to his room, and guided him in.

Harry's eyes grew wide as he realised her intent, “What, now? With them awake and downstairs?”

“Yes now... you earned a reward lover,” Tonks knelt before him, and began unbuttoning his trousers.

“Nym, not that I object, but what for?” Harry stumbled back until he was sitting on the edge of his bed, raising his rear to allow his girlfriend to strip off his pants.

“For staying faithful even though little Miss Bookworm practically shoved her jumblies in your face,” Tonks said. She quickly wriggled out of her shirt and unclasped her bra. “Well hero, which do you like best? Hermione's apples... or these?” She shot him a wide grin as she increased her bust size.
Harry's eyes went wide. His underpants suddenly got awfully tight.

“...I think I have my answer,” Tonks giggled. She knelt back before him and leaned in close, then pushed down his boxers. “Time for your first boob job, Mr Potter...”

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On the first floor Ginny rounded on Hermione, “How did it go?”

Hermione's expression wavered between sadness and resolve. “We made up,” she said after a small pause. “I think he forgives me now.”

“I'm happy for you,” Ginny said with a smile. “Harry needs you as a friend,” she stressed the last word.

“You know he's seeing someone?” Hermione looked at her quizzically. “Harry said he was with someone, and it wasn't you or any of our classmates... do you know who it is?”

“It's not my place to tell,” Ginny quickly said. “Please, don't ask me for her name. I won't betray my friendship with Harry like that.”

“But Ginny, I need to know! What if she is in league with Voldemort?” Hermione insisted.

Ginny shuddered. “Please, don't say that name! And I swear, she's not. Trust me... trust Harry.”

“I should tell the Headmaster, he'll know what to do,” Hermione insisted.

To her surprise, Ginny slapped her. “Listen to yourself! You only just made up with Harry, and now you want to betray him again?” The red-head sounded angry.

Hermione staggered back, more from the words than the actual slap. “Oh Merlin... I really almost
did, didn’t I?” she weakly said. Hermione dropped down on her own bed.

Ginny sat down next to her and put her arm around her. “You need to learn to trust your friends over authority... Merlin girl, you're almost like my brother Percy! You don't want to end up like that git do you, dropping your family for a cushy Ministry job?”

Hermione sniffled, “No, of course not... I'll try to do better, I won't talk to the Headmaster” she promised. *But I'm still finding out who Harry picked over me,*' she promised herself mentally.

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Tonks left before dinner, claiming she needed to do some things at her home. Of course she joined Harry in his bed later that night after everyone had gone to sleep. Both were very grateful to Sirius for showing them the secret passage.

The next few days all followed more or less the same pattern: cleaning the house during the day, some time for homework – Hermione insisted on going over everyone's essays and correcting them – and playtime for Harry and Tonks whenever they could find the time alone.

Sadly for Harry Tonks could not be there each day, she feared it would make Dumbledore suspicious. At least they spent every night together. There were a few Order meetings, but nothing of interest was discussed... the kids spied on them with the Extendable Ears, and Tonks informed Harry later in private, but all that the Order talked about was Voldemort's strange illness, a few unstructured attacks on Muggleborns – fortunately with no loss of life – and the incessant need to guard some hallway in the Ministry. Tonks didn't know the details about that, so couldn't tell Harry what was so important there. Dumbledore liked to keep his secrets...

August was in its second week when the Hogwarts letters arrived. Harry was doing push-ups in his room after lunch when the door barged open, and Hermione ran inside.

“They're here, finally! Harry, do you think – *murble*” Hermione trailed off as she saw Harry was topless, wearing only his tight pants, and she took in his toned muscles.

Harry looked up at her amused, and scrambled to his feet. “Do I think, what exactly? Hand me that towel, would you?”

Hermione reached out and touched his right arm, “So hard,” she mumbled. Then she shook herself, “What?”
“Towel, please?” Harry repeated. He sported a wide grin.

“Oh! Err... here!” Hermione turned beet red, and handed it to him while asking, “How... how long have you been training like that?”

“Ever since the start of summer, more or less. I also did a lot of jogging, but since I can't do that here I improvise I guess,” Harry answered her as he towelled off some of the sweat. “What were you saying when you barged in like that?”

“Oh... err... the Hogwarts letters... they came...” Hermione looked at him hungrily again.

“They're in the kitchen I guess?” He asked, getting a nod in reply. “I'll be down in a bit, I'm taking a quick shower first. Suppose I stink,” he grinned, and walked past Hermione out of his door.

Hermione stood in place, her heart beating so fast she was afraid it would jump out of her chest. She saw the door had closed behind Harry, and there was the towel he had just used, lying discarded on the floor... Quickly, she grabbed it, and clutching it close to her, she ran down the stairs to the room she shared with Ginny.

Harry arrived in the kitchen and found all the Weasleys there. “Hey mate, where's Mione? Thought she went to get you?” Ron asked him.

“Dunno, I took a quick shower before I went down, maybe she's on the toilet,” Harry said with a shrug. “She said the letters came?”

“On the table Harry dear,” Molly said. Harry saw the envelopes and reached out for them, but Molly gently pushed his hand away. “Not before Hermione is here,” she chided him.

“We always open them as a family,” Ginny explained. The twins nodded in agreement to that.

“Want to play some chess while we wait?” Ron asked.
“Nah, that'll take too long,” Harry rejected the idea. “We could play some exploding snap though, if anyone has a deck.”

About five minutes later Hermione arrived, finding the four Weasleys and Harry passing around the exploding cards.

“Where have you been?” Molly asked. “You look a bit flushed dear, are you feeling well?”

“I... I'm good,” Hermione piped up. 'Not just good... that felt great,' she thought to herself. 'Just look at him... all grown up and powerful,' she stared at Harry's back.

“Earth to Hermione, you with us?” Ginny repeated.

Flustered, Hermione woke from her daydream. “Oh... sorry, yes,” she stammered.

“Can we open the bloody letters now?” Ron asked, drawing attention back to him. While Molly chastised her son for language, Hermione slid into place across from Harry.

Finally Harry was allowed his letter, and opened it. It contained the usual two pieces of parchment: the reminder that school would start on September first, and the book list. “Two new ones for me,” he said. “The Standard Book of Spells, Grade 5', by Miranda Goshawk, and 'Dueling Theory and Practice', by... oh wow that is a surprise, Filius Flitwick,” he read.

“Professor Flitwick wrote a book? He never mentioned that,” Hermione spoke up in surprise. She was last to open her own letter. As she opened it, not just two parchments, but something scarlet and gold fell out. Her eyes widened in surprise.

“What do you have there dear?” Molly asked her.

“Prefect?” Hermione asked, looking down at it. Then she repeated, “I made Prefect?”

“Congratulations dear!” Molly nearly shrieked, smiling widely at the brunette. “You deserve it!”
Everyone's eyes turned to Harry.

“Well, where's yours?” One of the twins asked.

“I don't have one,” Harry said. He gave Hermione a thumbs up, not that she noticed, she was still staring at the badge as if she couldn't believe it.

“If not you, who then? Neville?” The other twin wondered.

“Me,” Ron said in a tiny voice. They turned to look at him. Ron sat there, looking incredulously at a letter he had in his hand. “They made me prefect?”

Twin one jumped forward, grabbing both the envelope from Ron. He overturned it, and a similar badge to the one Hermione was still staring at fell in his hand. “No way,” he said in a hushed voice.

“There must be a mistake,” twin two said. He snatched the letter from Ron, and held it up to the light as if checking for forgery. “No one in their right mind would make Ron a prefect.”

Both twins turned to Harry. “We thought it would be you!” Twin two said, sounding as if he thought Harry had fooled them somehow.

“Surely Dumbledore would've chosen you?” his twin said.
“Tri-wizard Champion and everything,”
“But maybe you've pulled too many pranks?”
“That must be it, you're too much of a troublemaker,” the twins concluded.

“That's enough from both of you!” Mount Molly erupted. “I don't know how you pulled it off, but hand over the real letters. Harry dear, and you, Hermione too, put your new badges on, I'll take a photograph,” she smiled at the two.

“It wasn't us,” twin one said.
“We swear,” his brother added.

“But... but... Ron, you're not... really?” Molly's look was undescribable.
Meekly Ron held out his hand, and the twins handed him back his badge and letter.

Molly let out a shriek. “I can't believe it! Oh Ron, you made me so proud! A prefect, just like your brothers!”

Harry got up while as Molly started to rave on how proud she was, and went up the stairs. With Hermione dumb-struck by her own badge and Molly and the twins hovering over Ron, only Ginny noticed. She followed him upstairs, and saw him enter the formal dining room.

“It's not bloody fair!” Harry cried in the empty room. “I save the fucking school three years in a row, I am forced to fight for my life in a crooked tournament, I kick Voldemort's arse THREE TIMES, and who gets to be made prefect? The bloody hanger-on!”

Ginny stood at the door, watching in silence.

“No, of course Harry doesn't get to be prefect. We can't have him have a big head,” Harry grumbled, his back still to the door. “Stupid goat fucking meddlesome old git and his mindless followers. Ron? RON? I could accept Neville, he's a genuinely good guy, but RON?” Harry raved on.

Ginny walked up behind him, deliberately stepping hard so not to startle him. Harry turned his head, and saw her.
“Oh... err... congratulations with your brother;” he lamely said.

“You're right,” Ginny said. “It doesn't make sense to pick Ron over you. But you can't blame Ron for this, it's not as if he asked Dumbledore for the badge.”

“Wouldn't surprise me if he did,” Harry grumbled. Then he felt a pang of guilt, and in a softer tone continued, “No, I suppose you're right... I can't blame him for this. Doesn't mean it doesn't annoy the hell out of me though.”

“Wish I knew what the Headmaster was thinking,” Ginny said as she hugged him from behind.

“If he's thinking at all... old fucker is senile if you ask me,” Harry half growled. Then, he let out a
somewhat bitter laugh. “Thanks Gin-Gin.”

“What for?” She asked, still holding him.

“Just for being you, and listening, and stuff. Look... I'm going up to the attic, I need to hit some things. Just tell them I'm... make up something okay?” he moved out of her grasp.

“You got it,” Ginny promised. “If I see Tonks, I'll send her your way, okay?”

“Thanks again Gin-Gin, you're a princess.” To Ginny's surprise, Harry leant in and kissed her cheek. She watched him leave the room as she raised her hand up to her cheek.

Harry stayed in the attic until six o'clock. Beating up the already half broken furniture was pointless perhaps, but his anger and frustration were mostly gone. He went down to the second floor when he bumped into Ron on the landing. Harry forced a smile on his face.

“Harry, mum just came back! Come, let's check out my new Cleansweep!” Ron blurted out, happily.

Harry had to think for a moment. “As in the broom?”

“Not just any broom, a Keeper's broom!” Ron said. He took Harry by the arms, “I can't believe it mate, she actually got me one!”

“Cool,” Harry said. “Listen, Ron, well done, mate. Prefect and all.”

Ron's smile disappeared from his face. “I never thought they'd pick me,” he said. “I thought you were gonna be it, for sure!”

“Nah, the twins are right, I'm a troublemaker,” Harry said, trying to force some humour in his voice. “Come on then, let's check out your new broom.” Inwardly he felt like screaming still, but Ginny was right... he couldn't blame Ron for this. For all
his faults, being named Prefect was something he could blame Dumbledore or McGonagall for, not Ron.

Mrs Weasley was in the formal dining room on the ground floor betwixt piles of books, a new cauldron for Ginny, and a long package that Ron looked at longingly.
“No unwrapping it now, people are arriving for dinner soon,” she said. “You should wash up and come downstairs, Ron. Harry, come with me, would you?”

Harry followed Molly to the kitchen. Nobody was there yet except Kreacher, who scurried out of sight when he saw the Weasley matriarch.
A scarlet banner hung over the filled table, announcing 'RON AND HERMIONE, NEW PREFECTS'. Harry fought the scowl that arose as he read the words.

“Harry dear, I got your books, but there was a problem at Gringott's,” Molly said once they were both inside.

“What kind of problem Mrs Weasley?” Harry tore his eyes away from the banner.

“I wanted to deduct the cost from your trust vault, but the Goblins said they would not allow me access, and took back the key. Luckily we had enough left in the Weasley vault to pay for your books, don't worry dear I have them both, but do you have any idea what is wrong with your vault?” Molly sounded worried.

“Erm, not of the top of my head,” Harry said. He didn't want to admit he had gotten the lock changed, at least not until he knew for certain why the Weasleys had been accessing his vault.
“Do you... erm... often withdraw money from the vault?”

“Harry James Potter!” Molly sounded affronted, “Of course not! I only held on to it for safe keeping, and to make it easier for you to get your school books.” She looked at him with some sadness in her eyes, and continued: “You don't think I was stealing from you do you?”

“No, of course not!” Harry was quick to say. He hugged her, mollifying the woman somewhat. “I didn't know you had my key still, that is all. Thank you for taking care of me.” He let go of the hug, and saw Molly smile again. “How much was it?”

“Oh, not that much Harry,” Molly lied.
“Come on Molly, I shouldn't let you pay for my books. Tell me, or I'll just write Flourish & Blotts and find out anyway,” Harry said, a grin appearing on his face.

“Thirteen galleons for both books,” Molly admitted. “I'm sorry Harry, but Professor Flitwick's book is rather expensive, a full nine Galleons, and –”

“That's fine Mrs Weasley,” Harry smiled at her. “I have my money pouch in my trunk, I'll get you the money later okay?”

“You're a dear,” Molly said.

A little later everyone piled in for the impromptu party: the full Weasley family, Hermione, Remus, and Hestia Jones from the Order. Throughout Harry kept a smile plastered on his face, pretending to be happy for Ron. At least with Hermione he needed no pretence, he was genuinely happy for her getting the recognition she deserved.

Harry excused himself from the group after dinner, turning down Ron's offer to look at his new broom together. Since they weren't allowed to fly anyway, what was the point?

Sirius found him sulking in the library. “Go on up pup, she's waiting for you,” he said in a soft tone. Harry shot him a grateful smile, and rushed up the stairs.

“Where were you?” Harry demanded as he entered his room.

“Hello to you too love,” Tonks said flatly. “Stuck at Hogwarts with the old fool... I can't believe that man!” She looked at him, a hint of concern in her voice, “Sirius said you pretty much freaked out... have you calmed down a bit?”

“It's not bloody fair!” Harry exclaimed. “I deserved that badge, you can't tell me I didn't! What does... that bloody moron have that I don't?”

Tonks grabbed his shirt, and caused him to fall towards her. Catching him between her arms, she crushed him to her chest. “Hush love... you're right, it's not fair. Blame Dumbledore.”
“Mmm mmm mmm?” Harry's voice was muffled as she didn't let his head up.

“Quite a row actually in the teacher's lounge... McGonagall wanted you as prefect, but Dumbledore vetoed her. No, I don't know why love, he wouldn't explain,” Tonks said. She let his head up, and mashed her lips against his.

A deep snog later, Harry was calm again, and Tonks continued: “Don't blame Ron, well not for this. Dumbles pretty much ordered McG to make Ron the prefect in your place, I suppose he must have some plans.”

Harry sighed, and leant back until he was lying on his back. “Yeah yeah, I know. I shouldn't blame Ron. Still sucks though.”

“Know what else sucks?” Tonks said mischievously.

“No?”

“You'll find out,” she said with a giggle. A moment later Harry's pants were being pulled down, and he realised what she meant.

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Two floor down, Hermione was waiting for Ginny's breath to slow down. Finally the ginger girl seemed to be asleep. Hermione pulled the sweat-soaked towel she had stolen from under her covers, and pressed it close to her. Her right hand slipped back under the cover a little later.

Fortunately for Ginny, she was deep enough asleep that she wasn't awoken by the noises coming from the other bed.
“And the Nobel Prizes for Physics, Medicine, and Peace go to the Prof. Dr. Hermione Jane Granger, The Lady Countess of Harcourt, Minister for Magic of the United Kingdom, and Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, for proving the scientific basis behind magic, and bringing an end to all world wars!” King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden himself presented the brunette to the crowd.

“Thank you, thank you all,” Hermione spoke proudly. “It took years of study, but my study has successfully proven that magic has a scientific basis, and every one of us can be turned into a witch or wizard. And now that we all are magical, there are no more wars for resources, isn't that right Mr Rabin and Mr Arafat?”

The two men, leaders of Israel and Palestine, stood hand-in-hand as they agreed with her.

Hermione mingled with the crowd a little after her speech. The recognition of her peers was what she had always been hoping for. There stood Joanne Kathleen, the bully from her old primary school, who looked at her with admiration and now apologized to her. And Draco Malfoy, humbled by her achievements, acknowledged he had been a complete git and was wrong, and hoped that she, the brightest witch of her age, would be able to forgive him.

Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt stood face to face, and they were preparing to raise their fists. With a laugh, Hermione darted in between them:
“Now boys, no need to fight over me... you know you can't have me anyway.”

Suddenly she was in the arms of Harry. His muscular, powerful arms embraced her as he leant in closer, “I am so proud of you Hermione... I knew you could do it,” he breathed in her ear.
Hermione felt a shudder over her entire body.
“Why don't we celebrate a little in a more quiet place?” he suggested.

Next she knew, they were in a beautiful bedroom, fit for a palace. She was wearing sexy lingerie, and standing in front of a roaring fireplace. Harry walked up to her and kissed her deeply. She felt her body melt, and her knees went weak.

He picked her up, and carried her bridal style to the bed. Her eyes found his, and she saw the pure lust in them. Again, he kissed her, while he lowered himself over her. Her lingerie was gone, as were his clothes, and she willingly spread her legs wider for him.

A rod of molten red steel speared her, moving past her folds into her virginal tunnel. There was no pain at all, and Hermione let out a cry of delight: “Harry! Oh yes!”.
Deeper and deeper inside her he went, until their pelvises met.
“We fit together perfectly. I love you, Hermione,” Harry said. Hermione looked back at him with love, as he pulled out more than halfway, then plunged back in. Again and again he claimed her, and she felt her entire body go numb. “I am going to cum inside you now... that will mark you as mine forever,” Harry whispered in her ear.

Hermione let out a deep moan as she felt him flood her tunnel, then cried out: “Take me Harry! Make yours!” Her entire body went limp as she was hit by the most powerful orgasm of her life.

A female voice suddenly spoke: “Morgana's tits, Hermione, keep it down will you? Some of us are trying to sleep!”

Hermione's eyes shot open, and she saw Ginny sitting up in her bed on the other side of the small bedroom at Grimmauld Place. Hermione's covers were on the floor, she had kicked them off during her... dream... and her knickers, and indeed her entire bed, were soaked. “I... I'm going to take a shower,” she squeaked. She grabbed the towel that was lying next to her head – Harry's towel – and rushed out the room.

Ginny glared after her, wrinkled her nose at the scent in the room, but she was too tired to open a window now. The red-head tried to get back to sleep, muttering about horny, inconsiderate room-mates.

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Ginny woke up, feeling cranky and miserable. “Merlin, Hermione, for your room-mate's sakes at Hogwarts I hope that next time you decide to stir the sauce, you put up a silencing charm,” she grumbled.

Hermione had the good decency to look guilty, at least.

“Oh Morgana, what is this?” Ginny looked down in horror.

“What is it? Can I help?” Hermione rushed over.
“No, don't, it's –” Ginny protested, but too late, Hermione pulled the covers off her.

“No, don't worry about it Ginny,” Hermione said in a soft tone. “It happens to all of us... I was a little irregular when I started as well. Do you have any pads, or do you need to borrow some of mine?”

Ginny looked at the brunette as if she had grown a new head. “Pads? Hermione, I am on the Potion,” she said in an exasperated tone. “Although... maybe I forgot it?” Ginny looked uncertain.

“What Potion? Is it something like the Pill?” Hermione had that look again that promised she would keep nagging until she got her answer.

“Don't you know?” Ginny was genuinely surprised. “Everyone knows about the Potion! Well, all girls. Either your mother would've told you, or, for you Muggleborns, Madam Pomfrey has an information meeting some time in your second year, since most girls start around that age.”

“I was petrified, remember? I guess Pomfrey forgot,” Hermione said testily.

Ginny's face paled a little. “Don't remind me of my first year, please. But that'd explain it. Erm... oh this is awkward. The Potion – everyone calls it that – is for birth control. It also helps stop your, erm, monthlies. One dose lasts about seven months, but to be sure, most witches take it every half year. I was sure I took mine less than half a year ago though...”

“Well no-one bothered to tell me,” Hermione grumbled. “How do we get it?”

Ginny let out a sigh. “Let me... well... clean up a little, and I'll go talk to mum. I bet she can whip it up, it's not a simple recipe but mum is good with potions, had a N.E.W.T. in it and all. We're supposed to learn it in seventh year, but I don't think I'm taking my Potions N.E.W.T. with Snape.”

“Professor Snape Ginny,” Hermione corrected. Ginny just shot her a glare.

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Molly Weasley dropped a cutting of silphium into the cauldron. The useful plant was extinct in the Muggle world due to overuse by the Romans, but on the magical side it was still widely known.
“Ginevra Molly Weasley, that was very irresponsible of you,” she said, rounding on her daughter.

“Muuuum! I thought I had taken it,” Ginny protested. Hermione stood a little to the side, feeling sympathy for her fellow Gryffindor.

“I thought I had taken it' won't keep you from getting pregnant young lady,” Molly continued. “What if something had happened? You need to learn some responsibility.”

“Mum, please! It's not as if I'm... active... anyway,” Ginny admitted.

“Well I'm glad to hear that, at least,” Molly sniffed. “Make sure you don't... start... either.” She looked in the cauldron, pleased with what she saw. “It needs to simmer for another ten to twenty minutes, then you're both taking a full dose, girls. Hermione, talk to Poppy about getting your own supply when you're at school. And remember you can always come to me, or pick it up in an apothecary in Diagon Alley.”

“Thank you, Mrs Weasley,” Hermione said gratefully. She was still a little annoyed that neither of her room-mates at the school ever bothered to tell her there was a magical way to get rid of cramps, but then again she, Lavender and Parvati barely tolerated each other at best. Knowing them, they probably made fun of her behind her back for feeling grumpy and sniping at everyone.

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“Oi, if you won't let me get past, at least let me listen in,” Ron whined. The kitchen door was closed and locked when the Weasley boys came downstairs, so Fred and George had lowered one of their Extendable Ears, but had raised it back up almost as soon as they heard what was being discussed inside.

“Trust us little brother,”
“You don't want to know,” they said in twin-speak.

“Are they talking about woman's treasures again?” Ron looked intrigued.

“In a matter of speaking...”
“Best you don't press the issue though,”
“Or we'll take it as you volunteering,”
“To be a test subject.”

Ron paled, and backed off. “No, I'm good!” He ran back up the stairs leading up, leaving two grinning pranksters behind.

“What's got him so spooked?” Harry asked as he came down the stairs. “Ron rushed past me when I got to the first floor, and hid in his room.”

“Nothing important,”
“Just making sure little Ronnie,”
“Doesn't annoy ickle Gin-Gin.”

“Do I want to know the details?” Harry asked, amused.

The twins looked at each other, then said in tandem: “No.”

“Okay, I guess,” Harry grinned. “Say, now that I've got you both here... what do you think about preparing a major prank for the opening feast?”

“Look at him Fred, little Harry is all grown up,” (presumably) George said, pretending to wipe away a tear.

“Our little boy is turning into a prankster!” (presumably) Fred answered, and reached for Harry's hair to tussle it.

“Yeah yeah, laugh it up. If you're not interested, I'll just ask Padfoot,” Harry grumbled, ducking away from Fred's hand.

Instantly, the twins rounded on him. “Padfoot? As in Padfoot, Moony, Wormtail, and Prongs?” one of them asked.

“Why are you talking about the Marauders?” Sirius walked down the stairs, yawning as he spoke.
“How do you know about the Marauders?” The twins seemed to forget all about their twin-speak routine.

“I founded the Marauders – well, me and Harry’s dad,” Sirius said. “Breakfast ready yet?”

“Mum’s got the kitchen sealed up for some girl thing,” Fred said. “But that’s besides the point. Up to the drawing room we go!” Fred and George put their arms under Harry’s, and lifted him up, dragging him with them to the stairs. Amused, Sirius followed them.

“Someone is in a lot of trouble,”
“Not telling his elders he knew about their idols,”
“If that someone weren’t our chief,”
“and only investor,”
“we’d be angry,” the twins spoke as they forced Harry to go with them.

“Look guys, I would’ve told you if I knew you wanted to know,” Harry protested. He couldn’t keep the amusement at the situation out of his voice.

They entered the – fortunately empty – drawing room, and the twins dropped Harry back on his own feet.

“Gentlemen, Marauders and Boys-Who-Lived,”
“Let’s talk pranks.”

More days passed. Having completed all their summer homework long ago, Harry and the twins had ample time to prepare pranking plans. When asked why he had a sudden interest in them, Harry had this to say: “Dumb-as-a-door thinks I am unsuited to be a prefect, so I’m done following the rules. If he wants to treat me like a troublemaker like you both,” he ignored the mock protests from Fred and George, “then I’m going to earn the reputation by having fun.”

Sirius approved completely. Harry told Tonks about his decision as well. She seemed amused, and had some suggestions, in fact.

Hermione and Ron spent a lot of time bickering about prefect matters. Hermione wanted to prepare a detailed schedule for patrols, and the optimal route to go through the castle, Ron on the other hand didn’t care at all, pointing out that the Head Boy and Head Girl would decide these things, not fifth-year Prefects.
When Hermione was not arguing with Ron, she was trying to stay close to Harry. It was not uncommon to see her sitting in a chair with a forgotten book in her hands, a dreamy look on her face while she watched him.

And Molly still kept them cleaning. Sirius had tried to convince her it was a massive waste of time since he planned to abandon the house once (if) his name got cleared anyway, but she would not be convinced. At least it kept everyone a bit busy, and held off boredom, so in the end everyone went along with it.

A little good came of it: Sirius explained the family tapestry to Harry, pointing out where his name had been before it had been burned off by his insane mother, and he pointed out Harry's grandparents, Dorea Potter née Black, and Charlus Potter.

“Wait, does that mean we are related?” Harry asked.

“Sure thing pup, you're my, erm... second... no, third cousin,” Sirius answered.

“He lied!” Harry cried out.

“What did, pup?”

“Dumbledore! I asked him once why I had to go to the Dursleys, and he said it was because they were my only blood relatives. He lied to me!”

Sirius frowned. “True... I mean, even with me in Hotel Azkaban, you have more family.” Sirius got a mean grin, as he pointed out another burnt spot. “See this one here, your second cousin?”

“Yeah?”

“That's Andromeda, or as you'll soon call her, 'Mum','” Sirius barked out a laugh. “Although maybe it's a good thing you didn't go to her, because you're shagging her daughter rotten on a nightly basis.”
Harry glared at him. “Not funny. I guess it can't be avoided can it? Just about everyone with any pure-blood parent is related.”

“True, look here for example, Andromeda's sister Narcissa... that makes your best friend, Draco, your second cousin once removed, just like Nymphadora is to you.”

“Ugh. Well I'm only interested in one family member that way... and it's not a blonde ponce,” Harry quipped.

“I'm sure Draco will be devastated,” Sirius replied. “Haven't you ever wondered about him? With what I hear from you and the other kids, he spends more time on his hair than Ron does eating... and doesn't he hang around with two boys all the time?”

“What, you think Malfoy is a poofter?” Harry let out a laugh. “Oh wow. I can so see that.”

He didn't wait to tell the others about this. The twins and Ron were highly amused, Ginny got into a laughing fit, and even Hermione had to fight to keep a grin from her face.

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Finally it was the last week of August. School would start the next Friday, September first, and Molly got it into her head that a last cleaning sweep was necessary.

Everyone, including unfortunate Order members who were there as guests, got roped into work. Mundungus Fletcher, of all people, was assigned to work with the twins, but from what little Harry overheard, he was sure they were talking business rather than mucking out the master bedroom that now served as Buckbeak's pen.

Ron somehow managed to got out of work and was polishing his broom, and since Harry had little desire to see 'Prefect Ronald' gloat, he decided to go clean out the mouldy cupboard on the third floor that they’d skipped so far.

He walked up to the cupboard's door. The second floor cupboard had been overrun by a doxie infestation, and he just barely escaped their mildly poisonous bites. It had taken a lot of doxiecid before the colony was taken care of, and he was going to be more careful this time. Carefully, he opened the cupboard door. It was dark inside, and he reached for the light switch, but it wouldn't turn on. Harry heard something stumble inside.
“Hello? Anyone there?” he asked.
A figure stepped forward, and Harry's eyebrows rose in surprise as he saw Tonks. “Nym? What are you doing in there?”

A green light flashed. Tonks let out a weird gurgle, and collapsed to the floor. Harry was rooted to the spot in horror as the unmistakable form of Lord Voldemort stepped out of the shadows, his wand tip still glowing green from the Killing Curse that had felled Tonks.

“What... no...” Harry grabbed the closest wall, and slid along it to the floor. “No... you can't be dead...”

'This isn't real... Nym is at Hogwarts, and if this really was Voldemort, wouldn't he be gloating?' a small voice in his head spoke.

With a shaking hand, Harry whipped his wand out of the holster, and aimed it at the form of the Dark Lord. “R... Riddikulus!” he yelled. Nothing happened.

“Harry? Oh Merlin!” Lupin came running up the stairs, having heard Harry, and pushed him to the side. Tonks' corpse and Voldemort vanished, replaced by a silvery orb. Lupin held out his own wand, and clearly said: “Riddikulus”. The orb deflated like a balloon, and popped away.

Harry sat on the floor, looking pale still. “Thanks... I... I couldn't think of a way to make that funny,” he admitted softly.

Lupin knelt down beside him, and wrapped an arm around the shaking boy. “It's okay Harry, don't feel like you failed. That is one of the major dangers of a boggart... sometimes they take a form which is too traumatic. That's why standard procedure is always to be with more people.”

“Please, don't tell the others, okay?” Harry held out his hand, and Lupin helped them both get up.

“I won't,” the werewolf promised. “So... why was it Tonks who was dead there, and not one of your friends?”

Harry flushed a bit. “Tonks is a friend,” he stated.
“Mm-mm. More than a friend maybe?” Lupin padded him on the back. “Go get some hot cocoa downstairs, cub, I'll finish up here.”

Gratefully, Harry left.

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Harry was grateful for the real Nym that night. She just held him until he went to sleep, and he had a pleasant dream.
“See you at Hogwarts luv. Remember, it's Professor Tonks from now on,” Tonks whispered in his ear as Harry slowly woke up. She was already dressed in a shirt and skirt, and standing next to his bed.

“I'm going to miss sleeping with you,” Harry admitted.

“We'll figure something out, hero. Here, I have something for you to keep me in mind on the train,” Tonks said with a smile. She reached below her skirt, wiggled, and her knickers dropped to her feet. With quick footwork they were dangling from one foot, and she kicked up, causing them to fly in Harry's face.
“Score!” Tonks giggled. “Keep them with you, and you can give them back if we get the chance tonight at school...”

“Nym! Won't you get into trouble for that?” Harry gasped. He had her knickers in his hand by now.

“Nah, I'll be wearing teacher's robes over this... but you, Mr Potter, can be the only one who'll know that your hot, young, beautiful DADA teacher is going commando at the High Table,” Nym giggled again. “I really need to get going. Dumbles wanted me there by nine at the latest, and you need to get some breakkie before you lot go off to King's Cross. Knowing Molly, the Weasleys will be running late again.”

Harry pulled her down quickly and gave her a kiss. “See you tonight then Nym... I love you,” he said, blushing deep.

Tonks felt like she could float as she blew him another kiss before going into the secret passage. 'He said he loves me! Oh Tonskie, you are one lucky girl,' she thought to herself, humming happily, as she prepared to apparate to Hogwarts.
There was a lot of commotion in the house, Harry realised as he went down the stairs. From what he heard as he wolfed down some breakfast, Fred and George had bewitched their trunks to fly downstairs rather than bothering to carry them, and they had slammed into Ginny, causing her to fall down two flights into the hall. Molly and the painting of Mrs Black seemed to be having a shouting match as both rounded into the boys.

“Are you okay?” Harry asked Ginny when she came down into the kitchen.

“Mum patched me up,” Ginny said as she took some bread. “Just a bump on my head, that’s all. I guess we’re just waiting for the guard to go to King’s Cross now.”

“Guard? Since when do we need a guard to get to the station?”

“We don't need a guard, you need one,” Hermione informed him. “Professor Dumbledore said –”

“I don’t care what Professor Dumb said,” Harry interrupted her. “I can look out for myself.”

“WILL YOU LOT GET DOWN HERE NOW, PLEASE!” Mrs Weasley's voice bellowed through the house. Harry shot the girls a grimace, and went back upstairs.

“We're here, no need to shout,” he informed the Weasley matriarch.

“Oh, good Harry. Where is your trunk and owl?”

“My trunk is in the dining room, and Hedwig is flying to the school,” Harry said.

“I've got my trunk there as well mum, and Hermione's too,” Ginny added. “Where's Ron?”

“RONALD BILIUS WEASLEY! We need to leave, NOW!” Molly bellowed once more.
Ron came stumbling down the stairs, his trunk hitting every step behind him. “I'm here, I'm here!” he yelled.

“What were you doing? No don't answer that,” Molly decided. “Is Mad-Rye here?”

“Morning Molly,” the ex-Auror grumbled. Harry jumped, he hadn't even seen the man arrive. “Constant vigilance, Potter,” Moody barked a laugh.

“How are we getting to the station? Cars again?” Harry asked.

“No, we're walking, as soon as Sturgis gets here,” Molly answered. “Arthur tried to get us cars, but Minister Fudge didn't want to sign off for it when he heard you were with us...” she patted his arm distractedly. “Sorry, dear.”

“Err... why don't we take the floo instead? Surely, that is more safe?” Harry offered.

Molly stared at him with open mouth, and blinked twice. Moody barked out another laugh: “Good head on your shoulders there lad! Merlin, I should've thought of that myself... floo is much safer indeed.”

“I'll take Harry,” Sirius spoke up. He had come down while they were talking, and now everyone was standing in the entrance hall.

“Sirius, be serious,” Harry quipped. Then, with a little sad expression: “it's not safe, even as Padfoot. Remember, Wormtail has joined You-Know-Who, so your doggie identity may have leaked out.”

Sirius drooped his head in an almost canine fashion. “I suppose you're right,” he admitted. “Will you come back for Christmas at least?”

“Of course!” Harry beamed at his 'uncle'. “We're family, and family sticks together.” Sirius seemed happier at that.

The group went back to the kitchen, and a queue for the floo was formed. Lupin and Ron would go
first, followed by Mad-Eye with Harry, then the girls, the twins, and finally Molly with Sturgis Podmore. The latter duo would also take all trunks with them.

Harry shot out the floo like a bullet, but Mad-Eye's hand on his shoulder stopped him from going too far. Harry gave the man a grateful smile as they moved to the side with Lupin and Ron. The others joined them quickly.

“Oh look, there's Mrs Weasley with the trunks,” Hermione said. Harry was looking around. The station was as busy as ever, people rushing to and fro.

“Hey Weasleys! Had a good summer?” A tall boy with dreadlocks walked up. The twins as one hugged their mother, ruffled Ginny's and Harry's hair, and headed off with Lee.

“Right, err, I guess we'll go then,” Harry suggested.

“Take care of yourself,” Remus said, giving Harry a clap on the shoulder. “You especially Harry, stay safe.”

“I will,” Harry promised.

A warning whistle sounded, and the students still outside started heading for the train doors.

“Harry? Be careful, you promise?” Molly pleaded. Harry gave her another hug, then stepped aboard the train. Remus helped him with his trunk. Together, Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny waved through the window to the Order members, as the train started moving. The twins were nowhere in sight, having gotten on board with Lee.

“Shall we get a compartment then?” Harry asked.

Hermione and Ron shared a look. “Err.. Harry... we're supposed to go to the prefect carriage,” Hermione stammered.

Harry's expression turned into a frown. “Oh. Right. Well, see ya then.” He turned his back on them, and picked up his, and Ginny's trunk. “You coming, Gin-Gin?”
Ginny nodded.

“Oi mate, it's not as if I asked for it, I'm not a git like Percy,” Ron protested behind him.

“You have a meeting to get to, remember?” Harry said without turning his head as he walked off. People were looking at him as he and Ginny passed the compartments. Harry wondered why he got such weird looks, until Ginny pointed it out to him:

“Harry, they're either recognising you, and thinking of the Prophet and its slander campaign, or they see a hot boy and wonder who he is,” the ginger said with a giggle.

“You think I'm hot?” Harry shot a grin at her.

“Don't get a big head, Mr Potter. I'm taken, and so are you,” Ginny laughed.

Everywhere they passed seemed to be full, or was filled with people they didn't want to sit with. As they passed by one such compartment, several Slytherin girls – he thought two of them were Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davis from his year – looked him over like he was a piece of meat on offer.

At the very end of the train, they found Neville Longbottom standing in front of a closed compartment door.

“Hi Harry, hi Ginny,” he panted. Neville was slightly overweight, and the effort of pulling his trunk was apparently a bigger workout than he was used to. “I walked... half the train... Everywhere's full...”

“Don't be silly Neville, what about here? It's just Loony Lovegood,” Ginny looked past him through the door. “Let's go in.” Ignoring Neville's protests he didn't want to disturb anyone, Ginny opened the door and stepped through. Harry, pulling his and Ginny's trunk, followed, while Neville waited outside.

“Hi Luna, mind if we take these seats?” Ginny asked, shooting the girl a smile.

Luna was a very pale girl with long blonde hair, and had the largest eyes that made her look
constantly surprised. Her wand was stuck behind her ear, and she was wearing a necklace of what appeared to be Butterbeer corks. She was holding a magazine, upside-down. Luna looked over the newcomers, then nodded. “Hello Ginevra. I don't mind, but I think the school will be upset if you take the seats from the train. Why don't you sit down instead?” she said.

Ginny forced a laugh, “that is funny, Luna.” Turning to Harry, she waved him further inside. Neville took a look at Luna, frowned, and walked off.

“Oi Nev, where are you going?” Harry called after him.

“Don't mind Neville, he thinks I am a little weird,” Luna said. Harry shrugged and stowed the trunks, then sat down across from her. Luna stared at him, not seeming to need to blink. Harry began to feel rather uncomfortable, until she broke the silence: “You're Harry Potter.”

“I know I am,” Harry replied. Something about the blonde was off, but he thought she might be all right still. Ginny seemed to trust her. “And you're Loon– Luna Lovegood?”

Luna's expression changed for a fraction of a second, before she took on her serene look again. “Yes, I am Luna Lovegood. I'm in the same year as Ginny, in Ravenclaw. *Wit beyond measure is man's greatest treasure,*” she said in a sing-song voice, then went on, “some of the girls call me Loony and tease me. I don't like that much.”

“Sorry Luna, I will not call you that,” Harry apologised. “Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too, Harry Potter.” Luna resumed staring at him.

“Erm... what are you, err, reading?” Harry felt very uncomfortable.

“Oh, *the Quibbler,* it's my daddy's periodical,” Luna said, not taking her eyes off him. “I was doing the rune puzzle. Have you tried runes Harry Potter? I think they are fascinating.”

“Err, no, I'm not taking Ancient Runes,” Harry admitted. “Well... err... have fun I guess.”

The train went silent again. Ginny had picked out a copy of *Witch Weekly*, Luna stared at Harry,
and Harry sat there, fidgeting. He slipped his hand in his right-hand side pocket, and found the soft cloth he was looking for, then just held it, trying to keep his mind on other things as he looked out the window.

“Oh! I didn't know you were a collector,” Luna suddenly spoke. Harry focused back on her.

“Err... what?” he asked, confused.

“Daddy warned me some bad boys would do underwear raids,” Luna clarified. “Or is that your own pair?” she indicated his right hand. Ginny also looked over, and let out a giggle as she saw Harry held Tonks' knickers.

“What? No! It's not mine, it's...” Harry trailed off, fighting a blush.

“I don't know the rules. Do you have to take them off me, or do I just hand them over?” Luna asked. She stood up, and raised her skirt with both hands, revealing her white bloomers.

Almost panicking at the unexpected surprise, Harry looked over at Ginny for support.

“You're not getting mine, Harry If anyone is, they're Dean's,” Ginny giggled, before giving in to full laughter.

Harry just stared at the blonde girl, mouth open. This was so unexpected he had no idea what to say.

At that precise moment, the door to their compartment slid open. Harry jumped up in surprise, accidentally bumping against Luna and causing her to fall back on her rear, her skirt fortunately now no longer raised. In the tussle he felt his glasses fly off his head and land on the floor, then as he was stumbling for his balance, heard a crack as he accidentally stepped on them.

“Oh... err... hello,” someone at the door said, the door now fully sliding open. Harry looked over, and through the blur caused by not wearing glasses, thought he recognised Cho Chang, his crush from last year... and Cedric Diggory's ex.

“Hi there hot stuff, are you a transfer student?” Cho said seductively, stepping inside. Ginny was still laughing although trying to stop, and Luna just sat there looking at Harry and Cho, but Cho
paid them no mind.
“Why are you sitting with these losers? Come on over to my compartment, and maybe we can get to know each other better?” she suggested.

Harry found his voice again, “Err... no thanks Cho,” he spoke out, hating how his voice seemed to tremble. Then, with more power: “I'm happy sitting with Ginny and Luna.”

“Harry?” Cho blinked in surprise. “I didn't recognise you! Err... had a nice summer?” She looked him over much like the Slytherin girls had earlier – or indeed Hermione.

“Capital,” Harry dryly responded. “Excuse me.” He bent down to pick up his glasses, or what remained of them.

“Oh Morgana, look at that bum...” Cho whispered to herself. Before Harry got back up, she just closed the door, and hurried off.

“Where did she go?” Harry asked no-one in particular. He held his broken glasses morosely.

“She, hee hee, had to leave,” Ginny finally seemed to calm down a little. Then, more seriously, “Here, let me Harry.” Ginny took out her wand and waved it over the remains of his glasses, intoning, “Oculus Reparo.”

Harry's eyeglasses trembled and flowed back in shape, but then a poof-like sound was heard, and they disappeared into nothing.

“Oops... that's not supposed to happen,” Ginny apologised.

“Just my luck,” Harry grumbled. “What am I supposed to do now?”

“I'll be your seeing-eye girl for the train ride,” Ginny giggled. “Talk to a teacher when we arrive, I'm sure one of them can help you.”

Luna kept silent, reading her magazine somehow upside-down.

An hour later, after the food trolley came and went, the next visit turned up. Harry sat there with a scowl on his face looking outside for all the good it did him, and Ginny and Luna were still reading
their magazines.

The door slid open and Hermione walked in, pulling her trunk and carrying Crookshanks' carrier.

Harry got up to help her. Crookshanks looked ready to murder someone in his carrier, and Hermione looked tired; even without his glasses he could see it.

“Where's Ron?” Ginny asked.

“Ron found Dean and Seamus, and wanted to sit with them,” Hermione said disdainfully. “Well, each House has a boy and a girl fifth-year prefect,” Hermione she continued. She looked annoyed at Ginny for having claimed the seat next to Harry, and opted to sit down next to Luna instead, as Harry stowed her trunk away. “Guess who made Slytherin prefects?” she asked rhetorically.


“Right, and it's Professor Snape, Harry. And the other one is that horrid cow, Pansy Parkinson,” Hermione said, anger in her voice. Then she looked at Harry, “where... where are your glasses?” Harry looked in her direction, and Hermione felt her heart skip a beat. Without the glass in front of them, Harry's green eyes were even more intense...

“Broke them,” Harry said miserably. “And the repair spell made them disappear.”

“Oh! That is interesting, I read about that possibility in Waffling's Magical Theory, he wrote that an object that was repaired once before, has a forty-seven percent chance of being reduced to 'nothing' – I guess he meant atoms – if another repair is attempted each time,” Hermione piped up. “Oh hello, who are you?” she added in an aside to Luna, who was now looking at her.

“You are misplaced in Gryffindor. Why you're not a Ravenclaw is the biggest mystery in the school,” Luna said. “I am Luna Lovegood, pleased to meet you. Have you given Harry your knickers yet? I offered him mine, but he hasn't said yet if he wants to take them himself, or if I should just hand them over.”

Harry let his head collapse on his hands, as Ginny again began to giggle uncontrollably, and Hermione emulated a fish as she let her mouth drop open, having no idea what to say to that.
Harry heard Ginny's giggle suddenly stop, and he heard her whisper what he thought was, “No way”.

He raised his head from his hands and looked forward. Hermione had stood up, and he saw her bend over slightly, but his horrible eyesight made it impossible to see details. Hermione sat back down briefly, then stood up once more, and reached forward quickly. Her hand bumped into his, and he felt soft cloth. Automatically he grabbed it and Hermione sat back down.

“What?” Harry couldn't think of anything else to say, as he realised that Hermione had, indeed, handed over her knickers.

“You, you wanted them, right? Just give them back when you're... done... or put them in the wash,” Hermione blurted out.

“No fair, I was first,” Luna said, and Harry didn't need to see her face to know she was pouting.

“Luna? No, wait. Hermione, what the hell?” Harry tried to focus on her face, but not only was it all a blur, Hermione seemed to have her head turned. “What the hell?” he repeated, and looked to his side for support.

“Don't look at me! I already told you, you're not getting mine,” Ginny said, amusement in her voice.

“Have you gone mad?” Harry blurted out. “Hermione, what the hell? Why would you hand me your... underwear?”

“But... Luna said that...” Hermione started, then trailed off.

“If you don't want hers, can I have them? I don't really see what the appeal of collecting girl's knickers is, but I'm willing to learn,” Luna offered.

“No, you're not taking hers!” Harry yelled. At that precise moment, the door to their compartment again slid open. Harry pushed his hands in his pockets, hiding the evidence.
“Well well well. Scar-head, his pet Mudblood, the pauper, and the lunatic,” Malfoy’s slightly high voice sounded. “Guess I found the loser wagon at last. Were you hiding from me, Pottie?”

“Draco, piss off. I'm not in the mood for you,” Harry snapped back at him. Trying to focus his eyes on the blond ponce was giving him a headache.

“Better watch what you say, Potter. I'm a Prefect. I should give you detentions for that,” Malfoy sneered.

“You shouldn't abuse your authority like that, Malfoy,” Hermione corrected him.

“Shut up, Mudblood, nobody's interested in what you have to say,” Malfoy retorted.

“Piss off, Malfoy, didn't you hear me the first time? I'm not in the mood to flirt with you,” Harry grumbled.

“Flirt? What are you on about, Potty?” Malfoy turned his head in an aside to Goyle or Crabbe, “See? The *Prophet* was right, he's delusional!”

His overgrown bodyguard laughed, and feeling more secure now, Malfoy stepped inside the compartment. He focused on his nemesis. “What do you think about the fact they made the Weasel prefect instead of you, scar-head?” He made to step even closer.

“I told you to piss off, poofter!” Harry grabbed Malfoy by the arm with his left hand, and squeezed, hard. Malfoy let out a yell of pain.

Even through his blurry eyesight, Harry recognised one of Malfoy's pet trolls get closer, and in a move he had practised with Tonks over the summer, he had his wand out of the holster and trained at the boy. “Take your boyfriend, and get lost!” Harry yelled.

Crabbe – for Harry recognised him now – blinked stupidly, then took Malfoy by the shoulder, and pulled him away. Malfoy nursed his right arm with his left as he glared at Harry: “You'll pay for that, Potter! I'm a prefect, unlike you!”

“Yeah, and you're also a git who likes to hang around with two boys all the time. I told you, I'm not interested in you that way,” said Harry.
Ginny and Hermione laughed. Malfoy glared at them all with hatred.

“Tell me, how does it feel to get passed over, Potter? How does it feel to be less than a Weasley?”

“Last warning, Malfoy,” Harry said, moving to stand up.

“Hit a nerve, did I? Well, you'd better watch yourself, Potter,” Malfoy said with a smirk, but he let Goyle pull him back out of the compartment, still nursing his arm.

“Bloody git,” Harry grumbled as he sat back down.

“You shouldn't let him provoke you like that,” Hermione said after a long pause.

“I don't want to hear it,” Harry said, irritated. “I've got a headache. Let me rest my eyes a bit. Warn me if something else comes up, okay?”

He didn't wait for a reply as he leant back and shut his eyelids.

Luckily the girls seemed to realise he was in no mood to talk, and went back to their own reading, at least until the train entered a storm front. The weather outside turned to rain, and it grew rather dark. The lights in the train came on, but it was not enough to read by. Luna stared at everyone, Hermione gave Harry a weird look, her hands restless in her lap, and Ginny inspected her nails.

Harry was not fully asleep, but half dozing. Occasionally he opened his eyes hoping to catch a glimpse of where they were, but it was pointless. The storm cloud made it impossible to see anything, not that he could see much more than a foot in front of his face anyway.

“We should change,” Hermione spoke up at last. The girls all got up to take their robes from their trunks. Harry gave Ginny a grateful smile as she helped him with his trunk. As he pulled his robes over his head and Ginny helped him get the collar and everything straight, Harry saw the prefect badge on Hermione's chest catch some of the light in the compartment, and his expression darkened again.

Finally, the train slowed down and they heard noise in the corridors as people made to get up. Hermione excused herself to the others, since she had to supervise all of this as a prefect, leaving Harry with Luna and Ginny to look after the grumpy Crookshanks. Trying to distract the half-Kneazle some, Harry pushed his fingers through the grid on the front of
the carrier and stroked Crookshanks' head.

“Hermione will be grateful you're petting her kitty,” Luna said. Harry flushed, and tried to look at her critically to see if she was implying something, but it was no use. Luna seemed oblivious to what she said. Ginny on the other hand giggled again.

“Let's go,” Harry finally said. “Erm, Gin, can you?” He held out his free hand.

Ginny nodded, and took him by the hand. They slowly moved to the doors, and Harry was expecting to hear Hagrid's familiar booming voice any moment now, but it never came. Instead, the unmistakable nasally voice of Snape was heard: “Out of the way, you dunderheads! First years, report here, now!”

“Where's Hagrid?” Harry asked out loud.

“Come on Harry, move,” Ginny pulled on his arm. “We're blocking the door.”

“Oh.”

They lost Luna as they were jostled by the crowd, and Harry just barely held on to Ginny's hand. Harry looked around in vain for familiar faces, but the combination of the dark and rainy weather and his lost glasses made it impossible for him to see. He also missed the speculative glances thrown his way by several female students as they watched Ginny pull him towards the road outside the station.

Ginny and he walked past one of the horseless carriages, when Harry stopped in his tracks. The horseless carriage, was no longer horseless... even through the darkness and his bad eyesight, it was clear there was a pale vaguely horse-like creature tied to it.

“Come on Harry, let's get inside,” Ginny complained. “What are you looking at?”

Hermione emerged from the crowd, her face flushed and panting a little. “Oh, Harry! Have you seen Ron? Malfoy was bullying some second-years and I did my best to make him stop, but he's worse than ever now that he is prefect. Oh, thank you for taking Crookshanks,” she blurted out.

“Dunno where he is,” Harry said distractedly. He held his hand to the creature, and felt it had leathery skin. It reminded him a bit of a snake's skin.
“What are you doing, Harry? Are you quite all right?” Hermione asked, concern in her voice.

“Oh, I'm good... it's just, have you ever seen these horses before?”

“What horses?” Hermione squinted. “Harry, are you sure you're all right?”

“Come on, the horse pulling the carriage!” Harry turned to look at her. “Wonder if Hagrid found them?”

“Harry, we should really get in before the carriage leaves without us,” Hermione huffed. “You can joke later.”

Harry wondered if she was joking, she could see it, couldn't she?

“Harry, come on!” Ginny called.

“Yeah, okay...” Harry frowned.

“It's okay Harry, you're not going mad,” a dreamy voice said from behind him. “I can see them, too.”

“Really?” Harry turned to Luna. Her wide, silvery eyes seemed to stare straight through him at the horses.

“Oh, yes,” Luna said. “I've been able to see them since my first year, they've always pulled the carriages. Don't worry, you're as sane as I am,” she said, climbing into the carriage.

Harry frowned as he followed her. Somehow that wasn't as reassuring as it should be.
“Wonder why Snape was collecting the firsties? Isn't that usually Hagrid's job?” Ginny asked.

“Professor Snape, Ginny,” Hermione corrected her in a bored tone. “I don't know. I hope Hagrid hasn't left.”

“I wouldn't mind if he left,” Luna spoke. “He's a horrible teacher.”

“No, he isn't!” Ginny said angrily. Harry frowned as well, he liked the half Giant.

“Well, he's not good at explaining how to actually care for animals,” Luna defended herself. “We Ravenclaws consider him to be easily the third worst teacher.”

“Well you Ravenclaws are wrong then,” Ginny snapped at the blonde. Luna seemed unperturbed by the hostility.

“I think Hagrid is a great person,” Harry said. “Just out of interest, who are the other two, then?”

“Professor Trelawney is second-worst, and the absolute worst is Binns,” Luna said. “And I do like Hagrid as a person, but I took Care to learn how to, well, care for magical animals, not to deal with either the most dangerous or the most useless ones. And I am sure those skrewts from last year were easily illegal cross-breds. I hope we get more of Professor Grubbly-Plank this year.”

“I don't,” Ginny said hotly. Luna just smiled, and stared at the others as she seemed to like to do. As the carriage came close to Hogwarts Harry tried to see if Hagrid's cabin had lights, but it was impossible to tell. Shortly after the carriage stopped at the Great Hall, and they stepped out.

“It was an interesting train ride, Harry Potter,” said Luna after they had all gotten out. “I hope you will not ignore me from now on, I rather like having people to talk to.”

Harry began to protest he wouldn't, but Luna stopped him by pressing something in his hand. “Here's mine. You can keep those if you want, the other girls would likely hide them from me anyway.” And with that, she slipped away into the crowd. Harry didn't need to look down to know he had gotten another set of knickers now. He let out a sigh, and put them in his pocket with the others.

“I don't like her,” said Ginny as she walked up to Harry, oblivious to what Luna just said or did.
“She shouldn't be so mean about Hagrid.”

“Honestly, I can see what she means. I was expecting more from Care as well when I took the class. Luna seems to be a nice person and doesn't mean any harm,” Harry defended her.

“Ginny, can you get Harry inside? I need to speak with the upper year prefects and find Ron, we are supposed to help out now” cut in Hermione, and she rushed off.

Harry looked to the front of the carriage and the weird horse again, then took Ginny's hand. They went inside and got into the Great Hall. Ginny led him to a seat, then moved off to sit with some girls from her year. Harry realised no-one he knew was sitting there, and certainly didn't recognise anyone, so he just walked along the table to the High Table where the teachers all sat.

“Professor Dumbledore, when can I hold my speech?” the fat woman in pink was complaining. “The Minister will be very displeased if you do not allow me to!”

“Dolores, as I told you this afternoon when you suddenly arrived, without prior warning I might add, individual teachers never give speeches. You can save it for your first class,” Dumbledore answered her.

“Potter! What do you think you're doing here?” Snape blurted out, as he was the first to see Harry walk up.

“I apologize for interrupting,” said Harry. “But is Madam Pomfrey here?”

“I am right here Mister Potter,” Poppy's voice sounded to his left. “Don't tell me you need my services already?”

“My glasses, madam, they disappeared,” Harry said, blushing a little.

“A likely story, Potter! Detention tonight!” Snape blurted out.

“I'm telling the truth! I can't see shit!” Harry protested.
“Another two detentions for foul language in the presence of a teacher,” Tonks spoke up. “Snape, do you mind if I take yours as well? I can use some help getting the classroom ready for after the weekend.”

Snape almost smiled as another teacher gave 'the Potter brat' a detention. “Of course, take him,” he told her.

Harry scowled at Snape, then looked back at where he thought Madam Pomfrey was. “I apologize for my use of foul language, but it's quite true... I am blind without my glasses.”

“Oh very well, Mister Potter, I'll take you up to the hospital wing,” Madam Pomfrey said as she rose. “Don't worry all, we'll be quick. I'll have him back at the Feast in no time.”

“That is fine, Poppy,” said Minerva.

“So that is the Potter boy? Troublemaker, I can just tell,” Harry heard 'Dolores' say as he was taken by the hand to Madam Pomfrey's domain.

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Harry resisted the urge to check out his reflection in every surface as he walked alongside the matron back to the Great Hall. She had given him a pair of contact lenses – magical lenses – that would apparently automatically change to his prescription, and didn't even need to come out. When he asked her why she hadn't offered these before, she responded that he had never asked. He couldn't fault that.

Poppy led him back inside, and from the many small kids sitting at the tables, Harry realised he had missed the Sorting this year: food was already on the tables, and the feast was in full swing. It didn't matter to him, he could get to know some of the new Gryffindors over the weekend. Harry walked to his table and looked for a familiar face.

“Erm, hi,” a voice next to him said. Harry looked up, and recognised Katie Bell, his Quidditch team mate. “Are... are you new here? I see you're wearing Gryffindor colours. Do you want to sit next to me?” she asked. He saw she was blushing slightly.
“I’m not new, but I’ll gladly sit next to you,” Harry laughed softly.

“Oh my god, Harry?” Katie squeaked out. “I didn't recognise you without your glasses... and wow, you got buff!” She reached out, and touched his muscles.

“Got lenses now,” Harry replied. “Erm, mind letting go?” Katie still had her hand on his arm.

Quick as lightning, she pulled it away. “Sorry, Harry, you surprised me, that's all,” she said. “You look hot like this, by the way.”

Harry smiled, “You don't look half bad yourself, Katie.”

“Look at you, all grown up and flirting,” Katie said with a slight laugh. “Listen, you can still sit next to me if you want... I'm sitting with Angie and Alicia. They sent me to find out who the hunk standing next to our table was. And Harry? I really like the new look.”

“We'll take him from here Katie,”
“We have something to discuss with Mr Potter here,” the twins cut in. Katie gave Harry a smile, and left. The twins placed their hands on Harry's shoulder, and more or less forced him into a seat.

“Where were you, Harry?”
“Because we did our part,” they said in tandem. Then, the last one said: “Where are your glasses?”

“Got lenses now,” Harry said. “Sorry guys, I had to take care of my eye-sight first. You managed to get it into the teacher's drinks then?”

“Of course we did,”
“We're all ready for the first Marauder Prank in twenty years,”
“Even if Prongs Junior wasn't around for the preparation,” the twins agreed.

“I'm sorry guys, I'll be there for next time,” Harry apologised. The twins looked mollified.
Out of nowhere, Hermione sat down across from him and the twins, having carried her plate from where she was sitting before. “There you are. Harry, you missed the sorting. What have you been doing?” she demanded, more than asked.

“Hello again to you too, Hermione. Find Ron?” Harry said, a little annoyed.

“Ronald is still sitting with Dean and Seamus,” Hermione sounded equally annoyed. “Seamus was saying he believed the Prophet about you being a liar, and Ronald was not bothering to defend you. As soon as I saw you had gotten back, I left them to their rumour-mongering.”

“I don't care,” Harry said with a shrug. “Let the idiots believe what they want.”

“Harry! How can you say that?” Hermione sounded affronted. “And no changing the subject, mister. What have you been doing?”

Harry rolled his eyes. The twins cut in:

“Harry has been flirting with Katie Bell,”
“Lovely, busty, brunette Katie Bell,”
“The dog he is,“
“I'm so proud Fred, Harry-kins is growing up,” George finished.

Hermione's mouth dropped open, then she snapped it shut and glared at Harry. “So, you are with her now? Harry, how did you two even meet during the summer?”

“Hermione, I'm not. Katie was just being friendly,” Harry protested. “But enough of that. Did they say yet where Hagrid was?”

“Oh! Sorry Harry, I thought...” Hermione sounded instantly apologetic. Harry looked straight at her, and he saw the blood flow to her face. Hermione took a deep breath to steady herself, then answered: “Err.. I mean... no, Hagrid's not at the table. Just the usual teachers, and Tonks, and some woman wearing pink.”

“Her first name is Dolores, and she has something to do with the Ministry,” Harry mused.

“Wonder what the Ministry wants with Hogwarts? They're not usually getting involved,” Hermione
thought out loud. Harry just went for the food, rather than speculate further. He was a bit hungry by now.

For a while they all just ate, talking about nothing important, until Professor Dumbledore stood up again, and tapped his fork against a glass to get people's attention.


“Meow?” Professor McGonagall asked her supervisor, then clamped her hands to her mouth as she realised she just mewed.

Snape shot to his feet and glared at the Gryffindor table, but rather than the usual stream of accusations and insults, hissing like a snake came out. A little pale, he dropped back in his seat. The other teachers all were affected as well: Professor Flitwick squeaked like a mouse, Professor Sprout grunted like a pig, and Tonks clucked like a chicken. Throughout the hall, the students were laughing, he and the twins included. Hermione on the other hand looked affronted at the disrespect.

Headmaster Dumbledore stood there watching everyone, a look of amusement on his face. He let it continue a minute more, than raised his wand to his throat, and a light appeared as he wordlessly cast something. “A most inventive prank,” he spoke out loud. “It is not often that the teachers are the ones caught!” He turned to his colleagues and waved his wand over the teacher's table. All went quiet, then Snape was clearly heard:

“Two weeks detention and a hundred Points from Gryffindor!” he yelled.

“Now, now, Severus, we have no proof a Lion was involved,” Dumbledore said, a smile still on his face. “No detentions or point loss, but I ask that the guilty party or parties come forward in private later. This prank was impressive, and I am sure Professor Flitwick would like to reward the spell work.”

The diminutive part-Goblin stood up so he could be seen, and nodded.

“Now on to business,” Dumbledore continued. “We welcome two new teachers this year: we are very pleased to welcome Professor Tonks, formerly an Auror, as our new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. And Professor Umbridge will be taking Care of Magical Creatures.”
There was a round of polite applause throughout. Harry forgot to clap for Tonks, as he wondered what the Umbridge woman was doing there... Tonks had warned him about her earlier during the summer.

Dumbledore continued, “Quidditch tryouts will occur on the –”

To everyone's surprise, he was interrupted by Professor Umbridge clearing her throat loudly. She stood up, and was obviously intending to give a speech. Dumbledore glared at her, and continued talking: “As I was saying, Quidditch tryouts will occur on the next weekend. Gryffindor is the reigning champion, from the year before last, and I expect the other Houses are looking forward to taking the cup. Now, the Gobstones Club...” he kept talking, and Umbridge, fuming, sat back down.

“Oh Merlin, it's that Umbridge woman. She's the right-hand woman of the Minister,” Harry informed Hermione.

“She is? I don't like the sound of that,” said Hermione. “How do you know that? Have you seen her before?”

Harry was spared from answering as the student body en masse got up from their seat, Dumbledore had obviously just dismissed the school. Hermione jumped to her feet, flustered: “Harry, I need to go! Ron and I are supposed to show the first-years where our House is!”

“That's fine,” Harry said, but Hermione had already left him to find Ron. Harry made to walk off as well, but a call from the High Table stopped him: “Potter, with me,” Tonks was heard.

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Tonks led Harry to the DADA classroom. As they walked, she looked him over.
“No glasses, hero?” she said, standing up from her desk.

“Contacts,” Harry shot her a smile. “Seems Poppy had them all along... I just had to ask for them! Wish I'd known my first year. I don't even need to take them out at night, it's as if I'm not using anything!”

Tonks embraced him and they kissed. Harry pushed her backwards as they did, and she ended up leaning against her desk. Finally they broke the kiss, and she was left panting for air.
“Merlin, I missed you today,” she blurted out.

“I you, too,” Harry agreed with her. “Do you know where Hagrid is?”

Tonks frowned, “He is out on Order business somewhere, with Madam Maxime from Beauxbatons, she joined up as well, apparently. Dumbles had gotten Professor Grubblly-Plank to take his place, but something went wrong.”

“I guess so, if that Umbridge hag is here now,” said Harry. “How did that happen?”

“She showed up two hours before the train arrived, carrying an official Ministry seal. Get this: since Hagrid never took his O.W.L.s, they have declared him unfit to teach, and therefore claim the Care position has been unfilled since your third year. Umbridge demanded Dumbledore bring forth a new teacher on the spot, or she'd take it.”

“But he had Professor Grubbly, didn't he?” Harry asked.

“Grubblly-Plank, and sure, but she only can teach three months at most,” Tonks explained. “She runs her own business, and isn't willing to teach full-time. So Umbridge demanded she get installed as the Care teacher straight away. Dumbledore had no choice but to ask Grubblly-Plank to go and allow Umbridge to take over.”

Harry frowned. “That's not good. They must have something planned.” Trying to get his mind off things, he looked at Tonks, and sported a grin, “So, still going commando under there?”

“Wouldn't you like to know?” Tonks grinned back. Harry didn't answer her: he dropped to his knees before her, and with both hands, pulled open her robes. “Harry, what are you doing–!””

Tonks' comment was lost, as he pushed her up on her desk, and flipped her skirt up.

Tonks was indeed still wearing nothing beneath.

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Her hair was matted around her face as she lay on her back on her desk, her legs too limp to be able
to move. Harry groaned and collapsed forward over her, his head resting on her chest as she felt slowly retreat out of her folds.
“That was so good...” she drowsily said.

“Mmmm... I liked it as well,” Harry agreed. He moved off her, and shot her a grin. “Wonder what the Headmaster would say if he could see this... a teacher just dominated by her student?”

“Don't you get a big head Potter. You haven't worn me out yet,” Tonks pretended to glare at him.

“Oh no? Well then, wench... we're breaking in that new bed of yours!” Harry lifted her off the desk, and carried her bridal style through the door to her private office and quarters.

'Merlin, I love teenage stamina,' Tonks though as he laid her down on her bed and moved over her.

---------

“Have you any idea what time it is? Young boys should have been in bed hours ago!” The Fat Lady portrait admonished Tonks as she woke the painting to let Harry back in his Common Room.

“I lost track of time a little, said Tonks. “It's the weekend, so it doesn't matter much. Now are you going to let us through?”

The painting huffed, but opened. Tonks followed Harry into the empty common room. “I liked how assertive you were tonight, lover,” she whispered to him as she embraced him one last time.

“Well then, wench, just wait until the next time I have you at my mercy,” Harry whispered back.

“You just wait until tomorrow, hero. Sleep well.”

“Sleep well. Love you,” Harry answered. Tonks was smiling wide as she left the Common Room again.

Harry went up the stairs to his dorm room. As he stepped through the door, Ron spoke up: “Harry?
“Tha’ you?” he asked, drowsily.

“Yeah, Ron,” Harry said in a soft tone, as he started to undress. “Go back to sleep.”

“Merlin, it’s nearly three a.m. mate... she was riding you hard. Gnite,” Ron slurred, and he drifted back off.

Harry took his robes and shirt off, then kicked off his shoes and went to remove his trousers. As he did, he realised he still had something in his pocket. Harry fished out the three pairs of knickers, and let out a soft groan. It was good thing Tonks hadn't asked for hers back, because he had no idea how he was to explain how he got two other pair.

Harry glanced over at the other beds, and decided that the chance of Ron, Seamus, Dean, or Neville finding them was too big a risk if he kept them in his jeans pocket. Silently he opened his trunk and just threw them in. He'd have to sort that out later.

Luna was probably – he hoped – just joking, but Hermione didn't seem to be content with being 'just a friend' at all. He vowed to bring up the 'Hermione issue' with his girlfriend tomorrow.

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On the other side of the tower, Hermione was having another pleasant dream. Fortunately for Lavender and Parvati, she could cast a silencing spell on her bed. It was needed earlier, as the brunette had fallen asleep clutching a stolen towel.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I know in canon the train is on a Monday, but I use a real world calendar. September 1st was a Friday in 1995 and therefore the kids have two days off before school starts on Monday. Is that logical? No, but when have wizards ever been accused of using logic?
On Saturday morning, Harry was the last in his room to rise, and he took his time to wake up. The previous night had been very pleasurable to both him and his Nym, and he was glad September 1st fell over the weekend this year. He definitely could not stand classes straight away!

Following his morning shower he passed through the Gryffindor Common Room, waving a greeting to those who acknowledged him and ignoring those who glared at him, and went to the Great Hall for some breakfast.

Harry saw his dorm mates Ron, Seamus, and Dean sitting at the Gryffindor table – Ron stuffing his mouth as usual – and he sat down next to them.

"Morning guys," Harry said. A plate appeared in front of him and he began collecting bread and meat for his breakfast.

The trio had stopped talking as Harry sat down with them, and now shared a look before Ron answered, "Errr… Morning, Harry. How did detention go?"

"Oh, Tonks is not so tough," Harry said, a grin appearing on his face. "She's much easier to deal with than detention with the greasy bat. So, what were you three talking about before I sat down?"

The trio shared another look. Ron started again, "Nothing really, just –"

"What really happened to Cedric, Potter?" Seamus interrupted in a loud tone.

Harry noticed Ron grimace, and became acutely aware everyone within hearing range of his Irish classmate now looked at them. "I told you all what happened last year, Finnegan," Harry said in a low voice. "And the Headmaster repeated it at the Closing Feast. Does that answer your question?"

Seamus scoffed. "The Prophet says you're lying, Potter. My mum almost didn't let me return, since I have to share a dorm with you."

"Yeah, well the Prophet is as trustworthy as Professor Trelawney after she's been at the cooking sherry. Only an idiot would believe that rag," Harry replied, staring Seamus down.

"Are you calling my mother an idiot?!" Seamus started to rise up from the bench, but Dean kept him down.

Harry mentally counted to ten, then pushed his plate away. "You know what? I don't care what you or your mother believe, Finnegan. I'm done with breakfast. Later."

Harry stood up and made to walk away.

"Yeah, run, you coward!" shouted Seamus behind him. Harry didn't respond and was nearly at the door when he heard Seamus shout again: "That's for insulting my mother, you lying bastard, Furnunculus!"

Harry jumped to his right to avoid the spell, and looked in horror as it passed him by and hit Hermione in the face… the brunette was walking with Ginny and just stepped through the Great Hall doors.

Hermione let out a cry of pain as great ugly boils began springing up on her face.
"Mr. Finnegan! Detention with Mr Filch, tonight!" yelled out Professor McGonagall from the dais, while Harry rushed to Hermione's side. "Mister Potter, Miss Weasley, take her to the hospital wing would you?"

Ginny called an affirmative back even as Harry knelt down.

"Hermione? Come on… let's get you to Poppy," he suggested. Hermione cried in pain, and shook her head.

"Gin-Gin? Can you take her bag?" Harry asked the ginger girl and without waiting for a reply, scooped up Hermione in his arms. The brunette squeaked in protest but Harry was already rushing off towards the hospital wing, Ginny trailing behind with their bags.

"Poppy, are you here?" Harry called out. He kicked open the hospital wing doors, and placed Hermione on a bed. She instantly grabbed his left arm, and held him close, so he couldn't leave.

"That's Madam Pomfrey, Mr Potter. Just because you're a regular doesn't mean we're on first name basis," Poppy was heard to answer. She stepped out of her office and walked to them. "What's the problem today then?"

"It's Hermione. That git Finnegan hit her with the Pimple Jinx," said Harry. Soothingly he stroked Hermione's arm as she whimpered and held on to him. Ginny took position on Hermione's other side, watching the girl with concern.

"Oh dear girl," Madam Pomfrey was instantly focused on her patient. "Let me get the Cure for Boils Potion." She disappeared in her office, then came back out with a vial containing a blue liquid. "Could you apply it, Mr Potter? Just gently dab the affected area, and let it work for a minute."

Harry nodded and took the vial and a soft cloth. "Hermione? Will you let me?" he asked. The brunette nodded, and looked up at him. Her face was covered in painful looking boils, and her eyes filled with tears. Gently, Harry dipped the cloth in the potion, then dabbed it against the closest boil. The effect was instantaneous: the boil receded, leaving unblemished skin.

"Very good, Mr Potter! Just like that for the others," Madam Pomfrey praised him. "I'll be in my office if you need me." She walked off.

"Harry? Hermione? I'll tell Professor McGonagall that Hermione is all right, okay?" Ginny suggested. Harry just nodded, and the red-head walked off as well.

"Sorry you got hit by that arse's spell," Harry said to Hermione as he continued removing her boils, one-by-one.

"It's not your fault, Harry," Hermione said in a weak voice. "Why… why did he curse you? I thought you were friends."

Harry scowled. "That idiot believes the Prophet. I told him only idiots believed the garbage in his paper, and he got angry." He continued dabbing at her boils as they spoke.

"Honestly, Harry, you can't go around telling people they are stupid," Hermione chided him.

Harry stepped back and closed the potion bottle. "Well, I see you are all better, since you're nagging again," he said, turning his back on her.

"Harry, wait, I'm sorry," Hermione quickly said, grabbing his arm again. "All I meant was, you should try to be more diplomatic about it."
"Yeah, I guess," Harry admitted. "How are you now? Did I get them all?" he asked.

"Can you look closely, near my nose?" Hermione asked. Harry leant in to look, and then suddenly she moved her head forward, and stole a kiss on the lips. Harry froze for a moment in surprise, then Hermione moved her head away, smiling. "I'm good now, Harry. Thank you."

"Err… yeah. Don't mention it," Harry said. He quickly moved out of her grasp and went into the matron's office to get her to check his work.

Ginny returned while Madam Pomfrey was looking Hermione over. Professor McGonagall was with her and took Hermione's statement, then asked Harry for his side of the story.

"I see, Mister Potter," McGonagall said. "Mister Finnegan did say you had provoked him, defending his actions."

"What?!" Harry exclaimed angrily. "that lousy git! First he all but tells me he thinks I am a liar, and then he attacks me while my back is turned, and you blame me?"

"Calm down, Harry," McGonagall said loudly. "Keep your temper in check, this is the Hospital Wing, not the Quidditch Stadium! No, I don't blame you, although it is clear you do need to work on your temper. Mr Finnegan will serve his detentions with the caretaker for the attack, but you, Harry, do need to learn not to act so rashly."

"It's not you who's the target of slander," Harry grumbled.

"Libel, Harry," Hermione cut in. Harry looked at her, as did Professor McGonagall. Hermione gulped, and added, "Slander is spoken. The Prophet is attacking you in print, and then it's libel."

"Libel or slander, I don't give a shit, I want them to stop," Harry grumbled. Professor McGonagall and Hermione said 'Language!' at the same time, and Ginny giggled at Harry's groan.

—

Harry avoided the Common Room for the rest of the day since he didn't want to run into Seamus, so instead he went to the Quidditch Stadium to have a bit of a flight. With the tryouts scheduled for the next weekend there was no official practice yet and he would not run into any conflicts. Hermione and Ginny came with him: Ginny took out a school broom to practice – she wanted to try for the team the next year. Hermione sat in the stands watching them (and reading one of her books).

Harry dressed in his Quidditch outfit and then came out on his Firebolt and practiced Seeker moves while Ginny worked with a practice Quaffle near the goal posts.

Being up in the air cleared his thoughts and Harry had forgotten all about Hermione's stolen kiss by the time dinner came around. He and Ginny landed their brooms and went for the lockers. Harry looked up, and saw Hermione was no longer in the stands.

"See you in the Great Hall okay, Gin? If you see her first, tell Hermione I'll just drop off my broom and then join you guys," Harry said to Ginny before they parted ways.

Harry stripped in the Gryffindor locker room and got in the shower. The hot water always did wonders for his muscles after a long flight. He stepped out and found his Quidditch jersey no longer on the bench where he had dropped it, and silently admired the efficiency of the House Elves. Harry dressed, then walked back to the Gryffindor tower.
After he left through the door, it opened again from the inside, and Hermione appeared from under Harry's Invisibility cloak. Her face was red from the 'show' she had seen in the shower, and she clutched the stolen Quidditch jersey to her as she, too, returned to the tower.

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"I love you, really," Harry drowsily said as he lay down next to Tonks on her bed later that night. She was spooned up against him, and he gently ran his right arm over her sweaty skin as she enjoyed their post-coital bliss.

"Love you too, hero," Tonks murmured. "I've never felt as secure as I do now, in your arms."

"Stay with me forever?" Harry asked, allowing his hand to follow the sweat trickle on her back.

Tonks giggled softly. "Always, love… but for now, I need to get you back to your dorm." She sat up a little, and stretched.

"Can't I stay here tonight?" Harry asked, trying to pull her down again.

"Wish you could, but that'll get us both in trouble." Tonks replied. "Put your clothes back on, lover. I'll still be here tomorrow."

Harry did a mature thing: he stuck out his tongue, then got up and looked for his clothes.

The other boys were asleep by the time he got into bed.

---

When he woke up on Sunday, Ron and Seamus were still in the dorm. As he got out of bed, Ron punched Seamus none too gently in the shoulder, and Seamus coughed to get Harry's attention.

His hand ready to whip his wand out of the holster, Harry stopped, watching the Irish boy.

"Err… I am sorry for hitting Granger… I mean, I shouldn't have tried to hex you, Po– Harry," Seamus said. "It's just, with what you said about me mum…"

"I didn't mean to insult your mother Seamus," Harry cut in. "It's the Prophet I have an issue with, not its readers. So, does this mean you believe me now?"

Seamus looked pained. "Err…"

"Come on mate, he apologized didn't he? Just promise you won't bring it up, either of you, okay?" said Ron.

Harry raised an eyebrow in surprise at this sudden mature response, but agreed it had merit. He held out his hand towards Seamus. "We good mate?"

"We good," Seamus agreed and they shook hands.

The rest of Sunday was spent with late homework, chess games with Ron, and other ways to waste your time before school started.

He had been looking forward to "detention", but sadly Tonks kicked him out of her bed at nine that evening, since they both had classes the next morning. She promised to try to make it up to him during the week.
Monday began with History of Magic, or catching an extra nap, as most students used the time to sleep. Harry took his customary seat near the front, but surprising all three of them, Hermione sat down next to him before Ron could, leaving Ron to sit with Seamus, and Dean with Neville. Harry looked at his bushy haired friend questioningly but she just shrugged and pretended she didn't know what he meant.

Potions and Divination (Ancient Runes for Hermione) were next but even their least-liked teachers could not bring Harry's mood down because he knew DADA would be next. In Potions class, Snape was his usually annoying self but Harry wasn't his target of the day: instead Snape spent the ninety minutes tormenting poor Neville. They had to make the Draught of Peace, and Harry was grateful to be working with Hermione as she silently corrected him when he nearly forgot to add syrup of hellebore to his potion. At the end of the class grudgingly Snape had to give him an Acceptable… Ron got a verbal assault and a Troll for the day, however.

The Gryffindor and Slytherin classes entered the DADA classroom and as usual, divided in two halves. Harry and Hermione – he had by now accepted she wanted to be his desk mate for the year – took seats near the front. Tonks was not yet in the classroom. While the other students goofed and a few laid out their books, sitting in a relaxed pose or chatting, off Harry sat in a ready pose, his wand at the ready.

"Harry, what are you doing?" Hermione asked softly.

"Trust me," Harry said. Hermione also took out her wand and tried to copy his pose.

At the very moment the bell rang to signal the start of their class, Tonks came in from her office. She looked over everyone, then said, "All of you are dead, except for Potter and Granger here. Can anyone tell me why?"

Hermione raised her arm (of course), and so did Harry. Over on the Slytherin side, a girl with dark brown hair also raised hers.

Tonks indicated the Slytherin, "Yes, Miss…?"

"Greengrass, Professor. I assume we're all dead because you could have cast an area of effect spell, and only Potter and Granger had their wands out?"

Tonks beamed at her. "Five points to Slytherin for that answer, correct. And ten points to Gryffindor for having two students who read and understood the opening paragraph of their textbook."

Many students looked confused, and a few took it out and began to read. Tonks stepped forward and grabbed Lavender Brown's copy out of her hand, startling the girl. Then she read out loud: "The primary rule about a duel or magical fight is, be aware of your opponent's position. If you enter an unknown area, always assume you may be in danger and act accordingly."

Tonks looked triumphantly at her classroom as she handed back Lavender's book. "Almost none of you know me. Last year you had a Death Eater in disguise as your teacher. The year before that a Werewolf." Harry scowled as she said that but she continued, "Your second year you had that useless fob Lockhart, and your first year your teacher died under mysterious circumstances. So going by example you should be cautious of me," Tonks concluded.

"Professor Lupin was a great teacher!" Harry called out. Most Gryffindors voiced their support.
"Detention, Mr Potter, I think every night this week to start. If you have something to say, you can raise your hand and wait for me to call on you," Tonks said. Malfoy seemed especially pleased to hear that his nemesis got in trouble again.

Tonks stepped in front of her desk again and waited until she got the attention of the class back. "I do not doubt Professor Lupin was a good teacher, but the fact remains, he was a potential danger. And so could I be. But let me reassure you all, I am a trained Auror, so the only ones who have to fear me are Death Eaters and others who mean harm to others," she said.

Draco, Theo Nott, and a couple of other Slytherins suddenly felt less secure.

"But enough talk. Let's get started with our lesson. If you'll open Professor Flitwick's book to page twenty-five, he discusses the Shield Charm which we will be practicing this week..."

"Wow Harry, what did you do to annoy her? She is as mean as Professor Snape," Hermione whispered later, while Tonks was assisting Ron and Seamus with their wand movements.

"I may have called her by her first name a bit too often in the Summer," Harry made up on the spot. Luckily Hermione accepted that as an answer, as Harry had a hard enough time to hide his smile at the thought of a recurring nightly 'detention' with his favourite teacher.

Chapter End Notes

I lost my original file for chapter 16 somehow, so hopefully the formatting isn't too bad compared to other chapters. Had to copy it from FFN. As a result I can't remember the actual original upload date either.
Chapter 17

Following their Monday classes and dinner Harry returned to the Common Room, Hermione following closely behind, and he let her convince him to start on his homework. Not that they had much, Professor Snape was the only one to assign them an essay, Professor Trelawney wanted them to start a dream journal, and Tonks only assigned further study on the Shield Charm. They would get to try it in the double class on Friday. Harry had already learned it in the summer with Tonks and was looking forward to being able to show off in class.

Ron begged him for a chess game, but a quick 'Tempus' charm revealed it was close to eight, and time for his detention with Tonks, so he begged off and rushed to her quarters.

Tonks brought him back to the Common Room at ten, and he went to sleep very happy but somewhat tired.

Tuesday started slowly with Charms and Transfiguration. Both Professors Flitwick and McGonagall had a lot of new material waiting for them. Before he could leave for lunch, Harry was held back by Professor McGonagall.

“You have Care after lunch, correct, Mr Potter?” Harry nodded, and his teacher continued. “Be careful with Professor Umbridge. She is already convinced you are a troublemaker, and I don't want to hear you riling her up, understood?”

“Yes ma'am,” said Harry.

“Good. Now what is this with Professor Tonks? Detentions straight away? What did you do, Mr Potter?” she asked.

“It's nothing, ma'am. She's just a bit more strict than I thought. I am not trying to get in trouble, really.”

Professor McGonagall huffed. “That has never stopped you before, has it? Very well. Try to behave in and outside of class, but for now just take your detentions. I hope she isn't being too hard on you?”

Harry fought to keep his expression neutral. “I can handle it, ma'am,” he said.
“Very well, off you go to lunch, then.” Professor McGonagall sent him off.

Care of Magical Creatures was still held outside. Harry and Hermione went by Hagrid's cabin but the window was shut and there was no indication the gentle half-Giant had returned to Hogwarts yet, so they walked past it to the field where their teacher was waiting.

Professor Umbridge was wearing her customary pink half dress, but had a green coat over it and was wearing green boots. The ensemble served to further make her resemble an overgrown toad, Harry thought.

“Welcome, everyone,” the odious woman said to the Gryffindors and Slytherins as they arrived.

The students mumbled a greeting, and she frowned in distaste. “No, no, that won't do. Try, 'Good afternoon, Professor Umbridge,'” she instructed them.

Rolling his eyes, Harry repeated the greeting along with the rest of the class.

“There, isn't that better?” Professor Umbridge beamed at them.

“How old does she think we are, six?” Harry said in a low voice to Hermione.

“Hush,” she shushed him. Luckily Professor Umbridge hadn't noticed them yet.

“Now, unfortunately you've not had a proper education in Care of Magical Creatures yet, since Headmaster Dumbledore was negligent... some would say, criminally so.” Professor Umbridge spoke cheerfully, but her look was not pleasant at all.

Harry wanted to speak up in Hagrid's defence, but Hermione stomped on his foot as he opened his mouth so no words came out, only a grunt. If Professor Umbridge heard it, she ignored it.
“I think we’d best get back to basics. Now, can anyone tell me what sets magical creatures apart from other ones?” she asked the class.

The students looked at each other, then Hannah Abbott, a Hufflepuff student spoke up. “Errr... they have magic?”

Professor Umbridge rounded on the girl, an expression of distaste on her face. “Tut, tut. In this class, we raise our hand before we speak. Now dear girl, did you have an answer for me?”

Hannah looked incredulously at her teacher, but raised her arm. Professor Umbridge nodded, and Hannah repeated her answer.

“Simple, but correct,” Professor Umbridge said. “Take a point for Hufflepuff. Now if you'll all look at these cages?” She pointed to her left, and the students came closer. “Can anyone tell me what these animals are?” she asked them.

Harry took a closer look, and saw they appeared to be hedgehogs. He wasn't about to volunteer, though. Hermione on the other hand shot her hand up.

“Yes, you with the bushy hair?” Professor Umbridge called on her.

Hermione frowned at that but answered: “Those are either hedgehogs, or knarls, or both, Professor Umbridge.”

“Very good Miss?” said her teacher.

“Granger, ma'am, Hermione Granger.”

“Granger... hmmm. Of the Dagwood-Granger family perhaps?” Professor Umbridge stared at Hermione.

“No ma'am, I am a Muggleborn,” Hermione said proudly.
Professor Umbridge visibly paled. “Oh... well... very well done then. You hear that class? The Muggleborn was right, these are hedgehogs and knarls.”

Harry noticed Hermione tense up as Professor Umbridge dismissed her.

“Now on a visual glance they are identical,” Professor Umbridge continued, “but knarls are far more intelligent, and have a limited source of magic. Can anyone tell me how we can tell these apart?”

Several students raised their hands but Hermione was not among them, Harry noticed. Professor Umbridge called on a Ravenclaw student who gave the correct answer that knarls would react badly to being served milk whereas most hedgehogs would go for it, and got five points. Hermione fumed even more, since she hadn't gotten a single point for her correct answer.

“Can anyone give me another example of a magical creature that has a non-magical counterpart?” Professor Umbridge asked the class.

A Slytherin girl was called to answer this time, and brought up the crup.

“Very good,” Professor Umbridge beamed at the girl. “Take ten points for Slytherin. Yes, the crup resembles the common Jack Russel terrier known to the Muggles, but is of course far more intelligent. Does anyone have another example?”

A number of other creatures where suggested, such as the pig-like Nogtail, the dog-like Grim, and the ferret-like Jarvey. Then Professor Umbridge took word again. “Very good all, I am happy to see that despite your lack of a real teacher, at least some of you have learned on your own. But there is another creature that nobody mentioned yet. Can anyone take a guess?”

Most students looked uncertain. Then Hermione raised her arm again.

“Yes, you, the Gryffindor Muggleborn?” Professor Umbridge reluctantly called on her as no-one else seemed to volunteer.

“It’s Hermione Granger, ma’am, and I think... perhaps the unicorn and horse?” she offered.
“I am fully aware of your name, girl,” Professor Umbridge snipped back at her. “And that is wrong, for even Muggles can turn unicorns apart from horses. That will be twenty points from Gryffindor.”

“What? That is not fair!” Harry shouted.

“Ah, Mr Potter. Defending your Muggle girlfriend? Another ten points from Gryffindor for talking back to a teacher,” Professor Umbridge sneered at him.

Harry was about to say something else, but Hermione stamped on his foot again.

Professor Umbridge focused on the class as a whole again. “I trust you are all aware of the Kneazle? A highly intelligent feline with magical powers, that is however capable of producing offspring with common house cats. However, these unfortunate half-breeds pale in comparison. And very rarely it a Kneazle is said to be born to two common cat parents. Of course, those cases are all lies, they always turn out to be just smarter common cats. They might fool some people, but the truth will always out.”

Harry noticed Hermione getting angry, but he didn't quite know why yet. It became clear however when their teacher continued, “In fact, there is a disturbing parallel between the Kneazle and something else... does anyone have an idea? Yes, Mr Malfoy?”

Draco's voice clearly was heard as he called out: “The Mudblood, Professor Umbridge?”

“Very good, ten points to Slytherin.” Professor Umbridge smiled as she praised the boy. “Just like some smarter cats can be passed off as Kneazles to the unsuspecting, the occasional Muggle animal will produce a child that appears to be capable of magic. They are of course far inferior to real wizards and witches.” She looked directly at Hermione as she said those words.

“How... how dare you! My parents are not animals, and I... I am a much better witch than you are!” Hermione shouted.

“Detention tonight, Miss Granger. Report to my office directly after dinner,” Professor Umbridge said cheerfully. “Now class, I want you all to write an essay on how we can tell Muggleborns apart from real wizards. I trust finding sufficient examples shouldn't be too hard – after all, Hogwarts standards have slipped so that there are several in each class...”
Hermione was bristling with righteous fury all through Herbology. Afterwards she sought out Professor McGonagall. Harry went with her for support.

Professor McGonagall listened to Hermione rant about Professor Umbridge's open racism, then let out a sigh. “I am disappointed in you, Miss Granger. You shouldn't let her get to you.”

Hermione's eyes went wide as she protested, “But... but... how can she say those things? She's supposed to be a teacher!”

“She is a teacher, even if her views are distasteful,” said Professor McGonagall. “Your detention stands. Keep your head down, and don't talk back to her in the future. And the same goes to you, Mr Potter. Don't forget she already has it in for you,” she warned him.

“But... but...” Hermione had her fists balled, and was lost for words.

“Come on, let's go grab some food,” Harry suggested. Hermione deflated, and allowed Harry to guide her away.

“I can't believe she doesn't even try to do something!” Hermione complained once they were seated. Harry sat next to her, but nobody else was: Ron was sitting with Dean and Seamus, and most others had also formed their own cliques.

“Doesn't surprise me one bit,” Harry remarked. “When has she ever listened to me?”

“Yes Harry, but that is you,” Hermione blurted out. His eyes narrowed, but she didn't notice and ranted on: “Unlike you, I am not a troublemaker, I am a model student! Surely she should take my word against Professor Umbridge? Did you hear what... that woman said about me, my parents?”

“I was there, yes,” Harry simply said. “Now let's eat up. We both have detentions to get to, don't we?”

“No need to remind me,” Hermione snapped at him. But she stopped ranting and ate her food.
Hermione had her detention immediately afterwards, but Harry still had some free time, as Tonks did not expect him until eight. He went to his Common Room, and saw the Weasley twins sitting in a corner, whispering.

Harry dropped down on a chair next to them, startling them from their work. “Hey guys. What are you working on?” he asked them.

The twins looked around and saw nobody seemed to pay attention, then pulled Harry in close. “Some new Wheezes, for the shop,” twin A said. “Thanks to your investment, partner, we have enough cash to build inventory already,” his brother added.

“That's great, guys,” Harry said with a smile. Then his expression clouded a bit. “Hey, have you had Care yet? You're both taking it, right?”

“Fred is,” twin B – George – said. “We split up the electives, Fred has Care and Runes, I take Divination and Arithmancy.”

“And Muggle Studies?” Harry asked.

Fred and George shared a look, then laughed simultaneously.

“Yeah, I agree,” Harry grinned. “Might still take the OWL for it though... Can't hurt.”

“But to answer your question, yes, I had my first Care class yesterday,” Fred said. “Why?”

Harry recounted his lesson, and that the insults had gotten Hermione a detention. He finished it by asking, “Was she like that in your class?”

Fred and George seemed to silently confer, then Fred shook his head. “Not really. Well, she did
bring up that Cat/Kneazle Muggle/Wizard nonsense, but nobody made a fuss... She didn't assign detention.”

“But Clara Willis was angry, wasn't she, brother?” said George.

“Right you are,” Fred agreed. “She's Muggleborn like Hermione is, but in Hufflepuff” he clarified for Harry.

“I can't believe they're letting her teach,” Harry said with a sigh.


Harry froze, then carefully asked, “How... how do you mean?”

“You're on her shitlist, don't think we haven't noticed,” said George. “In fact, don't you have detention in a few minutes?”

Harry glanced up at a conveniently located clock, and stood up. “Damn, you're right! I dunno why she has it in for me, but I've got to go now,” he said.

“Maybe she knows you were behind the animal prank,” George suggested. “So, when can we expect the next one from you, Prongs Junior?”

“Err... haven't thought about it yet. Hey if you see Hermione, tell her we can work on our homework together later, okay?” Harry called back, as he rushed off.

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Five past eight, Harry knocked on the door to the DADA classroom. Tonks opened it, a stern expression on her face. “You're late, Mr Potter,” she said.
“Sorry Nym, twins held me up,” Harry said cheekily.

“Not in the corridor you goof. Get inside!” Tonks pulled him in, and closed the door behind him. “Don't call me Nym where someone else can hear, idiot,” she said, but in a gentle tone that made it clear there was no anger behind it.

“But I can call you Nym when we're alone, right?” Harry asked.

“Of course, hero,” Tonks leant in and gave him a quick kiss. “But you're still late, Mister. Maybe I should punish you...” She got a wide grin.

“Oh? Have something in mind then, evil teacher of mine?” Harry grinned back.

“We-e-ell, I was planning on making you do lines, but with that attitude, I think spanking may be better!” Tonks moved to grab him, but Harry ducked under her arms, and suddenly was holding her from behind.

“Good idea... I can't wait to have you squirm on my lap,” he whispered in her ear, and gave her rear a smack.

“Oh you! Just you wait!” Tonks said back. Her left arm snaked back, and tickled Harry in the side, where she knew he was most sensitive.

Harry let out a high shriek, and released her, so she got the advantage again. But not for long, for as soon as she had him on his back on the floor, Harry flipped them over, so she was lying under him, and now his hands were attacking her sides.

In the end, neither got spanked, but both 'won' their struggle. Harry groaned as he pulled his pants back up, while Tonks was looking under the desks to see if she could find where her bra had ended up. Harry let out a sudden laugh, and Tonks looked up to see it hanging from the classroom's chandelier.

“A bed is more comfortable,” she commented cheerfully as they continued redressing.
“And less destructive to the classroom,” Harry answered. He gave Tonks another soft slap on the butt.

“Just for that, hero, you get to put all the desks back in place. I have the third years tomorrow morning, you know,” Tonks ordered him.

“Yes ma'am,” Harry gave her another smile, and took out his wand. A few waves later, and the room was back in order.

“Adequate performance there,” Tonks said in a haughty tone. “You're almost as handy as a House Elf, Potter, I think I'll keep you.” Then she giggled, ruining the effect.

“You're not getting rid of me, no matter what,” Harry agreed.

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Tonks escorted him back to the Gryffindor Common Room as curfew had started, and Harry stepped back inside. He didn't see Hermione anywhere, but Ron was playing chess with Dean.

“Hey Ron, is Hermione back from detention yet?” he asked his sort-of friend.

Ron looked up briefly, and said, “Yeah mate, she came back shortly after you left. She went straight back upstairs though, and I haven't seen her since.”

“Thanks,” Harry said.

“Hey, do you want to play a round? I'll have Dean beaten in three turns,” Ron asked.

Dean looked down dismayed at the chessboard, when his black queen spoke up: “He is right, you know.”

“Nah, another time maybe,” Harry called. “Hermione and I wanted to do our essays tonight. Ron shrugged and Harry walked over to Lavender and Parvati, who were whispering in a corner.
“Hey girls,” he greeted them.

The gossip duo looked at Harry, then at each other, then giggled in tune.

“Errr... yeah,” Harry felt a little uncomfortable but went on. “Can either of you go up to your dorm and tell Hermione I am back? I thought she might be waiting for me.”

“Sure thing, Harry,” Lavender said in sultry tone. She got up, and walked towards the stair, swaying her hips in an exaggerated manner. Harry looked on amused as he realised this was Lavender's way of flirting with him.

Soon after, Lavender came back down and sat next to Parvati again. Harry and she had been talking about the Holyhead Harpies in the Quidditch competition – Parvati was not that much into the sport, but the Harpies' captain had recently become the face of a Wizarding make-up firm and that was her forte – but they stopped when Lavender rejoined them.

“I told her you were here, Harry, but she said she was tired and would do her essays tomorrow,” Lavender explained.

“But maybe we can do it with you?” Parvati suggested.

“Thanks for the offer girls, but in that case I think I'll retire as well,” Harry replied.

“If you're sure,” said Parvati.

“We can be very nice though, Harry. Don't worry... we won't bite,” Lavender added.

Harry gave them both a wide smile and backed off. His smile disappeared as soon as he was out of their view. Something about the way the two looked at him was unsettling.

Up in the Gryffindor girls' dorm, Hermione sat cradling her hurt right hand. Faintly visible on the back of it was a scar reading, 'I will not talk back to my betters'.
Chapter 18

Harry was humming a happy tune as he waited for his friends to come down the girls' stairs. A few days in the school year, the obnoxious stares from the other students had started to drop away so he now only had to deal with the very obvious flirting from a number of female students. And Colin Creevey. The latter was getting a bit on Harry's nerves, he had found the younger Gryffindor watching him in the showers that morning and not in a normal way.

Ginny came down, chatting with one of the girls from her year whose name Harry couldn't recall. She smiled as she saw Harry and walked over.

“Morning, troublemaker. Detention every night eh?” she said to him.

Harry grinned. “I know, I'm a bad boy. Whatever shall I do,” he gave a deadpan delivery.

Ginny stuck out her tongue as they waited for Hermione. And waited. The common room had cleared out as everyone had left for breakfast – even notorious late sleepers like Ron, and Hermione was still not down.

“Gin, can you check what's keeping her?” Harry asked, a little worried.

“Sure,” Ginny agreed. She went up the stairs and knocked on the fifth year girls' door. “Hermione? Are you still asleep?” she called.

Getting no answer, Ginny stepped inside, and froze at the sight. Hermione was lying face down on her bed wearing a Quidditch robe – Harry's – and nothing else. She was biting into a towel, and her left hand was busy between her legs while her left hand was under her chest. Ginny let out a small squeak. Hermione reacted instantly, rushing to get the covers over her, and falling out of the bed as she fumbled.

Meekly a voice came up from beside the bed, “Ginny? What... what are you doing here?”

“That could be my question, but I think it's bloody obvious what you were up to!” Ginny glared at the older girl and continued, “Harry and I were waiting for you. Go... finish up, and join us for breakfast in the Great Hall, we're going.”

“Please... don't tell him about this?” Hermione asked. Ginny gave her an annoyed hand wave and went back down.
“She'll be a little longer,” she told Harry.

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Hermione finally joined them for breakfast just in time for her to grab some food before they headed off to their individual classes, and there was little time to talk. He had Divination and she Arithmancy next, so they only met again during Transfiguration, and everyone knew not to interrupt Professor McGonagall's lecture, so it wasn't until lunch until Harry could ask her how her detention had gone.

“I... she made me do lines,” Hermione said, looking down at her food and glancing at her right hand. The faint wound had faded, but the skin was still very sensitive.

“Oh, well that isn't too bad then,” Harry replied. He took another bread, not seeing the brief annoyance shoot over Hermione's face.

“And what about yours? What does Professor Tonks make you do?” she asked, trying to change the subject to something else.

“Physical labour. She made me clear a good part of the class floor to make room for some spell practice,” Harry answered, somewhat truthfully.

“Oh,” Hermione didn't know what else to say. After Herbology they would have Care again, and she was not looking forward to that in the least.

Her fears proved to be valid. No sooner had the combined class made its way outside, or Professor Umbridge took out a roll and asked Hermione to step forward, and Dean Thomas was also asked to join her.

“Make a circle around, children, make sure you all can see,” Professor Umbridge instructed the others. Harry's hackles were raised, this did not bode well. “We discussed some of the ways in which animals can be passed off as the pure magical breeds last class, and it's time for a more in-depth inspection,” the odious woman continued. “You, girl, take off your outer robes,” she instructed Hermione.
Hermione froze. On the one hand, she was a teacher, and her Head of House – the deputy Headmistress no less – had made it clear she was within her rights to order her about. On the other hand, was she really going to let this... racist... treat her as something less than human?

“Hermione, Dean, get out of there,” Harry’s voice roused her from her thoughts. Harry stepped forward until he was directly facing Professor Umbridge.
“This is supposed to be a class, not a Death Eater meeting,” Harry said glaring at her.

Several students of both houses inhaled sharply at that. It was just not done to call someone a Death Eater, even if everyone knew they had carried the Dark Mark.

“I'm quitting Care, and so is Hermione. In fact, I expect everyone who does not agree with your petty racism will,” Harry said loudly, then turned his back on the toad-like woman.

Professor Umbridge stood there and opened and closed her mouth a few times, not voicing a single word, and making her look even more like an overgrown amphibian. When Hermione rushed up to Harry, she found her voice again: “Detention, both of you! I don't care if you drop this class or not, I will not suffer such disrespect!”

Harry's response was to give her the two-finger salute as he walked towards the school building, just as Hermione reached him.

Dean was still standing where she had ordered him to, but he and many other Gryffindors were looking after Harry and Hermione as they walked off.

“Class dismissed!” Professor Umbridge shrieked, and the group broke.

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“Harry, I can't believe you said that,” Hermione complained, struggling to keep up with Harry's quick pace as he walked back to the school.

Suddenly he stopped, and she nearly bumped into him. “You can't believe me? I can't believe you!”

Harry looked at her incredulously. “What happened to you, Hermione? The girl who went through a hunger strike over House Elf rights of all things is now letting a bloody overgrown toad racist treat her like she's a dressed chimpanzee? Have you suffered brain damage this summer while I was locked away at the Dursleys?”
“Don't you change the subject, Harry Potter!” Hermione placed her hands on her hips and glared back at him. Her face was getting heavily flushed, both from shame of his words hitting true, and from simply being so close to the object of her one-sided crush.
“You know that everyone told you to keep your head down, the Ministry is still slandering you, and what do you do? You directly confront the... person they send here! Merlin, I knew you were stupid, but –”
Too late, she clamped her hands in front of her mouth.

“Screw you too, Granger,” Harry said in a low voice, and he walked off once more. Hermione stood frozen in place.

“Nice one, Mudblood! Detention, and you got Scarhead mad with you!” Draco's voice sneered at her. Hermione turned her head and saw just about all Slytherins who took Care there.

“Piss off, Malfoy,” Ron said. He and Draco glared at each other until Draco took his clique away.

“Thanks Ron,” Hermione said.

“Stuff it,” Ron looked annoyed at her. “I may have 'the emotional range of a table-spoon', was it? But even I can see you were way out of line. You were shouting hard enough for everyone to hear you call Harry stupid for standing up to you. You'd better hope he forgive you yet again, because I wouldn't want to be friends with a fickle bitch like you,” the last bit was said so softly only Hermione heard it.

Ron walked away to re-join Dean and Seamus, leaving Hermione by herself. She fought the tears that threatened to erupt and then rushed back to the castle.

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Harry was in the Common Room, sitting on a couch and looking through some books. Hermione entered and carefully went to him. “Harry... I... I shouldn't have said that,” she said, her head low.

Annoyed, Harry looked up and said, “No, you shouldn't. Would that be all, Granger?”
“Harry, please!” Hermione grabbed his right arm and dropped on her knees before him. “I... it was that horrible woman, she got me so angry, and I wasn't thinking, and –”

Harry shook his arm free. “I already gave you a second chance this summer, Granger. Why should I give you a third one?”

“Because I am your friend, even if I am a dumb bint sometimes, and because I love you! Please!” Hermione moved up and hugged him tightly. Harry froze for a moment longer, then she felt his right arm go around her.

“One more chance, then. Please... don't make me regret this,” Harry said in a soft voice.

Hermione raised her head, and before Harry could say another thing, she kissed him on the lips for a brief second before breaking off. “Thank you, oh thank you, and I promise I will make it worth it,” Hermione blabbered at him.

Harry was about to say something about her again kissing him, but they were interrupted by the door to the Common Room opening and an angry looking Professor McGonagall stepping through.

“Mr. Potter, Miss Granger, with me, now,” she ordered them. The two rushed to their feet.

“Never in all my years at Hogwarts have I heard of such disrespect,” Professor McGonagall ranted at the two. They were sitting in front of her desk on hard chairs while their Head of House paced to and fro on the other side.

“Dolores told me you interrupted her class and insulted her, Mr. Potter. And that you once again joined him, Miss Granger. I believe I told you both that you ought to respect your teachers? Well? What do you have to say for yourselves?” Professor McGonagall finally sat down after she finished.

Harry took the word first, “Professor, I would like to change my elective to Ancient Runes. I am willing to take a test to prove I am up to third year level in it. Could you make the change?”
Professor McGonagall blinked. Hermione was not about to give her time to rant again, and cut in: “I would also like to drop that class, Professor. I already have enough electives that this should not matter, I hope?”

Professor McGonagall changed from staring at Harry, to looking at Hermione. “Now listen here! You cannot just expect me to just accept such horrible behaviour in class! I will change your schedules – and yes, Mr. Potter, you will have to speak with Professor Babbling about taking that test to see if you can keep up – but what about your dreadful behaviour in Professor Umbridge's class?”

“I am not going to apologize to that racist toad,” Harry said. “And neither will Hermione.”

Hermione stiffened in her seat, but kept silent.

“Then you leave me no alternative. A hundred points from Gryffindor – each – and you both have detention with Dolores tonight.”

“I can't, I have detention with Professor Tonks,” Harry countered. “And take all the house points you want. They're meaningless anyway. Come, Hermione,” he stood up.

“Mr. Potter, sit back down! I have not dismissed you yet!” Professor McGonagall fumed.

“I don't care,” Harry looked directly at her. “When we first arrived at Hogwarts, you gave us a spiel that the House would be like our family. Well, as Head of my House, I have to say you are an absolutely horrible 'mother', on par with the Dursleys. We told you what that Umbridge woman was saying yesterday, and what she was trying to do today, and you blame us? No, we're leaving. Hermione, come,” he held out his hand for his friend.

“Miss Granger, don't you dare think of leaving, or I will revoke your Prefect status right now!” Professor McGonagall tried.

Hermione's hand trembled as she raised it to take Harry's. “I... I'm sorry, Professor, but he's right,” she said, not daring to look her teacher in the eye. “I really am sorry.” She took the badge of her robe with her other hand, and placed it on her teacher's desk.

Harry took Hermione by the arm, and guided them out. Professor McGonagall sat silently looking
after them.

Hermione waited until they had rounded the corner before she started shivering. “Oh Harry! What will we do? She's furious!”

“Relax, what can she do really? We came to her with a valid concern, and she dismissed it. When people are not willing to listen, you have to force them to. That's something I learned this summer.” Harry hugged her to him. “I'll make sure they blame me, that's why I spoke for you in there. You are just a victim in this case. And there's no way in hell Dumbledore will let them expel me, so I am safe.”


“Relax, it's not the end of the world,” Harry patted her back, then released her from the hug. “Come on, let's go to dinner. And afterwards you can start tutoring me in Runes.”

“You... you really think you can make up for two years of Runes like that?” Hermione looked at him disbelievingly.

“I can try, can't I? I know some people call me stupid –” Hermione flushed at that “– But I know I can at least try. And besides, it's just a different alphabet. How hard can it be?”

“Merlin, you're doomed,” Hermione said under her breath as she followed after him.

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“Guys, I mean it, I'd drop Care if I were you,” Harry repeated to the Gryffindors that had ambushed the two of them once they came into the Great Hall. “They might as well call it Death Eater studies, with that Umbridge woman 'teaching'. I won't think less of you if you don't, but there's no way in hell I'm going to suffer five more minutes with that racist toad.”

“I'm with you, Harry-kins,” Fred called out loudly. “I'm dropping Care right now. Say, Forge, what do you think? Runes or Arithmancy?” he turned to his twin.
“Runes, Gred. Lots more fun. Can be useful for pranks on people taking the Death Eater elective,” George said with a grin, and wink to Harry.

At that the other Gryffindors let Harry get to the table, to sit down next to Hermione. If the twins were behind him, they knew they risked getting pranked badly if they kept up that class, so only a fool would openly voice his disagreement now.

Harry was telling a joke to Hermione, as he saw she was still troubled, when a slender hand rested on his shoulder. He turned to see it was a Hufflepuff girl, Susan Bones.

“Harry? This is for you,” she said, blushing slightly as she handed him an envelope. Then she leant in closer, “It was in my mail from auntie, sorry I didn't give it to you earlier,” she whispered.

“Thanks Suse,” Harry shot her a smile as he hid the envelope in his robes. Susan blushed, and rushed off.

“Oi, love letter, mate?” Ron called, having seen the exchange.

“Nah, I'm only interested in your sister,” Harry called back.

“What?! Don't you dare start with ickle Gin!” Ron turned red, and started to rise from his seat.

“Oh do sit down Ron, Harry is joking,” Ginny pushed him down heavily. She had been sitting next to him. “Nice try Harry, but you're not my type,” she grinned at him.

“Oh dear Ginny, you broke my heart,” Harry dramatically reached for his chest, and pretended to faint.

“Git,” Ginny shot him a friendly wink and went back to her own food.

“Why would Susan's aunt send you a letter?” Hermione demanded to know a little later.
“I’ll read it later in private, then I’ll tell you if I can,” Harry promised her. “Can we get started on Runes tonight?”

“You have detention with Professor Tonks again, remember?” Hermione poked him.
“Troublemaker.”

“Yeah yeah,” Harry smiled as he went back to his food.

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Despite her protests Hermione ended up showing her Runes books from her third year to Harry – she had all her school books dating back to first year, except the Lockhart ones, in her trunk still –, and he was reading through it until he had to leave for detention.

Hermione started working on her homework, when the door to the Common Room opened and Professor McGonagall stepped through.
“With me, Miss Granger,” the stern woman said.

Hermione put away her essay, then got up to step outside. “What is it, Professor?” she asked, meekly.

“You are late for your detention with Professor Umbridge. Mr. Potter has an excuse, but you don't. I expect you to apologize to her, and do whatever she demands, without protest, understood?” Professor McGonagall took Hermione by the arm, and nearly physically dragged her to class.

“But... but Harry said that –” Hermione protested feebly.

“Stop hiding behind Mr. Potter, it's your own actions that got you here! I expect you to think about your actions, Miss Granger, and try to become the model student you were,” Professor McGonagall interrupted her, pulling her along.

They reached the door of Umbridge's office, and McGonagall knocked. Professor Umbridge opened the door and gave her colleague one of her sickening smiles.
“I found your errant student, Dolores,” Professor McGonagall said.

“Thank you, Minerva. I'm sure Miss Granger and I will have a lot to discuss before I return her to her dorm,” Professor Umbridge answered. Professor McGonagall nodded and walked away.

Looming over the younger girl, Professor Umbridge indicated a desk where a familiar quill rested. “Start writing, dear. Perhaps this time, the lesson will sink in?”

Hermione sobbed as she sat down, and got to work.

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Elsewhere in the castle, Harry cuddled with Tonks on her bed when he remembered the letter. “Love, do you mind if I read this here? Your boss sent me a letter through Susan,” he told her.

“Go ahead hero, I could use a little rest,” Tonks said with a smile. “My breasts are very sensitive,” she complained. For the past few days they had seemed to be getting heavier and a bit sore, and she was finding she got tired a bit quicker than normal, too. She blamed it on the stress of the new job.

Harry read through it while Tonks half dozed off. Finally he put it away with a loud, “Huh.”

Tonks peeked up, “‘Huh’, what?”

“Someone is intercepting my mail,” Harry told her, frowning. “She sent me a letter Monday and Tuesday, but those never arrived. She had a tracking charm on it, and they did make it to Hogwarts, but no further.”

“Dumbledore?”

“Probably,” Harry shrugged. “Bones is smart though, she didn't put any sensitive info in the first two, she made it seem as if it was a general inquiry about the Dementor thing that got me away from Surrey. Speaking of, something happened to the Dursleys.”
“Oh?” Tonks sat up a bit, then snuggled up against Harry.

“Yeah, Bones found that Dudley is hospitalized for some reason, and Petunia is spending all her time with him. She hasn't found out what is wrong with him yet but one of her Muggleborn Aurors is going to try to get the info for her, who knows, it may be something magical. I know it probably makes me a horrible person, but I couldn't care less, honestly,” Harry said with a shrug.

Tonks hugged him closer. “You're a wonderful young man, Harry. You'd have to be, to have an amazing, hot, and intelligent woman like me fall for you.”

“Good old Potter charm, snaring older women,” Harry grinned at her.

“Oi, brat, I'm not that much older than you,” Tonks pouted. “If I knew you were into grannies, I'd have kicked you out of my bed ages ago!” She let out a laugh, then morphed her face only until it looked like she was at least eighty.

“Gah! I'm sorry, change back, please!” Harry pleaded. Tonks did so, and frowned. “What's wrong?” Harry asked.

“Nothing... well... maybe something,” Tonks' frown deepened. “Something felt odd about changing, as if my magic didn't want me to.”

“You're not in danger of getting sick, are you?” Harry looked at her, concern in his voice.

“Nah, it's nothing, hero. Probably just because I haven't been playing with other forms that much lately, being a respectable teacher and all.”

“Still need a rest? ’cause I'm 'Hot for Teacher’, ” Harry said, giving her a wide grin.

“I knew I'd regret introducing you to Van Halen over the summer,” Tonks mock-complained as she let him push her back on her back.
Whistling, Harry went back to his Common Room much later. Somehow they'd found the time to read the rest of Bones's letter. The Minister was still blocking all her attempts to look into the Death Eaters that had been at the graveyard at Voldemort's resurrection, but she still had her trusted Aurors follow them in hopes to catch them in the act. That they didn't find anything was the only downside of Voldemort still lying low: with the exception of a little Muggle baiting that always happened, there had been no signs of any attack yet.

Tonks pointed out that the Order of the Phoenix had been told by Snape that Voldemort was suffering from some unknown malady, explaining that. Harry made a note to tell Bones about that in his reply.

A very interesting thing that Bones brought up was that Dirk Cresswell, head of the Goblin Liaison Office and nominally one of her employees, had been carefully asked by the goblins if they knew of Lord Potter's whereabouts. Bones had tried to find out why they wanted to find Harry – and why they referred to him that way – but had been rebuffed. Harry wondered if this had anything to do with the Molly Weasley holding his key prior to Tonks rescuing him, and made a mental note to make it to the bank somehow next Hogsmeade weekend.

Bones had suggested replying through Susan, as Susan's mail was not intercepted and certain parties would hesitate twice before messing with the niece of the DMLE's leader.

Harry promised Tonks he'd write a reply tonight or tomorrow and send it back. Now, he was hoping to do a little more Runes practice with Hermione.

“Hey guys,” Harry greeted Ginny, Ron, and a couple others as he stepped through the portrait. “Where's Hermione?”

Ron and Ginny shared a look. “Dunno mate... we thought she was with you, maybe.”

“Gin, is she upstairs?” Harry looked at the clock, it was close to ten, so all students should be in their dorms now.

“No, I thought maybe she was doing her Prefect rounds? Someone has to,” Ginny glared at Ron, who didn't even register that she meant him.

“I'll check the map,” Harry said in a softer voice.
“I'll come with,” Ginny decided.

Harry opened his trunk and rummaged through until he found the parchment. He laid it on his bed and activated it, then they began searching for Hermione.

“There, she's in Umbitch's office,” Harry pointed out.

“Umbitch?” Ginny giggled briefly, then asked, “Why is she there?”

“Dunno, I mean, she tried to give us detention, but I told McGonagall we wouldn't go... oh Merlin. You don't think Hermione still went?” Harry looked worried.

“Authority worshipping Hermione? Looks like it,” Ginny shrugged. “Whatever. Umbridge... Umbitch, hee hee, may be a horrible woman, she's still better than Snape.”

“I'm not so sure,” Harry worried. “I'll wait up for her. She can't be kept there for too long, we have Astronomy tonight,” he decided.

“I'll wait with you. Maybe I can tutor you a bit in Runes,” Ginny said.

———

Another hour later many had retired to bed except for Ginny and a number of Harry's class mates who decided to stay up for their star gazing class. The portrait door opened, and Hermione stepped through.

“She finally let you go then?” Harry said, looking up. He had been practising writing the Elder Futhark with Ginny's guidance.

“Oh... Harry,” Hermione said. “Yes. She made me do lines again,” she said miserably.

“You shouldn't have gone,” Harry said. He looked her over and saw something weird. “Hey, why are you holding your right hand like that?”
“It's nothing,” Hermione protested, turning her body and attempting to walk to the girls' stairs.

“I don't believe you” Harry got up and blocked her path. “Show me your hand.”


“Not before you show me your hand,” Harry made to grab for her.

“Get off me,” Hermione ducked out of the way. “I am tired, and you're annoying me now.”

“Sorry Hermione,” Ginny sneaked up behind her, and grabbed her upper arms from behind.

Harry grabbed her left hand, and pulled it off her right. Clearly visible was that her right hand was bleeding.
“Did she do this to you?” Harry's voice seemed to have lowered a full octave as he stared at the wound.

“Please, it's nothing, I'm fine,” Hermione protested.

“The hell you are,” Harry said. He reached in Hermione's robe and pulled out her wand, before the brunette could even protest. Harry looked over her shoulder to Ginny. “Gin, keep her downstairs until I get back, okay? Hex her if you must.”

“Harry, you can't go after Umbridge!” Ginny protested. Hermione wasn't fighting, she was standing still, whimpering.

“I'm not,” Harry told Ginny. “I'm getting the Aurors and a Mind Healer. Something is seriously wrong with Hermione and I want to know what.”
Harry wasted no time with the portrait of the Fat Lady, despite the protest that it was after curfew. He rushed through the corridor back to the DADA office and started pounding on the door.

“Nym! Open up!” he yelled.

The door to the DADA classroom opened. “Harry, what did I tell you about calling me that in public? What are you doing back here anyway?” Tonks frowned at him as he pushed past her and ran towards her personal quarters at the other end.

“Harry, hold on! Sheesh, mister, I know you want to spend the night with me, but this is not the way!” she rushed after him as he entered her quarters.
“What are you doing?” she asked, confused, as she saw him grab the jar of floo powder and throw it in her fireplace.

“Sorry, Nym, I'll explain in a moment,” Harry said over his shoulder, then exclaimed clearly: “The Ossuary!”

Madam Bones had given him her personal floo address in the letter – just in case – and to his relief, Harry saw her face appear in the flames only a little later.

“Yes? Mr. Potter, what is it?”

“I apologize Madam Bones, but I need Aurors at Hogwarts straight away, oh, and a Mind Healer!”

“And why didn't you go through official means, Mr. Potter?” Madam Bones looked annoyed and looked past Harry. “Where are you, anyway?”

“Errr.... hi, boss,” Tonks waved awkwardly, as she bent down next to Harry.

“Madam Bones, I can't trust the Ministry. That awful toad they sent here has been torturing Hermione!”
“Torture?” Tonks sounded more confused than shocked.

“Mr. Potter, that’s a serious accusation,” Madam Bones said.

“She has words carved in her hand and is bleeding,” Harry clarified. “And on top of that, she was trying to hide it from me – that's just not normal behaviour! Please, Madam Bones, can't you help?”

Madam Bones was silent for a moment, then sighed. “Very well, Mr. Potter, I will contact a few Aurors I trust and bring them to Hogwarts myself. What floo can we use?”

“You can use mine boss,” Tonks said. “Call for the DADA Teacher's Office, Hogwarts – I'll open the connection on my end.”

“This had better not be some kind of prank,” Madam Bones grumbled and cut the connection.

“What about the Mind Healer?” Harry asked, but the fire died before she could reply.

“My mum is one,” Tonks said. “But first, tell me what the hell is going on, Harry?”

A rushed explanation later, Tonks was on the floo with her parents and shortly after Andromeda Tonks was in her office.

“Mum, Harry will fill you in – Harry, if Bonesy calls, tap that brick on the top right and the connection will open. I'll get Hermione here,” Tonks told them and left.

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Tonks rushed through the corridors, passing Filch and his cat, but she paid him no mind as she hurried to the Gryffindor Common Room. Filch and the other patrols was the whole reason she was the one to collect Hermione in the first place. Nobody would care about a teacher in the hallways, but Harry would have had to explain himself. He was unwilling to get Dumbledore involved any sooner than absolutely necessary and Tonks had to agree with him. Professor McGonagall was widely said to not even blink without the Headmaster's permission, so if she had
allowed Hermione's unjust detentions with Professor Umbridge, there was a real possibility Dumbledore was at least aware.

“Let me enter please,” she asked the Fat Lady portrait. The portrait nodded, all teachers had access without passwords, and allowed Tonks to step through.

“Harry?” Ginny asked as soon as the door opened. Tonks suppressed a grin at the sight before her: Hermione was trussed up like a price calf, and gagged, lying on the couch. Ginny was sitting on her legs and her twin brothers stood next to the couch keeping any others away.
““Oh! Professor Tonks! I can explain!” Ginny scrambled to her feet, babbling: “We were playing around and…”

“Harry explained things to me,” Tonks said. “I take it Miss Granger didn't take being restrained so well?”

The girl in question was glaring murder at her red-haired fellow Gryffindor.

“I'll take things from here,” Tonks continued. “Can you release her?” she asked Ginny.

Ginny nodded and cast a 'Relashio' on Hermione.

“Professor! Harry took my wand!” Hermione complained. “And she –”

“Miss Granger, come with me,” Tonks said. “We'll talk things through in my office.”

“Yes ma'am,” Hermione said in a small tone, her fury already gone.

Once outside she started to complain again: “Professor, Harry and Ginny ambushed me and took my wand and then –”

“Later, Miss Granger,” Tonks simply said. As they walked, she noticed Hermione had slipped her right hand inside her robe, hiding it from sight.
Finally they reached the DADA classroom, without encountering anyone on the way, and Tonks led her inside.

Hermione gasped as the door to Tonks's quarters at the side of the room opened and a red-robed Auror stepped through.

“This the girl?” he asked.

“This is Miss Granger yes,” Tonks answered.

Madam Bones also stepped out, followed by two more Aurors, Harry, and a woman Hermione didn't recognise at all.

“Harry! What is going on?” Hermione cried out. “Why did you take my wand? Why are there Aurors here? Who is that woman? Why are we in the DADA classroom at this time of night? Why...”


Madam Bones glared at him, then the Auror cast a 'Finite Incantatem', looking a little sheepish. “Pardon, miss,” he said.

“Hermione, show the Auror your right hand,” Harry said.

“Harry? What? No!” Hermione protested, taking a step backwards. Her escape route was blocked by Tonks though.

“Hermione, no time for your stubborn behaviour now. Show the Auror your hand,” Harry repeated.

“I'm sorry,” Hermione whimpered. She stretched out her hand. Clearly visible still were the fresh wounds and the words carved in it.

“Blood quill, no doubts about it,” the Auror said softly. 'Documentum,' he cast next and a yellow
glow briefly appeared over Hermione's hand. She didn't feel a thing as it passed over her.

“Miss Granger, tell me how you got those wounds,” Madam Bones said.

Hermione hesitated, then saw Harry nod. She sniffled a little, then cradled her hand again. “It... It was in detention with Professor Umbridge. She made me do lines. But not with a normal quill,” she said softly.

“That would be Dolores Umbridge, your Care teacher?” Madam Bones asked. Hermione nodded. “And this quill, what did it do?”

“I... I asked why there was no ink... and she said I just had to write. It wrote... in my blood... and the next moment the words appeared on the back of my hand,” Hermione said, looking at the floor.

“Thank you, Miss Granger,” Madam Bones said softly. “Please follow Mrs. Tonks to the other room, she will ask you a few more questions while she treats your hand. I promise you, you will never have to write with that disgusting torture implement again.”

“Miss Granger? Come here please,” Andromeda Tonks said. Hermione hesitated a little, but at Harry's nod, she rushed over to the other room.

“Robards, with me,” Madam Bones said. “We've got a toad to arrest.” The two left the DADA classroom, leaving Harry and Nym alone for a moment.

“You did a good thing in coming to me,” Nym said, hugging Harry to her.

“I hope so,” Harry said. “I hope Hermione will be fine?”

“Mum is annoyingly good at finding out your secrets,” Nym said with a grin. “Come on, hero, you might as well help me grade a few essays while we wait for mum or Bonesy to return.”

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Inside Nym's personal quarters, Andromeda Tonks was applying some essence of murtlap to Hermione's wound. “Your friend Harry cares a lot about you,” she commented.

“He does,” Hermione smiled softly. “He's great.”

“You two are best friends, right?” she asked. Hermione nodded, smiling. Andromeda looked her in the eyes, her eyes twinkling slightly, as she asked Hermione more questions.

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In another wing of the office, Auror Gawain Robards opened the door to the Care classroom without warning. Professor Umbridge was enjoying a cup of tea as the Aurors and their superior stepped inside her classroom and dropped the cup with sudden surprise.

“What's the meaning of this?!” she shrieked.

“Dolores Umbridge, you are under arrest for the suspected use of restricted blood ritual materials on a minor without parental consent,” Robards said, stepping closer to her, followed by a colleague.

“Stay back! I am the Senior Undersecretary to Minister Fudge, you cannot just try to arrest me!” Professor Umbridge scrambled to her feet and began pawing for her wand.

Robards was quicker and with an 'Incarcerous' ropes appeared to bind the odious woman.

“You have no right!” Umbridge shrieked. “I'll have your job for this!”

“Amelia? Mind explaining what you are doing in my school, arresting my teacher?” Professor Dumbledore's voice came from the doorway. Wincing, Madam Bones turned to face him.

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Andromeda Tonks left Nym's personal quarters. “Nymphadora dear? Can you watch over Miss Granger for a moment while Harry and I have a chat?”
“Don’t call me that, mum,” Nym whined. She stood up, hugged Harry briefly and disappeared in her personal quarters.

Andromeda sat down on a corner of Nym’s desk near Harry. She took a deep breath before starting her explanation.

"Harry, are you aware Miss Granger owes you a Life Debt?" she asked.

Harry looked confused for a moment, then nodded. "From the troll incident I guess? Yeah, I considered she might owe me one, but I never planned to call it in."

Andromeda marked a note on her writing pad and continued, "Well, as best I can tell, someone placed a compulsion charm on her some time this summer. On top of that, she seems to have been harbouring a slight crush on you. The combination of her natural crush, the compulsion charm, and the already existing Life Debt, has resulted in a... programming error, to use a Muggle analogy." She winced a little.

Harry looked confused. "So... what does that mean, exactly?"

"I am not sure what the original intent of whoever cast the compulsion charm was beyond the basics. The caster seems to have enforced her desire to stay close to you and at the same time made her want to go to great lengths to keep you both out of trouble. This desire not to ruffle any feathers is why she was so reluctant to go against that Umbridge woman. However, the combination means she has become utterly fixated on being with you."

"Being with me? Huh?" Harry blinked.

"She wants to be... romantically involved with you, Harry," Andromeda clarified.

"But I'm already with Nym-- I mean, with someone!" Harry exclaimed, looking panicked a bit as he blurted that out.

Andromeda briefly hid a smile. "Relax, Harry, I already know my silly daughter and you are interested in each other – and for the record, I approve." Her expression got serious again. "I am afraid that even though you are... involved, so to speak... Miss Granger is not exactly capable of accepting that."
"So what can we do to help her?" Harry looked anxious.

"The official answer is, we need to get her to St. Mungo's and under the care of a professional legilimencer. Over the course of several sessions, hopefully we'll be able to... deprogram her."

"How long will that take?" Harry looked to the bedroom door that hid his oldest friend.

"A few weeks, months maybe," Andromeda said carefully. Harry shot her a panicked glance and she explained, "Harry... if this was simply a compulsion charm, it would be easy, but since a life debt and her own natural feelings are involved, it has become deeply engrained in her psyche. Unravelling that mess will take a lot of time since it needs to be done very, very carefully. We don't want her to end up as a permanent resident on the Janus Thickey ward."

"Of course not! But weeks, months? That... is there no other way?" Harry pleaded.

Andromeda winced again. "There is one other way, but you won't like it," she said.

"Tell me," he demanded.

"If she gets to do what she is compelled to do, hopefully it will satisfy the compulsion charm part. At that point you can declare the Life Debt satisfied and it should resolved the issue completely, allowing Miss Granger to get her normal mindset back," Andromeda said carefully.

"What, I have to kiss her?" Harry asked.

"No, you'll have to love her," Andromeda said, carefully.

Harry looked confused. "But I do love her! I mean, she's a bit of a nag some times, but she's always there for me and --"

"Harry, you'll need to... fuck her," Andromeda interrupted him. Harry's mouth remained open, but no sound came out as stared at her.
"Pardon my language," Andromeda said. She took in a deep breath and explained, "Miss Granger is... very interested in you, sexually, that much my session with her made clear."

"Oh god. I can't be hearing this," Harry said, looking aghast at his girlfriend's mother.

"You are the one who wanted to know if there was an alternative to St. Mungo's, Harry," Andromeda chastised him. "I know it's not something you were planning – at least, for Nymphadora's sake you'd better not, mister – but if you want to break Miss Granger out of the delusion she is in without having her removed to the hospital, this is the only way. It's not as if she'd be unwilling either."

"I... I need to talk to Nym," Harry stammered.

"Of course," Andromeda agreed. "Do you want me to be there, too?"

"No... at least, not at first," Harry said. "Can you call her in?"

"Of course, Harry," Andromeda said with a smile. "She'll understand, I'm sure."

"Yeah, well it's not you who's going to have to tell an emotional Auror they're going to cheat on her," Harry grumbled.

Andromeda patted his head, then went to the other room again to relief her daughter.

Nym came out shaking her head. “Wow, Harry, she has it bad for you,” she said.

Harry winced.

“Okay mister, spill,” Nym deposited herself on his lap, seeing he was worried. “What did mum tell you?”

A terse explanation later, they were both silent as the seconds passed by, Nym deep in thought. Finally she spoke up: “I think you should do it.”
“What? But I... but we'll have to...” Harry was lost for words. He looked at her face and couldn't decipher the emotion there.

“She's your best friend and you can help her... what kind of girlfriend would I be if I didn't let you at least try?” Nym said softly.

“But I don't want to... make love to her,” Harry exclaimed, his voice breaking. “Nym... I love you. Not her,” he softly added.

“I know, hero, and I love you,” Nym said equally softly. “But mum wouldn't make something like this up. I love you, I trust you... so I can let you do this.”

“I don't deserve a girlfriend like you,” Harry muttered.

“Yes you do, hero,” Nym mumbled back, then kissed him.

Andromeda Tonks stood in the door watching them, smiling gently.

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Over in the Care office, things were more grim.

“I am afraid I can't let you arrest her,” Dumbledore told Madam Bones.

“It's not up to you to decide,” Madam Bones answered him. “Aurors Walker, Mitchell, cuff her and secure her. Auror Robards, search her office for the torture instrument.”

“Yes ma'am,” Robards nodded. He walked to the other room while Walker and Mitchell lifted Umbridge out of her seat and slapped cuffs on her.

“My office then?” Dumbledore said with a neutral tone, but his eyes revealed he was angry.
“No, I think not, not until the item has been found,” Madam Bones blocked him from entering further.

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Harry and Nym entered her personal quarters together and hand-in-hand. Andromeda smiled softly at the sight, Hermione stiffened. Andromeda sat in a chair, Hermione still on the couch she had been occupying the whole time.

“Hermione, I –” Harry started, but Nym interrupted him.

“You can have him this one time, but he's mine, understood?” she blurted out.

“Oh my god. You... YOU are with him?” Hermione's expression was one of shock. “Harry! How could you! She's your teacher!”

“Hermione, shut up!” Harry said loudly. Instantly, she cowered and sat back down. “Yes, Nym and I are together. I love her and she loves me.”

“But Harry... you don't need her. I can do everything she can... and without the scandal,” Hermione whimpered.

“Shut up,” Nym said heatedly. “This is difficult enough, so just shut up. Harry, do what you must. I'll... I'll wait.” She moved her head away before tears could flow, then rushed out.

“Harry? I'll look after her. Oh, and this may help...” she took a bottle from a pocket in her robe and handed it to him. “It's a short term lust potion. Take it, trust me,” Andromeda said softly.

Harry nodded and swallowed the potion. Andromeda left the room.

Harry shook his head to clear it, then focused on the only other person present, Hermione. “Merlin, you're beautiful,” he said.
Hermione's heart skipped a beat as the object of her affection looked at her. “Harry? Are you really...”

She couldn't say another word, as Harry moved for her and captured her lips with his.

In the other room, Andromeda cast a silencing charm on the door, then hugged her crying daughter. Nymphadora was not usually this emotional, but under the circumstances, she thought she understood.

Harry wasted no time in shedding his clothes and was now peeling off Hermione's outer layers. The brunette witch shivered slightly as she allowed his hands access to the various buttons and clasps, cooperating fully in raising her arms – or rear – when Harry indicated so. Before she really knew it, they were both naked, standing in Nym's private quarters.

“Let's go to the bed,” Harry said. Hermione nodded and allowed him to guide her there. She ended up on her back and watched as Harry crouched between her legs, then moved in to kiss her again. He moved down a little and kissed her stomach. Hermione let out a moan.

“Oh, that feels really pleasant... kiss me again, Harry,” she ordered.

“As the lady wishes,” Harry said cheekily. He placed another kiss on her stomach area, a little lower, just below her belly button.

“Oh my...” Hermione looked down her own body at Harry and shivered in anticipation. “Harry, I am sufficiently wet. Don't waste any time, just get on with it,” she said in a slightly trembling voice.

Harry moved over her, pausing only to kiss her left nipple briefly, and guided the head of his dick against her opening with his hand.

“Oh! I can feel you press against my labia minora!” Hermione exclaimed. “Now Harry, my vaginal orifice is the lower opening, make sure you enter it gently.”

“I know what I'm doing,” Harry grumbled a little. With a slight push of his hips, his cock head started to move inside.
“Oh! Oh! You’re... oh wow. It’s stretching me,” Hermione commented. She looked down between their bodies, trying to see what was happening.

Harry pushed in further.

“Nnnnh...” Hermione moaned a little. “Okay. Okay. That's further than my fingers have ever gone... or my wand.”

“Your wand?” Harry couldn't help but asking, pausing his slow push inside her.

“Shut up, Harry. That is private,” Hermione chastised him. “Now continue, you haven't fully entered me yet... oh!” Her mouth opened wide as Harry gave a harder push, and slid in more than halfway.

“That was... slightly faster than I was expecting...”

“Should I stop?” Harry asked, concerned.

“No, no, it's fine. I lost my hymen long before Hogwarts, my parents insisted I take horse riding lessons,” Hermione commented. “Besides, you've passed that point long ago with that... utterly massive organ of yours.”

“I'm not that big,” Harry said, smiling. As if to belie that, he managed to slide in deeper.

“Nnnh...” Hermione bit her lip, and closed her eyes briefly. “You're damn well big enough for me, more than big enough... I am feeling you in places I didn't even know I could feel.”

“Can I go on, then?”

“Oh get on with it. I'll tell you when I need you to STOP!” Her voice turned into a slight scream as Harry pushed in all the way, bottoming out in her.

“Oh... oh wow,” Hermione said in a strange voice. “This feels... rather nice.”
“Rather nice’?” Harry suppressed a laugh. “Wait until you feel this, then.” He pulled out as Hermione whimpered, and when he was halfway out of her, pushed back in.

“Ooh... so that's what intercourse is like...” Hermione had her eyes closed, and a strange smile on her face.

“No, this is what it is like,” Harry corrected her, repeating the motion, but faster.

“Oh! Oh! Oh my...” Hermione's running commentary stopped as she tried to get used to the new feelings. Harry increased the pace, starting to screw her for real now.

“Can... can you feel my vaginal muscles clench around you? Oh yes! Harder! Does... does it feel nice... if I clench like this?” Hermione tried to ask.

“Hermione?” Harry paused moving briefly, his face incredibly close to hers.

“Yes... Yes Harry?” She gasped as she felt him pulse inside her, then focused back on his face.

“Shut the fuck up,” Harry leant in to kiss her, then started moving again.

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“It's none of your business how I came here, Headmaster. I am here in an official capacity, investigating torture of a minor,” Madam Bones repeated stubbornly. She had taken a seat in the classroom. Professor Umbridge was in another chair, magical cuffs locking her hands and an Auror at either side of her.

Professor Dumbledore still stood near the door, glaring at her over the top of his glasses. Their staring contest was interrupted when he suddenly looked up and waved his hand. The classroom door opened and Professors McGonagall and Snape stepped through.

“Thank you for coming,” Professor Dumbledore said to them. “We have unexpected guests this evening,” he indicated the seated Madam Bones.
“What is she doing here?” Snape sneered.

“Don't worry, _Snape_, I'm not here for Death Eaters, cleared or not,” Professor Umbridge glared at him. “Professor Dumbledore, you're wasting my time. Why did you call your colleagues here?”

“Madam Bones, I called in Professor McGonagall since she is the Deputy Headmistress. As for Professor Snape, he is my trusted confidant and has my complete trust,” Professor Dumbledore said. He stepped further into the classroom and took a seat, his two teachers sitting down next to him.

“Albus? What is going on?” Professor McGonagall demanded.

Madam Bones ignored her. “Professor Dumbledore, I don't see the need for this. As soon as Auror Robards has the torture instrument, I will ask you to open the floo for us so we can leave.”

“Albus? What is going on?” Professor McGonagall repeated.

“Madam Bones here claims to have received a report that Professor Umbridge was using... an unorthodox method to keep one of our students in line,” Professor Dumbledore said.

“Cut to the chase Dumbledore. Umbridge here was using a blood quill on a minor,” Madam Bones said heatedly.

“Albus! Tell me she didn't!” Professor McGonagall said, shocked. “Dolores, you didn't?” she turned to the cuffed woman.

“Of course not,” Professor Umbridge smiled sweetly.

“I have seen your work,” Madam Bones said through clipped tones. “Just wait until Auror Robards has found the evidence. Do you want to save us some time and tell us where you hid it?”

Professor Umbridge shook her head. “You have made a huge mistake, Amelia. When I tell Minister Fudge about this, you'll be sorry.”
“We'll see,” Madam Bones said through clipped tones. “Auror Mitchell, go help your colleague,” she ordered.

The other Auror got up and went to the other room.

“Very well then, let's wait,” Professor Dumbledore said, smiling. “Tea, anyone?”

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Harry moved off his friend. Hermione had a wide smile resembling the proverbial cat that caught the canary, her sweaty hair matted around her head. She seemed a little dazed, still.

The euphoria of the sexual release was still present, but Harry felt the potion was wearing off and at least a little bit of his rational mind returned.

“Was I... any good?” Hermione asked in a small voice.

Harry looked back at her and gave her a soft smile. “Yes, it was good,” he lied, while reaching for his pants. 'Good' was an overstatement. It had been incredibly awkward... Hermione, despite her theoretical knowledge of the act and all it entailed, simply was an inexperienced young girl rather than a mature and very sexually confident woman. Without magic guiding them both, he was sure that she wouldn't have gotten off, even though he had tried to make it nice for her.

He looked back at her and caught her attention, “Look... Hermione Jane Granger, I consider any debts between us paid. Err... I'll see you in a moment, okay?” He quickly put on his last clothes and stepped outside, leaving a slightly confused Hermione behind.

Both Tonks women were looking at him. “Nym, love, I –” Harry started saying. He was interrupted as a Nymphadora-shaped missile crashed into him, claiming his lips.

Andromeda Tonks stepped past them and went inside the bedroom. Hermione was busy getting dressed, a strange look on her face.

“Oh! Mrs. Tonks,” she said, blushing deeply as the older woman entered.
“Hello, Hermione. Do you want to talk about Harry some more?” Andromeda sat down on the bed next to her and looked her in the eyes.

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In the Care classroom, everyone except for Professor Umbridge seemed to be getting annoyed. Finally, Auror Robards stepped back into the classroom. “Madam Bones? I can't find the item,” he said.

“Well look better then!” Professor Umbridge glared. “Did you try a Summoning Charm?”

“Of course ma'am and a couple of other spells as well,” Robards sounded as annoyed as his boss.

“Is this foolishness over, then?” Professor Umbridge smiled, sickly.

“Amelia, I think we've wasted enough time,” Professor Dumbledore said. “It is time you tell us who this supposed victim is.”

“You know the law, Albus. Not as long as the suspect is here,” Madam Bones said. Then she sighed. “Robards, seal the office. Walker, Mitchell, take this woman. Professor Dumbledore, may we use your floo to get back to the DMLE?”

“Of course, Amelia. I think I'll join you, after all Minister Fudge will be wondering why you were here as much as I am,” Professor Dumbledore smiled.

“That will not be necessary, Albus,” Madam Bones glared at him.

“Oh, but I insist. Follow me, then.” He stood up. “Minerva, Severus, I apologize for wasting your time. We'll speak at breakfast tomorrow?”

The group dispersed.
Andromeda Tonks came out of Nym's private quarters and found her daughter sitting in Harry's lap, the two of them kissing deeply. She cleared her throat but they didn't seem to hear her.

“Ahem,” she said a little louder and the two moved apart, blushing. “Harry, you'll be glad to know it worked. She is still very much... infatuated... with you, but there's no longer any extra influence forcing her to act on it. I think you two... you three... should talk things through now.”

“Thanks, Mrs Tonks,” Harry said, smiling.

“Call me mum, Harry. After all, you and my Nymphadora are rather serious, aren't you?”
Andromeda smirked at them both. “Nymphadora, you and your boyfriend will be spending the Yule holidays with your father and I, understood?”

Nym just nodded, too embarrassed to look at her mother.

“Very well. Then I'll return home before anyone finds out I was here. Nymphadora dear, I hope you and my future son-in-law have something planned to explain why these two students missed their Astronomy class.”
Leaving them with that thought, she went back inside Tonks' private room and flooed out.

“Errr... shall we, then?” Harry indicated the door Nym's mother had just left through.

“You read my mind, lover,” Nym wriggled on his lap.

“I meant... Hermione,” Harry clarified.

“Oh! Well... that's what I meant,” Nym blushed. She got off his lap and hand in hand they went in her office.

Hermione sat on the couch, her hands folded in her lap. The bed was made up and free of any evidence it had been recently used – courtesy of cleaning charms – but one look at Hermione made it clear that the girl had gone through an experience. She actually seemed to glow a little.
“Harry?” She looked up as they entered, blushing deeply. “I... thank you. I have to apologize, I was...” she trailed off.

“No need to apologize,” Harry shot her a weak smile in response. “We're friends, right? I know you were not thinking straight over the summer.”

“Oh Harry, thank you,” Hermione rushed in to hug him, but ran into Tonks' arm which blocked her way.

“He's mine,” Tonks said, glaring at the girl.

“Oh. Right.” Hermione sat back down. “So... you and Harry then?”

“Nym and I, yes,” Harry nodded. “Look... Hermione, I'll need your help. Please, don't tell anyone about us.”

Hermione sniffled. “Okay Harry... I'll keep mum. But we'll have a long chat in private about this later, okay?”

“Just talk,” Nym insisted.

“Honestly! I... oh god this is awkward...” Hermione looked down, blushing deeply, then took a deep breath and looked back up. “Mrs. Tonks explained to me why we... why we had to... have sex,” the last two words were almost whispered. “It was... nice I guess... but not exactly what I was expecting...” She took another deep breath, then found some strength. “I'm willing to put that behind us. Friends, Harry?” She held out her hand to shake it, it trembling only slightly.

Harry shook hers. “Friends,” he agreed.

“Good,” Nym smiled, hugging Harry from behind. “Come on, I'm taking you both back to your dorms. In case anyone asks, I kept you here while the DMLE did their investigation and we only talked, all right?”
Hermione froze momentarily. “Oh my god, I can't believe I forgot! Harry! That... horrible toad... she tortured me! Why did I not do a thing about it?”

“The compulsion charm,” Harry reminded her.

“Oh! Right. We'll need to find whoever cursed me!” she stated.

“My money is on Dumbledore,” Harry grumbled.

“Professor Dumbledore, Harry,” Hermione chastised him. “But yes, I agree. No-one else really had the chance. Ooh, I can't believe the nerve of that man!”

“She's a little hyper, isn't she?” Nym said softly, leaning against Harry's back.

“Just a bit, but you learn to deal with that,” Harry said, smiling softly.

“What are you smiling about?” Hermione demanded.

“Nothing. Come on, let's get back to our dorm for now. If all went well, the DMLE will call on us tomorrow morning so we can get rid of the toad,” Harry said.
The next morning Harry came down into the common room, yawning still. Hermione was already there and was sitting on a couch, reading a book. She looked up as he walked over to her, then looked away blushing.

“Hi Harry,” she said.

“Morning ’Mione,” Harry answered as he sat down next to her. “Sleep well?”

“Yes...” Hermione avoided his gaze and she was fidgeting with her hands.

“Hey, we're still good, right? Best friends, right?” Harry said softly.

“Friends. Right.” Hermione finally looked up and shot him a smile. “Friends, that's what we are, yes.”

Harry was silent for a bit as well. “Well, this is awkward... shall we just go for breakfast?”

“All right, Harry. Do you think Professor Dumbledore will say anything about that woman?” Hermione held her hand out for him to take, and he helped her up.

“I don't see how he cannot, I just hope he'll leave us alone for today,” Harry said.

This hope was shattered quickly for no sooner had they both entered the Great Hall, or Dumbledore spotted them.

“Incoming,” Harry softly said to Hermione. They both watched Professor McGonagall walk over to them.

“Miss Granger, Mr. Potter, do you have an explanation for why you missed Astronomy last night?” she asked.

“DMLE business, ma'am,” Harry answered her.

“I see,” Professor McGonagall made a 'tsk' sound. “The Headmaster would like to see you both in his office.”

“Can we finish breakfast first?” Harry asked.

“And what about Charms class?” Hermione added.

“I suppose you can, but make it quick. And I'll clear things with Professor Flitwick,” their Head of House said. She walked back to the teachers' table. Harry saw Dumbledore had left while they spoke.

“Let me take the lead, okay?” Harry suggested to Hermione. She nodded and they finished their breakfast. As they ate Harry caught Tonks' eye, and he inclined his head to the door. She seemed to get the message for she made an excuse to the other teachers and got up, leaving the hall.

Harry stood up a little later and headed for the doors with Hermione closely following. Tonks was waiting just out of sight for them.

“Morning love,” Harry said, smiling.
Tonks' expression softened at that, and she smiled back.

“Hi,” Hermione simply said.

“So, what's this about?” Tonks asked Harry.

“Old Whiskers wants to see us in his office. Have you heard from Bonesy?” Harry asked.

Tonks frowned. “Not yet, and I think she'd contact me before coming here for your statements... want me to come with to the Headmaster?”

“No, as far as he knows, you don't like me, and I don't see a reason to change that,” Harry disagreed. “But can you contact Bones and tell her Dumbledore has us in his office?”

“Will do,” Tonks agreed. “Don't look him in the eyes, and just keep stalling if he tries to badger you about the toad, okay?”

“Got it,” Harry agreed. He looked back and saw the corridor was still empty aside from them, then quickly leant in for a stolen kiss. “Love you.”

Tonks' smile could light up a dark night. “Love you too. Now off you go.”

She watched Harry and Hermione headed for the stairwell and then went for her own quarters to call the head of her department.

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Ministry of Magic

Dolores Umbridge seemed to radiate calm as she sat in the Ministry holding cell. Auror Longbrook who was assigned to guard the cells this morning was getting more than a little unnerved by this and went back to his copy of 'The Quibbler'. The magazine may have nonsensical contents most of the time, the runic puzzle on the back pages was always good to keep one occupied.

Not ten minutes later he hastily moved the magazine out of sight as someone came down the corridor leading to the lifts, and to his shock, he saw it was the Minister himself.

“Auror, I've come to release Madam Umbridge,” Minister Fudge said.

“Errr... sir, she's under arrest for –” Longbrook started.

“Perhaps you didn't hear me correctly? I said, I've come to get Madam Umbridge,” Minister Fudge repeated.

“I.... I'll have to ask Madam Bones,” Longbrook stalled. Quickly he scribbled a note on the message paper, and sent the paper aeroplane towards the lift shaft.

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Amelia Bones had only just arrived and was drinking her morning tea. That they hadn't found Umbridge's blood quill the previous night really annoyed her, but she knew her Aurors were thorough in their search. She must have either been warned somehow, or was just extremely paranoid and had hidden it elsewhere. No matter, the documented abuse of Miss Granger's hand should be enough to get a questioning under Veritaserum. That reminded her, she needed to get official statements from the girl.
Her thoughts were interrupted by a Ministry note flying over to her and unfolding itself on her desk. Quickly she glanced over it and let out an annoyed groan.

“Is Robards in yet?” she called in the general direction of the Auror desks.

“Not yet ma’am,” Auror Proudfoot, one of her most trusted men, answered.

“Just my luck,” Madam Bones grumbled. “Our esteemed Minister is up to something. If Robards or Mitchell arrive, have them write their reports on the Umbridge search asap – I'll likely be with Fudge.”

Not waiting for the affirmative she got up and stomped towards the lift.

By the time she arrived at the holding cells, Dolores Umbridge was just being led out of her cell by Auror Longbrook.

“What the hell is going on here?” Madam Bones demanded.

“Amelia, good to see you,” Minister Fudge turned to her. “Your Auror is just releasing my Senior Secretary. Terrible mishap, but I'm sure Dolores won't hold it against you.”

“Of course I won't,” Umbridge said in a sickly sweet voice.

“Mishap? Minister, she was caught torturing a student!” Bones protested.

“Caught? You have the evidence then?” Fudge countered.

“Of course! Official Auror documentation, I saw it with my own eyes!”

“Ah yes... Dolores just told me about that. This student claimed she used a blood quill, correct?”

“Claim my arse, the words were carved in her skin,” Madam Bones said. “Minister, I have worked with Goblins for decades now. I recognise scars from a blood quill when I see one!”

“And you have found that quill I trust?” Minister Fudge pressed.

“Not yet, but –”

“Exactly as I was telling the Minister, it's all lies and slander... I bet the chit hurt herself in a mistaken attempt to force me from the school,” Umbridge said. “She and the Potter boy are very close, I wouldn't be surprised if they planned it together.”

“That is ridiculous,” Bones spat at the other woman. “Minister, I promise you, after questioning Madam Umbridge we will know where she hid it. So please let my Auror return her to her cell.”

“I think not,” Fudge denied her. “You have no evidence other than the word of a hysterical girl whose taste in friends is questionable at best. Otherwise you will have to officially apologize to Dolores and drop the case.”

“And if I don't?” Amelia asked through clipped teeth.

“Then I see no alternative but to fire you on the spot,” Minister Fudge said. Madam Umbridge stood beside him and smiled.

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“Mr. Potter, Miss Granger, do sit down,” Professor Dumbledore smiled genially at them both as they entered his office. “Lemon drop?”
“No thank you,” Harry said. He wondered why he had suddenly become 'Mr. Potter' – Dumbledore had always called him 'Harry' before. “What is this about, sir?”

Professor Dumbledore tried to catch Harry’s eyes, but Harry looked away each time. He next tried to catch Hermione, but Hermione was looking down at her folded hands. Finally his patience ran out. “You caused quite a commotion last night,” he said.

“Oh, did we?” Harry said flatly.

“I understand that Professor Umbridge was a little harsh on Miss Granger but –”

“A little harsh? She was torturing Hermione! In an unjust detention!”

“Don't tell me you support that woman, professor,” Hermione added.

“Of course not my dear, I will have a talk with her and explain that Blood Quills are not accepted materials.” Dumbledore smiled in Hermione’s direction. “Still, you should not have needed to involve the Aurors. Any school business can be brought up with your Head of House, or myself.”

“We tried that, but McGonagall forced Hermione to go to detention any way,” Harry interjected.

“Professor McGonagall, Mr. Potter. But very well. I expect you will not try to go over my head in the future?”

“Why, are you going to stand up for your students for once?” Harry sarcastically asked.

Professor Dumbledore frowned. “I do not like your attitude, Harry.”

“Oh, am I Harry again? Well, if it's my attitude that's a problem, I don't like yours. Sir.”

“Harry, enough,” Hermione said softly.

“Twenty House points from Gryffindor for that disrespect,” Dumbledore said in a sad voice. “Now, all that is left is for you both to apologize to Professor Umbridge.”

“You... no.” Harry gripped the arm rests of his chair. Next to him, Hermione froze as well.

“No matter your problems with her, she is a teacher, and deserves your respect,” Dumbledore tried.

“I've heard enough. Hermione, come, we're leaving,” Harry started to rise.

“Sit down!” Dumbledore loudly exclaimed. “This is not open for debate!”

“Well you can stuff your –”

Harry’s not so respectful response was interrupted by a knock on the Headmaster’s door.

“Enter!” Dumbledore yelled. Both teens turned to see a pink menace step through. Hermione let out a stifled gasp, and Harry’s expression turned to murder.

“Professor Umbridge, I was not expecting you back yet,” Professor Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling.

“Just a minor problem at the Ministry,” Professor Umbridge informed him. “But the Minister has made sure I could return in time for my classes. Oh, but I see you have visitors already?”
“Indeed. I believe Mr. Potter and Miss Granger have something to say to you?”

Harry took a breath but before he could speak, Hermione did: “I will not be taking your class or allow myself to be alone with you at any time, Professor. You may have the Ministry on your side, but I will not be a willing victim of your persecution.” She glared the woman down, then walked past her to the door.

“What she said,” Harry said quickly, following after her.

“Well I never,” they heard Umbridge say as they left the Headmaster's office.

“Can you cover for me? I'm going to Tonks, I want to know how that toad got back here so quickly,” Harry said as he rushed after Hermione who was on her way to the stairwell.

“I'm coming with you, if anyone deserves to know, it's me, don't you think?”

“Of course.”

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They arrived at the DADA classroom to find Tonks teaching a first year class. Hermione hesitated to interrupt but Harry had no problem doing so. He opened the classroom door and as soon as Tonks spotted him, he waved her over.

“I'll be right back class, for now practice the incantation,” Tonks told her students then stepped outside.

“I'm sorry Harry, Hermione, Bonesy was not in the DADA office, she was in a meeting with the Minister. I don't know what about,” she clarified to them both.

“Probably about that toad bitch, she's back,” Harry grumbled.

“Language, Harry, but yes, he's right,” Hermione added.

“Oh Merlin.” Tonks groaned. “I hope the boss is not in trouble now... well... not much we can do about it now I guess. Why don't you go to classes? I'll try to talk to Bonesy over lunch and if I hear something, I'll let you know.”

“Might as well,” Harry sighed. “Hermione, what class are we supposed to be in now?”

“There's about ten minutes of Charms left, and after that, Potions,” she informed him. “I'm not your planner, Harry,” she softly punched him in the arm.

“Well have fun kiddos,” Tonks ruffled Harry's hair, then went back inside.

Harry tried to get his hair back in order while he spoke: “I'm not going to Potions. Snape can't teach any way, I'm better off doing self study. Speaking of, you were going to help me with Runes, right?”

“But... but classes?” Hermione bit her lower lip, looking uncertain.

“Look, I'll take all the blame for keeping you from class. But seriously, do you think Snape will be teaching us anything? He's far more likely to spend the whole ninety minutes abusing us both.”

“Professor Snape, and yes... you're right.” Hermione rolled her eyes. “You're a horrible influence on me, Harry. Very well, let's go to the library instead and I'll see if you have any talent in Runes.”
“You're amazing,” Harry shot her a smile and he walked off. Hermione felt a blush creep up and tried to fight it away as she made to follow him.
Chapter 21

Following an intensive study session in which Harry proved that yes, he did indeed seem to have a talent for Runes, the Gryffindor duo went to the Great Hall for lunch. They were talking about their teacher, Professor Babbling, and what test she might have prepared when a furious looking Professor Snape entered the large hall.

“Potter! Where were you and your girlfriend?” he raved as he stalked inside.

Harry ignored him as he handed a bread platter to Hermione. “I wonder if Professor Babbling will give me that test today?” he asked her.

“Potter! Don't you dare ignore me!” Professor Snape walked closer and made to grab Harry by the arm.

Quickly, thanks to his Quidditch reflexes – and years of abuse by his fatter and stronger cousin – Harry twisted away, and now faced the unpleasant man.

“Keep your hands off me, Snape,” he snarled back.

“Detention, Potter. And your little girlfriend as well,” Snape stared him down.

“Stuff it up your cauldron. I'm not going to detention with the likes of you,” Harry countered. Snape turned red and went for his wand.

“What is going on here? Severus, put your wand away!” Tonks said as she walked up to them.

“Potter and Granger here decided to skip Potions class and now talk back and refuse to accept the fact I've given them detention,” Snape informed her.

“Mr. Potter, Miss Granger, why exactly were you not in Potions class?” Tonks asked them.

“Dumbledore called us for a meeting that caused us to miss Charms and the start of Potions, and since Snape hates my guts I doubt he would have let us come in late as it is. So instead Hermione tutored me a bit in Runes,” Harry explained.
“That's Professor Dumbledore, Mr. Potter. Still, that is no excuse to skip the class completely. I think Severus was right to assign detention to you,” Tonks said after a moment, then allowed a small grin to show. “Severus, do you mind if I add that detention to Mr. Potter's back log he has with me? I can use someone to repair the training dummies the sixth and seventh years destroyed.”

“Perhaps hard labour will teach the brat to hold his tongue. I accept,” Snape told her, then gave her a nod, Harry a sneer, and walked off.

“Detention tonight then. You know the way, Mr. Potter,” Tonks said in a haughty tone, but her eyes were sparkling. Harry pretended to be annoyed as he turned back to his food.

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His guess that Professor Babbling would have a test for him in Runes proved to be right, and he spent the full hour working through a modified version of the end of year exam Hermione and his other new classmates had had to take the previous year. When the hour was over and they had to leave for History of Magic he had only just completed it when he had to hand it over.

“How did you do? Did you remember that Sowilo can mean both Wholeness and Success?” Hermione quizzed him.

“Yes yes, and that it is supposed to guide the energy flow to the Hvel as well,” Harry commented. “Merlin, that was a hard quiz. Are they all like that?”

Hermione laughed. “Oh no, usually we just have to work on a sequence. In fact, that's what we were doing today. I'll show you later if you like?”

“Thanks, appreciate it,” Harry smiled back at her, giving her a quick hug before he walked off again. Momentarily Hermione felt weak in the knees as she remembered the previous night.

“Oh Harry,” she softly said, looking at his rear side as he walked off before she grounded herself and rushed to take his side once more.

-----
History was their last class of the day and they worked on their homework following dinner, until time for the 'detention' came. To his surprise, Harry found Hermione following him into the corridor.

“What are you doing?” he asked her.

“Professor Snape assigned us both detention, didn't he? And you wouldn't let me be alone with him in the dungeon now would you?” Hermione pointed out.

“Yeah, but...”

“Come on, Professor Tonks will be waiting for you,” Hermione grabbed Harry's arm, and pulled him along. Not willing to argue in the corridor where a prefect or one of the professors could come across them at any moment, Harry just went along.

“Come in,” Tonks called out when Hermione knocked on the door. She stepped through first, and found her DADA teacher wearing a skimpy negligee only.

“Oh!” they both said at the same time.

Harry followed Hermione, and froze in the door opening, allowing his eyes to roam over his older girlfriend's body. “Wow...” he said.

“Shut the door Harry, you don't want someone else to see do you?” Hermione said. “Hello Miss Tonks. That is a sexy outfit, it really shows off your body.”

“Wha... Harry... Hermione, what the hell are you doing here?” Tonks finally found her voice again, deciding to tackle the issue head on.

“As I told Harry, you took over our detentions with Professor Snape. Our, so mine as well. Harry, follow her to her personal quarters and I'll just be here revising until you finish, okay?”

“Errr... Nym?” Harry hesitated near the door still.
“We'll talk later okay, Hermione?” Tonks waited until Hermione nodded, then took Harry by the arm and guided him inside her bedroom.

Once the door closed behind them, Hermione put away the book she had taken out of her bag, and rummaged in it, taking out Harry's invisibility cloak. She covered herself in it and then cast a silencing charm on herself. Hidden and silenced, she walked to the door connecting the DADA classroom to Tonks' personal quarters, and opened the door a little. Through the gap she saw Harry and Tonks kissing, and took the chance to slip inside the room, closing the door behind her.

There was a chair in the corner near the door that had nothing on it and she sat down in it.

“When did you become such a great kisser?” Tonks asked, licking her lips after they broke off.

“I have a wonderful teacher,” Harry replied. “And I just love kissing you...” To prove this, he began laying a trail of kisses down her neckline that led him to the top of her breasts, covered only by the flimsy material of her nighty.

“Oh, hero, that feels so good,” Tonks nearly purred. “Get those clothes off love, I want to see what's mine.”

Harry quickly stripped, then Tonks guided him over to her bed. They lied down side by side, until he rolled slightly over her and kissed her again. As they kissed, his hands started moving her negligee up. Tonks raised herself a little to allow him better access, and soon it was over her head and gone. Harry moved his head down to kiss her breasts, starting with the right one. Tonks moaned at the sensation on her nipple. Feeling the need to return a little, she reached down to grab Harry's semi-hard member in her left hand and softly began pumping it. Harry proved he knew her body well by moving to her left nipple before her right one got sore. Tonks let out a gasp of delight when out of nowhere his fingers were thrust into her.

“Oh! That... that feels wonderful,” she commented. He managed to hit that special spot near the top that turned her insane, and she moaned deeply, forgetting to do anything with his stiff prick. Harry pumped his fingers in and out a while, driving her mad, until he removed his hand quickly and placed it on her clit.

“Oh Harry! Yessssssss...” Tonks arched her back, then moved her left hand on top of his, trapping it in place. He rolled the little nub and softly pinched it, causing Tonks to let out a deep moan and finally she shuddered, her juices splattering all over their arms as she came.

“I want you in me,” she managed to say when her strength returned. Harry needed no further
prompting and moved back over her. She reached down to guide his cock where she wanted it and both moaned as his firmness parted her folds.

Across the room, Hermione had three fingers of her right hand inside her soaked knickers, and her left hand was pinching her right nipple as she furiously masturbated to the sight, imagining it was her in the bed with Harry. Somehow she managed to pace herself to keep herself on the edge. When she saw Harry shudder and heard him moan, followed by Tonks letting out a very contented moan, she pinched her clit and that brought her over the edge as well. Unknown to the couple on the bed, their voyeur came at nearly the same time as they both did.

Her legs weak below her, Hermione looked on in envy as Harry's member moved out of Tonks, allowing a small white pool to form below her. 'I love you, Harry,' Hermione thought, making her way stealthily for the door.

Harry left Tonks' bedroom more than a quarter hour later, looking like the Boy-Who-Shagged. Hermione sat in the same chair she had been in when he had left her, a book in her hands, and looking as prim and proper as always. “Have fun?” she asked him.

“Errr... yeah. Look, Hermione, don't tell anyone okay?” Harry begged her with his eyes.

“Don't worry, I won't say a word. I'll cover for you both even,” Hermione promised. She started putting her book away as Harry walked closer to her.

“Thanks, you're really a good friend,” he said, smiling.

“Let’s go back to Gryffindor Tower then,” Hermione proposed. Harry was a bit surprised to notice her skirt had a large wet spot as she rose, but since he knew he didn't exactly look like a proper student right now, he didn't comment on it.

Tonks was in her bed, sleeping the sleep of a well shagged woman. When she would wake hours later, the soaking wet chair in the corner had already been cleaned by the same House Elf who made it his job to keep her room clean, Dobby.
The following day at breakfast Susan Bones ‘accidentally’ bumped into Harry as they entered the Great Hall, and when he got to the Gryffindor table he found a piece of parchment had been pushed in his pocket. Following Herbology he had a free period while Hermione went off to Arithmancy, and he returned to his dorm room to read it.

It was a letter from Amelia Bones, Susan's aunt.

'Mr. Potter, Harry,

I owe you an apology. I tried to keep Madam Umbridge under lock and key until we could interrogate her, but somehow the Minister found out she was being held at the Ministry. He abused his powers to force her release and ordered me to stop the investigation into the Blood Quill. The good news is, he had to do this officially so I now have evidence on parchment that Fudge is abusing his position. Combined with the still ongoing investigation in the 'former' Death Eaters, the noose around his neck is tightening. It really irks me that we could not find the Blood Quill itself – unless she had a head warning somehow, we must assume someone else at Hogwarts is helping her. I think you know very well who my prime suspect is.

For now, keep your head down and do your best to ignore Madam Umbridge. I will keep you informed through Susan if anything changes. Make sure to destroy this message as well – the person who is intercepting your owl post cannot learn you have another way to get in contact with me.'

Harry frowned as he used a small 'Incendio' to burn the paper. Dumbledore helping Umbridge made no sense, did it?

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Professor McGonagall was wondering the same thing. “Albus, what are you doing with those things?” she asked, pointing out a small wooden case holding two long, black quills.

“Never mind that Minerva, that's between Dolores and I,” Professor Dumbledore answered her.

“Albus, are those Blood Quills? Is that why Dolores was arrested Wednesday?”

“Yes to both accounts. As for why I have them, I couldn't allow the Ministry Aurors to find them now could I?”
“Why on earth not? Don't you want her gone from this school?” Professor McGonagall looked confused.

“Oh, I do. But not when she can so easily be replaced by someone more subtle. Can you imagine what might happen if someone like Selwyn or Lucius Malfoy would be the next person Minister Fudge brings forward? No, this way Dolores knows I have the proverbial sword hanging over her head, and she will think twice before trying another stunt like that.” Professor Dumbledore looked pleased as he closed the box, and put it in a desk drawer.

“I hope you know what you're doing, Albus,” Professor McGonagall said, still looking doubtful.

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Tonks had a worried expression as she sent off her last DADA class of the week. She had wanted to show how dodging could help a skilled dueller survive a fight, but when she tried to morph into a smaller breasted form to do so – seriously, while she appreciated how much Harry liked her natural big ones, smaller breasts were much easier to deal with – she found her magic resisting the change. That combined with the general feeling of something being wrong prompted her to accept the possibility she had come down with something.

She knew Poppy Pomfrey seldom came down to the Great Hall for dinner, so she went straight for the Hospital Wing instead of grabbing some food.

“Hello, Nymphadora. What brings you here?” Poppy was preparing smaller Potions doses in her office and looked up as the metamorphmagus teacher knocked on her door.

“Could you do a general check maybe? I'm not sure, but something seems to be off,” Tonks said. She explained the things she had noticed over the past few days.

Madam Pomfrey cast a few wordless charms over her colleague, making 'hmm' comments to herself as the results indicated something only a Healer would understand.

“Are you seeing someone at the moment, Tonks?” she asked suddenly.

Tonks looked at her quizzically but seeing no reason to lie, she answered, “Yes... we're very much in love. I see him every chance I get.”

“I thought as much,” Madam Pomfrey said. “Well then Tonks dear, I think you and your lover
“What about? Do I have... an S.T.D.?” Tonks nearly whispered the last part, blushing.

Madam Pomfrey stared at her, then broke out in laughter. “S.T.D.? Oh, that is hilarious! No, nothing like that... you, my dear, are around two months pregnant. I suggest you and the father have a long chat about your future plans at the earliest opportunity.”

“Pregnant... how could I be...” Tonks stumbled back, found a chair, and sat down. 'My mum is going to kill me,' was her first thought, immediately followed by, 'Oh Merlin... how can I tell my Harry?'
Angelina intercepted Harry the next morning before he could sit down for breakfast. “Harry? Quidditch tryouts are later today, did you see the notice?”

Harry shot her a grin as he replied, “Must’ve missed it. But I’ll be there, don’t worry. We need a new Keeper, right?”

“Yes, and I hope we can find a few reserve Chasers as well. This is mine and Alicia’s last year, and Katie will be having hers next year, so we need to have a good team lined up. Professor McGonagall wants to keep that trophy,” Angelina told him.

“Sounds good to me,” said Harry. “When do we have the pitch reserved?”

“From three to five today, so don’t be late, Potter, or I’ll be looking for a new Seeker as well!” Angelina gave him a wink and walked off.

“Oi, what did she want?” Ron called when Harry sat down next to Ginny and Hermione. Ron was sitting with Dean and Seamus a bit across from Ginny.

“Quidditch tryouts,” Harry informed him. “You should try it, Ron.” At that, Ginny poked him in the side with her elbow, and Harry gave her a smile. “You as well, Gin-Gin. Apparently she’s setting up a reserve team.”

From there the talk went onto Quidditch in general with everyone except Hermione participating. Near the end of breakfast, Professor Babbling walked up to the table.

“Congratulations, Mr. Potter,” she told him.

“I passed?” Harry sounded surprised.

“Barely, but you had good enough marks that I’ll accept you as a fifth year student,” the teacher affirmed.
“Wow, that's great! Thanks!” Harry smiled wide, then turned to face Hermione and hugged her. “I passed, thanks to you!”

Hermione flushed all over as her crush pressed her close to him and couldn't even voice a reply.

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Following breakfast they returned to the Gryffindor tower and Harry went up to his room to inspect the condition of his broom. As he inspected it thoroughly he found a few small scratches and a couple of straws that were out of place so he decided to use his broom servicing kit on it.

He opened his trunk and started rummaging through it, only to find the three pairs of knickers lying there.

“Oh Merlin,” he groaned. “What the hell do I do with these?”

“Do with what, mate?” Ron's voice came from the door. Quickly, Harry slammed his trunk shut.

“Nothing!”

“Eh? Okay then... anyway I was wondering, do you want to play some wizarding chess? We haven't really hung out much since the summer...”

“Yeah, sure Ron... but I'm going to fix up my broom a bit first. I'll come on down later though, okay?” Harry just wanted him out of there, now.

“Great, see you in a bit then,” Ron said.

Harry waited until Ron took his wizarding chess set and left, then opened his trunk again. “Maybe I can just put them in the wash?” he wondered out loud. “No... someone'll see. Dammit, what do I do?”

Harry was startled when Dobby suddenly popped into place next to him. “Master Great Harry Potter Sir wants Dobby to remove the girlies thingies?”
“Dobby! Don’t scare me like that!” Harry yelled out, then immediately in a softer tone added, “Can you take them to the wash and make sure they are returned to the right persons? This one is Tonks’, that one is Hermione’s, and the yellow ones belong to Luna, she’s a Ravenclaw.”

“Dobby knows Miss Luna, she is being nice to all Elveses. Miss Luna's belongings is taken by other Ravenclaweses though,” Dobby informed him.

Harry frowned. “Someone is stealing her stuff, Dobby?”

Dobby nodded a little sadly. “Ravenclaw girls is being bullies and is takings Miss Luna's shoes and clothes when Miss Luna is not in her dorm. We Elveses sometimes is finding them in Greenhouse or elsewhere.”

“I see,” Harry said, frowning. “Does Professor Flitwick know about this?”

“Dobby does not know,” the House Elf said. “We Elveses is not allowed to tells student things to Professors except for Headmaster.”

“And Dumbledore wouldn't care even if he knew,” Harry grumbled. “Dobby, can you and the other Elves here collect her belongings and return them to her? And tell me if anyone else steals her stuff?”

Dobby nodded, “Dobby wills do,” he said, and popped out. Then he popped back in, snapped his fingers, and the three knickers disappeared from Harry's trunk, before he popped out again.

“Well, that's one problem solved... a little late,” Harry said out loud. He rummaged through his now less incriminating trunk contents for the broom cleaning kit, finally finding it.

“Huh... where is my dad's cloak?” he wondered out loud. Deciding to ask Hermione and Ron if they maybe borrowed it later, he started polishing his broom.

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A while later Harry was downstairs playing chess with Ron. Ron told him he hadn't seen his cloak anywhere when Harry asked after the first time Ron beat him. They were on their third game – another loss later – when Hermione came back in the Common Room, her hands occupied with
balancing a tower of books she had borrowed from the library.

“I concede,” Harry told Ron, turning his king over.

“Bloody useless you are,” the chess piece chastised him, but Harry shrugged it off. He walked over to Hermione and took some books from her tower so her face was revealed.

“Oh! Thanks, Harry,” Hermione said.

“No problem. Hey, do you maybe have my cloak?” Harry took some more books until they both were carrying about the same amount, then put his stack on an unoccupied table.

“Your cloak?” Hermione flushed and looked down. “Yes?”

“Oh, good!” Harry gave her a smile as he took the other stack from her. “I was afraid for a moment I left it at Gr– at our summer address.”

“You... you don't mind me borrowing it?” Hermione looked surprised.

“Nah, I trust you,” Harry said. “Why don't you bring that stack up? I'll guard the rest until you return.”

“Thanks Harry!”’ I love you,’ Hermione mentally added, going upstairs.

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Hermione returned for the other books, then she and Harry sat down at the same table working a bit on their Runes, she tutoring him. Hermione was just expanding on the use of Runes in wand crafting when the next interruption came, in the form of a professor.

“Har... Mr. Potter? Come with me, please,” Tonks said, sounding a little distressed.
Harry looked around and found that nobody was paying that much attention to them. “What's this about, Nym?” he asked in a soft voice.

“Harry... we need to have a chat, in private,” Tonks answered in the same soft voice.

“Can it wait? I have Quidditch tryouts in a bit,” Harry said.

“No,” Tonks raised her voice to normal levels again. “Come with me, Mr. Potter.”

“You'd better go,” Hermione prodded him.

“I'm coming,” Harry agreed, standing up. “Thanks for the help,” he said to Hermione before disappearing out of the portrait hole.

Hermione grabbed her papers and ran up the stairs to her dorm room, taking Harry's cloak. As quick as she could she ran out the portrait and to the DADA classroom. The corridor was empty when she got there, and she hid herself in the invisibility cloak before sneaking inside the classroom. Finding it empty, she moved over to Tonks’ personal quarters and put her ear on the door. Hearing soft murmurs from inside, she opened the door just a little, and sneaked inside.

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Tonks looked up as her door seemed to open and close on its own accord, but only partially registered it. She and Harry were sitting on her bed, her hands folded in her lap as she stalled for time.

“Come on, Nym, what's this about? I told you, I have Quidditch later,” Harry complained.

“Harry... do you love me? Really?” Tonks asked softly.

“Of course I do,” Harry said. “Nym, look up, please.”

Once she did, he hugged her to him. “I admit I was really surprised with how fast things went when you, well, rescued me from the Dursleys, but I know for a fact I fell in love with you. You never
need to worry about that.”

“Oh Harry!” Nym sobbed on his shoulder a bit.

“There, there,” Harry tried his best to comfort her, not understanding why his girlfriend seemed to be upset. “Why did you ask? Did I... did I do something wrong?” he softly asked as she seemed to find herself again.

“Hero... do you think we'll be together next year?” Tonks deflected.

“Of course!”

“And after that? And the year after that? Do you think... we can last?” Tonks didn't meet his eyes.

“Love... I'll be with you for as long as you'll have me,” Harry said. He moved away a bit and took her hands in his. “Nym... what is this all about? Did... did someone find out about us?”

“Oh Harry... I.... I messed up,” Nym said softly.

“Messed up how? Tell me, please. I promise, whatever it is, I won't get mad.”

“Harry... we've been making love for some time now, and...”

“Am I not good? Do you... do you want someone more experienced?” Harry sounded a bit pained.

“No, you goof!” Tonks looked up finally again. “Merlin, this is much harder than I thought it would be...”

“Don't... don't tell me you want to end it?” Harry nearly choked as he forced out the words.
“What? Never! Harry... I think I forgot to take the Potion on time,” Tonks answered him.

“What potion? Are you ill?” Harry looked at her critically.

Across the room, their spy choked away a surprised exclamation of disbelief and she got up from the chair, getting closer to them.

“The contraceptive potion, Harry,” Tonks clarified.

“Huh?”

“I went to Madam Pomfrey last night... and... oh screw it. Harry, I'm pregnant,” Tonks blurted out.

Harry sat there, frozen.

“Don't you dare ask if it is yours, mister. Because it is. Oh Merlin... not only am I shagging one of my students, I managed to get knocked up by one... my life is over,” Tonks rambled on.

Harry still sat silent.

“I understand if you're upset with me hero, but I didn't really plan this... not that I don't want to have a kid or three with you eventually, but I hoped to wait until you were out of Hogwarts... or had done the Dark Tosser in at least... not like this. Well? What the hell are you sitting there so silently for? Say something! Rage at me!” Tonks defiantly caught his eye.

Harry swallowed and scrambled to his feet. “I... I've got to go,” he rambled and ran out the door.

“Harry! Don't you dare –” Tonks shouted after him, but he was gone. “Fuck,” she said.

The door, which Harry had shut closed behind him, started to open again. Tonks nearly dove for her wand and yelled out, “Stupefy!”
The magic beam collided with a cloaked form, and Tonks heard it crumple to the ground. She stepped over and removed to reveal Hermione.

“Perfect, just bloody perfect,” Tonks said. “The father of my unborn child runs away at the news, and this psycho creeper was there to see it.”

Tonks pulled Hermione’s stunned form back in the room and sat down on her bed, beginning to cry.

Maybe five minutes later her door opened again and Harry stepped through.

“Tonks? Sorry I ran out, but –” Harry started saying.

“Haven't you done enough? I know I fucked up, but I didn't mean to,” Tonks cried bitterly.

Unnoticed by both, Hermione began to stir again.

“Oh... erm... I guess I messed up, too,” Harry said sheepishly. “Tonks... Nym...”

“What?!“ Tonks looked up to glare at him.

Harry dropped to one knee and produced a box from his back pocket. “Nymphadora Drusilla Tonks, will you marry me?” he asked, flipping it open to reveal a simple but beautiful ring.

Before Tonks could answer, a bump from across the room was heard. Hermione had fainted and slammed her head against the wall.
“Hermione? What is she doing here?” Harry looked in surprise at his long time friend as she fell to the floor.

“Ignore her, Harry,” Tonks said. Harry turned his head to face her and was met with a hard slap to the right side of his face.
“That is for running away when I told you I'm pregnant,” Tonks commented. She moved to slap him again and Harry winced as his left cheek now also stung.
“That one is for use of the names,” she clarified. He actually let out a whimper when Tonks raised both hands, but this time she used them to hold his face and leaned in to kiss him deeply.
“And that was for doing the right thing,” she said, a little flustered, after she released him.

“Does that mean... you accept?” Harry softly asked.

“Of course I accept, ya goof,” Tonks clarified. “I would love to marry you, Mr. Potter.” She held out her hand for him and trembling only a little, Harry slid the ring on her finger.

“Hope it's good... I wasn't sure, but...” he mumbled.

“I love it,” Tonks assured him. She held up her hand to inspect it visually when a groan from across the room revealed Hermione had started to wake up again.

“What is she doing here? Is that... my cloak?” Harry looked over and frowned.

“I bet it is, mister. Leave her to me, we're going to have a girl talk. Don't you have Quidditch to get to?” Tonks countered.

“Oh Merlin, Angelina will murder me!” Harry jumped up, leant back down to kiss Tonks again, and moved to go to the door.
“Nym... are you sure?” he asked before stepping outside.

“I am, hero. We can talk later, including about when and where you got this beautiful ring for me,” Tonks said, giving him a smile as she indicated the door. Harry rushed out and Tonks turned to face Hermione, who was holding her head and whimpering a little.
“You are in a lot of trouble, missy,” Tonks told her.
Harry rushed to the Quidditch field with broom in hand. A little flying might clear his head, he thought. He suppressed a groan as he entered the locker room and saw Angelina waiting for him, dressed in her team gear.

“You're late, Potter,” Angelina informed him. “For that, you get to deal with the fan-girls who are only here to ogle boys instead of trying out.”

“Why me? Can't the twins do it?” Harry whined.

“They can, but they, unlike you, were on time,” Angelina informed him. “Go change and meet me on the field ASAP. It looks like half the younger years turned out for this one.” She stuck out her tongue and turned to walk out.

Harry opened his locker and frowned when he found his Seeker gloves and other gear, but his team jersey was missing. “Great, Angie will kill me if I show up in my normal clothes,” he grumbled, then had an idea. “Dobby!” he called out.

The enthusiastic House Elf popped up to his right and immediately said, “The Great Harry Potter Sir is callings?”

“Hey again Dobby,” Harry gave the small Elf a smile. “Err... do you think you can find my Quidditch robes for me?”

Dobby nodded his head and popped out, only to re-appear almost instantly, with empty hands. “Dobby is findings them... but they is dirty,” he said, eyes downcast.

“Really? Where were they?” Harry asked.

“They is in Great Harry Potter Sir's Grangey's bed, Dobby thinks she is being sleepings in them and being naughty,” Dobby informed them. “They is having wet spots,” he added at Harry's blank look.
“Wha... urgh...” Harry looked away for a moment. “Can you... err... wash them? Thoroughly?” he asked.


“No, no, that's quite all right...” Harry sighed. “Thanks, Dobby. I'll just have to weather Angie's wrath.” Dobby popped out and Harry resignedly walked to the field, muttering. “Hermione, what the hell are you thinking... I feel I should spank you.”

---------

A slap resounded through Tonks's living quarters as the paddle met a reddening cheek once more. Hermione was tied up in magically conjured ropes, hovering a little above the ground as Tonks' magic lifted her. Her clothes were on the chair near the door, her wand on top of them, leaving her bare rear unprotected from the hovering paddle that was primed to spank her at Tonks's wand movements.

She would no doubt be protesting or crying out loudly, if not for the gag that had been stuffed in her mouth.

“Not so much fun is it, being the one naked with others watching? Well, you deserve it. And more. I am of half a mind to obliviate you back to before Hogwarts,” Tonks said in a heated tone. Hermione whimpered, although it was not clear if this was because of the words, or because of the spanking she was getting.

“But my hero won't let me, I think. For some reason he still considers you to be a friend, despite you stealing from him and spying on us.” Tonks inclined her head towards the chair near the door, on which Harry's invisibility cloak lay.

“And I do love him so much,” Tonks smiled softly, inspecting the ring on her hand.

The paddle continued to deliver spanks to alternating cheeks even without Tonks watching. A particularly loud whimper brought her attention back to the tied up witch.

“You overheard far too much, now. I don't know if I can trust you with the knowledge that Harry and I are going to have a baby soon or that he asked me to marry me. What's stopping you from running to Dumbledore?”
Hermione's slow rotation had brought her face back in view and she now loudly mumbled into the gag, as if to say something.

“Oh? You have something to say?” Tonks gave her wand a swish and the paddle stopped its descent to Hermione's right arse cheek at the same time the gag disappeared from her mouth.

“I... I won't tell,” Hermione sniffled. “Please... forgive me for spying on you two?”

“No, I don't think so,” Tonks scuffed. “Not yet, any way.”

“Please! Don't gag me again!” Hermione pleaded. “I... I'll take an oath not to tell! I'll swear fealty to you! Anything!”

“Let me think about it,” Tonks decided. She waved her wand and the gag re-appeared, and the paddle resumed its descent to Hermione's unprotected rear, landing with a smack.

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“Harry! Watch out!” Harry woke up from his daze to see a Bludger smack with full force against a bat straight in front of his face, placed there by Fred or George.

“Were you day-dreaming? Don't let Angie see it!” the Weasley twin shot him a smile and flew after the Bludger on his way to the other side of the field.

Harry chided himself. Being up in the air, ostensibly to watch the tryouts of the Chasers from above, had relaxed him so much that he had indeed started dreaming... dreaming about Nym. Nym who was pregnant. With his kid. He was going to be a father...

“Harry! What the hell is wrong with you today?” an annoyed Angelina flew up beside him.

“Nothing! I'm paying attention,” Harry lied.

“Oh really? Who did Ginny just pass the Quaffle to, then?” she tested him.
“Errr... that girl?” Harry pointed out a third year whose name he didn't recall.


“Look, I'm sorry, but –” Harry started to protest.

“Can it, Potter,” the dark skinned Chaser gave him an annoyed wave and flew back down.

Harry began to lower his broom towards the ground. Going back to Nym sounded like a better plan, he admitted. His mind was definitely not with the sport.

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“A – and I swear, on my magic, that I will not reveal what I discovered today,” Hermione said, her voice wavering. “Please, Tonks, let me down now?”

Tonks nodded and gave the girl a small push. Hermione let out a whimper as she started slowly spinning again in all directions, still hovering in the air.

“No, you can stay in place a little longer until I'm absolutely sure you've learned your lesson. I am going for lunch and see if I can find my Harry. When I come back I'll consider letting you down,” Tonks informed her.

Hermione's eyes widened in shock and she blurted out, “What? No! You have to stop this, I'm getting dizzy! And I took the oath and all! You can't just –”

Tonks gave her own wand a wave, and the gag re-appeared in Hermione's mouth. “You just hang around and I'll forgive you later,” Tonks quipped, then added a little maliciously: “The more you struggle, the more you get spanked. If I were you I'd just keep silent and think for now.” She gave the girl a meaningful glare and then walked out of her personal quarters and into the DADA classroom.
As soon as the door closed behind the departing metamorphmagus Hermione began to struggle to get free, but the moment she thought she might get her arms free, the paddle rose up from the floor and moved towards her rear. She froze her movements, and the paddle slowly descended back to the floor. Whimpering, she tried to ignore the feeling of nausea and hoped that at least the slow spinning would stop again soon, and she'd end up somewhat upright.

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Harry was half in a daze as he walked in the general direction of the Great Hall on his way back from the Quidditch field, his broom left in the dressing room for now, when he was suddenly pulled backwards.

He let out a startled, 'Hey!' as he disappeared out of the corridor and into an empty room.

“Gotcha, love,” Tonks beamed at him. Taking advantage of his surprise, she leant in to kiss him.

“Oh Nym,” Harry mumbled against her mouth. He wrapped his hands around her and slowly guided her to a school desk that stood nearby. Tonks sat down on top of it and Harry stepped between her legs, taking advantage of her new position to fully embrace her. She did the same, admiring his muscular torso as their tongues wrestled.

“You made me so happy, hero,” Tonks said once they released each other's mouths. “I love the ring... when and where did you get it?” She held out her hand, inspecting it on her finger again.

Harry beamed at her reaction. “Dobby got it for me... I sent him to Gringotts to get some Galleons to buy one with, I had it planned for the next time we got to the Alley, but he came back with that box. Apparently it is the same ring my grandfather Charlus used when he proposed to Dorea.

Tonks held up her hand and watched as the gold reflected the light from the window. “Well I'm glad he did... and that explains why it seems perfect for me. We Black witches demand the best, Mister,” she said, then stuck out her tongue.

“Just ask, and if it's in my power to provide, I will,” Harry said solemnly. The effect was only spoiled by Tonks giggling slightly as he tried to get all serious.

“In that case... I could use a foot rub,” she joked, sticking out her right foot. To her surprise, Harry grabbed it and began taking off her shoe. “Hey, I was joking,” she protested.
“You asked for it, you'll get it,” Harry cheekily said, and brushed his fingers over the underside of her now only sock-clad foot.

“Harreee! Don't! You know I'm ticklish there!” Tonks pleaded.

“Oh really?” Harry asked, exaggeratedly raising an eye-brow and tickled her again. “And here?”

“Harry! Oh!” Tonks wriggled, but her foot was stuck. “Don't you dare!”

Harry stuck out his tongue to her and wriggled his fingers under her foot.

The high-pitched laughter would have scared off even a Banshee, had Tonks not cast a silencing spell on the door before intercepting her man.

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With most of the Hogwarts student body and professors in the Great Hall or outside for lunch, Luna had the corridors to herself as she skipped through them.

“Hello Professor Tockwortle,” she halted in front of a portrait of a man wearing sixteenth Century clothes, who was dozing a little.

“Ah, Luna was it?” the old instructor yawned. “Good to see you so happy, my girl. Good news?”

“Oh, the most wonderful. All my socks and shoes and knickers have re-appeared in my chest today,” Luna informed him. “I think the Nargles must have brought them back.”

“Nargles? I think it more likely to be House Elves,” the painting gently corrected her.

Luna's eyes turned even wider. “Do you mean, that the House Elves and Nargles are in it together?” she asked, her voice showing her excitement.
“Errr... no... that's not what I meant, but –”

“Thank you, Professor! Today is the day I will trap one, I am sure!” Luna interrupted him, gave him a curtsy, and skipped away again.

The painting watched after her as best as he could from his frame. “Odd girl,” he remarked to himself. “Very polite and intelligent, but very odd.”

Luna halted in front of a door. She was at the DADA classroom, she knew, but the last time she had been in there, there had not been any Nargles. Maybe this time though?

The door was locked, but that was nothing an unlocking charm could not correct. The classroom was empty of Nargles or Wrackspurts or Heliotropes, though.

“Now, if I were a Nargle, where would I be?” Luna mused aloud. She knelt under a few desks, inspecting them, but found nothing except a forgotten quill tip.

Then she noticed a small whimper coming from the door behind the teacher's desk. “A whimper? But it is the wrong season for Whimpering Wallabis, not to mention the wrong continent,” Luna said softly. ‘Never speak too loud, or you might scare an invisible animal’, her father often said.

On tip toes she made her way over to the door and tried the handle, finding it locked again.

“Now what is whimpering behind not one locked door, but two?” Luna tilted her head and looked at the door again. The door did not change, which satisfied her. Again she took her wand from behind her ear and aimed it at a lock, casting 'Alohamora'. The door opened, and Luna stepped through.

“Oh, hello, Hermione Granger. Are you hunting for Nargles as well?” Luna didn't appear surprised at all at the sight in front of her. Hermione was still tied up, rotating softly around and upside down and was gagged. Not to mention she was naked and had a red glowing bottom. Luna didn't need to wonder long exactly why Hermione's rear was red, as the moment she entered the room Hermione began to struggle and a paddle rose from the floor to deliver some hard spanks to the tied up girl.

Hermione looked at Luna with slightly teared eyes and yelled something in her gag.

Luna blinked slowly. “I have to admit, Hermione Granger, that I never tried this method of catching Nargles before. I don't believe they are attracted to naked girls, or I would surely have
caught one before. We did an all nude hike through Sweden only two years ago, at least until the nice Muggle pleasemen came and took my daddy away,” she informed the trapped brunette.

Hermione yelled something else in her gag, shaking her head as she did so. Luna frowned. “Oh, don't worry, Hermione Granger. Daddy explained to them what was going on and they let him go. We are not allowed to do more nude hiking though.”

Hermione struggled some more and the paddle rose up from the floor again. Hermione's eyes went wide and she tried to freeze in place – not easy if you were tied up and rotating – while Luna just looked at the scene.

“Oh, now I understand,” Luna told Hermione. “It is all part of some ritual, right?”

Hermione whimpered as the paddle spanked her hard on her left arse cheek. Before it could spank her again, Luna reached out and grabbed it. She gave her own thigh a small spank with it and let out a yelp, dropping it to the floor. “Ow! That feels very uncomfortable,” she told Hermione.

Hermione nodded and whimpered some more.

“Really?” Luna's eyes went wide again. “Oh, okay then. If you want me to leave you alone, I'll –”

'Mmmm! Mmmm!' Hermione protested, shaking her head. To her relief, when Luna had grabbed the paddle she seemed to have broken the spell on it, for it didn't rise up.

Luna blinked. “Well... okay, then,” she said, softly. She stepped closer to Hermione and grabbed her with both hands. Hermione let out a small sigh of relief through her gag as she stopped spinning and Luna gently rotated her so she was hovering right side up again. Although Luna didn't seem inclined to untie her yet.

Luna instead blushed as she still held Hermione by her sides. “I... I've never done this before,” she mumbled. “But, since you insist...”

Hermione was now the one with wide eyes as Luna knelt down in front of her, her mind racing to interpret what was happening. 'Oh Merlin, she's not going to–'
Hermione's train of thought derailed as a soft tongue licked across her exposed lower area, and a moan escaped from around the gag. No matter how degrading Tonks's torture had been to her, right now Hermione was one frustrated witch... and Luna seemed intent on relaxing her.

Someone entering the room now would almost not seen Luna as she was nearly completely hidden from view with Hermione's legs resting over her shoulders, at least until Hermione tried to clamp them close to pull the blonde in further. On and on Luna went, encouraged by Hermione's moans and seemingly erratic movements, until she screamed in her gag again, this time a scream of joy, not pain.

Flushing all over Luna got back on her feet, her face and fingers shining with the proof Hermione had really enjoyed her ministrations.

“Oh... that was so much nicer than I thought it'd be,” Luna said in her ethereal voice as she looked up and seemed to spot the gag in Hermione's mouth for the first time.

“Oh! Well that won't do,” Luna declared. Gently she reached for the cloth, and pulled it out of Hermione's mouth.

Hermione licked her lips and opened and closed her locked jaw a few times before focusing on the girl standing in front of her.

“Luna... just... what was that?” Hermione asked.

“That was a great start, don't you think?” Luna beamed at her. “Here, have a taste.” She leant in, and to her own surprise, Hermione realised she opened her mouth for the other girl's kiss. A small part of her realised she was tasting herself on the blonde's tongue, but that voice was increasingly getting more quiet while Luna's hands ran over her body.

“This was so much better to find than a Nargle,” the not-quite-all-there blonde said softly after breaking the kiss. “Hermione Granger?”

“Y – Yes, Luna?” Hermione was confused, embarrassed, happy, and more confused, all at the same time. She shook her head to clear it and watched the other girl intently.

“I would love to do this some more. And maybe you can tie me up and spank me, later?” Luna asked, blushing.

Hermione blinked and bit her lower lip. She focused on Luna's hopeful face and something inside her seemed to flip a mental switch. “Okay...” she agreed. “Let's go find a place we can be in private
then. And Luna... it's Hermione.”

“Oh thank you, Hermione,” Luna said as she beamed at her new friend. She stepped closer and gently lowered Hermione fully to the floor. The moment Hermione's somewhat unsteady feet touched the ground the hovering spell broke and the brunette witch staggered forwards as best as she could, still tied up. Luna giggled and then started to untie her.

-----

Having more or less forgotten about the tied up girl halfway across the school, Tonks and Harry were heavily flushed as well as they re-dressed. The tickling session had turned into more and even though it had been quick and dirty – literally, in the somewhat abandoned classroom – both felt it had been worth it.

“Shall we send a note with Hedwig then?” Harry spoke up.

“Huh?”

“Your parents. Shall we send Hedwig with a note?” Harry clarified.

Tonks shuddered. “Oh, Merlin and Morgana combined... mum and dad will kill me,” she whined.

“Nah... they love you, Nym. Just like I do,” Harry said, embracing her.

Tonks relaxed in the embrace, then broke it off with a determined look. “Nothing to it, mister. Tomorrow I'm sneaking us out of the school – I'll make up some business with Bonesy if I must – and you and I are going to have to face up to mum and dad in person,” she informed him.

Harry was silent a bit, and then nodded. “Okay... at least if they kill us, we'll go together, right?”

Tonks looked at him to see if he was serious, then saw his eyes glisten. She let out a small giggle that was met by Harry's laugh.
No matter what, they would face their problems together.
Chapter 24

Tonks was surprised at not finding Hermione in her quarters when she and Harry returned there, but not too worried. Even though she knew stripping and spanking the peeping Tom no doubt crossed a line, it was very unlikely Hermione would talk to Dumbledore. Even without her oath.

As they sat there writing a note for Nym’s parents, someone knocked on the classroom door, which caused a soft alarm charm to go off. Tonks went into the classroom to see who was calling on her while Harry remained hidden in her own quarters, at least until she called him over.

Standing there facing them in the doorway was a flush-faced Hermione with Luna waiting further down the corridor.

“P – Professor, may I please enter?” Hermione asked, then looked over her shoulder to Luna, who nodded, Tonks saw.

“Come on in, and you as well if you like, Miss Lovegood,” Tonks said. Hermione took a few awkward steps inside while Luna simply darted inside. The lithe blonde leant against the wall whereas Hermione stood directly in front of Tonks, her hands folded behind her back.

“H– Harry? Please, come,” Hermione pleaded. Harry looked at her questioningly but walked up and took Tonks' hand, figuring Luna could be trusted with their secret.

“Luna... Luna said, I should apologize,” Hermione started. Luna coughed softly, and Hermione grimaced. “I mean, I should apologize. To you both. Harry... I have been acting horribly, and it wasn't all because of Dumbledore's spell, I stole your clothes, and used your cloak to spy on you both.”

Harry started to say something, but Hermione silenced him with pleading eyes. “Please, let me continue. Professor Tonks... I was wrong to spy on you both and to make you worry about telling anyone else, like Dumbledore. Please, can you two forgive me?” She looked back again at Luna, who was smiling.

Harry and Tonks looked at each other, then Harry nodded. Tonks spoke first: “Okay, Hermione. I will forgive you... but this was the last time, understood?”

“Same for me. You're still my friend, and I would hate to have to lose you over this,” Harry confirmed.
“Oh Harry!” Hermione rushed forward to hug her friend but literally ran into Tonks’ arm.

“I don’t trust you enough, yet,” Tonks glared at her.

Hermione started to splutter, “But... but... but I will be good! I just wanted to hug Harry, you can’t just –”

“Hermi – o – neee, you're nagging,” Luna said, drawing out the brunette’s name. “What did I say about that?”

Hermione flushed again. Looking down, she muttered, “Sorry, Luna.”

“Professor, if you'll excuse us both? My girlfriend and I need to have another talk, one that will probably end with both of us undressed,” Luna said to Tonks. “Bye, Harry. Don't worry about Mr. and Mrs. Tonks, just be yourself,” she added. Luna took Hermione's hand and pulled her out of the classroom.

“Did... did she just say what I think she said?” Harry asked Tonks.

Tonks stared at the now closed door, then began to laugh. Infected by her amusement, Harry joined her.

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“Minerva, I'll need to borrow Mr. Potter for the day,” Tonks spoke up at the breakfast table. It being Sunday, many of the faculty were taking the chance to sleep in, the Headmaster among them.

“Oh? May I ask what for, Tonks?” Professor McGonagall asked her.

“Gringotts business, Minerva. They asked for Harry specifically, and I thought it was best if he was protected out there... things being what they are,” Tonks said conspiringly.
“I see. Has this been cleared with the Headmaster?”

“Everyone who needs to know does, Minerva,” Tonks answered her. Technically true... they felt Dumbledore didn't need to know, after all, and he didn't.

“I see no problems with that, then,” said McGonagall. “Will you be back before the end of the day?”

“I'll try, if we run late for some reason, I'll make sure Harry is kept safe. We should be back in time for Monday classes.”

“Very well then. Simply tell Mr. Filch you two are allowed to leave. Please tell Mr. Potter that this does not mean he gets a pass from his homework, though!”

“I'll make sure to tell him,” Tonks said, smiling at her former teacher and current colleague.

She made her excuses to the rest of the assembled staff, happy that both Dumbledore and that foul Umbridge woman were not there, and walked over the Gryffindor table.

Harry was sitting there eating alone, both Ron and Hermione being absent, and many of the other Gryffindors were still keeping their distance from him.

“Ready, Harry?” Tonks asked. Harry nodded, wiped his mouth, and got up. Tonks looked him over approvingly, he had skipped his school robes for today – all students were allowed to, during the weekend – and was wearing some of the better clothes she had picked out for him over the summer.

Tonks walked to the school front gates, Harry following. Bypassing Argus Filch was no problem with a teacher present and once they made it to the gates and in apparition range, Tonks hugged Harry close. With the usual crack of apparition, they disappeared from Hogwarts grounds.

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Harry and Tonks re-materialized in the beautiful foyer of the Tonks house by tripping over each
other's and their own feet and made an immense ruckus as they collapsed over each other and on the ground.

“Well, if you two are quite finished,” a sarcastic voice sounded.

Harry looked past his girlfriend to see Andromeda Tonks standing there, a smirk on her face. “He... hello, Mrs. Tonks,” he said. He scrambled to his feet and held his hand out for Nym to get up as well.

“Nymphadora dear, always nice to see you,” Andromeda said. “Although I see you are still a klutz. And hello Harry, you are always welcome here,” she gave Harry a smile.

“Muuuum...” Nym whined. Harry sheepishly grinned. “Err... thanks. Is Mr. Tonks at home as well?”

“Yes, Ted is in the library, follow me,” Andromeda said. “I must say, Nymphadora, I was quite surprised to get a note from you last night asking if you could visit with some important news. You haven't lost your job already, have you?”

“Muuum!” Nym looked annoyed, at least until Harry took her hand and squeezed it softly. Her expression softened. “No mother, it is nothing like that.”

“Nymphadora dear! Harry! Good to see you both!” Ted stood up from his comfortable chair and greeted them both as they entered the room he was in.

“Hi daddy,” Nym said, at the same time as Harry said, “Hi, Mr. Tonks.”

“Well now, shall we adjourn for some tea before you tell us what this is all about?” Andromeda proposed.

A little later the four sat at a nicely set table, tea cups and biscuits in front of them. Harry noticed Nym was obviously struggling to find some way to open the conversation, so he decided to rescue her.

“Erm, Mr. Tonks, Mrs. Tonks,” he started, only to be interrupted immediately.

“Err.. right. Anyway, as I was saying, erm, you know, erm, Nym and I are... erm... dating?” Harry fidgeted with the collar of his shirt as he spoke, it suddenly seemed to be three sizes too small.

“I was aware, yes,” Andromeda answered. Ted just nodded.

Harry took a deep breath and continued fighting to get the words out. “Okay. Good. Erm. Well... I... she... that is...”

“Oh for goodness' sake,” Andromeda muttered, then rounded on her daughter: “Nymphadora, rescue your beau! What did you two come here for that required us both to be at home?”

Nym froze in her seat momentarily, before blurting out, “Mum, dad, Harry asked me marry him!”

“I see,” Andromeda said in a neutral tone. “Well, that explains the ring – oh yes dear, your disillusionment skill always failed for me ever since you were a Hogwarts student – but aren't you very young? You, Harry, specifically?”

“I must agree with Droma,” Ted spoke up for the first time. “I appreciate that you make our Nymphadora happy, Harry, but you're what, fourteen now?”

“Fifteen,” Harry corrected him.

“Right, fifteen. Still, that is awfully young, even if you both were Pure-bloods, which you aren't. Wouldn't it be better to wait a few years?” Ted sounded friendly, but a little edge was in his voice.

“Mum... dad... I agree, we both agree, but...” Nym started saying, but was interrupted again.

“Oh dear. Ted, look at our little Nymphadora.”
“What?” Ted raised an eyebrow, looking at his fidgeting daughter, holding her younger boyfriend’s hand.

“You're pregnant, aren't you?” Andromeda blurted out.

“What!” Ted started to rise from his seat, but his wife's hand on his shoulder kept him down.

“Answer me, dear,” Andromeda demanded.

“Oh lord... yes... yes mum, I am pregnant,” Nym admitted.

“Well now, that explains why you want to get married. Congratulations dear, but I think you and I need to talk in private while Ted takes Harry to meet Betsy.”

“Betsy?” Harry spoke up.


“Who is Betsy?” Harry asked, getting to his feet. Still seated, Nym was scrunching her face trying to remember, when she suddenly paled and called out, “Daddy, no!”

“Betsy is my shotgun, boy. Come along before I have to get angry,” Ted grumbled. Harry gave Nym a partially panicked look, but followed the man outside.

Nym looked at her mother. “Mum! Dad isn't really going to –”

“Don't be silly dear, he's just going to scare Harry,” Andromeda cut in. “Now, tell me how you got pregnant.” She took her seat again directly across from her daughter.

“But... but Harry...” Nym looked a bit panicked outside, but at least she hadn't heard a gun shot... yet.
“I am waiting, Nymphadora,” Andromeda reminded her.

“What the hell do you want me to say? Yes, I've been shagging Harry for a few months now, but I was on the Potion?” Nym glared at her mother.

“Mind your language, you are not too old to go over my lap,” Andromeda glared back. “And of course I know you two have been having sex. I nearly walked in on you both in your little studio over the summer, remember? No, what I mean is, how could you be so irresponsible? I love you Nymphadora dearest, and I always hoped you'd give me beautiful grandchildren to dote on one day, but couldn't you at least have waited until he got his O.W.L.s?”

“Muuum... I swear, I was on the Potion. I do not understand why it failed. It's not supposed to,” Nym protested. “And yes... I know we're too young. But... but I'm going to be a mother... and Mrs. Potter... Merlin, why must you be so difficult? I was hoping for some support!” Her eyes started to become filled with tears.

“Oh, Nymmie,” Andromeda said soothingly. She stood up and walked around the table to hug her daughter from behind. “Of course your father and I will support you. We love you very much,” she said.

“Thanks mum,” Nym said in a smallish voice. “So... I guess I need to get married soon, right?”

“How far along are you, dear?” Andromeda asked. Nym was showing a tiny bump, but only someone who really paid close attention to her would notice.

“Merlin... I have no idea. The school Healer said about two months, which means I should be due around May or so...” Tonks trailed off.

Andromeda did a mental calculation. “Okay. That means you, dear, are going to marry your husband this Yule holiday. Any later, and you will be too obviously pregnant to fit in a wedding dress. We'll have to deal with wagging tongues as they come... am I correct in assuming your Harry has the means to support you both?”

“Mum! Of course he does... he is the last Potter, and even if he weren't, I have a steady job.”

“Well, not for much longer I think, you will need to find a replacement teacher for your last few
months at Hogwarts. And no more Dark Wizard catching either, you have a new life to think of now,” Andromeda said. “First things first. I am setting up an appointment with a proper obstetrician at St. Mungo's for you for as soon as is possible, and I expect you both here again next weekend so we can begin to plan your wedding.”

“Mum... you're taking this awfully calm,” Nym carefully said.

“Oh don't worry dear. I will 'freak out' later, when have the time for it. And don't think you're out of trouble either, if you were still living here, I would ground you until you are due,” her mother answered her.

Nym was about to say something in reply, when a loud gunshot came from outside.

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Back at Hogwarts, Dumbledore decided to spend the day in his office. He didn't want to risk running into Professor Umbridge until he knew exactly how to handle her, and he trusted in McGonagall to run the school for him. She usually did anyway.

Professor Umbridge was fuming in her personal quarters. Minister Fudge might have rescued her from persecution, she knew the real reason she was not in Azkaban right now was that the blood quill had not been found. And since she hadn't had the chance to hide it before that Potter boy called the Aurors on her, someone else must have found it. Her mind was going overtime trying to figure out who might have taken it, and why. None of the conclusions she came to were good in the long run.

In the Gryffindor dorms, Ron was wondering where Harry and Hermione were. Sure, they had drifted apart following the summer and he had a new circle of friends with Dean, Seamus, and some of the other Gryffs, but usually he at least saw them throughout the day. His thoughts were interrupted somewhat when he caught Lavender watching him curiously, and both teens blushed as they looked away.

Ginny was wondering the same, but she was a little smarter than her brother and remembered the Marauder's Map. A quick glance in Harry's dorm had told her that Harry and Tonks were nowhere to be found and she smiled as she assumed they had a pleasant day elsewhere. As for Hermione,
her dot was overlapping with that of Luna Lovegood's in an out of the way corridor near the Ravenclaw dorms where no classrooms were in use. For a moment Ginny wondered if that was worth investigating, but then Victoria, one of her friends, called from downstairs to see if she wanted to have some fun. Ginny paid it no further mind.

—

Luna was finding that she enjoyed the thought of having a girlfriend who was a closet submissive. Hermione had her hands tied behind her back with her own school tie as she stood in the middle of the room, her legs slightly parted and her face flushed. Luna thought Hermione was beautiful, standing there naked and trembling, as she directed a feather with a levitating charm as it brushed past Hermione's erogenous zones. Soon, she knew, Hermione would no longer be able to keep silent and would call out and she would have to 'punish her'.

One look at the brunette was enough to tell an onlooker, if there was any, that Hermione definitely did not object and in fact was only prolonging the 'torture' because it felt so good... she was looking forward to see how Luna would punish her this time. Even though she could honestly say she had had no interest in girls before, something about the inventive and really odd younger girl drove her mad and she couldn't, wouldn't, let the small voice that objected drive her away.

An “Ahn,” escaped from her lips as the feather tickled her extended clit once again. Luna's eyes widened and a huge smile appeared on her face as she heard Hermione give in. It was playtime again.
Chapter 25

In the Tonks' extensive back garden Nym stood glaring at her father, her hands on her hips. "Daddy! How could you!" she accused him.

Ted grinned, picking the shotgun up from where Harry had dropped it when the unexpected kick had thrown him to the ground. One moment Ted was telling him to lead the target a little when aiming for the white disk and the next thing he knew he was lying on his back maybe a yard away from where he was standing previously, with his shoulder hurting like hell.

Ted started to laugh out loud as Nym rushed to her fallen fiancé. "Quite a kick there, eh, Harry? Don't worry, you'll get used to it," Ted told him, a grin on his face.

Nym glared at her father as she helped Harry back to his feet. "Every single time, daddy. And you wonder why I never take someone home."

"You could have warned me," Harry complained. His shoulder hurt, and he had hit his head when he had been thrown to the floor.

"Sure, but what's the fun in that? Want to try again?" Ted had reloaded the gun and offered it to the younger man.

"No!" Nym cut in. "Come, Harry, I'm going to take you up to my old room and see if you need any treatment," she informed him, taking his hand.

"Erm... okay," Harry mumbled as he was dragged back inside.

"You know they're going to shag under your roof, right, Teddybear?" Andromeda snaked her arms around her husband as she embraced him from behind.

"I was trying not to think of that, thank you very much," Ted grumbled.

"Did I do bad?" Andromeda started playing with his shirt.

"Minx," Ted breathed out. "Let me unload Betsy and put her back away and I'll join you, okay?"

Andromeda's smile was all the answer he needed.

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"You have quite the vocal range, Nymphadora honey," Andromeda commented.

Nym spluttered, spraying the tea she had just swallowed all over the table – and Harry, who was unfortunate enough to have her looking at him just then.

"Next time, don't forget the silencing charms hmm?" Andromeda smirked, casually waving her wand to dry the table and her daughter's suitor.

"Mum! Please?" Nym and Harry were both blushing, while her mother looked extremely pleased with herself.

"At least I can trust Harry will be able to keep you satisfied. Good, otherwise I would have had to ask your father to give him some pointers," her mother continued.
“Droma, stop teasing the kids,” Ted cut in as he walked back inside.

“Thank you, daddy,” Nym said with relief.

“Always spoiling my fun,” Andromeda said with a small pout but then she got a serious expression back as she focused on Harry. “Now Harry, I am pleased to see you at least remembered to give my daughter a ring, but have you already met with the goblins?”

“Erm, no, do I need to?” Harry asked.

Andromeda rolled her eyes. “Do they teach you nothing at that school of yours anymore? As the Head of House Potter, you need to formally declare your intent to marry and of course submit to the tests.”

“What tests?” Harry and Nym asked at the same time, smiling as they realised this.

“The usual, any checks for love potions, the Imperius, binding vows, and so on,” Ted answered for his wife.

“Why on earth is that needed?” Nym wondered.

“Isn’t it obvious? Nymphadora, your beau is Harry Potter. As in the Potter family who holds a seat on the Wizengamot,” Andromeda said, rolling her eyes.

“Wait, I have a seat in government? But I’m fifteen!” Harry blurted out.

“Yes dear, you are, but as the Head of House Potter you will be eligible to take it up when you turn seventeen... or get married,” his future mother-in-law informed him.

“Wow,” was all Harry had to say to that. “Erm... okay, I guess that's good... but what does that have to do with the goblins testing me?”

“Harry, obviously they need to make sure you are not being controlled. Once we're... married... I'll be able to act as your proxy, after all,” Nym realised.

“Exactly,” Andromeda looked pleased her daughter got it. “So, Harry, how do you feel about a trip to Gringott’s?”

“Now? But I don't have an appointment!” Harry protested.

“No need, goblins work 24/7, when money is involved. Nymmie, take my future son-in-law upstairs and get him dressed up as good as possible – yourself, too. He needs to make a good impression,” Ted said.

“And don't jump his bones dear, you can have sex when we get back,” Andromeda added.

Loudly protesting a whiny “Mum!” , Nym and Harry disappeared upstairs.

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“Mr. Potter here to see the inheritances and contracts department,” Nym spoke up as they came to the front of the small queue of a teller’s at the goblin bank. Luckily her parents had decided they could handle it themselves, so at least she would not be embarrassed further today.

“Wait here,” the goblin peered down at them and then with an annoyed huff got off his high chair and walked off.
“Erm... okay,” Harry said, looking at Nym for support. She just shrugged.

A few minutes later the teller goblin re-appeared, looking at them with an annoyed expression. He reached up on his desk and put a plate saying 'Closed'. Some of the people who were in line behind Harry and Nym started to protest, leading to the goblin smiling a toothy grin at them and saying, “You can wait at the next counter.” He looked pleased with himself to be able to inconvenience the wizards and witches as they had no choice but to obey, then turned to Harry and Nym and said, “Follow me, humans.”

Making surprisingly good speed for such a short creature he lead them through the bank's back doors down a corridor that was at a slight incline, then turned a few corners seemingly at random before they ended up at an unlabelled, unremarkable door. “Your manager is waiting inside. Now stop wasting my time and get in there,” he snarled at them.

“Yeah, thank you, buddy,” Nym mumbled as they stepped inside.

Another goblin sat inside, glaring at them when they entered “Finally decided to answer our summons, did you?”

Harry, startled, took a small step back. “Err... sorry? I didn't realise I had to hurry...”

“You humans always waste our time,” the goblin said, still sounding annoyed. “Sit down and listen,” he indicated two wooden chairs that looked very uncomfortable. As Harry and Nym sat down they realised that the goblin's desk was placed on a kind of plateau, so he could look down on them.

“What is your name, sir?” Harry asked, trying to remain polite.

“None of your business. You may address me as Account Manager,” the goblin nearly snarled, then picked up a knife. Instantly, Nym's posture stiffened and she nearly whipped out her wand, then saw the goblin smirk and actually give a small nod.

“You mate has good reflexes, Mr. Potter. Cut yourself with the knife and leave a drop on it. I need to confirm your identity before we continue,” the goblin said, sliding the knife forward on the desk.

Harry did as asked, keeping his expression neutral as he drew blood on his left thumb, then re-placed the knife on the desk and slid it back.

The goblin smeared the blood on some parchment, then for the first time looked pleased as it apparently confirmed Harry was indeed Harry. “What is your relationship to Sirius Black?” he asked without warning.

Harry breathed in sharply and looked at Nym. She squeezed his right hand in support. “Sirius Black is my godfather, why?” Harry answered. Saying more could incriminate him as Sirius was still – despite Amelia's efforts – a wanted criminal, right?

“And have you spoken to him recently?” his account manager prompted. Seeing Harry was hesitant to answer, he barked out a laugh, sounding very much like a hyena, Harry thought. “Relax, human. We don't care about who your Ministry decides to persecute or not... just answer the question.”

“We are in regular contact, yes,” Harry admitted. “I spent part of the summer with him. Why?”

“That is in order then,” the goblin said, marking something on a piece of paper that Harry and Nym
could not see.
“In a few minutes the Potion will be ready and brought here. You will drink it, then Gringott's
business for the day will be concluded. You have until then to bother me with your own needs,”
the goblin told him.

“What? What is this about? What Potion?” Harry demanded.

“You will learn when you need to,” the goblin dismissed him. “And a standard Willpower
Draught. If you are not a weakling who is controlled by others, nothing will happen when you
drink it. Gringott's needs to make sure you are capable of making decisions,” the goblin smirked.

“What happens if erm... I am under control?” Harry wanted to know.

“Nothing pleasant,” the goblin said, looking pleased. “And your time is running out.”

“Err... right.” Harry frowned, not happy with how little he was being told, then remembered why
they came in the first place. “Account Manager, it is my intent to m– to marry Nym Tonks here,
come Yule. Under inheritance law, I request you confirm I am doing so of my own free will,” he
stated.

“And sign such officially, so that the Potter inheritance will not be negatively affected,” Nym
added, since Harry forgot that part.

“Right, that,” Harry agreed.

“Fine, since you're getting the Potion anyway,” his account manager agreed. He rummaged in a
drawer, then pulled out a roll of parchment and slid it to the other side of the desk.
“Sign this, both of you,” he told them.

“I'll read it first,” Harry countered, getting a smirk in reply.

Quickly he glanced through it and found it to be a document declaring that the signing parties had
decided to get married within a year of giving their signature, and that the third party (Harry
correctly assumed this to be their account manager) had confirmed the husband was not being
controlled by potions or charms.

“Wait, it only checks if the husband is not controlled? What about the witch?” Nym asked.

“Take it up with your Ministry, this garbage is theirs,” the account manager said. “They only care
about wizards not being controlled.”

“Sexist backwards a-holes,” Nym grumbled. “Come on, Harry, let's sign.”

Silently the goblin slid a dark looking quill forward, with no ink. Harry eyed it warily. “A blood
quill?”

“I am impressed,” the goblin said, his teeth showing as he smiled. “Not many humans recognise
these... where did you see one, human?”

“Never mind,” Harry declined to answer. If the goblin was not telling him anything he didn't 'need
to know', neither would he. He signed his name on the first spot quickly, then handed Nym the
quill. She, too signed, then the goblin took the scroll back.

“How long until the Potion–” Harry started to ask. Just then the door opened and a young looking
goblin entered holding a goblet.
“On the desk, Anklebiter, quick!” his account manager ordered.

“Yes, uncle,” *Anklebiter* said, placing it down, then disappearing.

“Was that your nephew?” Harry asked.

The goblin looked annoyed again. “Just drink the Potion, human. Do not concern yourself with Gringott's matters you have no business with.”

“Right... bottom's up, I guess,” Harry took the goblet and looked at the contents. It looked a little like pea soup, if pea soup were bubbling, and had occasional red flashes occur inside it. Cringing at the foul odour, he swallowed the contents in a single gulp.

Nym looked at him with worry in her eyes as he grimaced, but nothing happened except that the account manager took the blood quill in his own claw, signed the scroll, then rolled it up and placed it in a desk drawer.

“Well? What are you two still doing here?” he glared at them after a few seconds.

“Err... are we done then?” Harry asked, confused.

“Obviously,” the goblin snarled. “Get out, I have more work to do.”

Harry and Nym got up and both decided saying anything more was useless, as the goblin wasn't even looking at them.

“Nasty critters with worse manners than the offspring of Goyle and a mountain troll,” Harry said under his breath to Nym as he opened the door for her, only to come face to face with the young goblin from before.

“Err... hi, Anklebiter was it?” he quickly said, as Nym stifled a giggle.

“Follow me,” Anklebiter told them, and quickly they were back in the lobby, then outside.

“That was weird,” said Harry.

“That's goblins for you,” Nym agreed. “They hate our guts, but the treaties make it so they can't actually hurt us or betray us until we act in bad faith first. Come on, mister, we're going to share a sundae at Florean Fortescue's, and you're buying.”

“Oh, am I now?” Harry said with a grin, letting himself get pulled down the alley.

“Yup... you're my rich boy toy after all,” Nym sounded very pleased with herself.

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In the rather empty ancestral Black home at Grimmauld Place, Sirius looked up as a postage owl entered through the open library window and landed in front of him. He took the letter and gave the owl a treat.

“Fan mail from your Azkaban girlfriend?” Remus Lupin asked, walking inside.

“Piss off, Moony,” Sirius said, grinning. “Nah, goblin post. Harry came by and has had the Willpower Draught, so he's now officially accepted as my heir, should something happen.”

Remus smiled slightly. “Have they told him?”
Sirius shrugged. “I doubt it. I'll tell the kid over the Yule holidays. Better him than that Malfoy brat, right?”

Remus frowned in distaste at a memory of the blond ponce. “You can say that again. Still, you're not interested in even trying for an heir of your own?”

“Moony, even if Amelia manages to get me trial and I am freed... that's not going to happen,” Sirius said, sounding a little sad.

“Why not? You still... like girls, don't you?” Remus asked.

Sirius barked out a laugh, “Like them and love them, mate. But no puppies for me in the future... long-time Dementor exposure has ruined that for me.”

Remus winced. “I didn't know,” was all he could say.

“Yeah, it's kept a secret... guess I'll have to make do with being the crazy loveable uncle for any of Harry's kids... or yours,” the dog animagus said, grinning.

“Wha? Mine?” Remus spluttered. “Padfoot, you cannot be serious.” As Sirius got a smile as if Christmas had come early, Remus let out a huge groan as Sirius started to pick up on his favourite – and much overused – pun: “Serious? Moony, I am always Sirius...”
Chapter 26

Chapter Twenty-Six

Someone knocking on the door to her private quarters interrupted the long-serving Transfiguration instructor and Head of Gryffindor from her copy of Transfiguration Monthly. “Enter,” she called. The door opened to reveal her young colleague. “Miss Tonks, so you made it back today after all?”

Tonks had a small smile on her face as she stepped inside. “Yes, it went smoothly, Minerva.”

“Good, good. Would you like some tea?” McGonagall put a bookmark in her magazine and picked up her wand to summon the tea set from the other room.

“Thanks. Erm... I... I've got to tell you something.”

McGonagall looked at the younger woman quizzically. “I'm all ears, dear,” she prompted her after Tonks remained silent a bit too long.

“Oh Merlin,” Tonks muttered under her breath. “Minerva... I can't keep teaching after the holidays.”

“Why on earth not? The students love you! Is it the Ministry?” McGonagall looked concerned as she poured in the tea, then handed over a cup to her colleague.

“It... it's not that. Min... I'm pregnant.”

“Oh. Oh my.” McGonagall looked closely at her, then let out a sigh. “Well, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed. But you're right, dear. It's not advisable to use magic so close to your due date... when are you due?”

Tonks scrunched her face, thinking. “Second week of May, the Healer said.”
McGonagall nodded. “It happened over the summer then? I thought you had been seeing someone... you seem happy. I assume he knows?”

Tonks nodded, a small smile re-appearing. “Oh yes, he knows. I... he... we're going to get married over the holidays.”

“Congratulations my dear!” McGonagall rose to hug Tonks, then sat back down next to her. “I expect an invitation, understood. Who is your husband to be then? Do I know him?”

“Ah. Well... erm. That... that's part of why I came to see you.”

“Speak up dear, you can tell me,” McGonagall encouraged her.

“Please don't think too badly of me, okay?” Tonks pleaded.

“Why are you so worried? It's not... oh Merlin. It's not Black, is it?”

Tonks looked affronted. “Sirius? Gah! Of course not! He's... he's my cousin! Well, once removed, but still...”

“Okay, not Sirius. Good... at least you have some taste,” McGonagall quipped. “Who then?”

“Harry...”

“Harry? Harry who?” McGonagall tried to recall meeting any Harry's over the past few years, but only name kept coming to mind. “Don't tell me it's...”

“It is. You see the problem, Minerva? I... I didn't know how to tell you, with Dumbledore and the Ministry and all and –”

McGonagall leapt to her feet, pointing an accusing finger at Tonks, “Are you out of your damn mind? He is a child! You... you're old enough to be –”
Tonks flushed in a mixture of shame and anger as she, too, got to her feet. “He's only six years younger than I am, and he's far more mature than you think! Don't... don't just accuse me of...”

“Well, what am I supposed to think!” McGonagall sighed, sitting back down. “In Maeve's name, Tonks, what were you thinking?”

Tonks sat down slowly. “I wasn't, not really... but I swear, I was being careful. I... I don't understand how I got pregnant.”

“Surely you're old enough to know by now. I know the standard of education has dropped some, but not by that much,” McGonagall joked.

“Ha ha. No, I mean, I was on the Potion... it's supposed to be fool proof,” Tonks defended herself.

“Well. Well. What's done is done, I suppose... does... does anyone else know?” McGonagall reached for Tonks hand and took it in hers, to comfort her some.

“Sirius knows, and so does Amelia. Amelia Bones, my boss. And some of Harry's friends found out. And my parents... that's who we went to see today.”

“Not Albus?”

“I... we... We don't know how much we can trust him,” Tonks admitted. “Some things just don't add up, in Harry's life. Minerva... did you know about Harry's home life?”

McGonagall paused a bit before answering, carefully. “I know he lives with his aunt and uncle, the Dursleys.”

“Right. But do you know what they're like?”

“I believe my words to Albus were, 'the worst kind of Muggles',” she admitted.
“A good way to put it,” Tonks said, her expression clouding over. “Harry won't be happy I tell you this, but he'll forgive me, you deserve to know. They abused him, Minerva. And Dumbledore knew. All of the Order guards did. Remember how he pulled me off Harry watch when I raised my concerns?”

“I... I find that hard to believe,” McGonagall said, her expression stricken. “Albus is a good man, Tonks. I know him through and through, and he is decidedly not dark!”

“Minerva, I am not saying Dumbledore is evil. Far from it... he tries to do good. The question though is, good for who?”

“The Greater Good!” McGonagall blurted out.

“Exactly... The Greater Good. Or, in German, 'Zum Größeren Wohl'. Remember whose slogan that was, Minerva?”

McGonagall paled. “Grindlewald...”

“Gellert Grindlewald... youth friend of Albus Dumbledore. Like I said, Minerva, I don't think he's evil... but what Dumbledore considers 'Greater Good' is not exactly what I feel is best.”

“I... I need to think,” McGonagall said, looking ashen.

“Of course... I'm sorry for springing this on you, but you see why I don't want Dumbledore to know, right?”

“Yes, yes... if things are as you say they are... oh, Merlin.”

“I'll try to get an Auror replacement for after Yule, Bonesy owes me a favour I think... you okay if I come back later, Minerva?”

“Go, go,” McGonagall just waved.
The tea was cooling off, forgotten.

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