There is a light that never goes out.

by Grumpymagizooligist

Summary

Newt has his demons, so many that he has given them names and job titles.  
Tina has her own Demons, they don't play well with others.  
How do you find where you fit in when the whole world has been turned upside down?  
Who can you trust?  
Newt and Tina try to make sense of the world after the Greater good has forced them to pick a side.

(edited in respect of clarity and to make easier to read thanks to my Beta SaraB)

Notes

I have not written anything in 10 plus years, please be nice, I'm breaking myself back into the habit.  
I appreciate any comments and if you have any prompts for me let me know
“Newt!”

A huge ball of energy nearly took him off his feet, knocking him back down a few steps. He had not been expecting it, so it took him a few moments to figure out that the ball of energy was, in fact, his assistant, Bunty.

“Oh, Newt you brought company...” Her voice trailed off as she looked from him to Theseus, her face showing nothing but concern.

“Best get inside … we have a lot to discuss, and my front stoop is not the best place for it.” He gestured toward the front hallway.

Bunty shot him a questioning look, eyes wide, “Newt?”

“Just...” he gestured. This wasn't the time. He felt exposed: the world right now was, by its existence, a threat...very real and very close.

He silently moved towards Bunty, who drew back to let his party enter the modest size flat.

Looking around, he half expected to see everything where he had left it in his haste. It seemed like a lifetime since he had last been within these walls: how could it only be a few days, how could everything change so dramatically, in such a small, insignificant amount of time?

He turned to look at his brother, nodding in the direction of his living room, Theseus moved towards the sofa, silently moving the pile of abandoned papers neatly with a silent flick of his wand. He was followed by Jacob, the empty look mirrored in both sets of eyes as they sunk down into the battered furniture.

Neither man had spoken a word since leaving Hogwarts grounds...not that any of them felt like talking much, but the two of them had walked without even looking where their feet were taking them.

Under orders to stay out of sight...and out of the ministry...Newt had been at a loss for where to go. His brother's house seemed the obvious choice, but Theseus was in no fit state to mingle with muggles and memories, and Jacob looked as if he was in no fit state for anything. Newt had never seen anyone look so lost. So where was he supposed to take them all?

“Take them to that wonderful little flat of yours! We all know that you have more enchantments and spells protecting your little menagerie, that even I find it difficult to find you sometimes. Take them all...yes, even your muggle friend, Newt.” Dumbledore had prompted.

And so that was what they did. Newt had wrangled them all to his house, much to the confusion of
Bunty, who eyed the house guests with both reverence and caution.

Her eyes lingered over his shoulder, a look of sadness crept over her face, it was brief before her normal disposition was restored. She pushed past him and reached up to grab at something. Newt whipped around confused, wondering what had made her react in such a way,

Spinning around, he saw Bunty reach up towards Tina, who lingered in the door frame, shadowed by the quiet girl with the dark hair, always watching. She looked just as lost as Theseus,

Tina gave him a startled look...he should have warned them about Bunty.

He should have told Tina about Bunty... he had mentioned her before … hadn’t he?

He was searching his mind, trying to piece together the broken memory of the days before. Had he said anything in letters?

Putting quill to paper seemed such a bizarre thing to him at this moment. He felt so detached from everything: empty. He started towards Tina, who had moved her hand towards her wand, on guard, and as sharp as ever, particularly after the latest events.

Bunty reached up, removing the small curled-up, furry object from Tina’s grip carefully.

Niffler yawned, and reluctantly let go, tiny digits unwrapping from the button of his new protector’s blouse, and looking at Newt accusingly.

“Well come on trouble...let's get you back in your nest,” said Bunty, wrapping hands around the disapproving beast.

Tina smiled weakly at the woman who had just invaded her personal space, Newt could tell that it was forced...it didn’t reach her eyes.

“You must be Miss Tina,” Bunty looked across at Newt, there it was again that sad haunted look.

“I’m Mr Scamander's assistant, Bunty. He will, no doubt, forget to introduce me I know what he’s like when he gets one of his heads on...stubborn thing he is!” She ushered everyone into the sitting room.

“Come on, everyone in! I don’t need to know the whatnots of the situation.” She glanced past the two women still standing in the doorway, shooing them in as she closed the door behind them.

Newt caught her eye for a tenth of a second, but Bunty hid her face under her flopping hair, trying to get away as quickly as possible. “Best let you jinx the door, Newt, and I best get this one down...then I shall bring us all something to drink..” Bunty looked down at the floor, “By the looks of it, something a bit stronger than tea.” She scuttled past him, eyes downcast.
Newt watched her turn and head down to the basement, the sound of her fussing over the Niffler floated up the stairs as she disappeared into the dim light. He turned, gently putting his case down, and removing his overcoat, throwing it over the coat rack that stood in the corner.

Raising his wand he pointed it at the door, muttering incantations under his breath. He was aware that he was not alone: Tina had also raised her wand, following his lead, her normally steady hand shaking.

“Do you think that will hold ...” she asked quietly, her eyes finding his for the first time in what felt like years, instead of the mere few hours of shocking reality.

He wanted to smile. He wanted to reassure. He wanted to tell her that everything would be fine. He wanted to...but he could not...It would be a lie. He felt hopeless, and a silver tongue was exactly what had gotten them all into this situation to start with.

“It will if we keep the spells up,” he said, sliding his wand back into his pocket. “Dumbledore wanted us here. My house is very secure, plus...” he sighed, rubbing at his neck, “our best defence is laying low. He has yet to rally here. He avoids confrontation with what he knows well.”

He held her gaze for a moment. “We are not safe, don’t ever forget that, Tina. We won’t be until we all get back what we lost.” He looked up at the woman behind Tina. “All of us,” he said in her direction, aware she had been listening to there exchange.

“Nagini, is it not?” he asked cautiously. He had seen her change, back in the vaults. He knew what she was, and how scared she was right now...unsure if she was safe...if she were human or beast to these strangers.

Tina had scooped the girl up in her wake, protecting her in the same way that she had Credence, her instinct to protect jumping to the forefront.

In all the chaos, the maladictus had been ripped from the closest thing she had to a family and dropped into the middle of sadness and chaos. She nodded, still unsure of her place in all this.

“We will get him back,” Newt said quietly, stepping forward and offering her his hand.

She stared at him, questioning his gesture before she offered her slim hand in return.

“My name is Newt,” he said quietly “you are free to call this your home as long as you want...” he gestured around. “I wish I could welcome you in happier times.”

The girl glanced at him, trying to read him. He had seen it before in more than one person or beast: she was torn between fight and flight. He wasn’t surprised...she had every right to distrust all wizards.

Tina reached out and placed a hand on the woman's shoulder, Nagini looked at it before covering it
with her own fingers, sinking into the hug that Tina offered up.

Tina’s eyes caught his, and he could read the repressed sadness her big brown eyes He knew she would hold it deep inside till she was alone, for her new ward’s sake...protective to the last.

Tina whispered into the hug, too quiet for Newt to make out: a secret shared between the two women, not meant for his ears.

“Thank you,” Nagini said breaking from Tina’s hug. She moved silently into Newt’s drawing room, sinking into the large chair across from the fire, eyes flicking over her surroundings. Newt watched the three lost souls in his messy, dusty, worn-down room, trying not to think of the one that had silently slid back to his side.

“Not to pick your generosity apart, but isn’t this only a two bed flat, if I recall?” She removed her coat and hung it next to his, gesturing around her.

“Yes, but small spaces are something that I see more of a challenge than a full stop.” He nodded at his case.

“You can’t expect us all to stay in that case Newt!”

He liked hearing his name on her lips.

“I wouldn’t expect that for a moment.” He sighed, “No, I shall do a bit of structural shuffling, move the walls a bit.” She was watching him with such a curious look, it almost overshadowed the sadness that was on the verge of tipping the edge.

“I suppose, if you can make Arizona in a shoebox, a few more rooms won’t be much of a struggle.” She tried to smile...it almost worked this time.

He wanted to say something, anything that would push that sadness away, but he could not find the words or the actions that could take away her pain until he had addressed his own demons.

And that was the problem: his demons not only had names...they also had specific jobs and a retirement fund. His thoughts were not his own...not right now. Paranoia, insecurities...they were nothing compared with the vast nothingness of the unknown he now faced.

He broke the eye contact and headed to the kitchen, casting a sideward glance at his brother. Theseus had his head cocked to the side as he stared out the window, now nursing at a glass of god knows what.

Bunty fusses over Jacob, trying to convince him to take a drink, but Jacob seemed to discombobulate to care.

Newt?” The soft whisper of his name from her lips played on the edge of his conscious mind,
rousing him from his thoughts.

He was tired. More tired than he had been in a very long time: his body wanted to stop...HE wanted to stop.

“Newt.” It wasn’t a question now...it was a full stop encroaching on his mind. He couldn’t let himself get caught up in her wake: it was his job, he needed to do the protecting, it was his turn to make sure everyone was alright...to take the lead.

“Newt,” she said quietly, moving between him his gaze he hadn’t even realised he was holding over the players in his living room.

Her eyes held his, a look of worry and fear flashed over them. She let slip slightly, breaking down the wall one bit at a time.

“We all need sleep, come on,” she said gently.

Tina was right, She was always right, even when she was wrong.

He nodded slowly, making to walk towards the hallway again. Tina made to follow but he held up his hand. “It's ok, I have this.”

She looked bemused, but let him go.

He was grateful as he headed to his second floor, wand raised. She needed to rest, and he needed to stop thinking about anything, anything at all, for just a few moments.
Tina wrapped the big fluffy yellow towel around her, body tired and mentally exhausted, the long soak had been a blessing. The tears were spent, her mind lingered on mistakes that could no more be changed than the weather.

She wished she could take back all the anguish she had lain upon her Sister and Jacob, the torment and anger that she had wished upon herself. the pain that she had then inadvertently cast upon everyone and everything that she touched, on Newt. It was all her fault.

She tried not to think about Newt, angry with herself for jumping to stupid conclusions, angry at herself for taking it out on Queenie, and then on Jacob, it hadn’t been there fault they were so sickeningly in love. It had hurt to watch, so much so she had lashed out at the only person she thought she could depend on in life, driving her sister straight into the arms of that madman.

The pounding rain on the windows seemed to mock her mood, its spring and yet the rain had not let up since they had set foot back in England it was as if it knew the sun had been extinguished when her sister had crossed the fiendfire.

As she dried her hair and looked around her new surrounds, she took in the small details that differed so much from the rooms her and Queenie shared back in New York. The bathtub was a large white four-footed behemoth, it was almost as big as her kitchen table back home, the ornate tiles surrounding it looked old, she wondered how old this building was, had it always been a wizard home? She knew that old houses like this often had hidden rooms and passageways, or was that just in no-maj books? Would house elves pop out from behind sliding panels?

From the little she had seen of London it seemed as if it breathed, like it was a living thing that never slept, a creature that was not quite able to ever be tamed, maybe that was why Newt had not returned to her, maybe the call of the giant beast was too much for him to leave.

And there she was, thoughts back to Newt, her brain slid him in there like a full stop.

She walked back to the tub and pulled out the plug, watching the water drain away, how many beasts had he washed in this bath, she found herself musing as she let her hand slide along the still warm porcelain, how many times had Newt lay in the waters embrace thinking about her as she missed him from across the miles. No, she could not let her mind wander, to be so whimsical, this was not the time, Queenie was her number one priority. But still…

Sitting in the room that Tina found herself wondering if Newt had any idea how perfect the small space was that he had created for her, the bed was just a little oversized, a dark yellow mustard blanket thrown across it, a pile of pillows she had dis-guarded to the floor, a dresser stood at the foot
of the bed, she had tried the draws when she got in and found all but two to be unlocked, they were full of parchment and quills, shiny buttons and random screws, no doubt pilfered by a Niffler at some point. The two locked draws had the better of her, but no amount of charm work would make them open.

She was aware of the late hour as she held one of the books that she had retrieved from the bookcase open.

Attempting to read the same paragraph almost ten times now, her mind wandered.

Pulling the peacock blue comforter around her tighter, she sunk further into the oversized chair, watching as the rain ran down the window, street lamps casting a warm orange glow over the walls, she could not sleep.

Her dreams turned to nightmares as soon as she closed her eyes, and she knew she was not alone in her late night torment.

Footsteps had padded along outside her door several times, who or why she did not know but she doubted that any of them would sleep well, minds to full of hurt and replaying memories that would take far to long to fade.

Nagini alone would remain in her room, scared to leave, Tina knew the woman would not want to hurt others while she took her other form.

She had requested Newt to lock the door, lock it and make sure that she was unable too get out, hold it with magic, just for her own piece of mind.

Tina could tell it was done begrudgingly.

Newt had looked tormented as he had charmed the door, and he hadn’t quite managed to make eye contact as he had taken his leave.

She had looked so lost, this wonderful creature dressed in pyjamas far too big her slender frame, scared and worried for everyone but herself, a small girl lost and alone in the world.

Alone.

That thought haunted her almost as much as the nightmares. She was alone.

Alone.

She pulled the blanket tighter around her, there was something comforting in the way it felt against her skin, like a hug woven into the fabric, she moved to pull her feet up underneath her, feeling a slight resistance as she did so.

Looking down she soon found the cause.

Two large round eyes looked up at her.

“Hello Dougal,” she said reaching down and offering him her hand, he felt warm, and as she lifted him to her knee she felt his soft fur brush against her skin, the smell that she associated so strongly with happiness lingered in the air around him.

“Couldn’t wait to see me ?” she questioned him, the Demiguise snuggled her neck lovingly.

She appreciated the gesture, a hug given without any other reason but comfort, no hidden pain or consequence.

She buried her face deep into the creature's fur, allowing him to take care of her, he had been so clingy the last time she had seen him too, was this a possible future that he had seen? Was that why he had been so reluctant to go back in the case, back to England with Newt?

Stroking him gently she watched as the rain grew heavier against the window almost turning to hailstones as it bounced off the ledge, maybe this would lull her into sleep she thought as her fingers smoothed out the snoring beast, Morpheus was just calling when a bright flash illuminating the sky followed by a large bang.

Both Dougal and herself jumped, she laughed at how quickly she had started, nothing more than
thunder and lightning, the creature on her knee had buried his head shaking, he was scared of the noise.
She tried to think back to what Newt had told her about Dougall but she could not recall what Dougall's disposition to the weather was. She looked down at the large scared eyes of the beast, her mind made up.
“Come on, let's go find your Mummy.”

Pulling the comforter just a little tighter around her she stepped out into the hallway, she knew she looked ridiculous but she didn't care, for the first time in a long time she didn’t care about what anyone else had to say. Other peoples opinions were what had gotten her into this mess in the first place.
Dougal was still cowering under her arm as she took the stairs down to the lower floor, it had only just occurred to her upon leaving her room that she had no idea what room was Newts, she had never thought to ask, just wanted to be alone with her thoughts.
Downstairs, however, seemed like a good idea, the further away from the noise of the pounding rain the better, maybe she would pop Dougal in the case if she could get past Newts enchantments, hide him from the rumble that she was still hearing roll across the sky, maybe she could find something else to read, try and distract herself from her troubles if but for a moment.
The living area was not dark as she thought it would be, someone was awake, not that she was surprised, after all, if she couldn’t sleep it would have been stupid to think anyone else would.
A familiar mop of earthy hair sat in the large chair facing away from her towards the fire, it wasn’t till she got closer that she realised that the smile she didn’t even know she had worn dropped a little.

“Not the Scamander you were expecting?” Theseus said as she stopped suddenly.
She shrugged slightly pulling the blankets closer to her, at the sound of his voice, Dougal had shifted his gaze over the fabric to get a better look.

“Sorry, old man, not my brother this time either.” he shrugged “wondered where he had scampered off too. He came up to me sniffed me, I woke up and he dashed off.”

Theseus looked tired, the dark circles under his eyes made him look much older than his years. Tina had never really looked at him before.
Everything had happened so suddenly, of course, she had seen his face before in work report he was high up in the order of things here in the English ministry, and his face had been used briefly by Newt only the day before last.
She knew who this man was, after all, he had been in the picture of the book launch but she hadn’t ever really looked at him.
Her actions and feelings had been elsewhere at the time, she hadn’t really taken in how strikingly the features matched to his brothers.
It was subtle, but they both had the same eyes, the hair was very much of the same hue, and right now when his guard was down like this his insecurities apparently very much obvious.
Tina wasn’t quite sure what to do with herself, part of her wanted to comfort him, part of her wanted to escape the situation as quickly as she could, the same way she escaped every awkward off-duty situation, one this was in a way her boss, and two this was Newts brother.

“You can’t sleep either?” he said taking his wand and using it to summon himself another drink.
Another flick of his wand duplicated the tumbler and sent one towards Tina, she almost dropped her ward as she reached out to grab it, much to the creatures disgust.

“It's ok, I’m not going to kill you with it, it wouldn’t be worth the wrath of Fido... ” he smirked at his
Tina shifted towards the sofa, Dougal resting on her knee, the latter sniffed at the brown liquid in the glass and shrugged.

"It's just fire whisky, Bunty knows her stuff, twenty-one years aged, perfect for nursing all sorts of ailments, or helping to forget." Theseus took another large swig stretching out in his chair.

Tina nervously sipped at the liquid, it burned, but in a good way, he was right it was the good stuff. The two of them sat in silence, observing, Tina more than aware that the two of them had not been formally introduced, but they were obviously aware of the each-other's presence in Newts life.

"Younger siblings are strange things..." he said eventually breaking the silence. "They drive you crazy in the worst possible way..." he rubbed his neck in a very Newt like way. "Yet if anyone touched a hair on there precious little heads, we would do time in Azkaban for our actions." he sighed, she found herself nodding along to his words, taking a long draw of her drink.

"He drove me mad trying to get that travel ban lifted you know, five times he tried, Five! I was ready to tell him to give up, but Leta...Leta said that she knew there was more to this special research he wanted to get back for, she knew him better than me sometimes," his voice trailed off lost in thought.

Tina watched him, Newt had a travel ban? Oh, Tina you overly critical idiot. Five times? Why did she let her head and heart ever take over anything?

"It was quite adorable watching her try and get the details of that special research out of him, find out what was making him so frustrated and revoltingly happy..."

Was it really her that made him that happy?

"He introduced me to her you know? Leta, this troubled soul, that needed protecting, and I tried to protect her I really did, but my brother, he has a habit of finding these wild things..." he took another long drink, draining his glass. "He doesn’t try to tame them, have you noticed? They stay because they see something in him. He never gives up on any of them you know, not even the violent ones the lost causes, even me, even Le..." he trailed off unable to say her name.

Tina didn’t want to hear this, any of it, but she listened as the man she had known for less than twenty-four hours found solace in her, even if it was a subject she would rather avoid. She averted her gaze as he wiped away a tear that had started cascading down his cheek.

"Jacob said you and Queenie were close." he said quietly breaking the silence "I know how difficult it is, To not know if they're safe or not. That bumbling idiot can go weeks without letting you know if he’s al...” again his voice trailed off, he was going to say ‘alive’ but that thought had jarred his memory to his lost love.

She hadn’t even realised that she had started to cry, thinking of all the ways her thoughts on her baby sister matched up so well with that of the older Scamander. She wiped her face on the corner of the comforter, trying to find herself.

Theseus watched her, the sadness was still behind his eyes, but his face was the picture of auror like composure.

"What Newt said earlier, about getting them all back, he will do it you know," he said quietly after he let her compose herself.

"I don’t doubt it for a second," she said finally speaking. "I will not rest till I have my sister and Credence back here with us, where they belong, I can’t force them, that would make us no better than him, but Newt and me have stopped him before, we will do it again... as many times as needed.” on her knee Dougal moved slightly at the sound of her voice, Tina wondered if he could see the choices they were making, moment by moment, could he not tell
them what would end with the best course of action?
Theseus got to his feet, putting his empty glass down on the small side table before stopping to look at Tina again.

“At some point, I would like to talk to you about the events in New York, I have questions on the file, that you as the leading investigator might be able to shine a light on.” he placed a hand on her shoulder, an act of comfort no doubt, although Dougal did not see it that way, making what could only be described as a low growl. Shocking both Tina and Theseus by the look of it
Theseus retracted his hand quickly. “It’s alright, I know Dougal. I will not touch her again, I promise.” the overprotective beast glared, retracting himself back into Tina’s arms. Theseus shook his head before turning towards the stairs.

“If you want my brother, if in doubt, he’s always down in the basement,” he said one step ready to ascend the steps.“Try not to cry too much into his favourite blanky, he’s had it since mother pushed him kicking and screaming into the world. You must be very special research Miss Goldstine if he let you stay in his bed.”
Tina didn’t catch his expression but she understood the undertones of his comment and pulled the blanket around her tighter.

Chapter End Notes

I like writing Thad, he's got layers, just like Newton.
Where Bunty had moved the box of Jobberknoll tail feathers to was quite the mystery, he was just about to abandon the search when he saw the telltale box, buried under a pile of his discarded paperwork. Grabbing the small wooden box he removed two of the tiny tail feathers and added them to the concoction he was brewing. It fizzed slightly and turned from the bright orange it had been, to deep purple hue. Raising it to his eye level he gave it a slight shake and it turned clear. Putting a stopper in it he carefully wrote the date and the words ‘Vertaserum’ on the label, best to stock up while he still had feathers from the last fledglings. He wasn’t sure when he would find them again, and he had a feeling that truth potions may come in handy in whatever lay next. The vile joined the swooping evil venom in his field case and he closed it with a concealment charm. Beside him one of the Diricawl hatchlings watched him curiously, Hopping up on to his shoulder as he moved out of his work space and in to the first set of sheds. Normally his creatures would be the best sort of distraction, making him forget about whatever was troubling him, but the events of the day had been to piercing, his mind kept going back to the dancing blue flame. He had always found solace in the fact that he made his own rules, his own choices, and here he was his hand forced, through an act not of his own, making him chose a side. He wanted to mourn for his friend, she had been his only one for so long, but other thoughts jumped out in protest. He had dragged everyone in to this mess, all for the sake of one animal. This is why he tried to avoid people, all people, animals he got, they ran on instinct, a bit like him. He threw pellets for the Mooncalfs, the Diriclaw popping out of existence only to reappear to steal the treats on offer, much to the confusion of the calf that had reached out too grab it. These ones had been to small and too weak to return to the wild with the last rescues, maybe next time, if they didn’t become to reliant on his care. We watched them for a while, running around the enclosure trying to capture the Diriclaw, smiling at the increasing confusion as there attempts came up short. It wasn’t that worries played on his mind, he tried not to worry, he was an act first face the consequences later kind of person, so it was most definitely not worry. It wasn’t until Picket ran up his leg in protest at the others throwing him out of the tree upon his return that he realised the pain he was feeling was guilt, guilt for all the hurt he had caused dragging people he cared about greatly in to this great big mess. Leta had always said, that one day Newt would be the death of her. He never thought that would be the truth, stupid confusing, world changing Leta. One of the few human creatures he had ever been stupid enough to let in to his heart. The one that had been the first to tell him that she loved him for being this awkward inward beast that saw the world differently to the rest. Newt had moved past his feelings for Leta, schoolboy lust, not designed to last longer than a year, but she was still his best friend. He had asked her once out of ear shot of his brother, why Theseus? She had smiled that stupid smile of hers, the one that she did when only he was about and she felt
she could be herself, looked him in the eyes and said
“Because I see the bits of you in him. The you that I couldn’t tame in him, no one can tame you
Newt,” she had broken eye contact with him and sighed
“I tried, you know that, but you are a free thing that cannot be caged. I need the stupid selfish act of
stability, a kind of love that your brother gives out in bounds."
He had known she hadn’t meant it to sting the way it did but between Leta’s words and his actions,
the two of them acted first she hadn’t intended it to be hurtful
But it was, just a bit, that tiny light he still carried for her, the thoughts of what if that had gotten him
through his time in the war, that blissful image he held of them in his head of long summer days,
outcast just the two of them, what his young mind had stupidly confused for love.

He had never once begrudged the relationship between her and his brother, it had been awkward, to
begin with, of course, it had, he had never been one to share well with his older brother. But recently
since he had gotten back from New York, things had gotten more complicated.
Theseus had been on the dock waiting for him when he got home, that concerned but annoyed look
he always wore when he didn’t know if hugging or strangling Newt was what he wanted.
“You can explain all this to Mum, Fido.” he had said, dragging him in to one of the blasted hugs he
loved so much, he had actually missed him so he didn’t complain to much and let the Fido go.
“I’m sure she will think my quest was for a noble cause, plus I bought her Taffy, so she can’t hate
me to much.” he said gesturing to his case.

The real reason for putting himself forward to escort Newt from the Docks to the Minestry was clear
soon enough.
He had wanted his blessing to ask Leta to marry.
Newt had expected it was coming, but it hadn’t hurt anywhere as much as he thought it would, he
had a feeling that was partly to do with the bit of his heart he had left across the Atlantic.
He wasn’t going to say no was he, his brother wasn’t stupid, he knew they had a past, but Leta was
free to do what she wanted, and happier than Newt had ever seen her in a long time.
The blessing was given, he could have done without the best-man job though.

He sat down on an overturned bucket next to the sink and slipped off his braces rolling up his shirt
cuffs ready to prepare some floberworms for feed.
The sadness he felt at losing Leta was large, but it hurt nowhere as much as the look in Tina’s eyes
as her sister had crossed the flames.

His Tina, what had been a mild infatuation was growing stronger.
Leta had known it, she had seen right through him, he had never been much good at hiding things
from her, so he had avoided them both, he had wanted to keep his raven haired witch to himself as
long as possible, not sure if it was all in his imagination.
After having set his mind to a life of solitude, this wonderful being had happened in to his life in the
most wonderful of ways.
He wasn’t sure at the time if it had been love, but he had known it was more than Lust, more than the
school boy longing, the only thing he had to compare it to.
He hadn’t been lying when he said special research, it might just not have been the research the
ministry or his brother expected.
He felt guilt over dragging the others in to this, non of them would have been involved if it wasn’t
for him wanting to take Frank back to Arizona.

Chapter End Notes
ok, I needed to get this out there to get past the how on earth would newt explain all this to tina aspect... that was just not going as planned at all, even headcanon newt has a habit of messing up words if you give him to many. let me know what you think and I should be back soon with the next bit if I can get the buggers to do what I want.
Tina had sat stroking Dougal and trying to get her thoughts in order for some time. It wasn’t until she was halfway down the first steps to the basement that she realised that she had moved, it had been almost automatic, shocking even herself, maybe she should just let Dougal go. After all, Newt had taken himself down there to be alone, she didn’t want to intrude on his solitude. ‘Yes, you do’ her internal voice spoke to her, that voice in her head sounded a lot like her sister, the one that told her to act on her impulses, always nipping away at the back of her brain.

She had no idea why the sight in front of her had amazed her so, in her tiered stupidity maybe she had been expecting just a normal basement. She should have known better than that, but the lack of sleep was making her thought not her own. It was the smell that had hit her first, that earthy smell she had found so appealing before when Dougal had jumped up on her lap, the air was thick of it. The next thing she noticed was the giant lake, in all fairness it was hard to miss. It looked like it went on as far as the eye could see, vast, an entire mountain range in the cellar of a London flat.

He was far too humble, a few extension charms upstairs were nothing compared to this, this put his case to shame, her wonderful wonderful man. Here she would allow thoughts of him to enter her chaotic mind, how could she not, looking out over the wonderland he had created for himself, for his creatures, his life.

As if it had been waiting, a large horse-like creature crested the water where her eyes had gazed, she knew what it was straight away, Newt had said he was caring for a Kelpie, she didn’t think it would be under his kitchen sink. Watching as the artificial moonlight gleamed of its tangled mane, she couldn’t understand why wizards were so inclined to destroy such amazing things, hide them, protect them, but destroy? She sank down resting on one of the arches that lined the staircase, just taking a moment to take all the new information in, this space was such an extension of Newt. Queenie was right, he was one of a kind. The thought of her sister stung at her eyes, Theseus was right, younger siblings were born to infuriate. Did she know what she had done? What had he said to her to make her leave Tina behind? How did she think that taking the side of a No-maj killer, a man who would murder a child without a second thought, would ever give her and Jacob the life she so desperately wanted.

The fights had been awful, back in New York she had tried so hard to reason with her, if they had the funds, she would quite happily have paid for them all to emigrate to Europe, but her sister had never been the sort to wait for anything. In the short amount of time Jacob had been in the Goldstein’s life, she had watched her sister fall so hard and fast in love with the no-maj that had come crashing into there life. She just had to wait a little longer, till she had some money saved, they would have been safe, no laws broken, they would have been together. A family. Tina had to admit she had liked the idea, the thought of being a little closer to a certain gentleman friend may have been part of it. It was a strange feeling missing someone, being angry at them and worrying about them all at the same time. Stupid, stubborn, loving big hearted Queenie. Her little sister she would die to protect.

She heard Newt before she saw him, he was singing some sort of sea shanty. Wiping the tears away again on the corner of Newts blanket she made to get up, she should return Dougal, Thank Newt for
giving up his bed to her. However, she thought better of it when she saw him.
Newt looked so different when he thought nobody was about, he held himself in a different way, not hunched and protective, making himself somehow invisible,
. He walked with purpose, no one to judge him here in his own space.
Tina knew she should announce her presence, it was rude, indecent and not at all socially correct...but she had been looking for a distraction, and this was doing the job.
He undid his boots and rolled up his trouser legs, bow tie long gone, shirt untucked, and cuffs rolled to the elbows he walked to the very edge of the waterline, his wand tucked behind his ear for safe keeping.
She had never seen him like this before, so off guard. This was how she pictured him when he talked about tending to his wards in his letters, it was a thought that had lingered at very inappropriate times, it had taken her to very questionable places.
Her imagination hadn’t done it justice, She wouldn’t interrupt, she would just observe, she was good at observing, she wanted to make sure that she could file it away for later, sometimes questionable places like a roadmap.
Dougal had finally poked his head out to see what was going on, the two of them quietly watching, as Newt dipped his feet into the lake and whistled.
The flash of green moved faster than she would have thought possible, it was at Newts side within seconds, its head resting against his as he stroked at its slimy green mane.
He sang his song quietly to it as it nuzzled him. Taking something from his hand and chewing it thoughtfully.
“I take it you missed me.” she heard him say, speaking to the Kelpie like a small child,
“You should have behaved better for Bunty, she only has your best interests at heart. She has a big heart that one, too love you all as much as I do.”
Tina found herself smiling, then hated herself for it instantly, this was not the time. Just then Newt looked down at his side, something small and fuzzy had run to him.
Picking it up and gently he placed it near his chest, she could make out a small face poking over the buttons as he addressed the creature, she let her gaze linger at the bare skin on show.
“I know you know something’s up.” he spoke soothingly “but we will all be fine, there has been a lot of heartbreak and losing ones we love, I know you can sense it, no need for you to get restless over it, I have you, your safe here, Mummy’s got you.”
At that sound several more of the furry critters had run across to him, Dougal seemed to take this as his cue to return to Newt, dragging the comforter and a tangled up Tina with it. Unceremoniously tumbling down the remaining stairs, Tina landed in a lump in the dirt at the bottom.
Newts head snapped round to look at her ever graceful Tina like entrance, he made to get up however he was impeded.
Dougal had launched himself into action rounding up the creatures, on closer inspection, Tina could see that they were Nifflers, smaller than the one Newt normally had with him.
In all Dougal’s fussing, he had nudged his way so close to Newt he was almost upon his knee.
He took a step back and slipped off the side of the jetty, landing in the waters below.
In the blink of an eye, Newt was in straight after him,
Tina had darted forward before she had time to read the situation, she was about to dive in after him and only stopped when she saw the Kelpie lifting newt to the surface an angry Dougal in arm.
She gasped as he pulled himself on to the side of the water enclosure and shook his head dry like one of his beasts.
Dougal copied Newt and in shaking himself dry water went everywhere. She jumped back slightly as the cold water hit her, Newt reached out to grab her before she went the same way as Dougal.
“Could you just ….” he reached into his shirt, pulling out the tiny Niffler and handing it to her, “sorry he’s a bit wet.”
A quick look at her and a slight blush before his eyes started darting around, he was quick scooping
up the small army of fluff with nimble fingers.
It would be a lie to say that her heart had not been racing against her chest.
She looked down at the tugging furry wet thing, she felt on her nightshirt.
The soggy wet face of a Niffler looked up at her, it tried desperately to escape her clutches and hide in her shirt as it had done with Newt moments before.
He was so much smaller than the Niffler she had become accustomed to, its fur shone a flickering silver colour under the moonlight, one tiny paw currently hanging around her locket, it didn’t rest till it was hiding in the safety of her pyjamas. Now covered in tiny soggy paw prints. She felt it shift and get comfy hanging around the chain she always wore. It was a comforting sort of feeling having something so small breathing away near her skin like that,

She let her eyes return to watching Newt, his wet shirt hung tightly over his shoulders, the off-white fabric, on the disappointing spectrum of translucent, clung to him in ways that Tina was filing under indecent, for later, his hair even more unkempt than usual, curling with its unexpected soaking.
It was quite something, watching him throw himself under a wooden bench and return triumphantly with the last of his fury assailants gently cupped in his grip.
Wand in his mouth, his shirt covered in mud and now missing a few buttons dishevelled and chaotic, he was completely in his element, she could have sworn he muttered ‘bloody females’ as he cast his eyes down at his capture.

Newt looked up, she flashed red and then looked away, it was disarming how handsome he looked right now, but this wasn’t the time.
She couldn’t act on it, not now, it wasn’t the time.
If she kept telling herself it made it all easier.
She didn’t deserve happiness, she had failed in everything, she had failed her little sister, Credence, MACUSA, and she had failed him, jumping to stupid conclusions without gathering the facts. Some Auror she was.

If he had noticed her embarrassment, he didn't acknowledge it.
Next thing she knew he was at her side again, an arm full of fur pressed to his chest, fighting for freedom, one of them picking at the buttons of his shirt trying to get the pearlescent spheres for its pouch.
Her eyes drawn first to the small beasts, then to the freckled skin below his shirt. She knew she had been spotted when he shifted uncomfortably, she tried to distract herself by looking down at the creature that now sat entwined around the chain.
“Sorry about Einstein, he’s a bit clingy,” he said with his eyes fixed on her chest, she felt herself blush stronger now, well it wasn’t like she hadn’t invited his gaze.
“He’s the only male you see,” he raised his arm slightly to show her the three in his arms. “and this lot keep beating him up.”
She knew that she shouldn’t be enjoying the attention, but she was in no rush to scold him for his glances, Einstein could stay just there, nuzzled into her chest just as long as he wanted. She lifted a hand and stroked him gently on the head, aware that Newt’s eyes were following her every move.
“Hello Einstein, you can think twice before thinking you’re stealing my locket young man,” she playfully scolded. The tiny brown eyes looked at her then across at Newt and his siblings before taking even more clam upon Tina.
“I think you might have just gained a Niffler.” sighed Newt, it was a contented sigh
“or he’s gained a Tina, I suppose its all relative to how you look at it.” she chanced a look up at him.
His ears flushed red at being caught gazing at her. He fumbled with the back of his neck with his free hand, Tina wondered if he got that habit from his brother.

“We should probably get them back into there nest...” he said avoiding catching her eye.
Tina wished he would, he looked so endearing right now, so quintessentially Newt. It made that little flame in her chest burn a bit brighter.
“Where on earth did you get a litter of them from?” she said following in him closely. “Are there more than four? I thought they were always in groups of six or more as a rule?” she pointed at the smallest one in Newt’s arms, it had finally unpicked its prestigious button. “How is that one Ginger? I thought they were always black!”

He jumped nimbly up the ledge near his workroom, arm still full of fuzzy fury. He finally caught her eye again extending his free hand to help her follow. She reached up to take it but then he drew it away sharply.

“You read my book.” he raised an eyebrow curiously. She felt as if she was getting judged. “You were supposed to be waiting for me to give you it in person.”

Tina didn’t know where to look, it wasn’t like she could deny it. She made her mind up at that moment, she caught his eye again.

“I couldn’t wait that long.”

He turned on his heals walking towards the nest of shiny objects set into the hillside. She couldn’t work out if she had said the wrong thing or not. She felt Einstein nudge her to follow Newt, she found herself pulling at the grass on the embankment, trying to gain purchase struggling to get a grip on the earth below her fingers.

Why was nothing ever simple.

When she finally scaled the ledge, she felt she had the cheek to call it even that, she saw Newt setting down the three Niffler’s into the glittering horde.

“You didn’t answer my questions!” she said scraping the mud off the knees of her pyjamas, she saw the corners of his mouth twitch.

“He’s most definitely decided to keep you.”

Newt was close now, too close. She tried to fight back the urge to bridge that gap, it would be so easy, one step would do it. She had a feeling that this was what they both wanted, but not like this. Not just because they were both hurting and alone, that was no way to build a life.

His hand had brushed her neck as he had tried to grab at Einstein, had he felt that jump in her heart rate as she did? He had to know how he made her feel, he just had to.

“If you must know...” he said finding her eyes again, he held the gaze but only for a few moments before stepping away, it was as if an unsaid resolve had passed between the two of them. He always seemed to know what she was thinking, but not the way Queenie had, it was as if he felt her thoughts rather than herd them. She was glad he had stepped away, right now, here with him, her head wasn’t thinking straight.

Newt walked back over to the Nest and held out another one of the lost buttons from his shirt. Niffler, the one that travelled with him at all times, came running out and along with his arm too try and grab at the treasure.

“It would appear that my research was a little wrong in this case.” he nodded at the Niffler who was now biting the button to check its worth. “It would appear He.. is a She.”

Niffler shoved the button in her pouch and ran back to the Nest. “Within a few weeks of getting back, I had picket going crazy down in the case as he dragged me down here show me the new arrivals.”

“So... why are they not all black? “ she questioned as Einstein braved the front of her shirt again.
Newt looked down sheepishly.
“Well, it would seem that there may be hereunto unknown branches of the Niffler tree in the United States. Obviously, I can't be a hundred per cent sure, but the reason I struggled to get her back so much is the simple fact that she was running around the diamond district looking for a mate. she’s part of the reason I found you so fast in Paris, she associates you with him ...or at least I think she does,”
Tina had no idea why that information had made her eyes start to swell with tears, maybe that was the last tipping point of her emotional scale ebbing over, but she sunk to her knees, tears stinging at her face.
Before she could even pretend to hide them, Newt was at her side a protective arm wrapped around her side, pulling her into a one-armed hug so as not to squash the creature resting in her top.
“Its ok, let it out,” he whispered into her ear as he breath shuddered through her, she was so tired when was the last time she had slept?
She could rest now, he had her, she was safe.
Safe with Newt.
Since he was a child, he had always found that the quickest way to learn about a creature, any creature, was to observe it, it was something that was proving to have become useful as he had stumbled into adulthood and become even more of a recluse.

It had sometimes been a slow process, Firecrab’s, for example, would take ages to do … well anything, it could take weeks for one to even contemplate a move, let alone make it. But when they did it always proved to be the most magnificent of displays.

Others like Nogtail, every move would be quick and calculated, sometimes to the own creature's downfall, too proud to back down in the face of failure and too invested in the now to see the future.

In life, Newt liked to think he walked the line between the two. When it came to his work and his beasts he was all Nogtail, quick and calculated, he had to be, if it came down to it he would rather not end up on the pointy end of a Chinese Fireball. When it came to everything else, he felt like he was far to close to the Firecrab for his liking.

He wasn’t sure what time it was, his eyes were still closed, all he knew was that the beasts hadn’t yet started to rouse for the morning routine, the quiet calm was engulfing him still. This was when he liked his own little world the most. When everything was serene, peaceful when his creatures were content and safe. He knew he would have to move soon, the artificial sun would soon be rising, and so would the first round of hungry mouths to feed. For the first time, he found himself wondering if he could delay the routine, just a little, he didn’t want to move.

Right now at this moment, the world outside his basement was a distant memory.

He had a momentary second of confusion when he had become aware he was on the verge of awake, no longer in the throws a thankfully dreamless sleep. The weight on his leg had been one he was not used to, the texture of the hair against the bare skin on his arm had been something he could not place, yet his reactions were not instantly alert, whatever this unknown presence was, it was not a threat. His brain slowly processed the information, the chaos of the last few days beginning to right themselves in his mind. One thought stood out beyond all the other mishmash of chaotic memories. Tina.

Tina was here, with him, in his basement. That thought shone like a beacon through the darkness of the last few days. The sight of her stood in his pyjamas, Einstein hiding in her hair, the look of exasperated outrage as he teased her. The way she had turned in to his hand as he had tried to take back Einstein, the beating of her heart pumping life through her veins.

When his eyes finally opened, he found he was still on the ledge near the Niffler nest, propped up against the wall, the familiar but strange feeling on his knee, was on further inspection, Tina’s head.
He remembered now, all of it.
Someone had pulled his blanket over the top of the two of them, best they could.
Had they really both fallen asleep like this?

He remembered trying to comfort Tina as she had finally broken down, remembered her tears, how
she had felt hugged into his body, warm and inviting. He must have looked a fool, covered in Merlin
knows what, dirt and lake slime, but she hadn’t seemed to care.
He allowed himself a few moments to take her in.

Her hair splayed across his knee, bare skin of her neck peeping over the top of his new favourite
Pyjamas, deep blue against her pale skin. He let himself wrap a strand of her hair around his fingers,
to try and log it in his memories, it felt soft to the touch, even against his worn hands. Beneath his
touch she stirred, turning in to his hand again, shifting slightly rolling over to face him, eyes still
closed.

Still fast asleep.

From under the blankets, there was a shuffling Einstein’s head appeared eyes glaring at Newt, before
repositioning himself into the grove of Tina’s neck. If Newts biggest competition had four paws and
a tail, he was safe, If not a little envious.

He should wake her, but she looked so peaceful, curled up against him, he didn’t have the heart, and
she needed sleep.

Shifting slightly to find a more comfortable place to rest his head, he flicked his wand at the
inadvisable ceiling of the basement, he didn’t think it would fool them, but a few more hours of the
night might at least give him a chance to sleep a little longer.

There was something almost safe in the way Tina being this close made him feel. Gently he moved
her slightly so he could get comfortable, making sure not to wake her, he lay her head down
returning his knee, to her makeshift pillow. Trying hard not to think about how awkward all this was
going to feel in the morning, a totally innocent thing like sleep, he let himself have this one moment,
he didn’t know when or even if he would get one again.
Fingers playing with a loose strand of hair were the last thing he remembered before sleep took him
again.

A small stone bounced off Newts head waking him from slumber.
Blinking he looked about to see what had caused his wake up call.

Picket dropped down on to his shoulder from the rocks behind him.
The Bowtruckle had a small bit of paper, Newt recognised the neat scrawl, taking it from Pickets
mouth he glanced a look at Tina, she still slept, her arm now draped across his legs, his blanket
wrapped tight around her, her new guardian slept protectively in the crook of her neck. He was
going to have to keep an eye on that Niffler.
Propping himself up he looked down at the paper.
Unfolding it he prepared for the worst.

Newt,
Don’t panic.
I have gone into the ministry.
I want to file my report while it is still fresh in my mind.
I also want to get some of my case files out, I don’t know who we can trust.
I have to do this, you have your beasts, I have my work.
You can tell me off later.
I will be back by 3.30pm no later.
Thes.
p.s
You should let your special research know that the old muggle trick of vinegar is good for grass stains, although I think you may need to buy a new shirt.

P.P.S Don’t think you are getting out of explaining all this, better me then mum.

Old Newt would have been mortified at his brothers suggestion, Theseus's relentless teasing growing up had been one of the few things that had followed them in to adulthood, His brother had always been so forward with everything, friends, work, The fairer sex as he liked to call them, he could have sworn Picket sniggered from his perch on his shoulder, so then Theseus had been the one to cover them up in the blanket, he had hoped it had been Jacob, that would have been momentarily less mortifying.

His brother was right, he would be getting told off later, plus he was in no fit state to go to work.

But right now, his mind was more focused on the woman whose face he was busy committing to memories, pale white skin dark raven hair, breathtakingly beautiful, did she know that? It seemed like something she should know, it would be like asking the moon if it knew it was the most magical thing in the sky, it should go without saying, but he wondered if she knew just how brightly she burned up the dark.

At his knee Tina stirred again, his fingers instantly began stroking her hair, she made a content sigh before her eyes flickered open.

The slow realisation of the situation rolled over her features. She blushed a deep red, it just made her even more endearing.

“Morning,” he said gently, he let his hand linger in her hair, not quite ready to lose the contact with her just yet. She seemed content to let him do so, her eyes big as saucers now as they found his own. “Morning.”

On Newts shoulder Picket chattered his own slightly mocking morning.

Tina looked at the small beast, a look of confusion slowly turning in to comprehension.

“I take it You don’t like sharing you’re Tree do you Pick?” she sat up, Newt instantly missed the heat on his leg. “I promise I won’t chop anything off him without your say so ok?” she joked as Picket chirped something Newt would have to reprimand him for later.

He sat up at her lead, ready to move if he needed, however Tina scuttled to his side throwing the blanket over the both of them, Without thinking, and as if its the most natural thing in the world his hand found hers, an act of comfort, he places his head on her shoulder gently as Picket seeks higher ground in his hair, it had only been to allow Picket room to manoeuvre, but she had lent in to him resting her head alongside his own.

Making him reluctant to move, in awe of how natural this felt, his entire body becomes aware of her every little move as Pickets tiny rant went on between them. They listened to him until he had run out of steam, and sunk defeated between the space that was left between Newt and Tina, slung between the gaps pushing Tina away with tiny feet, his eyes fixed angrily on her ear.

Sitting quietly the two of them watched as the beasts started to wake up around them. Neither ready to break whatever this was between them, even to move the grumpy Bowtruckle from his new defensive perch.

In a world full of noise and uncomfortable silences, this silence was just for the two of them, warm and safe.

He felt a slight movement, and a glance told him that Einstein was watching him closely, being
judged by one of his animals was a new one on him, two was just downright bizarre. He sighed, his lonely nights thinking of her would never have brought him to this conclusion, in his mind they were in New York, happy and whole, not fractured and hurting, sat on the floor of his basement in secret, hiding for there life.

“Are you Ok Newt?” it had been fairly more than a whisper but it hadn’t needed to be loud, it was just for him, she was right there, as close as he had ever been to anyone in a long time, physically and mentally.

Time to see if the Nogtails had the right idea.

“That’s not the phrase I would use.” he still didn’t turn to look at her, if he did he would lose all composure, his resolve not to rush would go out the window, he was in no doubt that they were on the same page now, maybe not the same paragraph, and he was adamant some of it probably got lost in translation, but he was happy to wait till they both got to the same point in their story.

“Conflicted maybe,” he chanced a side glance at her.

Her eyes had become downcast, her grip realised on his hand. Why were words his enemy? He wanted to explain, but the words would not get themselves in too the right order on his tongue. When it came to Tina he knew his actions would have to convey his meanings, at least until he could speak without messing it all up.

He responded by moving his hand protectively around the small of her back, finding a tiny patch of bare skin, his fingers moved across it in what he hoped was a reassuring way. The feel of her skin beneath his fingers did nothing to help his resolve. She shuddered at his touch, he only hoped it was in a good way.

“Conflicted?” she asked quietly. Her voice was shaking slightly.

Something in him became wrestles at the sound. No, he didn’t like that at all, she needed to catch up, she needed to know that from this point out, he would protect her as long as she was stupid enough to let him. That he couldn’t bear the idea that one day he might have to live in a world where she wasn’t in it. How the pain he felt seeing her break down in his arms over Queenies betrayal had been almost too much for him to handle, that had wanted to apparate them both as far away from harm as he could, to stop her from hurting, to protect her from the darkness that was closing in around the two of them from every direction.

But he knew that would come out as gibberish, and she needed to understand.

“On one hand, we’ve lost so much,” he settled on, allowing himself another quick glance, this time her eyes looked right at him, he could see the same longing look he had seen in Paris etched there, the same yearning that he felt every time he thought of her.

“and on the other, I have this very small issue, its nothing major just something that keeps me awake at night”

Tina had shifted under his touch, his full hand now rested between her shirt and trousers, his fingers following the curves of her slender back, it would be but a moment, a single moment, for him to pull her forward to him and … and then what Newt? When was anything done in the shadow of sorrow a good idea?

“What is it Newt?” she asked quietly, he found the sound so tempting, his name on her lips, this small distance, her skin under his fingers and his mind in her control.
“You,” he said simply. Pulling her towards him, settling for a gentle kiss on her forehead. His lips gently brushing against her, his heart racing. “My tiny little problem is you.”

Chapter End Notes

As ever let me know what you think.
we might even get out of the basement in the next chapter
Tina didn’t want to look up at him, she kept her eyes fixed ever so determinedly on the rather large clump of freckles just to the left of his Adams apple.

She wasn’t sure she could process the words that he had uttered, but she knew that right now the words that he spoke seemed to be in a direct contradiction to the softness of the kiss he had just placed upon her forehead.

Right now she felt that if she moved so much as an inch, gave herself the satisfaction of one glance at him it would be her undoing.

When she had woken, for a few blissful seconds, he had been all that there was in her world.

Right now all she wanted was to hold on to that.

She moved slightly under the touch of his fingers, each tip felt like it was giving her a jolt of electricity, bringing her back to life, she swallowed hard, gaze determinedly locked on to that damn patch of freckles.

There seemed so much more of him, maybe it was the proximity, maybe it was the lack of the millions of layers he normally had about his person, but he seemed too be everywhere all at once.

She was aware that he had moved slightly, reaching up her hand found the collar of his shirt, she held him there, if she saw his eyes, the way they looked at her, she wouldn’t hold.

“I understand conflicted.” she said quietly, his other hand had fallen to join the first, she wondered if he had the same urge to explore as she did, her hand was so close to the warm skin of his chest. She could remember how inviting that had been as she had spilled her tears upon him, her pulling at him as she sought comfort from the engulfing pain of losing her sister.

But this was a different sort of pull, it came from deep within her, it had simmered before, but never drawn its head, now it stirred, interest causing it to try and control her.

Keep looking at the freckles Tina, you can do this, this isn’t the time.

“I’m sorry I keep you awake at night.” she said softly, he paused the stroking of her skin for a second before he continued, fingers tracing new flesh from it previous path. It sent a shiver through her, she pulled him just a little closer, aloud her fingers to gently brush the skin on his chest, warm to the touch.

“You really are the most insufferable of creatures.” he whispered quietly, she could tell by the tone he was mocking her, his words had the smile in them she couldn’t bring herself to see.

“and you the most unfathomable beast.” she teased him back.

She wanted to pull him closer with everything she had, she wanted to find all the other bits of him that he kept hidden away from everyone else. She wanted to keep him safe, to hold him and never let go.

“Tina?”

his lips hovered near her ear now, she could feel the breath on the tips of her lobe, For the love of… where were them frecles.

“Would you like your book now?”

Newts kitchen was sparse, the hob was obviously very seldom used, the pantry was not very well stocked, and the kitchen table might as well have just been an overturned fruit crate for the size of it, Tina sat drinking her black tea from a small china cup perched precariously upon the edge of a chair that had probably never seen better days, the rain from the night before had not stopped and she
doubted it would.

She wished she had her suitcase, or any of her belongings really, on returning to her room she had found a tidy pile of clothes, a small note indicated that Bunty had left them for her, Tina had been touched by the gesture.

Standing in front of the mirror she looked at herself and laughed, Bunty was an angel but nothing fit her apart from the large blue cardigan, the skirt was far too loose and the blouse barley grazed her naval.

As if on cue there had been a knock at the door, she had ventured over careful to make sure her new wardrobe didn’t trip her up, however when she had opened it, there was nobody there.

The tug on her leg caused her to look down, by her foot sat a stack of clothes, a small brown parcel, and atop of that Einstein. She picked the bundle up, hooking her new best friend up and on to the chain of her locket. She looked at the brown paper, it was addressed to her in Newts sweeping hand. She placed it on the bed and turned her attention to the clothes.

Newts trousers and shirt had fit her considerably better than the items that Bunty had left, she did however add the knitted cardigan to the outfit, she didn’t want to upset Bunty by making her think she was ungrateful.

“What you think then Eyni?” she asked as the Niffler looked at them both in the mirror, the creature looked slightly confused, he could probably smell Newt on the clothes, Tina certainly could.

The Brown package sat on the table beside her, she hadn’t seen Newt since they had left the sanctuary of his basement, and that already seemed like a distant dream.

She tried not to think about it, but the lines between reality and daydreams were starting to blur together. Could she really trust her own mind, her own body. She wanted too. Newt was a beacon in the darkness, he had been calling her ship in to safety while life had been going on around her.

Now she was grounded, and what looked like a light house had been sucked into a sea of fog. And to make matters worse the good ship Queenie had gone and sunk in to the mist, there but just out of sight, taunting her, ripping her from the warmth of the lighthouse she longed to seek refuge in. If she let him in, what was to say that he wouldn’t slip in to the same shadows that had taken her sister.

She was torn, she wanted to open her gift. She had waited so long for it after all, but he had been so offended that she hadn’t waited for ‘her’ copy. She drummed her fingers against the teacup, watching as Einstein pulled at the neatly packaged paper.

“Morning Tina.”
Jacob walked in, he looked like he had been awake all night. She pointed her wand at the side board and a red cup came floating over full of tea. Jacob sat on the other side of the table, looking at the content.

“Black tea, the closest thing to coffee I could find,” she said sympathetically. “I have no idea how the English function without Coffee, but apparently they do.”
Jacob looked so lost. He was such an easy man to read, you didn’t need to read his mind his face said it all.

“So what’s the plan, we getting Queenie back or not?”
“We don’t have a plan… not yet anyway.”
He sipped at his tea, not hiding his dislike very well.
“That’s what you and Newt do. Save things.” he observed her “I’m sure as heck the two of you will come up with something.” she could tell he was trying to convince himself as much as her.

“I miss her, its like a bit of me is missing” he took another sip of the god-awful tea “but it’ll only be for a bit, she’ll come bobbin through that door without a care in the world,” he looked up as if expecting to see her do just that, his eyes lingering at the threshold, ever the optimist.

“I know my baby, he might have gotten into her head, but…well being in peoples heads is our Queenies speciality.” his eyes had glazed over.
Tina averted her gaze to the package on the table. Einstein was sitting on top of it looking at Jacob with a look of utmost concern.
Tina patted him gently in the direction of the no-maj.
He scuttled over to Jacob and began butting at his hand.
“And who do we have here? whatcha doing little fella?” Jacob turned his hand over and the beast jumped into it, sniffing him.
Tina figured that he must smell something shiny, but was surprised to see Einstein try and shove Jacob’s thumb into his pouch.
“Einstein, and I think he’s broken.” Tina sighed putting her cup down next to her package.

“He appears to want to collect people rather than things.”
“You got no chance of getting me to fit in their little buddy,” Jacob said affectionately
“You have to love the determination.” she patted her chest and the Niffler looked up at her dropped Jacobs thumb and considered his options.
“Eyni, leave Jacob alone.” quick as an arrow, the beast jumped across from Jacob, scurried over the package, up her arm and took his place anchored around Tina’s neck.

Jacob watched all this, he shook his head, and took another drink of his tea, she was suddenly very aware that she was sat in clothes that were not her own and acting as if one of the creatures was hers.

“You're getting as bad as Newt,” Jacob said watching her from over the top of his cup.
“if you have a picket hiding in that shirt of his, id say it was a lost cause.” she blushed, averting her gaze again to the package on the desk.

“I’m only teasing Teen, since when did you care what I say?, Queenie always said you always looked smart in a suit, What’s the package?”
“It's Newts book.”
“But you have it already.”
“I know, but this is the…”
“Ah!” Jacob said knowingly.
“Well, at least you got it off him eventually. Are you gonna open it? Or are you now able to see through solid objects? cause if you can you could have given a fella a warning.” Jacob put down his cup, causing Tina to look at him.

“It’s only a book, it's not like its gonna bite you, although knowing Newt, I bet he has one of them
somewhere in this rabbit warren of his.”

Tina knew Jacob was just trying to calm her nerves. She didn’t know why she was delaying the opening, it wasn’t as if she hadn’t read the book already, more than once, more than a few times to be fair.

It was more to do with the gesture that had been put into her getting this very copy.

It had felt like it would never be hers, the world had changed so much since it was promised to her, it felt as if this book was the closing chapter on something that was far too big, far too complex.

Across from her, Jacob made and exasperated sigh.
“Tina, it’s just a book, if it tries to bite you I promise I’ll be the first to whack it with a kettle, or a Newt whatever happens to be closest.”

Oh to hell with it, nothing else was in her control these days, at least she could be in control of the way she felt about Newt. Plus Jacob was right, it was just a book.

The brown paper came away easy, Tina wondered if he had been carrying it with him all this time, just looking for the moment to give it to her.
She imagined him frustrated at his brother, unable to get the travel ban lifted, wanting to make sure that she got the thing in person.
She wondered if Theseus knew about this part, he seemed to be an ever watchful eye on his little brother, the same way she had over Queenie.

The cover of the book was different to that of the one she had in her case, never to be seen again she supposed, her book was a deep red, this one was blue. The shade of Blue she associated so strongly with Newt.

It almost matched his overcoat, his old one, not the new one that she thought was far too bland for his personality, if it weren’t for the lack of brown tweed, it would almost be identical.

Images of golden beasts glinted, drawings that Tina recognised as that of his own, and in stark contrast to her store-bought copy his first name was just shortened to ‘Newt’, it sat alongside the name she had given him, the name he had chosen to use above all the other titles.

It was like a version of him that only she saw, compressed and bound in book form.

It was perfect.

Tentatively she turned to the first page, instead of the customary title page she had expected to see there was a note, written in what she now recognised so well as Newts handwriting,

*The title, like myself, belong to you.*
well… that was something.

She clutched the tomb to her, looking anywhere but at Jacob, a world of I told you so’s ran through her mind.
An angry squeak came from her chest, as a disgruntled head popped up past the binding of the book.

“Come here buddy, I don’t think she’s all here right now, you know what dames get like.” he indicated to his shoulder.
“Less of that Mr,” Tina warned as she tried to compose herself.
“Hey me and my Buddy Einstein, were talking bout you, not to you,” Jacob teased.
“Sort of name is Einstein anyway? Sounds too grand for one of Newt’s ideas.”
“Trust me it is, I would have much rather called him Bob, but I let Bunty name them this time.”

Tina’s eyes snapped straight to him, he leaned on the door frame picket sitting on his shoulder, he was dressed again in his waistcoat, this shirt with all the buttons in their rightful place, she was secretly pleased, dishevelled Newt was not to be shared with anyone, that was hers.

“Apparently, she finds it quite funny, What with me being a Newton, she thought Einstein was a perfect name for him. She likes her Muggle studies, Bunty.” Newt crossed to the sink patting Einstein as he did so.
“He, I feel got off lightly, his sisters Sabin, Apgar and Aning, not so much.”
“You can say that again” taking another sip of his tea Jacob looked over at Newt who was busying himself with a teapot, “Where did your brother shoot off to this morning anyway?”
“Theseus?”
“Yeah like I said your brother, ain’t none of you English types got normal names like me n Tina.” Tina almost choked on her tea, beside her Newt reached out and gently touched her shoulder, it was such a light touch, but it was a huge gesture in front of Jacob.

“Jacob, Porpentina is not a normal name …” she rolled her eyes, “Or did you think Tina was my proper name?” he chose to ignore her.
“Well, just warn your brother I am gonna get it wrong, Nagini has already told me to stop trying to say it, she says just to call her Gin, its a wonder you ever get anything done, what with all the fancy names and such.”

Newt retracted his hand, she looked round at him, he was now leaning against the sink his own cup entwined between his long fingers.

“He’s gone in to work, he slipped out before I got up this morning, he left a note with Picket.”
But Picket had been with them all night when did… Tina’s eyes caught His for a split second, Newts ears went slightly pink.
“No point arguing with him, Thes, is like me in that way, he wouldn’t have listened, he wants to get
any sensitive information out of the ministry, he thinks that its only a matter of time. I have to agree
with him.”
“So what do we do in the meantime?” Tina asked, looking for the answers in his eyes.
“We wait, we regroup and we figure out our best strategy, and as Queenie is aware of my address,
that means we will also have to move.” he placed his hand on the back of her chair, she could feel
his thumb stroking her back, his hand hidden from Jacobs view.

“But what about the creatures? You can’t keep them all in the case, that wouldn’t be fair on the
larger ones at all.” she couldn’t imagine the Kelpie being very happy after the freedom it had
downstairs.
“I’ll think of something, Mum will probably have room for some of my roomier acquisitions, the
farms got plenty of space.”
“Didn’t picture your Mom as a farm type buddy.”
“My Mother … Oh I can’t even begin to explain her, Theseus once described her as a Viper-tooth in
a Puffskin body, I can’t say I disagree.”
She had never really thought about Newts parents, not as actual physical people.
They had just been side points in his letters, she wasn’t sure what to make of the news that they may
be coming into her world, and soon.
As if Newt had felt her slight apprehension, he changed the subject to food, something that Tina was
highly grateful for.
The day had been a long one, it felt like they were on house arrest, waiting for something to happen. The rain refused to let up, pounding relentlessly on the window.

Newt had to admit that he was not enjoying this amount of people in his personal space, it was outside his comfort zone, most things were outside his comfort zone as a rule, but the pretence of playing at host was exhausting.

It wasn’t that he begrudged the company, not a jot, he wouldn’t change the companionship that Jacob provided, for all the tea in China, but Newt was beginning to find this constant company, draining.

He had been more than thankful when Theseus returned at 3.30pm promptly, distracting the need for him to be the centre of attention.

Newt was impressed, to anyone looking you wouldn’t see the sadness he carried with him. It was something that Theseus had always been good at, first impressions, his poker face. The hopelessly lost expression of the day before would now only show itself when no one was around to see it, his ability to protect himself from the world so much more elegantly than Newt. He had been born to follow in the footsteps of there Father.

That wasn’t to say his brother wasn’t prone to life-threatening idiocy. That was a trait of there mothers that they both shared, the fluctuation was that when Theseus did it, it was Noble, when Newt did it he was a prat.

Newt sat in his window seat observing the easy grace Theseus had with everyone in the room, Jacob chatted with him like they had been friends for years, Bunty hung on his every word. Even Nagini had moved over to his side, she looked so different dressed in a simple green cardigan, and a long grey skirt, legs tucked under herself, still timid, but willing to get the measure of her present situation. He couldn’t hate his brother for his good-natured charm, how could he.

Newts eyes were drawn to a movement, it had just been a turn of a page, but it was the loudest sound in the room to him right now, louder than the pointless chatter his brother conducted, louder than the rain that bombarded the glass pane beside him.

Another page, then another page, he smiled.

Theseus might be able to hold sway over an audience, but there was one person in that current audience who was quite happy enjoying the starting act.

A little giggle, eyes darting over the page, fingers pushing back a loose strand of hair. A pause in concentration as she tried to comprehend what the words written in-between the lines indicated. Chew on her lip when something forced a smile across her face.

He hoped that she appreciated the notes he had added to her copy, the extra bits of information that his publisher had decided were too boring, vulgar or biologically correct to make it into the actual printed work.

Her ears blushed red, he wondered what one of his annotations had raised such a coy response, he was led to believe that she was a modern witch, maybe he had been wrong? She glanced a look at him, blushing even harder now. His interest peaked now, where was she up to? All he knew right now was that she was absorbed in his words, he might not be able to get them to do what he wanted out loud, but on paper… that was where he came into his own.
He turned his eyes back to the sketches he had been working on and studying. His rough workings of the migration pattern of the Ridge-back verses the nesting of the Iron belly normally helped to calm his nerves, but his mind wandered, replaying images from the days before. The good and the bad. His attention kept drawing him back to the turning of a page.

He hadn’t been paying all that much attention as he doodled across the page, his mind almost worked of its own accord these days when he sketched, more often than not having to concentrate on not getting eaten by the things he observed. Things like Runespore had more heads than brains, and while mostly harmless, you wouldn’t want to get in between the left and right head’s argument, not if you quite liked any of your appendages where they were originally grown.

It wasn’t until Theseus wandered over to join him did he realise what his brain had been doodling, he slid a map of Luxembourg over the page, but he knew he was to late, his brother had seen it.

“We need to talk, Fido.” sliding up and leaning against the wooden sash. Theseus looked from him to Tina who sat stroking Einstein, her eyes skimming his book.
“Depends upon the subject,” Newt said quietly sliding his work back into his field journal.
“You know as well as I do you are not getting out -” Theseus nodded in Tina’s direction. “-of that discussion”
Newt shrugged in a non-committed way.

“However, we need to act, this is not the time for such things. we need to put a plan of action together, I sent Mum a message when I was in my office over the secured floo, she’s happy to take a few of the more adventurous of your charges, as long as they don’t have more than two heads and six legs.”
“I’m sure she is.” Newt had a sneaking suspicion his Mother was hoping that he had picked up a new Hippogriff on his Journeys, she was in for a disappointment.

“Obviously, nobody knows anything that happened in Paris,” Theseus sighed “So obviously that means that everyone knows about what happened in Paris, I’m not to go in until The minister has decided the best course of action. Compassionate leave and all that.” he caught Newt’s eye.
“Obviously that is extended to you, leave with full pay, Until it all gets...” Theseus trailed off, Newt let him simmer in his own thoughts for a moment.

Newt Didn’t know where to put himself, even before the events of the last few days, once his travel ban was lifted he had no intentions of going back to the ministry, he didn’t need too, his book was actually managing to pay the bills. He had been hoping to travel, to maybe expand on it, maybe investigate a few more habitats over in the Americas, maybe drop by and see a certain set of friends…

Newt composed himself.
“We need to move, at some point soon, One of his lot are aware of my address.” he tried not to think of the crushing disappointment that he had felt when Tina had not followed her sister through his front door, now he cursed himself for the open invitation he had extended, and the situation it presented now.

“If they try at your house, and fail, its only a matter of time… they’re going to know we haven’t left Europe, it would be too easy to track us, even if we went by muggle transport.” Newt kept his voice low, he didn’t want Tina to hear them discussing Queenie like this as if she was a spy.
Theseus nodded. They had worked together before when Theseus had been posted to the front line, it had been one of the very few times that his brother had ever taken direction from him. He could count on one hand how many times he had seen his brother’s composure slip, ever the leader. However, he was looking at Newt now for guidance. Newt wished he could point him in the right direction.

“Well we can’t stay at my place indefinitely, Mum can’t be having us there, Dad will just get himself all wound up and end up jinxing something, or someone so bad that it would give us away when the entire misuse of magic department have to descend.”

Newt had been trying to think of somewhere they could move, trying to think if there was anywhere less obvious to take everyone, but as all the people he trusted were sat in this room, his mind was drawing up blanks.

“I’m sure we will come up with something.”

“Yes, we probably will.” he looked up at Theseus, he had never really seen him look this lost before, it was as if he had lost all purpose.

“Thes, is there anything you need, just say.” Newt placed a hand on his elbow. “I might not be much use with words of advice,” he sighed, “But you know that you have me right? You aren’t going through it alone.”

Newt needed his brother to see, no matter what had gone on between them, between Newt and Leta in the past, it was nowhere near the love his brother had for Leta.

Newt knew that now, now that even a turn of a page could draw him in.

“Careful Fido, that was almost human affection, we don’t want people to start thinking you’re normal, what would your mother say?”

Newt pulled his hand back, at least one thing stayed constant, his brothers’ ability to deflect situations with humour.

“I think the mother would say about bloody time.”

Theseus smiled despite himself, “Talking of human affection.” he snapped his eyes to Tina “Miss Goldstein?”

Newt had a sudden vision of things becoming very embarrassing very quickly.

“Thes, don’t you bloody dare...” but it was too late.

Tina had untangled her legs and was striding towards them both, Newt tried not to appreciate how good she looked in his clothes, they fit closer than the oversized blouses that she normally wore, he would have to make sure she borrowed his things more often.

In the time it took to think that, she had crossed the room, she slid into the window seat between Newt and his brother, Newt noticed she left little room between her long legs and his own, tucking herself alongside him, had she been aware of her actions? Making sure she was as close to him as possible in the presence of his brother?

“Miss Goldstein.”

“Call me Tina, we aren’t at work are we?” Newt noted the tone in her voice, she was challenging Theseus, testing the grounds, just how did the Auror department work? Was Thes, her boss by default? Did it work across time zones and borders?

Newt suddenly realised where he had seen a stand like this before, he had visions of dragons sizing each other up, eyes observing, tasting the air and weighing up the options. However, when it had been short snouts bearing their fangs at each other, he had felt slightly more in control.

“Well, of course, Tina.” Theseus was playing a dangerous game, he had been on the sharp end of
Tina’s rage, it hurt like hell.
“Then how can I assist you?” she said curtly.
Newt wondered if Theseus remembered the jinx in the records room from the day before as clearly as Newt did, it had been rather something to see her disarm and restrain him like that.

“I was hoping that you would help me look across these files I brought back from the office,..”
Theseus rooted around in his inside pocket, they watched as he reached almost down to his elbow. Had Thes used his undetectable extension charm on it? He must have, for seconds later arms worth of brown files were strewn across Newts work desk.
“That charm of yours is rather useful Fido.” he smirked, “They didn’t even think to check the inside pocket.”

Beside him, Tina shook her head. “You are just as bad as he is.”
“Maybe, but I'm not stupid enough to get caught, even if the Auror is as charming as you.”

Tina blushed and Newt shot his brother a warning look. However Tina had inched closer to Newt, her arm brushed his as she leaned forward to retrieve a file from the pile, he wasn’t stupid he knew she had done that so Theseus would see the contact.

“So what you think you got in these files then Mr Scamander?”

“Theseus, please and this is a copy of every report that has passed through my hands, any and all sightings and anomalies that could potentially point to where the main hub of operations is.”
Tina sat back, leaning against the window, her fingers flipped open the file, Newt watched as her eyes glanced over his brothers' notes.

“It’s a lot to ask, I know you have been through a lot recently.”
“Theseus, stop talking, at least Newt has the sense to shut up when he’s being an idiot.”

If he had thought that she was perfect before she had just surpassed herself… It had taken fourteen years, a few black eyes and a stupid amount of courage for him to call his brother an idiot, and here she was after less than a week.
Newt braved a look at Theseus, he gave him an impressed nod, Tina had passed whatever it was he was testing her on.

“Newt, be a gem, and get me some ink and parchment will you?” Tina asked him gently, catching his eye, her eyes darted across his features, he could feel her scanning him, trying to read his reactions.
Right now he would quite like to give her the biggest hug imaginable, but that wasn’t appropriate. Even if what was appropriate between the two of them had become more and more difficult to tell these days.
Begrudgingly he moved from her side, darted up to his room and using his unlock charm to open his dresser drawer, he grabbed the requested items and returned to the living room, not wanting to give his brother the chance to get himself cursed into next Tuesday.
Images of countries she had only very briefly read about in book danced under the lamplight, she
leaned back, stretching to relieve the pain between her shoulder blades formed from hunching over,
she had lost track of the time, how long had she been sat cross-legged upon the rug? Files splayed
out around her, it wasn’t dignified but it worked, organised chaos as Queenie had called it.

Across from her Theseus sat slouched in one of Newts miss matched armchairs, he had nodded off
after dinner, having only really picked at the Fish and Chips that Bunty had ventured out for.

The air was stuffy now, humid now the rain had stopped.

Theseus had fallen asleep shirt untucked, top button undone and cuffs rolled up, a map of Europe lay
open upon his knee, sleep had finally caught up with him.
She knew that he had been trying to fight it.
Scared of what would meet him as his eyes closed to the world.

Tina hadn’t even realised she was watching him until Jacob woke her from her observations, taping
her shoulder gently and passing her some coffee.

“Bunty did good, this stuff ain’t so bad, ain’t like that stuff on 32nd, but it’ll do.” he kept his voice
low, aware of Theseus’ slumber.

“Jacob, remind me to tell Bunty she’s an angel will you?” she felt the gentle brotherly grip on her
shoulder.

Jacob had done this several times during the day, she wasn’t sure if it was her, or himself he was
trying to reassure.
she almost felt as if he had to keep reminding himself that this was real, that Tina was there with him,
that the last few months were solid, she had a feeling that he might not trust his own judgment.

“Don’t stay up too late,” he said quietly and doing something he had never done before he lent down
and kissed the top of her head.

Tina didn’t even flinch, once upon a time that would have been one of her defence triggers, an
invasion of her space.
However, the action was somewhat comforting, Jacob cared.

She might not be able to bring her sister back right now, but having Jacob around was as close to her
as she was getting.
Right now Jacob was her family.

She reached up and gently brushed the fingers on her shoulder.

“You try and sleep too, you need it,” she said affectionately, nodding towards the slumped figure in
the chair.
“I promise I will go to sleep as soon as I finish this file.”

His fingers slipped from below hers.
“You better, Queenie would never forgive me if anything happened to you, so you just look after you, I know it helps to throw yourself into work, but I will take it off you if I think that’s what she would have done.”

Tina looked up at him. His eyes were glazed, talking of Queenie had sent his mind somewhere, where did he go? did he go straight to dancing blue flames as she did?

“I promise Jacob, I will sleep in an actual bed tonight,” she said it before her brain caught up to her mouth.
If he noticed the strangeness in her remark he didn’t let it show.

He nodded satisfied that she would at least pretend to go rest, she hoped it was enough to make Jacob get some sleep himself.

She watched as he took the stairs, where were they going to end up the pair of them?
other than work there was nothing to call them back home to New York.
Word of Jacob being a No-maj and how much he had seen.
how much would have filtered back to the President?

It had not crossed her mind until just then, as she watched what was left of her family ascend the stairs.

She turned her attention back to the file if she could work out a pattern, anything at all, it would make her feel less hopeless, it would give her at least a purpose.

She flipped over some parchment and set about writing out the trade route that Theseus had highlighted.

Tina wasn’t sure but she thought she had seen the name of the trading company before, the memory of the logo printed on boxes jogged at the edges of her mind.

Not in New York, had it been on the harbour in France?

She had seen something about Calais in one of the other files, she got up and moved over to the desk, she was sure the file was over there.

Carefully so not to upset Newts own organised chaos Tina moved a few of his files.

She thought she had reacted quickly enough to thwart the impending landslide, but reactions were something her exhausted mind was considering as an afterthought.

She watched as the files tumbled from the desk and landed on the floor, she gave out a frustrated sound and with a flick of her wand the papers righted themselves.

Something, however, caught her eye.

Through correspondence, she had become accustomed to Newts handwriting, his ability to wax lyrical about some creature or other, accompanied by his sketches and drawings.

Tina knew Newt liked to sketch, his hands fixed on something solid as his mind wandered, in the short amount of time he had spent with her in New York, she had come across some of his doodles, images of his creatures that played across his mind.

She had likes finding sketches of Frank all over the house after he had left, even if one had been on the title page of her Macusa handbook.
So she wasn’t surprised to see his sketches etched alongside his notes, however, this one made that little light that refused to go out flicker a little stronger.

Lifting the parchment, she tipped it into the light from the desk lamp.

She let her finger trace the image, Einstein’s likeness looked back at her, wrapped tightly around her chain, nestled upon her chest, her knees tucked up, his book resting upon them.

She hadn’t noticed him watching her, observing her.

But he had, he had observed her right down to the tiny scar near her hairline, the way she chewed her lip when she read.

Is this how Newt saw her? She looked so calm, so grounded. Did he not see the dark circles under her eyes, the way her hair never did what she wanted it too. The way her limbs felt far too big for the rest of her body.

He had drawn her like one of his wards.

And she hadn’t even noticed, too engulfed in his words, sucked into his world on a printed page.

Tina wondered if this was what it was like when the Nifflers saw gold, now she saw it she needed to keep it close.

“I think I got the likeness down.”

Tina almost cursed him. Had she not been so tired her reactions would have been faster.

“Don’t sneak up on a girl!” she said not turning around, “would you sneak up on a Hippogriff like that?”

“I wouldn’t find a Hippogriff going through my work files, eating them maybe.” she saw him move into her line of vision, slipping back into his window seat where he had spent most of the day. His eyes were watching her curiously. “Although I wouldn’t put it past you to eat them.”

“I was looking for something, but your mess attacked me.”

Newt looked passed her at the splayed out mess across the rug, raising an eyebrow.

“My mess?”

“Don’t you dare judge me, Mr Scamander. That there is organised chaos, this is the leaning tower of disaster.”

“Did you know it leans because a Dragon crashed into it? back when the Roman wizards tried to copy the muggle Olympics?”

Newt looked at her, his eyes eager, she knew he was deflecting.

“I visited it once, heard tell of a vampire nest, a load of rubbish obviously we all know they prefer Albania, but the impact mark is visible still if you look at it just right.”

He started fidgeting with the files on the table.

“The Colosseum… now that is a bit of a difficult one to try and cover up. There is a native colony of Minotaur, they live in the tunnels below. Ovid wrote about them in his poetry, he was possibly the worst person in the world to have left them in the care of to be fair.
Spent far too much time worrying about the pictures. 
Good job that by the time most of Rome had learned to read the things had become myth”
He smiled at her.
“Ts all in his work, if you can be bothered to translate Latin.”

This was the thing with Newt she realised the more she got to know him, it was all or nothing, he would either give you nothing, or he would give you everything.

She shook her head, of course, Newt read ancient Latin poetry, they probably taught it at Hogwash.

Something was niggling...

“Do you spend a lot of time staring at women and drawing their likeness?”

Avoiding his eager gaze, her voice low so not to wake the sleeping, she wasn’t sure why she felt she needed to know, but she did.

He was watching her, aware of it at least this time, she was surprised by how easy it felt, anyone else would have been cursed into oblivion by now, but with Newt it was a fuzzy kind of comfort, he wasn’t judging her.

“I was drawing Einstein, he just happened to be sitting on you at the time.” he lent back against the window pane, something behind his eyes stirred, like he was debating over the words he was going to use next.

She knew she had to let him get his words in the right order, so she waited.

“When you study a creature, it doesn’t do to just look at the thing.”

he waved his hand toward the basement

“You need the why and the where...You have to get the habitat right, it pulls the whole observation together, things need to be in context to be understood.” Tina gave herself permission to hold eye contact.

With Newt it was always the eyes.

His fingers were gripping on to his seat so tightly the tips of his fingers were going red.

“Are we talking about this right now?” she read between the lines, she knew it was him trying to make light of the situation that stupid magazine article had put the two of them in, she already felt like an idiot, he didn’t have to spell it out.

But she knew herself that there was some sort of stupid checkmate between them.

“No, but we have to at some point,”

he was watching her in much the same way he had observed the missing Ocamy in the joists, exited, wonder and a fear of making the wrong move were etched upon his face.

“Might as well start by sorting out one of the few things we have control over.”

Tina was acutely aware that this was the first time she had been semi alone with him since waking up in the case.

He also had a point.
Looking down at the sketch she reminded herself that this was how he saw her.

She lay the parchment down on the pile of files, looking across the desk at him, the empty hole that had been present for so long, it was closing.

Whatever creature had made the hole was eased by his presence.

But now there was a gaping chasm where her sister belonged, the creature was fighting back, but the edges of the chasm were crumbling, she couldn’t lose Newt to the avalanche.

After being separated by an Ocean, why did this tiny desk feel as if it was just as wide?

Newt tipped his head to the side, Her feet moved of there own volition, following some subconscious trigger.

She sunk into the window seat next to him, close but not quite touching.

It wasn’t that blissful feeling she had upon awakening, but a gentle calm washed over her in his closeness.

“Well I don’t know about you, but your first trip to England I didn't see us under house arrest,” he spoke quietly, Theseus had snorted over in his chair, his body shifting for comfort.

“I’m glad he’s sleeping, he needed it.”

“I was under the impression that you didn’t get on?”

He shifted next to her, bridging the gap that was between them.

She could feel his warmth against her side, she had liked that when she had woken.

Her body always seemed to want to lean into him these days, he was like a magnet pulling her towards him.

“The age gap has always been a bit of an issue, plus he was mums pride and joy until I came along, then he was at Hogwarts, we didn’t really see one another till holidays, and even then Thes wasn’t going to be seen dead hanging around with his baby brother.”

She watched him, his gaze lingered on his brother, before moving to her. His eyes searching, the lamplight flickered off them, dancing across the dilated pupils, inviting her in.

“We get on a lot better now then we did when we were kids, mum said we both have her stubborn streak, she isn’t wrong. Plus Thes was Prefect, then Headboy, champion of the Dueling club… you know… the perfect son. Whereas me well…” he sighed.

“I only got to keep my wand because of Dumbledore.” he drew his wand, giving it a light flick, folding the map on his brother's knee and adding it the pile on the floor.

“You’re meant to get it taken off you if you're expelled, but seeing as how I didn’t actually do anything wrong, I was spared the old snapped wand.”

He looked at the wand in his hand, Tina watched as the inlay shone in the lamplight. She had never noticed the iridescent shell before, it danced under his touch.

“And in true Scamander style that was a Leta special, always getting me into trouble. That short temper matched her height when she met Thes the first time, she hated him, on no grounds other than the fact she felt that I had been in his shadow.”

Tina shifted uncomfortably, she felt uncomfortably close now Newt was talking about Leta, she wanted to be anywhere but here right now.
Newt must have felt it radiate off her because she felt his hand on her knee, making sure that she didn’t bolt.

“Let me speak Tina, I know you don’t want to talk about me and Leta, but you need to understand, and it’s not going to go away until we talk.”

Tina continued to stare at the image of Theseus, his snores louder now. She let her hand find Newts, placing it over his, signalling he should go on.

“Leta was my best friend, and by that I mean that she was the only one that didn’t think I was a freak for having this infatuation with my animals.” he sighed “she was outcast because of who she was, you heard her, she lived in the shadow of Corvus, in the shadow of her family name, Leta was not always the nicest person, but she was my friend.”

Newt removed his hand from under Tina’s swapping it out, she was suddenly aware of his other hand, it was gently stroking the bottom of her back. He was trying to calm her, she hated to admit it was working.

“I kissed her once.”

Tina tensed up, she didn’t want to know. Why would he tell her this!

“Shush, Tina listen, please you need to just listen,” he whispered quietly in to her ear, there was a strange feeling stirring in her stomach, it wasn’t anger, it wasn’t even infuriation, it was that creature, it was trying to climb back out, fighting against the avalanche.

“She slapped me so hard, didn’t speak to me for over a week, dunno if you noticed, Newton Scamander is not good at reading people, animals yes, women? Nope. It’s an art form I very much doubt I will ever get.”

Tina tried not to imagine a fifteen-year-old Newt, shocked at the sudden impact of Leta’s palm. It was impossible not to, it was quite the image, she felt the laugh before she heard it.

“Laugh, I do now, I was an idiot, it’s amazing what trouble school boy hormones will get you in to.” she felt him pull her closer into him, his lips still resting near her ear as he spoke. The creature in her pulled itself over the ledge the whisper calling to it.

“After a bollocking, we set things right, we moved on, well, she did manage to get me expelled but in all fairness, I had done with everything I could learn from a book, though I don’t think dad ever forgave her for the inconvenience.”

“what did you do?” Tina jumped at the sound of her own voice.

“I just got as far away as I could, avoided people, I didn’t want people to find me. when Leta left school, she was not allowed to have anything to do with me, Thes told me that, not her. Leta was too stubborn and proud to let me know it wasn’t her choice. We finally made peace during the war.”

Tina’s mind shot back to being surrounded by watching faces, watching judging faces. ‘Scamander the war hero?’ even now Newt stood in his brother's shadow.

“What happened?”

“Thes got hurt, really bad, he saved half his squad in the crossfire.” She stroked his wrist encouraging him to go on.
“I’d been sent to his squad to look after a Dragon they had cornered. Dragons are a speciality of mine, I will have to introduce you to some, and well... he went down fighting, I managed to get most of the men back in one piece, they didn’t like taking orders from me, I mean look at me, but when you’re the one in charge of the fire-breathing monster, people tend to do what you say.”

She turned to look at him. His eyes were glazed as he was lost in his thoughts.

“They met in the hospital in-case you ever wondered. Leta had seen a Scamander had been admitted with Dragon burns, she assumed it was me, asked to be assigned to the burn ward, tell you what her face was a picture when she realised the person she had been speaking to was Thes not me, suppose the bandages had something to do with it.”

Tina felt mortified on Leta’s behalf, she was about to question how she mixed them up when she suddenly remembered the previous night, both her and Dougal had done the same thing and that was without burns and bandages.

“He asked for my permission to marry her you know?!” his eyes turned back to meet her, looking for her reaction to this new information, he was sharing himself with her, letting her into his world, the real world not the one he had created for himself.

“I knew it was coming, I think that’s part of the reason I wanted to get Frank back to Arizona, I wanted to get away from the two of them, the other side of the world seemed like a good idea at the time, I’m sure there must be an unwritten rule about siblings dating best friends, it puts you in a bloody awful place.”

Tina couldn’t sympathise, her best friend was her sister. The creature in her stomach turned tail back into the hole.

“I think..” his eyes found hers again, “I think,” he repeated. “Thes thought that I was still in love with Leta, and I was in a way.”

Tina tensed, Newt noticed, fingers started tracing patterns on her waist, trying to calm her.

“she was like my sister, after all the stupid hormones and childhood stupidity, she managed to turn herself into this little ball of ambition and love, she and Thes were made for each other, she was his anchor. I think I left mine on the other side of the world,”

Newt broke eye contact with her, looking over at his brother, for the first time she noticed the sadness in his eyes was not for his lost love, it was for his brothers.

It took her a few moments to comprehend the last thing he said, the creature sniffed the air again, patting at her heart hopefully.

“I’m worried about him Tina, he’s lost his anchor,” he gripped her tighter around the waist. “I’m scared and worried and all these things I haven’t felt towards him in several years, the stupid twit that he is.” his fingers had worked the bottom of her shirt loose with fidgeting, she could feel his rough hands skimming her waist.

“I’m all sorts of anxious, his messed up heart is going to go and make him do something stupid and noble.”

“Yes, that does seem to be a family trait.” tracing his thumb with hers, she tried to calm him echoing back his own movements, she could tell he was starting to struggle with this confession.

She reached up and touched his cheek with her free hand, he turned in to her touch. She wanted to comfort him.

“What about you?”
“What about me?”

“Am I allowed to worry about you? After all, I am the little problem that keeps you awake at night… remember?” he smiled into her hand.

“I said that didn’t I?” he had the decency to go bright red.

“Yeah you did.” she stroked his cheek lightly, enjoying the softness under her fingers, just that small action, it stopped the aching, just for a moment. Newt seemed to find comfort in the action. Closing his eyes under her touch.

“How about this, we both worry about Thes, and Queenie, and everything else. But we try and keep it away from your babies in the basement?”

“Share the worry?”

“Yeah, but not around the nifflers Einstein has enough to stress over,” she studied his face, he had incredibly long eyelashes, she had never noticed that before now. But then again, she had only ever watched him from a safe distance, this was not a safe distance. This was the exact opposite of a safe distance. Why did the creature have to have so much hope?

‘I missed you.” it was only a breath of a sound but it filled the space between them.

She sunk into his chest pulling him closer. Hands wrapping into his shirt, head against his shoulder, face near his heart. Did he have this aching in his chest too? Tina had never needed to be near anyone this bad before, she knew she should be worrying about Queenie, about Theseus and Credence and the whole big mess that they were stuck in, but right now all she could think about was Newt.

“I missed you too, so damn much.”

“Well this is a predicament.” his lips brushing the top of her head. “We appear to have the same problem.”

She knew the problem was more than them just missing the other, this was bigger than just the two of them, so much bigger. But for now, she could at least enjoy the comfort of his hug and the promise of something more.

Chapter End Notes

thoughts?

also if you don't understand the poet reference I insist you look him up and read the description of his two biggest works...

then you will get the joke.

sometimes Newt just likes to show off

as ever i love comments and ill try and answer each one
Jacob had intended to get up early. Clean Newts kitchen and use the ingredients that Bunty had acquiesced to keep himself busy and bake, he wanted the familiarity of the flour in his hands, timings and quantities. He had to keep himself busy.

He didn’t know when he would see New York again, the decision forced upon him. He knew that to go back would mean that he would lose all of this. MACUSA would wipe his memories as soon as he set foot of the steamer.

He didn’t want to lose his best friend, because for the first time he had an actual best friend. This weird quirky English guy with a stupid name and all these wonderful creatures, creatures that he had grown to adore, he didn’t want to only remember them when he closed his eyes. Echoes of dreams. He didn’t want to forget Tina, the strongest person he had ever met, he wanted to see her fulfil her potential, he wanted to find the strength she had in her commitment. She always wanted the right thing. Even if it meant it was at her own distress.

But mainly, he didn’t want to forget his girl, his Queenie, his Queen. His crazy, wonderful, caring, adorable, loving Queenie. He missed her, every last bit of her. She was so blinded by her own love that she had gone and done something so crazy. Why was she so impatient.

Tina had suggested a move to Europe eventually, so they could be together, openly, they just had to save up enough. The bakery was doing good. Tina had suggested another branch in London to him and Queenie, she wanted to be near Newt, even if she wouldn’t have admitted it.

That damn magazine, it had caused so much distress, it had infected everyone it had touched. Reaching out wrapping tendrils of disrepair around everything it touched.

Tina had left after Credence too quickly, it was as if she had the plan already, she just changed the destination.

So much chaos, so much hurt, but so much love.

Queenie.

His girl.

He did not want to be made to forget.

So he would bake, and learn how to care for the creatures, make himself useful. He might not have a wand or do magic, but he knew this was where he belonged.

He had never really felt that until that day at the bank, ever since then, even before he remembered
the events in the subway, he had felt like he belonged to something.

He hadn’t felt like he was wanted or belonged ever since his grandmother had died.

He shuffled to the bottom of the stairs, sunlight breaking through the windows, a welcome change from the rain that had been persistent since he first arrived, he wasn’t expecting anyone else to be up, it was even too early for Newt and his morning rounds.

He would bake rolls for breakfast, then maybe look at making a pie for tea. Bunty would probably go get him the ingredients if he asked her.

He was just beginning to list what he would need in his head when he almost walked straight into Nagini stood at the bottom of the stairs.

She lifted a finger to her lips silencing him, she was watching something, head to the side, china cup in hand.

“Don’t wake them up, they all need the sleep.” she lent up and whispered in his ear. Jacob looked past her to the sun-drenched living room.

Theseus was still where he had left him last night, he still looked just as uncomfortable as he had then. He was going to have a bad neck when he woke up, but at least he had finally managed some sleep.

Dougal was fast asleep across the rug, Einstein wrapped in his fur snoring slightly, basking in the sunbeam that lit them. One of the birds Jacob had seen in the basement sat, its long tail feathers draping the back of the sofa, it’s eyes watching the Niffler accusingly.

But all of this was a side note to the image in the window, it made even his sad heart feel lighter.

Newt had fallen asleep in his window seat.

One foot on his desk chair, one propped along the frame of the window. In his arms lay Tina. His head lay atop of hers as she rested on his chest, legs tucked under her, her face turned towards the sun streaming through the window, One of Newts arms tucked protectively around her waist, his hand resting upon her stomach, her hand resting upon his.

It didn’t look comfortable, but they looked peaceful.

“I didn’t know they were together,” Nagini said quietly.

“last time I checked they weren’t” the sight made him miss Queenie, even more, she wanted her sister and Newt together so bad, it must have been exhausting for her, it was bad enough just having to watch them let alone hear in there head.

Jacob weighed up their options, they could wait until they woke up, and then they would avoid each other all day, and go back to avoiding the situation and embarrassed cause they thought everyone was watching them because of this moment.

He could actively wake them up, make them face up to it… and have them die of embarrassment. That was almost as painful to think about as the first one.

Or they could just pretend they hadn’t seen anything…
The last one seemed like the best idea, nodding towards the kitchen Nagini followed his lead.

Jacob was normally quite quiet when he baked, however today he felt a well-timed case of the dropsies, would be diplomatic.

After all, that’s what his Queenie would do.

Newt felt the warmth move away from him first, it was that which had alerted him to how sore his back felt. Had he fallen asleep in his shed again?

No that didn’t seem right, he could smell something wonderful cooking, that was not something he associated with his case.

The next thing he felt was his fingers being untangled, the weight against his leg growing less. He wished it wouldn’t move, the light in him was enjoying the way it felt.

“Newt, I think Jacobs up,”
Tina’s voice was hovering on the edge of his conscience, she had been there before.
He had had this dream before, her waking up in his arms, wrapped around him, holding her close. Waking her with a light touch, her lips against his the warmth of there bodies pressed up against each other...

A few more minutes of sleep, he needed to hold on to the image of her, soft skin under his touch, her fire dancing across her eyes.

He felt a sharp pain, it stung at his elbow, and this felt very real. Dream Tina didn’t nip at him, well there had been that one dream, he had enjoyed that one a bit much… but no this was very real and very sore.

“Next one will be somewhere a lot more delicate if you don’t wake up Scamander.”

“Is that a promise?” he cracked one eye open in time to see her blush, before catching his eye with a smile.

She tried to smooth down her hair at the back where she had been curled up against him, she was losing the fight,

she had cut it since last time he had seen her, it was nice but it didn’t suit her, it made her look harsh. It was like she was trying to make herself look unapproachable and sharp.

A pang of guilt crept over him, had she cut it because of that stupid article? Had she made herself look as fierce as she could?

He leant forward to reach up and tame a stray part of her fringe.

Tina jerked away before he could get to it, nodding towards the harth where Theseus stirred in his chair.

He was suddenly aware that they were not alone in his case, his mind had been to busy with the warm feeling in his chest, and stirrings in other parts, it had not bothered to read the room. Tina had a habit of distracting his train of thought.
Not that he had managed to get past the first thoughts of the day and the longing that had past through his mind, thank Merlin Queenie wasn’t about.

He watched as she straightened herself out, yawning as she stretched herself out from her curl. The shirt he had lent her only just skimming her trousers as she did so, he let himself to enjoy the sight, watching as the fabric danced across the pale skin of her abdomen.

It was just as well they were not alone, as that stretch alone was nearly his undoing, he wondered if Tina had noticed just the effect she had on him because there was no hiding the way parts of him reacted to her, especially when he was in the grips of sleep.

Tina turned to look at him, he could feel her eyes as they passed over him, there it was again that feeling of time standing still, she was observing him the way he had done her so many times before, it was nice to do it in person other than in newsprint.

When she had finally looked away, Newt felt as if he had been catalogued for later use. It was strange to think that Tina thought about him the same way, he wondered where her dreams took her, was it as vivid as his dreams of her?

It was a glorious torture.

Tina stood up, he wished she would stay, at least till he felt he could actually stand and not have it be inappropriate.

He was going to log this one up as a learning lesson, no more close contact like this where he could bring shame to them in public.

Tina stood up and crossed over to his desk, she paused, as if she was contemplating something. Then picked up his wand, she turned it over in her hand a few times, it was almost as if she was sizing it up, holding it between her delicate fingers.

There was something almost intimate about the way she studied the groves worn into the tool of his trade. Her fingers trailed along the teeth marks, caused by not having enough hands to do his job sometimes, and dents and bumps from his many stupid mistakes, it had been good to him, his wand was one of a kind, just like him.

Tina turned to face him.

As if expecting it, his body automatically shifted towards her, she smiled again, resting a hand against his thigh.

He caught her eye, he was coming to realise he could almost predict her next move when their eyes met like that.

Right now she was trying to convince herself to do something, he had seen that look before.

Resolution flashed across her face, she smiled as she ran her other hand up his thigh, skimming lightly across the parts of him he was trying ever so hard to control.

Her hand lingered for a trick, then he felt his wand being slipped into his holster on his belt.

“Its dark times, Mr Scamander, you should keep an eye on your wand at all times.”

Thank the heavens, Thes was still snoring.
“I will take that on board.” he had no idea how the words had formed on his lips, he was totally under her control.

She gazed at him for a few more seconds, actions are harder to lose in translation.

“I need coffee,” she said breaking the gaze.

“I need a second” he heard himself saying as she strode off towards his kitchen, her own wand hitched at her side.

He needed to calm down.

Newt could smell something wonderful coming from the kitchen, once he managed to calm himself he had the feeling he was about to consume some of Jacobs own brand of magic.

Bunty was just hanging her coat up as he entered the kitchen, the very cramped kitchen, too many bodies and not enough space.

The flat really wasn’t designed for more than three people, and the kitchen contained six before Theseus even got up.

“Ah Newt, I have a letter for you.” Bunty thrust the folded brown envelope into his hand, there were no distinguishable features so how did she know it was for him?

As if she had been expecting it Bunty smiled.

“I bumped into a certain professor that we are both rather fond of as I headed down hornbook, I say bumped, I don’t think you ever just bump into Dumbledore do you?”

Newt carefully opened the parchment, aware that Tina had crossed to his side.

Newton,

I have been in correspondence with our mutual friend in the Dales, as we suspected the Zoo is not a safe place to keep migrating subjects.

I believe that you may find the answer to the safest nesting site upon visiting Miss Shipton and her petrified well.

If it pleases you she will welcome you on the cusp of the next billywig cycle.

Regarding our spiked friend I have made sure that the previous abode was clear, but as with dwellings uninhabited the parasites had infected the living space.

Also be aware that I have found this rather charming bakery on my travels, I stopped in to congratulate the owner, but he alas was taking a well-earned break, I do find it wonderful the way muggle banks can send money to anywhere in the world, it is like there own sort of Gringotts.

Please send my regards to your Mother when you next visit I was rather fond of the Brandling cake she sent.

And please inform your father that I would like to move my knight to take his bishop.

Regards
A.D

P.S I look forward to seeing you all at our usual inn, make no bones about it.

“Ok, what does any of that mean?”

“It means we have a plan of action,” he said, looking at her as she tried to work out the code.

“How did you get that, from that?”

“Let's just say we're going to be moving soon, and looks like we're getting out of London. Dumbledore has found someone to care for the bigger creatures that I know will look after them well, and some of them I can leave at Mum’s.”

“I still...”

“He's found us somewhere to lay low, somewhere they won’t think to look for us.”

Tina was looking at him as if he were crazy. If he wasn’t so used to Dumbledore and his eccentricity he wouldn’t have been able to work it out himself.

“We're going to York?” Theseus pondered over his other shoulder. Newt hadn’t even heard him get up.

“Looks like it.”

“New York?” Tina’s face looked confused.

“No… Old York,” he said passing the letter to his brother so he could read it properly.

“Dad’s not playing chess with Dumbledore is he?” Theseus said looking over the paper.

“That’s about as likely as mum is to ever make a cake...”

Tina was looking between the two of them, her face no less puzzled than it had been moments before. Newt was almost sorry for her confusion.

“Brandy and Bishop… at the Fleece.” Newt was suddenly aware that everyone but his brother was looking at him for answers.

Chapter End Notes

I give you a bit of smut, you give me feedback.

Happy New Year!

Don't let the muggles get you down.
It hadn’t taken long for them to gather the things that were needed for the road.

After all Tina mused as she folded her one clean shirt in with the two Newt had lent her, it wasn’t as if she had much in the way of things, but a shirt, the underwear she was standing in, one pair of trousers and a book were the totals of her worldly possessions, that was a new low in the grand scheme of things.

Newt had explained that her flat had been investigated if it was by Macusa or one of Grindelwald’s followers it was hard to know. Tina disliked the idea of people invading her private space. That had been the deciding factor in her decision not to fight to return.

If it was Grindelwald, it was stupid and dangerous.

If it was Macusa, the last thread of respect she had for them had split too far beyond repair.

Life was going to be very different now, she knew it from the moment Newt had explained the letter.

She had already started to formulate plans in her head, however, the idea of Queenie, the idea of there being no ‘us’ made all her plans feel distant and unreachable. It wasn’t that she had never had to just look out for herself, she had, it was just that she had always liked the comforting reassurance that Queenie would always be her ward.

Around her neck, Einstein snored quietly, happy and content to just be near her. She found his heat gave her a small comfort, she was starting to see why Newt found solace in his case.

“How did you get him to the basement in the first place?”

“In the case. He was the only one in it at the time, didn’t have to worry about the others, so I just made it all water.” mopping the water up with the tip of his wand, he muttered under his breath again, he was still avoiding her eye, she knew she had crossed a line this morning, but he had just looked so… well Newt.

She wasn’t ashamed of her actions, She had just been so tempted.
Newt was a temptation that she found her own torment wrapped around, when she had woke up in his arms, the beast had purred. It liked what it did to him, it wanted that attention, it craved it.

She had just wanted to let him know that she agreed with it wholeheartedly. It wasn’t teasing she told herself as she watched him struggle even more with his enchantments, it was just tic for when the window shopping became something more, she would be glad to pay her tab off in full, but for now, she let the debt mount up.

Her mind wandered, what would happen if she had the guts to make the first move, a real first move, not just a glancing touch to places unknown.

“Oh for the love of...” the case exploded again, water exploding like a geyser, drenching them both. “NEWT!” she screeched as the cold water cascaded around her.

“Tina... are you ok?”

“I’m fine, but you have to stop this, you need to calm down.”

Cold water dripped down her back, down her chest … it pooled in the base of her shoes, she was starting to see a pattern emerging.

“Newt, please. Just stop for two seconds and think,” she said pointing her wand at him and then herself and casting a drying curse. She took a second to appreciate him standing their, clothes clinging to him before she did so, she had teased herself as much as she had him this morning.

Tina looked from him to the Kelpie it had swum over with the commotion and watched them curiously.

He was bridled, so behaving, she couldn’t help but be reminded of the carnivals she had attended with her mother as a child, the carousel horses dancing in flickering lights.

A spark of an idea crossed her mind.

She jumped to her feet quickly, crossing to the shelves near Newts workbench, rummaging through the tall units until she found what she was looking for.

She knew Newt was watching her, just wondering what the heck she was doing.

“Sometimes the simple answer is the best.” walking over towards the lake she drew her wand. She scooped lake water up into the mason jar she had collected from the shelf. Pointing her wand at the Kelpie she cast the diminuendo charm, shrinking the creature to the size of a mouse, lifting it she placed it into the jar.

“He can last in there just like a goldfish would if you won him at the fair, then when we get him to your Mom ’s, we can make him bigger again.” she tried not to sound too happy with her idea.

“He’s not going to be happy,” Newt said walking over to her and looking at the tiny horse.

Tina found it rather soothing to watch the little thing gliding through the water in the tiny jar.

“He will be fine once he realises he’s out of a basement.” hoping her voice sounded reassuring.

“I suppose its only for a bit,” Newt said quietly taking the jar off her, he still avoided her eye.

“It won’t take long to get to your Moms’, and while we do that Theseus will have managed to start the journey North. Safer moving like you said, your babies will be fine until we get where we need to get them, they managed the journey to New York alright.”

He popped the jar down in amongst the bottles she had been sorting, he was still avoiding her eye.
“You should go with Theseus, they might be expecting us at Mum’s it might not be safe.”

“And that makes me even more determined to go with you. If something happens, I know your first thought will be the case. Let me worry about you.” with a flick of her wand she retrieved the jar from the box. “Anyway a bigger group of us will just draw attention, better to be in two smaller groups.”

As far as Tina was concerned she wasn’t letting him out of her sight again. She had already lost too much of her heart, she would keep Newt close. She trusted Theseus to get Nagini and Jacob to the safe house, she didn’t trust Newt to get there in one piece, stupid dumb luck or not.

Images of Newt getting sidetracked over a dragon sighting, disarmed... tortured, no she would go with him. Even if he protested every step of the way.

She would keep the Kelpie in her hands till he agreed.

He opened his mouth to argue but he must have thought better of it upon seeing her face.

The sun was starting to set by the time they walked along the winding lane towards the senior Scamander residence. Muggle transport had taken longer than just using magic, but it was also a lot easier than trying to re-acclimatise the contents of the case. Bunty had headed the pack, lead the pack sure footed in her movements and wand ready just in case.

Newt and Tina followed behind, avoiding the giant mud puddles that had formed along the old road. Tina had the suitcase, Newt carried the box with the jars and the Kelpie, Tina had taken it in a trade-off. He stopped complaining that she was putting herself into the line of danger, and she let him have the Kelpie. She made sure to grab his case as they had alighted the train, just so he wouldn’t get one of his smart ideas.

Newt sidestepped a rather large pothole and reached a hand out to help her to cross the small quagmire. Tina felt reluctant to drop his hold when she reached the other side, the feeling of his hand in hers always made electricity spark deep in her. She was sad to feel him drop his grip as Bunty looked back over her shoulder to see where they were.

Even when the sun came out, the rain had kept its hold, filling all available crevice with murky brown pools. The smell of it floated on the air.

Ahead of them, there was a crackle and Bunty disappeared.

“Newt? Our guide just went up in a wisp of smoke.” he looked up the lane and then back to Tina. Slow realisation spread across his face.

“Oh that’s right, Sorry Tina, Mum’s house is called ‘Feather Down Cottage’, I should have said” as
soon as he did the landscape ahead changed, Bunty came back in to view, and so did a rather impressive looking house.

Suddenly Tina wished she had decided to go with Theseus, This was far too grand for the likes of her.

“You ok?” he asked concerned. She nodded her head looking at the deep red sun bathing the brickwork in a warm glow.

“That’s the manor house, it’s a lot fancier on the outside than it is inside. Mum has been known to move the fawns into it in the winter, keep them out of the snow.”

He rolled his eyes.

“Oh, Obviously, Theseus loves the main house, it’s all just for show”

Tina was confused, how could you avoid going into your own home?

Newt must have picked up on her confusion because as he leads her through the kissing gate, he pointed down towards the treeline where a large white thatched cottage spread out warm and inviting.

In the yard chickens and Gnomes chased each other. Sweet-peas blossomed along trellises that arched the doorway. Large Sunflowers loomed over them reaching to the last of the days' rays. It was like something out of a fairy story, Tina wouldn’t have been surprised if it was.

Newt started down the cobbled path towards the house, waiting when she didn’t immediately follow him.

“Oh we don’t live up in that house, mum makes us take the cottage. We only use the big house when we have to host a gathering, thankfully, now dad’s retired that is happening less and less.”

She was about to say something when an angry noise came from down in one of the sheds. "Bugger" followed by a dark-haired woman, hair tied back and secured with a cloth, her skin was almost deathly white, and she had laughter lines etched around her eyes.

Her eyes were a dazzling green against her skin, a small smattering of freckles graced her cheeks. She wore tweed trousers and a loose blue shirt and what looked like dragon hide gloves covered her hands.

“Arty, I swear on your son’s life! If you tell me one more time how to-” the woman stopped mid-sentence catching sight of the three of them heading towards her

“- Newton, come here my boy! Artemis, get your hand out of that dragon dung and get out here, the youngest is gracing us with his presence.”

“Remember what I said about Viper-tooths?” Newt said quietly, taking her by the hand to help her over a wooden sty that arched a fence.

“I apologise in advance” he whispered half smiling as they took a few more steps further down the hill. The sensation of his hand in her own lingered even after he had moved away.

“Hello, mum,” Newt said putting down the box and walking over to the older woman, he gave her a hug.

“Don’t you hello mum me! what’s this about a sick Kelpie? Where is your brother? What mess have you got yourself stuck in this time?”
Tina had only a small memory of her own mother, but she recognised the sound of worry and concern in the scalding he was receiving. She had been on the receiving end of that tone, the sound brought back memories of bandaged knees and muddy faces.

“Theseus needs time mum, let him be, he’s had a rough few days, yes I have a Kelpie, I have it right here,” he scooped the jar out of the box showing his mother, she scowled at the tiny jar and then at her son, but she didn’t say anything.

“and on the subject of what have I gotten myself stuck in this time, well that is a long story” Tina saw his shoulders sag slightly.

His mother had seen it also and pulled him into another hug.

“Rhea, please leave the boy alone.”

“He’s my son Arty, do not tell me how to look after him, I carried him for nine months, not you.” his mother broke apart from Newt, a playful look in her eye as she let her eyes scan over her creation holding him in front of her by the shoulders.

“Honestly Newton since he retired he’s done nothing but get under my feet.”

“I couldn’t get under your feet if I tried, would never get back up.” the man laughed. " He’s also my son, so if you could let him get out of your talons, I would like to see him myself.”

So that was what Newt would grow in to then? His father would have been tall if he didn’t lean on the cane, his hair still dark sandy blond, having lot its red to age, it fell in the same way as Newts did. Newt had his fathers eyes, it was hard to tell just exactly what colour they were. But the smile, that was all Newt.

Newt caught Tina’s eye and flushed red at being mollycoddled in such a way.

“Dad,” he said walking up and hugging his father, Tina noticed Newt held his father as if he were made of glass.

Beside her, Bunty had popped down the other case full of Newts belongings. Her ginger hair wrapped up in the welcoming embrace of Mrs Scamander.

Tina suddenly felt very uncomfortable.

“Mum, Dad this is Tina, She’s-”

“Wonderful,” Said Mrs Scamander, cutting him off. “Come on sweetheart, I promise whatever he’s told you about me is a lie.”

Tina only had a split second to panic before she was being pulled in to a bone-crushing hug by the woman. So this was there Theseus got it from.

“Nice to meet you.” Tina managed, Newt shot her an apologetic smile.

“Rhea, drop your new specimen and let her breath.”

“Artemis Scamander, let me enjoy my son bringing two absolutely charming young ladies to my home. I’m surrounded by Bucks all the time, honestly, it’s exhausting.” Newts mother let go of Tina and looked at her son, her eyes sparkled.

“I do wish you would visit when your life wasn’t in mortal danger,” she scalded "and that you would tell me what’s going on in it.” she berated her son and cast an eye at Tina.

Tina gave an impish grin, she felt like she was on appraisal at work. Confident that she knew what was going on but at the same time, worried she had it all wrong.
“Albus called and told us to expect you, I’ve had young Edward make up the boarding room above the shed,” Mr Scamander said patting his wife’s arm gently.

Newt caught her eye in a panic, staying at his parents hadn’t been part of the plan. The idea was to drop the beasts off and head straight to Yorkshire, Bunty was to return to the ministry, to hold the office Newt temporarily had left open.

“Don’t even think about it, you stay the night, keep mother dearest happy and save me from more dung duty.” Arty said placing a hand on Newts arm. “We haven’t seen you in such a long time, and you have brought such charming company.”

That was it, that was the voice, the one that he used when he spoke to the Niffler when she was being a pest. Tina felt a sudden rush of fondness for the older man.

“Give me one night Newton.” his mother said as she removed her dragon hide gloves and linked her arm with Bunty, she offered the other to Tina. Tina looked at it with trepidation. Gingerly she took the woman’s arm and let herself to be lead towards the serenity of the cottage.

Chapter End Notes

This wouldn't write itself, it was being stubborn.

Thank you all for the lovely comments, It means a lot.

You can have plot in the next chapter or you can have relentless fluff or you can have both...
Tina couldn’t understand the reason English people enjoyed afternoon tea, lots of little bits of food instead of an actual meal seemed like a lot of work for a very small pay off, however right now she couldn’t think of anything she would rather be doing. It was warm enough to eat outside, the last rays of sunlight trickled over the hill, casting long shadows across the yard. The sound of the countryside was very close to the sound she associated with inside the case. It probably had something to do with the noise of the animals milling around and Newt constant humming under his breath, other than when he was around his creatures she had never seen him this unguarded.

Tina placed the mug of tea down on the wooden table, beside her Newt fed small bits of his sandwiches to the Kelpie as it swam around in the jar. He smiled at her, managing to hold her gaze, the snatched looks she kept grabbing when he thought she wasn’t paying attention had been adding up. His father was very interested in her Job, having been an Auror himself Arty was curious about how different the Americans treated the laws he knew by heart. Bunty sat on Newts other side listening to the conversation about No-maj and wizards, every so often she would roll her eyes and whisper to the man sat next to her. Edward, or Eddy as he liked to be called was pail and spindly and looked like he would snap if he went out in a strong wind. He had dark green eyes, they darted about the table, resting on Bunty with a smile every so often as she talked. He was very quiet, following the conversation carefully, he had only spoken when he was introduced to Tina. Rhea’s assistant seemed nice enough, but she couldn’t help feeling she was being judged for what she said, even if she didn’t agree with the laws, she was the one that had helped to uphold them.

Newt evidently had been slightly selective with the truth about what had happened in New York. He had squeezed her knee gently as talk had moved to the subject, his eyes on his father who looked very tired in the light cast from the candles around the table. She looked at Newt, his eyes silently told her not to mention too much.

“So how long have you been… friends?” Arty asked her. She had noticed the pause, so had Newt. He avoided her eye and fed the Kelpie a rather large bit of cucumber.

“I arrested you in December, so what’s that? About six months?” Tina tried not to laugh as Rhea pulled an exasperated face at her son. “Well, I suppose he wouldn’t meet such a pretty charming thing like you any other way… Tell me Tina was he chasing something with too many legs? Or was it something chasing him this time?” “I resent that mum.” “He blames it on a lustful Niffler, I blame it on his inability to fix a lock…” she caught his glance, she knew he still hadn’t fixed it, despite what he said in his letters. “Oh dear, did he cause much damage?” Arty said smiling at the two of them. “What one dear Newt or the Niffler?” They talked about the Thunderbird and Jacob, how they had chased down all the creatures. About how Tina had chased him and Jacob through central park, all the time Newt beaming at her. He had been very careful to direct the conversation away from Tina’s family, she was grateful.
It was the last thing she wanted to talk about now, here when she felt calm for the first time in … she shocked herself, just when was the last time she had felt calm? Maybe that last day on the docks, when Newt had promised to return to her?

Rhea Scamander was a force of nature, stubborn and vocal with it. Tina couldn’t help but like her, she bossed her husband around, she had no time for Newt’s ramblings, Tina had laughed out loud when she scolded him for not getting to the good bits. When the events in Paris were raised, her face was the same set mask Tina had seen Newt wear before. If she had anything to say about Leta, she didn’t voice it. But her eyes said it all, there was no sadness in them.

Once everyone was up to date with what had occurred, Arty raised his glass (they had moved on to cider after the tea had run out, Tina wasn’t sure that had been the best idea, but she had drunk it anyway.)
“To Leta,” he said simply.

“So…” Rhea turned to Bunty and Eddy, Tina had the feeling she didn’t want to linger on the thought of Leta for too long.
“Since my little man is leaving his beasts here, you will be looking for a job I suppose?” Bunty looked shocked at the sudden change of conversation direction. Tina looked at Newt, his face twisted to show he disproved of being called his mother’s ‘little man’.

“Hadn’t really thought about it, Mrs Scamander.”

“How does full board, and two weekends a month off sound? We will match whatever Newts been paying you for your time, at least till I get used to the new additions to my little Zoo, I’ve got no idea when it comes to some of his more exotic acquisitions. Plus I think Eddy could do with the help, I’m not as up to running around after ruddy big Griffs as I used to be.” Bunty looked to Tina for help, she tried to nod enthusiastically, beside Bunty, Eddy looked at her hopefully.

If Bunty stayed with the Scamander’s she would at least be able to look after the creatures. Newt would rest better knowing that she was looking after them, making her life much easier. Bunty would be safe, a lot safer then she would be returning home, or to the ministry. Tina was starting to feel rather fond of Newt’s assistant, she would have hated anything to happen to her.

Plus Tina had seen how Eddy had beamed at her, it reminded her of Jacob.

“Do you mind Newt?” Bunty asked him, she felt him fidget a little but she knew he was processing the same thoughts Tina had.
“Course, not Bunty, you know better than anyone how to look after them” he looked straight at her and she flushed red.
Tina found it endearing the way she reacted to Newt, it was nice to know someone else saw the same awkward charm she did.

Eddy had looked over at Newt glaring at this exchange, Newt as ever was oblivious.

“Then it’s settled, good job I already made you a room up,” Rhea said helping herself to a slice of cake.
“Oh it’ll be lovely to have a Girl around the place, its been winkies galore in this place for far too long.”
Beside her Newt almost choked on his mouthful of crumbs.
“Mum, Really?”
“Let your old mum have a bit of fun in this life Newton, best you let me make jokes than to get out the photo albums, I have some wonderful ones pictures of you as a nipper.”

Newt shifted in his seat but didn’t say anything else, his eyes fixated on the Kelpie in the jar, his ears going scarlet.

The next half hour passed with stories of young Newt, too Tina and Bunty’s amusement and Newts embarrassment.

Tina had a warm feeling inside that had nothing to do with the wine or the warm night air.
It was only when it got almost too dark to see that the discussion turned back to the animals.

Arty was almost as good at habitat creation as his son. The enchantments on the barn were almost echoes of the setup Newt had at his flat.
The Mooncalf had happily settled with minimum fuss, The Graphorn took a little longer to trust the new surroundings, aware of the difference.
It had taken Tina sitting on the floor stroking the male behind the flanks for them to settle down.
With everyone who was being re-homed settled for the night, it just left the Kelpie to take down to the lake.

Tina had followed Newt, they said goodnight as the others had returned to the cottage.
He had wanted to go by himself, insisted it. But she couldn’t, wouldn’t let him, memories of Franks departure hung unspoken.
The way he had embraced the Thunderbird before he flew off had been one of the most heartbreaking things she had ever seen, he cared so much for each of his beasts, to let one from his care be passed to another caregiver, that was outside his safety net.

The air was sweet with the smell of the meadow flowers on the warm night air, as the lake came in to view.
It was calm water, still, it reflected the stars that had come out overhead as the moon cast its eerie glow across the valley.
Tina had lived in the city since she had left school, she had forgotten just how vast the night sky was, how infinite the view. Here without all the light from the street lamps, the sky never ended.

Newt opened the mason jar, silently his hand went to the water, breaking the perfect mirror of the sky above.
A flick of the wand and the Kelpie returned to full size.
The low moon made it stand out in sharp relief against the dark sky.
Water and moonlight glinted off the tendrils of kelp that flowed around the nape of the creatures neck.

Tina watched as his hands reached up to the creature's muzzle, it butted him back in recognition.
“Good boy,” Newt muttered.
Newt moved his hands over the creature's mane, it sniffed him before nudging the side of Newts face.
“Behave,” he said patting the beast.
The Kelpie bowed its head deeply before turning tail, long ripples making the starlight dance upon the surface of the lake.
Tina found herself pulled to him, but she didn’t move. She would let him have a moment.
So she hung back, wondering if this was always this hard. She couldn’t imagine how hard it was to let go of something that you loved, letting it go into the world on its own.

“Tina?” his voice was quiet, but it carried across the warm night air like a yell.
“Yes?”
“Why did you come with me?” he didn’t turn, he didn’t raise his voice, his eyes hadn’t moved from the rippling kaleidoscope of the Kelpie’s wake.
She took a few steps forward. Not quite joining him at his side.
She weighed up her words in her head, she didn’t want him to think she thought he was weak.
It took a strong person to love something and let it go, not knowing when they will see it again.

“Because...” she weighed the words on her lips. “Because I could. Because I wanted to… because I needed too, if you needed me..” she stopped and looked up at the stars again.
Why were words such a burden? Why couldn’t she just tell him she was worried for him? That she wanted to make sure that he was fine.

Why was it that in life-threatening moments the two of them were always in tandem, minds and actions working as one?

Yet here, in a field, in the middle of nowhere, they danced around the other and words could not be uttered.
It was so quiet here.
Alone.
Only she wasn’t, she hadn’t been alone in what felt like an eternity.
Alone with Newt, it was a comfort she didn’t realise her aching heart had longed for.
The tears were flowing down her face quietly now as her eyes gazed across the lake at the low moon.

“Tina?” his voice came from close. “What is it?”
She couldn’t look at him, she knew if she did she was going to break down again.
His presence felt heavy at her side as he disturbed the humid air.

“Thank you, Tina,” he said quietly.
“What for?”
her eyes picked out the stars along Orion's belt, she tried to calm herself by reciting them by name.
“You know what for.”
The moon moved behind a cloud, making the stars shine brighter.
Neither spoke for some time.

“Its so quiet,” she said quietly once she had regained her composure.
“It’s not always this quiet, this is rare.”
She looked up at him, he was gazing at her with that look in his eye again, the one that made her want to protect him at all costs.
The one that would get her into all sorts of trouble.
He offered her an arm, she took it gingerly.
“I think Mum wants to adopt you,” he said as they headed back to the cottage.
“I think she’s wonderful.” Tina said beaming, “ she sees right through you! It's quite funny.”
Newt jumped the sty and offered Tina a hand, she ignored it and hopped the thing in one go, she knew he was just being Newt, but she was starting to think he was confusing her with one of his society ladies.
He muttered something about being stubborn.
It gained him a dig in the rib.
“Any need ?” he said pretending to be wounded.
The smile formed before she could think of a sarcastic retort. Newt kept up the pretence of pretend pain till they got to the cottage.

The meal from the evening had been cleared, the yard now spotless. The sweet-peas that bloomed in the daylight had closed up for the night but their scent hung on the air. Tina had moved to go towards the cottage but Newt had taken her by the elbow and directed her to the shed where the beasts were being housed.

She was confused until she saw a small set of stairs to the side of the building, they had been almost impossible to see unless you looked for them. She looked at Newt, confusion set in, but he just smiled at her and she followed him none the less.

The top floor of the barn, as it turned out had been changed into a guest dorm, Rhea would entertain other breeders, or enthusiasts in the converted loft, Newt’s case stood propped against a large post in the middle of the floor, a bottle of cider and two teacups sat atop that.

She knew that had to have been Rhea, although she was sure Arty was just as meddling.

“The cottage is tiny,” Newt said in way of apology.

“It’s fine, honestly Newt,” she said looking around the space, she guessed that she would be sharing a room with Bunty, there seemed to be two rooms set back from the living space.

“Bunty has a room in the cottage, well she has my old room, Mum likes Bunty around, I send her here when dad’s had one of his funny turns, his memory isn’t what it used to be and his legs have just about had enough now,” he said as she glanced back at him. That explained why Bunty knew her way around then and why Newt was so delicate with his father.

“That room is the bathroom, that ones the bedroom,” he said picking up the bottle of wine and the cups.

“You take the bedroom,” he said quietly, lifting the case up on to the table. “and just where are you going to sleep?” she asked walking towards him, trying to catch his eye.

“Oh I’ll sleep on that-” he gestured to the hard wooden bench in the corner, “-once I get the others settled,” he said switching the lock to open the case, she felt a pang of guilt, this was his family, his home, she would sleep on the bench.

She watched as he whistled and Dougal, Picket and the Niffler’s carefully made their way out the case, observing the surroundings.

Upon seeing Tina Einstein darted for her.

Newt sighed contently as he watched her, Dougal climbing into his arms.

“Nightcap?” he said looking at the bottle on the table, adjusting Dougal till he sat on his hip and his other hand could be freed. He pored the liquid into the metal cup and handed it to Tina.

“Mum has a habit of breaking glasses when she’s angry, so we stick with metal caddies now, she tends to be angry quite a bit.” he shrugged taking a drink from his own.

Tina raised her own to her lips, letting the sweet liquid play on her taste-buds, it was so different to the whisky she had shared with Theseus, this made her feel happy and warm, the whisky had made her cold and depressed.

She decidedly liked this better than whisky, or maybe it was just the company. Newt seemed to have that effect on her. Here in a place that he felt so at ease, it was easy to find yourself wrapped up in it.

“You don’t need to sleep on the bench,” she said in barely a whisper, she didn’t know where it had come from, maybe the creature had found its own voice.

She waited for his response.

He had frozen, eyes on her, his cup halfway to his mouth, he looked confused and befuddled but not, to Tina’s surprise embarrassed.

The creature waited.

“It’s stupid you sleeping on a bench.” she started. “not when the bed is in there, it's not like we
havent...” she was going to say ‘slept together’ but the sanctification that went with that statement was too loaded. ‘that’ hadn’t happened.

At least not yet.

He moved his cup to his lips and took a drink. His eyes didn’t leave her once.

“People will talk,” he said shrugging.

He hadn’t said no.

“To be fair, I think I no longer give a rats ass about what anyone else thinks Newt.”

she downed the last of her cider.

“After what happened in Paris, I don’t care! Not about people that mean nothing to me.” she moved forward filing her cup again with the sweet liquid.

“If someone has something to say about the two of us sharing a bed fully clothed with four Nifflers, a Bowtruckle with attachment issues and Dougal, I’ll give them something to talk about!”

He snorted into his cup with laughter. Proper laughter.

The kind she hadn’t heard from him before, it was like a siren song to the beast in her chest.

“Think I’m funny do you Newton?” she said teasing him.

“Wonderfully so, and maybe a teeny tiny bit terrifying ” his smile reached all the way to his eyes.

Dougal looked between the two of them in confusion.

“Tiny Teeny Tina,” he said to himself musingly before giving a small chuckle,

“I think I might start calling you Tiny.”

“Whatever you say Fido.”

The two of them dissolved into fits of laughter at her mock outrage.

Her side hurt with the stitch that came along with such laughter but it felt amazing.

When she had somewhat composed herself she drained her cup.

Newt followed her lead. She watched as he yawned, trying to hide it as best he could behind the container.

“We should go to bed Newt,” she said reaching up and taking the mug off him.

“Sure?”

“Sure.”

She really was, she wanted to sleep, she longed to feel his embrace as sleep wrapped them in its grips.

She wanted more, she wanted to taste his lips, feel him close to her in all the way she had held him in her dreams.

She led the way, kicking off her boots at the door and climbing into the overly inviting bed fully clothed, Einstein clawed his way on to the bed, finding her pillow and placing a paw protectively on her hair.

Her eyes were heavy, the sweet taste of the alcohol lulling her to slumber.

A few moments later the bed dipped and she felt him crawl on to the bed beside her.

Small feet padded across her, the other creatures settling down for the night around them, she could hear Dougal emitting his content sound somewhere by her head.

The beast in her stomach yawned, curling around the effects of the cider.

She felt the heat of Newt as he positioned himself carefully alongside her.

Even half asleep she knew he was stalling, she reached up and found his hovering arm and wrapped it around her waist pulling him closer, wrapping him around her back, his breath catching on her neck.

“Hold me,” she yawned.

He pulled her closer.

“Good night Tiny.”
She only just heard it as sleep took its hold.

Chapter End Notes

they are so fluffy I'm gonna die.

you know the drill

x p
He had slept half the way up mountains, with snow bleaching against the tent. He had trekked through humid Jungles, sleeping high up in the canopies amongst spiders and birds. He had ventured into the desert, and bowed to a Sphinx, sleeping under a canopy of stars. He had even somehow managed to teach himself the skill of sleeping on a line, stood up packed like sardines as bombs and who knows what flew overhead.

If Newt was tired, sleep was easy.

But right now he was very tired and sleep seemed to elude him. It teased him, pulling him into a false reality. The room was humid, that awkward heat, the one that got under your skin and made it hard to lie in one spot for too long. If he had been alone he would have been down to his underwear by now, clothes discarded in an attempt to find a comfortable position, however, he wasn’t alone. He was highly aware of the woman that lay beside him, she had insisted on him being there, but it felt as if he was intruding. No, not intruding, that was a lie, he was lying to himself again. She wanted him next to her, she had asked, insisted on it.

His mind tried not to wander, but it was proving to be almost impossible. Did she not realise that this was torture, her lying next to him like this.

Yes, they had slept alongside one another twice now, but that was different, it hadn’t been intentional. Sleep had caught up with them and that safety that they found when they were together had won them over.

This was intentional, instigated and wanted. So bloody wanted.

If he had been more of a man when he left New York, where would the two of them be now? Would life have let him be happy? Would life have let him be part of something bigger than just him? Being on his own had felt like it was the only path for so long.

Yes, there had been women, alcohol was often to blame. He never drank unless he knew who he was with these days. Alcohol, it made a fool of him.

It made him want the comfort that he couldn’t provide himself, two bottles down into whatever the locals called their special, he became far too confident, far too sure of himself, only to regret it as the hangover set in the next day. War did that, it made a man a hollow shell, not knowing what tomorrow would bring or if the new day would be the last.

He had wondered what it was like to have someone you cared about back home, worried and scared that you might not return.
He had been so used to being alone, the notion of belonging, it was something he couldn’t ever get his head around, being part of something bigger than just himself.

But Tina had wrapped his arms around her. She had wanted him to be that close, she had been worried about him, she had cared about the way he felt about his creatures. She hadn’t wanted him to be alone.

Tina is worried about us.

He weighed the sentence in his mind.

Us.

It felt strange to think of himself as a part of us.

Tina and Newt.

People will talk.

They already talk, when have you ever really cared about it.

You don’t but Tina might.

Tina just wants you, stop being such a prat, you saw the way she looked at you, the way she teased you, she even said it herself, she doesn’t give a rats arse about it.

Yes but what if that was the alcohol?

You are an idiot Newton, you can’t even give yourself a break.

No wonder Leta didn’t want you, why would anyone ever want you.

Tina wants you.

He was tired, he needed sleep.

He had fallen asleep, he knew he had, his mind finally giving up on its overthinking.

he’d fallen asleep with Tina in his arms, but he hadn’t managed to follow her into that blissful rest.

His mind wouldn’t rest, it was haunted by his own doubt.

He had woken. Gasping for air and clawing at his own neck. Blue flames suffocating him in his sleep, his shirt suffocating him in real life.

He had untangled himself from Tina and rolled to the other side of the bed, got up and brought himself a drink of water.

Climbing back on to the bed he undid his top few buttons on the accursed shirt and calmed his breathing.

He had survived worse night terrors, in less favourable environments than this.

He turned to watch Tina, sipping on his water, she had untucked her shirt in her sleep, her limbs flayed out around her.

Einstein had made himself at home on her pillow, strands of her hair tucked into his pouch, his sisters lay by her feet snuggled in a ball. Picket slept in the knot of the headrest, as far away from Tina as he could.

Newt was going to have to have words with him at some point, this childlike act was not on.
Dougal sat on the chair next to Tina, his eyes watching Newt with a worried look, he had scared him with his abrupt awakening.

Tina looked content her eyelids flickering as her brain processed the day's events, she looked so calm, her mouth turned up into a smile at the corner as she dreamed.
Newt wondered what it was that had made her smile like that.

He was lost in thoughts as Dougal carefully climbed across Tina, giving Newt a stern look.
He knew he needed to rest.
Newt lay back down stroking Dougal till he fell asleep.

The second time he woke up, it was to the sound of Dougal dropping to the wooden floor beside the bed, Newt yawned, blinking his eyes against the moonlight that fell through the window.
He hadn’t been asleep enough to dream.
The room felt hot, the humidity clinging to him in the darkness, he undid the last of his buttons and took off his shirt, it was too hot, he needed sleep, he would face the consequences in the morning.

He felt Tina stir next to him, blinking he turned to look at her.

She had been awake herself at some point, for she had retrieved her own cup of water, the peaceful look from earlier had slipped from her face, it was now set with a scowl.
Whatever it was that she was dreaming about now seemed to displease her.
At some point she had deemed it to warm herself and removed her trousers, they lay bunched up on the bottom of the bed, had that been a conscious decision?
Her long legs skimmed the hem of his borrowed shirt, decency is thrown out the window as the heat had become unbearable.

He tried to keep his eyes from the place where the hem skimmed the top of her thighs.
He tried and failed, the draw was so strong.
He let his eyes wander the curves of her legs, strong and toned from work.
He wondered what it would be like to feel his waist tangled in there grips, as she pulled him closer.

He instantly felt bad for the thoughts, however tempting.
Tina trusted him enough to share a bed, trusted him enough to lie like that, her skin on show.
So tempting.

How could this perfect creature find him desirable?
He wasn’t sure that he wasn’t dreaming.

The third time Newt woke, he was sure he was waking in a wonderful dream.

In his dreams, her skin felt soft like this, soft to the touch like the skin of a hatchling.
In his dreams she held him this way, wanting him, staking her ownership with her sleep-heavy limbs.

He pulled her closer, no she was very real, real and very close.
This wasn’t a dream, in his dreams, this was where he woke up.
He tried not to think how indecent they looked right now, half-naked and entwined.

He glanced a look down to where she had thrown a leg over him. The shirt hitched up around her waist now, catching in the embrace. She curled so neatly into his profile, it was as if she was part occamy, she had fit so well to the available space. He could feel the heat of her leg against his stomach, the heat of her as she pressed into him. In his mind, he could trace the curve of her hips, how her thigh flowed into the curve, the way her curves bent him to her will.

Closing his eyes he tried to recall the first page of Hogwarts a history, anything to take his mind off the feeling of her pressed against him like this. Had she been awake when she had decided to make such a bold move? Or was this the dormant part of her mind, the bit that he knew she liked to keep hidden away. Had it acted of its own accord? The part of him that called out to that part of her mind, the real her, whispered quietly in his head. It fought back against the idea that he wasn’t good enough. She wanted him, why couldn’t he just let her in.

He raised his hand to her hair, stroking it gently till he fell back to sleep.

The fourth time he awoke, he was content.

Her delicate touch as she traced the pattern of his scars across his chest was the first thing he was aware. It felt light as a feather, he could feel every tiny movement, it sent a pleasing ripple through him that he had never felt before. His brain caught up. He was suddenly very aware of every inch of Tina as she pressed herself into his side. She was warm and soft, her skin smelt devein.

What was that under his touch?

A few seconds of contemplation and his brain reached the conclusion it was her underwear, he had his hand on her underwear. It was cupping the gentle curve of her hips, this revelation made him want to pull her even closer, was she awake? Did she know he was awake?

Did she know what she was doing to him? If she was awake she wasn’t going to be able to miss it, what with her leg tucked in against him like that. It was a lot more noticeable with their current entwined position.

“Tina?” he whispered. He needed to know that this was not a dream.

“Mhuhu?” she answered her head tucked against his collar, her lips next to his skin.

“Just checking if you were awake,” he said quietly as she pulled herself closer to him. She really did sink into all the available space.

“I think I am.” he could feel the smile upon her face as she moved her hand across his chest.
His breath stuck in his lungs as he weighed up his options.

“Do nothing,” she said sleepily as if she could tell what he was thinking, “Just lay here and hold me, I can pretend the world doesn’t exist for a few more hours.”

Newt gently moved her hair away from her face with his free hand, looking down at her as he did so.

“Whatever you want Tiny,” he said kissing her gently on the top of her head. She yawned. “Go back to sleep.” he smiled.
“I’m trying to but you keep talking,” she said as her fingers traced along his ribcage, following each scar with a gentle touch.

He didn’t realise something so simple could be so persuasive, that feeling of her was all there was in the world right now.
The feeling of her leg as she wrapped herself around him, pressing up against him in ways far too indecent for the pretence of friends.

She traced the scar that ran down his side, she lingered when it disappeared under his waistband if she hadn’t realised before there was no hiding it now, that was the downside to the human species only the male showed, that was what made the whole courtship thing unbearable.

“Tina.” he wanted her to look at him. He wasn’t sure if his resolve would last much longer if he didn’t distract her, her hands were too soft on his skin, her body to soft under his hands.

He nudged her head with his chin, she seemed to understand. Turning her head up to look at him.

“Stay.”

Her eyes found him, did she know how the light danced across them, how he would happily look into them for hours if she let him? He would tell her, somehow, the words would be right one day. They would come out in the right order, she would understand him, she would understand them, her… him .. us.

“Stay?” she asked quietly.

“Don’t go back to New York.” she had to understand.
He wanted to protect her, he wanted that little part of her that she kept locked away, it deserved to be free, having been caged far too long.
He would care for it, look after it, do whatever it needed to keep it safe.

He held her face with his free hand, she pressed her cheek into it her eyes closing and she smiled.

Newt had seen many wonders in his life, rainbows over the Victoria falls, dragon’s dancing in the light of the moon, newborn unicorns taking there first steps. But nothing compared to that smile.

That was his smile.

Chapter End Notes

I am currently working shifts from Hell so sorry for the delay.
Have fluff to make up for it yes?

Not gonna lie this was a struggle this chapter because ... well as I post this its almost 4am, so I hope you enjoy my insomnia.

I will get to my comment section as soon as I can.
The smell of freshly brewed oolong tea drifted into his thoughts, the only person he knew who thought that would make an acceptable breakfast tea was his mother, who had done nothing but drink it since he had ventured back from China with it stowed away in his case.

White breakfast tea was the only way to start the day, that and maybe a slice of toast with a decent preserve, pear or quince, something his Nan had made from the orchard as a child.

His mother had tried but it just wasn’t the same as his old Nan’s quince preserve, she had always scooped an extra large portion on to his bread as a reward, he was never sure what he was being rewarded for, but Theseus never got extra helpings.

His mothers preserve still triggered memories of long days, endless summers and his Grandfathers crazy adventures, tall tales of from far off shores.

Trinkets and baubles from far off adventures embellished stories to entertain young ears and curious hearts.

His brain was slow and foggy, it struggled to place his surroundings. He must have finally managed to get the much-needed sleep that it craved for, he felt as if he had slept the sleep of the dead, something he had not accomplished in longer than he would care to remember.

The world felt like it was far away, the sun was turning the insides of his eyelids red, the vanes in his lids visible in the backlight as daylight attempted to lure him from sleep.

It was a strange sort of feeling in his chest, he couldn’t put his finger on but it lulled him to slumber, just a little longer.

Her eyes brought the cluster of freckles in to focus, it helped to calm her, it grounded her, it stopped her acting on the longing feeling she had in the depths of her gut, the one that would be her undoing if she let it.

She has woken up in confusion at first, unaware of her surroundings, unsure why she felt so … it wasn’t content, it wasn’t peaceful… maybe it was safe?

The feeling was new, as was this warmth that pulled her into consciousness.

When she had woken the first time, she had missed the feeling of his arms around her. It had been an instant thing, she had felt him shift in his sleep, nightmares maybe? She wasn’t sure. She hadn’t noticed his return sleep taking her back within its grasp, it had been a good dream, it wanted her back.

The need to pee had hit her, she had never been a big drinker, and the Cider was making her bladder protest, the humidity didn’t help, the heat made her uncomfortable.

She had cast an eye over him as he slept, his buttons had worked there way undone from his shirt and his limbs flayed all over the bed. She was aware of picket watching her from the bedpost disgruntled at something or other she had offended him with.

She made the decision as she sat up to head to the toilet.
she slipped her legs out of the trousers that Newt had lent her, the air felt so much better against her skin, her legs had itched with the heat.
When she had returned to the bed, the Niffler’s had claimed the trousers as a makeshift nest, she hadn’t had the heart to move them, they looked so adorable, Einstein has even joined them in there slumber.

Newt was just a sleeping figure beside her. His breath shallow in sleep, he was a quite bedfellow, Queenie had been known to talk in her sleep, it was both annoying and fun at the same time, it was a way that Tina had managed to find out many a secret that her sister kept.

She could make out the curve of his chest in the moonlight, she knew how lying upon it listening to his heartbeat had felt.
She could just reach over it would be so easy to just curl into that space beside him, hold him close, he looked calm in sleep, his long limbs twisted almost marionette-like across the bed.

how easy it would be to put her inquisitive mind to rest as he lay there sleeping, her wandering hands longed to explore more, to investigate to add too her own teasing in more depth.

It took all of her training to distract her from the longing that cursed her at that moment in time.

She used the mantra she had taught herself for when Queenie was just a little too nosey, it helped to clear her mind, centre herself.

She couldn’t give in to temptation.

When she had woken to find herself wrapped against his naked chest, she wondered how her sleeping self had managed that manoeuvre, apparently sleeping Tina was a lot less restrained than awake Tina would have allowed.

Her fingers traced the scars across his rib cage. Newt almost purred under her touch she could hear it echo through his chest.
That sound did things to her, was he awake?
She traced a raised white scar with the tip of a finger, it led along his chest near his heart, his chest was toned with all his field work, she hadn’t expected it.
He hid it well behind his awkward outer appearance, again another layer she figured he had built up against the world around him.

Was he awake?
He said her name, it had done things to her insides, she struggled to answer her body tucked so close to his, face tucked into his collarbone, she could taste his scent on her tongue.
He was talking but she was still between awake and sleep the words wouldn’t register.
She picked out the word awake, right now she was half torn between this being reality or a wonderful dream.

He was awake, he was saying something to her, but her mind was elsewhere, she felt herself pushing into his side more, something very instinctive, her fingers traced the scar down to his waistband, her attention had been drawn elsewhere.
His hands found purchase on her hip, she moved in to his touch, his rough hands pressing against her skin. She was struggling between lust and sleep, both called to her on a primal level.
She was happy in the in-between state she currently resided in, she seemed to be braver here.
She spoke but the words were lost in the sleepy haze, drawn to the scar that now traced all the way down to his abdomen, she noticed his reaction to her touch, it was hard to miss when she had her leg
wrapped so tightly against him, at least she knew this longing was mutual.

“stay.”

It wasn’t a request, it wasn’t an order, it was just a fact. His eyes bore into her own, searching for something. The hand on her waist pulled her tighter, he was trying to put into actions what he failed to put into words.

“Don’t go back to New York”
She was lost in his eyes, his touch on her face, cupping at her cheek. Whatever it was between them, this feeling was new, and she knew she couldn’t let it get taken away.
Right now, they couldn’t make her go back if they tried.

Tina had watched as he lay sleeping, he looked so calm in his sleep, it had felt like a shame to wake him, so when his mother had knocked on the door, Tina had uncurled herself from him and answered.

Rhea stood in the doorway smiling, looking Tina up and down with a knowing eye. Her hair today hung loosely around her heart-shaped face and she wore a suit of tweed and a smart hat.
Tina suddenly understood where the ability to hide behind an outfit came from, that both Newt and Theseus had down to a tee.

“Sorry to wake you, I just wanted you to know that myself and Bunty are off up to the village.” she moved into the reception room followed by Eddy. The latter avoiding looking at her.

“We really need to get you some of your own clothes my dear, Newton’s wardrobe just doesn’t give you the personality I know you have.” she indicated that Eddy should put the tray down he carried, Tina could smell the coffee before she saw it. Eddy ducked out of the room with a silent step, however, he knocked the plant pot at the top of the steps causing it to crash on to the floor below. Rhea shook her head.

“He’s a good worker, he’s just a little on the strange side, but I can’t help but like him.” she smiled. “After all, I’m used to strange, you have met both of my sons.”

“Newt isn’t strange.” Tina found herself on the defensive.
The older woman shrugged, helping herself to a slice of the toast that had been laid near the coffee on the tray.

“Oh, I don’t mean it in a bad way. I very much doubt there is a single member of the Scamander clan that isn’t a little strange, Arty included. I have to say its part of his charm, we love them for it do we not?”

Rhea didn’t wait for a reaction to the statement. She busied herself with her oversized carpet bag.

“You have a letter from my other offspring,” she said handing her a letter.

“He sees fit to send word to you but not his own mother.” she shook her head, she was worried but she wouldn’t let it show too much.

“I will make him write to you as soon as I see him next.” Tina tried to sound hopeful, but it fell a bit flat.

“please do, I am worried, no matter what he thinks. Leta may not have been my first choice for either
of my son’s but they both cared for her, never saw it myself, but then I was never very good with girls.” Tina could see the sadness being compartmentalised in the woman’s mind, it was something Tina had gotten very good at.

Deal with one issue at a time, right now it was the well being of her family that played on the woman’s mind.

“I will try my best Mrs Scamander,”

The woman took her leave, leaving Tina to prepare her coffee and look over the letter that she had been handed, it wasn’t anything of import, just a note to say that they had arrived and that Theseus had made contact with someone at Macusa, Tina’s stomach dropped. She had managed to go a whole hour without thinking about the world falling down around her. Who had Theseus contacted? Who did he think he could trust in that warren of cockroaches?

She took herself over to the case and let herself in, the soft grass felt strange underfoot, she picked up the food that was already prepared for the Runespore, her hands and feet almost working of there own accord.

She fed the last two of the creatures, the case seemed so quiet without the usual chorus of tweets and sniffs.

The change had come and it felt heavy in the case, the creatures could feel it, they seemed to know something was wrong.

The feeding round was brief, she moved quickly back to the stairs and back into the sunlit barn.

Adding some cream and a small sugar cube to the hot coffee she had served herself, she contemplated making Newts tea for him, but she knew that way madness lay.

She did, however, add the tea leaves to the pot, smiling at the way the smell reminded her so strongly of him.

She would have to learn how to make it how he liked it, what if she was going to be …

A half-formed thought, a conversation had in half sleep, lust and longing all wrapped up in a blissful embrace.

The corner of her mouth twitched, he wanted her to stay.

Nobody ever wanted her to stay, She annoyed people, she irritated them, she was too critical, too bossy, too much Tina for most people.

But not for Newt.

She took a sip of her coffee and a bite of the toast, it had some strange fruit she couldn't place spread across it, it mixed together with the coffee in a pleasing way.

If someone had told her when she had gotten up on that cold wet morning in Paris, how much her life would have changed in the last few days she would not have taken a word of it for truth.

The truth of the matter was that she was shocked at herself.

She was not one to be so confident with matters of her heart, it was always pushed to the back of work and caring for her sister. This transition into independence had been needed, but she could have thought of less dramatic ways for it to come about.

Since December the axis of her world had slowly been shifting, the last adjustment had happened fast, and now she didn’t have a clear view of her horizon any more, that was what scared her.

The lack of a path, the lack of a clear set destination.

If the prickling feeling that sparked through her whenever Newt was near was any indication, he was
set to be part of the journey, everyone else was fuzzy around the edges, Newt was solid and real.

He wanted her to stay.

She picked up the tray and headed back to the bedroom, he lay where she had left him, arms stretched out surrounded by creatures.

She wanted to stay, she adored this strange wonderful man.

“Morning.”

He felt the bed shift as someone filled the space beside him.
His hand twitched toward his wand before his brain caught up with him.

“Gonna jinx me Newt?”

Sleep made a fool of him.
His thoughts took time but they started to fall in to order.
He was home.
Tina was Home.

“Wouldn’t dare,” he said shielding his eyes from the sun as it streamed through the window and blinking towards the woman sat next to him.
She held a mug in her hand, and a slice of toast was halfway to her mouth, she smiled at him over her crossed legs, leaning down towards him.

He felt his breath catch in his chest, last nights actions catching up with him, he wasn’t normally anywhere near as forward, Tina really would be his undoing.

“You looked peaceful, I didn’t want to wake you,” she said finding his line of sight, she looked radiant in the beam of light that fell across the bed. “I brought your Breakfast.”

There was a small tray set out on the bed by her knees, what he recognised as his mothers' usual assortment of breakfast chaos adorned it, the fruit of various descriptions.
Bread made down in the village, butter from the farm next door.

He watched as Tina took a draw of her drink, she could smell the aroma of the coffee, it was something he associated with her now, something comfortable and familiar.

“Have you been over to the house?” he said hoisting himself up on his elbows and letting his eyes adjust to the light and the sight before him.

She still sat in just his shirt.
The hem had tucked neatly around her legs to protect some modesty.
She sat cross-legged in front of him.
Her elbows resting on her knees as she lent towards him.

“No we had a visitor, with this...” she handed him a small bit of paper, it was stained slightly from where Tina had added the water to the tea leaves.

Newt and Tina,
please don’t go vanishing before I get back.
Love Mum.

Tina smiled at him over her coffee, placing her slice of toast back down on the plate.
She was watching him.

The events of the night pawed there way into his mind.
He wondered what was going on in hers as she contemplated him.

Newt was a lot of things, he knew he was brave in his own way, he had always tried to do the things
he thought were right, he knew he skirted the line a lot with what the world thought of him, but he
always tried to at least keep some standards.

Every single moment of last night was against everything that he had been brought up to consider
decent, the correct way to do things.
He should not have been in bed with Tina, he should not have been holding her that way, it was not
the way things were supposed to be done.
Yet his own mother had left the two of them to breakfast fully aware of the sleeping arrangement.

If it was such a bad thing why did it feel so good?
He wasn’t sure who’s end game it was, or what side of the family tree it came from, but the Cider
and the coincidence pointed to his father.

He was a thirty-five-year-old man, so why did he feel like he had been caught sneaking out of the
girl's dorm rooms at three am?

Tina had insisted, he told himself.
She’s going to get you into all sorts of trouble.
Yes but you like that.

The voice in his head was far too clever for its own good, he had to admit getting into trouble with
Tina was one of the more tantalising things she did to him.

“I’ve been down in the case and fed the Zouwu, I didn’t think you would mind having a bit more
sleep, you looked like you needed it.” Tina smiled at him as Einstein scrambled to put himself
between the two of them, Newt caught a tiny flash of green jumping down from the headboard.
“all ok?”
“wondering where everyone's gone I should imagine, it’s very quiet in there.”

Tina’s eyes followed Picket until he sat protectively on Newts chest.
Pickets feet felt sharp in contrast to Tina’s soft fingers on the same skin.

“Jealousy is not becoming Pick,” he said as angry noises chattered from the bowtruckles mouth. He
gently lifted Picket to his hair, and sitting himself up he reached for his discarded shirt from the chair
next to the bed.
The boldness he had found last night was fading in the bright sunshine.

“You have a lot of scars Mr Scamander.”

He felt her eyes watching him again, he paused, she wasn’t judging him, was she complimenting
him? Was that the right word, he wasn’t sure, but there wasn’t revulsion in her voice, she was
curious.
He could see that busy mind working, she was trying to work out if it were teeth or claws that had
inflicted the damage.

“It’s not all Nifflers and Kneezles, sometimes they have fangs and claws. I don’t always start out on the best of terms with some of my more lively acquisitions.” he shrugged pulling one arm into his shirt. “its the scars you don’t see that hurt the most, I'm sure you know that?”

He slid his arm into the other sleeve but he didn’t fasten it, he knew he was selfish, but he was enjoying seeing Tina’s reaction.
Her eyes were tracing the long scar down his side, the one her fingers had found earlier.
To her credit, she didn’t falter when he caught her eye if anything the look she gave was loaded with promise.
He knew they needed to get moving again soon, but he was in no rush.

Chapter End Notes

sorry for the delay, id wrote them into a corner.

you know the drill.
Theseus Scamander was a lot of things, he was brave, loyal, an excellent auror and all round bloody good chap, well if you believed everything you read in the prophet, Theseus right now felt like none of the things that he was supposed to embody.
Right now he knew he was holding it together by the tip of his boot straps and completely unsure where he stood in his own life let alone the world.

He sat in the window seat of the Golden Fleece, watching the barge men move there sacks to the carts, the awful rain had made the river rise and burst its banks, the water spilling into the streets. The Fleece was dry and warm, flooding wasn’t something that bothered wizards.
The streets by the river bank were up to the knee in murky water, hastily constructed walkways had emerged as life went on around the minor inconvenience, barrels and planks of wood replacing the well-worn cobbles to make for dryer passage.

The Golden Fleece was one of the oldest pubs in Britain, but unlike most Wizarding establishments it was known to open it’s doors to Wizards and Muggles alike, the purists hated the place, so it had made a good cover for the comings and goings of questionable business.

The Proprietors of the business were as shady as they come, or at least they pretended to be Brandy and Bishop Goforth were renowned for there straight talking and underhand dealings.

Brandy had worked for Theseus in more than one way or the other for several years, she was not to be messed with and by far one of his best Aurors.
She came across as a lady of questionable morals and even more questionable lifestyle choices, however, Theseus had gone to school with her and knew for a fact that she was really a very sweet thing and when she went by Longbottom she was a great deal less scary. She had been all golden curls and dimples back in Hogwarts.

Bishop was a travelling alchemist before he met Brandy. He had learned his trade on the road, moving from town to town, following wherever the family took him, road or sea.
His skin was sunk with ink, his hair jet black and pulled back in dreadlocks, it cascaded down his back, he wore a flat cap and a waistcoat that glistened under the lamps, it gave the impression of being alive as the light danced across the fabric.
You wouldn’t want either of them to happen across you on a dark night.

The two of them had settled and taken over the pub when Bishop had become ill, they played off the idea of the place being Haunted to cover some of Bishops more ‘explosive’ pursuits.

Theseus had it on good authority(his own) that the skeleton that propped up the bar was real, they had found it under the basement when one of Bishops experiments dissolved the three-hundred-year-old flagstones.
They had tried to move it, but when they did chaos broke loose, it had taken then fresh-faced Theseus hours to obliterate the Muggles that had seen the bones rise from the grave and head back to the pub.
Mr Bones now took his seat at the end of the bar, he would be provided with ale and pies under the understanding that if Muggles were about he had to play dead.

Theseus poked at the pie that sat before him, he wasn’t hungry.
He knew he needed to eat, but the task itself felt hard to comprehend.
He had made it through the last few days running on adrenalin and sorrow.
There was a gap in his heart, it kept calling to him.
He missed her.

It hurt, everything hurt.
Breathing hurt.
Thinking caused pain.
Planning helped.
It took his mind off losing her.
Yet people kept wanting to talk about it.
He didn’t want that.
He would keep distracted.
That way the hurt couldn’t sneak in and make the hole bigger, make him die a little more.

Brandy lolled down into the chair beside him, dropping a letter on to his knee.
“Tell me to bugger off Thes, but we been friends since we were eleven years old, why you here and not with the family?”
“Bigger things than me in this world Brandy,” he said simply, he ignored the woman at his side to watch a washer wife traverse the plank across from him and head up the narrow overhanging street ahead.
“You know we got your back Thes, no matter what yeah? Whatever it is that you and yours are messed up in, me and Bish, we got our ears to the floor, we hear things, we know stuff, I know you don’t like messing with Macusa.”
Theseus turned the letter in his fingers.
“I have to get all the facts if I have to play by a new set of rules, I will,” he said quietly.
The woman nodded.
“Just stay safe, Leta wouldn’t want you doing stupid things.”
“I dunno what she would want any more”

The two of them sat in awkward silence for some time till the door went and three dockmen came in causing MrBones to freeze halfway to his mouth with a beer.
She got to her feet squeezing his arm.
“What’ll it be gents?”

“Only other alchemist I met looked like a ghost,” Jacob said watching as Bishop moved from place to place, nimble for such a large man.
“Oh, you met Nicolas?” Bishop said lifting a glowing vile to his face. “wish he would tell me how he made that stone of his.”
“Stone?”
“Oh yeah, you Muggles don’t know about …” the man smiled “No matter, you will learn, you don’t need to be a wizard to learn Alchemy, my mother was a Muggle like you, one of the best. No magic needed.”
“You think I can learn it?”
Jacob felt something like pride rear its head, maybe this was what he did to help, no need for wands or magic?
“Thes’ says your a baker, he says you were about when all this stuff went down, your Mrs has deflected, she’s a witch, right? You gotta have something about you, normal muggles can’t deal with all this stuff, they push it down, commit it to a fairytale.”
Jacob watched the man, mesmerised as he moved along shelves conveying different items.
When Jacob had first met Bishop he wasn’t sure what to make of the man, he was intimidating and fierce.
However, Jacob was aware looks could be deceiving, behind the image, Bishop was clever and kind, it had not surprised him to find that he was one of the good ones.
He had watched him as he had quietly repaired some of the flood damage with his wand concealed in his overcoat, unseen by the tiling workmen along the river.

animals had sought refuge in the basement where they now sat, he had brought them food and not rushed them out spending time with them and taking them under his wing. He felt a little like he had been sucked up in that caring.

Theseus had been growing more distant as the day had worn on, without the buffer of Newts house and the constant threat, the three companions had fallen into a somewhat mutual silence as the train had rolled into the city.

It had been a blessing when the rather large man in front of him had taken an interest in the baker, Jacob needed a break from his own torment. He was struggling with enough heartache without Nagini and Theseus's to add to the collection.

Jacob watched as the man combines some more ingredients, moving over to one of the dogs that had come in from the wet with a limp, the man gently administered the paste that he had created. The dog looked up at him and flexed it paw experientially.

“You really think I can learn that?” Jacob asked awed.

“Don’t see why not. You look like a clever gent, it’s just like following a recipe.”

Jacob contemplated the idea for a few moments, maybe this was what he did to help the cause. Maybe this was the way he got back his girl.

“Theseus,
Your mother wants you to write,
I advise you do so, or you may end up with a lot more than a howler.
Why have you been in contact with macusa?
What vermin want to be of help to us?
Tina.”

Theseus smiled, she was even angry in letters, where did his brother find these women?

Tina sat on the haystack watching Newt as he and his mother tended to the Hippogriffs, they were magnificent, the way the sun danced on their feathers as they chased and swooped around the grounds. She couldn’t imagine the childhood that Newt must have had, living here in this place surrounded by these magnificent creatures. It was no wonder that he had chosen the path he did, she couldn’t imagine wanting to do anything else.

Rhea fussed with one of the smaller creatures, grooming its fur near its tail, it was tawny feathered and its fur a calico colour, it looked smaller than the others, almost as if it were shrunk. It didn’t like to be fussed with and Rhea looked exasperated at the whole thing. Newt sat perched on the fence, too far away for Tina to make out the conversation but she got the feeling that Newt was waiting for his mother to ask for help before climbing down to her.

The small creature shook, Rhea stepped back and a second later the hard work she had put in was ruined as the hippogriff chose to roll in the mud. Tina couldn’t help but laugh, it must have carried because Newt looked over to her and smiled. Was this what it was like to get caught up in his life?
If it wasn’t for the feeling of sorrow and loss that just couldn’t be moved no matter how hard she tried she would have said this was one of the most perfect days she could have imagined.

The blissful awkwardness of the morning, it hung between them. She was starting to realise he was taking things at the same pace he would one of the creatures he took in too his care, he was worried she may bolt at any time.

This all or nothing thing with him was confusing, but she liked it.

She had always liked the thrill of the chase, it was part of what made her want to be an Auror. It was the thrill of the unknown, the ability to adapt to the surroundings, to think fast and see the bigger picture.

She couldn’t get around how he could change directions in his personality so quickly. Was it nerves?

Because if it was nerves, she could help him, she could tell him she was just as pent up and confused as he was. He made her nervous and anxious, he made her feel like bees were stinging her insides and her breath was not under her control, he had no right to make her feel like that. But he did. He had every bit of her twisted around his little finger, she felt tuned in to his every word.

Obviously, she wouldn’t tell him that, after all, she was supposed to be a straight talking no messing Auror.

Then why did he make her feel like a giddy teenager?

If it was decency, well... to hell with decency, it never got you anywhere.

It most decidedly did not let you wake up half naked with arms and bodies entwined, no that wasn’t the decent thing at all.

It had felt amazing, however, so decency be damned.

Right now all she wanted was to keep him safe, in her arms, in her heart, in her bed... no she needed to keep things compartmentalised, everything was fine as long as Newt was safe by her side

She pulled her knees up to her chest and hugged her legs into herself, Rhea had bought her new clothes when she had been down to the town, she felt better having changed into fresh undergarments, but she missed the scent of Newt on her clothes. The smell of him lingered in her hair and on her skin, it was comforting, she could almost feel the touch of his fingers as they had cupped at her waist.

She let her mind wander, safe in the knowledge that her thoughts were her own.

In her mind his hands moved slower, more certain, she let him explore …

She was torturing herself and she knew she was, what if he just saw her as a friend? After all he had been close to Leta, he had carried photos of Leta, he had kissed Leta.

That was one up to Leta.

Tina cursed herself, the woman was dead, she had been engaged to Theseus, she had been Newts friend, but still, something nagged at her it wouldn’t let go.
Maybe he was scared she would react as Leta had?
Maybe he was scared that he would get a slap for his advances.

Or maybe he just realises you both have just lost major parts of your world and he doesn’t think this is the best way to start a relationship?

Her Auror head scalded her, right up to the point where she remembered she was no longer an Auror.

The creature in her chest circled, it had been placated by embraces, but it wanted more.

She wanted more, for once she gave a damn about her own wants.

To kiss him.

She wanted to kiss him, damn what was the right way to do things, doing things the right way may have lost her the last of her family, it wasn’t going to lose her the love of her life too.

Oh!

Love. Where had that snuck up from?
She adored him, she wanted him, oh mercy how she wanted him, but Love?

She watched him as he effortlessly bolted the fence, bucket in hand and wand in his mouth, he had her in an enchantment all his own.

With grace and ease, he jumped up the haystack and joined her.
He looked full of joyous energy, it radiated off him like a warm glow.
“Mum has asked us to stay one more night, just so she’s sure she has things under control, that is ...if you don’t mind?”
“I don’t mind at all.” she had tried not to smile, but it happened anyway.
She liked being described as ‘us’.
He fidgeted with a blade of hay, something was being left unsaid.

“No, I just feel selfish. I want to get a move on, get things going, but at the same time—” he turned to look at her now, his eyes catching hers, “I’m rather enjoying having you to myself.”
He held her gaze, he was getting better at it now, so was she.
Tina matched his look, holding it in her own, she felt braver now than she had this morning.

Did Newt feel as out of his depth as she did? If he did he didn’t show it.

“What happened to ‘you should go with Theseus’?”

“I still stick by that statement, here could have been anything waiting here to attack us, it could have been very dangerous” he was mocking her, to anyone else and from anyone else it would have been
undetected, but the enigma of Newt was starting to fall in to place.

“So far, the most dangerous thing I’ve encountered is your wandering hands, Newton,” she said playfully, testing the water. Again he didn’t blush, baby steps Tina, baby steps.

“My wandering hands? The cheek of it all.” he grinned.
Oh dear, that grin was quite disarming at full force, it made her feel like anything was possible, maybe it was.
It was a grin that would get her into trouble, it spoke to her, telling her that whatever crazy idea crossed his mind she was onboard.
Tina was a leader, not a follower, this was new.
This was scary.
It was wonderful.
That grin was infectious, she felt her own spreading.
The little light that had been flickering daring to go out with every thought of Queenie, reignited stronger than ever.

“I am nothing but a gentleman!” he slumped back on to the hay resting on his elbow.
Tina instinctively moved into him.
However, she kept a respectable distance aware of his parent's proximity.
“Hum,” she said leaning back on her own elbows, subconsciously echoing his stance.
“Oh no you don’t, You don’t get to do the Aurour thing on me again.”
“What Auror thing?”
he raised an eyebrow under his mess of a fringe, did he not understand how adorable he looked when he did that?
Damn it, Tina, you are setting yourself up for a massive fall, but she couldn’t help but drop her guard whenever he was around.
“The analysing every little thing, Tiny. Does it not get exhausting?”
“Hark at you, I’d say we were a matching pair in that department.” don’t look at his eyes Tina, that’s the way...
“I can go if I’m too exhausting for you ?” she pretended to get up to leave, besides her, the laugh started in his chest till he was laughing so loud it caused his Mother to look over at them on the inquest.
“Tiny, I’m not letting you go anywhere.” he pulled her back down to him, she felt his arm slip around her waist as he pulled her into his side.
She sunk into his hug, he was getting braver, so was she.
“Sticking with Tiny then?” she whispered quietly into his ear, she could taste him again, it would be so easy to just move her lips to his neck right now, to take that tiny step to cross that line.
She felt him nod, his stubble and hair combining on her own neck sent small waves of shock right through her.
“You’re a tiny pain in my ass, Mr Scamander.” she tried to break this feeling, for her own sake, she was getting too distracted from everything they needed to be working towards. She tried to break the hug, to move away from this wanted touch.
She was failing.
“Eloquently put, but here in good old England we say Arse.”
She broke the hug, giving him a stern look, or at least trying to.
“You’re an Arse,”
It was too late, that was it, Tina dissolved into laughter.

“You Two, come on food.” Rhea lent on the fence, her face expressionless, Tina felt the red rising in her cheeks. How much of that had Newts mother seen? Newt had gone back to avoiding eye contact as he got to his feet by sliding down the side of the stack.
He stopped and turned to her offering his open arms to help her down, it was too inviting and her
normal independent stubborn streak was waning. 
She wanted to feel his arms around her again, so she let him catch her as she followed him to the 
floor. 
His hands found the bare skin on her back as he caught her. 
The last time he had caught her like this they were back in Macusa, it seemed a lifetime ago now. 
How did she get to this, completely caught up in his world, in him? 

“One more night. Then tomorrow life can have us back? Deal?” he said pulling her closer. 
She nodded, trying to find his eye, he looked past her at the haystack they had just vacated. 
“What’s wrong Newt?” 
“I’ve just...” he trailed off. “doesn’t matter, come on you need to eat.” 
as soon as he let go of her waist she missed the contact. 
What was it that he couldn’t say? 
She was determined to find out, the light flickered dangerously. 
Stop letting your guard down Tina, she scolded herself. 
Without thinking, she grabbed his hand and started towards the cottage. He looked at the gesture and 
entwined his fingers in with hers. 
“Come on, let's not keep Rhea waiting,” she said pulling him along. 
He wasn’t getting away. 
Not this time.
Nagini found herself drawn into his orbit. This world was strange and new, but he felt safe. He was hurting, she could feel it. They all hurt, she could taste it on the air. The smell of loss and pain surrounded his hunched form, it hung dark above him tangible, moving to wrap around him like a coiled veil.

She had become used to identifying them now, their scent saved in the alcoves of her brain, a safe place for her blood curse to separate friend from foe.

Tina’s scent reminded her strongly of Credence, she could smell the streets of New York on her skin, the traffic, the steam from the vents. It hung around her, wrapping her in a shadow that no one could see but her. She had found solace in Tina. She was hard to read, the emotions that came off her clouded her scent, her face didn’t match the aura that she exuded.

Jacob was surrounded by the scent of the bakery, she could pick out the individual ingredients he used to make his bread, she could smell the scent of a female, possibly the girlfriend that he pined for. She had found Jacob impossible not to like, he was charming and disarming with it. His sorrow was strong, but he worried about others first.

Newt had been hard to read, he had travelled, she could smell the distant shores, she had picked up on the scent of home, it had been fleeting, her memory of home was foggy at best. She could see his animals they hung around him, visible in the scent they left lingering around him.

His scent crossed with Tina’s, more so now, it had been subtle to start with, but as the days had passed the two of them became harder to separate from each other. He had warmth in him, she could understand why his creatures adored him as much as they did.

Right now however as she sat across the table from Theseus she wondered how long it would be before the darkness that was hounding him would finally break him, it hung in the air above him, reaching its way into the world, heavy and oppressive. It worried her, she had felt the same anger in Credence, it wasn’t good for him, it couldn’t be good for Theseus either. He had the same warmth in him as Newt, it kept the darkness back. She could only hope that the love he had left in his heart was enough to chase it away completely.

Nagini wanted to comfort him, but he was a wizard, and she was … well, she was nothing but a beast, so less than nothing as far as the wizards cared. Her perception of wizards was on the turn, she could feel the respect that her companions held for her, they had taken Jacob in, they had taken her in. The people she had around her now were unlike any she had encountered before, they did not look down on her, they treated her like an equal.

Theseus finished penning his letter and stood, for some reason, she felt that she should follow. They moved out to the back yard, hidden from the muggles that were in the front bar Theseus called
down one of the owls, it hopped down on to his arm and he handed it the letter. “Take it to feather down cottage, its for Tina.” he looked the bird in the eye. “Do not be tempted to give it to Newt,” the bird cocked its head and surveyed him. “He will give you a treat, either way, so don’t go getting ideas.” The owl nipped him affectionately and took off, letter tight in its claws. Nagini gave Theseus a confused look. “I'm giving Tina a warning, for all our sakes, I don’t think she will be happy with recent predicaments.” “I was more interested in the owl, your brother appears to have a good influence on you.”

The shadow shifted slightly, observing the interaction. The warmth had confused it.

“People tend to think we are not all that alike, we are, we just...” his eyes glazed with thought. Nagini waited.

“People seem to think that because I'm an Auror I am just that, an Auror and nothing more, I might not have the knack of charming animals the same way as Newt does, but I did grow up in the same house as him, you do pick things up.”

He rubbed at his neck thoughtfully, his eyes turned up to watch the owl as it circled finding its orientation.

“To be honest, sometimes I feel like a bit of a prat, I have to come across as being held together, right now its the exact opposite.” he sighed sinking in to the wooden barrel near the wall, Nagini jumped up on to the one next to it, her legs dangled, too short to reach the ground. She waited, he needed to vent.

“I’ve always wanted to just up and vanish as Newt does, I mean he drives me mad, I worry sick about him every time he goes off on one of his adventures. I don’t think he knows how much I envy that option, to just leave.” she watched as he picked at his cufflink.

“I know I have to be the responsible one, the organised one. Newts got too much Scamander in him, he takes after our grandfather, he was never tied to one spot for long, but like him we both fall hard and fast, you are bound to have picked up on the way he is with Tina, Newt was besotted with Leta at school, I teased him for it. It was an easy target to be fair, she had him wrapped around her finger.”

he looked at his hands. “having gotten to know her I understand how hard it was for him to escape that, other than work, she was my world, now I have neither I feel a bit lost to be fair.”

the two of them sat in silence

“Do you have siblings?”

“I may have, I can’t remember, the only family I've ever known is Credence, before that its a haze of faces and bars.”

“Did you love him?”

“Who credence?” oh that was a whole world of hurt that she wasn’t ready to share, not even with this man who’s by his very existence felt like comfort, it was strange what you saw when you saw the real person behind the wall.

“Yes, was he...”

“I… well...” what were they, they had spent the entire time they were together separated by bars, hands touching finding warmth in the simple actions. She wasn’t sure how he felt but to her Credence was home. How did she sum that up in words?

Theseus jumped down from his barrel offering her his hand, she hadn’t noticed that it had started to rain, the heavens were about to open again.

To his credit Theseus let the subject of Credence drop, she was grateful, around him the warmth moved the darkness back a little.
“What is a Hufflepuff anyway?”
she was on dangerous ground, it was one thing to laugh at his school song, but to disrespect, the
gadger was a whole new level of betrayal.
Tina had spotted his old school banner up in the shed, the silver and yellow bleached out from the
sun, even now the sight of it gave him a warm glow of pride.
“It was my house at school.”
“I know that! But what is a Hufflepuff?”

The look of frustration on her face was priceless, he couldn’t help but enjoy it, the way her eyes
grew wide as she huffed indignantly was quite adorable.

“I’m a Hufflepuff,” he said smiling as he reached up for his broom, it felt like forever since he had
flown, well not by broom, but the easiest way to find all the hippogriffs was by air, since his mother
had given Edward the afternoon off to help Bunty move in, it seemed only fair that he take Edwards
place.

“Yes I know but what is it!” she crossed her arms across her chest indignant.

“Its the name of one of the houses of Hogwarts...” he was having fun, he could do this for hours, it
was the only way he could get Theseus to leave him alone sometimes as a child.

“Oh for the love of merlin...” she threw her hands up exasperated.
The flowing top his mother had bought her suited her, it moved around her life mist as she ran her
hand through her hair agitated with his teasing.

He wished she would stop looking so tempting, it was distracting him from his errands.

His broom vibrated under his touch, drawing him back to the shelf.
The thing hadn’t been used since before he went to war, but it jumped to his hand like it was only
yesterday he had held it under his grip.

His broom wasn’t as flashy as Theseus’s, the later had been on the Quidditch team, he was happy to
watch from the stands, Leta by his side.
Well, that was unless they were playing Slytherin then the small house rivalry could be found to rear
its head.

He had always enjoyed playing Chaser, he wasn’t the build for a chaser, but he was nimble and
quick to avoid bludger, so under protest, he took up the position.
Looking back it was good practice for dodging the wrath of Runespore and an assortment of things
that he had come across on his travels, that moved first and asked questions later, much like the
beguiling witch that stood in front of him he supposed.

“do you fly?” he found himself asking, he didn’t turn he could feel her watching him, again just like
this morning he knew she was watching him, even if he couldn’t see it.

“A little.” her voice sounded thrown off balance by the sudden change of direction. There was
something else, he couldn’t quite put his finger on.

Newt jumped down to join her, caught her eye, and smiled handing her Theseus’s broom.

“And what exactly am I supposed to do with this?”
Her anger was entertainment all of its own, but the look of joy at being handed the broom outshone it tenfold.

“Well it’s not so you can brush the floor is it?”
That gained him a jab in the side, she had quite a bit of strength behind that lovely figure of hers.
It had been a hunch that she flew, the ministry insisted on it for Auror training here, he had never asked if Macusa was the same.

“should I be worried that your first reaction is always violence?” he said moving out of the way before she could poke him in the ribs again.
The mischief in her face was infectious. It danced across her eyes and the smirk played upon her lips, he tried not to linger his gaze too long, aware that she was observing him.

stepping back and throwing the broom across her shoulder she pursed her lips and rolled her eyes at him, he really did find her telling off a little bit thrilling.
He shouldered his own broom, following behind her towards the fields beyond the lake.

The view had always been one of his favourite things about flying, you only had to go as far as the tops of the trees and you could take in the entire farm. He felt as at home on a broom as he did with is beasts, especially when it was grounded he knew so well he flew over.
The air was cooler up here, it felt nice after the heat of the day, flying was second nature to him, Tina, however, did not look quite as comfortable as himself.

He had flown the length of the lake before he realised she wasn’t behind him, circling back he found her hovering near the tree line, she seemed reluctant to go higher.
“What you waiting for?”

“It’s been a while,” she said sheepishly, her voice carrying on the breeze.
He looped around and headed back to her side.
He looked at her hands trembling as she inched the broom higher.
“do you not like heights?”
Her face flushed bright red, and she averted her eyes, she had looked so confident marching up to the field, this turn of direction seemed odd.
“Not the best with them, no.”
“you don’t have to help you know, I just thought that you might...”
“Newt stop talking.”
he did as he was told.
She looked determinant as she inched the broom higher and higher above the trees.
“You don’t have to prove it to me Tiny.”
“I’m not doing it for you,” she called, her eyes still closed but now a length above him.

He watched with pride as she levelled herself out, flying up to join her, just on the off chance he may need to catch her.
One eye at a time she opened them, looking pleased with herself, he grinned at her she was so stubborn, it was adorable.
“Well done.” beaming at her he flew to her side.
“I would quite like to go back to the ground now if that’s ok with you,” she said staring him in the eye, he had the feeling she was avoiding looking down.
“You do what you have to do.” he tried to say reassuringly but the pained look on her face at trying to contain her composure was forcing him to chuckle.
So she was scared of heights, it was nice to know, he was starting to think the only thing that scared
her was himself.
He escorted her to the ground, her eyes had remained closed again until she felt the earth under her feet.
She looked sheepishly down at her shoes, tips of her ears going red.
“It’s a stupid thing I know, but I have a reoccurring dream of falling from a broom, its silly, I live in a city that has the tallest buildings in the world, yet I avoid the view if I can help it.” she sighed “all cause of a stupid dream.”
Newt dismounted, he wished he was a braver man then he would just scoop her up, throw her on the back of his broom and show her there was nothing to fear.

However he couldn’t bring himself to do it, in his head something was still nagging, niggling away, it stopped him having that extra jolt he felt he needed.
He made to step towards her, maybe envelope her into a hug, however just as he did so an owl flew down to them, hopping at once on to Tina’s shoulder.
It dropped a letter into Tina's hands, its eyes found Newts.
As he stepped forward the Owl backed away, looking at Tina to make sure she had the letter it had posted.

Tina was momentarily confused, Newt recognised his brother's hand, this was the second time today he had been in contact with Tina, what did his brother want that badly.
The same thought must have crossed Tina’s mind, her eyes darting from the letter to Newt.

“It’s ok, go.” she shooed him away, but intrigue had hold of him and would not let go.
“I will curse you Newt, you know I will, this is work. Go do your Mothers bidding will you?” how did she always see right through him when it came to stuff like this when his affection for her seemed lost and befuddled.

Begrudgingly he mounted his broom and took off, the thrill had lost its edge as he circled calling out to his mother's beasts, he wasn’t really paying attention, his eyes kept flicking back to Tina who now sat paper in hand, owl on her knee.
He knew that Theseus wouldn’t do anything intentionally to hurt him, but this newfound camaraderie between him and Tina was picking away at him.
He hated himself for even thinking it, Leta had not been dead a week yet, did he really think that little of his own flesh and blood?
But Tina was something special, he knew she didn’t think that, but she shone.
He was stupid to think that she wouldn’t turn other peoples heads the way she had his.

He made quick work of rounding up the last of the brood, eager to join Tina as soon as possible.
As he landed she looked up at him with red swollen eyes.
“Tina what is it?” he sunk to her side pulling her into a hug, what had his idiot brother said this time.
“Well I’m no longer an Auror,” she sobbed. “My life work up in smoke,”
He said nothing, unsure how to respond, they had worked it out already, why the tears now?
“Seeing it written down, it makes it real you know?” she said folding the parchment and sticking it in her pocket, the owl took that as a sign to leave, taking off into the late afternoon sun.
Newt pulled her closer, he felt like he was trying to hold the broken pieces of her together in his arms.
However she broke his grip, not looking at him, her gaze was far away and distant.
“Macusa is sending a delegation for myself and Jacob, we have to go.”

the words hung heavy in the air, he could hear her heartache in them.
He hated it, every last part of it.
“I’ll come with you,” he said softly.
“No you won’t, travel ban remember.”
“Sod a bloody Travel ban,”
“and what Newt? Both of us end up locked up for stupid reasons? How does that help.”
Newt felt a fit of anger rising in his chest. It scared him how powerful it was, they were not getting
her, Tina had done nothing wrong, nothing but what she thought was right, and Jacob…

Tina must have felt Newts anger she got to her feet.
“This isn’t your fight Newt, just leave me be,” she whispered as she walked away.
Newt watched her go, taking part of him with her.

Chapter End Notes

you know the drill,
also, I'm taking prompts for one-shots, I was so stuck with this chapter. I could have
done with some outlet somewhere else so yeah if you want a mini fic let me know in the
comments.
Tina cursed herself.
How could she mess everything up so grandly?

So much had happened recently, her old life in New York felt like it was a distant dream. The skyline and the smog lost in a memory of another time, another life, it hadn’t been a happy life but it was built on hard work and determination. But now what did she have? Was it not bad enough that she had nothing? Nothing but this grasp of hope with Newt. MACUSA wanted to take even that.

The faint glimmer of hope she had found, it was set to be stolen away from her yet again, her past coming back to haunt her like a ghost of dismay and regrets, choking the very life and love out of her.

Her wand vibrated at her side, feeling the raw emotion that flowed to her every nerve. How dare they.

She was better than that. They didn’t deserve her, she was a good Auror if nothing else she knew that, nothing got past her if she could help it, she was loyal to a fault, followed the rules, most of the time and did as she was told, yet she was still to be punished.

They didn’t deserve this, not her, not Newt.

Who else had come face to face with that tyrant twice and lived to tell the tale?

A No Mag, that’s who.

No wonder the President wants him obliterated she mused, Jacob had survived better than half of her own office, that must have stung.

She liked the President, she had that same ambition Tina strived for. It was hard to make a dent in a man’s world, but she had stood and fought with the best of them. She wanted to believe this order had not come directly from the president, but she knew the rules before she broke them, this was on her own head.

She was angry at herself for her stupidity, her blind ambition, her misjudgement of a situation, the selfishness of following her heart, having acted upon it had brought this down upon them all.

Hope had lulled her into false security, in its guise as a handsome Englishman, let her drop her guard and build an idea of happiness that she was foolish to think was hers for the taking.

The tears did not fall, they crashed around her, her guilt at the anguish, the anger and the pain she caused everyone else that came in to contact with her. It came pounding at her heart in waves of sorrow.

She paced the circumference of the lake, it grew dark as she walked along the pebble outcrops the current gently lapped the water around the irregular shaped stones.

She felt numb, empty.

She was to be deported back to America but as what?
A deserter, a traitor?
She wondered what charge they would slap on her, would they send her to the death chamber?
Without Newt it would be no escape. No swooping death or strong arms to catch her this time.

Her heart felt like a rock in her chest, maybe it realised it too was alone, it had fallen too fast and too deep.
She had trusted it and it had created its own downfall, stupid heart.

Tina sank down on to a large rock, eyes turned out to the calm lake as the last of the sun sunk down below the horizon.
Her anger had lessened, but her body ached from the tension that she carried in her stressed and anxious state.

The air was cooler tonight, the stars hiding behind dark clouds that threatened rain, she pulled her arms tighter around herself, trying to calm the shakes that had nothing to do with the change in temperature.

She let out a sigh, it rang through the night air, echoing in the trees surrounding her.

How long she sat, watching the lapping shoreline she was unsure, her mind blank and unthinking as she watched the dark water wrap the pebbles upon the beach, the tide hiding them from her view.

She jumped as the sounds of the night were disturbed by a gentle grunt.

Looking up, the beast that had been relocated into the lake only the night before filled her vision, it watched her inquisitively.
It was a majestic image.
As it moved to watch head tipping caused the water to fall from its flanks eyes moved side to side. He looked sad, her mood seemed to reflect in his expression.

It drew her to the edge of the water, her feet suddenly wet as she reached up to comfort it.
His muzzle turned in to her hand, Tina hadn’t been sure what she expected but it wasn’t for the creature to be soft, almost fur-like underhand. Newts creatures always surprised her, much like the man himself, they were a mystery.

“How is it?” the creature looks at her, “The lake? I know it’s a change, is it a good one?”
Another snort for an answer, something sticky hits her arm, she doesn’t look to see what, she can guess.

“Are you happy?” she says quietly, unsure if it’s the Kelpie or herself she is asking. They hold this tableau, finding a kindred emotion, part of something outside there control.

“If it answers me I’ve gone mad,” she says to the world at large. A hollow laugh that she doesn’t recognise fills the air.

“Newt talks to the contents of his case all the time, he’s not mad, he’s wonderful, and you are an idiot. Move forward not backwards Tina.”
Her pep talks had worked in the past, but now she found no hope in her own positive attitude. Maybe she has gone quite mad, stood here on the edge of a lake, stroking something that could quite easily kill her at any given moment, talking to herself.
Maybe she could plead insanity when Macusa came calling? Right now it felt like it would be easy to prove.

The Kelpie sniffed her jawline, leaving more trails of mucus wherever it lay its nose.
“Well ain’t you a cutie,” she says as it sniffs her hair, snorting with an agreement.
Tina wrinkles her nose as the slimy substance reaches the back of her neck, it smells strange but yet comforting, triggering that feeling at the base of her stomach. The one that lingered whenever she thought of Newt to long, a mixture of sadness and longing, home and a distant prospect of happiness. Here with her arms around one of his rescues, her heart belonged to him, not herself. He was a protector, he gave without hesitation when it came to his creatures, doing what was right. All he had wanted to do was extend that to her. So she had put the walls up and pushed him away.

The Kelpie turned back to the water, as Tina’s hand moves to her locket, the smell had triggered her to reach for it, taking her back to Newt’s case, a soggy Niffler and comfort she hadn’t felt since she was a child.

“Shame you can’t come you could bite them when they come for me.”

the beast lowered its head to her in solace.

“I couldn’t ask you to do it, I know how big a softie you are,” she stroked his cheek lightly, ”you’re like me honey, scary, hard and fierce, but you got a big heart. Right boy?”

The large green eyes found hers, then cast their eyes across the field to Feather Down, a look of sorrow seemed to cross its face.

“I know, but I can’t...”

With one last look back at her, the beast turns and heads back to the depths, leaving Tina alone and slightly slimy in the moonlight.

Tina quietly let herself back into the rooms above the barn.

Time had passed, it had slipped through her fingers like grains of sand, her thoughts circling her mind like vultures, picking at the last of their prey.

She felt tired now, sleep and stress snuffing out the last of her energy.

She just wanted to wash some of the slime off her skin, maybe try and get some rest, she could go down into Newts case, sleep on the cot.

She didn’t deserve to sleep at his side, not after the way she had acted.

“Tina?”

Newts voice was soft, it wasn’t anger, it was worry.

Newt didn’t do worry.

The pang of guilt tugged at her heart.

She waited for him to cross the room.

it didn’t happen.

When she turned to look, he sat at the small kitchen table. Half-eaten sandwich, discarded teacup and parchment around him. He had built a tower of sugar cubes on the table, one hand halfway to placing a square.

His eyes looked red, he looked defeated, she had never seen him like that.

Lost.

She had done that to him.

More guilt to burden herself with, she had managed to break the purist soul she had ever met and
broken him.

“It’s gone midnight, I was about to come look for you,” he said quietly, placing the lump of sugar on to the top of the tower.
He didn’t look at her, she didn’t blame him.
“I would have looked sooner, but I thought you would want time to think.”

Tina’s gut wrenched at the sound of his voice, broken and cracked.

The world had felt so much less complicated only this morning.
Yet he knew her so well after such a short amount of time.
He hadn’t followed, he hadn’t tried to calm her, he knew exactly what she needed.
She didn’t deserve this man in her life.

She lingered at the door
Torn between going to him or running as far as she could.

“Tina.”
He looked up at her, she wished he wouldn’t, it only added to the hurt she felt, seeing red bloodshot eyes knowing they were because of her.

In a flash he was at her side, his face full of concern.
“What happened?” she felt his eyes gazing over cheek into her hairline and then down across her chest, she followed his gaze.

It took longer than it should have to process how revolting she must look, tiered puffy eyed and covered in dirt and what could probably only be described as sea horse sneezes.

“The Kelpie likes his new home.” it was an explanation of sorts.
“so this is…?” his finger traced over the crusting substance, despite the numbness she had felt all night, the sensation tingled, spreading a warmth that had nothing to do with the heat of Newt’s hand.
Hands moved up her arm, sparks prickling under her skin at his touch.
He was close to her now inspecting, she could feel his warm breath on her skin.

“I wouldn’t keep that up if I were you, that may well be Boogers.”
he paused as he inspected her shoulder, his eyes found hers. Curiosity getting the best of him.
She had never realised how many different shades of blue and green made up his eyes before, the sparkled even more due to the tears he had obviously spilt, how could he look even more handsome when he looked so sad?
Tina cursed the universe for this turn of events.

“Boogers?” he questioned, Tina was unsure if it was the word or the substance that confused him.
“Boogers, you know when you sneeze?”

He blinked at her a few times, contemplating this information before his face contorted into laughter.
“How did you get covered in Kelpie snot?” he said between peals of mirth.

“He gave me a hug.” she knew how ridiculous that sounded, it caused the corners of her mouth to twitch.
But in a way it was true, she knew Newt would understand that it sounded like something he would do, give a monster a hug.
The thought of that burned in her heart as the laughter formed on her lips.

Suddenly he pulled her into him, his arms circling tightly around her. She could feel the laughter
shaking his body as he wrapped her protectively in his embrace.

‘You never met a monster you couldn’t love’ that was what Leta had said to him, she was right.

She sunk into his warm arms, allowing him to engulf her.
His arms felt strong against her back, the laughter echoing in his chest, she could feel her darkness slipping away.
He didn’t blame her for anything, he wanted her around, why couldn’t she just take that as it was, why did she have to think the worst.

“I have to ask, how did you get it in the back of your hair?” he said quietly into her ear, the sound of him so close made goosebumps appear all over her skin, it had nothing to do with the coolness of the night.

“He sniffed me, I told you Boogers.” she reached her hand up to touch her hair, it was indeed crusty sticking together in clumps. She must look a mess, she felt the flush of embarrassment creeping over her.

“Well, as much as I commend your daring adventure into wizardzooligy, I must insist you don’t try something like that again without a trained professional at your side.” he shifted so he could find her eyes again.

She met his gaze, laughter slowly being taken away by seriousness, no one had ever looked at her quite so intensely before, he had her wrapped up in that look, she would probably agree to anything.

She felt a stab of guilt at snapping at him, he only wanted to protect her, of all the new feelings that had developed since he came into her life, someone wanting to protect her had been the most bizarre to comprehend.

She hadn’t felt that since her father had taught her to ice skate on a cold December over a decade ago, before everything went dark, herself and Queenie becoming an island.

“I’ll be that person if you let me, Tina, you know that right?” he said quietly as if reading her mind. It was a gentle offer, was the raw hurt of her snapping at him still fresh in his mind. She wasn’t proud of that, he only wanted to help.

“Does that count if its creatures of the Human variety?”

His smile disarms her, it always does, sneaking under any barrier that she constructed against the world, a boat to carry her from the island that was her life, so much more barren now Queenie had gone.

“They are the worst ones, they need to be treated with utmost caution and never ever, and I mean ever, approached on one’s own.” his hand reached up as it had done many times before, tucking a loose strand of her back in to place.

Tina knew it was a gesture, her hair to far gone with mucus and muck to be saved by such a simple action. She closed her eyes into his touch, soft and careful.

“I’m sorry.”
“What for?”
“storming off, I -”
“Tina shut up.”

His impression of her was scarily accurate, it caused her to open her eyes to look at him.

“Newt I -”
“Tina, I would not expect you to react in any other way if you did it wouldn’t be you.”

“Then you know I never say sorry for what I think is right, I was wrong to snap at you Newt, I’m
He bowed his head to her, much like she had seen him do with the hippogriff, however, when he looked back up at her his eyes were full of hope. “Please let that be the only sorry you ever feel you have to give me,” he said taking hold of her hand and raising it to his lips. He gently placed them upon her knuckles, leaving a small patch of heat between them, she longed to feel his hands entwined with her own again.

“Go wash, you smell like the bottom of the lake.” That was not what she had expected him to say next. She wanted the ground to swallow her whole, she would surely die of embarrassment if anyone but Newt had muttered words to that effect. He placed his hands on her shoulders, turning and pushing her towards the bathroom, she heard the water filling the bath. How had he done that without his wand? She needed to ask him, it was something she should learn.

“And what about you Newton?” she said turning to him as she closed the door. “I’d rather you never give me the chance to miss you if you don’t mind.” the words were low but she heard them over the sound of the water and the door lock. “Me too,” she whispered into the wood.
He sipped his tea as he watched her sleep, his blanket wrapped around her like a shield to the world, Einstein slept in the sunny spot that fell across her as day broke, protecting her from the night terrors that still haunted her, not that Newt would mention it, she would share in her own time.

It had hurt when she pushed him away, he had let her in and she had rejected him.

That had been his first reaction, however as he had reasoned through her actions. Watching her from the veranda as she paced the lake, it dawned on him that this was Tina’s reaction to most things, she wasn’t used to having someone to turn to in that way. Her initial reaction was to shoulder the whole blame, not turn to others for comfort. He hoped that whatever was developing between the two of them could change that. Her pain was something he wanted to help unburden, he wished she would let him in.

He gathered her slimy clothes and took them to the laundry, letting her sleep, she needed it, she was exhausted.

As he lifted the items into the wash something fluttered to the floor. The letter from Theseus lay on the dark grey slab. A flick of a wand and the paper was in his hand, his curiosity peaked. It was a betrayal of her trust to read the letter, but his nagging doubt still picked away at him. He needed to know what had caused her to react in such a way.

‘Tina,
The vermin as you so delicately put it is none other than Auror Graves.
We worked together in the war, his concern initial was for myself, however upon learning that you were in my company he expressed concerns as to your well-being.
Graves has a high opinion of you Tina, as do I.

I am giving you advanced warning, Macusa is not at all happy about the events in Paris, as you have already gathered.
You have been resigned from active duty.
I’m sorry I know how much the work meant to you.

Graves has advised me that they are planning on sending an extraction party to collect you and Jacob.
You are to be taken before the court, I am unsure as to what charge.
I do however know that the Extraction party is led by Auror Toliver,
I’m led to understand that you worked with him in the past, you may be aware of the best course of action to take with an old partner.

I for one would hate to see this extraction come to pass, for all our sakes, I feel we are better off keeping you around.

We will talk in person as soon as you arrive, look after my idiot brother in the meantime.

Regards.
Theseus.

Toliver, he knew that name, where from? Had Tina mentioned him before in a letter? At least if Tina knew who he was, she might know how he worked, they may have a chance of evading capture.

He would have to have words with Theseus about the idiot thing, he wasn’t an idiot when he saved his life.

Carefully folding the paper back along the crease he slipped the paper into his own pocket, waiting until Tina’s clothes were clean before sliding it back into its correct place.

Tina was awake when he got back to the barn, she sat upon the top step, coffee in hand his old shirt torturing him as it hung off her, she smiled at him sheepishly. Her eyes looked less puffy than they had in the early hours when she had crawled into bed next to him after her bath. She had tried to keep her distance but he had opened his arms and she had moved into his chest, warm and content, safe in his arms. It was comfort that had sent them to sleep last night, the frustration and teasing of the night before dampened by the blow of the news.

A warm smile met him as he sank down on to the step behind her. Her hair was still clumped up in patches on one side where she had placed her damp hair on his chest, but at least now she wasn’t covered in snot.

“I washed these,” he said presenting her with her clothes. “I’m sure you don’t want to spend the travel today smelling like the lake.”

“I dunno, it sort of reminded me of you. Although I have a travel outfit from your mom”

“I smell like a dirty lake?”

“No silly, the lake smells like your basement.”

“Oh, so my house smells? Is that what you’re saying.” he teased, she reached out and put a hand on his arm, her slender fingers soft on his warm skin.

He looked down at her hand, so delicate for such a good fighter, she really was a treasure.

He let his gaze move up her arm, the shirt sleeves skimmed her elbows, her skin browning from the sun, she was starting to develop a cluster of freckles on her arm, her skin unused to the light. From her elbow a movement caught his eye, The Niffler slept wrapped around her locket, back in his rightful place, guarding her for Newt.

He tried to not linger, but the way lockets and the beast fell upon her chest drew him to the curve of her breasts, her breathing making the loose fabric move in time with the rise and fall.

“Eyes up here buddy.” she laughed.

“I'm just checking on your pet,” he said going red around the ears.

“Yes and I'm the king of England.”

He diverted his gaze down to his hands.

“Sorry, pure biology I assure you,” he said quietly under his breath, ashamed of his actions.

“Newt will you look at me?”

He did as he was told, her smile was wide upon her face, she looked radiant, he didn’t deserve to have that smile saved for him, he really didn’t.
“What did you say about not saying sorry, if I minded I would have cursed you in to next week.”

He felt the full blow of that statement hit him like a graphorn to the chest.
“You have to understand, no one looks at me the way you do, its strange that’s all.” she pushed the strand of hair he was so fond of out the way, he noticed the sun had caught her nose, it left its kiss where the skin curved to meet it.

“Then I pity anyone who doesn’t see you the way I do, you are rather captivating, I hope you forgive my forwardness in saying so.”

Newt didn’t know where the forwardness had come from, maybe the fear of her leaving the night before, maybe he just knew it was what she needed to know.

He was captivated by her, her captive to do with him what she wished. He reached over and took the cup from her hand placing it on the step, and carefully pulled her closer.
She slid into the space between his knees and rested back into his chest, pulling his arms around her waist, from where he had a clear view of Einstein’s hiding place, he mapped it for later exploration, trying to fight the urge to reach and explore.
She tipped her head back to look at him, shirt tightening over the newly mapped ground. He gently places a kiss on the top of her forehead, his chin in her hair as she closes her eyes under the gentle touch of his lips. She sighs contently, he wished he could protect her and make this happiness permanent.

They sit in bliss for a few moments before the sound of the farm coming to life disturbs them.

“When do we leave?” she asks shaken from her contemplation.
“Soon as you are ready, best get on the move, harder to track a moving target.” she shuffles between his arms, the mention of the trace on her making her nervous.

He pulls her up towards him and on to his knee, she starts at the move but rests back into him. Pressing his face into the back of her neck, breathing in her scent, not sure where this new found bravery has come from he takes no chances in letting her escape him again.

They are in this together, they are a unit if they take her he wasn’t sure how he would survive. Hands sliding down to rest on her thighs, slightly pressing her to him, he wonders if it torments her as it does him.
“If they want you, they have to fight me for you, I won’t make it easy on them.”
“I don’t believe you make anything easy on anyone do you?” she wiggled, pressing herself to him more, no hiding anything that was happening between them, she knew exactly what it was that pressed up against her, for someone who wasn’t used to being looked at she was very forward sometimes.

“I won’t let them have you, not my Tiny,” he whispered quietly his lips on her ear. She shuddered under his touch, he couldn’t help but smile.

She pushed herself up off him, his knee felt cold and he immediately missed her comfort.
“Come on, before Biology gets us into trouble, we have to go,” she smoothed down the hem of the shirt, his eyes lingered from his sitting position the view left little to the imagination, her underwear skimming the curves of her as she moved to step back into the lodging. She reached over him to grab the cup, giving him a full view as the weight of Einstein pulled her locket and the shirt down gaping before him.
“That is just bad etiquette.” he swallowed hard.
“I’m an outlaw Scamander, catch up.” she disappeared into the door with a skip in her step.
“Tell Jacob not to worry,” Bunty said wrapping the both of them into a hug. Newt didn’t even try and protest, he was beyond fighting it now.

“You need anything, you send an owl ok?” Tina said as Bunty returned to Eddy’s side, a genuine smile on his face this time, the date must have gone well Newt presumed.

He had never really been a good judge of people, but Bunty seemed to be even more cheerful than usual.

“We will, but it’s all under control.”

Newt looked at his Mother she nodded to him indicating to the side of the cottage. He followed her as his father spoke quietly to Tina indicating points on a map.

“Newt, I know what you are like for not listening to any advice anyone gives you.” his mother looked up at him, her eyes on the brink of tears, he had never seen his mother cry, she prided herself on her strength.

He felt the air knocked out of him.

“Mum?”

“Don’t let her go. The way you two are, that’s special. Protect her, because I know she’s going to try her hardest to make sure you get out the other side.” Rhea composed herself.

“You look at her the way you’re dad used to look at me when we first started courting before you and Thes were even a whisper of an idea.”

He went to speak but Rhea lifted a hand to stop him.

“Newton, you cherish that woman, every little bit of her, because there might be a day when one of you will look at the other and all there will be is memories.” she let a single tear escape wiping it on the back of her hand.

“Your dad forgot who I was again the other day, I would give anything to have him look at me one more time the way you look at Tina, but he’s slipping, I lose more of him every day.”

Newt reached out, his mother patted his hand.

“Don’t worry about me, worry about her. Don’t let her become a memory.” she smiled composing herself, hiding her pain behind the wall she had taught her sons to build.

“If dad takes a turn for the worst… send an owl mum.”

“I will do no such thing, you don’t need to see him when he’s like that, he isn’t himself. He’s a stranger.”

“No, he isn’t, he’s still in their mum. He loves you the same way he always has.”

He had never really seen his mother vulnerable like this, it was a day for bravery in all forms.

“Try to find time for her, Newt. I know you always feel like you need to do what is right, but sometimes what is right is the thing that is right for you.” she glanced over at Tina who stood waiting for Newt at the kissing gate, suitcase in hand, large sun hat and travel shawl wrapped tight, every bit the English lady she was supposed to be pretending to be, she looked sheepish and Newt knew she felt uncomfortable dressed like that.

“Go, comfort her, she looks worried” his mother pushed him towards the gate, he headed towards Tina looking back at his mother who had completely regained her composure, waving after him with a big smile on her face.

“Don’t do anything stupid, and I would like an excuse to buy a new hat, a griff ate my old one.”

Tina said nothing but a look of intrigue sat upon her, she waved goodbye as they set off back towards the lane.
“Why would your mother need a new hat?” Tina asked him as they reached the point that they could apparate beyond the protective wards. He linked his arm with her and after giving his family home one last look he turned back to Tina.

“Oh its just an English turn of phrase, a bit like you and your Boogers.” she might feel uncomfortable but she looked quite angelic dressed in her persona of an English rose.
She raised an eyebrow but let it go, eager to put some distance between there last known address and their destination.

They landed in an ally near an old country Train station, the world may have changed but this place had been the same since the dawn of the steam age, quaint red brick cottages lined the one narrow street, the one public house the hub of the town activity.
Tina did not drop his grip when they arrived, keeping her hand tucked into the fold of his arm, every bit the lady she pretended to be, Newt didn’t question it, he liked the feel of her on his arm.
It was like she was supposed to be attached to him, it was something he was growing to like.

“So far, England has not failed to amaze me, I thought London was alive, but this is a sleeping beast, I feel like any moment the houses will come alive.”
“Little villages like this really do have there own personality, this is a Muggle settlement, but wait till we visit one of our own, they really have a life of there own.” he manoeuvred her towards a small path that lead down to a brick building with a wooden set of steps leading to it.
It ran alongside rails that stretched on forever on both sides, a little green bridge spanned the line.
Of all the Muggle inventions Newt liked the Steam train the most.
The smell of it brought back residual happiness that lingered from his school days, scarlet and clouds of steam, the chatter of students boarding for a new term at school.

He was aware of Tina looking at him, he had stopped halfway down the little wooden steps.
“Ok?”
“Yes, just remembering getting the train to school as a child, the smell brought it back.”
“I can’t imagine you at school, what with your lack of ability to follow rules.”
“Oh, I was what Theseus would call ‘a little shit’. I was in trouble all the time, drove him mad, just as well he only had to put up with me one year.”

As they reached the building Newt set down his case, indicating for Tina to pull up a seat on the wooden bench.
He counted out muggle money to the man in the booth and received two tickets back, folding them he popped them in his waistcoat pocket before joining Tina at her side.
Her arm instantly linked back in with his as she watched the world idle by.

They smelt the train before they saw it, the aroma of the steam floating across the air.
Newt couldn’t help but smile as the fawn Green train pulled in to the station at the look of wonder upon Tina’s face, this was a proper steam train, not the pale comparison that had carried them to his mothers.
They found there compartment and Newt hopped aboard, turning to offer Tina a hand.
She linked her hand around his wrist, pulling herself into him and in turn in to the compartment.
He placed the cases in the luggage rack above there head. Smiling as Tina took in the grandeur of the compartment.
She sank down on to the thickly quilted bench and beamed at him.
“Well this is posh.” she mocked.
“I might as well spoil the lady, she is of high society after all.” he quipped back.
“Is this how you rich folk live? I don’t think I’ve ever seen so much shiny brass in my life.”
Sinking in to the seat beside her as the whistle blew Newt watched as her face lit up at the sight of the steam blowing past the window.
“The first steam train I ever saw as a child, I was convinced it was a real dragon, black and slick flowing across the countryside like a serpent. As I got older, I realised that it pails in comparison to a real life dragon, however, this bit of Muggle magic still holds a place in my heart.”

The train rolled into movement as if in agreement, Tina gave of an excited giggle.
“How does it work?”
Her face was almost out of the window as she tried to see the pistons and gears springing into life.
“The feeders pump heat from the bellows into the water tank and the steam powers the wheels as it escapes, as I said Muggle magic, they call it Physics, cause and effect. It works under the same principle as our own wands, they have no magic of there own but it gives the energy a place to go, the steam creates energy and pushes the train into motion.”

“You are an encyclopedic source of pointless facts Scamander.” she glanced at him with that look of mischief in her eye.
“It’s one of my few highly rated qualities.”

Newt watched her as she devoured the view from the window, he would normally be sat in that seat, watching and marvelling at the way the train moved and built up speed, the countryside shooting by as villages became further and further apart. But right now he was happy just watching the witch in front of him take pleasure in Muggle engineering.
He wanted to commit this to memory, this happy moment, the way the gentle breeze from the slightly cracked window moved the strands of hair that framed her face, how the hat she wore didn’t quite sit correctly, her fringe causing it to lift away where it should sit flat.

How the sun had turned her skin a slight tan, complementing the way the deep yellow of her travel dress set off the curve of her collarbone. Her grey travel shawl lay dis-guarded upon the seat next to him, forgone in her excitement.

He wanted to set into his mind how the drop in the back of her dress showed off just enough of her back to give him a teasing image of the curve of her shoulder blades, leading down to a cluster of moles just by her heart.

His mother had picked well, the yellow and grey playing against her strengths, his mother had dressed her in his colours, he wouldn’t be surprised if she had done that with intent. He would have no problem pretending to be madly in love with this creature should anyone question there cover story.

“Newt,” she said quietly sinking into the seat next to him, she took off her hat and lay it on the seats across from them.
“When we aren’t on the run, I’d like to go on more steam trains,” she said with an air of longing in her voice.
“I know a great many that you may find even more thrilling than this,” She lifts his arm and finds the Tina sized space at his side, always filling the available space, even when awake.
“You don’t talk about your travels, the beasts yes, but the finding them, you skirt around it, you must have seen so many amazing things.” she wraps his arm around her playing with his hand tracing the outlines of the many scars and dints that cover them.
It was so intimate a gesture he lost his thoughts to it, causing her to turn to him, looking up at him with the two great big oceans of brown that drew him in.
“It was lonely, to have such amazing sights, sounds, tastes and have no one to share it with.” he saw the sadness flash deep within her.

Wiggling slightly she turned towards him pulling her feet up on to the chair under her, like a child waiting to hear a story.

“You haven’t seen anything until you see the sunset over the desert, it makes the ground look like water, the heat and the cool hitting against each other, it creates its own climate, sometimes if your lucky you can see the dragons dancing upon the lightning, drawn to the raw power you see, they dive in to it bathing in it like we would a waterfall only far more graceful than a human could ever be, it sparks of there scales in showers of rainbow flashes.”

Tina is hanging on his every word. Eyes wide at the talk of Dragons.
He pulls her closer, she really did look distracting in that shade of yellow.

“You already know I’ve visited Romania, it is a picturesque vision of mountains, sweeping fields and the most amazing castles, it’s forests are alive with faery. They lure travellers from the road using lights and smoke to cause distraction, the locals blame it on Vampires, Stoker and his writing are to blame for that turn of events, however, in reality, the Vampires live high in the Carpathian mountains, they are natural guardians of the peaks, although their story is bathed in blood and gore, I personally find them quite charming.”

Tina had moved closer again, she really was quite charming herself.

“I think I would like to meet them myself one day,” she said softly.
The train rocked them both gently as it rounded a hill, she was so close now he could feel her nose bump against his cheek, she gave a small nervous giggle.

“Then, I will take you, we will travel by the Orient Express, it’s a grand train, it makes this look like a tin can,” he looked down at her for her approval of this idea, his mind already full of the adventures they could have, just the two of them away from the world.

She had her head turned in to him, so close there noses almost bumped, he expected her to jump, to startle but she didn’t, a look of hunger crept across her face, her eyes hovered on his lips.

“that is if you don’t-”
his words were cut short by soft lips finding his own, as the gentle rock of the train pulled her into him more, he responded in kind his eyes closing as he caught her bottom lip in his own deepening the kiss.

She pressed herself into his side, forcing him to hold her tighter as the train swayed his heart pounding in his ears, drowning out the rhythmic sound of the train upon the tracks, drowning out everything that wasn’t the touch of her lips against his own.

She bit against his bottom lip taking him even more by surprise, parting his lips to deepen the kiss on her own terms, pressing in and exploring causing him to reply, his hand sliding to her hair pulling her into him more.

“Tickets please.”

They both jumped as if they had been scalded, Newt felt the heat rise in his cheeks as the Ticket inspector tapped on the glass.

The amused expression upon the old man’s face didn’t go unnoticed.

“On the honeymoon are we?” he said jovially reaching for the tickets that Newt fished from his pocket.
“Yes, sorry about that… you know how it is I’m sure.”

“Oh to be young and in love, my Mrs won’t even hold my hand in public these days, make the most of it while it lasts.” a look of sadness flashed in the man’s eyes as he punched the tickets and handed them back to Newt with a wink.

“Good luck on your life together, you look like you got a handful there sir.” he tipped his hat and slid the door closed again but gave Newt an encouraging grin before moving on to the next car.

“Well, he was a happy fellow.”
“Peeping tom more like.”
“You can’t blame the man for you attacking me with your wandering lips Tiny.”
“How dare he insinuate we are on our Honeymoon, and what did you mean? You know how it is?”

He turned to look at her, framed in the early afternoon sun, eyes set angry and scowling at his retort she had never looked more lovely or more fierce.

“Do you often accost men in that way?”
He interrogated her, the way he had him over the drawing of her and Einstein, her quite rage drawing him into her.

“Just ones that are too stubborn to make the first move.” she huffed.
“I asked you to stay, was that not bold enough for you?”

She uncrossed her legs from under her, anger dissipating into the air like the steam that passed the window.
“you asked me what a Hufflepuff was,”
He moved over to the seat across from her, taking her hands in his own.
“A Hufflepuff is loyal and just, we would do anything for the people who mean the world to us, risk death to keep them safe.” he squeezed her hand gently.
“But we are also incredibly persevering, we find the right time to act, when the moment is right when the pieces are in the right place, sometimes we act on instinct, but know that if you corner a badger we can be fierce if we need to.”

one swift pull and he had her on her feet the gentle sway of the train holding her to him, the taste of her lingered on his lips, he would die a happy man if that was the last thing he tasted.

“I needed to be sure, I had to know it was not born out of sorrow, that it wasn’t just because you were scared of being alone.” a gentle touch to push the strand of hair away, a now sure sign of affection between the two of them, intensified by the things that had just passed between the two of them.

“I should have kissed you when I left New York, but I was scared, scared of rejection, scared that I had read the signs wrong, scared to make myself a fool in front of the most amazing woman I have ever met.”

Her eyes were filled with tears again, the way they had in the records room, words left unfinished hanging between them. He pulled her towards him, his hands in the small of her back now, she did dazzle in that dress.

“I’m sorry I kept you waiting, I promise not to do it again.”
He held her gaze for a second before cupping her lips with his, pressing into her the way she had him, her hands found his shoulders, he felt her pulling him in closer, her body pressed into him in
ways that made his blood ache for her.

She broke away with a grin.
“You said sorry, you said we didn’t say sorry remember?”
“‘we’ now is it?” he questioned, her forehead pressed against his own.
“I think I would like that.”
Her hands moved from his neck down to his waist, she tucked her hands into his back pockets, resting her head against his chest.
“Now you were telling me about Romania.”
Right now they would talk of future adventures, safe in each other's embrace.

Chapter End Notes

I know right? two chapters in one day, I spoil you.
The train station they pulled into was a grand thing.
Steal beams and glass that shimmered as if it were made of a thousand tiny fish swimming across the sky, chased by the smoke and steam that billowed up looking for some form of escape.
Man-made clouds, dancing in the breeze.

The platform seemed to be alive, a hive of people coming and going.
Life didn’t stop here, this was where it started, it buzzed and swam through the crowd like blood through a vain, driving the city, beating like a heart around them.

Nobody gave them a second glance as they stepped down from the train, rich and poor, old and young, all just part of the network of life that swam through the station, no time to stop.

Newt took her hand as they jumped the last step on to the platform, the warm evening glow of the sun reflecting off the gentle curves of the train, the slow vibration of the line making it look as if the beast was just sleeping, purring like a cat basking in the last of the beams.

Newt waited as she looked around her, taking it all in, the red and gold paintwork, the ornate carvings on the arches of the little bridges that spanned the line.

He had donned a light tweed jacket before disembarking, the air was cooler here in the north, Tina pulled her travel shawl around her, the chill nipping at her shoulders now. Newt moved her hand, tucking it into the fold of his elbow, pulling her into his side so that they could both manage with their respective suitcase.

They hung back slightly as the crowd thinned, Tina was happy to do so.
The station was loud.
So many people.
Last time she had been in a crowd like this it had not ended well.

Tina was used to lots of people, she lived in New York.
You couldn’t go anywhere to be alone.
Even sitting on a rooftop you were never far from someone else.
People shoved and pushed as they tried to get on with busy lives, the ebb and flow of the crowd swelling around them.

Right now, even with the warmth of Newt at her side, the growing closeness between them, the world felt too busy, to vast, new and strange.

The lights seemed to spin around her, she clutched at his arm, unintentionally alerting him to the overwhelming feeling that had taken hold of her.

“Tina?”
He moved them to a metal bench, around her the sounds of the station became muted and dull, her chest felt heavy.

She couldn’t breathe.

Why couldn’t she breathe?

Why couldn’t she remember how to breathe?
Her chest felt constricted, she knew she needed to do something... what was it?
The noise around her was loud but indistinct, a wall of whispers and clicks and hisses of steam and
people... so many people.

She tried to focus, focus on anything, but her vision was doubled.

Images shifted, moving of there own accord, she felt dizzy, she felt sick.

The pain in her chest constricted tighter. She gasped for air.

One.
What was that?
One. Two.
Who was that?
One. Two. Three.
Breath in, breath out.
One. Two. Three. Four.

Newt, why was Newt here? Shouldn’t he be back in England?
“That’s it, In ...”
Six.
“Out...”
Seven.
Why were they counting?
Eight.
“That’s it, Tina, in and out again.”
Nine.
“Look at me, Tina.”
Ten.

His eyes looked at her with worry, he counted out with her breathing in time.
She felt dizzy, how had she got here? Where was here?

Her chest hurt, she was suddenly tired, so very tired.

In .....One.... Two... Three...

Why did it seem so strange? Breathing was something she had never really thought about before but
right now, right now it seemed as if it were something she had to work for tiresomely.

Newts face came swimming into view, his hands cupping her own.
He counted as she breathed in and out.

The world didn’t seem right, it felt as if she were watching it unfold from another person's eyes.
Sounds and vision didn’t quite meet up.

Four...Five...Six.
“Listen to my voice, Tina.”

Newt’s voice sounded real, she clung on to it.
“I have you, come on Tina.”

His eyes were calming, she found herself locked on to them as she tried to remember how to fill her
lungs.
Seven...Eight...
“and back out…”
Nine…
“Welcome back.”
Ten.

He wiped the tears from her face, she shook, her limbs hurt, her chest felt as if she had been hit by a bludger, everything was so loud.

Everything but Newt, he pulled her into his chest, making sure not to cover her face, she gulped down the air, it tasted murky and stung as she forced it into her lungs.
She was confused, what had happened?

Newt stroked her back, reassuring her silently, she could feel him trying to match her breath, subconsciously echoing her.
“Are you back?” he whispered quietly.
It was just the smallest of nods, but he understood.

“We are in York, you just had a panic attack, it’s fine I have you.”
again she nodded.
“Just give it a few more breaths, you have this.”

She turned her head up, the ceiling danced again, the world became a little more in focus, sounds became clear and identifiable, her limbs felt as if they were made of lead.

They sat for some time, watching the trains come and go, the station still moving to its own heartbeat but lulled as the trains became less frequent.

“I have no idea what that was about,” she said sheepishly, suddenly embarrassed by the lack of control she had shown.
In all her years as an auror she had never felt as if she had lost control of her own devices, never once lost the ability to think for herself.
“It could be any number of things, it’s just how our body reacts to extraneous situations, we’ve both been through a lot the last few days, nothing to worry about.” she appreciated the reassurance but she felt foolish.

Her arms tingled, her breath felt forced as if she needed to keep reminding herself that she knew how to breathe.
Her legs ached, it stretched to the very tips of her toes, cramping from the muscles contracting with shakes.

“Think you can manage the walk to the lodging?” Newt was careful as he helped her to her feet, an arm supporting her waist allowing her to rest into his side.
The strength he carried no longer surprised her, but the public display of affection was new, she sunk into his protective grip, doing something she had never done before, trusting him to get her to a place of safety.

They made there way out into the city, she looked around, this was old… very old.
A grand set of sandstone buildings engulfed them on either side, lined with neatly trimmed and edged lawns and hedgerows.
Ahead of them old stone walls loomed atop a hill, for a moment she thought that Newt had returned them to his own school, then her eyes fell upon the river and the swollen banks alongside.
He turned her gently to the left leading her along a small cobbled walkway. He didn’t rush her as she took in her new surroundings, she was eagerly consuming the information of this strange new place. Trying to distract from the heaving pain in her chest each time she breathed.

Her eyes fell upon the path they now walked along, sudden realisation dawning upon her as her brain caught up with her eyes.

“Newt? Are these graves?”

“This city is built upon itself really, so yes they are graves, this used to be outside the walls of the city, the world was very different back then, this entire city has graves all over it, including under the pub we are staying at, I have many things to show you.” he pulled her tighter as they walked through a large arch, the walls of the old city looked like they were carved straight from the earth itself.

“Just how old is this place? Is this a no-ma… Muggle city?”

“Very old, it goes back as far as the original Vikings coming over and claiming the area, it’s muggle ground, however, I’m sure you can feel the magic in the place, it predates the magical world as we know it, you can taste it on the air.”

As they talked Newt led them across a bridge that spanned the water, on the other side Tina stopped suddenly.

“are they coffins?”

she observed the large stone items scattered around the grounds of a grand house, some stood some lay, some were half destroyed.

“Yes, our English history goes back a very long way.”

“Do you English like to keep it in the yard all the time? Or is this another rich person thing?” sarcasm oozing from every word.

Her body still ached but her mind was becoming clear now, she drank in the decadent buildings, old and new nestled between smatterings of medieval.

In comparison to New York, Old York seemed like it should be part of a fairytale.

They crossed the road and ambled along a cobbled street, Newt never once letting his protective grip slip.

Tina was happy to let him hold her like this, happy to let him guard her as they moved silently through the streets of this unknown to her city.

Her thoughts were becoming less jumbled now, lingering on the way she had found the taste of liquorish upon his lips a pleasant surprise, the way his light stubble had felt Nudging against her chin, she hadn’t known what to expect, that was part of Newts charm, he was very disarming with his unknown aspects.

The way he wanted to protect her, the way he wanted to make sure she was fine.

This was all new.

She found herself wishing she had her sister to discuss it with, she was scared and in awe at the same time.

How could Newt feel like he was the most terrifying thing she had ever encountered while making her feel like she was the most important thing in the world.

It was a skill all to its own.

As they neared the end of the market place they met with a problem, the river had burst its banks at this point, it’s swell reaching way up into the market.

“come on.” Newt dropped his hand from her waist and held it out in front of her as he took a well-practised foot upon a large plank of wood, on further inspection, Tina could work out the outline of a crudely made footpath that zigzagged across the flooding, it perched on overturned barrels and fruit crates.

Newt leads the way, slowly so she could follow his footing.
“That’s the fleece,” he said nodding towards an old brick building, mismatched and held together with hope and a prayer.

An effigy of a golden lamb hung above the door, it glistened in the lamplight. The building looked as if was undamaged by the flood waters, the damp actively avoiding the walls of the building.

“One of ours?”
“Yes, but the occasional muggle can be found within the walls, it tends to get more relaxed the further north we go, to be honest”
“Is that safe?” she said following him as he jumped down on to the suspiciously dry ground.
“There’s nothing to hide, we don’t need to whip our wands out when we’re having a pint do we?”

A smile played on her lips as she chuckled to herself, he had a way of making her feel better instantly.
“This isn’t America, we don’t have to worry, muggles are mostly harmless.” he waited for her to join him at his side.
“ Mostly?”
“Some are politicians. Or worse policemen.” his face was so deadpan Tina couldn’t help but laugh.

“You really do have an issue with authority don’t you.” she tapped him on the end of the nose affectionately.
“ Just a little.” his straight face cracked into that grin that he saved just for her.
“Just as well I’m about to keep you out of trouble then.” she could lean in and kiss him again they were so close, but they were in public, in a place that she did not know, what were the rules and decorum around here anyway.

“Maybe let me get into a little bit of trouble?” his face was the picture of innocence, last time he had pulled that face he had just let Jacob get bitten.
“I would just have to arrest you again, that didn’t go so well last time.”
“I think a near death experience now and again is good for you.” he laughed, she had missed that laugh, so childlike in its sound.

“Although I think-.,” he said sweeping down and kissing her swiftly, it was a gentle kiss, but it almost took her off her feet, she wasn’t expecting it.
Light lips on hers, a promise of more later, a reassurance maybe that he didn’t have issues with her line of authority. “-I’m not the one on the run..” he lingered in her space, she could get used to this, breathing in his aroma, his taste on her lips.

“Makes a change,” she whispered nudging him with her hip in a playful way, thoughts of what happened on the platform starting to fog over in the grasp of the now.

“I’m quite sure I prefer it when you’re the one in charge.” he winked at her.

She looked at him, did Newton Scamander just flirt with her? He really was getting brave. She felt the implication of what he suggested causing her to flush, she was glad the light was low now, she could hide her redness from his eyes, the forwardness had knocked her off kilt.

Newt pushed the wooden door open, the smell of food floated across the air, warm and inviting. Tina’s insides jumped at the aroma, with her having caused a delay they had yet to eat, the last thing eaten had been early this morning, toast and coffee.

Her stomach grumbled, she didn’t feel hungry but it obviously had other ideas. She scanned the room, years of training being put in to place as she took in her surroundings.
It was a homely kind of place, old horseshoes lined the walls, a fire burned quietly in the hearth as two older men sat, playing dominoes and nursing a dark black liquid in a pint glass.

A half-smoked cigar sat in an ashtray, smoke curling making pleasing patterns in the air.

In the window seat, a gentleman of about Newts age sat reading a newspaper, his drink untouched on the table in front of him.
Tina was starting to wonder if they had the right place when a loud bang came from downstairs.
She started but Newt didn’t even flinch beside her.

A woman with a mop of blond curls stuck her head around the corner of the other room, not startled by the noise, but curious.
Her eyes fell upon Tina.
Auror.
It was second nature now, she could spot another auror from a mile off, it came in useful if undercover.
The blond was sizing Tina up in an almost identical way.

“Oh bloody hells bells, the other ones turned up.”
The blond wiped her hands on the rag that hung from her belt and tottered over to the two of them in heals that made Tina flinch at the thought of them.

The woman engulfed Newt in a hug, she was a lot of women, all the curves in the right places, she dressed in a way that Tina had seen the Gypsies dress.
Silks and leathers wrapped her body in way’s that Tina wouldn’t dream of attempting, even undercover.
A pang of jealous rage shot through her as the woman held on to Newt just a little too long for her liking, Newt after all didn’t like hugs… and she didn’t like that this woman obviously knew Newt.
She should know better than to hold to him just a little too long for her liking, Newt after all didn’t like hugs… it was nothing to do with the lingering embrace at all, she told herself as heat gathered in her cheeks.

She was aware of whispered words traded before the woman let Newt go.

To her confusion, Newt seemed nonplussed at the exchange that had just happened between himself and the vivacious beauty that had just thrown herself at him.

“Tina, I would like you to meet Brandy,” he stepped back to let the woman get a good look at Tina, close up she looked older than Newt, and her painted face covered a hard life, she wore the same sleep-deprived bags under her eyes that Tina was so used to from long hours and no time to rest.

“Oh, So this is the American Thes has been telling me about then? Hear you worked under Percy? How is he after his little indecent?”
Tina looked from the blond to Newt then back again, he gave her a reassuring nod.
It was ok if Newt trusted her. She could too.

“Graves is doing better than I would have expected considering,” Tina said direly, her old boss was currently the last person she wanted reminding of, her termination from active duty still stung.
“Crying shame, he was good in a scrap was Graves.” there was a genuine look of sadness in the woman’s eyes, she understood.
“I’m sure it will help to have a set of eyes back home, to keep us up to date, it’s good to keep up with current events,” Tina said quietly.
“Well, you just can’t trust the newspapers these days,” Newt added with a sly smirk in her direction. He would pay for that later.

Tina was aware of how the three of them had fallen into talking around the subject.
To anyone from the outside, this would look like they were talking about nothing but an old friend and news from home.
She had expected this from the obviously undercover Auror.
Newt’s ability to fall into this had been a curveball.
She supposed that his brother was the head auror, she shouldn’t be so surprised, however, she had a feeling that Newt may have learned this skill in a back alley somewhere.
Doing something that probably would make her blush… or arrest him, possibly both.
Tina’s work facade must have slipped, he was observing her as her thoughts had wandered.

“Anyway, come on you must be starving, I’ve got food on the go, and your room is ready upstairs if you want to make yourself at home, got muggles in at the sec, so as much as I would love to see my favourite traveller, your best off waiting till after last orders to fetch him down.”

Brandy was already leading the way into the back if the pub, Newt had to duck to get under the low wooden beam that ran the length of the room, it grazed her head slightly as she moved under it.

Obviously, this building was designed for shorter people than her, but it looked old, very old.
The exposed stonework hadn’t even been smoothed, it consisted of rocks and rough cut bricks, wooden beams and low ceilings.
They had nothing like this in New York, even the grand halls of the school were no match for the history that she could feel radiating off the structure around her.

You could feel the life oozing out of the walls, you didn’t have to have magic of your own, the building had enough of its own.
The back room was long and slim with a bar running the length of it, it was made of rich dark wood and peppered with stools all along it.
She froze as she saw what propped up the end of the bar.

Newt must have been aware of her sudden stop for he turned to smile at her, taking her hand in his own for the first time since they had entered the building.
“Is that what I think it is?” she asked him quietly.
“He was here first, they didn’t like to move him.” Newt shrugged as the skeleton that sat at the end of the bar gave them a wave before returning to his frozen position.

Tina’s brain was going in overdrive, they must be breaking a million MACUSA laws, just with this one thing…but she wasn’t MACUSA, not now.

England was strange, there were No-maj in the next room and here were the insides of a dead guy…eating a pie by the looks of it.

There had been a lot of first today, but she had to say that this one was high on the list.
They were directed to the nook next to the fire by Brandy, who swept out of the room, disappearing behind the bar into a back room Tina supposed was the kitchen.

“Are you ok?”
Newt slid along the little wooden bench till his leg was pressed against hers, the sound of concern was evident in his voice, his eyes trying to find her own.
“Yeah, I feel better now, just hungry. Don’t want to end up like our friend there.” she nodded in the direction of the bones, they had turned to watch them, or as much as two empty eye sockets could.

“If you need to get away from people just let me know, Brandy won’t mind and Theseus is probably locked up in his room somewhere.”
Tina felt a pang of guilt hit her, Jacob.
“Where’s Jacob?” she said eyes daring about the room.
“He will be about, Theseus won’t have let anything happen to him.” Newt placed a hand on her leg to stop her nervously tapping her foot, she had come over with a second wave of the dizziness that had hit her upon leaving the train.

“Breath Tiny.”
He gave her knee a gentle squeeze. His voice anchoring her in the now.

Brandy had just placed down the food in front of them, a large brown battered dish with sausages and gravy in the middle, when there was another loud bang from below them. She shook her head, smiling apologetically at Tina who had started at the noise.

“Bish is trying to teach Jakes his tricks, they were at it all afternoon. Only so many times you can blame it on a six-hundred-year-old building settling.” she rolled her eyes as smoke started to come rolling under the crack in the door behind the bar.

“Well, at least it's not purple this time.”

Tina felt an affectionate pull in her chest as Jacob entered the room in a cloud of smoke, followed by a man who looked the polar opposite to the gentle baker she knew and loved. The two of them chuckled as the latter extinguished a small flame that had been burning in his hair.

Jacobs face lit up when he saw the two of them sat there, making a beeline straight to Tina and grabbing her in a hug.

Tina felt Newt’s hand slip from her knee as she was lifted to her feet by her surrogate brother.

“You’re a day late, you trying to kill a man?” Jacob said over her shoulder to Newt, she could tell he was shifting uncomfortably behind her. Normal Newt behaviour seeping back in.

“Sorry, took longer than expected to get the children settled with their Gramps,” Tina said chuckling. She would take this one, Newt had done enough today.

Jacob set her back down on the ground and pulled up a seat to the table, a Pint glass was placed in front of him by a smiling Brandy, who nudged him with a hip as she left.

“Tina, you gotta see what I’ve been learning, did you know you could make stuff to do some of the stuff you and Queenie do with your wands?” he said it so quickly that she struggled to get the words to make themselves clear in her mind.

He looked at her with the eyes he normally reserved for presenting her with one of his pastry. Expectant and exited.

He pulled out a small vile holding a greenish blue liquid in it, at least it looked like a liquid until the light hit it when it became swirling tendrils of light.

“Bishop helped me make this,” he said proudly.

“Distilled essence of murr?” Newt asked him taking the vile and looking at it in the brightness of the lamp.

“Yup, I have a few more cooking away downstairs, but that’s not bad for a first shot.” Jacob sounded so proud of himself, his voice rang with it.

“Bishop helped me make this,” he said proudly.

He looked at him confused but a look of realisation had floated across Newts face.

“Distilled essence of murr?” Newt asked him taking the vile and looking at it in the brightness of the lamp.

His eyes danced over the vile as he studied the moving light.

“Yup, I have a few more cooking away downstairs, but that’s not bad for a first shot.” Jacob sounded so proud of himself, his voice rang with it.

“It’s better than most people can do after years of training,” Newt said handing the vile to Tina to look at closer.

The vile span with little lights, it was as if someone had caught stars in a bottle and added a rainbow. She was still none the wiser to what it was, or what the conversation that had sprung up between Newt and Jacob was about.

However, the sight of the two of them talking so animated filled her with a warmth that she longed to keep hold of in this traumatic time.
She sat quietly picking at her food, staring at the vile on the table. The men either side of her talking quickly and joyfully about Jacobs new found talent. It was endearing to watch the two of them, but she was at a loss to know what was going on, she wished someone would let her into this conversation.

She finished her food and sipped on the glass of apple juice that Brandy had provided, watching the two most important men in her life spar back and forth until she couldn’t take it any more. “Can someone please explain what in the name of Mercury is going on!”

Both sets of eyes snapped to her. She shrugged, whatever it was that Jacob had made, it wasn’t No-maj. so what was it?
“Bishop is an alchemist,” Jacob beamed at her. “He’s been teaching me his own branch of magic.” She looked from Jacob to Newt, slow confusion slipping from her face. “Bishop is a half and half, muggle and magic parents, he wasn’t magic enough to get the letter for Hogwarts, not that he’s let that stop him, you don’t need a wand to do all magic after all.”

Today was getting stranger by the moment. This morning she had woken up confused and scared. The scared had been replaced by curiosity and lust, Newt’s lips still lingered in her mind, warm and safe. The world had been distant and echoey, Newt had pulled her back. All this she could deal with, but Jacob managing to do magic? This was getting silly. She wasn’t sure she had woken up at all.

“‘It’s just like baking in a way, a lot more numbers and weird squiggles, but I understand it all.” Jacob looked so pleased with himself that she didn’t have the heart to do anything but smile at him encouragingly.

“It’s like I already know some of it like I knew it... but forgot it, it's strange.” “Does Theseus know you’re up to this?” Newt asked cautiously. The absence of his brother was hanging heavy in the air, Tina could feel him fidgeting where his leg rubbed against hers. “It was his idea.” Both of them turned in unison to look at Jacob, the man smiled at them both. “He ain’t stupid, he knows what he’s doing, he wants to speak to you Tina.” he took a sip from his pint glass. Newt’s hand had automatically fallen to the base of her back, his hand resting on her hip, Jacob caught it and gave a knowing smirk part hidden behind the glass.

Newt didn’t like the idea of Tina being alone with Theseus, this was a realisation that she had only just fallen upon, his movements too swift at the mention of his brother wanting to spend time with her, he needed to touch her, make sure that she was real and here and with him.

He had nothing to worry about, only the one Scamander had turned her head. Theseus was handsome, but he wasn’t Newt, he wasn’t this charming awkward endearing fool that she had kissed less than an hour ago. She gave his knee a gentle squeeze, catching his eye, trying to communicate with him, to show him that he had nothing to worry about.

Jacob coughed. “You two got something you wanna share?” he said knowingly. “Only I know the pair of you well enough to know that something is up.” She felt the blush creep up her chest but kept her eyes on Newt, this was too new, too fragile to
“Nothing at all,” said Newt, his face a blank canvas as he broke his gaze with Tina to look at his friend. “Hey whatever, You don’t wanna share don’t, just know that if Queenie were here we would have it out of you already.” a tone of sadness was in his voice.

Tina felt awful pushing him out, but she wasn’t even sure what this was between her and Newt, not yet anyway. She suppressed a yawn, she didn’t want to sleep, not yet. She would have to go to sleep without Newt’s arms to keep away the monsters in her dreams. She was scared if she closed her eyes, she would awake back in her old flat, alone and lonely.

“Right your bed,” Jacob commanded seeing her yawn for the second time. “I’m not tired.” “That’s a lie, room three is yours, Newt you got Six its across the hall.”

Newt’s face stayed neutral, but he gripped her ever so slightly tighter on the waist. He didn’t want to sleep alone tonight either.

Jacob gave them no chance to argue, he marched the pair of them up the crooked old staircase, the steps groaning as they took the weight of the three of them.

On the first landing, Jacob excused himself and slipped into his own room, indicating that the two of them should continue up a floor more.

The building seemed to get narrower the further up they went, causing them to bump shoulders as they took the steps together slowly. Each limb brushing past each other sent a shiver up her spine. When they got to the top landing the angled roof made them both duck there heads.

The two rooms that had been allocated to them were the only ones up here in the rafters of the building, no one would ever come up here but housekeeping or someone who was staying in the two lonely rooms.

The two of them paused awkwardly outside there respective doors, the corridor making it so that there was not enough room to move freely, Tina wished there was more space between them it may have made it easier to leave his side.

The look on Newts face spoke volumes, he was having the same struggle she was, he didn’t want to sleep alone either.

“This is us then,” he said breaking the silence. “Yep, definitely us,” she said rocking back and forth on the balls of her foot. Newt fidgeted slightly his hands in his pockets, the awkward man had made its way to the surface.

She took a step forward, needing him to know she wasn’t happy about this either. The space wasn’t big enough for him to do anything but move into her advance, she reached up brushing his hair back from his eyes. “I’m just across the hall if you need me.” she searched his features, wanting to memorise the happiness that he had elated in her, to close her eyes with his face etched across the parts of her mind she went to in sleep.

He blinked, taking her in the same way she knew she was absorbing him. She kissed the end of his nose, taking a step back and finding the handle to her room behind her back, the door opened a snick.
The sound triggered something in Newt and in half a stride he had cleared the gap between them.

Tina gasped as he pressed himself up against her, lips searching out hers in frustrated movements.

She welcomed his lips against hers taking the time to note that the satisfied sound that he made as their lips met, it sent a pulsation through her that made her want more, she liked hearing that noise upon his lips.

In one swoop she managed to reach out and grab Newts case, sliding it into her room with a well-aimed kick, her own case followed soon after as she moved him towards her closing the door behind them.

The click brought Newt to reality.

She felt the moment it happened, the eagerness of the kiss had become gentle, his hands had gained ground upon the base of her back again, pressing her into him, the urgency had gone now, no decisions to be made no awkwardness to negotiate.

The room wasn’t big enough for two, she felt her head meet the beams as he pressed into her and she gave back willingly.

Not for the first time did she wish she wasn’t so gangly and tall.

Newt noticed, his own head also scraping against the wood.

He broke there embrace to look at her.

“is this alright?” he asked sheepishly.

“better than that.” she sighed into him.

Newt took a seat on the bed, pulling her back into him the way they had sat only just this morning, she could feel his breath on the back of her neck as he planted small kisses at the top of her spine.

“Sorry about that, but you did say if I needed you?” he whispered into her skin

“No sorry,” she whispered quietly

“No sorry.” he nodded into her neck.

She stroked his bare arms as they wrapped around her waist.

“Sleep here tonight.” it was barely audible, but she knew he had heard her, he pulled her closer lips running along her hairline, arms strong around her.

She tried to smother a yawn but failed.

“Get ready for bed, I will feed the case and be right back.”

She slid under the crisp white sheet, Newts shirt, now her own settled around her, she could hear the creatures in his case through the tiny gap he had left open.

She felt something fuzzy paw at her cheek before climbing into the bed and curling near her chest.

Einstein.

His gentle breathing lulled her to sleep the ache of the day finally lifting from her body.

In her edge of semi-conscious state, she felt his arms wrap around her holding her close to his chest, the smell of the case the last thing she could remember as the dark took hold.
Falling from a great height, the world rushing past at a speed that confused, images flashing too quick to process.

Droning noises overhead and the noise of anguish ripping around on the howling wind.

Black shrouds unseen through smoke and darkness, unfelt by hearts too heavy to go on.

The grumbling of death, a rattle on the wind, louder than any gun, creeping, ever creeping, closer dragging out the last of all the light.

A glimmer of hope.
A moment of paradise
Then the darkness crept in.
Blue flames, darkness, pain.

Water, drowning.
Darkness seeping in from all sides, bringing with it the sadness, that sinking feeling.
Red.
Fire on water.
Chasing the darkness, dancing light full of promise.

Then falling, flames and hope extinguished in an abyss of suffocating tendrils of blackness, rasping death, empty nothingness.

“It’s just a dream, I got you.”
Newt grabbed at his neck, gasping as he fought off the darkness.
Sweeping black cloaks with glacial breath still filled his vision, the darkness around him swelling.
Not now, it couldn’t have him not now, not when he finally felt wanted, not this way. not ever.

“Lumos”
Unseen hands guided his own from his neck, pinning them down at his sides.

He struggled, it had him, he didn’t want to go this way, where was his wand?
He needed his wand.

If he could cast his Patronus, it would be fine.
He could get to Tina, he could save her.

What if it was too late?
He fought back against the grip, trying to free his hands.

Something gave an annoyed squeak near his head, he felt a bite on his ear.
The pain made the world come clear.
Two big worried eyes came in to focus.
He felt his body catch up.
He was safe.

Tina had his arms pinned to his sides, she sat upon his chest, restraining him from lashing out.
“Einstein, you didn’t have to bite him.”
Newt suddenly felt a twinge in his ear, the pain that had woke him from the nightmare.

He wanted to turn and face the little git but he couldn’t tear his eyes from the woman that currently
had him under her control.

She looked at him, he must have woken her, his dream had felt so real, he wanted to touch her, make
sure she was real, but she had him restrained, wrists pinned to his sides with force and protection.
“Quite finished?” she asked him, her voice tinged with worry and sarcasm.

He nodded, she let go of his wrists, resting back.
He felt her weight on his chest, the warmth of her thigh against his bare skin, she was real alright.
He reached up to his ear where he felt a damp spot, inspecting his fingers he found blood.

“Don’t blame him, he was as freaked out as I was when you lashed out.”
Tina reached to his pillow scooping up the tiny beast, Einstein was shaking, she held him to her face,
tiny paws reaching out to hold her, he scampered into her hair, hiding from Newt.

Newt felt like he wanted the world to swallow him whole.

“You ok?” she asked him.
He nodded mutely.

“You were mumbling, something about a kiss? Then you started thrashing out.” she let her hand fall
to his chest to steady herself, both hand and his chest were sticky with heat.
She fidgeted, the parts of him in contact with her causing the little ripples of reality to reach parts of
him that were still not quite awake, did it do the same to her?

“You scared me for a moment, I didn’t think you were going to wake up.”
Newt noticed her hand move to her neck, a red mark was forming.
He pulled himself up into a sitting position, turning Tina’s head so he could see the mark better in the
light.
“You didn’t mean it. You were having a nightmare,” she said as he sized his hand up against the
growing bruise.

The world grew dark again, he had done that?
He was an awful excuse for a human.

“Don’t you dare say you’re sorry mister,” she said reaching for his hand and holding it in front of her
face, she slid her fingers in-between her own, forcing him to look at her with the other hand.

“look at me,” she said forcefully, he did exactly what he was told, a thought from his nightmare
stirred, the lamplight catching her eyes.
He had told her they were like fire in water.

“I thought I lost you,” he said quietly in way of explanation.
She observed him but said nothing, he took that as his cue to continue.
“I … you were … and then… swooping in, reaching and rasping as they did in the war. The
Dementors that is… and I couldn’t… they had taken you and I couldn’t-” he trailed off the words stuck in his deep rattling breath of a sob.

Arms were around him instantly engulfing him in a tight embrace, pulling him into her, legs wrapping tightly around his middle his head embedded in her chest.

The bed wasn’t big enough for the two of them to start with. The slope of the ceiling making the space even smaller, but Tina didn’t seem to care, she just held him and reassured him. She was real, she was safe.

“It was only a dream, between the two of us right now, if any dementors come calling I reckon we would take down an entire regiment of the things.” she whispered her hand fidgeting with the hair at the base of his skull strands of hair twisting through nimble fingers.

Newt knew himself. He hated people in his own space, but she wasn’t people. She was Tina, and this was her space, she did fill it so well. He observed the parts of her he could see from this position, trying to calm an already heavy beating heart.

Her leg wrapped around him, it fit so well into that little crook between his waist and his own leg, he realised he had raised his own to meet her, legs supporting her as she had slipped off his chest and into his lap. Her skin was ghostly white as it pressed up against his scared and tan waist, the sun never saw this part of her, hidden behind modesty and decency. All but forgotten now, here with him.

He could hear her heartbeat, his head resting so close, oh bloody hell, he was resting on her chest, sure enough, a glance to the right and he found more to study.

“I think If I tried now I would possibly end their entire species,” he said swallowing hard. She sighed, she sounded so content, he liked that.

“We couldn’t have you doing that now, you would hate yourself in the morning, it goes against everything you stand for.” he could feel her smiling, her heartbeat had changed, she was happy.

He felt small paws scramble on to his head, Einstein slid into his line of vision, looking sheepish and worried, he slid down on to Tina’s locket looking at Newt with trepidation.

He was eye level with his mini assailant, grey fur and big eyes. “Did I taste nice?” he asked. Tina giggled, it was like warm butterbeer on a cold day, it filled him with a soft feeling he had no recollection of experiencing before. He looked up at her, her eyes still danced in the light cast from the lamp.

She really was the finest piece of art he had ever seen, painted just for him and delivered by whatever god had found him worthy.

She nudged his nose with her own, smiling down at him, so much of her in the space around him was distracting, his hands wandered now. Nightmare was forgotten as he found the bare skin on her back, pulling her down into him letting hands map out the curve of her waist, her shoulders, the way her back arched towards him when she liked what she felt.
He kissed the bruise he had left upon her neck. He felt bad about it, but she sunk into his kiss with a light moan of submission. That was almost his undoing.

“Tina.”
Her eyes found his, giant saucers in the low light, sucking him into her world.
“Newt.”
“As much as I wish to assure myself that you are in fact real...” she nudged his nose again with her own cutting him off.
“Shut up and kiss me, I promise not to let us get too carried away,” she said softly. “I’ve waited long enough for you, a while longer won’t kill me”

Her lips were warm and inviting as he pulled her in, sharp pain near his neck, another bite from the Niffler round her neck, with nowhere to go he scampered away.

They were not a graceful pair Newt noted, too many gangly limbs and not enough space, driven by whatever this feeling was that burned in him, she was very real, her skin burning where it touched his own, hair skin and lips entwined, fingers exploring, finding places to hold, to pull, to press. Her hands were gentle but assertive.

She pushed him back till his head met the wall, deepening the kiss. His hands fell to her legs, across her thighs, he lingered at the seam of her underwear, that was a line to cross later. She gasped against him as his hand teased her the way she had teased him, Revenge was sweet. She grabbed his hand away pinning it to his side again.

“Now, now Mr none of that.” her eyes looked dangerous, she was really quite something. She replied by pressing her hips into his, not relinquishing her grip on him. “What happened to the Mr shy guy?” She whispered into his ear as she pressed kisses along his chin. “He got arrested, by the most perplexing witch and hasn’t really looked back.” She giggled, sighing into his neck in a satisfying way.

She sank into his chest, the sheer urgency of her want seemed to have passed, he didn’t mind. She was too precious to lose over something silly like lust. Right now the world was all Tina, everything else could wait.

He looked at himself in the mirror. A small nick graced his ear where tiny teeth had taken an even smaller chunk, on his chest he bore a second, he couldn’t blame Einstein, he must have had a shock, he was only protecting Tina. Picket sat on his shoulder, watching him as he shaved.

The little Bowtruckle had come out of his huff, although he had made it abundantly clear he was not happy with not getting to spend as much time in his favourite tree. After a woodlouse or two, he was slightly more aggregable. Tiny fingers inspected his bite, tutting at the sight. “Now don’t you go starting something with the clan, you already have enough opposition, in that case, to begin with.” Picket had the decency to look at least a little ashamed of himself as he jumped down into his usual pocket. Last few buttons fastened and waistcoat on, too hot for a tie or long shirt sleeves, Newt stepped out on to the landing, waiting only seconds before Tina exited her own room.
He had slipped out early, gave her a chance to get ready, gave himself a chance to breathe.

Things seemed to have jumped four chapters ahead.
Nothing was in the right order in his life, it all just seemed to happen as and when it wanted.
He looked at the mark on her neck, fading quickly now that she had let him treat it.

He wasn’t proud of that, even if he hadn’t been awake when he had done it.
She had donned a neckerchief trying to hide the last of it from view.
It was the same shade of yellow as her dress from the day before, however today she had opted for a loose fitting blouse and dark blue pinstripe trousers. He was reminded strongly of the outfits she had worn when she was back in America.
“Do you think they make a decent coffee in this place?” she asked him as they descended the stairs, she looked eager for the day, so much calmer than yesterday.
“If they don’t, Brandy will no doubt find some somewhere, she is a particularly good finder, it’s a Hufflepuff strength after all.”
“Ah yes the elusive Hufflepuff,” she said in a mock knowing voice.
“Don’t start this again.” he tried not to smile but the look of devilry on her face was too much not to find adorable.

“Start what?”
Theseus sat at the bar, cup halfway to his lips, empty plate in front of him.
He looked his usual calm self, it had even managed to spread to his eyes this time.
The only indication he had lost the love of his life came from the now redundant wedding rings he wore on a chain around his neck.
“She’s struggling to comprehend Hufflepuff pride. She scoffs at it.”
Theseus laughed.
“Did you ask what a Hufflepuff was by any chance?”
“He couldn’t tell me.”
“Buggered if I ever figured it out either, something about badgers.”
“Yes, I got that.” Tina beamed at him. She slipped into the stool beside Theseus.
Newt begrudgingly took the seat on the other side of his brother.

Bishop took their orders, his hair looking slightly less singed at the ends than yesterday, he then made Tina’s day by producing an entire cafetière of coffee.
He watched as she made her morning cup, two sugars, cream. He would have to remember that.

“So.” oh that was loaded ‘so’ if Newt had ever heard one.
Theseus turned to face him, Tina’s content sigh over the coffee was lost to him as Theseus sort his attention.
“I came up to see you last night,” he said nonchalantly.

Oh. bugger.

“Yes?”
“Fancy my shock when I got there the cupboard was bare Fido.”
Newt composed his face, the perfect picture of innocence.
“Really, that’s strange I was in bed all night.”

Behind his brothers back Tina nearly spat out her coffee as she laughed into her cup with a snort.
Theseus cocked an eyebrow at him, he knew he wasn’t fooling anyone, but he wasn’t going to give his brother free ammo.

“Well it was more to speak to Tina, I just figured where one is the other isn’t far behind.” he looked over his shoulder, straight at Tina who tried to compose her face, Newt saw the corner of her lips
twitch.
“I was asleep, did you not check his case?”
Checkmate. Oh, she was good at this.
He had almost never seen Theseus lost for words, however, she had just trumped him.

“Anyway, what is this cunning plan you have?” Tina said as Bishop put a plate of pastry’s down in front of her.
She had her work voice on now, collected and calm, although he knew that was completely a mask she saved for when she was worried.
“Well, to be fair it was Jacob’s idea, he just didn’t realise he was having it.” he took a drink of his tea, he was enjoying his captive audience.
“He’s quite interesting, did you know he’s got his own bakery?”
“Get on with it Theo.” he didn’t have time for his brother's ramblings.
“I’m getting to it, patience is a virtue little brother.” he had that look on his face that infuriated Newt in a way that got right under his skin, something Theseus knew well enough.
“We were discussing how you met, Jacob mentioned the fact that he had been bitten, it gave me a hunch, after all, all magic leaves a trace.” Newt was wondering where he was going with this, what did this have to do with Tina and Jacob getting cart in front of Macusa?

“Oh, why didn’t I think of that!” Tina looked dumbstruck and Theseus looked pleased with himself. “Explain?”
It was Tina who spoke.
“In order to qualify as a squib you only have to have a trace of magical blood, enough to pick up on a trace, or be able to do very very basic magic.” she looked so annoyed with herself. “How long do the effects of a mertlap bite last Newt?”
“up to three years, or until the infected area has cast off all dead skin”
“so if they did a trace on Jacob now-”
“he would still show as having trace amounts of magic in him” Theseus finished her sentence. “The alchemy might just back up the case, but he’s taken to it like a natural don’t you think?”
“This is all well and good but what did you want Tina for?” Newt was starting to lose his ability to abide his brother.
“Well, I had a proposition for her. Not that it has anything to do with you Newton,” he snapped back.
“Now boys, no fighting.” Tina sighed as she took another sip of her coffee. “Thes what did you want to ask?”
“I got to thinking if we managed to get them to drop the case for Jacob, that leaves you.” Theseus smiled that dangerous smile he saved for when he was doing something he should know better about.

It didn’t exactly fill Newt with hope.
“We’ll as Macusa only have you on the one charge, I thought that would be easy to overturn, I would find some sort of loophole in the system but alas it’s not that easy.” he sighed. “The American way of doing things seems a little backwards, don’t you think?”
“Get to the point Theseus or I will let Newt of the leash.” Tina’s brow was furrowed, his brother was playing a dangerous game, you don’t keep a woman like Tina in the dark, he had found that out the hard way.
“Ganging up on me now are we?”
“Thes get on with it.”
Theseus looked between the two of them enjoying the small amount of control.

“Macusa has you on all counts I’m afraid. However, Percy seems to think if you were working undercover for someone, another Ministry, or I don’t know... myself? We could probably get them to drop all charges with the right bit of detective work anyway.”
“Are you saying?”
“Yes, we tell them you were working under MoM orders, obviously that will mean you taking up a role in the ministry for a short while at least, we will have to buff the false truth till it shines, but I think we could probably make it look convincing.”
Newt found her face, he had leaned around Theseus to gauge her reaction. She looked both scared and elated at the same time, her hand tapped nervously on the side of the cup.
“Will, that work?” Newt found himself asking. Theseus smirked, his smug face always made Newt want to hit him it really did.

“Don’t see why not, the grounds for it were laid when you went awol in December.” he gave Newt a knowing look.
“They already know you work in the beast department, they know you are my brother and they also know you tried and failed five times to get your travel ban revoked. Of course, there’s the whole hand in helping to destroy New York, I don’t think that us pretending I sent you there on purpose is a long shot do you? They already have you on the watch list.”
“What about Queenie?”
Tina’s voice sounded so small, it took all his power not to jump off the chair and go to her. Theseus made himself another cup of tea, contemplating an answer.
“One bridge at a time, When we get her back, then we will think of something.” he sounded far away from himself now, caught up in thoughts he wasn’t ready to share just yet.

The three of them sat in silence for a while, occasionally glancing at the others in the mirror behind the bar, a silent resolve seemed to be taking place, once Theseus decided to scoop you under his wing you became family.
Eddy, Bunty, he didn’t let many people in, however the wayward soles that had crossed his path had been there for him this last week, they had become an extension of that protection.
“I am going to brave the office this afternoon, I have to sort out Leta’s things, I should organise … well something for her, but well—“ he trailed off, Newt knew what he was thinking it had crossed his mind on more than one occasion.
How do you hold a Funeral without a body, how do you hold a wake when the only ones who would be there would be himself and Theseus, then where would it be held?
Theseus would not want a public display, yet to have one in his own home would be both painful and dangerous.
To return to where she fell would be insanity, yet in any other circumstance that would be where she would be interred, in the legacy of her own family.

“Do you think its wise? Going back just now?” Tina said breaking her own silent musings.
“No time like the present, plus I can start to hide details of your skulduggery about the place. Nagini is coming with me, we're going to see if we can get her papers, or at least find out who she is. It must be strange to not know your own name.” Theseus was talking to himself now, he got to his feet and looked down at his watch.
“While I’m at it do you need anything from your office?”
Newt looked at him confused, his office?
Oh, his office at the ministry! Yes, he still worked there didn’t he, his mind was elsewhere these days.
“No Nothing of import.” he racked his brain, “Oh actually yes, my travel coat is there could you fetch it?”
“The ratty old blue thing?”
“It is not ratty, its vintage.”
“That means old.”
“No, it means its got style.”
“You got it off Grandad, It's probably got something, but let's hope whatever it is isn’t contagious.”
Theseus rolled his eyes. “I was hoping you had finally binned the thing.”
“That coat has travelled the world with me, its even saved my life once or twice, It’s not going in the bin.”
“It’s bloody ugly Newt, I don’t know why you kept it so long.”
“It was a gift.”
“Off a crazy old man who no longer can tell his arse from his elbow.”
“Theseus just get the coat.”
Theseus huffed in defeat, Newt would have his coat back by sunset.
He watched as he headed out to the back yard, Nagini sat waiting, stroking a cat that had crawled on to her knee, she smiled when she saw Theseus, the cat hissed and ran off.

Newt was suddenly aware that Tina was at his side, having filled the space on the stool his brother vacated.
“So you can act like a normal person?”
He looked at her grinning at him, the confusion on his face must have been clear as she rolled her eyes in a way that reminded him instantly of Theseus. Were all Aurors like that, did they teach it at training?
“You and Theseus, you wind each other up so much, it’s rather amusing.”
“Well, he is an idiot.”
“Hey that idiot is soon to be my boss, so just go easy on him.”
Newt lent into her, he was keen to know what she thought about the idea, but the look on her face was to easy an opportunity to miss.
“So you have to take orders off him then?”
“I guess so.”
“You don’t listen to me, and he’s twice as stubborn.”
“Then I will just have to listen to him and ignore him twice as hard.”

She looked at him, something like hope dancing across her eyes.
“You think it will work?” she asked hopefully.
“Most of his ideas normally get through by sheer dumb luck, no reason for this one to be any different.” he wasn’t lying. His brother had an insanely lucky streak normally, hopefully, it wasn’t changing.
“One thing at a time, no point in worrying.”
“You know what I say about that.”
she smiled, other than when they were alone together it was the first real smile he had seen on her face.
“I hope he does get your coat, I like that coat,” she said getting to her feet and leading him to the front bar.
“So do I. How dare he call it ugly!”
“So you got it off your grandfather?”
“It’s a very old coat, it could tell you some tales.”
Behind them, the skeleton shook his head, one of these days he would get a pint in peace.

Chapter End Notes

you know the drill...

thank you all by the way each comment makes me so happy
Newt watched as Tina browsed the rows of potions, her eyes darting across labels, hands picking up bottles, wonder and interest causing her to smile to herself every so often.

Jacob had a basket full of ingredients. He was following closely to the list that Bishop had provided him, Tina helping him with the more extravagant things, required for relativity simple spells but lost on his friend.

The sun had come out, bright and warm. The cobbled streets were too inviting to ignore, Newt knew better than to try and talk his friends into staying in the Fleece, the cabin fever of his flat was still thick in the air.

They had not needed to go far, the pub was at the bottom of an old Muggle street called the Shambles, its wooden framed buildings bunched together, reaching up to almost touching, you could shake the hand of the man in the house across the way by hanging out the topmost window, the gables but a hands width apart.

The street had its own sort of magic, old and bustling, like the train station it had its own heartbeat, however, this one was slow and steady no need to rush.

They had browsed Fudge shops, looked at silversmiths who spun fine items from pewter, silver and gold, Glass-blowers who created art from nothing but heat and sand, making intricate baubles that caught the light.

Jacob had found a kindred spirit in a man twice his age that made pastries to rival even his own creations, charming him into sharing recipes and tips upon the best way to proof the dough.

Street sellers and Bookshops, a toy shop with hand made dolls and wooden toys, the call of the market buzzed on the air.

The air hot and fuzzy in the mid-afternoon sun.

If Newt had thought Tina looked happy in the old muggle street it was nothing to how she looked as they took a turn in to Whip-ma-wop-ma-gate.

The Wizard street ran alongside the Shambles, hidden from the Muggles.

Its history went back further than the city that had risen around it. Built upon ley lines by some of the earliest wizards, Newt had always liked to visit with his mother as a child, it had been a treat to visit his grandparents and be fed something with too much sugar and no health benefit whatsoever.

The entrance to the street was hidden in obvious sight, muggles just chose to ignore it, instead of wondering why the small street even bothered to have a name. A shiny bronze street name even proclaimed the name of the hidden street, yet unless you knew it was there it remained hidden from view, a quirk of magic that had become a running joke to the muggles that saw only a street of no less than a meter in length.

Newt had guided Tina and Jacob towards the small step that led to the entrance, Jacobs trepidation at stepping up the low step behind the church and seemingly walking in to a solid wall was well founded, Newt sometimes wondered if one day the wall would really seal as the one in kings cross did, leaving him with a bloody nose and a confused bunch of muggles.

He hadn’t been disappointed in Tina’s reaction at all, wide eyes devouring the tapestry of colour that assaulted the eyes.

An animal emporium with litters of cats, rats and knezzles drew Tina towards it as soon as they walked in, Picket moved uncomfortably in his pocket, weary of the sounds coming from the cages near the door.

A large goshawk sat watching his pocket with ravenous intent.
They didn’t linger for long, Chalk and Slate the bookshop had caught her attention now, books on every subject imaginable lined the walls. The bookshop looked as if it had been grown not built, it smelt old and earthy, the way all good bookshops should.

They had taken a long time looking. He had been rather touched when Tina had dragged Jacob over to look at the display of his book near the front door, he wished he hadn’t flushed red at the eyes that had turned to look at him while he tried to make himself disappear. Tina headed outside, he watched as she headed in to the sweet shop before proceeding to gather some of the books that she had taken an interest in and taking them to the till.

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He caught her up as she took a sample of a sherbet skull from the young witch behind the counter. Her face puckered at the sour taste. “English food is so strange.” she had said as he handed over a knut to pay for a bag of the sweets, despite her exclamation Tina tucked them carefully into her pocket.

Newt hadn’t been avoiding Jacob, well not intentionally. His friend had been trying to grab his attention all day. He finally collared him as Tina looked in to a vat of armadillo bile.

“So…” Newt suddenly found the dried frogs pills that he had in his hand rather fascinating.

“You wanna talk about it? Only I know you didn’t stop in your room last night.” Jacob’s voice wasn’t accusing the way his brothers had been.

“Tell me it’s none of my business if you want, I just wanna be happy for you that's all” Newt kept his face composed but he knew his ears had gone red, causing him to concede defeat.

He caught Tina’s eye across the shop, she gave a coy smile, before turning back to her browsing.

“I’m not sure what it is yet, but its something,” he said quietly.

“It’s been something for a while though yeah?” Newt contemplated what his best friend had said, he was trying to think of his life before Tina came into it, he was finding it increasingly hard.

“Up until recently, I believed it to be very one-sided, however recent events have proven otherwise.” he was happy with that answer, or at least he thought he was, Jacob shook his head.

Newt watched Tina as she picked up and observed a silver spinning disk, it cast lights all over the shop as it caught the sunbeams, making rainbows dance in the dust.

“Trust me, my friend, it was never one-sided, she just shut down when she thought you were engaged, she wouldn’t show it in front of us, but Quennie obviously picked up on it, people are easier when they’re hurting.” Newt stood for a few moments, eyes following something slimy around in a jar. He always seemed to hurt her without even trying.

Jacob placed a hand on his shoulder, giving him a reassuring look.

“Trust me, you used that salamander line and it worked, she likes you just the way you are, even if you are some eccentric Brit.”

“Thank you, Jacob…I think.”

The evening brought a cool breeze, it was welcoming after the muggy heat of the day. The windows were pushed wide the sound of the busy streets around them floating on the air. They sat talking in one of the rooms above the bar, a converted dining room Tina supposed as she
looked across the items Theseus had smuggled from the ministry.
Old looking maps with words and phrases written in a language that she did not know, German
maybe? It was a language that she had no concept of. However, both Newt and Jacob had their
heads together trying to decipher the script that leads its scrawling path around the map of Europe.
She sat next to Theseus, putting her own hand to documents that declared her allegiance to the
British ministry.
It felt as if she were giving away a little bit of herself, it stung about as long as it took for her to
 remembered the betrayal of her own country.
She signed the bottom line with a flourish, it was countersigned by Theseus, it all looked very
official.
“Welcome to the Auror family again”
That Scamander grin was disarming, didn’t matter if it came from Theseus and not Newt, it knocked
her slightly, she could trust him, it was a very strange feeling, she was so used to having to look out
for herself back at Macusa.
In the safety behind closed doors, Newt had aloud the creatures out of the case, the Nifflers played
on the table chasing muggle coins, Nagini sat with the mother Niffler on her lap snoozing softly, she
was quite taken with her new friend.
Picket chattered away to Newt on the table pointing out different pictures around the edges of the
map, he was quite animated, Tina really should ask Newt if he understood the chattering, or if he just
pretended to to keep the little bowtruckle happy.
Einstein sat on her shoulder, he observed the man beside her with inquisitive eyes.
The air was sniffed, the head was tipped, she felt little paws jump from her arm.
The Niffler was inspecting Theseus even closer now, sniffing his ear, confusion etched on his tiny
face.
Tina tried to ignore it but Theseus looked confused.
“He thinks your Newt,”
Newt looked up at the sound of his own name, he looked at Einstein sniffing and inspecting
Theseus’s ear, before subconsciously reaching up to touch the bite mark on his own.
It didn’t go unnoticed by the older brother.
“He bit him,” Tina said by way of explanation.
“Really?”
“Yep twice, it was in self-defence wasn’t it Einy, you didn’t want to get squished,” she said patting
her arm and the little critter jumped straight back to her.
“He’s become quite the little companion.”
“Yes, he sleeps with me most nights now.”
“The Niffler or my brother?”
Tina busied herself putting Einstein back into his protective seat on her locket, choosing to ignore the
last question. She was secretly impressed that she had managed to keep her composition.
“Oh, come on give me something.”
“I’m sorry Boss I can’t do that, classified need to know information.” she flicked through the false
paperwork that they had created, was it a sibling thing? Were they all so snoopy?
“I could pull rank-”
“-but you won’t because you are secretly very scared of my amazing skills.” she looked him in the
eye, “Or did you need me to throw you across the room again ?”
“Yes about that, you never did apologise.”
“Well, to quote your brother you were being a prat.”

Bells peeled from the church across the road, the clock above the fireplace showed it to be nine
o’clock.
Newt started busying himself with his case, grabbing his peacock blue coat Theseus had begrudgingly returned and put it inside.

“And where are you off too?”
“I have an appointment.”
Newt looked at his brother, Tina was a little confused, where was he off to at this time of night? Why did he need his case?
Theseus must have thought the same as he stepped into his path.

“Oh just what kind of appointment?”
Tina could see him trying to think up a lie, before deciding against it.
“I’m taking the last of the case to the Triangle.”
Tina was confused what was the triangle? Why did Theseus look as if he was less than amused?

“You have to be kidding me.”
“Can you think of anybody else who’s going to look after them better?”
The two of them stared each other down, Tina was no less confused.
Eventually, Theseus gave up and moved to one side.
Newt clicked his tongue and Picket scuttled over to him, ran up his leg and settled into his waistcoat pocket.
He turned to Tina, eyes wide.
“You coming with me?”
She couldn’t help but wonder why he even asked, she slipped her wand into her pocket and stepped around her new boss.
“You are either brave or very very stupid.” Theseus’s said to her as she joined Newt at his side.
“Can’t I be both?”

Following Newt into the tiny back yard of the pub, she was still none the wiser to where they were heading. Newt seemed to be in no rush to let her in on the secret, linking her arm as they span on the spot.
Tina was aware of two things, the sound of dripping water and the very agitated Niffler that hung around her neck. He hid in her neckerchief, disgruntled snorts indicating his displeasure.
The air smelt strange, like old eggs. Newt held on to her arm, the ground beneath them was slippery, she could feel her boots not quite gripping before she even opened her eyes.

When she did open her eyes the light was dim, they were in a forest, the water that she could hear dripping came from an outcrop of rock, it dripped into a small pond, candles stood on dry spots around them, it gave the whole area a shimmering green glow.
She looked around her, where on earth were they?

Her eyes fell upon things hanging from the stone outcrop, the water dripping down from it.
“Newt is that a pair of shoes?” she said tipping her head to the side to get a better look, her eyes started adjusting to the light, “And is that a teddy made of stone?”
Beside her, Newt laughed.
“This is a petrified well,” he said as an explanation, manoeuvring her as a drop of water narrowly missed her head.
“A what?” what did a well have to be scared off?
He pointed up over him, now her eyes had adjusted to the light she could make out lots of trinkets, bits and bobs, all looked like they were made from stone.
“The minerals in the earth around here, it coats whatever it touches with a stone like powder, the locals believed it to be the work of a very dark witch who went by the name Mother Shipton.”
“The person Dumbledore wanted you to meet with?”
“She was never a real person, well she was but she doesn’t go by that name, and she is most certainly not a witch.”

Tina watched as the water dripped from the rocks splashing around them, tiny lights flickered in the woods around them.
“So what are we doing here?” she asked as she watched Picket stick his head out of Newts pocket chattering wildly.
“Yes I remember last time we visited, I won’t let that happen again, best you keep your head down don’t you think?” Picket continued to chatter away as he sunk deeper into Newts pocket.

Tina was aware of a soothing sound on the air, it sounded like a song she remembered from childhood, a lullaby her mother used to sing to her, she needed to find out where it came from… she should follow it.
Newt held her tightly, holding her face in both hands and swooping in to quickly peck her on the lips, suddenly the music was gone just as quickly as it had started.
“I’m a bit used to it now I forget how she affects others.” he smiled. In his Pocket, Tina could see Picket trying to tie his leaves around his head. “I Know Pick, won’t be long.”
Tina’s eyes darted around for the place the sound had come from, before comprehension of the fact that it had not been out loud at all, the music had resonated in her own head.
Her eyes fell upon a woman in the woods, silver hair framed a face whose features it was hard to identify. She watched them a smile on her face, stepping forward she grinned, rows of jagged teeth flashed in the candlelight.
Newt dropped his hands from Tina’s face, one fell to her waist as he ducked to pick the case back up.
“Ursula, so good to see you.”
“Young Newton, you brought a mate I see.”
Tina felt her cheeks warm.
“This is Tina, Tina this is Ursula, I take it you have worked out what she is?” he asked Tina had been trying to work out just that, the music in her head, the inability to actually say what this woman looked like, the compulsion to follow, the razor mouth.
“Are you a Siren?”
The woman nodded looking impressed.
“Smart, I like her Newton.”
The woman nodded looking impressed.
“Smart, I like her Newton.”
Tina followed his lead, tentatively making there way over the slimy rocks.
“Tina now works with Theo, but you know that already.”
The woman bowed her head in acknowledgement.
“I know everything and I know-nothingness, I help the souls lost between the spaces, I see what I need to see.” she looked between the two of them, “I heal the brokenhearted, mend the wounds and end the pain, I can be nothing and all-consuming all at once, I entice and tease I feed on the pleasure that chases the ache”
“Yes and that is exactly why my brother doesn’t like to come to visit,” said Newt as she leads the way along the path.
“I would only play with him a little, Scamander men are such a challenge.”
Newt gripped on to Tina just a little harder. Whatever this woman was projecting into his head he was fighting with all his worth.
“Ursula, please stop.”
“Oh Newton, are you scared she won’t share you?” the silver faded slightly a flash of purple touching the edges of her glow. “Or do you not want to share her, with another woman?”
Whatever she projected at him this time made him halt. The siren stepped back.
“Oh.” she took a few seconds to settle on the face she wished to wear. “You are a dark horse Newton, you my dear are in for a treat.” she turned away from them and headed further up the path.
Tina studied Newt’s face, whatever the Siren had projected had phased him slightly.
“Yeah?”
“I’ll be fine, Just… well if she shares with you what she just got out of my head, Just know it was uncontrollable.”
Tina’s interest peaked. Just what had he imagined that had pushed a Siren out of his head.
“What-”
“I will show you one day,” he said cutting her off, he grabbed her hand and headed after the Siren. She wove through the trees like mist, her form ever-changing. Tina kept getting glimpses of her projected thoughts, images that teased and tempted.
Images of bodies entwined kisses lingering upon unexplored places, interwoven with the sound of the song from her childhood.
One image knocked both her and Newt back at the same time.
Had he felt the ripple of release that had rocked that last projection, the way he looked at her now she thought he probably had.
They heard a snigger ahead of them.
“Oh you Scamanders, you are fun.”
She had stopped at a cave, she waved her hand over the entrance, it shimmered.
“Ursula, you are getting worse,” Newt said coming to a stop, the Siren looked pleased with herself. “I’m almost three hundred, Let me have my fun.” An image of Newt and herself flicked across her mind, deep in the throes of lust and longing.
“I’m just showing you what is yet to come.”
Newt shook his head.
“Thank you, Ursula, can we?” he indicated to the shimmering cave.
The woman shrugged her shoulders.
“I was hoping to get to keep you this time.”
Newt chuckled to himself shaking his head, he reached out a hand taking hold of her hand in his own and stepped through the shimmering entrance to the cave, the sensation of travel hit her in the gut, they were moving fast, this was old magic.
They came to a stop suddenly.
The air smells different, salty tinged with something she couldn’t put her finger on. When she opened her eyes, it was to the sight of a vast body of water and rolling hills dipping into darkness.
A man sat near an open pit fire, tendrils of smoke billowing around his head, he looked up when he became aware of there presence. His face lit up upon seeing the two of them there.
“Newt my boy!”
“Grandad, I would like you to meet Tina.”
Pearl

Newt held her hand as he led her towards the fire that burned near the sea, the cliffs on either side protecting the alcove from view, the small cave spat out on to the sandy beach, a dip in the landscape of hills and moors that seemed to stretch out forever in the fading light.

“Is there any more of your family you would like to warn me about?” Tina whispered as he pulled her forward, she was acutely aware of the fact that he hadn’t dropped her hand.

“Mum’s mum, but well we don’t talk about her, or too her for that matter..” Newt did not sound as if he cared much for the woman, there was no love in his voice as there had been when he greeted his Grandfather.

The latter had gotten to his feet as they approached.

“Boy, you better have something good for me in that case, non of that rubbish you brought me last time.” his voice was playful but he spoke fast, Tina struggled to understand him.

“Runespore alright for you?”

“Got all three heads?”

“Yes, although he’s a bit on the small side.”

Tina couldn’t help thinking that if George was on the small side what the hell was a full size one like?

“Runt of the litter?”

“No saved from a woman who kept him in a shoebox above her bed.”

“Bloody idiot, hope you told her what for.”

“No the Grindelow she was trying to keep in the garden pond beat me to it.”

“Niffler?”

“She not he, had a litter, long story.”

“Frank?”

“Free, longer story.”

“Dougal?”

“In the case”

“Picket?”

“Pocket”

“That Kelpie?”

“Mother.”

“Theseus?”

“Distraught.”

“My idiot son?”

“Enjoying running around after mum.”

“You.”

“Not dead.”

“This charming creature.”

“Is Tina.”

“Sit down I’ll make you a cuppa”

Tina’s head hurt, the back and forth between them was swift and fluent, his grandfather spoke in a different way to Newt, it was hard to pick up the words as they conversed.

The look of confusion must have been obvious as Newt gently squeezed her hand.

“Admetos Scamander, at your service. Although most call me Ade, my little tadpole here calls me Gramps.”
He addressed her now, moving in to the light.

The man was almost a head shorter than both herself and Newt, his hair long ago faded to grey but it had that unkempt look that seemed to follow the paternal line. It hung at shoulder length giving her the impression of a slightly bald Dougal. His face bore scars that danced in the light of the blue and red flames that danced on the driftwood fire. A pipe hung from his mouth, smoke billowing in tendrils around his head.

Now she understood why Theseus’s was reluctant to return Newt’s coat, maybe he was concerned he was going to dress as exocentric as the man in front of her. He wore a long dark frock coat, emblazoned with shining medals, gems and golden buttons that caught the light. He wore a shirt that looked as if it had been made from silk and embroidered upon a distant shore, they didn’t match, but somehow this man pulled it off with style.

“Nice to meet you”
“a Yank?”
“Yes, sir.” Tina felt like she was being scrutinised, eyes glancing her up and down. “Come in to the light, I want to see what I’m dealing with.”
He reached in to his pocket and pulled out small round glasses, perching them on the end of his nose.
Tina did as she was told. Newt taking a few steps forward with her.
“It’s alright Newt, you don’t need to hold on to her she won’t bolt.”
Tina wasn’t as sure, she resented the fact that he dropped her hand and stepped back as his Grandfather circled her critically.
“Thunderbird? One sister? Parent’s… resting, good at charms, stubborn, Macusa, conflicted, old wizard blood, interesting very interesting.” he stopped and got very close to Tina’s face. He sniffed her. “Too much coffee.”
Behind her, Newt laughed. Tina’s heart jumped at the sound.
“Besotted, very good, very very good” he looked her in the eye. “Brave.”

“Right well if we are quite done making me feel weird…”
“Oh, Don’t be silly, I’m just doing a read on you, Your an Auror are you not, can read it on you, used to be in the investigation department myself, but I got the call, you got to follow your heart, just like Newt does, can’t abide office work, would much rather go chasing dragons.”
He stepped back, looking past her at Newt.
“Did Ursula effect her?”
“Just a smidgen.” Newt walked over and sunk in to the sand near the fire.
He sounded half amused half exasperated at the way the siren had acted.
“She means nowt by it.”
“But still Gramps, a bit of decorum wouldn’t kill her.”

Tina felt the urge to go and join him, she wasn’t sure if she liked Ade or not, she could understand why Theseus was weary of him.
“She is what she is, and we are what we are, she only shows you what you need to see, you know that.” he looked at Tina, “You made it through alright, strong stuff this one.”
“You have no idea.” she knew she had her work face on, she glanced over at Newt who shook his head apologetic, Ade was in her personal space, it was only a matter of time before she would snap.
“Welcome to the Family, pull up some sand.” he beamed at her, taking a step back.
Tina felt a bit phased by it all.

“Tina, sit.” Newt’s voice called to her, stronger than any siren song. She took a step back and sank in to the sand beside him. It had been a very strange day.
His arm reached around her pulling her closer to him, it felt strange, this sort of intimacy in front of others, especially around members of his family.
Across the fire Ade’s eyes followed Newt’s movements, he smiled approvingly.
Tina was only half watching, her attention was drawn to the man at her side.

“This is a new development, never thought I would see you bring me a lady friend..” Ade said placing a copper kettle on to the fire.
He stoked the kindling with a stick,
As Tina watched she noticed that the Fire was not empty, small lizards danced across the flames.
She watched them as the licked the curves of the flames, born from the heat, dancing there mating dance across there own sort of magic.

“Things change Gramps, you know that, better than most.”
“But the more they change the more they stay the same don’t you think?”
Tina could feel Newts hand as it fell to the base of her back, he was content and comfortable in his Grandfathers presence, happy to show the world how he felt.

“Don’t be mad at Theseus, he deals with things in his own way, I take it you heard about Leta?”
“Ursula picked up on it, she didn’t see it, she would have warned the two of them, we told Albus that when he came calling to, its only glimpses, her powers arn’t what they used to be.”
The old man sighed, there was a sadness in his eyes.
“I know the rest of the family don’t approve, But Ursula loves you all in her own way”
Tina couldn’t help but think to the projections that the siren had cast in to her mind, oh yes she loved the brothers alright, she had seen it, all of it.
“They will understand one day, maybe just not now.” Newt sounded sorry for his grandfather,
“People take time, we both know that.”
Tina couldn’t help but feel she was not getting the full story, it was as if someone had pulled a few chapters from the middle of the book. She had the beginning and end but the bit in the middle was a little blurred.

The three of them sat in silence for a moment or two the only sound that of the crashing waves at the shoreline.

“Why did you tell Thes we were going to the triangle?”
She expected Newt to answer but it was his Grandfather that spoke.
“That’s what we call the reserve, Newtons Triangle, even the muggles call it that. Although they dunno why” Ade snorted with laughter
“That’s how he got his name you know, not gonna tell you how or why, not my place to say about my own son.”
“But yet you normally insist upon it.” Newt said from her side slightly twitching at the turn of conversation.
“all I’m saying is I dunno what you’re parents expected, making you in a dragon reserve, its there own stupid faults you take after me.”

Tina took a few moments to process the information before it dawned on her what he was on about, the dialect was so strange to her ears, should she be surprised that Newt was conceived in a creature reserve? She had met Rhea, she doubted that there would be nothing Newts mother wouldn’t do.

“Would you like to share any more deep hidden family shame or can we have a cup of tea first?”
Tina watched the older wizard as he observed the two of them around the fire.
“Ah Newt she didn’t even flinch, I’ll have to work a bit harder.” he gave off a small sigh.
“So you got a Runespore for me?”
Tina watched as Newt helped his grandfather get the last of his creatures from the case. Newt looked happy enough to be leaving them in his Grandfathers care, beside her on the sand Dougal hummed to himself softly, despite her trepidation about Ade, this place seemed to breath the same tranquillity that she had come to expect from Newts case.

“Oh now that is a big Kitty.” Ursula said stepping out of the shadows as Newt brought the Zouwu to the surface. She had been so silent that Tina hadn’t even known she was behind her until she spoke. Tina watched her cautiously, the face she had settled on was that of an older woman, dark red hair fell in ringlets around a gentle face.

“I’m not to be feared young one, I’m not going to hurt you.” she said sitting down beside her, Dougal ran and jumped in to the Sirens arms. “To know the infinite possibilities is a burden we both carry is it not my furry friend.” she stroked the Demiguise behind the ear. “I only test the ones that journey this way, Ade is my treasure to protect.” Tina chanced a look at the Siren, her eyes gazed affectionately towards the older Scamander, there was no ill intent etched upon her face, only a look of adoration that Tina was able to tell was not a projection.

“Young Newton is his Grandfathers crowning glory, he worried so long, I tried to find him some solace, I told him one day someone would make him whole, his little tadpole was always too adventurous for the tiny pond of wizards and men.” Tina watched as Newt magicked a large ball of string, he sent it rolling down to the sea, the Zouwu bounded after it, lights and tail ablaze with colour and he enjoyed his new found freedom.

Tina stroked Einstein, he was watching the new arrival with wide eyes. This was the first person he hadn’t tried to put in his pouch to collect. She wondered what the Niffler saw when he looked upon the siren. “He sees me.” she sighed “The real me, the one that I hate.” Ursula must have picked up on her thoughts, she didn’t feel it the way she did with her sister, with Ursula it just was. It was as if she knew your thought before you had them.

Tina couldn’t help but feel sorry for the creature that sat beside her, it was the same feeling that she got whenever she thought of Credence or Nagini, or even herself and Newt in some respects, always on the outside never quite fitting in. “I feel the pain that you carry, don’t let it take hold, it will bury deep and become a noose to hang yourself, pain and life, creatures like me thrive upon both, it is easy to feed on pain and sadness, it takes a strong resolve to thrive on life and love.” The voice was raspy, the glamour slipping slightly, however, the face stayed the same. “Admetos, Artemis, Newton even Theseus in his own way, they are like beacons to the lost.” the Siren sighed softly, it was the most perfect sound Tina had ever heard. “They forget themselves in the protection of others, they shine like a light that never goes out, but all lights may fade if not stoked upon the kindling of love and hope.” Tina watched as the woman got to her feet, her hair changed shades to a darker red the shape of her eyes changed to emphasise the grin she had adorned. “Do not linger, there are many alternative tomorrows they may not all come to pass.”

Newt had a soft spot for his grandfather, he always had, his adventures had filled his early years with tall tails of the high sea’s, far flung adventures and creatures that were so magnificent that as a child he knew his Gramps hadn’t made them up. From the Yeti’s of the snow topped mountain to the stone beasts of Easter Island, his Grandad had been and seen them all.
His Grandmother Alice had been with him every step of the way. As a child the two of them would tease Newt, saying that his Gran was the inspiration for the muggle book, but the muggles never got the real wonderland right. The stories that they would share would be so much more wonderful than that of Muggle imagination.

He remembered his Gran vividly, a bright shock of auburn hair and a smile that shone like the sun. The world went very dark the day that they lost her.

Gramps had never quite been the same after that, the world no longer held anything for him. Newt had hated leaving him to go back to Hogwarts after that summer, there had been something very final about that goodbye.

His grandfather now fussed over his new acquisition, ribbons of light flowing from the end of his wand as giant paws reached out to swat them.

“Ursula saw what happened, this darkness, are you ready to face it?” Ade looked at him, a rare look of seriousness upon his aged face.

“We are tangled up in it if we like it or not Gramps, he took Leta, Tina’s sister Queenie has been bewitched to his side, he has an obscurus, a boy named Credence.”

“Still attached to the host?”

“Very much so.”

His Grandfather became distracted, giant paws almost took a swipe from him, but the old Auror took an easy side step and the claws failed to make contact.

“Only ever met one obscurial before, Anya, Wonderful but troubled mind, lived off the coast of south America, on a little clipper ship, she said a witchdoctor had cursed her to be tormented by black shadows.”

“What happened?” In his years on the job Newt had met but two obscurials, credance and the little girl who’s magic he had carried in his case.

“She’s alive and well and still living on that boat as far as I know, worked herself some sort of remedy to keep it contained.”

Newt’s head was going crazy with thoughts.

“Gramps, don’t suppose you can find out where she is can you?”

The longer Tina spent with Newt the stranger things became, between the creatures the beasts and the unknown she was starting to forget what normality looked like.

Ursula danced across the sand, as Newt looked up at the creature that came towards him, Tina felt a pang of nerves.

Newt however moved past the creature and headed back up the shore to her side.

“I’m sorry I should have warned you.” he said sinking in to the sand beside her.

“About Ursula or your grandfather?”

“Both.” he slipped his hand on to hers, Einstein watched him curiously.

“They are a lot to take in.”

“Yes it’s a bit much for most people, it overpowers the brain a little. Gramps has always been that way, he observes and collects information, he misses nothing. Ursula, well you saw what she can do, Theseus hates that, he doesn’t approve of Ursula being part of the family. It bothers him when people get in past the oculums. I’m sure you even struggled with her.”

Tina’s mind flashed back to the images that she had been shown of her and Newt, the creature that lived in her stomach purred at the thought of him making her feel the way she had in that projection.

“She gave me a lot to think about that’s for sure.” she bit at the inside of her lip, she wanted to know what Newt had thought that had pushed the walking embodiment of lust out of his head, the images that had flashed before Tinas eyes had left little to the imagination and she had developed a good imagination.
They both watched as the zouwu chased the ball around the beach, Tina wondered if Newt had gotten lost in his thoughts the way she had, thoughts of his hands on her, eager skin against skin.

“If you like we could stay here tonight, I can take you to see the dragons.”
“I thought Ade was joking.”
“Does he look like a man who jokes about dragons?”
“Will he not mind?”
“My grandfather is the only member of my family that I can do no wrong, I don’t think he will mind at all.”
“I think I would like that.” she smiled at him.
“I also think I have a lead on something that might be important, another Obscurial.”
Tina’s heart jumped, a lead any lead was better than the nothing they had now.
“Where?”
“Rio.”
The house was swung high above the ground in the trees, out of the way of any creatures that had free roaming rights to the Triangle. It was wooden and rickety and if it wasn’t for magic, would probably have deteriorated into a mess not long after construction.

It was a very different dwelling to the shingle coated cottage Newt remembered from his childhood. Gran had insisted on a quiet place, to make sure Ade didn’t become all consumed with work and beasts.

Tina’s face had lit up at the sight of the building, high between branches and raised from the earth, it was quite something the first time you saw it, nestled away between the canopy of evergreens and oak.

The wooden steps that lead up to the front door held baskets of plants, cages of tiny birds, terrariums of lizards in various states of health and numbers. Glass jars and bottles filled all the available space on the front porch a workbench much like his own lay with half written notes, diagrams and musings adorning it.

They let themselves in the door wasn’t locked, like Feather down you couldn’t find it unless you knew its name and with a siren guarding it as well you would be stupid to even try and find it.

Dracholme was somewhere that few would visit, his grandfathers own sort of sanctum. The front room was built around a large firepit, rugs and small benches lined the walls. Around on shelves many of his Grandads potions sat, books on folklore, atlases of the wizard and muggle world. Instruments for navigation, star charts and deviation tools all worn and old but loved and used.

Newt walked over to the fire, he picked up the book that had been placed there, he felt a small pang of pride in the fact that his Grandfather had found the time to go through and add his own notes. Bits of paper stuck out from various pages, a Phoenix feather was being used as a bookmark.

“He’s very proud of you,” Tina said hugging into his arm, he liked this prolonged contact, he could become used to this if she would let him. 
“Someone has to be.”

“Hey, what am I then? Yesterday’s dishcloth?” she dug him in the side.

“Yes but you’re a little bias on the subject.” her eyes danced with mischief.

“Oh don’t you worry mister, if you do something stupid I will tell you.”

“Oh, I don’t doubt it for a second.”

“Anticipate to hear it about five times a day for the foreseeable future.”

Picket sniggered from his pocket.

“You stay out of this.”

A quick glance at the bowtruckle got him a raspberry for his trouble.

“Charming.”

He lead Tina down the left corridor, towards his grandfathers guest room, it was just as sporadic as the living space, one large cushion sat against the wall, piles of rugs and throws surrounding it, the walls were adorned with souvenirs from Ade and his adventures around the world.

A star map was etched into the wall above a tiny reproduction of El Caracol, mapping the orbit of
Venus as it wrapped the sun. Beside it fossilised remains of a long extinct beast, next to pristine bones of a Sea dragon, that Newt knew his Grandfather had scavenged when exploring long forgotten Dos Ojos caves in Tulum. Long forgotten by locals, visited only by the slightly overly enthusiastic Wizard with a thirst for knowledge of long gone beasts. Obviously, Newt had visited, but the trip had been uneventful, unlike his Ade he had returned empty-handed.

An image of Agnete, leaving her life with her Merman when the church bell's called her home, was painted upon a dresser screen. One of the few fables that crossed the divide of Muggle and Wizard. Large brown jugs sealed with wax and indication of his visit to Saveneapotek, one of the last great alchemist. He was found still working over on mainland Europe, Newt hoped he had made it through the War, he would love to take Tina there one day. “Gramps gets about a bit, not as much now, however, he’s been known to travel far and wide tracking a beast.”

He turned Tina was looking at a picture on the wall, a black and white image of a much younger Admetos, Alice linked his arm as they stood in front of the Pyramids. “You look like him.” “Do you think?”

Tina traced the face in the picture. “Yes, it’s the eyes.” she smiled to herself. He couldn’t help wonder what she thought when she smiled like that, the smile that was just for herself.

“Is that your Grandmother? she looks familiar?” “It is indeed, they met in Egypt, she was training to be a curse breaker, he just wanted to steal a sphinx.” “So you thought you would follow in his footsteps?” “I have yet to take one into my care, I don’t think I have the ability to answer fifty questions when all I want to know is if they want wet or dry food.” he tried to joke but she wasn’t listening. Tina was looking Alice closer, a look of confusion was upon her face. “Did you’re Gran have red hair by any chance?”

Ever the Auror, even when she was off duty, nothing got past her did it? He nodded, he wanted to know what her thoughts were. “Is one of the faces that Ursula projects that of your gran?” her eyes were wide. “Yes some people see Gran when they look at her, it’s not to hurt, she pulls the faces from our thought.” “I’m not sure I like the idea.” “No neither does Theseus.” Newt set down the case on the floor, empty of creatures he felt like it was something that was no longer his, reluctantly he clicked the locks over. His old blue coat sat on top of the muggle side of the case. It had been a gift on his seventeenth birthday, He had always loved it long before it was his own. He had seen his grandfather tame the most savage dragon in it. As far back as he could remember the coat had always hung by the door, to be put on whenever extra protection was needed.

“Come on I Promised you dragons.” Tina turned to him, looking at the coat he had thrown over his arm. She had questions. She always had questions.
“I will tell you all about Ursula as we walk, come on.” he waved her towards him.
“Make sure you have your wand out, scarier things than me lurk in these woods.”

Tina’s eyes were wide as they walked into the darkness that was the woods. The ground was not hard to navigate apart from the occasionally raised tree route that he traversed with years of practice, Tina lost her footing a few times, he, however, pretended not to see for her own pride.
After the third stumble, she linked her arm into his, he couldn’t get over how natural it felt to have her here like this, at his side.
“Gran died when I was twelve, it was quick, she caught an infection from a Chimera bite when they were in Athens, her reflexes were not what they used to be, I’m not even happy about working with them, but Gran loved them.”

He lit the path ahead with his wand, Tina was watching him attentively as he talked, flicking her eyes to the path ahead only long enough to confirm sure footing.

“The bite sent her quite mad, she had no idea who Gramps was by the time they got home to England, kept thinking Dad was him, it was very confusing for everyone. I remember sitting in the shed and Gramps walked in. I knew she was gone, He looked so old all of a sudden, the life had gone from behind his eyes.” He felt something tugging in his chest, it was like yesterday.
“He blamed himself, blamed himself for making her fall in love with a silly fool, a fool who had taught her to love the creatures that had become her demise.”
He stopped he thought he heard something off in the distance, he pointed his wand illuminating the way, two reflective spheres of light bounced off a knezells eyes as it ducked into a burrow.

“After the Funeral, I had to go back to Hogwarts, I didn’t want to, the goodbye was so final, I was adamant that he wasn’t going to be around when I came home for Christmas.”
He started walking again, Tina sniffed beside him.
“I was right, he couldn’t find it in himself to go on.”
Beside him, he felt Tina stiffen slightly.
“He took himself to the cliffs at Ravenscar, just along from the beach we were on earlier, He was going to throw himself off.”

“What happened?” she had stopped.
“Ursula,” he said pulling her slightly. “Ursula had been injured, thrown out of her pod for being too old, to damaged to hunt. Gramps pain was like a beacon, it called to her in hunger and desperation, he was a lost soul, an easy feed.”

There was another noise up ahead.
He stopped and dropped her arm for a moment, taking his coat and offering it up to her, wrapping it lightly around her shoulders.
She pulled it close around her as he wrapped an arm around her protectively.
“Well she picked Gran's face right out of his head, it was the only thing that he had left. Apparently, it shouted so loud to her she was able to use her glamour to convince Gramps to come down off the cliff.”

“Then what happened?”
“Hunger and pain overcame her, but not until after Gramps had made his peace with my Gran, or at least Ursula who looked like her, he says it was like a light turning on. The realisation that Gran died because she was doing something she loved, that she would hate that he blamed himself.”

They were nearly at the clearing now, he could smell the sulphur on the air.
“Ursula and Gramps have been inseparable since, he nursed her back to health and taught her to feed on hope and elation rather than pain, in return, she helped him find something to keep going for.”
He gave Tina a moment to wipe the tear from her eye.

“Problem is as you probably noticed sometimes she gets a little carried away with what she projects,” his mind flashed back to the image of Tina head thrown back in ecstasy, he ached for her she had him completely at her mercy.

“Yes, I had noticed, I could have done without seeing what she wants to do to your brother, and me for that matter, it’s flattering but a bit wrong.”

“She showed you Thes?”
“You should see what she wants to do to you. She wasn’t joking when she said she wanted to keep you, you looked like you were having fun.”
“So did you,” he whispered quietly, thinking of the image of her and Theseus that had been nothing but a fleeting image. Had she lingered longer on that one?

“Oh don’t worry slugger.” she stepped in closer, her eyes glimmered from the repressed tears, “You got to be the main course, apparently I have good things to look forward too.”
She pulled him down towards her by the lapel of his waistcoat, her strength never failed to impress him, her fingers wrapped into his braces, the world could be collapsing around them right now and he was quite sure he wouldn’t have noticed.

“I’ll keep you in check Scamander, with force if necessary I’m led to believe you like that sort of thing?” her lips teased his.
He swallowed down a lump. When did she become so forward?
He had expected her to pull him into the same sort of passionate kiss that she had when he awoke from his nightmare, but her lips were soft against his own.

She was making sure that he knew exactly where he stood, he had never been kissed like this before, it was as if she was trying to convince him that she was his, it was sure and measured and it reached to the bottom of his very soul.

After what felt like hours, or months or it could even have been years, they broke apart.
Newt didn’t open his eyes, he pulled her closer to him wrapping her tighter in the warmth of his coat. Between the smell of the woods, the warmth of her pressed against him and the sound of Dragons in the distance he had never felt more content, not for the first time he wondered if he could persuade her to just give up on this fight and keep her safe, somewhere nobody could find them.
In his arms, she sighed.

“Come on, Dragons,” she said quietly.
Reluctantly he released his grip.
“Up ahead.” he nodded as she slid her arms into his coat.
It didn’t quite fit, the arms were slightly too long.
It grazed her knuckles as she shuffled it into place.
“The coat is to keep you protected, it’s made of certain wool that you can only get from the deepest darkest parts of Thailand, it’s good against getting attacked by fire, ice and a good swipe with a claw.” she looked at him, eyes wide again.
“Told you, I like my coat, it also smells like me and the two grumpy sods that live ahead should pick up on that, I would much rather they didn’t think you were dinner.”
“Is there a chance that might happen?”
“I never say never.”
Her hand slid into his own, she was on his ground now, she felt vulnerable.

The clearing was massive, they had found that the creatures were not happy unless they had free roam, the forest acted as a border to the south, the rolling heather moors provided a natural
playground, the sea and mountains marking the boundaries on the other side, very basic magic kept Muggles from the place, however roe dear and the natural wildlife would still venture, giving the Dragons something to eat and something to play with.

They saw the glowing purple eyes first, the gigantic shape of the Hebridean black darker than even the pitch black of the night sky, he was a mammoth of a lizard, the entire skyline taken up by jagged frame.

The false skyline was broken up by a shimmering ball, the moonlight dancing on the scales causing it to look like a wonderful gem, polished and glistening.

The Opal's eye was a quarter of the size of the Black it raised its head observing the newcomers into his domain with weary pupil-less eyes.

Beside him he felt Tina freeze again, he took a chance looking at her, had she frozen from fear?

He felt a breath escape him.

No, she was in awe, her mouth was slightly open, eyes reading the sight before her, taking it all in, she looked mesmerised.

He remembered that feeling, the first time he had been introduced to the small arm sized hatchling, holding it in his arms, realising that this powerful beast could kill him if it wanted to, looking down at it as it blew tiny smoke rings as it slept, trusting him completely.

“They're so big!” she gasped as the Opal's eye stretched out his wings, he slipped down of the other dragons back, Newt could see him sniffing the air.

“How did you control one of these in the war?” her voice was so distant.

“It wasn’t easy.” he indicated the large scar down his chest, the one that Tina had taken to playing with on a night time, not that he mind.

The opaleye was still about a field away, slowly moving forwards, he could see him tasting the air.

“He hasn’t seen me in a bit, he’s taking his time.”

“He’s like a cat, the way he moves.”

“I’d rather he didn’t try and sit on my knee any time soon.”

Tina laughed, the sound carried across the moor, the black turned his head towards them, trying to identify the sound, he rocked a few times then got to his feet, the overall effect was that of a volcano sprouting legs.

It only took two bounds for the Black to be upon them he sniffed at Newt hopefully, lolling his head like a giant Labrador, beside him Tina froze again, he didn’t blame her this time, the large red eye was almost as big as him and up close the fangs were as big as his arm.

The red eyes moved across to Tina, Newt instinctively moved his hand to his wand as the creature sniffed at her.

It tried to take her into its vision with both oversized eyes, giving up and settling on staring her down with just one.

Newt was just about to cast a shield charm when the thing dropped to the ground rolled over and offered Tina the space below his chin.

It was Newt's turn to laugh this time.

“Felix wants you to rub his chin.”

She looked at him dumbfounded.

“Go on he’s submitted to you, just keep away from the fangs, he forgets how big he is sometimes.”

He watched as the Opal's eye hung back, he had always been a bit slower to trust, he had been treated badly by wizards long before Ade had re-homed him.

Tina gently reached out touching the beast on the soft underside of its chin, the creature closed its
eyes to her touch blowing out smoke rings in its contentment. He knew exactly how the beast felt.

Chapter End Notes

all these places are real places, please feel free to look them up, as ever thanks for the feedback, xx
Chapter Notes

I know I normally put these things at the end.

But special thanks to my lovely beta reader Sarab.

Shes an absolute star and picks up the stupid mistakes my dyslexic brain doesn't see.

Anyway

On with the dragons.

X grumps x

“Felix wants you to stroke his chin.”

She looked down at the leathery scales that were presented to her, the dragon was called Felix, it was a dragon … and it was called Felix, nothing grand nothing fancy, Felix.

She wondered if it was a family trait or just Newt and his Grandad chose such ill fitting titles. Felix didn’t seem to fit this gargantuan creature, the pulchritudinous beast was mesmerising, she would have trouble finding the words to describe it if ever asked.

She was aware that Newt was still talking, but she didn’t quite pick up on the words.

Her hand reached out, placing it upon the dark grey scales, the creature vibrated under her touch, her hand almost the same size as each one of the layered scales.

It was gigantic, she knew Dragons were big, she just didn’t realise how big.

This one was easy a block long, it’s head alone was larger than most of the creatures she had encountered while she was in Newts company.

The beast blew out rings of smoke as it nudged her arm its eyes closing as she ran her hands over the soft scales of its chin.

She was in love.

She was aware of the white Dragon, hovering at the edge of the clearing. It was constantly just to the outside of her line of sight, like a cat sneaking upon a bird, it hid itself in direct sight, not hiding, using stealth to use the blind spot in her natural vision.

It was cautious.

Someone new was in his enclosure. She wasn’t sure she liked the eyes, the unyielding emptiness, unsettling.

Newt moved in her side-vision, side stepping the larger beast then herself, heading towards the glowing mass that watched them.
A long silver tongue tasted at the air, determining who it ventured into its domain.

Newt took his time, moving like a breath of air, no sound under his feet.

It was a skill she admired, he would have been a good auror in the tracking department, she was good, but also very clumsy.

“s’okay Rex its just me.” he said in a sing song voice.

Of course the other one was called Rex, why wouldn’t it be named after half the dogs in America.

The pale Dragon watched him, she didn’t like the way it looked at him.

Moments later the palm of Newts hand found the muzzle of the beast.
The much smaller creature stood the same height as Newt however its body was long and arched, like a child’s drawing of a snake.

It made a trilling noise, it sounded happy as Newt welcomed its playful headbutts.

Tina let herself to breath again.

The creature drew itself up resting a clawed foot on Newts shoulder, she saw Newt readjust his centre of gravity to take on the additional weight.

The large pupil-less eyes seemed to linger on her.

“Rex is not good with new people, his eyes are not as good as they once were, I think he probably has about thirty percent of his vision left.” He looked around at her “He’s a little confused because he can smell me twice.”

Under her hand Felix hummed away to himself.

Tina was trying to picture what Newt must have looked like in the war.

She couldn’t imagine him in a uniform, let alone a military one.

Had he really managed to control a clutch of Iron belly?

She wouldn’t have believed it if she hadn’t seen the rage that lay beneath Newt’s exterior.

The thought of him wrangling more than one seemed preposterous.
Nevertheless she had no doubt in her mind, that if there was a way to do so, Newt would have found it.

Rex pressed in more assured leaning over Newt to reach her, she saw Newts feet start to adjust, he was slipping.

“Let him come over, I have my wand, let him come to me.”

Newt glanced at her between the beasts furry elbows, he didn’t look convinced that this was the best course of action.

“Newton, let me play with the dragon.”

Rex inched closer to her over Newts shoulder, she could see where the talons started to dig in to his skin.
Reluctantly he relinquished his hold on the creature.

It really did move like a cat, the whole body was fluid with motion as it drew itself over Newt.

Under her hand she felt Felix adjust, one giant eye watching as Rex moved forward one clawed foot at a time.

The larger beast rolled to its side, watching as the flowing white scales and fur moved towards them.

When the beast was arms length away it sniffed the air, flicking out its tongue.

Tina did her best to hold, remain calm as she had seen Newt do a million times before.

Rex let out a high pitch sound half growl half hiss.

“Now that is quite enough of that.” she mimicked the tone of Newt, the beast stopped.

“You are a very handsome boy aren’t you?”

The beast observed her, behind Newt looked torn between impressed and terrified.

“Now what is all this noise about? Felix here likes a chin rub how about you?”

The creature sunk to the floor watching her.

Nonetheless its posture relaxed, its ears twitching at the sound of her voice.

“Now isn’t that better?”

Felix had returned to almost purring, you could feel it as well as hear it, he too was aware that the threat had passed.

Rex lay his head down on the grass between his clawed feet, he really was something to behold, as white as snow with a blue green glow to each scale and patch of fur.

He wasn’t resting, he was still alert, Newt moving back to her side caused him to grunt, repositioning his head to face away from the two of them.

“Is it not bad enough you stole one of my Nifflers? Now you steal my dragons too?”

“I think you will find mister, Einstein stole me remember?” she felt the sleeping kiter stir in her pocket at the sound of his name.

“well you seem to be a stolen favour of the dragons also. They normally don’t take to someone so quickly, you have the knack.”

“Porpentina Goldstein, Dragon tamer. Its got a ring to it don’t you think?”

Newt laughed gently, she was aware that he still hadn’t quite relaxed.

His eyes constantly darted from one creature to the next, her included.

“Newt, Relax will you, they are fine with me, if they were going to turn me in to dinner they would already be on desert.”

As if he had planned it Felix yawned, stretching out, knocking Tina off her feet.

Newt acted fast but not as fast as the Dragon.
It took one look at Newt, then looked back at Tina, she felt the sniff of an apology before with one giant flap of wings he took off, landing at the far end of the field.

A laugh raised up from somewhere deep inside of her stomach, a mixture of happiness and fear, Newt was at her side in the mud within seconds. She could feel the mud seeping into her trousers, but she didn’t care, she pulled Newts coat around her closer as the man himself looked on at her with concerns in his eye.

The look on his face made her laugh even more, he really couldn’t read humans could he.

“I’m fine.”
She reached up touching his cheek.
“Honestly Newt nothing about this is a bad thing, You brought me dragons.”
His face relaxed slightly.

“Felix is just a clutts, I’m fine Newt honestly, no harm no foul.”

He reached down to help her up, a sure hand on her waist as he pulled her upwards. They were getting good at this. Being in the others space no longer seemed to send that nervous tension across the air.

“Do you want to head back?”
Looking past him at Rex she shook her head.

“We can go back after he’s let me stroke him.” she nodded at the white dragon that was pretending to ignore them.

“You may have a wait.” said Newt mockingly, the corners of his mouth twitched, it was only subtle but the action was not lost on her, she knew him well enough now.

“I’m good at waiting.”
“We both know that is a lie.”
He wasn’t wrong, but she was determined that she would win the creatures trust, if just for her own benefit.

Newt watched on as the opal eye wrapped itself around Tina, she looked like a chick cocooned in feathers and scales as Rex wrapped his body around her gently.

The only sound on the air was the raspy exhales of air slipping out as the creature moved happily under Tina’s touch.

She had said she would win the dragons trust.

He had never seen them take to anyone so quickly, she was a natural.

Rex had pretended to ignore them for another half an hour until Tina had pulled the packet of sherbet skulls out of her pocket.

She had popped one in to her mouth and the sound of the paper had aroused the dragons curiosity, eyes watching her as she carefully removed one more from the bag.

She held it up, unblinking eyes followed her hands every move. She tossed it up in the air and Rex had reached out straight and true and clamped his jaws down on it.
before it reached the top of its arc.

He had watched as Tina clapped her hands together in glee. When the dragon returned to face them he was just that little bit closer than before.

This had gone on for almost an hour, Tina throwing a sweet and the steal fangs of the beast crashing down on to them, until the sweets were gone and so was the distance.

He had felt a swell of pride when Rex had rest his head alongside her leg when the sweets ran dry.

She looked so pleased with herself as she ran her hand along the pearl white muzzle.

He wasn’t sure what it was she was trying to prove, maybe something to herself, but she looked so at home around the creatures, it was as if she had always been around them.

From somewhere in the distance the sound of a rooster alerted Newt to the fact that the sun was almost on the rise.

Reluctantly he informed Tina it was time to head back to the house.

She had said a swift goodbye to her new found friends, his arm linked with hers as they headed in to the rapidly lightning forest.

His eyes darted around taking in the slightest sounds, he wasn’t sure what his Gramps had out in the trees, but he felt vastly out of sorts without a case full of beasts to protect him.

That nigging sensation had started at the back of his mind again, as if he was forgetting something, it had plagued him ever since France, something forgotten, but what it was seemed out of his grasp.

When Dracholm came back in to view he was relieved, between the feeling of being watched and the way his brain was searching for answers he was becoming increasingly tired.

He carefully opened the back door to the house, the world around them coming slowly awake as they made the way to the spare room to sleep.

Tina failed to hide the yawn as she neatly folded his coat placing it on one of the benches that ran the length of the room.

With a flick of his wand the shutters fell in to place, Tina jumped at the sound, then gave a nervous giggle.

He wondered if she had picked up on the feeling of being watched as they had made there way back through the trees.

If they were being watched it was by something that was not human.

The entire triangle was protected by wards, anything human within a mile of the dragon reserve would have alerted them straight away.

She walked over to the large scatter cushion in the middle of the floor taking a seat and removing her boots.

Picket clambered out of his pocket, jumping to the shelf and chattering angrily at Tina.

“He says not to forget Einstein,”

“I wasn’t going too.” said Tina yawning again, she lay herself down on the improvised bed stretching as she undid the scarf around her neck gently moving the sleeping Niffler with it.

He added his waistcoat to the neatly folded coat, wishing he had thought to pack something to sleep in.

Newt joined her on the oversized cushion, watching as she gently tucked Einstein up on the tiny pillow by her head as the critter slept on.
“You have to stop spoiling him so much the others already pick on him.”
Newt concentrated on undoing his boots as she carefully slipped off her dirty mud covered trousers. She kicked them off and on to the floor near her boots. She didn’t answer him.

When he chanced a look she was tucking Picket in under her scarf a completely unapologetic look in her eye. “Now you.” she hooked him by his braces at the back pulling him in her direction. He shuffled up the bed towards her.

He shrugged his braces off and lay down next to her, Picket watching from his own little bed Tina had made him, he was obviously coming around to this kind of sleeping arrangement. He had to admit he did like it himself.

She reached over grabbing one of the many throws that scattered the room and threw it gently over the top of them. She reached out wrapping her fingers in with his own and pulling his hand towards her heart. The sigh of contentment spoke to him, this was all he had ever wanted her to be happy.

“Thank you for showing me the dragons” she whispered her eyes closed to the world. “They are magnificent, Queenie would have loved them.” he could hear the hint of sadness in the words that left her lips. He didn’t like the way that she talked as if Queenie had already passed.

“There we shall have to fetch her to meet them,” he didn’t expect an answer, she looked as if she had already fallen asleep, however she spoke again, her voice small and soft the sound made his heart break a little.

“I miss her Newt.”

It was some time later Newt finally fell asleep. Thoughts lingering on the blond who was missing in both there lives. The helplessness he felt at being unable to protect Tina from the darkness that may yet come was what finally sent his weary mind in to shut down, sleep taking him to dreams of glowing red eyes and flashes of white.
The soft touch on her cheek woke her, she was becoming accustomed now to waking in new surroundings. He was the one constant in her life that made all the change seem worth it.

She had expected him to be awake, but he was still sleeping. His hand having reached out to her in his dream. With care she moved his hand away from her face.

She observed him. He slept at peace, the terrors were not present, the hand had been reached out in comfort not defence, she relaxed. There would be no repeat of the previous night.

By her head she could hear the light breathing of the Niffler and Picket who slept on quietly. Around her the wooden house was silent.

She tried to make herself go back to sleep, it was impossible. It had always been the same, if she woke and it was light, that was it. There was no getting back to sleep, that was why she clung to her dreams as close as possible, trying to lull herself into rest that she badly needed.

Would she be a bad person if she woke Newt up?

Lying here with thoughts of her sister in her mind was beginning to drive her slowly crazy. Was she ok? Did she regret her decisions? Would she kill under Grindelwald’s orders?

The thought of her baby sister taking a life kept playing over and over in her head.

Even her steadfast technique, counting Newts freckles was not distracting from the thoughts of Queenie.

In her mind she had already lost her.

She knew she had done it, she had talked about her sister the way she spoke about her mom and pop, talking like Queenie was dead.

It had shocked her, she kept running it around in her head.

She had mentioned her in past tense, as if she was gone.

The tears had begun again before she even realised, silent tears that trickled down her face, she felt so selfish.

For the first time in her life she felt that maybe she could be happy, have a life that had always seemed so far away, chased by ambition and determination.

Fear too if she was honest with herself, she had always been to scared to let anyone in. The pain of losing her parents so young, the pressure of always being strong for her baby sister, the
walls she had built were so high.

Yet here she was, Newt had somehow managed to get behind her defences, he had completely wiped out her tactical advantage. Honed over the years of not letting anyone close enough to hurt, to love.

He had come barging in to her life like a trojan horse, but this one came with his own private world hidden in the lining of a suitcase.

The world had fallen around them, bit by bit. They were both caught up in something that had never been there fight to start with, she felt awful being so happy.

Without Queenie here, the happiness had a bitter after taste, she had nobody to share it with.

It was this thought that drove her to seek her own company, gently moving as not to wake her companions, she flicked her wand at her trousers and removed the mud, slipping them on and quietly making her way from the room.

Ade’s house was like an emporium of weird and wonderful artefact, her work brain rang out alarms, there was so much here that was against Macusa law.

Then she remembered, she was no longer Macusa, she was Ministry, she was going to have to learn a whole new set of rules, although going to work at the same place as Newt each day would have it’s advantages.

She had never been in the British building, she knew it was all underground from Newts letters, she wasn’t sure she liked the idea of being completely locked away from the outside world, the wand permit office had been bad enough.

Did they have a uniform? Were there any other women on the investigation squad? She had so many questions, yet she may not even get to step foot in the door if Macusa had anything to do with it.

This whole thing had gained so much ground so quickly her brain was beginning to hurt at the idea.

It was a whole new life, one that she had to start without her sister by her side, her sister who had fallen in love with the idea of Tina and Newt being together, long before Tina had even come to terms with her own feelings for the man.

The world was different now.

“I did wonder who would be up first, my money was on Tadpole, good job I ain’t a betting man, I would have lost.”

Tina looked up, Ade sat on a large throw near the firepit, he had a large silver contraption set up on the edge of one of the benches.

He smiled at Tina, taking a long draw on his pipe and pushing his glasses back up his nose. He beckoned her towards him, as his wand went about adjusting parts of the object of it’s own accord.
“Newt asked me too try and locate an old friend, best way to do that is taking up a bit of the old sorcery, well divination really, Tadpole doesn’t agree with it, says its too unpredictable.”

Tina popped herself down on the floor beside the man, a glass of something warm joined her jostling for a space on the throw.

“Apple tea, from Portugal, It’s not that Coffee that you Yanks like, but it helps to calm the nervously depositioned.” he looked at a tiny cog through a giant magnifying glass, poking it with his finger.

“How does it work?” she found herself asking as small darts of light flashed in and out of tubes. The effect was quite hypnotic.

“One of my better inventions, it lines up the stars in miniature, I put in a date, I can map stars out as far out as ten years in advance, it sounds pointless, but if you are tracking a beast that relies on certain astrological events, it can come in very handy.”

Tina nodded, she had always been good at astronomy, it was old magic it held together the old beliefs.

There was something humbling in the knowledge that the planets and the stars were so far away, it had a habit of making everything in life look small by comparison.

“So how will this help with the Obscurial?”

“When I saw her last she was with a fella and he was part vela, he was tracking the movements of Venus through Saturn, said it gave him restorative powers.” Ade scoffed

“Now that is a bunch of mumbo jumbo if ever there was some, however if I can work out when that set of events is due to happen next over Rio, I should be able to pinpoint them down to at least a few hundred miles.”

“That will be close enough, Thank you.” her eyes darted over the configuration of stars and planets that moved in time with the gentle sway of Ade’s wand.

“If I can get it down an area Ursula will send the word out. Her people talk, the power of an obscurus and a part vela out at sea will send out a dinner invitation loud and clear.”

“That would be even better. The lead … not the sirens wanting to eat them.” Tina said taking a sip of the tea that had been offered to her.

It tasted strange, like the cider that Rhea had given her but with a bitter undertone, it wasn’t awful but she didn’t think she would drink it again, however it was having a calming effect on her, Ade had been right about that.

In front of them the contraption hissed and spluttered now working under its own steam, Ade’s wand now back in his own hand.

The same incandescent shell ran through it she had seen in Newts, she wouldn’t be surprised if it had the same core, the two men were so alike.

“If you wondering about the wands, yes its the same,” Ade twisted the wand around in the light.

“You yanks got the wand thing backwards, the wand picks you, not the other way round, see that shell, its not a shell, its an Opal, you met Rex?”

Tina nodded.

“Opal eye and heart-strings, increasingly difficult to find, Olivander only ever made a few, he doesn’t like to mess with dragons, so few of them left now, it takes an eternity for them to die of old
“But you run a Dragon reserve!” she was a little shocked at the news that Newts wand was actually made from a dragon.

“Gotta pay the bills, It’s just life. Dragon’s gotta die of natural causes to give up any of the good stuff. Olivander knows each beast that he gets his supply from, be it phoenix or unicorn, if he were to harm them in any way at all Newt would have closed him down long ago.”

Ade handed her his wand, it’s entire handle was carved from the same pale opal as Newts, it was longer, but just as worn. She turned it slowly in her hand, the Opal caught the lights, it shimmered.

“If it was taken by force, it wouldn’t work, much like that horned serpent core that you tote, must be the only one I ever seen, it’s in such an unassuming case too, maple wood? No ebony.” he held out his hand, reluctantly Tina handed the man her own wand.

He sniffed it, turned it over a few times, then handed it back to Tina.

“That’s an old wand, a very old wand, wonder how many turned it down for its simplicity for something more flashy, but not you, you picked it, or maybe it picked you after all.” Ade said taking his own wand back.

Tina remembered picking up several wands before settling on the one in her hand, they had indeed been flashy and bejewelled. Her wand had felt right as soon as she picked it up, like an extension of herself. It had hummed in her touch as she picked it up, fit neatly in to the fold of her hand.

“They never tell you what the wand is made from, how can you tell its horned serpent?”

Ade smiled.

“Maybe I tell you, or maybe I let you wonder a little longer.” he said smiling as the star chart suddenly changed colour.

“Right that’s calculated at least, last sighting was in Rio, I should be able to cross it over with past notes and then Ursula will pass it on to her old pod.” he seemed happy to be back on the chase.

“How long do you think it will take?”

“How long is a bit of string?”

Tina was growing to like Ade, he was forward, but she realised that she didn’t really mind as much as she had in the past. He was watching her again now, she fidgeted with her wand in her hand, was it really a Horned Serpent core? When she had checked it at Macusa it was not flagged up as restricted, maybe Ade was just making fun of her.

He got up, the machine had burned stars in to a piece of paper that had been resting below it, Ade carried it towards the back door.

“Do me a favour, Just don’t break his heart.”

The older man had stopped in the door frame, paper in hand and wand behind his ear.

“He’s probably told you about my Alice, us Scamandlers don’t do well on our own.” the sadness
touched his eyes only momentarily, before his normal jovial face returned. He nodded once then headed out the door.

Newt found Tina looking through one of his grandfathers old field journals. He had been shocked when she was nowhere to be found upon waking, the sense of relief at seeing her now forced him to smile.

Picket chattered away on his shoulder holding her neckerchief like a cloak around him.

The critter and the Niffler had been fighting for ownership of the yellow fabric for the last few moments but as soon as Einstein saw Tina he dropped the fight and ran to her.

Picket was currently celebrating his small victory loudly in Newts ear.

“You ready to head back?”

“You bet, but only as long as you let me get some more of the sherbet skulls for Rex.” she placed the book down getting to her feet.

“Sugar isn’t good for him.”

“If it’s good enough for me it’s good enough for him, don’t be a spoil sport.” Einstein ran up her leg and took purchase on his favourite spot, her hand instantly went to him, stroking him gently. She was a vision, even if she did keep stealing his beasts.

“You’re Popps has been working on finding the Obscurial, he’s gone off to run calculations?”

If Gramps had gone off to play with his infinite impossibility machine they wouldn’t see him again any time soon, he would be caught up in start charts and gyroscopes until sometime next spring unless Ursula talked him out of the sea cave that he stored it in.

“We should head back to the pub, Theseus will be sending the investigation squad after us at this rate.” he picked up a quill from the side of the fire pit, looking at the set up his grandfather had been using, he would hate to admit it but the old man was on to something with this star mapping.

He jotted down a quick note, letting Ade know they were leaving and for him to send word when he had some more information.

Tina stood waiting for him by the door, his now almost empty suitcase in her hand, his coat tucked over her arm. She must have gotten them from the bedroom when he was leaving the note, she was so much more organised than him, she always seemed to know what to do and when to do it.

“Can we come back to see the Dragons again?” she asked hopefully as he reached her side, her face lit up at the prospect, he couldn’t deny her anything when she shone like that.

“Any time you like, all you have to do is say, I’ll fetch us straight to the well and Ursula will come get us.”

“Whenever I want?” she sounded so exited.

“Whenever you want.” If he had known that to make her happy all he had to do was show her giant
murdering lizards, then he would have done it months ago. This was a million miles away from the woman that had asked him if he was writing an extermination guide.

She practically skipped down the stairs, the warmth of the late afternoon sun shielded somewhat by the canopy of branches that filtered the rays.

Newt couldn’t help but wonder how long it was since Tina had felt this relaxed around anyone, she worked to hard. Macusa had never appreciated her, something that only made her work even harder. She was too good for such a backward system like they were governing across the pond.

Her hair looked lighter when the sun hit it, reds and mahogany highlights adding to the salamander image that he held so close to his heart, he wanted to keep an image of her like this, his wild thing in her element.

“Keep up Mr Scamander.” she said jumping a rather large root with her own special brand of grace. She almost fell but hid it so well no one would have noticed, well no one else.

“Should I pretend I didn’t see that?” he called after her as she broke the tree line and stepped in to the blazing sun.

She ignored him, too busy watching as Dougal bounded towards her jumping in to her arms. His creatures had taken to her, all of them, he couldn’t blame them, she was somewhat beguiling.

They appareted a little outside of the city walls, it was safer than suddenly appearing in the yard of the fleece, Muggles might see. Newt had returned the last three reluctant inhabitants back in to the case, he would change up the habitats later, no need for so much room now.

Tina had linked her arm with his as they walked along the river.

“You think she’s alright?”

He didn’t need to ask who she was talking about.

“I do.” if she had half the temperament of the witch beside him, she would be able to see the lies.

“Thes was right, you kidos like to make us worry.” she said sinking her head down on to his shoulder, the spring in her step faded somewhat.

He suddenly felt very guilty for all the stupid things that he had put Theseus through in the past, he hadn’t exactly been the most supportive sibling as his brother had forged his path through the ministry. He would make it up to him somehow.

The cobbled streets didn’t feel as inviting as they had the day before.

Newt noticed it first, the feeling of being watched.

He listened hard, trying to work out if it were friend or foe that tracked them.

As they hit the solid flagstones of the market place he noticed that Tina had angled her hand towards
her wand, she had noticed it too.
She stopped at the curb, dropping down to pretend to tie her shoelace, casting a glance around the case behind them.

“We have a tail.” she said getting to her feet, she whispered in to his ear under the pretence of kissing his cheek. “behind us grey suits, two of them and one woman long green coat, not sure if they are Macusa, Ministry or some of his lot.”

Newt kept staring straight ahead, he could see two more figures trying so hard to blend in that they stood out from a mile away.

“Newt!”
It was Brandy.
She ran up to the two of them from the back ally.
“You gotta go to the ministry, its Macusa, they took Jacob, Theseus has already left.”

Newt froze, beside him Tina stiffened up. all pretence of subtle observation gone, she was glaring at the figures around her now.
Her eyes narrowed with contempt.

“Newt, Take me to the Ministry.”

Something in her voice made him do exactly what she wanted.

The smell of London hit them, in the distance Big Ben struck six.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to SaraB for the beta

You know the drill.
I love each and every comment x

Next chapter is almost good to go too

So don't worry
I won't leave you hanging long
She was shaking with anger. He had never seen her this mad before. The rage rippled off her, it slunk out into the air around her. It was almost solid enough to touch.

She paced back and forth, muttering under her breath.

Newt picked up a few of the words: his own name, Jacob’s. Her eyes were turned up to the heavens, sparkling with rage.

He glanced up and down the street. The lane was clear, nobody in either direction, the lateness of the hour leaving the streets near the ministry all but deserted.

“How dare they!” she growled at the world at large, kicking a rather large empty box.

His heart was racing. What if they took her away? What then? He tried to bury the blind panic that had started to grip at him. He wouldn’t let them take her without a fight, not when they had only just found each other. If they survived they would both be wanted felons.

Then what? Where would they go? Both sides of the Atlantic would have them on the watch list. They would have to vanish. His mind raced with quick solutions, each more ludicrous than the last.

All the while Tina paced.

“When Darcy and Mckaw, I saw them! I’ve run missions with them, and they were looking at me like I was some sort of monster!” Sparks were flashing from her wand tip, the anger trying to find any way it could to escape.

“How DARE they!” her face contorted in anger and pain, he rushed to her side.

“Tina calm down, they aren’t worth it. We need to get to Jacob. We can’t let them take him back to America... they’ll Obliviate him.” He took her hands in his own, trying to get her to look at him. She was shaking so violently he was worried she may have another panic attack, however it was something almost primeval that burned behind enraged eyes.

“Tina, sweetheart, look at me.”

She swung her head up.

“We have a plan remember?” slowly she nodded, eyes beginning to calm now. He pulled her in to him, he wanted to protect her, but this was her battle she had to do this alone.

She sank into his chest, she was scared, so was he.

He pulled her tighter, breathing in the scent of her, trying to calm himself.

“You can do this Tiny, you are so strong, don’t let them get to you.”
“But what if I can’t?” her voice was but a whisper. “Newt what if we are to late .what if they took Jacob already? he’s all I have left, he’s like my brother” she sought out his eyes with her own, she looked so scared, he had never seen her look so vulnerable the last of her defences finally crumbling.

“What if Thes’s plan doesn’t work? What if they say that I have to leave...” her lip quivered and his heart broke just a little more.

“Then I do believe they will have two Scamander’s to deal with. My brother may well be an arse but he thinks very highly of you.” He tried his best to smile at her but it didn’t work, he felt like she was slowly slipping away again.

“Then we follow his plan.” She faltered. “I work for the Ministry now, maybe it’s time to go to work.”

Tina was terrified, not that she would let anyone know, not even Newt, though she knew very well he could read it all over her.

She had started off as angry, she had moved past furious and now she was bordering between hatred and revenge.

Her own team had been sent to track her down?

Of all the low down dirty tricks that Macusa had thrown at her, this was the lowest of the low.
Newt had called all Aurors careerist and elitist, she hadn’t understood before but now it was painfully clear.

These people didn’t care about her, just their own gain.

They were no better than Grindelwald.

She had trusted these people with her life on more than one occasion, she wondered how she had gotten out alive.

They stepped out of the room used as an apparition point, her eyes scanned for any sort of threat.

It felt strange to be back in work mode, everything felt out of place after the last few days of being in Newt’s protective bubble.

Her hand went straight to her wand, ignoring the aged wizard that had requested to register it as they had moved in to the atrium.

He sat behind a small wooden desk with a set of scales much like the ones she had used back when she had been relegated to the wand permit office.

The memory did nothing to calm the rage beast in her chest that had moved into attack mode, it was threatened.

Next to her, Newt juggled his case and wand. “She’s on Auror Scamander’s team, Reggie. want to take mine?”

The older wizard smiled at Newt, it was a warm smile, this man was not a threat.

“Nah, you’re OK Mr Newt! It’s good to see you back with us.”

Tina’s eyes took in the Green tiles that shimmered like one of Newt’s creatures, lizard-like scales
under wizard made lights. People rushing from place to place, oblivious to the life-altering trauma that she currently faced. She had been these people. Eager to move up in the ministry, to drag herself from her comfort zone to make her way up the ladder, only to get knocked back down again without a second look. She felt like shouting out a warning, to tell them to give up now.

The silver light at the end of the tunnel was a train without any brakes, Nobody was getting out alive.

“Auror Scamander said to meet him in your office should you turn up, I was awfully sorry to hear about Ms Leta, she will be missed.” Reggie said pointing them towards the large elevators at the end of the hall.

Newt acknowledged the man, however, Tina was eyeing the large open room with caution, aware that they were potentially walking in to a trap.

It was a mark of how much things had changed in the last few days, once the mention of Leta would make her freeze. Now there was a lingering sadness that had nothing to do with Newt, But everything to do with Theseus, a man that she had known less than a month and already considered a friend. Her hand gripped tighter on her wand, she could feel the sparks prickingling under her fingertips.

Grindelwald was going to pay for what he had done to Theseus, he was now part of her own little self-made family, it felt strange to think that this was the biggest her own family had been in a long time. Stranger, even more, to think that non were bound by blood.

Their boots rang out as they crossed the expanse of tiles, as Newt directed her towards the large gold elevator port.

As they waited, Tina’s eyes focussed on the notice board behind Newt’s head. He had tried to block her view with his frame and failed.

Her eyes scanned the wanted poster.

She was becoming used to seeing people she knew on the things, it was the way of her world, however, the face of her sister and Credence hit her like a ton of bricks.

Her wand vibrated in her hand.

“Tina, calm, getting yourself arrested isn’t going to help Jacob’s case. It won’t look that good on you either.”

“I don’t care, My sister is not a criminal.”

“In the eyes of the law she is,” he said grabbing her wand hand in his own. “We know the truth, but we have to realise that she made a choice, You of all people know what our world is like with rules.”

Biting back the retort that had built on her tongue, he was right. Didn’t make it hurt any less, but he was right.

The lift clunked into place beside them, Newt guided her in.

Thankfully no one was in the thing owing to the lateness of the hour, most people had already left the building for the day.
He didn’t drop her hand, wrapping his own long fingers along the side of her wand, trying to calm the magic that threatened to escape in her anger. Once more she was aware that people didn’t give Newt the credit he deserved, he really was a powerful wizard. He would have been an amazing auror, to help contain someone else’s magic was high level magic, she even struggled.

Her mind went back to the obscurial contained in one of his own creations, pure magic wild and free contained in complex and carefully crafted spell work.

He had taken on Grindelwald single handed and held his own.

The thought of this alone made her relax somewhat, even if Macusa took her away, she was sure Newt would get her back.

She remembered the look on Grindelwald’s face masked as Graves in the interview room, on of the most powerful wizards in the world and even he had been in awe of Newt’s ability.

Newt must have felt her anger shift, he dropped her wand hand, moving his own in to the small of her back, his wand resting the bottom of her waist, it may still be needed.

He had the case in his other hand, his eyes watching the lights on the elevator as they changed.

“Remember our cover story... I came to New York to find you--”

“--Well that isn’t exactly a lie.”

“Yes…” he had begun to stutter again a clear sign he was getting flustered “...and you are very much found, but I was sent on Thes’s orders, you have been working--”

“--for him , yes I know all this Newt, this isn’t my first investigation.” the calming effect he had on her was starting to wear off again with his rambling, he was making her anxious.

He raised his other hand turning her to face him, the case had been placed on the floor by his feet, she could tell he was trying to find the right words for what he wanted to say next.

“Yes you have been questioned before, but it is the first time it has affected us.”

“What do you call almost getting executed then?” she asked eyebrow cocked.

He gave her a look so earnest her breathing stopped, swooping in, he kissed her possessively, every move, every breath moving her more and more in to his deepening kiss, his hands pulling her closer, his wand hand moving to cup her face protectively.

“That wasn’t US yet, was it?” he said resting his forehead against hers, there was something like resolve in his eye.

“If I don’t come back--”

“--You will come back. This is not open for negotiation.” He stepped back as the lift jerked to a halt, his hand ducking to his case, suddenly feeling as if he were a million miles away.

She missed the contact instantly.Her heart was pounding now. A mix of every emotion all at once, fighting to win out over the other. She was terrified, but felt more alive she had felt since the subway back in New York.
Newt led the way, no one came in to the magical creature department unless they wanted a favour, were doing a favour, or had managed to anger Travers so much that he relegated said person to Newts department. Newt had never minded too much, Muggle relations were on this floor, another department everyone tried to avoid.

The wanted posters had even made it on to his floor, a flick of a wand and they were banished to the bin where they belonged. Tina didn’t need to see Queenie staring down at her any more than Jacob would have.

Not for the first time he cursed the Ministry on both sides of the pond. Humans were so fickle.

Tina kept up with his pace, her face now set in an angry scowl, she was on a mission, the kindness was wiped from her face, replaced by that dead set determination.

She was quite the sight, his powerful, amazingly beautiful angry little dragon tamer.

They came to a stop outside his office. The lights were on and they could hear voices on the other side of the door. Angry voices at that.

He glanced at Tina, she was reading the sign on the front of his door.

‘N.A.F. Scamander. Head Magizoologistt, Beast division.’

Theseus had made sure that they had gotten all the names in.

“You never told me you were the head of the department.” she said proudly.

“I can hardly call it a department, it’s only this half of the floor.”

“Damn sight more of a department than the non-existent one at Macusa.” He could tell by her tone there was no love lost. Macusa had handed the hammer to her, with it she had hit the last nail, well and truly sealing the coffin of her old life.

“On the plus side, it means I get to boss myself about, which comes in useful. I gave myself permission to fund a trip to America you see...”

The angry shell broke for moment, her eyes finding his, two big brown orbs looking at him adoringly. He would never get used to her looking at him like that.

“For the love of--” His words were cut short with a crash behind the door.

Instantly wands were raised. That wasn’t his brothers voice...it was an American.

“Percy calm down.”

THAT was his brother. That was the tone he used when Newt had done something wrong and Theseus knew he was going to get him in to all sorts of trouble for it.
Carefully, Newt opened the door.

Percival Graves stood by the desk a shattered cup lay on the floor, coffee slipping slowly towards one of Newt’s not very well organised stacks.

Newt raised his wand and pointed it directly at the man. At his side Tina did the same.

“What were the first words you spoke to me when I joined the Auror department?”

Confused, the man looked from Newt to Tina,

“I’m taking a chance on you Goldstein, try not to screw it up,” His lip twitched.

Tina lowered her wand. Newt followed her prompt.

She shrugged “It’s him alright no one else would know that. Where is Jacob?” Newt could hear the panic in her voice.

“Not going to check that I am me?” Theseus scoffed from the chair in the corner.

“No one else would bring the director of Macusa’s auror department to my shitty little office Thes’. I know you are you.” He looked from his brother to Tina who had moved close to his side. The look of confusion was etched upon her face again: she was wondering, like he was, why Macusa had sent Graves, of all people.

“I hear you have become a double agent,” Graves said, raising an eyebrow as Tina had instinctively moved a step closer to Newt.

Newt was not convinced that Graves had no ulterior motive, was he here to help Tina? Who was he to judge her choices.

Newt glanced at her wand. Her hand was steady, but he could feel the angry magic building again.

“Tina, it’s fine. I know all about Theseus’s plan, it might work.” Graves nodded at the man in the corner, “People think that the ministers are the ones that make the rules, but the truth is that they are more in the dark than they will ever know.”

“Why are you here?” Tina sounded guarded.

“Officially I’m here as part of the inquest...just as an observer. Madam President likes to think it was her idea, it was not,” he said, inclining his head towards them both.

“So you are investigating us?”

“No, but believe it or not Tina, you are one of my best. I want to make sure that they give you a fair trial.”

Tina snorted with false laughter.

“I can leave you to the judgment that your ex partner bestows, if you want, but do you think he will be fair on you?”

Beside him Tina tensed up.

Newt tried to meet her eyes, but she avoided his gaze, eyes fixed on the office flooring as though it were the most interesting object in the room.

“That’s what I thought.”
Newt was confused. Whatever this conversation was about he was not part of it.

Theseus got to his feet, and walked over to Tina, clamping his hand on her shoulder. Newt suddenly felt a pang of jealousy rear its head, and hated himself instantly.

“So, You are Queenie’s fella, huh?”

Jacob felt out of his depth. He had taken most of his life in his stride: things happen, you learn, and you move on. But moving on from this would be hard if he couldn’t remember any of it. It had all happened so quickly and now he was here. Wherever here was. He tried to keep his mind clear.

He was good at not thinking anything. It was almost second nature now to guard some of his mind. He loved Queenie with every little bit of his being, but he had to keep some of himself back from her somehow.

He didn’t count on it being so useful when up against the trio of wizards that prodded and poked at him asking relentless questions.

He looked up at the one that had spoken.

The man in the dark coat didn’t look at Jacob when he spoke, his eyes turned to a quill that was busy scratching across parchment of its own accord.

“Scuse me?”

“I said are you Queenie’s fella? it’s not a hard question is it?”

Jacob had to admit it was a hard question, depending on how you looked at his current lack of ability to account for the aforementioned blond.

“I was.” His voice cracked.

“You’re a no-maj right? No formal magical training? No family name?” the man who addressed him flicked through the papers on the desk.

Jacob didn’t answer.

“We are investigating the involvement of a Miss Tina Goldstein and her Sister Queenie Goldstein in the recent movement, mass murder, and no-maj baiting that has arisen in the wake of a certain dark wizard’s escape.” The man looked up at Jacob now. Jacob had caught the slightly bitter tone in the man’s voice when the Goldstein name had slipped from his mouth. Jacob bit back the highly uncharacteristic retort that had formed.

“You were present on more than one occasion. Why would a No-maj cross paths with one of the most dangerous wizards of all time...not once but twice?” the man looked across at the dark haired wizard next to him. “Are you ready to do the trace McLean?” the man muttered to him under his breath but raised a wand towards Jacob.

“You gonna do what now?” Jacob spluttered.

“A trace, it’s simple magic but very effective, it will tell us if you have any Magical blood Mr.
Kowalski. If I was you, I would hope for a yes, but on the plus side, if it's a no you won't remember any of this.”

“You got no right to go doing this type of stuff on a fella...we’re in England, the rules are all sorts of different here!”

“Be that as it may, at this exact moment in time I also have you as an accessory to— he looked down at the files in his hand— attempted robbery, breaking and entering, actual robbery and the destruction of most of downtown New York. If I could deport you now I would.”

“So you can’t deport me?”

The man that stood in front of him chose to ignore Jacob’s observation.

“We would like to know what Miss Goldstein was up to over in France.”

“You sent her,” Jacob said flatly as the man walked closer.

Jacob took a long hard look at him...he knew that face...had seen it before: a glimpse out of an upstairs window before sneaking down a fire escape before Tina discovered him in the flat.

“We did nothing of the sort.” He sounded confident, but Jacob was waiting for the crack in his voice that he was sure he would hear, and sure enough there it was.

“Well that’s what she told us, take it up with her.”

“Oh I … that is to say we intend too,” he stuttered. Jacob was suddenly reminded strongly of Newt

The man flicked his wand and a small vial flew to his hand.

“Drink it!” He thrusts the vial in to Jacob’s hand. it glowed and moved in much the same way that the very first potion he had attempted.

He eyed it closely, “what is it?”

“It’s the activator for the trace, Mr Kowalski. We will give it time to work then we will know.”

“Know what?”

He was not graced with an answer .

Jacob reached up, running his hand over the now almost invisible scar on his neck, he hoped that Theseus’s bright idea would work.

She was shaking with anger, He had never seen her this mad before.
The rage rippled off her, it slunk out into the air around her. It was almost solid enough to touch.

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“Then we follow his plan.” She faltered. “I work for the Ministry now, maybe it’s time to go to work.”

Tina was terrified, not that she would let anyone know, not even Newt, though she knew very well he could read it all over her.

She had started off as angry, she had moved past furious and now she was bordering between hatred and revenge.

Her own team had been sent to track her down?

Of all the low down dirty tricks that Macusa had thrown at her, this was the lowest of the low. Newt had called all Aurors careerist and elitist, she hadn’t understood before but now it was painfully clear.

These people didn’t care about her, just their own gain.

They were no better than Grindelwald.

She had trusted these people with her life on more than one occasion, she wondered how she had gotten out alive.

They stepped out of the room used as an apparition point, her eyes scanned for any sort of threat.

It felt strange to be back in work mode, everything felt out of place after the last few days of being in Newt’s protective bubble.

Her hand went straight to her wand, ignoring the aged wizard that had requested to register it as they had moved in to the atrium.

He sat behind a small wooden desk with a set of scales much like the ones she had used back when she had been relegated to the wand permit office.

The memory did nothing to calm the rage beast in her chest that had moved into attack mode, it was threatened.

Next to her, Newt juggled his case and wand. “She’s on Auror Scamander’s team, Reggie. want to take mine?”

The older wizard smiled at Newt, it was a warm smile, this man was not a threat.

“Nah, you’re OK Mr Newt! It’s good to see you back with us.”

Tina’s eyes took in the Green tiles that shimmered like one of Newt's creatures, lizard-like scales under wizard made lights. People rushing from place to place, oblivious to the life-altering trauma that she currently faced. She had been these people. Eager to move up in the ministry, to drag herself from her comfort zone to make her way up the ladder, only to get knocked back down again without a second look. She felt like shouting out a warning, to tell them to give up now.

The silver light at the end of the tunnel was a train without any brakes, Nobody was getting out alive.
“Auror Scamander said to meet him in your office should you turn up, I was awfully sorry to hear about Ms Leta, she will be missed.” Reggie said pointing them towards the large elevators at the end of the hall.

Newt acknowledged the man, however, Tina was eyeing the large open room with caution, aware that they were potentially walking in to a trap.

It was a mark of how much things had changed in the last few days, once the mention of Leta would make her freeze. Now there was a lingering sadness that had nothing to do with Newt, But everything to do with Theseus, a man that she had known less than a month and already considered a friend. Her hand gripped tighter on her wand, she could feel the sparks prickling under her fingertips.

Grindelwald was going to pay for what he had done to Theseus, he was now part of her own little self-made family, it felt strange to think that this was the biggest her own family had been in a long time. Stranger even more to think that non were bound by blood.

Their boots rang out as they crossed the expanse of tiles, as Newt directed her towards the large gold elevator port.

As they waited, Tina’s eyes focussed on the notice board behind Newt’s head. He had tried to block her view with his frame and failed.

Her eyes scanned the wanted poster.

She was becoming used to seeing people she knew on the things, it was the way of her world, however the face of her sister and Credence hit her like a ton of bricks.

Her wand vibrated in her hand.

“Tina, calm, getting yourself arrested isn’t going to help Jacob’s case. It won't look that good on you either.”

“I don’t care, My sister is not a criminal.”

“In the eyes of the law she is,” he said grabbing her wand hand in his own. “We know the truth, but we have to realise that she made a choice, You of all people know what our world is like with rules.”

Biting back the retort that had built on her tongue, he was right. Didn’t make it hurt any less, but he was right.

The lift clunked into place beside them, Newt guided her in.

Thankfully no one was in the thing owing to the lateness of the hour, most people had already left the building for the day.

He didn’t drop her hand, wrapping his own long fingers along the side of her wand, trying to calm the magic that threatened to escape in her anger. Once more she was aware that people didn’t give Newt the credit he deserved, he really was a powerful wizard. He would have been an amazing auror, to help contain someone else's magic was high level magic, she even struggled.

Her mind went back to the obscurial contained in one of his own creations, pure magic wild and free contained in complex and carefully crafted spell work.
He had taken on Grindelwald single handed and held his own.

The thought of this alone made her relax somewhat, even if Macusa took her away, she was sure Newt would get her back.

She remembered the look on Grindelwald’s face masked as Graves in the interview room, one of the most powerful wizards in the world and even he had been in awe of Newt’s ability.

Newt must have felt her anger shift, he dropped her wand hand, moving his own in to the small of her back, his wand resting the bottom of her waist, it may still be needed.

He had the case in his other hand, his eyes watching the lights on the elevator as they changed.

“Remember our cover story... I came to New York to find you--”

“--Well that isn’t exactly a lie.”

“Yes...” he had begun to stutter again a clear sign he was getting flustered “...and you are very much found, but I was sent on Thes’s orders, you have been working--”

“--for him, yes I know all this Newt, this isn’t my first investigation.” the calming effect he had on her was starting to wear off again with his rambling, he was making her anxious.

He raised his other hand turning her to face him, the case had been placed on the floor by his feet, she could tell he was trying to find the right words for what he wanted to say next.

“Yes you have been questioned before, but it is the first time it has affected us.”

“What do you call almost getting executed then?” she asked eyebrow cocked.

He gave her a look so earnest her breathing stopped, swooping in, he kissed her possessively, every move, every breath moving her more and more in to his deepening kiss, his hands pulling her closer, his wand hand moving to cup her face protectively.

“That wasn’t US yet, was it?” he said resting his forehead against hers, there was something like resolve in his eye.

“If I don’t come back--”

“--You will come back. This is not open for negotiation.” He stepped back as the lift jerked to a halt, his hand ducking to his case, suddenly feeling as if he were a million miles away.

She missed the contact instantly. Her heart was pounding now. A mix of every emotion all at once, fighting to win out over the other. She was terrified, but felt more alive she had felt since the subway back in New York.

Newt led the way, no one came in to the magical creature department unless they wanted a favour, were doing a favour, or had managed to anger Travers so much that he relegated said person to Newts department.

Newt had never minded too much, Muggle relations were on this floor, another department everyone tried to avoid.
The wanted posters had even made it onto his floor, a flick of a wand and they were banished to the bin where they belonged.
Tina didn’t need to see Queenie staring down at her any more than Jacob would have.

Not for the first time he cursed the Ministry on both sides of the pond. Humans were so fickle.

Tina kept up with his pace, her face now set in an angry scowl, she was on a mission, the kindness was wiped from her face, replaced by that dead set determination.

She was quite the sight, his powerful, amazingly beautiful angry little dragon tamer.

They came to a stop outside his office.
The lights were on and they could hear voices on the other side of the door. Angry voices at that.

He glanced at Tina, she was reading the sign on the front of his door.

‘N.A.F. Scamander. Head Magizoologistt, Beast division.’

Theseus had made sure that they had gotten all the names in.

“You never told me you were the head of the department.” she said proudly.

“I can hardly call it a department, it’s only this half of the floor.”

“Damn sight more of a department than the non-existent one at Macusa.” He could tell by her tone there was no love lost. Macusa had handed the hammer to her, with it she had hit the last nail, well and truly sealing the coffin of her old life.

“On the plus side, it means I get to boss myself about, which comes in useful. I gave myself permission to fund a trip to America you see...”

The angry shell broke for moment, her eyes finding his, two big brown orbs looking at him adoringly. He would never get used to her looking at him like that.

“For the love of--” His words were cut short with a crash behind the door.

Instantly wands were raised. That wasn’t his brothers voice...it was an American.

“Percy calm down.”

THAT was his brother. That was the tone he used when Newt had done something wrong and Theseus knew he was going to get him in to all sorts of trouble for it.

Carefully, Newt opened the door.

Percival Graves stood by the desk a shattered cup lay on the floor, coffee slipping slowly towards one of Newt’s not very well organised stacks.

Newt raised his wand and pointed it directly at the man. At his side Tina did the same.
“What were the first words you spoke to me when I joined the Auror department?”

Confused, the man looked from Newt to Tina,

“I’m taking a chance on you Goldstein, try not to screw it up,” His lip twitched.

Tina lowered her wand. Newt followed her prompt.

she shrugged “It’s him alright no one else would know that. Where is Jacob?” Newt could hear the panic in her voice.

“Not going to check that I am me?” Theseus scoffed from the chair in the corner.

“No one else would bring the director of Macusa’s auror department to my shitty little office Thes’. I know you are you.” He looked from his brother to Tina who had moved close to his side. The look of confusion was etched upon her face again: she was wondering, like he was, why Macusa had sent Graves, of all people.

“I hear you have become a double agent,” Graves said, raising an eyebrow as Tina had instinctively moved a step closer to Newt.

Newt was not convinced that Graves had no ulterior motive, was he here to help Tina? Who was he to judge her choices?

Newt glanced at her wand. Her hand was steady, but he could feel the angry magic building again.

“Tina, it’s fine. I know all about Theseus’s plan, it might work.” Graves nodded at the man in the corner, “People think that the ministers are the ones that make the rules, but the truth is that they are more in the dark than they will ever know.”

“Why are you here?” Tina sounded guarded.

“Officially I’m here as part of the inquest...just as an observer. Madam President likes to think it was her idea, it was not,” he said, inclining his head towards them both.

“So you are investigating us?”

“No, but believe it or not Tina, you are one of my best. I want to make sure that they give you a fair trial.”

Tina snorted with false laughter.

“I can leave you to the judgment that your ex-partner bestows if you want, but do you think he will be fair on you?”

Beside him, Tina tensed up.

Newt tried to meet her eyes, but she avoided his gaze, eyes fixed on the office flooring as though it were the most interesting object in the room.

“That’s what I thought.”

Newt was confused. Whatever this conversation was about he was not part of it.

Theseus got to his feet, and walked over to Tina, clamping his hand on her shoulder. Newt suddenly felt a pang of jealousy rear its head, and hated himself instantly.
“So, You are Queenie’s fella, huh?”

Jacob felt out of his depth. He had taken most of his life in his stride: things happen, you learn, and you move on. But moving on from this would be hard if he couldn’t remember any of it. It had all happened so quickly and now he was here. Wherever here was. He tried to keep his mind clear.

He was good at not thinking anything. It was almost second nature now to guard some of his mind. He loved Queenie with every little bit of his being, but he had to keep some of himself back from her somehow.

He didn’t count on it being so useful when up against the trio of wizards that prodded and poked at him asking relentless questions.

He looked up at the one that had spoken.

The man in the dark coat didn’t look at Jacob when he spoke, his eyes turned to a quill that was busy scratching across parchment of its own accord.

“‘Scuse me?”

“I said are you Queenie’s fella? it’s not a hard question is it?”

Jacob had to admit it was a hard question, depending on how you looked at his current lack of ability to account for the aforementioned blond.

“I was.” His voice cracked.

“You’re a no-maj right? No formal magical training? No family name?” the man who addressed him flicked through the papers on the desk.

Jacob didn’t answer.

“We are investigating the involvement of a Miss Tina Goldstein and her Sister Queenie Goldstein in the recent movement, mass murder, and no-maj baiting that has arisen in the wake of a certain dark wizard’s escape.” The man looked up at Jacob now. Jacob had caught the slightly bitter tone in the man’s voice when the Goldstein name had slipped from his mouth. Jacob bit back the highly uncharacteristic retort that had formed.

“You were present on more than one occasion. Why would a No-maj cross paths with one of the most dangerous wizards of all time...not once but twice?” the man looked across at the dark haired wizard next to him. “Are you ready to do the trace McLean?” the man muttered to him under his breath but raised a wand towards Jacob.

“You gonna do what now?” Jacob spluttered.

“A trace, it’s simple magic but very effective, it will tell us if you have any Magical blood Mr. Kowalski. If I was you, I would hope for a yes, but on the plus side, if it's a no you won’t remember any of this.”

“You got no right to go doing this type of stuff on a fella...we’re in England, the rules are all sorts of different here!”
“Be that as it may, at this exact moment in time I also have you as an accessory to—” he looked down at the files in his hand “- attempted robbery, breaking and entering, actual robbery and the destruction of most of downtown New York. If I could deport you now I would.”

“So you can’t deport me?”

The man that stood in front of him chose to ignore Jacob’s observation.

“We would like to know what Miss Goldstein was up to over in France.”

“You sent her,” Jacob said flatly as the man walked closer.

Jacob took a long hard look at him...he knew that face...had seen it before: a glimpse out of an upstairs window before sneaking down a fire escape before Tina discovered him in the flat.

“We did nothing of the sort.” He sounded confident, but Jacob was waiting for the crack in his voice that he was sure he would hear, and sure enough there it was.

“Well that’s what she told us, take it up with her.”

“Oh I … that is to say we intend too,” he stuttered. Jacob was suddenly reminded strongly of Newt

The man flicked his wand and a small vial flew to his hand.

“Drink it!” He thrusts the vial into Jacob’s hand. it glowed and moved in much the same way that the very first potion he had attempted.

He eyed it closely, “what is it?”

“It’s the activator for the trace, Mr Kowalski. We will give it time to work then we will know.”

“Know what?”

He was not graced with an answer.

Jacob reached up, running his hand over the now almost invisible scar on his neck, he hoped that Theseus’s bright idea would work.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks as ever to SaraB,

also people please watch the extended cut of G.O.G

the rage was real watching it because all the deleted stuff was actually a plot that made the film make so much more sense.

but yeah....

you know I love reading your comments

x grumps
Thank you Sarab for making this chapter so much better

If you looked at the pattern in an expanse of wood you could see faces and shapes. It was a game that Queenie had invented when they were very young to help them get through some of the darkest moments. Something to focus on as adults made grand gestures too complicated for her to comprehend, long words used to converse over the heads of children.

Tina had spent hours doing it.

They had been oblivious to the extent of the chaos that had rippled out from the death of their parents, consumed by the empty space and coldness that used to be filled with the warmth of a mother and father.

The sisters had sat in the waiting area of many an old office building as the fate of the immediate future was decided by people who cared little for the two statistics that sat in the stark wooden benches outside the door.

Queenie had pointed out a very deep groove in the solid door of one office, proclaiming it looked just like a smile, she had been so adamant that the door was smiling at them that Tina had looked up from her book to observe this grinning door for herself. By the time great-aunt Esther emerged from the office, they had created a backstory for the giant tree monster: he had been so bad that he was turned in to an office door by a very angry wizard who was sick of him flicking giant moss-covered bogies at his sheep.

This had become the steadfast go-to whenever either sister had been sad: stories made up from patterns in the wood and imagination, a way to escape past the solid barriers that kept being dropped at each turn. As Tina had gotten older the doors may have become more ornate but the barriers were just as painful.

She missed her sister so much the pain was all-consuming. Queenie would know exactly what to say to make this whole jumbled mess make some sort of coherent sense.

The pattern engraved on the door made her imagine the salamanders she had watched dancing on the flames, and that dark mass near the top of the door looked like Einstein if she looked at it the right way, the knot in the wood reminded her of the way Frank’s feathers had wrapped around his chest in spirals.

The stories may have moved away from tree monsters, moving much like everything else into Newt’s orbit...to the creatures she now knew and loved, but she didn’t find that much comfort now.

Her mind was too full, her heart too heavy, and the prospect that her past was about to come back to haunt her at the expense of others, held on so strong that even her childhood escape was unable to
chase away the demons.

Holding her head high she did what she has always done. She Waits.

Jacob didn’t quite understand what was going on, but he was sure whatever it was displeased the trio behind the long desk.

The woman watched as a long ticker tape ran out from the contraption in front of her, she cocked an eyebrow at him as she looked up.

The man who had been questioning him tightened his grip angrily around his wand, watching the tape as it slid along the table.

Jacob felt the slow creep of numbness steal over him, starting at his lips and moving through his system as if a chain reaction had been set off along each and every nerve in his body. With each new tingle, the tape got just a little longer.

“You can’t be serious!”

“You can’t argue with facts Ollie, he’s got magic in him, maybe not enough to go on the list, but you can’t wipe his memory, rules are rules,” the woman squeaked.

“Check the results again McKaw! I refuse to believe that it’s true.”

Jacob could feel the effects of the activator wearing off, the feeling of pins and needles shooting through his limbs.

“Ollie, the man has magic in his blood. We can question him, but we can’t deport him back to Macusa...not without solid proof that he’s part of the Grindelwald movement.”

Jacob was not a stupid man. He had been learning about the wizarding world, and quickly. He felt rage starting to bubble up in him. He wasn’t one to lose his temper, but he was beginning to get fed up with people talking about him as if he wasn’t important...as if he wasn’t in the room with them.

He listened as the Aurors behind the desk continued to talk as if he wasn’t sitting inches away from them, as if they were not talking about the fact that the love of his life, his sweet amazing princess hadn’t ripped his heart in two with one simple action.

His anger at Macusa was growing by the second. They wouldn’t be in this situation at all if it wasn’t for one stupid outdated law.

He knew he should calm down, but the rage was brewing.

They honestly thought that he was working for that white-haired freak?

“Mr Kowalski, are you working with Grindelwald?”

“The crazy mad man who bewitched my finance? You seriously think that I would be on that lunatic’s side?”

The ticker tape on the desk caught fire. The woman yelped and jumped back. The three aurors stared at the ashen mess on the desk.
“You may leave Mr Kowalski.”

Jacob didn’t need telling twice.

The door swung open.

“Tina!”

Jacob threw his arms around her. He felt warm and smelt like home and all of a sudden she was back in her tiny apartment, her sister was safely wrapped in Jacob’s arms and Newt sat at her side. She cursed herself for thinking it, knowing that the image of basic happiness was slipping from her grasp by the second.

“I made the Magic thingy catch on fire. I don’t think they were expecting that,” Jacob whispered, “To be fair I don’t think I was expecting it myself.”

“You did magic?” she kept her voice low.

She used the distraction of Jacob to glance behind the wooden door, the sinking in her stomach made her wish she hadn’t, she had caught a set of brown eyes that she had all but managed to forget about.

“I don’t think I did it, but I don’t think that they know that,” he said quietly with a scathing tone to his voice

She had never seen Jacob angry before...he was always so laid back, but his normally soft features were tight with anger.

“Graves is waiting at the end of the hall. Go. Quick...before they change their mind!”

"She watched Jacob cross the space to stand beside her old boss, her heart feeling a little lighter than it had in hours. She returned Graves’ nod and he guided Jacob toward the exit.

Her relief was short-lived. As she turned to face the Aurors, dark brown eyes regarded her with a scowl: her past stared her down from behind the large desk.

“Newt will you please sit down.”

“Don’t tell me what to do in my own office.”

“I will hex you into next week, don’t even try me.”

“You are not the boss of me Theseus.”

“Well for my own sanity I’m glad of that.”

Newt hated the feeling of being stuck in a box. Yes, he had his case, but that was his space, he had syphoned part of himself into every inch of its walls. Being stuck in his office...being stuck underground, it made his skin itch.
Plus, his head and heart were two floors downstairs.

“Newt she will be fine.” Theseus hovered on the outside of his vision.

“But what if she isn’t?”

“Then I will make them wish that she was.”

Newt felt sick. All of his life he had tried to be alone, but right now he felt as if he would give anything to be with her, anything. He knew Theseus was just trying to calm him, but it wasn’t working.

What was happening?

Why had Graves been gone so long?

What had happened to Jacob?

All of this was his fault.

“It’s not your fault, Fido.”

Sometimes he swore his brother read his thoughts, “Yes, it is.”

“I know it is hard to believe but the world does not revolve around you little brother.” Theseus grasped his shoulder before Newt has time to avoid him and held him in place, his firm but gentle grip commanding him to cease the pacing. “Stop.”

It was like someone turned the power off: his body sagged under his brother’s touch. His brain was foggy, he could feel the stress of the last few days gathering in his limbs.

Was it really only last night that she had seduced a dragon?

It already felt like it was long ago. He felt as if the world had forgotten how time worked, rushing past fast then next second slowing to a crawl. The walls of his dingy office bothered him more with every second. Could Theseus not feel the way that they closed in?

It had been the hardest thing he had ever had to do, letting Tina leave without him.

Of all the creatures he had returned to the wild, she would always be the hardest to let go.

He always left a part of him with each creature, and he worried that one day he would run out of bits of himself to share.

His heart had been left behind once, on a far offshore, to be buried in sea fret and distance, but it had returned to him, a little bruised but still good. Now he knew that was part of his heart he would never get back, for it no longer belonged to him.

“You really are smitten,” Theseus said with a sigh, shaking his head.

Newt didn’t have the energy to answer.
“I can’t believe it worked.”

Theseus jumped up to greet Graves and Jacob as they walked in the door, casting a worried look at Newt, who hadn’t spoken in almost an hour.

“Did they buy it?” he asked anxiously. He had grown fond of Jacob in the last few days. He was a good man...the world needed more people like him. Jacob had been there for him when the memories had threatened to swallow him whole, and they had found comfort in their mutual sorrow.

“Buy it? Thes’ I nearly burned the place down!”

The muggle grinned with delight, drawing himself up to his full height.

“You did what?” Graves asked looking confused.

“The paper thing they were recording on… Poof!” He mimed a small explosion.

Theseus was impressed: he had thought that there may be trace amounts of magic from the bite, but having so much left over that the Trace machine imploded on itself…

“Tina?” Newt asked quietly.

He had sunk into his chair, his wand on the desk, and a small ball of green flame dancing on his fingers, his features washed out in the eerie glow.

It was moments like this, when Newt did wandless non-verbal magic, that Theseus worried most about his little brother. He worried that, if left to his own devices, he would sink into the dark spaces of his own mind again.

He had often wondered if Newt realised how nerve-wracking his raw power was, or how both his brother and father often worried that his own power would consume him if he turned it too far in on himself.

“She’s in with them now.” Graves watched as Newt twirled the green light around his fingers like some sideshow trickster. He caught Theseus’s glance, his face was a fixed expression but his eyes let Theseus know that he had questions.

‘Later’ he mouthed from behind Newt's back. Drawing attention to Newt in this state only made it worse.

“Best get down to her.” To his credit Graves’ voice was steady, even if the look he gave Theseus was tinged with curiosity.

Newt momentarily looked up as the door clicked shut behind Graves.

His brother muttered something under his breath, pocketing the flame and getting to his feet.

Theseus was quicker, one hand on each shoulder pushed him back into the chair.

This was when Newt scared him slightly...he honestly didn't know his own power sometimes.

“What will storming down to the investigation get you?”

“I can’t just sit, I hate waiting.”
“Newton, if she has nothing to hide you have nothing to fear.”

Jacob moved uncomfortably beside them.

“They asked me why Tina was in Paris...sounds like they didn’t know she had gone on assignment.”

Newt tried to fight under his grasp but Theseus refused to budge.

“She was on a mission from them to track down Credence, that’s what you said,” Newt muttered.

“That’s what she told me and Queenie.” Jacob stepped between Newt and the door: Theseus had the feeling that he had done it to stop Newt bolting. He had to admire the man’s guts.

Theseus always thought twice about confronting Newt when he was like this...and that was with a wand in hand, yet Jacob stood up to him unarmed.

“Well let's look at it this way,” Theseus reasoned, “If they didn’t send her, that gives our story even more substance. Now, will you just calm down!”

“Stop telling me to calm down! This is me calming down! This is as calm as I can possibly be at this exact given time!” Newt had started muttering to himself.

Theseus frowned. That was never a good sign...it often signified his mind going into overdrive and the muttering was the overspill.

“Well, stop acting like a spoiled child! You are no good to anyone when you get like this. Tina is not one of your creatures, Newt...she’s more than capable of dealing with this on her own. Percy will step in if he has to.”

He reached forward and handed Newt back his wand. “Tina is a member of my team Newt, you know what that means.”

“Nobody gets left behind,” Newt muttered into his hands as he covered his face. “But this isn’t the War, Thes. I can’t exactly go charging in there saving your arse with an army of dragons at my back.”

“No but you can go downstairs and save Tina with her angry boss at your back.” He pulled his brother up by the crook of the arm and nodded at Jacob to follow as he headed to the door. If they waited any longer in Newt’s office, it wouldn’t end well for anyone. Better to have Newt pacing out in the open than in a confined space.

Jacob caught his glance and picked up Newt’s case. If the last few beasts escaped, it would end badly for all of them.

“How many in were in the inquest?”

“Three. One of them was-” Theseus silenced him with a swift look. He wanted to avoid setting his brother off again., Thankfully Jacob picked up on it and changed tack “-a woman.”

Between them, Newt muttered something but it was lost on them as they walked down the spiral stairs.

Newt couldn’t think straight, his brain was buzzing with a million thoughts, all of them anchored in the space in his heart where Tina had taken hold. He knew he had to calm down. He could feel the
flame in his pocket dancing around his fingers as he paced.

What had Tina really been doing in Paris if Macusa had not sent her?

Why would she lie?

He wanted his own answers. If she was in trouble...if she was in something too deep, he would find a way to get her out of it. Why hadn’t she just come to him, he would have helped her.

That bloody magazine, it had caused nothing but trouble. That was the reason she hadn’t come to him. He would have helped...he would have found a way to get to Paris, to help her track down Credence. If that's what she wanted, he would have followed her in a heartbeat. He had a suitcase, for Merlin's sake!

It felt as if they had stood at the end of the corridor forever. Newt was about to do something really rather stupid when the door burst open.

Tina rushed down the corridor, her eyes averted, but instead of coming through the door where they all stood waiting, she swung right and into the lifts.

He was confused. Where was she going?

As the three of them stepped into the room, the large golden safety gate on the lift drew closed as they approached.

Newt caught her eye as she slammed a hand on the button: they were wide, red-rimmed, with tears brimming in them.

“TINA!” he shouted after her, but she made no move to stop the lift.

“I'm sorry Newt,” she mouthed. A single tear trailed down her cheek as the lift moved off.

He had no idea what was going on.

Where was she going?

What was she running from?

Theseus pulled him into the second lift, slamming the gate shut behind them. “Newt, breathe,” he said as he bustled about preparing his wand.

He was breathing! What a stupid…actually no he wasn’t, he had been holding his breath like a small child about to throw a tantrum.

The lift clunked to life, just as Newt caught sight of Graves and the Macusa Aurors rounding the corner.

They didn’t look happy.

“What the hell has she said to them?” Theseus must have spotted them too.

Newt had no idea, but he was going to find out.

When the lift flew open at the atrium, he darted out, Theseus on his heels. The room was packed with wizards and witches shuffling from one place to another. Glancing all around the room, he finally spotted Tina heading to the apparition point. He wouldn’t have seen her had it not been for
the yellow neckerchief.

He bolted in her direction but felt a restraining hand on his shoulder. He shrugged off his brother’s grip, but Theseus grabbed his arm.
“Get the hell off me Thes!”

“You are no good to anyone if you splinch yourself!” Newt glared at him. He hated when he had a point.

They stared each other down, so focused on each other that neither turned at the sound of the last lift clicking into place.

“Scamander!”

“What!” both of them snapped at once, not breaking the glare they shared.

“There’s two of them?”

Newt watched as Theseus’s shoulders sagged, he looked so much older all of a sudden. Whoever this Auror was, Theseus’s wasn’t impressed.

“Yes Achilles, there are two of us.”

Chapter End Notes

you know I love the comment section
Tina had been investigated before, the first time over the stupid Barebone woman. That had been hard the way that woman had treated the children had been so unjust, she wasn’t about to sit by and let that happen...not on her watch.

She had held her head high as she marched into the interrogation room, happy that she had at least saved Credence from his mother, even if it was only the once.

The Auror had taken her punishment: a fall from grace, a slip down the ladder. It just made her even more determined...fed her ambition. She grew.

The second time she was investigated was when she was implicated in Newt’s escapades. That had not been as easy. At the time she had thought she was in the right, and if Graves had been the real Graves, her actions would not even have been questioned.

Rules were rules.

By the time they left the building, her head was not held quite as high, but her heart felt a little fuller.

Newt had caught her.

The unyielding protectiveness Newt showed his creatures, paired with his ability to do the right thing, even if it did mean breaking a few rules, proved to her that her actions held true.

The Auror in her swore to avenge Credence, the woman in her chose to believe in hope and in the stranger from far off shore.

She shivered, shaking off the memories and steeling herself for the battle ahead. As she walked into the room, she kept her head held high, ready for anything they threw at her. She would take the lessons of the past and use that knowledge now to her advantage. Her motives had been sound. If it had been anybody but Achilles sent to question her, the cover story from Theseus would not have been needed.

It was time.

Forcing her mind as blank as she could muster by staring straight ahead at the enchanted window, Tina stepped into the interrogation, knowing full well that Achilles would try and pick the information from her mind...a skill of his that she had found out about too late.
What she wouldn’t do to go back and change things.

She placed her wand on the small table in front of her, eyes trained on a fixed point behind the long desk. She wasn’t going to give him the satisfaction of seeing her lose control. He didn’t deserve it.

They talked she listened.

No...she didn’t know where Grindelwald was hiding. No... she did not go to Paris to join him. Yes...they could reverse the spells on her wand if they wanted proof.

The whole time, Achilles hovered in the edge of her vision.

The door clicked.

Graves slipped into the space, sliding down the side of the room and settling heavily into the chair at the end of the table with a sigh.

That was all it took to break her averted gaze.

She darted a look at Graves, seeking some sort of normality...reassurance from her mentor that this would be ok. Instead, she locked gazes with the dark-haired wizard that she had all but forgotten in her Newt-filled happiness.

Achilles Tolliver. He was as diametrically opposed to Newt Scamander as she could have gotten: the neatly cropped hair, the dark brown eyes, a head shorter than she was, and loud in every way that Newt wasn’t. He had come into her life assigned as her partner: their superiors said that she had learned from her mistakes and grown...Achilles was to watch and do the same.

He wasn’t a bad man, he just wasn’t Newt.

His eyes bored into her. She could feel him prodding around inside her mind. She tried not to let him in.

He prodded harder, smirking maliciously, “What were you doing in Paris?”

She struggled to keep her mind blank and inaccessible ”On a mission to try and contact Credence.”

Achilles’ voice echoed in her head. ‘LIES’

She struggled harder, but he found his way in, breaking down all of her mental defences. It wasn’t the same way that Ursula invaded the mind: she impishly showed what was already in a person’s subconscious. Though shocking, she was quite gentle. Achilles was cruel. It was like someone banging a chisel in the back of her eyes. His voice reverberated in her skull as she tried to keep any emotions from showing on her face.

“The department never authorised that mission, you know that as well as I do.” Achilles walked up to her, a sceptical expression on his face.

She had forgotten how much of a height difference there was between them. At this angle, she was forced to look down at him.

His face looked pained, remarkably similar to the expression she had worn herself upon learning about the Scamander engagement. “I will ask once more, Miss Goldstein,“
“I was sent on a mission to find the location of the obscurial known as Credence Barebone. I was to remain undercover until contact was made.”

Achilles let out a growl of resentment.

Behind him, Graves gave a small cough. “May I shine a light on the situation?”

She saw fear flash across Achilles’ strained face. Graves scared him. He nodded curtly, not taking his eyes off of hers.

“Miss Goldstein was working under Scamander’s orders. We have no case, Tolliver.”

At the sound of Theseus’s name Achilles winced. “Tina works for Macusa,” he replied casually to Graves, still staring her down. His eyes danced with hate.

She did not dare to take her eyes off him.

The sound of the chair scraping the cold stone floor gave indication that Graves had begun to get to his feet.

Tina would not give Achilles the satisfaction of looking away first.

Achilles's took a step back as Graves thrust a manilla file before him.

“Auror Goldstein has always been second in command to Scamander, and as such, she outranks everyone in this room, apart from myself. Do not think for one moment that the current situation was anything but a contrivance by people with more knowledge than yourself, Tolliver.”

At the mention of the Scamander name, Achilles grimaced, grabbing the file from Graves’ hand irritably, finally dropping his penetrating gaze from Tina’s face in defeat.

Tina took a moment to catch her mentor’s eye. This had not been part of the strategy concocted by Theseus back in the Fleece.

Graves brushed past Tolliver silently picking up her wand and handing it back to her.

“I don’t think he is very happy do you?” he murmured.

Tina didn’t answer him, her eyes on Achilles, watching as pages were examined and angry conversations were conducted just out of her earshot.

Under his breath, Graves continued, “I may have talked Theseus's into changing the wording on that contract a little. I hate to lose you, but if I have to, I’d rather it was to a friend then that bunch of vultures.” He inclined his head towards the table.

“Second in command?” she finally asked, finding her voice, her eyes still on the arguing Aurors.

The rich bass chuckle at her shoulder brought her attention back to her mentor. Graves stifled the laughter, but the corners of his mouth quirked up, crow’s feet crinkling the corners of his eyes.

“Worth it just to see him mad as hell, don’t you think?”

“Was Auror Scamander ok with that?” She kept her voice low, so as not to carry to the group of American Aurors still engrossed in discussion across the room.

“It was an amendment made fairly recently...at his request. He’s taken a shine to you, kid. It's a shame...I was hoping to move you further up the ladder back home, but you had to go off chasing beasts.” Again he raised an eyebrow at her, “I owe you my life Goldstein. This is my
Tina felt a sudden surge of gratitude, towards both Graves and Theseus. “Thank you sir.”

“You HAVE TO BE KIDDING ME!” Achilles slammed his hand down upon the table making everyone jump.

To the credit of the other two Auror’s, they didn’t withdraw from his anger. Instead they drew wands and pointed them at Achilles. “Calm down, Olly, or we will be forced to stun you,”

Achilles glared at her with hostility, face flushed with rage.

She had seen that face before, and yet again she was the cause of it.

Graves moved towards the table, his own wand now pointing alongside the others, “Stand down, Toliver!”

Achilles deflated, his anger turning in on itself.

He wasn’t a bad man: hot-headed and a little too handsy, but not bad...not evil like some men could be. In a world where Newt didn’t exist, she would have been flattered by the attention he had showered on her. Tina had never really been treated that way by any other peer in the department...they all still thought she was a little odd. They respected her now, but they still spoke in hushed tones.

Achilles had come into the department after she had been reinstated, he formed his own opinions. He was a good Auror, and they worked well together: he had been able to read her moods, something she now knew was because of his ability to poke around in her mind.

They had become friends. The lonely Auror finally had a work friend. A comrade in arms to have her back when the days got too long and the paperwork would build up around them...someone to go for coffee with and grab lunch. It made the long days waiting for Newt’s letters a little more bearable, and it was nice having someone other than Queenie to talk to.

When he had first asked her out, she had turned him down. Excuses about being too busy for relationships and rules about dating a work partner came too easy because her heart had been across the sea. Achilles didn’t need to know that.

Then the magazine happened.

Five hours into an undercover fact-finding operation, he had made his move again: half a bottle of fire whisky shared between them, his advances had made her feel wanted again. It had been easy to like Achilles. He was a likeable fella, if not a little short tempered. She had fallen into the comfortable companionship; they were well suited, as both were ambitious and willing to put work before everything else.

When Tina had found out there was a chance that Credence could have been alive, she had begged for the chance to make things right. On the fourth rejection, she decided to drown her sorrows.

Doors being closed on her were not new, but if Credence was still alive she wanted to get to him...to finally protect him the way she wished she could have back in the subway. Her thoughts had drifted
to that night, and her eyes had filled with tears as she thought about the ways she had let him down, the ways she had failed him. As with all thoughts of that night, her mind moved to Newt...it always moved back to Newt. She saw him wherever she went...heard his voice...could picture clusters of freckles under that unkempt hair.

Achilles had chosen just that moment to knock on her apartment door: he found her deep in the cascade of tears, her barriers down, trying to cling to anything solid she could find. He had shushed her gently, held her close, and stroked her hair. Kisses had turned in to more, but guilt had quickly intruded: his hands were not the hands she wanted on her, the brown eyes were not the green ones she longed to see.

She was broken and drunk, and her mind was full of some other man...not the one that wound himself around her now.

This was how she had discovered that Achilles could get into her mind: her barriers down from the alcohol and emotions, he had invited himself in....immediately picking the name Scamander right from her head.

The fight had been loud, if not one-sided. Things had been thrown...by who, she never worked out. Achilles had slammed the door on his way out, leaving Tina to cry herself to sleep in her half-dressed state on the chair by the window.

When Tina hadn't shown up for their lunch date at the bakery, a worried Queenie had rushed home to find her sister still curled in the chair: dishevelled, wrung-out, and miserable.

The following days had been awkward and miserable at work. Achilles had avoided her as much as possible, which was difficult since he was her partner. He criticized her work to Graves. He was bad-tempered with the junior Aurors, snapping at them for the smallest mistakes. He glowered and stomped around the bullpen, slamming files on his desk with unnecessary force. Red, the house-elf bellhop, complained that Tolliver had hexed him for ‘not minding his own business’. But the final straw for Graves had been when Achilles had drawn his wand on the department secretary, reducing her to hysterical tears. Graves had suspended him for a week without pay, and placed him on probation when he returned to work.

Tina couldn’t face going back into that: her mind was made up, she would go to Paris, find Credence, and bring him home...with or without Macusa’s help.

Queenie had believed it when her sister had told her that she was going on assignment. She almost had herself convinced.

If finding Credence would bring her back just a shred of self-worth, she would travel to the end of the world to find him. It was one thing Tina felt she still had to hold on to.

It would take a long time for her to recover from that night, she had blocked it and buried it deep. She felt that Achilles had every right to hate her...she had used him in the worst kind of way: to distract herself from her own heartache. To her, his anger was justified.

Shaken from her thoughts by the sudden silence, she crashed back to reality. The room had cleared. All of the Aurors except her and Achilles had adjourned to the side chamber. It seemed that the outcome had been in her favour.

He stalked toward her, eyes darting across her features. “So you got you’re Darling Scamander in the
end, did you? Does he know about our little...relationship?”

Tina froze. How did he know about Newt?

“Should I tell him? I feel like I should, maybe I can show him what you like done to you,” he said with a leer. “I suppose you slept yourself to the top...is he just a part of the corporate climb, too?” He stepped further into her personal space, cheeks flushed, a muscle ticking along his jaw. “You lied to me! You betrayed me! I should show your fella exactly how you betrayed him too”

Tina froze.

Though her barriers were up, she caught glimpses of the images he was trying to project. Panic seized her. She needed to get out of this place. She had to go before she hurt Newt...he didn’t deserve the wrath of Achilles Tolliver.

The anger that had been building up all day sparked the tip of her wand. The next thing she knew, Achilles lay clutching his stomach on the cold floor, keeled over from the spell that had escaped her wand.

Tina turned tail and ran as if her life depended on it.
Why is it that whenever Macusa gets involved in anything, it goes completely to pot? Theseus thought, irritated,

Chaos just seems to follow them around. They’re all so loud, how do they ever manage to sneak up on anyone?!

Theseus felt as if the weight of the world lay heavy on his shoulders. So much for Transatlantic relations. If he managed to stop Newt doing anything stupid in the state he was in, it would be a minor miracle. His brother seemed destined to screw up on both sides of the pond. At least when he was in England Theseus could do some sort of damage control. That didn’t mean that it was safe to take his eyes off Newt, his anger was too raw.

“Yes, Achilles there are two of us,” Theseus replied, feeling suddenly older. He tried to read the expression on Newt’s face.

Does he know? Does he know about Tina’s...well...boyfriend? ...partner? ...ex?

Graves had never really been all that clear in the facts, but whatever happened ended up with this man’s suspension, so it must have been dramatic.

“Where did she go?” Achilles demanded, trying to fill the space between Theseus and his brother, only angering Newt further.

Theseus had taken an instant dislike to the man as soon as Achilles stepped foot on Ministry property. The arrogance preceded him wherever he went. Ignorance and insolence seemed to follow him around like ghosts.

If the man had been in his department, Theseus would have fired Tolliver long ago, but Macusa was running thin: they needed feet on the ground...any wand they could get. Even so, Theseus didn’t trust him. It was the eyes: it was like he was trying to see into your very soul. He was a ferret of a man, the kind that used a loud voice in small spaces trying to make himself sound big and important.

What on earth had Tina seen in him?

He was growing to detest him more with each and every breath.

Behind the American, Newt glanced anxiously around the room.

It made the pit of Theseus stomach drop. Newt was already on the edge of a meltdown. He didn’t need this revelation to stoke the flame.

“What the hell did you do to her?” Newt demanded in a low, dangerous tone.

Achilles ignored him, his eyes trained on Theseus’s rather than Newt.

Theseus tried to predict his brother’s next move.
Don’t do anything bloody stupid, Newt.

The low profile they had been trying to keep may have been chucked out the window, but They didn’t need to draw more attention to themselves, and they certainly didn’t need to advertise their current location to Grindelwald’s followers.

Achilles rocked back on the balls of his feet, agitation getting the better of him. When Theseus didn’t immediately reply, Tolliver stepped further into his personal space, trying to intimidate him. It would have been effective if Theseus hadn’t towered over him. “I asked you wh--”

“--No idea, could be anywhere.”

“Would have thought you would keep tabs on her?”

“The location of my Head Auror is a need to know basis. As such, I don’t think you have the clearance for such information.”

Achilles gave a low snort of laughter, “Your head Auror? I ain’t buying what you're selling Scamander.”

Theseus's caught Jacobs eye subtly gesturing that Jacob should get Newt away from here.

To his credit, the Muggle did just that, somehow getting a reluctant Newt to follow him across to the long hard benches that stood near the Floo.

“Hey! Buddy! I’m talking to you!” Tolliver's wand prodded him in the chest, the shorter man not happy that he did not have Theseus’ full attention.

With a flash, Achilles wand flew out of his hand, arching gracefully into the outstretched palm of Graves.

In all the time Theseus had known Graves he had never seen the man look so utterly fed up with one of his own juniors.

“Tolliver you have been warned on several occasions! Need I remind you that Auror Scamander is your superior...and as such, I demand a level of respect from all of my subordinates.”

“With all due respect, SIR, I only wanna know where my girl--”

“--I would be careful how you finish that sentence, Tolliver!” Graves warned, “Rules are Rules.”

Theseus wondered if the Auror in front of him was an animagus: he was doing a very good impression of a rat, gnawing away at the situation.

*How has Tina resisted cursing this little arsehole into oblivion?* he wondered, struggling not to do just that himself.

“She didn’t work for us Sir,” Tolliver replied petulantly.

“A technicality I assure you,” Graves rumbled, clearly at the end of his patience.
Achilles seemed to shrink in size under the penetrative stare of his boss. Obviously terrified of Graves, he finally accepted defeat.

Not willing to leave without a final barb, he turned angrily back to Theseus, stepping in close so only he could hear his words, “You know she only used you to climb the ladder,” he smirked, “Dame like her, she don’t want the likes of you and me.”

Theseus grinned at the irony, “You’re right...she doesn’t.”

Newt sat with his head in his hands.

**What just happened?**

With no clear idea of where she would go, he felt the panic setting in. The few places that she had been while in the country had been protected by numerous charms and shields that made it impossible to travel to safely by apparition, and that was only the beginning of his problems.

Jacob sank on to the bench next to him, the muggle’s calming presence settling over him. “Newt, buddy… you OK?”

*How can Jacob sound so collected at a moment like this?* Newt thought bitterly, Doesn’t he understand my life is falling apart around me? With a pang of guilt, Newt realised Jacob knew exactly how he felt. He had lost Queenie...he had watched her disappear. *Are all women just as likely to take flight or was it something reserved for just the Goldstein sisters?* Newt couldn’t answer, couldn’t fathom the words he wanted to use to verbalise how very not ok he felt.

“I don’t like that guy. He’s always given me a bad taste in my mouth,” Jacobs said, eyes trained on the Macusa Auror that had barged in front of him to get to Theseus.

The man did nothing to help Newt’s hatred of authority. He was everything that Newt despised about the majority of Auror’s. The way that he was attempting to size up Theseus's was only confirming the ignorance of the man.

“He does seem to be rather--”

“--Annoying--”

“--Hold on a second, how do you---”

“--Oh...he was Tina’s partner at work.”
Newt looked at his friend. Something didn’t sound right in his voice. It was as if he was afraid to tell Newt something. Newt didn’t want to pry but if it was something, anything that would help him get to Tina he needed to know. “Jacob?”

“It ain’t my place to say nothing, it’s between Tina and Achilles.”

Newt’s brain caught up, ‘I’m sorry honey, Tina’s been dating an auror from work.’

Is this the same man? He seemed to harbour some sort of vendetta against the Scamander name. That couldn’t be right, Tina would have told me… wouldn’t she?

Jacob looked at him in earnest. “She thought you was marrying Leta… don’t be too hard on her.”

The creature in his chest that longed for Tina was alert, hackles raised and claws unsheathed. This other man was a threat.

Or is he?

The auror was smaller than him... he was fairly certain that he could take Achilles in a muggle fight; he had never been much of a one for dulling, but this man looked like he would go down with a well placed left hook.

Newt looked across to where Theseus stood: his brother’s expression was slightly pained as he tried to keep his auror persona in place, as the American invaded his personal space.

It took all of Theseus’s power not to laugh in the man’s face, “Oh Tolliver, I hate to say it but you have the wrong brother.”

“HIM?”

The Macusa auror turned on the spot, causing Newt to jump to his feet. The Creature in his chest reared on its hind legs, ready for a fight. Newt tried to calm it, aware that they had drawn a crowd.

Nervously Jacob got to his feet, “Newt buddy don’t do anything stupid, the meathead doesn’t even have a wand.”

We don’t have time for this! Newt thought, We need to find Tina!

Whatever had happened he wanted to hear it from her, not second hand from someone else, which was precisely what had gotten them into this mess in the first place.

The thought of her out on her own and getting captured by one of Grindelwald's followers hit him hard in the chest, he felt the anger making the room spin.

“HIM!” Tolliver was getting louder.
“May I please remind you that... you... are...an... Auror... Tolliver and as such we use our Inside voices when we are representing Macusa on foreign soil.”

Achilles looked back at his boss, mouth hanging slightly agape.

Graves seemed to be finding his confusion as entertaining as Theseus did. They were both struggling to keep up the serious work persona that they normally wore.

Theseus raised a hand towards Newt, “My brother, Newton Scamander...I don’t believe you have had the honour?”

Achilles scoffed “HE’S the one that helped to catch Grindelwald?” he made a beeline for Newt and Jacob.

Newts eyes snapped up to meet the accusing ones of the Auror.

*Can he not shut up already?*

All this was keeping him away from finding Tina.

*Why is he looking at me like that?*

There was a sharp pain in his temple.

*What does she see in you?*

*Get out of my head NOW*

Achilles recoiled, he obviously had not been expecting Newt to feel him prodding at his mind. The surprise was short-lived, and the auror sneered, *she was so easy...she feels good--*

*I said GET OUT!*

This time Achilles physically took a step back.

Newt felt his own rage burning at the tips of his fingers: this man was the reason that Tina had reacted so badly to that letter, the reason she had been scared to let him in. There had been something that had gone unsaid by Tina and this was it. Achilles. HE was the nagging feeling that Newt had in the pit of his stomach, the feeling that something wasn’t right. *This rat of a man was the weight that Tina had been carrying.*

Newt could feel Achilles trying to fight against his blockade but he refused to budge. Ursula had given him a significant amount of practice in guarding his mind. The pain in his temple grew, and he surmised this was not a natural skill: the man had learned it.

*She was nothing but a bit of pro-skirt, not even all that good-

Pain shot through Newt’s hand, .the commotion around him dimmed to background noise.

He blinked.
Achilles had really backed away now, blood gushing down his face and through his cupped hands.

How did that happened?

In his stomach, the beast gave a satisfied shake and kneaded the ground triumphant.

Suddenly, the pain in his hand intensified.

Theseus's looked torn between mad and amused as he dashed to his side “Did you have to?”

Looking down at his hand Newt could see the swelling forming already around broken knuckles.

“Fighting like a muggle? Fair enough the berk deserved it, but really Newt...punching him in the face?”

“He deserved it.”

“I know he did.” Theseus sounded proud, not something that Newt expected.

“BUD DE BADARD BUNCHE ME IND DA NOABS!”

Behind Theseus the other Macusa Aurors reluctantly tended Achilles, his eyes quickly blackening under the force of the blow.

“I’ve told you before, little brother, you don’t tuck your thumb in when you punch someone! That’s broken in at least three places, you idiot.” Theseus's looked down at his rapidly swelling hand, taking it in his own before Newt jerked it away.

_They didn’t have time for this._ Every second they spent arguing, the more likely it would be that something would happen to Tina. The feeling was starting to make him feel nauseous. “I need to find Tina Thes, what if one of Grindelwald’s fanatics find her?! Can we please go?”

Newt couldn’t stand the thought of being in the confines of the Ministry a moment longer, broken hand or not, he had to find her.

"We don't know where she's gone, Newt! All of the bolt houses are secured. I don't want to lead Grindelwald's forces to Mum and Dad--"

“Then we go to Gramps! He is almost impossible to find. W-we regroup, we adapt we form a plan.”

Theseus looked from his brother to the struggling form of Tolliver who currently had the other two Auror’s holding him in place; they seemed in no rush to patch up his broken face.

“Ok you go to Gramps. I will sort this…” Theseus gestured to the world at large with a shrug.

Newt felt a small pang of guilt at the work he had just created for his brother.

Theseus sighed, “Do you have any idea where she will have gone?”

Newt shook his head, the beast in his chest now paced...worried for its mates' return.
“I will send the word out, we will find her Newt...I promise.” Theseus clasped him on the shoulder giving it a quick squeeze, “Take Jacob and go. I will follow later.” Theseus pushed them both towards the apparition point, “Go!” he shouted as Tolliver let out a yelp of pain.

Newt’s hand ached as he tried to grab his case, fingers swollen and bruising now,

Jacob took pity on him and took hold of the case, a mixture of awe and respect on his friend’s face. “Remind me not to piss you off,” Jacob said as Newt turned them on the spot and headed for the cave.

Chapter End Notes

First time trying to use rich text for the italics.
Apologise if it goes to hell.
You know the drill I love your comments and thank Sara.b for the beta.
It was growing dark in earnest. She had no idea how long she had sat on the dirty, cold ground, so fed up with life that she wished it would just swallow her whole.

How stupid she had been to think that her life could be anything but miserable.

The sobs had long since turned to nothing but dryness on the back of her tongue, her eyes stung, her ears rang and her heart felt like lead.

She had destroyed her chance with the only person who had ever loved her. If she had just kept her temper under control, just a moment longer, Newt may never have had to know about Achilles. They would never have had to meet, the life she had slowly begun to picture was a tangible reality. But no. That wasn’t how her life went...she never got the breaks.

You couldn’t make up the last few hours: finally landing her dream job...her life’s work, only to blow it moments later by letting her anger get the better of her. It had cost her everything.

He knows by now, she thought, a deep ache in her chest.

She couldn’t stand the thought of Newt’s reaction to finding out about Achilles: the pain she had inflicted upon him...on both of them. She had turned Achilles into a monster and broken Newts heart in one fell swoop.

I don't deserve happiness, she thought miserably, I don't deserve anything.

A sniffling near her heart drew her attention. Looking down, she saw a familiar tuft of grey sticking out of her shirt pocket.

She thought she had run out of tears, but the sight of Einstein looking up at her, with nothing but concern upon his furry face, caused a new round of weeping to start.

Even now, while she felt so alone and so broken, parts of Newt would cling on to her keeping her alive.

The Niffler scampered up her shirt stroking her cheek and grabbing at her neck scarf, pulling it into his pouch, placing snuffled kisses on her skin.
She had screwed things up, but Einstein still loved her. At least someone does.

“Ah, Miss Goldstein.” The voice behind her made her jump.

Getting to her feet, she drew her wand.

The tiny Niffler squeaked in protest as her wand hand flew up to point in the direction of the voice.

All she needed now was one of Grindelwald's disciples to sneak up on her unaware. If she got herself killed, nobody would know. Nobody but Jacob would mourn her. Newt could go on with his life as if she had never existed. He might cry, but she didn’t deserve the tears, she had wronged him. He didn’t deserve the curse or the heartache that followed her around.

“Sorry to startle you. But please lower the wand. I don’t mean you any harm, I am, after all, on your side.”

Tina blinked, her eyes struggling to adjust to the twilight gloom.

When did it get so dark?

She had lost all concept of time. Overcome by the sinking feeling and her own stupidity, it had slipped by unnoticed.

Between two large trees stood a figure in a tan suit. Tall and thin, and wearing a trilby, the man's voice definitely a man, she thought, was familiar but she couldn’t place it until the moon broke through the cloud and lit the man’s face.

“Dumbledore?”

He nodded. “Ah, so formal introductions are not necessary...excellent! I do apologise that I was unable to entertain you on our last meeting.” Newt's former professor extended his hand, offering it to her by way of introduction.

Tina hesitated. Her eyes still stung from crying and she knew she looked a mess, but she was an Auror, and he was a stranger to her...to take the hand of a stranger was just insanity.
“Wise...I see why young Newt likes you so much, but I assure you I am not a threat.” His voice was soft...almost melodic.

“How did you know I was here?” she asked, reaching her free hand up to calm the worried Niffler that hovered by her neck.

This had not been her first choice, she had landed in the cave near the dragon reserve the first time, then once calmed, had moved to the road outside Newt’s flat: the thought of entering the now empty building had been too daunting...too much history already buried in the walls...and that had only been over a few days. She had contemplated Featherdown. Bunty could have been an ear to listen...but Bunty had feelings for Newt...that was obvious. Tina didn’t think it would have been right to confess her betrayal of the man they both loved to Bunty...and that was before you even got to Rhea. Blessed Morrigan...what will his mother think?!

“I know a lot of things Miss Goldstein. It’s a burden, but it sometimes does have uses. I knew you would want to be alone, you needed to know the place in order to apparate without injury, home was not an option, and you were unlikely to return to the Scamander estates. That left Hogsmeade or the Golden Fleece. When Theseus raised the alarm about your hasty exit, I hedged my bets on you being around here somewhere. I am happy to see I was correct in my assumption.”

Tina still hesitated. Though impressed, she kept her wand raised, all too aware that this could be a trap. Newt and Theseus trusted this man, but from what she had seen, Travers and the other Aurors were more cautious of Dumbledore. Tina held him in mixed regards, still unsure what his intentions were.

“Cautious I see. I don’t blame you at all, Miss Goldstein. I would expect nothing less from someone Newt trusts.” He stared for a moment at the tiny Niffler on her shoulder, “He must care for you a great deal to leave one of his creatures in your care. I myself have yet to attain the trust needed for such a task. May I enquire to the nature of the beast? It looks like a Niffler in every way but colour. He’s quite the protective little thing, isn’t he?”

Einstein moved to her outstretched wand arm, inching closer to Dumbledore as he spoke, sniffing at the air cautiously. With each sniff, a tiny paw moved closer to her wand.

“Einstein is a Niffler. Newt thinks the one in his care mated when he was in New York. We...Sorry, he thinks there may be a branch of the Niffler tree native to the States...hence the different colouring.”
The man regarded the creature, bowing to Einstein’s level on her arm. The beast watched him, sizing up this new stranger. Tina trusted his instincts, he had never been wrong on reading people before.

“Quite remarkable. I always did like Newt. He was possibly one of the worst behaved students I have ever had the misfortune to teach. Always in detention...but things like this,” he pointed at Einstein, “This is what we really should teach in the classroom! Remarkable...it really is.”

With a squeak, the Niffler jumped over to Dumbledore’s outstretched hand, sniffing and pawing at the man.

Tina felt a sudden urge to grab Einstein back, urged to protect him, her only link to Newt, her heart pounding so fast she could feel it’s beat against her ribs.

The professor must have felt her anxiety, gently handing Einstein back. “Go on little one...back to your mummy.”

Einstein scuttled back up her arm and found his perch on her necklace, watching everything going on around him.

Tina felt her heart slow again, now that Einstein was back in her care. She wanted to trust the man standing before her, but nagging doubt hung around her, thick and immovable; the question she was eager to have answered burned away at her. “Why did you send Newt to Paris, Professor Dumbledore?”

Dumbledore glanced up at her from beneath the brim of his hat as he got to his feet, eyes studying her before speaking. “I tried to send Newt to Paris. Newt, however, does whatever Newt wants. Why did you go to Paris Miss Goldstein?”

“To find Credence.” It came out too quickly, and she frowned, What is it about this guy that makes me just wanna blurt out whatever I’m thinking?!

Dumbledore pressed on, “Why did you really go to Paris Miss Goldstein?”

“To escape.”
It was true. She had gone to Paris to escape. Ran away just as she was doing now: from Achilles, from the gossip and hurt...away from the pain in her very core at the thought of Newt marrying Leta.

*They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions,* she thought bleakly.

It was all for her own stupid selfish reasons. Suddenly, she realized that she had answered Dumbledore before her brain registered what she was saying. He was good. He would have made an amazing Auror.

“We do strange things when the heart is involved, do we not?” his voice sounded wistful. “Why don’t we head up to the castle, I will not tell Newt you are here if you do not wish him to know. However, I must insist that we get you somewhere safer, as I fear you may have antagonised Gellert. I think he would have quite liked to acquire you as part of his collection.”

Tina studied him as they walked. He was one of the only people that she had heard refer to Grindelwald by his first name...there was something remorseful in his tone. She was curious, “His collection?”

“Gellert has always collected people. He has always sought the strong-minded, the free spirits and the strong-willed. He gathers them to him...to make himself stronger...to gain more power.”

As they entered the darkening village, Tina realized that she hadn't made a conscious choice to follow Dumbledore...he had simply drawn her along in his wake, as though by magic. She glanced around at the witches and wizards enjoying the last warmth of the day, sitting around wooden tables, drinks in hand, without a care in the world. It was all so different from the world she knew back home.

“Why me?”

Dumbledore shrugged, “Why the Scamander’s? I believe that the events in Paris were put into motion with the direct intention of capturing you all in his collection. I do not, for one second, think that he chose to conduct the rally where he did with any other intention than to lure you all in.”

“But--”

“--this is not the time to discuss such things,” he warned quietly, inclining his head towards a long wooden bench running along the pub.
An old man sat hunched over watching them intently as his hand tapped rhythmically on his cane.

“Evening Linus, nice night for it.” Dumbledore tipped his hat to the man as they passed.

“If you say so,” the old man grumbled, “You need to keep an eye on that brother of yours, Dumbledore...tell him to stay away from my goats!” Linus glared after the two of them as they passed.

“We both know Aberforth has no intentions of ever listening to a word I say, Linus ...as is his nature.”

“Codswallop.”

Dumbledore gave a low chuckle.

Tina raised and eyebrow, “You sound like Theseus when he complains about Newt.”

“I think Theseus has the patience of a saint when it comes to his brother. I, however, can not say the same in relation to my own.” He directed them towards the winding road up to the castle gates.

“Siblings are strange things, are they not?” He sounded so disheartened.

His wording made her mind flash back to Theseus, nursing a broken heart, drink in hand, and dark rings around his eyes. That night felt so long ago now.

“I was always closer to my sister, or at least I was before she passed. Like yourself, the burden of adulthood fell upon myself and my brother much sooner than it should have.” There was something in the way he spoke that made Tina understand that this was not something the man liked to talk about. He suddenly looked so much older, his eyes downcast and the smile that had reached them before all but flickered out.

They paused at the gates, and Dumbledore tapped the large lock with his wand.

One day she might turn up at the grounds of Hogwarts, and be able to enjoy the sight, but her current
Leading her towards the castle in silence, Lights shone through the large windows of the castle. It cast long pools of light along the path in front of them.

In the far distance, the sound of a creature calling out on the night air broke the silence, and silhouettes danced in the tree line over by the lake

“Our resident herd of Thistrals.” He nodded towards the sound, “Completely harmless, but it does help to keep some of the younger students out of the Forest if we keep up the pretence that they are vicious and deadly”

“I don’t think they are either are they?”

“Not at all. But we both know looks can be deceiving.” He pushed open the large wooden door, and the warmth hit her like a wall after sitting out in the cold for so long.

“We sometimes have to house parents of students if the need arises.” He indicated the way, leading her down a flight of spiral steps to a long low corridor. The smell of the kitchens wafted across them...and something else? Something earthy she couldn’t put her finger on, but she knew it well, it was almost homely.

They walked past a large painting of a basket of fruit, the smell of food stronger as they neared. Tina’s stomach gave a hungry growl that Dumbledore politely ignored.

When they reached the end of the corridor the older wizard indicated a large wooden door.

“I will give you a spell to recuperate, then may I please join you for some supper?”

Tina nodded. In the short walk from the village, she had started to piece together her own view of the professor, and she wanted to learn more. At this moment in time, he was the only one that she had to turn too.

“I will send Note to Theseus's that you are safe, but I will refrain from telling him that you are here.”

“I would rather you didn’t.” She needed to sort the chaos in her mind before she could face either
Scamander, she was not at all sure that she could even face Theseus at the moment, let alone a decimated Newt.

The man beside her studied her intently. Was that pity in his eyes? She didn’t deserve pity. This mess was all her own fault.

Dumbledore seemed to read this in her expression, “Then I will not send note until tomorrow.”

“That would be appreciated thank you.” That would at least give her a little time to compose herself for the inevitable fallout.

“I will take my leave for now. You should find everything you need in the rooms. Anything that you are missing, or in need of, just ask the painting and a house elf will find it for you.” He paused, as if he wanted to express something more, only he couldn’t find the words to phrase it. His face had taken on such a Newt-like expression, that Tina felt her heart skip. Whatever the thought, it left as soon as it came. He started walking back down the corridor, his footsteps echoing on the cold stone before he turned the corner back to the staircase. He called back to her, “I have taken the liberty of asking them to provide you with coffee. I will return after I have done my rounds...I have some N.E.W.T and O.W.L students who have decided to leave all learning to the week before exams begin! I have confiscated at least seven questionable learning devices from the Gryffindors alone.” He smiled sweetly before heading off up the stairs.

Tina sagged, she hadn’t been aware of how very tired her body felt until Dumbledore had left her standing alone in the corridor. He seemed nice enough, but there was something unnerving about the way he acted as if the people around him were just some minor part of a bigger plan.

She wasn’t sure she trusted him yet...something seemed strange. The way he talked about Grindelwald unnerved her: he used his first name...nobody else did that.

*How far did the two of them go back, exactly?*

She knew they had been friends at one point...what had happened to make them chose two such different paths?

Her mind dropped back to her sister...the purest heart she had ever known: Queenie had chosen one path, and Tina had chosen the other... The world wasn’t always black and white, yes and no...Tina knew that. But the thought of Dumbledore and Grindelwald being friends felt ominous.

She turned to the door behind her. It wasn’t locked. Tina’s mind was buzzing with activity, but no coherent thought would stick. Was it possible to keep going when totally exhausted? She supposed it must be, but she simply didn’t have it in her at this moment.
She sank down in the large chair near the fire, coffee was laid out for her on a small table with a plate of cookies. The simple thought that Dumbledore had cared enough to provide cookies for her sent her over the edge, and the tears began to fall again. Tina didn’t try and stop them, she had lost everything...yet here she was, with coffee and cookies...warm and safe.

Newt.

She wanted Newt to be here...wanted to go back to the way they had been around the Dragons: just the two of them, his creatures, and a world that just involved them.

Of all the stupid mistakes she had made in her life, believing a stupid gossip magazine over her gut instincts had been the biggest.

What is Newt doing now?

Is he safe?

Has Achilles filled him in on the juicy details?

She imagined he had gleefully told Newt about the weakness she had shown in her downfall from grace.

Einstein jumped off her necklace and bounded towards the food offerings, sniffing hopefully at the milk.

Tina leant forward and tipped a small amount into the saucer, before breaking off a small bit of cookie and laying it to the side. “Don’t tell your papa that I let you eat cookies.” she warned him as he nibbled at the morsel on offer.

Are Nifflers allowed cookies? she wondered, suddenly seized by doubt.

They were allowed milk, but what else did they eat? If she had her own case she could have checked her copy of the book. Newt had added a whole extra page on the life of a Niffler in her edition, she knew it would be in his amendments.

Cradling the coffee in her hands, she looked around: the ceiling was low, the round windows set high in the walls, the dark of the night underlined by grass. So she was below ground, but only just.

The room was decorated in a variety of different plants and shrubs, all contained in neat but mismatched pots. The chair and the throws on the wall were of a dark mustard colour that she had
seen before in Newt’s apartment, come to think of it, and that was the symbol she recognised as that of Newt’s house at school. The black badger embossed on the stonework above the fireplace confirmed it.

\textit{Had Dumbledore put her in the Hufflepuff Guest room?}

She could imagine a younger Newt studying in a room like this: he would have his sleeves rolled up and a messy pile of scribbles on parchment strewn around him, nose inches from the paper and at least one bandaged finger, his hair as untamed as ever.

Her mind wandered, she saw a dark-haired boy with Newts freckles and nose, but it was big brown eyes that looked up from under the unruly hair.

As quick as the image came to her mind, reality snuffed it out. Newt was gone from her, and any future she had imagined or could imagine that would involve the dark-haired boy was just that, imagination.

“You are an idiot Porpentina. You did this all to yourself.” Speaking to the world at large, she sank down on the chair, surrounded by Newt’s past and her fading future, and cried.
Thanks as ever to my wonderful Beta Sara, she has become a wonderful sounding board for the chapters.

as ever you know I love the comment section, I read every one even if I don't respond because sometimes real life gets in the way
If you ever want to see what I get up too when I'm not pretending to be J.K you can find me on Instagram as Pezilla
where I pretend to be cool and stuff even though I'm so much a Hufflepuff it hurts, and I love every second of it.
Jacob’s first thought was that Newt had dropped them into a New York sewer: it smelled like one that was for sure, but as his eyes adjusted to the gloom, the shapes of trees and the outlines of rocks came in to view. “Where are we?”

“Cave near my Grandfather’s...give it a second,” Newt hissed.

Jacob looked around at his friend. Newt had sunk down on to a slimy rock, cradling his mangled hand against his chest.

When Newt punched Achilles in the face, Jacob had been impressed. The fact that he heard almost every one of the bones in Newt’s hand break with a crack had not been so impressive. The American Auror had flown across the room with the force of the punch. Jacob wouldn’t have thought Newt had that in him, ...but I stand corrected.

Now they were alone the pain in his hand was causing Newt to falter, the agony was etched on his face.

“Newt buddy is there anything I can do?”

He laughed bitterly, “You could have told me about Tolliver.”

Jacob felt heat creeping up the back of his neck at his friend’s accusing tone, “I’m sorry I didn’t warn you about that Jerk, but it wasn’t my place to say nothing.”

Newt shot him a resentful look.

*Those are the rules, buddy,* Jacob thought, …*ain’t my job to tell her secrets. Tina should have told you.*

But that was the thing, Tina wouldn’t have told him. Achilles had been a weakness. Tina didn’t show weakness...not to anyone. She was so stubborn, a trait she shared with her sister.

*What is it with these two dames that made both of them put themselves through the wringer on a daily basis?* Jacob thought bitterly as he looked on the crestfallen face of his best friend.

*Love.*

He didn’t know why the thought hit him so hard. Of course, it was love.

Jacob wasn’t stupid, he knew how much he loved Queenie, she had stolen his heart as soon as he met her. She still carried it now wherever she was. He missed her with every breath and with every second of the day.
His soul broke a little when Tina stepped onto that lift. It felt as if he was losing his last grip on his beautiful princess as her sister slipped out of his grasp.

He wanted his girl back. He wanted to give her the things that she had always wanted: a wedding, a family. He wanted nothing but her. He would give up his life’s work, if it meant that he could have her back, safe and warm in his arms.

*My baby knows how much I love her.* He looked over at Newt, *Idiot man and his ‘salamander eyes’... Tina, what have you done to him?*

He was a broken man, hunched over on an outcrop of stones, pain etched on his face that Jacob was not sure came entirely from the broken hand.

He knew that Newt had always carried a light for Tina: the two of them casting all sorts of longing glances when the other wasn’t looking, but the extent of his feelings had always been so hard to judge. Newt was normally so hard to read, but right now he was an open book. If that wasn’t the story of a man who had just lost the love of his life, then Jacob wasn’t sure what love looked like.

“Newton?” a voice called out from the trees.

Jacob looked for the source, his eyes settling on a redhead emerging from the creeping darkness.

Sparing only a fleeting glance at Jacob, she headed straight to Newt, a concerned look on her face. “Newton, look at me, please.” Her voice was soft and melodic. She reached down, grabbing Newt by the chin, and forcing him to look at her.

His eyes were distant, raw and red now, the picture of torment.

The colour drained from the woman's face, her expression changing to one of sorrow. “Come on, Tadpole, let’s get you to your Grandfather, he can look at that hand.” The woman turned to face Jacob, her eyes kind, but her features changing as if her face was constantly moving. Had it been any other time Jacob would have reacted in panic, but right now his concern l only for his friends, and if this woman could help then so be it.

“You must be Jacob! No Theseus, then?” she glanced around the cave, “No matter...he’ll arrive later, perhaps.” Her eyes flashed a deep blue, reminding Jacob of Dougal’s as she looked at him. Her face broke into a smile. “Yes later...like all good things. I am Ursula. I will take you to Ade.”

Newt nodded in encouragement, still cradling his hand, “No projecting...please.” He sounded pained.

“You carry too much right now, Young Newt. I wish only to get you to Dracholm.”

Newt nodded weakly: his face was drained of colour, and his hand looked almost purple with the bruising.

“Now both of you, come along,” Ursula demanded, guiding them along a well-worn path through the trees.

Jacob fell into step beside Newt, taking hold of the case, a sudden thought crossing his mind, *What*
“happened to the creatures that were still at the pub when Macusa nabbed me?

“Don’t worry,” Ursula replied brightly, “I have them...they are all accounted for.”

Jacob blinked, nonplussed. He was certain that I had not asked the question out loud.

Ursula grinned wickedly.

He had many questions but now was not the time: Newt needed care, and Jacob needed to ensure that he got it.

“It’s fine!” Newt snapped, snatching his hand back from his Grandfather's grip. He didn’t need Ade to look at it...he could do it himself. At least I could if the world stopped spinning quite so much, he thought irritably. The whole thing was quite ridiculous. The world had no right to go around spinning like that....t was making him quite sick.

“I guess we should just be thankful you didn’t use your wand hand, you stupid sod.”

Newt tried to glare at his Grandfather in way of an answer, but the lights had started to hurt his eyes now, “Always better with the left...they don’t expect it.”

“Expert in Muggle fighting now are we?” Sarcasm oozed from every word that left Ade’s mouth.

“Might have had to utilise it in the past.”

“Still broke your thumb in three places and at least two knuckles. should have kept the thumb outside the fist, boy!”

“Yes, that’s what Thes’ said. I still broke the idiot's nose.” The world went out of focus, just for a second.

“Just his nose?” his grandfather asked, sounding disappointed.

Newt jerked back to reality. “Only 'cause they pulled me off him, or it would have been his entire face.”

“That’s my boy!”

Reluctantly Newt held his hand out to the older man to look at. The swelling was now so bad that it looked like his hand had been replaced with a turnip. Black spots in his vision followed the nauseating spinning...he was on the verge of a blackout, he could feel it.

“Alright, Tadpole...who was this clot, anyway?”

“Macusa...” he groaned, the world fading a little when Ade put pressure on the palm of his hand. The pain was growing now with every second.
“Did he deserve it?”

Newt thought about what he was being asked, *Yes...for Tina, it was worth it.*

“Hurt Tina...hurt my Tina...MY Tina,” he managed to slur out thickly before the room went black as the pain finally won out.

Jacob watched as the older man used his wand to manoeuvre Newt to one of the benches that lined the wall. He had hung back as they entered, unsure to who or what it was they were walking in too.

Ursula had returned to the cave to wait for Theseus, leaving Jacob to stand around, wondering what the hell was going on.

“So your the Muggle?” The old man didn’t look up from where he waved his wand over Newt’s hand.

“Yeah.”

“Want to shine some light on this idiot?” he indicated the unconscious form of Newt.

Ade placed his grandson’s broken hand in a pot containing some sort of murky brown liquid.

“What was so bad that he forgot he's a bloody wizard?”

Ade's voice cracked. Jacob noticed a change come over the old wizard: sagging shoulders...a worried frown that had replaced his cocky grin...all a front for Newt's sake, he realized. Ade turned around to face Jacob, getting to his feet as he did so.

“Macusa caught up with us,” Jacob explained, “Newt had a run in with someone from Tina’s past...real piece of work called Tolliver.”

The older man summoned two large bottles from the trunk near the door, handing one to Jacob as he joined him. “Go on.”

“Tina, well Tina was in a bad place when she thought Newt was gonna marry someone else. Tolliver was a mistake, we all said it...but she was heartbroken.”

“Tina alright? I like that girl...she’s got fire in her stomach.”

“Tina hightailed it out of the ministry. Newt didn’t know about Tolliver.” Jacob sighed, *Because Tina is also an idiot,* he thought glumly.

The older man took a swig of his drink, indicating that Jacob should do the same.

“Ade Scamander.”

“Huh?”

“I’m Newt’s Gramps...Ade. You must be Jacob. Newt doesn’t have many friends.” he sighed staring at his grandson. “Do they belong together?”

“Who?” Jacob was confused, the man talked to fast and the conversation jumped too quickly from one place to another.
“Tina and Newt, or Newt and Tina, whatever way you want to look at it.”

*Did they belong together?* Jacob thought of how much the two of them pined after the other, the way they protected each other. Two people so different on the surface but exactly the same souls underneath. The thought made him smile. “They really do.”

“The then he’s going to have to stop being such a pussy. Any idea where Tina would go?”

Jacob shook his head, *This guy’s intimidating.*

“Well, she can’t have gone far. She seemed like a smart girl...she will figure it all out.”

Newt woke blearily to the sound of rain thumping like drum beats on the wooden roof; thunder rumbled off in the distance. He struggled against the woolly fog clouding his mind.

*What happened? Where am I?*

His limbs felt weighed down...unresponsive. A few blissful seconds of tranquillity passed before reality hit him.

*Tina and Achilles, she had ... they had...*

Images cascaded through his mind, making his heart ache so fiercely that it was difficult to breathe. The idea of them together hurt more than he cared to admit.

He couldn’t think about it...not now. With the pain in his hand reduced to a low pulsing ache, his memories of the last few hours came back to him like a tidal wave. He needed to get up. He needed to find Tina: she wasn’t safe, he needed to tell her that he didn’t care about whatever happened with Tolliver. *Only you do care...so much you punched a guy in the face.*

He thought to himself bitterly, It’s your own fault she stepped out with another man. *You love her you idiot! You should have told her in New York...should have told her a million times in your letters...should have told her the first time you kissed her, you absolute bloody fool!*

Unsure what his Grandfather had done, he flexed his fingers gingerly in the solution, wincing at the pain. Still sluggish, Newt fumbled the bowl, knocking it to the floor, spilling the contents.

“Oh look, our gallant hero is awake.” Theseus’s voice echoed like a drum in his head. Blinking back against the hazy light, Newt tried to raise himself into a sitting position, only for the pain in his hand to intensify.

“Piss off, Theseus,” he groaned as he swung his feet gingerly of the side of the bench.

He felt sick. Now that he had spilt the contents of the bowl all over the wooden floor, the pain in his hand came rushing back.
“Is that any way to talk to your brother?” Ade scoffed at Newt, waving his wand over the spilt liquid, levitating it back into the bowl, “At least tell him to quit being a knob. Might as well go for it if he ain’t going to listen to you anyway.”

Newt ignored his grandfather, trying to pick Theseus out in the light coming from the candles around the room. He didn’t sound worried, *Tina...did you find her, Thes?*

His brother and Jacob sat on rugs near the empty fireplace, sharing an amber liquid from a fancy bottle between them. *How can they look so relaxed at a time like this?*

“Tina’s safe, Newt.”

The creature that longed for Tina pressed up against his chest. He needed her. He had to get to her. He tried to get to his feet but Ade pushed him back down. “No you don’t, Tadpole.”

“I have to see her!”

There was a loaded silence, Jacob and Theseus exchanged knowing looks before coming to some sort of private resolve.

“She doesn’t want to see you.” Theseus said grimly “Not right now, anyway.”

*Why doesn’t she want me?*

He looked at his best friend and his brother trying to find an answer on either face, both determinedly avoiding his gaze.

*Why wouldn’t she want to see me?*

Had they been talking between themselves behind his back? What else had they been talking about when he hadn’t been around?

*Why would she tell Thes that she doesn’t want to see me?*

The awkward silence in the room only further fueled the image in his mind that the two men he thought he trusted had been talking behind his back.

*They knew!*

*The bastards knew! Did everyone know?* Newt sunk back dejected. The beast in his chest returned to its den to lick its wounds,

*why wouldn’t she tell me?*

*Why doesn’t she want me?*

*First Jacob and now Thes?*

*Have I just been blind this whole time?*

*Jacob knew but didn’t tell me, How could he? He’s supposed to be my FRIEND!*

Images of Tina, breathless with pleasure as Achilles teased and caressed her, flooded into his mind.
The forced image of the woman he loved being teased and caressed in ways yet unknown to himself.

Had Achilles pushed the same thoughts into Theseus’s mind?

The nagging feeling that he had when Tina and Theseus were together bubbled to the surface, biting at him. Was this what Theseus had wanted all along? For Achilles to distance him from Tina so he could have her for himself? after all, he had taken Leta...what was to stop him from taking Tina too.

_Why did nobody tell me?_

Jacob broke into his thoughts “Queenie tried to tell you, buddy! At least you know she’s safe?”

_Yes but she doesn’t want me, does she? She didn’t want me when she slept with that arsehole. The one that nobody wanted to tell me about..._

Blood roared in Newt's ears, drowning out Jacob's soothing words. Rage shot through him like fire and ice: a prickling heat ran painfully over his skin, while his chest felt flash-frozen...he couldn't think...couldn't breathe...couldn't feel. All he could do was burn. The pure energy cascading through him was both thrilling and terrifying. Struggling for control, he fixed his eyes on the wall behind Jacob, mentally reciting the twelve uses of dragon's blood to calm himself. It didn’t work.

The pots on the shelf behind Jacob exploded. With a yelp of surprise, he dived out of the way, narrowly avoiding the flying terracotta.

Scrambling to his feet his eyes swung to Newt, etched on his face was a look Newt would never forget  “OH no you don’t, you do not get to go around throwing a goddamned tantrum like a spoiled BRAT”

Newt had never heard Jacob shout before. He looked livid.

“You still have a chance with Tina. She’s just mad at herself...she made a stupid mistake, and she probably feels like an idiot. Ain’t no reason to go off the rails. Me and Thes? We gotta reason to be mad...to blow shit up! But are we? We both lost the women we love. We know what you're going through! We know Newt! We understand!” Jacobs' eyes narrowed. “I love you like a brother, but if you don’t calm the hell down, I will punch you myself, you got that?”

Newt nodded. Shocked by the sudden outburst from the normally placid man, the outburst had thrown him completely.

Across the room, Jacob still shook with rage, clearly distressed at his own anger and pain.

Theseus got to his feet putting a hand on Jacobs' shoulder attempting to calm him “I think what he’s trying to say is… it’ll look better in the morning.” The Auror handed Jacob a fresh shot of whisky.

The baker downed it in one swig, glaring at Newt over the top of the glass.

This was why Newt didn’t do people, they were too complicated.

He had lost Tina, and now he had enraged his best friend because of it. Jacob was right, He still had a chance with Tina. _I know she is alive and safe, it's more than they have to hold on to._ Nagging
doubt still hung over him, but Jacob’s outburst had quelled the rage the beast had demanded.

Newt stuck his hand back into the solution that Ade had made for him, and reached for his wand. With a flick, he summoned a glass of the whisky Theseus had just poured. The burning sensation hit him as he swallowed the shot in one gulp, knowing that alcohol wasn’t the answer, but it was the only comfort that he had.

*I’m blowing things out of proportion. Theseus is right...it will all look better when I calm down.*

“Where is she?”

Theseus looked him in the eye, his face set in what Newt referred to as his ‘stern big brother face’

“She’s safe, that’s all you need to know right now.”

Theseus crossed the room, sinking on to the bench beside him.

“Is she really safe?”

“I can’t imagine her anywhere safer.”

His brother’s voice sounded so sincere Newt couldn’t help but believe him.

Jacob slammed down the bottle of Whisky, making them all jump before storming across the room and slamming the door behind him.

Newt stared after his friend unsure how to react to this turn of events. *Well done you, idiot, you managed to anger the calmest man you have ever met, this is why you have no friends.*

“I will go talk to him,” Ade said quietly, getting to his feet, and indicating after Jacob.

When the door closed behind Ade, Theseus turned back to Newt, refilling his glass.

Topping off his own glass, Theseus turned back to his brother, taking a deep breath to calm himself before speaking, “I think this might be time for that little talk, don’t you?”

Chapter End Notes

Sarabahama my beta has done wonders with my ideas on the last few chapters. I can’t thank her enough.

I’m sorry to keep hitting you with angst... normal shipping will resume after the plot bunny stops pooping all over the chapters.
I need to write something happy soon!
You all have my permission to think one bad thought about me and stick it in the comments!
As ever I love the feedback.
See you in the next one
“-so there I was...in a field with my brother, trying to work out how he had managed to transfigure a Goat into a wheelbarrow when the old man comes storming in...wondering what the pair of us were up to!” Dumbledore laughed, “Let’s just say that he has never really been forgiven for that schoolboy discrepancy.”

Tina regarded the man who sat across from her. True to his word, he had returned a few hours later, looking slightly less composed than normal, after having to confront some of his students.

Dumbledore was easy to talk to, something that had come as a shock. Tina had expected him to be like the teachers at her own school...bordering on terrifying. However, the kind nature of this man was obvious to her as he sat, sipping tea and helping himself to sandwiches from the silver plate on the table between them.

“That’s part of the reason they take wands from us during school holiday back in America...to stop us turning buffalo into bookends.” She smiled into her own tea.

“I think it’s a very good idea.” Dumbledore chuckled to himself.

The talk had turned to school days when Tina had inquired about the off-handed remark that the old man back in the village had made about his brother. She had expected Dumbledore not to answer, but he entertained her curiosity.

Tina had the feeling that although the man before her had lots of acquaintances, he didn’t have many actual friends...something that she knew all too well.

On her knee the Niffler slept, his gentle snoring filling the companionable silence.

“Do you still see your brother?” she inquired after the talk had returned to childhood adventures.

The man looked pensive as if he were trying to balance his next words carefully...wanting to answer the question, but not sure if the words would cause damage once said.

“I haven’t spoken to my brother in a very long time,” he sighed. “We argued over Gellert...words were exchanged that could never be taken back.” He looked down at his hands. “Our choices are what make us Tina, but they do not define us.”

“You knew him then? Before all this?” Tina knew she was pushing her luck, but her curiosity was peaked. She found herself liking this man, even if he WAS associated with Grindelwald. Whatever his burden, he seemed not to be able to share it with the world.

Dumbledore gazed up from his hands and looked at her, and she could tell that he was reluctant to talk, but she had a feeling that he needed to unburden on someone. She suspected that even when he was surrounded by people, he felt alone...it was there in his eyes.

“For a long time we were inseparable,” he said quietly, not breaking eye contact. “The arrogance of youth and the stupidity of the heart, all wrapped in one inevitable disaster.” he sighed.
“We do silly things when the heart is involved,” she repeated his own words from earlier back to him.

Tina would never again judge another person for following their heart. Aware now, how emotions could destroy even honest intentions. Look at the mess she had gotten herself into! The choices love had forced upon her own sister! No, when it came to the heart Tina would never underestimate how stupid and blind it could make a person.

“Wise words,” he murmured.

“You were close?”

“Exceptionally.”

The professor was quiet, his gaze on the flames in the hearth, but Tina knew his mind was miles away. Dumbledore looked suddenly much older than his years, talking about his past like this.

*Just how much burden does this man carry on his shoulders?*

When she had first learned of Dumbledore, she had assumed he was only using the people he surrounded himself with as pawns in some larger game. She still believed he was a game master, moving the pieces around the board even now, but his motives appeared to be instigated by something other than power.

*Just how close had they been?*

The thought ran through her mind as Dumbledore reached into his pocket.

“The world is a very strange place...we don’t all fit into the neat boxes some would like us to. *Ripples* can upset the balance. You know this as much as I do...youngest witch to join the Auror department in Macusa, now one of the only women to join the Ministry as an Auror! Our world progresses, but it is at a funeral march, not a swift flow of progress.” He drew a small ornate filigree pendant from his trouser pocket. He held it up in front of him, the light danced across the swirling orb in its centre.

“Is that--”

“--a blood pact. Yes. Hindsight is a wonderful thing...unfortunately, it always comes too late.”

Tina looked past the pendant, watching Dumbledore as he looked at the swinging jewel with regret. Realisation dawned on her; it had been more than friendship. She knew that look...it was the same one that looked back at her when she had gazed into the mirror while alone in France. It was that of a betrayed heart.

“So this is why you can’t move against him?”

Dumbledore nodded, sliding the trinket back into his pocket.

“The only people who know of this are in this room, Theseus, and the man who returned it to my possession. A Niffler is a useful thing to have around. Newt returned this after the events in Paris, astute as always. He is aware of its significance in the current predicament.” Dumbledore caught her eye again, his normally composed features twisted into something akin to sorrow.

“You loved him didn’t you?” she asked quietly, not wanting to pry. After all, she had only just met
the man.

The older man smiled. “Do you know you are the first person to ask me that? Most assume that I was just part of his master plan. Maybe I was, I have never had the chance to ask.”

Tina was aware he hadn’t answered the question, but she didn’t want to push it. It sounded like the man had never opened up to anyone really about that aspect of his life, he really was alone.

Dumbledore busied himself making tea as he composed himself.

“So, do you think it can be broken? The pact that is?”

“I hope so. This is my burden to carry, but it affects far too many people. Choices that I made as a young man were irrational. I hope to be able to make amends for past indiscretions.”

“Did you know? When you made that pact...did you know what he was capable of?” she asked cautiously.

Dumbledore took his time before answering, “I think I knew, I just didn’t want to believe that...well that...” he trailed off, hand going back to his pocket, Tina realized how painfully vulnerable he was in that moment, something she was sure he never let slip past the walls he had built around him. “We do rash things when the heart is in control. My naive mind wanted to see the best in him...maybe I thought I could change his ways?” He sipped his tea, eyes closed in contemplation.

In the silence, Tina pondered his words: if they had been a couple, they must have had a lot in common. “Did you agree with him?”

“A little. You have been in the presence of that silver tongue of his. He can be very persuasive. I do feel that it is wrong for us to hide away from the muggles, but unlike Gellert, I understand that they are our equals, not our lesser.”

The air was thick with words unsaid.

Tina was trying her best to process the information that she had been given, still unsure of Dumbledore’s intentions, but his immediate objective to stop Grindelwald was the same as her own, and to that end, she would trust him for now.

“Why tell me all this?” The thought had been biting away since the man had opened up about his past.

“Honest answer? I trust you Porpentina. You have already deduced that I have few friends. I find myself wishing you to be in the small circle I do have. Like myself, you do not suffer fools gladly. Had I had someone like you around to tell me the truth to my face when I was younger, I may well have avoided some of the situations that we are currently in.” He smiled ruefully, “My motives are entirely selfish...I need someone to keep me in line, that is if you don’t mind?”

Is this fella for real?

“You want me to keep you in check?”

“I want you to be my friend. I believe that we both are in need of one,” he said earnestly, placing his cup back on the table.

Tina sighed, Trust him, Tina, trust that gut instinct! Last time you didn’t, look what happened!
“You’re not going to take no for an answer are you?”

“I already count you as a friend...I just wish for you to regard me in the same way. As I said, I have never spoken of my past so openly before. I do not ask you to understand, although I believe you do. The world, after all, is not always good and bad.”

She nodded, extending a hand. She might regret this later, but she would deal with that if the time came.

“Friends.” She looked him in the eye, “That makes you, and Einstein. I think your secrets may be safe.”

Dumbledore got to his feet, dropping her hand. Still smiling that warm smile of his, he reached down and stroked the sleeping Niffler behind the ear.

“I very much doubt that Tina. You may have left in a rather dramatic fashion, but given the urgency of the alarm that Theseus raised, I feel you may be making things hard on yourself.”

“I wouldn’t want to be my friend right now, I don’t deserve that friendship.” she averted her eyes, the crackling fireplace suddenly becoming the most fascinating bit of architecture.

Dumbledore took that as his cue to leave, heading towards the door.

“Please do not sell yourself short Porpentina, or Newton either. I have seen sides of him you couldn’t imagine. He would not give up on you so easily please do not give up on him.”

She looked up at him before he left, his eyes regarding her with the same sort of omnipotent look that Dougal got when he saw a particularly good future.

She sighed, he’s right. “Would you let Theseus know where I am, please?”

The man nodded before closing the door behind him.

Sleep did not come easy, she had known it would be a challenge even before she climbed into the overly welcoming bed. She already missed Newt, the gap at her side did nothing to soften the empty feeling in her chest. The Niffler slept by her head, yellow scarf half in his pouch, the snoring the only thing breaking the quiet of the castle.

Where is Newt now? Is he lying awake like me? Is his head full of Achilles? What had he told him?

She wasn’t proud of dropping her guard and letting Achilles in. She had been weak, she just needed to feel wanted. Rejection and failure were not things that she allowed into her life, yet both had hit her so hard that he had been in the right place at the right time. She had used Achilles, she knew it and so did he. Had it not been for her own self-pity she would not have let it go on as far as she did, alcohol fueling the need to be touched... she needed to feel alive. She could count on one hand the number of people who had seen her in a state of undress, she wished that Tolliver was not included in that list.
Her mind replayed that night, his hands sliding into her shirt, the feel of his mouth on her skin... it made her stomach turn, she had managed to bury it so deep in her memory replacing it with happy thoughts of Newt that the vividness of the memory from that night shocked her. Tina had not intended things to get so involved or go so far with Tolliver, it had just been a selfish distraction for her broken heart.

Dumbledore was right, people do stupid things when they act on the instinct of the heart.

The pain she felt now was twofold, she ached for Newt but she also missed her sister with every fibre of her being, she wanted her to hug her. To help understand what was happening in her messed up head, to tell her she was being an emotional idiot and to snap out of it.

Tina had found a small amount of solace in Dumbledore, the man seemed genuine. He had no reason to lie about his relationship with Grindelwald. Had he meant what he said about friendship?

What was it with people in power that drew them to her, Theseus, Graves and now Dumbledore, maybe he was right maybe Grindelwald did want her for his collection.

Abandoning attempts of sleep she walked over to the dressing table and turned on the light.

The mirror showed her the reflection of someone she didn’t feel she knew.

They were her eyes, but they looked worn and tired, that was her face but she didn’t recognise the sunken sleep-deprived skin or the harsh haircut that looked back at her.

*What have I done to myself?*

Life hadn’t been perfect, but she had been content with her lot.

Then Newt happened.

The woman that looked back at her now was so far away from the woman who had fallen so hard for that astonishing man on a cold New York rooftop. That woman could never have imagined the torture she was about to endure while her heart was ripped apart and stitched back together.

*I love Newt. I wouldn’t go through hell and back for anyone else, not even Queenie, if Newt had crossed the flames I would have followed, I would have for him.*

*-Then why are you running away from him?-*

*-He doesn’t want me-*

*-Do you not think that is for Newt to decide?-*

*-I don’t even want me-*

*-Newt wants you, he wanted you to stay, you said you would stay-*
Anger at herself bubbled up, the thoughts in her head did nothing to help the churning feeling in her stomach or to calm the pacing beast that circled her heart. Staring at the reflection of what she had become she grew mad at herself.

Newt couldn’t be protected from the truth, she had been stupid to try and hide it. All it had done was cause heartache in all involved. The beast raged at the thought of Newts face when Achilles told him, anger radiated out into the room, she needed to calm down before she did something stupid.

With a loud crack the mirror shattered in two pieces, Tina jumped back just in time, missing the shard that flew towards her.

Chapter End Notes

as ever thanks to Sara for her critical eye over my work.

you know I love the comment section

x grumps
The conversation between the brothers had been long overdue: Theseus knew his brother was suffering and he hated the fact there was nothing that he could do about it.

It was strange to think that a fully grown man sat beside him, instead of a grubby-faced eight-year-old. The years had slipped by while he wasn’t looking, and he wasn’t quite sure where all that time had gone.

Theseus had felt so helpless at his brother's distress before, more than once. The first time he felt he couldn’t protect his brother, had been one of the hardest: not long before he had started Hogwarts, Newt had been given his first taste of death...one of mum’s foals...a difficult hatching. The tiny hippogriff had faded in their arms, too weak to survive longer than its first few breaths. Newt had struggled to understand why the tiny thing wouldn’t get to his feet. Four-year-old Newt had stood in the middle of the shed, his heart breaking over this little life that never would be. Big green eyes weeping with tears as a little voice had pleaded with him: ‘Siú make it get up!’.

“I can’t Newt’s it’s gone”

“Where it go Siú?”

“It’s just gone...”

It was at that point, with Newt sobbing into his shirt, that Theseus had realised that he couldn’t protect him from the evils in the world, but that it was his job as his older brother to make sure that he was ready for whatever malefic thing life could throw at him.

Newt had never been easy, he was too introverted, too awkward around others. Theseus had longed for Newt to find the confidence he had with his creatures and make at least one friend.

School had always been a challenge, Theseus had cursed more than one other student for making fun of the weird boy in the first year, unaware that he was the weird one’s older brother.

He had hated to leave Newt behind. But his brother finally had a friend. He had found another lost soul in Leta: a friend to stand at his side, even if her motives were often questionable.

The summer that Newt had come home from school and talked non-stop about Leta, Theseus had known that he was infatuated. He wished that he had managed to protect Newt from the heartache and the expulsion that came along with it.

‘She’s not worth it Newt,’

‘But she is my friend Thes, the only one I have other than you...’

Theseus hated Leta for it.

He had never met the girl, but she had managed to hurt Newt. Theseus should have been there to stop it. He had failed his baby brother, He was supposed to protect him, the only job his mother ever
asked of him and he had messed it up.

Theseus had been less than pleased when he received word that Newt had joined the war effort. Theseus was struggling to protect himself, let alone worry about Newt; up to his eyes in god knows what on a battlefield somewhere. Newt couldn’t be fighting, he just couldn’t. Newt was his baby brother, he should be at home helping mum with the yearlings, not out in no man's land, facing Dementors and death.

’Bet you didn’t expect me to come save the day on the back of a dragon’

He had never been prouder of Newt than in that moment. Storming the trench, he had saved Theseus and his entire squad. The burns had been worth it to see Newt look so confident in his work. Theseus had been happy to let him have his moment in the spotlight. He deserved others to see the bravery that Theseus had seen every day since Newt was four and coming to terms with life and death.

His baby brother had turned into a clever and powerful wizard. Theseus was not sure when it had all happened, but he knew that when Newt had given him the blessing to marry Leta, his brother had finally grown enough to not need his overprotective older brother.

In the last few weeks, everything had changed. Theseus had found himself as the protected not the protector. He had been so caught up in broken pieces of his life with Leta, that he hadn’t been keeping the promise he made to the tiny bundle in the peacock blue blanket many moons ago.

“I’m sorry,” he said quietly, his instinct to hug Newt almost winning out.

Newt looked so broken when only the day before he had looked so alive and whole.  

_I should have told him._

“Why didn’t you warn me?”

“You wouldn’t have listened...remember when I tried to warn you about Leta?” His heart ached at the uttering of her name, his heart would always ache for her.

“I told you to bugger off.”

“But you did it anyway because you don’t take no for an answer. It’s something I have always loved about you, from Mum trying to make you brush that hair of yours to stealing beasts that don’t belong to you, it's your way or no way.” Newt looked at his hand soaking in the bowl.

_Next time you hit them back, make sure that you have your thumb on the outside of the fist-

_The next time?_ -
-Make sure you move fast, a moving target is harder to hit -

-Like in Quidditch? -

-Exactly...only pretend the Quaffle is the moron’s face, and his right hook is the bludger -

-I can’t do this Thes, Reggie is so much bigger than me.-

-and you are gangly, but fast...confuse him, throw him off guard -

-I’m not a fighter... this is stupid -

-No but Idiots like Reggie Brown will keep coming! You want someone like that to bump into Leta when you aren’t there to step in? -

-No... Someone has to protect her -

He never did learn to stop tucking his thumb in. stupid bugger! Theseus smiled to himself at the memory, Bloody Leta...not even here, but still here in every way.

“I’m so sorry about Leta, Thes.” Newt’s voice sounded so broken when finally spoke, that Theseus wondered if his brother had had the same thought at sight of Newt’s mangled hand. “I didn’t mean to go off like that before--”

“--yet you did.” Theseus sighed, “It’s over...it happened. What was it Leta used to say… Anger--’

“--makes the heart grow fonder,” Newt finished. “She also used to say that we were only friends because we hated all the same people.”

Theseus reached out, putting an arm around his little brother. He hated seeing him hurt like this.

To his shock, Newt didn’t shrug off the touch.

“Why didn’t you tell me Thes… about Tolliver?” Newt breathed, the words barely audible, even at this distance.

Theseus blinked, carefully considering his answer: Why hadn’t he told him?

I wanted to protect you. For the first time ever, you looked so content...I wanted you to be happy.

The words wouldn’t form on his lips.

What can I say to make this better?

He opened his mouth to speak, but Newt beat him to it.

“Please don’t take her Thes!” he said in a rush, a pained expression on his boyish face.

Don’t take who? What was he on about?

They had been talking about Tolliver and...his heart suddenly hurt twice as much as it had before.

Merlin’s beard...does he really believe that I fell in love with Leta to spite him?

Theseus had tortured himself for months over his growing feelings for the woman, well aware of just how close she and his brother had been in the past. He hadn’t wanted to fall in love with Leta, but
she was so impossible not to love that he had no choice in the matter. He understood why Newt had taken the blame for her wrongdoing...had fought to protect her. Theseus had fallen hard and fast and had hated himself for it. It stung to think that, yet again, he had failed in his promise to that tiny infant in his mother’s arms.

His brother had seemed so happy.

*Bugger, Newt...can’t you see that Tina only has eyes for you? You’re an introvert...not blind! You must see how she’s drawn to your every move!*  

Tina was an amazing woman, ... *well apart from the whole Tolliver thing*. Theseus knew more about that than he would ever let on to Newt.

*But people make mistakes.*

He had watched Newt with Tina: the way the two of them orbited around each other, existing in the same space, but not ever really touching. He had never seen his brother so full of life as when he had stepped off the ship back from America.

The fact that Newt thought that he would try and seduce her away was laughable, and it hurt him to the core.

“How do you really think that?” he ventured.

Newt didn’t respond quick enough with his answer of no.

“That woman loves you! She hasn’t done anything but stare at you longingly since I met her, Fido!” Theseus roared well and truly angry at the injustice of the whole situation. “I can only apologise for falling in love with Leta so many times, but I did...and I still do love her...” he swallowed around the thick lump in his throat, “...more than life itself!” As the anger bled out of him, he became aware of the ache in his chest: he was breathing hard, a hollow feeling gnawing at him from the inside. “I have only ever wanted to protect you, ever since you were old enough to waddle around behind me, calling out my name. You are my brother and I love you, but sometimes you can be a right twat.”

Newt had the decency to look ashamed of himself.

*For someone so clever he can be a right idiot.*

Newt didn’t speak, his rage from earlier leaving him with no energy to even shake while the tears silently ran down his face.

“I’ve buggered it all up, haven’t I?” he asked eventually.

“No, but I think you have a lot of apologising to do...starting with Jacob, and in the morning, once you have pulled yourself around, I will take you to Tina.”

At the mention of her name, Newt’s eyes lit up.

“I just hope she’s holding things together better than you!”
Newt sat by the fireplace long after Theseus had shuffled off to try to get a few hours’ rest in the small bedroom. Newt’s limbs were leaden with exhaustion, his hand aching under the cast, but his mind refused to shut off—continually playing out all of the events of the last few days. The first watery light of dawn was creeping through the windows of Dracholm by the time he abandoned all hope of sleep. Deciding not to prolong the inevitable, he rose, dusted himself off, and went in search of the friend that he had wounded in his selfish rage.

Newt had never really had friends other than Leta.

A fact that had never really bothered him until he realised that he had inadvertently hurt Jacob, and he wasn’t sure how to rectify the situation.

His friend sat out on the porch with a mug of tea, watching the early morning sun creep through the trees. Jacob’s anger from the night before seemed to have lifted, but Newt proceeded cautiously as he walked forward, unsure how his presence would be received.

I wouldn’t want to talk to me, Newt thought bitterly, remembering the events of the previous night. He was still shocked at the way he had acted. He hadn’t meant to take it out on Jacob and Theseus, but his emotions had taken over.

If it had been Queenie and another man would I have told Jacob?

The thought had run through his mind constantly as his brain rejected the sleep it so badly needed.

I wouldn’t have said anything either, I can’t blame him for Tina’s mistakes. Tina should have told me.

Jacob didn’t look at him as Newt took a seat at his side.

The baker kept his eyes set on the horizon, lost in his own thoughts.

Newt felt awful, he knew Jacob was hurting but he hadn’t really understood how painful it was until now: to know the woman you loved was out there somewhere but didn’t want to see you...the pain of not knowing was so much worse than the pain of losing them. It hung over every waking thought...a life on hold.

The ache tore through the very fabric of existence: the thought that the one you love may no longer want you torturing your soul.

Is this what Tina felt like when she thought I was marrying Leta?

The pain of not knowing where Tina was killed him a little more each time he thought about her, but
at least he knew she was safe.

Jacob didn’t have that luxury.

Newt wasn’t sure how Jacob had kept it together as long as he had: it showed a strength of character that Newt wished he could muster.

He wished that Jacob would at least look at him, give some indication that he wanted to try and resolve the conflict. Falling out with Jacob felt like falling out with one of his creatures...he knew he had to gain back the trust, but he wasn’t sure how.

Eventually, Jacob broke the silence.

“How’s the hand?” he enquired, finally looking at Newt and away from the treeline.

“Bloody sore.”

Jacob reached up and pulled him into a one-armed hug, taking care not to compress Newt’s broken hand.

Newt had not expected it, taking a few seconds for his brain to fathom that the man was offering an olive branch of friendship. It had never occurred to him that Jacob would be feeling just as bad about last night as he was.

“I’m sorry Jacob,” he muttered when the Baker pulled back from the brief hug.

“Nothing to be sorry about. You just gotta remember you ain’t in this alone.” Jacob pointed at himself “Me and Thes are with yous...you gotta trust us,”

Newt nodded, more to himself than anyone else. He had to trust them...he wanted to trust them. In the light of a new day, he grasped the cold hard fact that they had only been trying to protect him.

“I get it. I do. We held back on telling you cause it wasn’t our place to say anything. How was I supposed to tell you about ... him?” Jacob avoided saying Achilles name. “You got to let us know what’s going on in that brain of yours...I ain’t got Queenie’s powers. I need you to say the words,”

“I’m still sorry,” he muttered.

“Yeah, I know you are bud.” Jacob slapped him on the shoulder.

Newt tried not to wince as the pain moved to his hand...t had been been a gesture of affection, after all. He couldn’t help but be grateful that he had someone like Jacob in his life. He didn’t deserve this friendship.

“So you're staying then?” Newt asked quietly after the two of them sat in silence a little longer, both lost in thought. In the chaos of yesterday the fact that Macusa had not deported Jacob had been almost forgotten.

“Got nothing to go back for, apart from the Bakery but... I figured you might need someone to manage your new boxing career.” he joked the hint of a smile on his face. The anger of the previous
night had gone, Jacob once again wearing the soft expression that Newt expected from his friend.

Newt smiled ruefully, “I think I’ll stick to animals if that’s alright with you?”

“Hell of a smack to the kisser mind, he won’t forget that in a hurry.”

Newt raised his hand, “he’s not the only one.” The pain was bearable now: his hand had been set in a charmed cast and would have to mend by slower magic. Newt didn’t want to chance the bones healing wrong...he depended on the full use of his hands to work.

“So, you gonna tell me what’s going on with you and Tina?” Jacob cautiously inquired.

*What was going on between us? I don’t even know anymore.*

“I need to speak with her.”

“You love her.”

“I --”

“—Wasn’t a question Casanova. I know you love her...it’s written all over your face. Or at least it is now. We know you love her...but does she?”

Newt gazed at the trees swaying in the breeze and tried not to think of the images that Tolliver had placed in his mind, fighting to overlay them with the happy thoughts and embraces that he had shared with Tina over the last few days. He wasn’t good with words, hopefully, his actions would have conveyed his feelings?

What if she thought that he only wanted her as a conquest?

*Does she think that I’m going to treat her like that scumbag?*

*She knows I love her? Doesn’t she?*

The tortured thoughts of the night before picked away at his subconscious.

*I should have told her...I-I need to tell her! I will every day of my life from now on if she will have me.*

“You gotta start talking Newt, or you’re gonna go bat shit crazy and there ain’t no coming back from that.”

“Words don’t particularly like me, Jacob.”

“I’ve read your book...both copies! Words like you plenty ‘nuff, or at least they do when you mean what you say. I read that dedication to Tina. I watched how she reacted. You can’t use that excuse now!” Jacob got to his feet, looking down at Newt as he moved back towards the house. “You need to speak the words. Tell her how you feel.”

“But--”

“-- no buts! You tell her how you really feel. I’ll lock you in a room till you do if I have to.”

Newt got to his feet following his friend. Jacob made it sound so easy...just tell her! Jacob's words
were sound: they echoed his brother’s so closely.

Just tell her.

Newt was so caught up in the thought, that he walked straight into his friend’s back when he stopped to open the door.

Jacob chuckled “Newt you gotta talk to her. You are a wreck. Come on, let's get Thes. We will take you to her. I need the two of you back to normal… no...scrap that...I need the two of you back to you. This…” he gestured at Newt. “Is too normal. It's weird, and it isn't you.”

Newt felt confused it must have shown because Jacob rolled his eyes and shook his head.

“Sooner we get you back to talking about salamander eyes the better. Come on, let's get you to her. You talk to her. Tell her everything. Everything, mind, Newt. Talk, or I will set you on fire. Don't even tempt me”

Chapter End Notes

As ever thanks to Sara.
Oh, and you dear reader, you make my comment section an interesting read.
I love the fact that you are so involved in my story. Each one of you makes me a little fuzzy on the inside.
The night had brought little sleep to Tina’s exhausted mind: her eyes stung, and her face hurt from trying to hold back the relentless tears that had finally subsided a little before dawn.

Tina had never lost control of her powers as often as she had in the last few weeks: even before she was at school she had always had firm control of her magic. The mirror shattering had bothered her more than she would like to admit.

It had been a quick swish of a wand to fix it, but the damage to her own psyche would take a lot longer to repair.

A knock on the door had been a welcome distraction from her own torment.

Dumbledore stood in the corridor, dressed and ready for the day, smiling at her.

*Does this man ever sleep?*

“I wondered if you would like to accompany me down to the Quidditch pitch?”

Whatever Tina had been expecting, it wasn’t that. The request had thrown her, but she accepted the invitation...anything to distract herself from the nagging doubts that had plagued her since the Ministry.

“Quidditch?”

“Yes it would appear that I have drawn the short straw, and must supervise the Hufflepuff and Gryffindor teams. They have been fighting over who gets to use the pitch to train. Both are in the house final, you see. Although I am obviously biased and wish my house to win, I do think the Hufflepuff team have shown a great deal of skill this year,” he spoke with such fondness that Tina found herself smiling, despite herself.

The grounds of the castle were extensive, but the sun seemed to reach every single spot as it made its way gradually over the treeline, making the giant lake glisten as the sun kissed it. A well-worn path lead down the hill, Tina followed Dumbledore as he headed towards the bright bunting-festooned bleachers in the distance.

Ahead figures in yellow and red stood facing each other down.

As soon as Dumbledore set eyes on them, he sped up his pace a little more. Tina idled behind, taking in the view and trying to banish some of the darkness that followed her in the warm sunshine.

Tina sat on the long wooden benches, watching as flashes of yellow darted around the pitch, Down on the ground, Dumbledore stood midfield, making sure that the ground rules he set were being
Tina’s eyes followed as the chaser—a small dark-haired girl—had manoeuvred herself into position to make a play...a perfect shot.

The keeper was open, it would be a walk in the park, all she had to do was time it just….

Tina clapped as the girl scored a goal, feeling foolish as the Hufflepuff team looked up at her in the stands. The dark-haired girl smiled, giving her a little wave of thanks.

*Had Newt played on the school team?*

She doubted he was the sporting type, though he had fine prowess on a broom. Maybe he had been on the team?

She should know now not to underestimate him: it had been something to watch him mount the broom back at Featherdown and kick off as if it was second nature.

Watching the Chasers weave and dodge, she could imagine Newt in the yellow uniform, looking all windswept and red-faced.

Tina watched the dark-haired girl dodge a bludger and roll her broom.

Suddenly the image of the boy from her imaginings the night before swam into her mind. He seemed more solid in this vision, even if her future with Newt still felt so uncertain.

Tina let herself imagine the ghost of her future swerving and dodging through the hoops, right up until it was too painful to contemplate any longer. Blinking back tears, she climbed down from the stands and slipped quietly out of the Quidditch pitch.

*Maybe a walk will help me clear my head.*

The grounds really did stretch as far as the eye could see, the forest curving around the lush green grass that swayed in the gentle wind.

A flapping of wings drew her attention to the edge of the tree line, dark skeletal horses watched her from the low branches.

*So that’s what Thestrals look like?*

She paused to watch as the beasts own eyes followed her every move. The smallest one stretched its wings and shook itself, its outstretched limbs resembling a bat in flight.

Newt had said that they were docile creatures in his book.

*They certainly look like it,* she thought as the herd grazed in the early morning warmth.

Tina sunk to the ground, wishing Newt was here to tell her more about them.

*You just wish Newt was here...stop trying to use the animals as a cover,* she chided herself.

The smallest Thestral ventured out into the sunlit grass, its skin a velvety hue where the light caught it. So small and so delicate, it watched her with the same curiosity that she studied it.

*Animals are so uncomplicated, I get why Newt likes them better than people.*
Tina sat for a long time her damaged heart being soothed by the preternatural grace of the creatures before her.

She watched as the smallest nudged its mother for attention. Some people would look at these beasts and see a monster, but she saw nothing but beauty and love...a mother's bond that she missed, more than anything at this moment.

Tina sat there a long time: long after the Thestrals had returned into the forest...long after the students had traipsed back up to the castle for breakfast, bickering as they passed.

If Dumbledore had seen her sitting in the long grass, he had chosen to let her be. She was grateful.

Finally, stomach growling, and fending off a headache from lack of coffee, Tina headed back to her room.

The house elf had shown up not long after she had returned. The small table by the fire now held an assortment of breakfast foods, and more importantly, coffee.

Tina welcomed the coffee instantly, but picked at the pastry on her plate.. It wasn’t that the food wasn’t good...it just wasn’t Jacob’s. Coffee was coffee, but Jacob’s cooking was like a hug from the man himself.

*Tina what have you done.*

A knock on her door made her jump.

Cautiously she got to her feet, unsure who would be knocking at her door.

*Who, besides Dumbledore, even knows I’m here?*

The knock was too heavy-handed to be Dumbledore: his knock was almost a whisper, barely a knock at all.

Raising her wand, she opened the door a crack.

“See...told you it would be the bloody Hufflepuff one ...” Theseus’s voice boomed back down the corridor loudly making her wince after the silence of her morning. “YOU...” he pointed at her, ”...never do that again! I expect you to tell me where you are buggering off to when you work for me, got it?”

*I can’t tell if he’s mad or messing with me.*

“I’m not paid to tidy up your mess, Auror Goldstein...I am not a house elf.” the sternness in his voice faltered at the end, and the same playful look Newt often had danced in his eyes.

*He’s messing with me,* Tina thought as she opened the door a little wider.
Tina’s eyes darted down the corridor to where Jacob stood with Newt’s case; behind him, the man himself was trying to make his body blend in with the stonework, and failing completely.

At the sight of him, the Beast in her chest became restless, scratching at her insides, craving to be near him.

Tina took a step forward before Theseus stopped her.

He kept his voice low so only she could hear him, “He punched that arsehole in the face...so hard that he broke the git’s nose and fractured his eye socket. He was a lot more lenient than I would have been,” Theseus said solemnly.

Tina stared at Newt in shock, *He broke Achilles’ nose*?! “If it was me, he wouldn’t have walked out the room...but Newt isn’t me, thankfully,” Theseus continued, concern written all over his face.

“I--”

“--although, if you want me to, I’ll happily take Tolliver down a few more pegs on your behalf,” Theseus interjected, eyes twinkling. “What were you thinking?”

“I wasn’t.”

Newt’s pull was too strong: she wasn’t really listening to Theseus her responses slipping automatically from her lips. She struggled under her boss’s hand, wanting to break free from the gentle grip he placed on her.

“Well that makes two of you.” He sighed. “Jacob, can you fetch that idiot here.”

Tina watched as Jacob hooked Newt around the shoulders, and manoeuvred him down the corridor. With a gut-wrenching realisation, she noted Newt’s hand was wrapped in a cast, cradled at his chest.

*The stupid fool! What has he done to himself? What have I done to him?*

When they got to the door, Jacob handed her the case, and upon dropping his grip on Newt, pulled her into a bone-crunching hug. “Don’t you ever do that to me again, got me?”

“Got you,” she said quietly, squeezing the baker back.

When they broke apart, Tina chanced a look at the man she had been avoiding eye contact with. “I think we need to talk,” she said quietly, hugging the case to her chest in lieu of Jacob’s warmth.

Theseus cleared his throat in a very obvious, false cough. “You think?”

“SHUT--”

“--Up Theseus” Newt spoke at the same time as she did.

Theseus chuckled to himself, and Jacob shook his head.

“Let’s leave them too it Jacob. I get the feeling we are no longer wanted… let me show you what breakfast is like...” he lead Jacob along the corridor, the latter shooting what Tina supposed was a ‘good luck’ grimace at her before they turned and headed up the stairs.

At her side Newt stood quietly, his eyes downcast avoiding her gaze.
Tina cleared her throat, suddenly nervous. “Well if we are doing this, it isn’t happening in the corridor. Get in.”

Tina was used to awkwardness between the two of them, but this time it was a more than the usual awkwardness.

The door had closed, silencing the background noise of the castle and making the quiet of her room all the more obvious.

Tina watched Newt, taking in his appearance: he looked tired, the rings around his eyes prominent as her own, his skin a whitish hue, making his freckles stand out more on his handsome face.

*When was the last time you slept?*

She felt like she hadn’t slept in a lifetime: Dracholm seemed like another life, one that didn’t belong to her...one where she hadn’t dragged the two of them through this torment.

Her entire body wanted to be near him, to comfort him. Tina could tell he was hurting, and more than just from a broken hand.

*He really did punch the jerk in the face then.*

Part of her wanted to go back and see the moment Newt had put Tolliver in his place, but most of her wanted to apologise for having made a situation where Newt felt violence was the answer.

“My...” Tina started but didn’t know how to end, how did she even begin to apologise for putting him through this?

“My...” Newt looked up at her his eyes searching hers for answers.

Why were they so bad at this, why couldn’t they just communicate?

Tina placed the case on the floor, taking a cautious step towards Newt, reaching out to place her hand on his cast. Tina half expected him to recoil at the touch, but he lifted his hand towards her, showing off his battle scar.

“He had a very hard head, for someone made out of hot air,” he said, his voice deadpan.

“You didn’t have to go do that.” She looked down to the swollen fingers sticking out the end of the cast.

*Some injuries can’t be healed by magic...sometimes you have to wear them to show that you are alive.*

“Yes I did. You know I did.”

“I don’t know anything anymore.”

“Then that makes the two of us.”
Tina looked up from his broken hand and straight to his eyes: they showed the broken heart that mirrored her own. “Newt I--”

“--Tina I...”

Why were they so bad at this? Why couldn’t she just tell him that she loved him, and that she was an idiot to have even given Tolliver the time of day? That she was sorry that she had put him through the pain of the last few days, and that she would spend every second of her waking hours making sure that he knew she loved every last bit of him. Why, when she needed them most, did words fail her.

A snickering behind them made them jump: the picture on the wall had been feigning sleep, its cover blown by its own amusement at their awkwardness.

“Case?” she offered.

He nodded in agreement. This was hard enough for the two of them to do alone without an audience.

Newt followed her down the steps into the case. She moved in the space like it was second nature now: the sight of her moving slowly across the oasis he had made felt so natural now, even if the case was currently devoid of most of its inhabitants. She looks so worn down, he thought grimly, She looks scared.

He wished he could find the words and actions to make it better, but he had no experience in this...it was all new, and very unknown.

“It’s too quiet.” Tina sighed sinking down on to the stoop outside the door to the shed.

“They’re safe, that’s all I can ask for,” he contemplated, longing to sit by her side but he remained standing, leaning against the door frame. “You know you are safe here don’t you?”

Her eyes refused to meet his own, focusing on wrapping a loose piece of rope around her hands.

Newt wished she would look at him, or at least tell him what she was thinking. He had rehearsed in his head, all the way up to the castle, the words he would say to make her understand that they would get through this together, whatever this was. But his crippling doubt had hit him again as soon as his eyes had fallen on her. He loved this woman...yet the words couldn’t form on his lips.

Why am I so bad at this?

The Images that Tolliver had forced upon him tried to fight back to the surface, but he set the beast in his head on them. They didn’t belong in his mind: if the beast mauled them enough, maybe he would never have to think of them again. Tina was more than what Tolliver thought of her. He didn’t even deserve to have had the woman give him the time of day.

“Tina...”

“I’m sorry Newt,”

Will, you just look at me, Newt moved, sinking to the other side of the step, trying to seek out her face. He wanted her to look at him...he wanted her to understand. He couldn’t find the words.
Jacob was wrong, I can’t do this.

“I’ve messed everything up, I’m so sorry Newt.” It was barely even a whisper, but he caught it.

“That’s not true.”

“Yes it is, and you know it is.”

Why was she so self-deprecating...did she not realise that nothing was her fault? He should have told her sooner how he felt, and then none of this would have happened.

He moved closer to her...slowly, so as not to make her bolt off. He wanted to hold her, but he was unsure if that would cause more damage in the current situation.

Tina’s hand reached out to touch his undamaged one, she hesitated before placing her delicate fingers over his own. Did she think he was going to pull away? Why was she being so reserved?

Do you think I will leave? Do you think that I would love you less because of a stupid mistake?

“Newt... I don’t...” Tina was struggling with words, just as he was. What was it that made them unable to just say what they wanted to say?

He used his broken hand to lift her face to look at him. Could she not read it on his face? He would wait forever if he had to, but she had to know how much he loved her. That had to be the reason she was so afraid of him finding out about Tolliver.

Anger and frustration distorted her perfect face, as she struggled with her emotions. She was normally so composed, but she looked so lost.

“Words are slippery buggers aren’t they?”

“If only there was some way to get them to...” she jumped to her feet, dropping his hand in her wake.

Newt watched as she retreated to the shed, routing through the stacks of paper on the desk, and slamming drawers, her eyes frantically searching with a desperate urgency.

“Where is it?”

“Where is what?”

Tina slammed another book out of the way looking for whatever had made her jump up so fast,

Newt couldn’t help but wonder what she searched for, but he bit back the question; she was already on edge, and he didn’t want to send her over again.

“Your field kit, where is it?” she said after looking on the last shelf.

Why do you need my field kit? he thought, chancing another step into the shed.

Tina always looked so divine when she was frantic like this, a whirlwind of chaos wrapped in an authoritative bow.
“It’s in my overcoat pocket.” he offered, leaning on the door frame, _Maybe?_ He didn’t have the foggiest if that was where it really was, but he had offered up the information all the same. _She does look so lovely when she’s mad._

Tina walked over to the coat hook in the corner, her hand hovered over the grey coat. Her eyes snapped to him: he shook his head and she reached for the teal one that hung at its side.

She swung it around her shoulders sliding her hands into the sleeves, before starting to rummage through his pockets. _Brave, she’s not scared of anything, is she… well, apart from me._

After a bit of rummaging, Tina finally found what she’s looking for. Holding up the small leather wrap like a Niffler with a new prize.

Placing it down on his mounds of paperwork, Newt watched as she gently opened the kit. Her eyes scanning for something, like a predator about to pounce on its prey.

When she turned back to look at him, she was holding two small bottles, topped with his own melted seal around the rim. Taking two steps forward, she finally met his eye.

“We both need to talk, and we both know that we’re lousy at it.” She held up one bottle pushing the lid off and passed the other to Newt.

“Veritaserum?”

She downed the content in one shot, eyes never leaving his, “We have to stop hiding the truth from each other. This way we can’t lie, no matter how much we want to.”

“I don’t lie to you, Tina.”

“But you don’t always tell me the whole truth, either.” Her face contorted in reaction to the potion: it was a rather large dose she just swallowed, but she was right, he had to stop holding things back from her.

He uncapped his own bottle and held it to his lips. “Bottoms up!” He hated the way the potion made him feel…like feeling drunk. He hated letting his guard down like this, but he was with Tina, he trusted her. The case was locked, and they were alone…what was the worst that could happen?

Chapter End Notes

Sara as ever has been a massive help. Wonderful beta

This is your Easter present.
You might be about a week for the next chapter.
My own personal Newt has my attention over the egg weekend.

I promise fluff is coming ....
I love the passion of my comment section ...

Also I'm back on tumblr after a runaway for a bit. Same name... so if you get really bored I'm over bothering other shippers
“You better have brewed this right, or we will both be dead before we make the antidote,” Tina smirked, taking the bottle back from him.

Newt watched as she returned to his field kit. It still lay open upon the stack by the coat hook, the other vials catching the early morning sun and glinting in the light. After sliding the vials back into place, Tina’s nimble fingers folded the leather back together, tying the cord into a neat bow. Turning to look at him, she slipped the leather wrap back into the pocket she had fished it from.

The coat would smell like her now, if it didn’t already. That would be some comfort, if this all went wrong...a part of her would linger even after she was gone: the scent of coffee and stale ink, and that sweet vanilla fragrance that always lingered on her skin. He had never been able to precisely identify the source of the sweet scent that followed her around.

Now his coat would remind him of her. The essence of Tina, wrapped up and imprinted on a lump of wool.

If everything failed, and this whole thing backfired, at least he would have this small part of her to cling to.

Tina pulled the coat around her tighter, breathing a little sigh of contentment as she did so.

“You should be alright, although that was the last of my stockpile. So, if you have any deep burning questions, now is the time to ask.” Newt could feel the effects of the potion taking hold: his mind was still his own...that wasn’t how the potion worked.

Veritaserum didn’t force the truth from it’s victim, rather it suppressed the urge to bury the truth in the mind: it knocked down the walls that the truth would happily hide behind, giving truth nowhere to go but out of the mouth before the victim had time to engage their normal defences.

In Newt’s case, he could feel his mind sorting his thoughts into neat coherent streams of consciousness, rather than the chaotic blasts it usually provided. Each stream revolved around the woman that he couldn’t make himself look away from.

It felt like forever since he looked at her last. Had he ever really looked at her in this way before? 
_Maybe, when you said goodbye on the docks._

Tina looked nervous as she stood waiting for whatever happened next, the edges of his coat clutched between her trembling fingers.

Silence stretched as they watched each other, both of them waiting for the other to speak.

“What made you think Veritserum was a good idea?” Newt finally asked, when her fingers started to turn white around the cloth.
“It was this, Newt, or wait till we are sixty…” Tina grimaced, “... then we might somehow stumble past a few syllables of conversation, and that's only if we get lucky.”

“You were planning on staying around that long?” Where did that come from?

Tina took a step towards him: she moved like the opaleye...slow and calculated. Her hands unclenched from the cuffs of the coat, moving to gently trace over the antique copper scales on his desk, Watching him in her peripheral vision as he weighed his options before speaking.

I wonder if throwing her a sugar skull would help the situation, he thought, swallowing hard.

She moved the small copper weights, balancing the scales out, straightening up once she was satisfied. “Up until yesterday… yes.” she stammered.

S he wanted to stay! Newt stared, nonplussed. The truth wrapped around the edges of her answer like a cocoon as the implication sank in. The creature in his chest stopped licking its wounds and stuck its ears up in hope, gently nudging him forward. “And now?”

“I promised to stay didn’t I?”

But then you ran away! “You did, BUT we also agreed to stop saying sorry for every little thing. You broke both of the promises in one go yesterday...I’d say our track record for keeping our word is a little on the rubbish side, wouldn’t you?”

“Just a smidge.” Tina caught his eye.

Was that hope that glimmered on the surface? Her words took him back to New York...back to Jacob’s apartment, when her eyes were soft and her haircut softer, before life had made her sharp and jagged. Just like a porcupine!

Newt felt the tugging of a smile at the corner of his lips: By all rational reason, he should be mad at the woman, but he found new things to love about her even now.

Tina cast her eyes down to the ground, kicking her heal against one of the tiny knots of wood.

He watched as she focused in on the knot, finding something to fixate on.

In her work as an auror, Tina never let her guard down...never showed weakness. Vulnerability like this was only for when she was mulling something over, almost asking for the truth to be coerced out of her.

The beast in his chest stood at heel now, waiting for its master to speak, raising its head dutifully when Tina finally spoke, ears attentive to her every word.
“I at least owe you explanation, if I’m not allowed to say sorry...he was a stupid mistake. I thought...I thought you were going to marry Leta...I know it’s no excuse, not really.” Her voice sounded distant as if the words came from another place, another time, echoes of a conversation she had rehearsed in her head time and time again.

Newt chanced a few steps forward, leaning against the desk with great care, so as not to knock anything off. He was aware that what she said next could cause the open wound that was his heart to rip so much that he would bleed out all over the floor.

More than anything, he wanted to reassure Tina that she was safe, that her heart was even more precious than his own. He wanted to reach out and lift her head so he could see her face, but something told him not to. That part of him that called out to her, it held him back. It needed the truth, but it had to bide its time, so it hung between them, waiting for the moment to speak.

“I didn’t see him...not the real him. That came after...” She paused, pulling his coat closer around her hunched shoulders, “I was so sure that I had lost you...that you were marrying the beautiful woman back home. Why would you want me? What did I have to offer you? You had travelled the world...been to all these amazing places. So kind, humble, handsome... what would you want with me? I had nothing...well nothing but my job,” she chuckled mirthlessly, tears shining in her eyes,”...something I knew you hated. Why would you want me? Nobody wants boring old Tina Goldstein.”

I do! Newt didn’t know how she could talk about herself in such a way. If she could see herself through his eyes, doubt would never cross her mind. She really was the most amazing creature he had ever encountered. The light in her burned with every color of the spectrum...a glorious cacophony that mesmerized his waking thoughts and filtered through his dreams.

Tina sighed looking to the heavens as though searching for some sort of answer.

The potion tugged at him, urging him to speak the words on the tip of his tongue, but Tina needed to get this out in the open, so he waited, heart aching in his chest.

The idea of Newt marrying anyone else still stung her to the core. The memory of the moment that she read the article replayed constantly as she spoke. She had felt so heartbroken and unloved, the aching burning her from the inside out, causing every breath to feel like one more constraint against an already struggling heart. There had been no tears...not at first. Only an all-consuming pressure on her chest. The pain compared to nothing she had felt before, having been so careful not to let anyone close enough to hurt her that way.

Tears had come later, when her heart could hold the pain no longer.

Tina hadn’t asked for Newt to find a place so deep in her heart, and was surprised to find he had buried his way in completely, part of him refusing to be cast out.
The Vertisurm was reaching full potency now, the words forming with little effort, flowing from her mouth of their own volition.

“He…Tolliver… I was happy to have someone on my side at work. He knew nothing about my past, so he didn’t have the same jaded ideas that the other aurors did about me. He was keen to help, happy to keep me company when I was working late. After I stopped writing to you, he became a distraction. I got word that Credence was still alive not long after your book came out, and Tolliver encouraged me to try and take on the case… I knew Credence the best after all.” Tina looked up as Newt edged closer to her, his broken hand resting limply at his side, his eyes darting to her occasionally as she spoke. She could tell that he was holding back, letting her talk.

What did he show you…

“I was denied the case four times. The last time, they told me that I would get demoted if I asked again. I was already on edge because of Queenie almost being caught with Jacob, I felt awful for arguing with Queenie about them spending time together…about reminding her that it was against the law…I felt worse for failing Credence again. I was falling apart, so I went home, and drank the last of the bottle of whiskey we had in the cupboard. It…um…it was the one from the last night you were in the apartment.”

Newt had moved closer now.

Feeling that he wanted to reach out caused her to move towards him, drawn to him. Newt wanted to comfort her, even if her words were hurting him with each one that spilled from her mouth.

I don’t deserve this man...all I do is break him!

Images of the last night Newt was in New York filled her mind: his bashful face at her sister’s inappropriate jokes, even if he had laughed at them more than either woman.

Queenie had made excuses to take her to leave, giving them the chance to be alone in each other’s company. They had talked until sleep had finally claimed them, the half-drunk bottle on the table between them and the stove warming the room. The bottle had remained half full since his departure, and she had made a promise to herself that they would finish it when he came back with his book.

That night, after her final rejection at work…at her lowest point, that bottle of whiskey had called to her: the closest thing to a hug from Newt that she could have hoped for.

Beside her, Newt slid his hand over her own where her palm sat flat against the desk, silently urging her to go on.

“I sat and I cried. I cried over you marrying Leta. I cried over Credence being alive. I cried over Jacob being a no-maj, and how Queenie was slipping away. I was slowly losing everything that I cared about.”

Newt gently squeezed her hand, his thumb stroking the back of her wrist gently.

“I read your book in your voice, or at least my mind does. It’s like you are reading it to me…if that makes sense? So that’s what I did. I drank a half-empty bottle of whiskey, and I wrapped myself in
your world...in this!” She looked up at him, gesturing around the case with her free hand. “I missed you so much, and I felt so alone...so I drank to forget...” Reluctantly, she pulled her hand from his: what she said next might make this lingering heat in her hand the last touch she would ever get from Newt.

“...that was how Achilles found me, I’m sure he filled you in on the rest...”

Newt watched as she shrank in on herself, so far from the way she normally expanded into his space. He didn’t like this, not one bit. Tina was strong, but her heart was more than five times the size of most people he knew. He couldn’t fathom how heartbroken she must have been. If he knew her at all, _and I think I do_, being told that Credence was alive, but she couldn’t help him would have tipped her over the edge. He hated the fact that he had inadvertently caused her this pain, even if he really didn’t have anything to do with it.

Newt was beginning to think he should have done more than hit Achilles.

The images he had been trying to forget forced themselves forward

_-she felt so good-_  

He had to know, the jealous rage being pursued by the growling beast in his chest. It chased the words off his tongue. “What he showed me--”

Tina’s eyes snapped up, searching for his next words, but she cut him off abruptly.

“-- did he show you why he left?”

_So it is true._

Newt’s face must have shown his thoughts, because she stepped forwards, reached up, and took his face in her hands.

“He left because I... because we... I was so lost Newt. I thought I had lost you...that I had failed Credence! I downed that whole bottle of whisky by myself. I never expected it to go so far with him. I had spent the entire night missing you, wanting to tell you exactly how I felt...I missed you. I wanted it to be you...I wanted you to kiss me like that, to hold me like that...he picked your name right out of my head because I couldn’t stop thinking about you...even if you had broken my damn heart! I wanted YOU! Tolliver didn’t like it. He told everyone that we slept together...and I mean everyone.”

The beast raged, tearing at his chest. Tina gripped his face tighter, the intensity of her pleading gaze expressing more that her words ever could. forcing him to look at her. He wasn’t mad at her...he was mad at Achilles! _How could he take advantage of her like that?_
He must have known that even if Tina was acting of her own free will, it wasn’t decent, she was in no fit state.

_But did you?_ he thought bitterly, closing his eyes in anguish, unable to stand the heat of her gaze any longer.

It bothered him, and he was annoyed by that. He wanted to be the bigger man, but the idea of Tina and that git…it haunted him. The fact that she had gone along with it, alcohol or not…

“I didn’t Newt.”

He opened his eyes. It was like she had read his mind.

“I know that question is burning away in that handsome head, Newt,” she said with a tremulous smile, her words as soft as a fwooper’s wing, “the answer is no. It never got that far, but it was far enough…far enough for me to hate myself, to cause me to lash out at Queenie, to run away. I ran towards you… But well, what was I supposed to do… turn up on your fiancé’s doorstep? I couldn’t do that to you…I just wanted you to be happy! If I couldn’t be happy, then at least you could be. I was resolved to being alone before you came into my life.”

*How could she think I would want anyone but her?*

Her hands guided his face till his eyes met hers.

The rage quelled, her eyes calming his tortured soul: in her darkest moments she chose his happiness over her own. The voice in his head that sounded like Queenie spoke to him... *you need a giver.*

Her confession hung in the air between them. She knew the truth hurt.

Under her palm, she could feel Newt clenched and unclenched his jaw, his expression pained. She hated that she was the one causing his pain. *You are worthless! No wonder you fail at everything you do, Goldstein! You are pathetic.*

“I understand if you never want to see me again,” she said, her hands dropping from his face, and moving away, feeling as though she should distance herself.

She sighed heavily. I should go back upstairs, he couldn’t possibly want me now.

She was too broken...so far removed from the woman he had left on that dock. She had seen herself - -her real self-- in the mirror last night, and she didn’t even like the woman that had looked back! How could she let someone with a heart as big as Newt’s waste time on a hopeless cause like herself.

To her shock, Newt grabbed her waist with his good hand. He held her tight, pulling her into his chest. Not for the first time, she was surprised by his strength.
“Do I get to say my piece, or did I just drink the last of my supply for fun?”

His voice was calm...at odds with the expression that had shot across his face only moments before. He paused, looking back toward the roof of the shed. She could almost see him practising what he was going to say in his head. She waited: after all, he had listened to her.

“The drawer in my room that you couldn’t get in to...did you wonder what was in it?”

*What has this got to do with anything? How does he know that I tried to open it?* she wondered, then realization dawned, *Because he knows you! You would look, and he knows it!*

Newt dropped his gaze from the roof of the shed to look her directly in the eye, studying her face with an intensity that left her a little breathless.

He didn’t stutter when he spoke, the potion seemed to be working the way it was intended. “It is where I keep each and every letter you wrote me. I won’t ever throw them away. Every single coffee smudge...every single spelling mistake, angry crossing out and ink splodge. All the imperfections that make you simply wonderful, right there in a solid form that I could hold in my hands, even if you were across an ocean. I’ve read them a million times, wondering how long it would be until I got to see your face again, because the longer I was away from you, the harder it became for me to picture this wonderful woman wanting to write to me. Let alone have the faint glimmer of hope that you might regard me in the same way.” He pulled her closer, cradling her gently but firmly in his arms. “I might be angry, but that is not at you. Its at him...and it’s at myself. I’ve never been good at people. I should have told you, from the moment I realised how I felt about you. I should never have let you feel like you were not wanted, or loved.”

_Did he just …* _Tina could feel her heart racing.

“Do you realise how much you have turned my life upside down? I was just going to take Frank home, then you came along pinning me up against a wall and demanding to take my name.”

Tina tried to process his words, her heart fluttering in her chest.

This was not the way someone who never wanted to see you again spoke. They were not the words of a man who didn’t want her.

Newt must have noticed her relax slightly, as he let go of his iron grip on her waist. Instead, his hand moved up to her face, wiping his thumb gently over the spot mustard had adorned her face on that cold December day that felt so long ago.

“You acted like a human...a hurt human.” He raised his broken hand. “I am the most unlikely fighter... but here we are. I acted human too.”

He cupped her face with his good hand, and she found herself leaning into his touch, the way she had a million times before, her eyes closing under his gentle caress.
“What happened… we have to move on from that. I just wish that I had found out the truth from you, not second hand from a tw...person like him!”

She let him guide her face towards his own, not wanting to run away from him ever again.

His lips brushed gently between her eyebrows, a feather-light kiss hanging on her forehead. When he spoke, it was like a gentle breeze upon her skin, “From now on, I promise to tell you everything... every little stupid, insignificant point, and earth-shattering revelation, if you promise me that you will never hide anything that's hurting you from me again?”

Words wouldn’t form, even with the help of the veritaserum this was too big an emotion for even it to control. She closed her eyes and nodded, aware that the tears she had been holding back had started to fall.

“I love you, Tina.”

Her eyes snapped open. *Did he really just say that?* She didn’t want to trust her own ears.

Newt studied her eyes, needing to see the spark burning deep in the pools that he longed to get lost in all over again. He had barely realised the words had fallen from his lips. He had loved her for so long now, he had thought that it was obvious to her, but when her eyes locked with his, he had realised that she needed to hear the words.

Her entire face lit up with a warm smile that pushed any doubt from his mind, her eyes shining with an intensity that he hadn’t seen before: if he had thought it was like fire in water before, now it burned like a thousand suns tearing up the darkness.

“Do you mean it?” she asked, her words thick with emotion.

“You know better than anyone that I don’t say things I don’t mean.” He nudged her nose with his own. Tina was a lot of things, but stupid was not one of them. He gently pulled her closer, his broken hand aching in protest as he cradled the small of her back. The pain was nothing compared to the agony he had felt when he thought that he had lost her.

“Say it again?”

“I love you Tina!” he said, louder this time, just in case there was any doubt left in her mind. Could she feel his heart beating in his chest? He could feel hers. She was pressing in so close to him now,
folding herself back into the Tina-shaped hole that had been vacant for what felt like too long.

“Even after...”

“Do I have to say it a third time?” Merlin, she is so stubborn! Why can’t she just...

Tina caught his lip in her own, pulling him in, and he melted into the force of the kiss. Newt didn’t resist as she pulled him towards her, his lips finding the rhythm, parting to let her explore more. She tugged him against her so forcefully, that he was momentarily thrown off-balance. Tina shifted against him, never breaking contact as she counterbalanced to keep them from tumbling to the floor. Her hand glided up his back and into the soft hair at the nape of his neck.

_I take that as a no then_ Newt thought, as he swung her around, her legs buckling under her as the back of them hit the desk. With one quick manoeuvr, he lifted her into a sitting position, never once letting her break away from the all-consuming feeling of sharing so much of the same space.

The sound of paper and brass getting shoved to the floor didn’t even make them jump. The pile of notebooks toppling dimmed to background noise...all that mattered right now was Tina, here in his arms, her body pressed against him in ways that were wholly indecent, even fully clothed. How had he managed before this woman had become his life? Feeling like he had lost her felt like someone had cut off his air supply. He would never let her ever question the way he felt about her again.

It wasn’t until he caught his cast on a shelf, the entire contents crashing to the ground, did the world become coherent. Even then, he begrudgingly pulled back from her lips.

He looked at her wrapped in his coat, face flushed from emotion and the three days of stubble that peppered his face,

Tina smiled up at him, the pink in her cheeks having nothing to do with the heat in the shed.

It was as if he hadn’t really seen her before: those three little words had finally unlocked that last part of her that she had kept under lock and key.

Her hands felt soft as they reached up an untangled his cast from the mass of string and twine that had until moments before been securing the shelf behind her head.

“I love you, Newt, but you have to stop being so--”

_Did she just...?_ he caught her lips again with his own.

“--destructive,” she muttered against his lips, defeated.

He pulled away grinning, feeling as if his heart were going to explode. He had never dreamed she would say it back. “What did you say?” he mocked.

She blushed.
“That you should stop being so destructive?” she teased, the color rising in her cheeks again, her eyes sparkling with what he hoped were happy tears.

“No the bit before that...”

The smile spread wide across her face, bright as the sun, and as seductive as the waning moon. “I said, ‘I love you Newt’.”

“Once more...third time's the charm...”

Tina chuckled to herself, the sound was so genuine he swore it was sewing back all of the torn bits of his heart.

Swatting his chest with her hand, she raised her mouth to his ear, her lips gently touching the lobe, “I love you Newt Scamander.”

He didn’t need vertiserm to know that every word of it was the truth.

Chapter End Notes

Everyone be thankful to Sara she made this a million times better. Show her love for being an awesome beta.

You can take the pins out the voodoo dolls now!

You know where the comments live x

Xxgrumps
“-Yes we really do wear robes! You can stop laughing now if you like?” Theseus hissed.

Heads turned, students, craning to peer down the long wooden tables at the visitors.

As the two men made their way toward the head table, Jacob’s low chuckle at the sight of the student’s regalia drew open stares of curiosity from the children...

Dumbledore waved at them, indicating the two vacant seats at his side.

Theseus recalled the feeling of walking into the Great hall the first time as if it was yesterday: scared he was going to disappoint his father—who wanted nothing but the best for him—and stressed knowing that he had to live up to his mother’s reputation for book smarts and practical magic.

Even now, as an adult, he felt the pressure of that moment bearing down on him. The feeling didn’t make the magnificent room any less spectacular, although now the benches seemed so much smaller, the tables seemed shorter, and so did the students.

_Had I really looked like that? Snot-nosed and scruffy-haired?_

It seemed so long ago since he sat here, the biggest threat being his impending N.E.W.T.’s, and the prospect of messing up the last Quidditch match of the year.

Would he go back now and change anything?

_Maybe I should have taken more time to live a little, like Newt...travelled, spent more time with Leta rather than work?_

Dwelling on the past helped nobody, but still, here in these walls, he could do nothing but linger on it.

“I thought Queenie was pulling my leg when she said you all wore robes to school,” Jacob said smiling at a group of Ravenclaws who had turned to look at the two strangers. Muffled whispers passed between students, words like ‘Auror’, ‘ministry’ and ‘Grindelwald’ could be picked out over the wall off whispers and background noise of breakfast happening around them.

“All the way up until we leave, then after that … well, it’s a little hard to blend in with Muggles looking like you are wearing a set of curtains. We try not to attract attention, although some of us are better at it than others.” Theseus took the two steps up to the where Dumbledore sat, taking his place at the man’s side. Jacob joined them two seconds later, his face taking in the grandeur of the enchanted ceiling and the curious looks coming from the four house tables.

“How is she?” Dumbledore asked, observing him over the stack of kippers that had just appeared in front of them on a large plate.

“Calmer than I thought she would be, all things considered. Thank you for letting us know that she...
was here. I’m happy it was you that found her and not … well… you-know-who.” Theseus was never sure what the relationship had been between Dumbledore and Grindelwald, but he knew better than to mention it over breakfast.

“And Newton? How is my favourite anarchist?” there was a fondness in his voice that Theseus had heard him use before. Dumbledore liked to collect people he admired, he had said once that Newt had a spirit that he couldn’t fault.

It was true, Newt’s motives were always true, but the execution of said motives often left Theseus picking up the inevitable trail of trouble that followed. Like now, chasing after Newt’s life, while his had fallen apart around him, Tina had better calm him down, I’m getting too old for this!

“Better than he was last night, but still Newt.” He loved his brother dearly but he was the most frustrating person on the planet sometimes, something the men on either side of him knew that better than most. Theseus helped himself to a plate of scrambled eggs indicating to Jacob that he should follow his lead.

“Don’t underestimate him, Thes. He’s got moxie when it counts,” Jacob said as he scooped a spoon of eggs onto his own plate, followed by a round of toast. “I’ve seen him face down some of them creatures of his. If you haven’t had the honour of a Erumpent wanting to hump your leg…well then, I don’t expect you to understand the balls that your brother has sometimes.”

Dumbledore watched the baker with amusement, observing him as he helped himself to the offerings in front of them. “I hear you made quite the impression yourself in the interrogation yesterday Mr Kowalski?”

“You could say that.” Jacob paused with a sausage halfway to his mouth.

Theseus studied Dumbledore: he had been wondering how to bring up the small fact that Jacob had cast incendio, even if only by accident. “I have been meaning to ask you about that. How did Jacob do it? The bite shouldn’t have given that much magic, surely?”

Dumbledore paused, swirling the dregs of the tea in his cup.

Theseus could almost sense Dumbledore weighing up how much of the truth to share with them. This was what made Dumbledore so frustrating: you always felt like he was holding something back.

Theseus had always admired Dumbledore’s poise.

The Minister hated him, probably viewing Dumbledore as a threat to his power, frightened that he would be thrown out on his ear, should Dumbledore desire the position. On the few occasions that he had sought counsel with the professor, the minister had made sure that Theseus was never far away with his top men.

*What on earth does he think I could do against Dumbledore? Let's face it, if Dumbledore wanted to, he could probably take over the entire ministry by the time he finished that cup of tea!*

Yet Theseus still questioned the wizard’s motives: he wanted to trust Dumbledore, but he felt that complete truth from the man was something he reserved for a select few.

“I have a theory, but I’m at a loss myself. Of course, you hear of muggles doing extraordinary things in times of crisis. It could be that we have a case of that… or it could be that Mr Kowalski here has hitherto unknown skills that even he himself was unaware?”
Not for the first time, Theseus understood that this was a deflection: Dumbledore was reluctant to talk more on the subject while under the watchful eye of Headmaster Dippet.

“It’s very kind of you to come to the castle to talk to my students, Auror Scamander. It’s always nice to get a professional view of the Dark Arts, and how best to defend oneself.” said headmaster Dippet, appearing suddenly at their shoulders.

It was as if Dumbledore had known, without looking, that Armando Dippet was about to walk past, even with his back to the head of the table, where Dippet had been sitting up until a moment before.

“Always happy to help.” Theseus smiled at his old headmaster as he walked past, giving a gentle wave of acknowledgement.

Dippet nodded and joined the students and other teachers heading off to start the school day.

Theseus was glad that Jacob had been so fascinated by the magically refilled plates, that he failed to notice the abrupt change in conversation.

Dumbledore lowered his voice leaning in towards Theseus “Miss Goldstein is here under the pretence that she is visiting from Macusa, although I am lead to believe that she has recently taken a position under yourself?”

Beside him, Jacob almost choked on the apple juice he was drinking, trying not to laugh, “Don’t let Newt here you say that, he might break Thes’s nose too!”

Theseus thumped Jacob on the back a little harder than was entirely necessary, trying not to laugh himself. In any other place, at any other time, he would have found the baker's jest hilarious, but the presence of so many of his old teachers, and under the pretence of work, he tried to maintain his composure.

The gentle chuckle that emanated from Dumbledore, however, tipped him over the edge.

The laughter felt good, if not childish.

The few students who had not yet left the great hall turned to look at the three of them, causing Jacob to laugh even harder. “You’re right, they do look like curtains…” Jacob wiped the tears of laughter from his eyes with the back of his sleeve.

Theseus stamped on his foot under the table, well aware that he had started acting as if he were a student, not an adult and most assuredly not the boss of an entire department of Aurors.

“Jenkins…Watson…get to class…,” Dumbledore said to the students who had stopped in the hall door.

They ducked out, leaving the three men alone at the top table, struggling to keep it together.
The sun warmed the grounds as the two men walked and talked, Theseus was growing fonder of Jacob by the day.

*You can’t dislike the man*, Theseus mused.

The baker had an easy charm about him that was a balm to the soul.

Theseus happily fell into the role of teacher and guide as Jacob fired of questions about everything from wands to Broomsticks.

“You really fly on broomsticks?”

“Why wouldn’t we?”

“Because the ground is a long way down and that’s generally where brooms like to be?”

The moving staircases and the sweeping grounds Jacob took in his stride, but the paintings talking to him seemed to confuse him, especially when a fat little knight on a horse decided to follow them for four floors demanding to take them both in a duel.

“The paintings are a little creepy.”

“The ghosts are creepier. Wait until you walk straight through one! The first time I walked through the Bloody Baron, I felt like I would never be warm again. You learn fast to avoid them.” Theseus shivered at the memory.

“Ghosts?” Jacob didn’t look impressed by this revelation. “As in chains and eternal torment kinda thing?”

“More like, slightly headless, and rather annoying.”

They came to a stop up in the north tower, perching upon a pair of oak chairs overlooking a large balcony. He had always liked to come up here as a teenager, it was quiet and away from the rest of the ruckus that was the hive of hormonal students. Newt had found him here many a time in his first year, never once telling his older brother his problems with the other student and totally unaware that Theseus already knew of the torment he endured.

“Do you think the two of them have killed each other yet?” Theseus asked with a wry grin, his thoughts wandering to his brother. He hated waiting...even more so when it involved Newt. Ever since he had sat downstairs in the manor, waiting as his mother had gone into labour, Theseus seemed to spend his life sitting outside doors, worrying and waiting for his brother.

“They’ll work it out.” Jacob sighed, “I’m rooting for them...someone deserves to get some happiness out of this messed-up situation, and I get the feeling both of them are long overdue.”

Theseus nodded.

Jacob rubbed his hands together, agitated, “--plus I dunno how much longer I can sit in a room with them undressing each other in their minds...how Queenie put up with it, I have no idea!”
Despite the man’s attempt at humour, Theseus could see his pain: the same sad look that came over Jacob whenever he mentioned the younger Goldstein sister. Theseus understood the loss that his new friend felt every time his mind went back to his lost love...he felt that pain himself whenever he thought of Leta...what could have been. “You miss her?”

“Everyday.” Jacob’s voice was heavy with emotion, “Even if I get her back, she won’t be the same...it won’t be the same. I know Newt keeps telling me she’ll come back, but I have to live with the fact that she chose Him...over me... after everything...” he stuttered to a stop, and sighed, “--it still came down to me being a no-maj, and her a witch, and us not being able to be together. Only this time, there was a choice.” Jacob ran his hands through his hair, looking worn down, now that the smile had left his face.

Theseus could see the lack of sleep etched around his soft eyes, the frustration furrowing deep lines into his forehead. “She chose Grindelwald over me...over us. It was her decision. I thought I knew her, but this ain’t the actions of my girl. We came halfway around the world to be together...” Theseus reached out taking the man by the shoulder as a tear of frustration ran down his face. “I just don’t understand how she can’t see right through him!”

She didn’t recognise the face in the mirror...she hadn’t for weeks now.

It was a straw man version of herself, hollowed out but wearing her features.

She was lost.

Her mind wandered to all the different parts of the castle, sampling the angry thoughts of the men four floors below, and the heartbroken thoughts of the woman in the next room, pining for her lost husband.

He had been taken in the flames. He had only followed because she had crossed, and now he was lost to her forever. That could have been Jacob.

The thoughts of the Widow in the next room ran through her head like a broken record, slowly torturing her...the choice she had made had taken the man she loved. As Queenie tried to block the sound, the image of the betrayal on Jacobs’ face returned to haunt her. That could have been him.

The only voice that gave her comfort belonged to Credence, and that was barely a voice at all. Instead, it was a thousand tiny echoes, all fighting to speak at the same time.

He was torn: not just physically...mentally he was pulled in thousands of different directions. It was exhausting to listen to, but she found comfort in the familiar.

Credence thought of her sister, often. Tina’s voice wrapped around every fragmented shard of his mind as he sank into the comfort of his protector.

Queenie caught snippets of thought, flashes of insight from the young man as his power grew: Credence saw Tina in places that he did not recognise, in a city he did not know. Newt was part of the interwoven web of his mind: the way the magizoologist had fought against Grindelwald to save him...someone he didn’t even know...filled his waking thoughts. Is that what bravery looks like?
Credence’s thoughts lingered on Newt: the spikes of rage he understood, if not the reason they formed in the man...the flickers of thought never quite coalescing into readable form.

The lion’s share of Credence’s thoughts lingered on the dark-haired woman...Nagini. She had understood him. Even now, parts of him searched for her...Images of her crying on the shoulder of another man...a face he didn’t know. She was safe...he found comfort in that. His thought lingered on her...a black shadow hovering over the figures he couldn’t quite see.

Queenie was never sure if Credence was ever whole...but she was sure that he wasn’t always all there.

A few nights ago, his mind spoke to her from across the hall, as if he stood right next to her in the darkness, telling her that Tina was safe...

The night before last, it spoke of Dragons and a feeling that he couldn’t put his finger on.

Last night, his voice was fractured: thoughts not meant for her ... but a boiling cauldron of his own reasoning and personal torture that she had tuned into, like so many times before.

Part of him searching for Nagini, part of him calling out for Tina. His voice echoed the same words over and over: Lost...Gone...

This was how she had found herself looking in the reflection, her face unrecognisable in the mirror that sat in the corner of Credence’s room.

Exhausted, Queenie had gotten up and crossed the hall to his room, crawling into the bed beside him and cradling his head until the rogue thoughts gathered back into his own mind.

He cried for an hour solid, sense unobtainable from the jumbled mass of thousands of parts of him pulling back together.

She soothed him as best she could and waited.

His pain echoed her own, but they had made this decision.

It was too late.

It was almost an hour more before he opened his eyes. It was one more after that before he opened his hand... showing Queenie the thin shard of mirrored glass that lay within it.`
told you not to put the pins away just yet...

thank you so much for all the lovely feedback on the last chapter, you made my grumpy heart happy...

also if anyone has any fanart of tina and newt please hit me up...

also whoever it was that sent out a fic recommendation on Tumbler for me. You... yes you get a cookie, it's only been nibbled on a bit by a niffler.

as ever thank you so much to Sara, who has to sort my ramblings before you get them, I couldn't ask for a better beta.

you know where the comments live...

x grumps
Cherry

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Newt followed her lead as Tina pulled him closer, her grip on the back of his neck tightening. He was sure that she would leave small, finger-sized bruises, but they would be his proudest battle scars, imprinted on his flesh by the woman that had well and truly claimed her place under his skin, and deep in his heart.

How had he fallen so hard and so fast?

He couldn’t even begin to fathom the ways that she had reached in and taken his heart in her hands, but he hoped that from now on, she understood exactly how delicate that part of him was...he didn’t know if he could stand to have it ripped out of his chest again.

Outside his case, the world could be falling apart: destruction and madness descending upon them, death and despair...Newt didn’t care, as long as he had this moment, this feeling of her in his arms...his name upon her lips, sneaking out in a low moan of contentment that escaped when they came up for air.

Newt stroked her back through the thick wool coat, his inhibitions tumbling under the effects of the Veritaserum. He wondered how she would react if he listened to the little voice that urged him to slip the offending garment from her shoulders...it was restricting his exploration. Would she mind? He didn’t think so.

One way to find out...

He gently moved his hand up her back, tugging the supple wool as he brushed another kiss across her lips. Tina slid her hands from his neck, shrugging off the coat, sighing against his mouth as the heavy fabric glided across her skin. It pooled around her on the surface of the desk, covering some of the destruction that had occurred in the wake of their reunion.

Well, she didn’t slap you. She might...if she knew what you want to do to her right now.

He wanted to feel her pressed against him...wanted to know what it felt like to have her legs wrapped tightly around him the way they had a million times in his mind. The layers of clothing between them was a barrier that no longer needed to exist.

Emboldened by the Veritaserum, Newt ran his hand across her waist, fingers rucking up her shirt, delving beneath the hem to stroke the soft skin at the base of her spine...lifting her towards him.

Tina moved into his touch, her lips seeking out his own as he pressed her further into the desk, causing her to hitch her legs around his waist for support.

I won’t let you fall, Tina, trust me.

Tina’s hands delved blindly in the space between them, as he whispered feather-light kisses along the curve of her jaw. When he felt her long, delicate fingers pop the buttons of his waistcoat, and shove it off of his shoulders, he murmured his assent...there were still far too many layers between them. As the waistcoat fell to the floor, she slid his braces free from his shoulders, sending a sudden urge...a burning desire to get as close to her as possible...coursing through every part of him.
He sighed against the long column of her throat, weak-kneed as he braced her against the desk beneath them...aware that, while he had the upper hand, she was the one in charge.

If she wasn’t careful he was going to …

*You can’t, Newt! She deserves better than you taking her over a desk, under the influence of a bloody potion… no matter how much you want too!*

Her skin was so soft under his touch...her warmth pressing up against him as she wriggled to pull him closer...her hands slipping under his shirt, exploring each patch of scars they encountered...every touch coercing him, bending him around her every want and need. He wanted to see her...as he had in the images that Ursula had etched into his mind...dishevelled, unburdened and undone.

Tina shifted, moving against the parts of him that longed for her most as she did so. She was gloriously flushed...as lost in this as he was, the rhythm and press of their movements making her spill his name from her lips again with a gentle moan.

The buttons of his shirt were forgotten as she tugged the shirt up and over his head, tracing the scars on his chest. It felt as if she were confirming that he was indeed the real deal, making sure that each and every scar were where she had left it.

Newt could feel her urgency as she explored his skin with her hands...her lips. He ran a hand over her stomach and hip, tracing the delicate curves he had yet to fully explore, eliciting a soft sigh that was followed by a low groan of frustration from Tina’s lips against his skin, as she arched her hips into him more, inviting him to go further.

She drew back from him, lifting her own blouse over her head, and Newt started, stunned by the expanse of creamy skin, barely covered by a rose silk bandeau.

Tina smirked devilishly, an impatient, hungry look in her eyes, as if she had finally found her prey, and there would be no escape for him now...not if the beast who currently enthralled him had her way.

*But it might be the Veritaserum … the effects were wearing off now, the doubt creeping back into his mind, But it could be all her…*

*What if it’s the Veritaserum doing this not her? She deserves better than this...my Tina deserves better than this, no matter what I want.*

His eyes roved across the skin she had offered up to him, battling the urge to kiss her flesh, to explore all of the new territory that she offered him.

*That scar on her side, how had that gotten there?*

*Does the skin on her stomach taste the same as her lips?*

He was fighting the Veritaserum in earnest now. This wasn’t him.

Yes, his mind had gone to these places, a million times before, but he had managed to restrain himself before, he would manage again, even if every bit of friction that Tina generated against him caused delicious sensations that shook his resolve.

*It’s not right...not like this.*

*She wants you to!*
But does she? She thought she wanted Achilles …

No, we aren’t him. We would never…

His fingers skinned across the silver scar that ran parallel to her ribcage…Tina practically purred under his touch.

Newt’s broken hand gently held her steady, and Tina quivered as his lips found the soft skin along her collar bone, tracing the pale flesh down the gentle arch, exploring parts that until moments ago had only been glimpsed in small doses as the two of them had fumbled around exploring each other’s nuances. His stubble felt rough as it ghosted over her heart, lips caressing the newly discovered territory.

For the first time, Tina realised that the creature curling around her insides whenever Newt was near, wasn’t a separate entity… it was her desire, lust, and passion taking on a form all its own, helping her to cope with the stark realization that she was falling in love.

Right now it took control, reacting to the touch it has wanted for so long: it hooked its claws into each hungry kiss, dragging Newt closer, determined not to let him go…not this time. The serum pushed her forward, searching for the conclusion that flashed in her mind the moment the words I love you had left his lips.

Tina could feel his arousal through his trousers when he pressed her against the desk, and she couldn’t fight her natural reaction to shift against him, seeking a deeper fit against him, and the waves of pleasure that the motion caused. It was reassuring to know that he wanted her just as much as she wanted him, and she wanted all of him.

Her hands worked of their own accord, trailing the long scar that meandered down his chest, and beneath the waistband of his pants…fumbling slightly as she reached for button of his waistband, her fingers gently teasing him through the fabric.

“Tina,” he breathed, as he pulled back from his exploration of her now almost bare chest.

“Newt?” she asked coyly.

Newt’s pupils were so dilated they almost consumed the entirety of his iris, eating away the glorious swirls of colour that she could get lost in for hours as they talked.

“As much as I want to ravage you, and believe me I really do--”

“Then do it!” she almost yelled, her frustration driving her nearly to despair. This wasn’t the time for Newt to be… well… Newt.

“This is the Veritaserum, not us.”

“So you don’t want--” Stupid Newt… stupid facts… stupid truth.
“-- Tina I do…I very much do … but not like this…” His thumbs traced patterns on her bare abdomen as he spoke, causing sparks of electricity to ignite in every inch of her, “Obviously… I, we … I …” Newt fumbled his words. Are the effects of the potion starting to diminish?

“You’re worried.” She could read it in his expression. What happened with Tolliver…happened under the influence. You’re scared that this might be the same, aren’t you? She cupped his face compassionately, not needing to ask the question out loud.

“Despite what I say about the subject, yes…I am worried,”

How could she ever have thought that this man didn’t want her? His face said it all: worried about overstepping her boundaries…of-of violating her…even when she was so willing, he refused to risk her trust. Nobody had ever care about her this much before.

**Newt Scamander ever the Gentleman!**

She wouldn’t have him any other way, even if the frustration that had built up inside her made her want to rip the last few layers of clothing away from him.

*Why does his reasoning have to be so sound?!*

“I promise-” he reached up, taking her hand in his own, and lifting it to his lips, before gently kissing her wrist. “- we will resume this later, but I couldn’t live with myself if we went further now.” He kissed along the inside forearm, working his way back to her shoulder with his lips.

The part of her that was still controlled by the serum was disappointed.

The part of her that was slipping from the serum’s grasp was less so.

Why did Newt…and his logic…have to be right, even if every last bit of her wanted nothing more than to finally feel them connected? She knew this wasn’t right. Not like this.

The grip of the Veritaserum was fading more noticeably now. Thankfully, the words that had needed to be said were now out. She hoped that they would never need it again.

Newt nuzzled her neck, his good hand drawing gentle circles along her spine,

She closed her eyes, wondering how could something as simple as his breath on her neck, and the feeling of his calloused fingers, be so soothing, yet make every part of her feel alive.

“Newt?”

“Mhuh?” he muttered into her neck.

*Is he smelling me? He is…he’s sniffing my neck! Mercy Lewis, I love this weirdo.*

“Did you mean it…”

He lifted his face from the crook of her neck. “What part?…”

She locked eyes with him, noting that his pupils had almost returned to normal now…the green and gray dancing around the darkness again, rather than retreating into nothingness.

“The bit where I love you… or the bit where I make love to you over my desk, because …” his cheeks flushed slightly, *oh you adorable fool…MY adorable fool! “well…yes…to both.” He at least had the decency to blush.*
The effects of the serum had finally dissipated...she knew Newt would be the same: this was all him talking...red-faced, adorable, bumbling Newt.

The flush ran down his neck and chest, making the scars stand out even more across his skin.

Tina didn’t want to spook him. She wanted to get to know this Newt... her Newt, because this was her Newt.

Other woman might want a prince charming, sweeping in and saving them on a white stallion, but all she had ever wanted was somebody to understand that she didn’t need saving.

Tina goldstein was quite capable of saving herself, thank you very much! But sometimes...just sometimes, life would be a bit more interesting with a few dragons in it.

"Maybe next time, we clear the desk first? I’m a little concerned that I might have bent your microscope--"

"Next time?" An eager hope darted across his face before he caught himself, blushing furiously.

Tina chuckled, "Yes...next time! We are adults Newt. This is what adults do when they’re in a relationship… "

"What? Strip each other inside magical suitcases? Play hide the microscope?" his voice oozed with sarcasm.

She batted his chest playfully. "Very funny Mr Scamander, but you know what I mean."

"You used the word adult and relationship in the same sentence, and I think it was addressed to us. I think that may be the first time anyone has referred to me as an adult … and as for the relationship bit…” he grinned at her "that sounds rather official."

"It does, doesn't it? I kind of like it.” she said, smiling so widely that her cheeks ached from the force it.

“I suppose seeing as we're almost naked, it's probably a little late, but...we don’t exactly do things in the right order, you and I, do we?” he nudged her nose with his own, "I would really rather like to court you Tina, that is...if you don’t mind?"

“I don’t mind at all, but...... you’d better ask the bosses if they approve of the idea.”

Newt gave her a puzzled look. “The bosses?”

Tina nodded, trying to keep her face composed, and gently turned his head so he could see the shelf by the door…

It was hard to tell who was more incensed… the small fuzzy ball of rage, or the angry stick.

Pickett clicked away indignantly in the face of his tree’s betrayal.

Einstein glared at his nest for attaching itself to the stick’s tree.

Tina’s discarded shirt hung haphazardly from a book on the shelf by the niffler’s head.

She couldn’t remember if the creature had been in her pocket when they had entered the case or not.

From Pickett's crumpled leaves, she suspected that the poor bowtruckle had been caught in the lustful
crossfire.

The look of pure betrayal on the face of the two creatures was equal parts adorable and frightening.

“Maybe we should talk to them?” Newt offered.

Tina burst into laughter. She couldn’t help it... it was one of the funniest things she had ever seen.

Newt gently untangled himself from her, stepping towards the creatures. “Listen…Pick, you have to stop getting so angry. Tina isn’t going to hurt me! This is a perfectly normal thing…”

“Please don’t tell me you are about to give the ‘birds and the bees’ talk to a bowtruckle, because if you are I may die of secondhand embarrassment!” Tina gingerly slipped her feet back to the floor, not quite sure if she trusted her own legs at this moment in time.

“Oh he knows all about that…You can be quite the ladies man can’t you Picket?”

The bowtruckle’s eyes thinned to tiny slits as he crossed his arms in front of what Tina presumed was his chest.

At the bowtruckles side, Einstein was in the process of pulling the yellow neckerchief out of his pouch, determinedly looking the other direction.

“Now both of you! This is no way to behave! Pickett, we both love you, and two trees are better than one, right?” She reached up and unhooked her top from the book that hung precariously on the shelf, gently pushing it back into position. Slipping the still-buttoned shirt back over her head, she offered the top pocket to Pickett.

He pouted at her petulantly.

She stood there looking at him, holding the pocket open with her finger, and nodding for him to get in.

Pickett looked from Newt to the Niffler on the shelf next to him, weighing up his options, before finally acquiescing, and jumping cautiously into the Tina-annex of his tree. He continued to chatter away angrily to himself as he made himself comfortable.

Tina turned her attention back to the small ball of anger that was watching the proceedings with curious side eye. “Now Einey,,I know you like to collect people...Newt is the biggest, shiniest precious I have. Don’t you want to have mom’s favourite shiney in your collection?”

The Niffler sniffed the air, moving a step closer.

“If Picket will let me share his tree, I think you should share my shiney, don’t you?” Tina said quietly, looking sternly into Einstein’s big brown eyes.

She felt Newt duck down to pick his shirt up off the floor, and heard the rustle of fabric as he slid it back over his head and fumbled with his waistcoat.

She resisted the temptation to look at Newt, instead focusing on her silent battle of wills with the tiny niffler. *This is how it has to be, Einey. I can’t lose him now!* she silently pleaded.

Einstein huffed a resigned sigh, edged towards Newt, and with a well-timed jump, crossed over the tiny gap, landing on Newt’s shoulder. He scuttled down across Newt’s broken hand, and followed the glint of the pocket watch into Newt’s waistcoat.
Newt looked up at her when he finished stroking the Niffler under the chin,

Tina wasn’t sure, but thought it might be a look of pride that adorned his face.

He lifted his good hand for her to take, no words needed as he intertwined their fingers.

Nodding up to the exit of the case he sighed contently. “We should show our faces,” he said, tugging her gently towards the ladder.

“Do we have to?”

“I think it would be best...we don’t want Thes thinking… actually let him think what he wants! We are adults…and this is an 'adult relationship'...right?” he mocked, making air quotes as best as he could with a broken hand.

“Oh very funny.”

“Come on let’s get you some coffee...you are probably going to need it once Thes starts. How many ‘I told you so’s’ do you think he can get in before lunch?”

“I have no idea but I have a feeling we will never hear the end of it. Do i have your permission to jinx him?” She dropped his hand as they climbed the ladder.

“You have my permission to jinx, hex, and torment…only...if you ever get the urge to do that chair thing again, please let me be there, because his face was priceless!”

Once they were back in the Hufflepuff guest room, they clicked the lock on the case. Tina double checked it, just to be sure. Even empty, it wasn't a good habit to start forgetting to lock it now.

“Never letting me forget that, are you?”

“No...not ever!” She grinned as Newt filled the gap between them, careful not to disturb the niffler, or squash the pocket where Pickett now sat. His lips were soft, but tender against her own. Finally, they were on the same page.

“Love you.” He ghosted the words on her lips as they parted.

In her pocket, Pickett mocked him in his high-pitched tone.

Both of them looked down, receiving an angry snort and a raspberry from the top of her pocket

“I’ve always meant to ask…..can you actually understand Pickett?”

Chapter End Notes

Me and my beta struggled with this chapter.
I have second hand embarrassment reading it... make the most of it ... normal plot will resume soon... but character development actually called for a little bit of smut.

As ever love all the comments and good vibes .
Sara has worked her socks of on this one.

Nothing but love for a fantastic beta x

See you in th next one.
“Infuriating...that’s what it is! Newton, you should know better. “ Theseus felt like he was Newt's father sometimes, not his older brother. He knew full well that the words he uttered were falling on deaf ears. He hadn’t been sure what he expected when Newt and Tina had finally come out of hiding, but he had expected something...

Right now the two of them sat across the desk from each other as they waited in Dumbledore's office for the man to finish his morning classes.

Not a single word had been said when Theseus and Jacob had found the two of them emerging from the kitchens. Tina, picking the blueberries out of the muffin in her hand, had merely smiled as Newt explained the basic principles of house-elf magic, helping her through the portrait hole.

There had been no apology for dragging them through the stress of the last twenty-four hours, no explanation to what had been said between the two of them.

In fact, the two of them were acting as if nothing at all had happened. After a quick aside to Jacob, both men had determined that the lack of reaction was too suspicious.

“He ain’t buttoned his shirt right.” Jacob observed.

*I’m a bloody auror...how did I miss that?* Theseus *chilled himself* “ True, but then some days I’m surprised he manages to tie his own shoes,”

Newt had been showing Tina the painting of his namesake, that hung on the wall at the bottom of the stairs, oblivious to his brother and best friend.

Jacob and Theseus stood behind them, trying to work out what exactly had happened. They theorised all the way up to the long corridor that held the Defence Against the Dark Arts classroom, Tina and Newt always a few steps ahead...just out of earshot.

When they let themselves into the office, Tina and Newt had silently taken seats on either side of the large desk, Newt sliding into Dumbledore's vacant chair, his eyes casting over the half-finished game of Chess.

The baker had slid in next to Tina, and Theseus was instantly reminded of his parents getting dragged into a teacher's office, Newt having done something so stupid that they had to get involved.

That, above everything else, had made him start to feel a lot older than his years.

It also made him feel the urge to lecture the two of them: after all, it was his job to tidy up their mess, *apparently*.

Jacob shook his head and absent-mindedly spun the gold planetarium on the desk, his disposition
improved greatly since he had unburdened some of his load on Theseus's sympathetic ear,

“I think they get it Thes’...no more --and I quote-- ‘buggering off and not telling any bugger where you're buggering off too? That sound about right?”

Newt chuckled, his eyes darting to the brunette across the table before speaking “That was quite an accurate--”

“I don’t sound like that.” Theseus snapped.

“You do say bugger quite a lot Thes’,” Jacob added helpfully.

Tina suppressed a chortle of agreement, her eyes dancing with something he had never seen before. She grinned as she turned to look at Theseus. “You do! But then, you Brits do talk funny!” she said, finally releasing a chuckle.

“It’s, you talk funny, sir,” Theseus reminded her.

“Not when, we aren't at work, SIR.” She bit at her bottom lip, glancing sidelong at his brother.

The look on Newt’s face spoke volumes...his eyes were wide with adoration.

Why do I suddenly feel like work is going to become a lot more interesting, and Jacob’s right...they are exhausting! Just what happened this morning?

Theseus cleared his throat loudly, about to comment on the couple’s behaviour, when a large silver object glinted into existence in the corner of the room, making them all jump.

A large silver Sphynx stood looking at them. It boomed in Ade’s voice, “Nagini is here, as is the family. Newton, what is this I hear about you having kept a Kelpie in a jam jar?! I expect you all for tea at six sharp, no excuses...bring Albus if you have to.” His Grandfather's Patronus dispersed in to vapour as the four of them stared at the spot where the creature once stood.

“Couldn’t just send an owl could he?” Theseus shook his head, exasperated.

Their grandfather was so dramatic sometimes, even if there was sound logic in sending a message this way, he couldn't help but think that Ade sometimes did things just for show.

Jacob looked to Theseus for answers about what had just happened, but Tina beat him to it.

“That was an impressive Patronus! I guess your gramps found a sphynx then.” Tina addressed Newt, who continued to stare into the vacant corner where the Patronus once stood, “So do they prefer wet or dry food?”

Why did Theseus feel like this was part of a conversation that wasn’t meant for him? His little brother grinned at her. “Oh, so you were paying attention then...”

“I am an Auror... Newton, I can do more than one thing at a time, you know.”

Newt looked like he was about to say something back but Jacob cut across him with a frustrated grunt. “Anyone gonna fill the No-maj in on what the hell that was ?” Jacob’s looks of exasperation at his surrogate sister made his face take on the same desperate look that had crossed his face only this morning when the talk had turned to Queenie.

Theseus didn’t like to see his friend distressed, even if he understood the emotion. Jacob was such a positive force of nature. When he felt low, it sucked the light and hope out of the room.
“It was a Patronus,” Theseus replied patiently, “It’s a kind of spell. We use them for protection, or in this case, to send communications. Grandad was just letting us know Brandy and Bishop got Nagini to him safely. Although I’m not sure where we are going to go, now that the fleece is compromised.”

“At least we don’t have Macusa chasing us anymore,” Tina offered up.

“No...just a bloody great bunch of murdering arseholes... should be a cakewalk now!” Theseus said sarcastically.

Jacob shook his head, “What are we gonna do Thes? What’s the plan?”

Theseus shrugged, for once in his life he didn’t have one.

Credence found comfort in the blond witch. She didn’t ask questions...didn’t judge him or skirt around him in fear. Queenie had seen what he was capable of doing, but she showed no contempt or trepidation in his presence.

Queenie’s face lingered in memory, the day that his life had shredded into a million wriggling shards of darkness.

She sat now in the large chair that overlooked the mountain range, her wand lay discarded on the small reading table to her side. Her hands lay on her stomach fingers entwined as she watched the snow falling gently outside.

It was spring, but the warmth didn’t reach this far up into the mountains. When the sun did come out, it barely touched the snow-capped peaks. It was a bleak place, but Queenie made it seem less desolate than it would be if he had to be here alone.

“You look, tired, honey.” She patted the chair across from her, and he followed her prompt. Sleep hadn’t been easy, the churning and splintering of his mind wearing him down. He missed Nagini. The little bits of him that searched for her had lost sight of her somewhere in the haze and fog that had been created in some sort of panic. He could feel himself trying to locate her: every time he felt the gentle caress of sleep take him, another part of him would jerk to attention, a sight, a smell, a taste of her in the air.

Placing his own wand on the side table he sunk into the available seat. He couldn’t get used to having a wand, somewhere for the raw power to go. He knew from reading that a wand should be an extension himself, but the dark wood didn’t feel right in his hand, almost as if it wasn’t part of him at all. It was as if he were playing at being a wizard, and the stick that he had been using turned out to be a snake.

“It’s ok, honey... you will get it.” The blond looked at him, her eyes dancing in the flickering light of the sun that fought its way through the clouds. It danced through the snow, casting strange hypnotic shapes across the expanse of glass. He didn’t have to try and find the words with Queenie, she just picked them out of his head, and for that he was grateful. If he were to have to try and put the feelings into words he knew he would fail.

“You still out there ?” the blond nodded at the world outside the window.

_Somewhere._
He concentrated on the snippets that he had collected, lingered on the images that his shattered self had collected: a castle...soul-crushing pain...green eyes...chaos. Strangers, or at least people he didn’t yet know, faces swimming in and out of focus in a jumble of shapes and emotions. The images were not clear. The shards of him that had been scattered were not able to focus on just the one thing. It wasn’t a picture, more an idea, vague images, snippets of outside life, the parts of him that didn’t want to be tied down to a physical being.

He looked up at Queenie, as she wiped the tear that had fallen from her eye on the back of her hand. “You saw my Jacob,” she whispered more to herself than him.

His mind circled back through the glimpses that the other vagrant parts of him found. It settled on a face, a handsome man...tall, slim, mousy-haired. Was that Jacob?

“No, go back one,” the witch said as the images shifted in his mind.

The mousy blond hair of the man in his mind’s eye shifted and the face of a short dark-haired man took its place. He looked tormented, shouting at an unseen entity. Credence wished that he could fathom words through the snippets but it was too fragmented and far away to hear.

He recognised this face, it had been in the subway that night, this man had a kind soul, he had felt that even then, maybe that was why a sliver of him had adhered to the man, following him silently.

Queenie closed her eyes, tears trailing down her delicate doll-like face.

He wasn’t even sure if she saw the images as he did, but he knew that she felt the emotion that came along with each one.

“He can’t find out about this Credence...what you can do...it’s too dangerous. I don’t know what he would do to you.” It was just a whisper her eyes firmly closed as she hung on to the image in his mind.

Who? Grindelwald?

The woman nodded.

Credence wasn’t stupid. Naive yes, but stupidity got you killed. Queenie was right...he had to keep this hidden. He already knew he was a part of the machine, but right now this grasp on the outside world, the parts of him that wouldn’t return home, they were at least a potential means to escape.

Once he had been sure he could trust her, he quickly sought the truth about New York. If he had known that Grindelwald was responsible...that he was impersonating Graves...

I would have done what exactly? I knew nothing of my own kind. Just that there was a way out and I took it. Why didn’t i reach out to Tina? Everything would be so different, I might finally know who I really am!

“He wants to see you later.” The woman didn’t open her eyes, “You feeling up to it?”

Credence shrugged, well aware that she couldn’t see his reaction.

Does he still think I believe him?

Queenie shrugged.

In his hand, a small blue ball of flame danced across his fingertips, it was cool to the touch but his
skin tingled wherever it landed.

“Best not let him see you do that either. He still thinks your magic’s wild. The longer you keep him thinking that, the better... for both of us.” She hadn’t opened her eyes, her hands resting on her stomach as her head lolled back in the chair.

He noticed the untouched food on the large table between them for the first time, she hadn’t eaten again today, she needed to keep her strength up.

There’s more than just you to worry about.

“That’s not for you to stress your pretty little head about,” she sniffed.

“Queenie please eat,” he said quietly as he observed the bags under her eyes. The castle was keeping her awake, he was keeping her awake at night.

“I don’t want it, you have it,” she said meekly.

"You have to eat," he pleaded. She was his only source of comfort in this dank place, and he needed her to keep afloat on the sea of nothingness that was his own loneliness.

“I don’t have to do anything,” she said, her voice harsh and cold.

“I know you don’t, but please, do it for us!” When she got like this, he was so strongly reminded of Modesty, but she was a child. She could go on like this. Queenie was a fully grown woman... this was crazy.

“I’m not crazy,” she muttered harshly, gritting her teeth.

“Really? Because the only person here who actually gives a damn about you, who is trying to look out for you, is telling you to eat and you are ignoring him...I would say that’s textbook crazy.”

“Maybe we best get you some new textbooks.” she snapped, her eyes opening as she grabbed her wand and got to her feet. “ I am not a child... and I am not crazy.”

“Then stop acting like both then!”

Credence got to his feet following her lead, as she stalked out the room and towards the corridor that housed both of their rooms.

“Stop following me,” she snarled at him over her shoulder.

We both know that isn’t going to happen Queenie, so why do you keep fighting me when I try to help?

She stopped so quickly he walked into the back of her.

“Queenie?” he asked aloud as she wobbled into his chest. “Queenie?” he asked again quietly as he felt her body start to violently shake.

It took a few moments before he realised she had begun to sob. Unsure what to do, he pulled her into him, trying to comfort her.

Come on, let’s get you to your room, it’ll be no good if one of the others see you in this state. They already think we’re the weakest links.
It came in useful sometimes, communicating without speaking. He gently pushed her into the direction of her room, aware that at any second one of the more unsavoury residents of the castle could round the corner.

When the door to the room clicked closed behind them, Queenie sunk to the floor, slipping from his arms as the sobs fell freely now.

Sliding his back down the door, he joined her on the floor stretching one arm around her to pull her his side. I know you aren’t crazy, but you need to eat, I need you to eat. Jacob needs you healthy. We ALL need you healthy.

Queenie shrunk into his side, sobbing onto his shoulder, and he held her the way she had held him, waiting for her to pull the bits of herself back together. They couldn’t show weakness now… to do so might get them killed, and right now he was still trying to pull himself back together from the last time.

As she listened to Dumbledore, Tina could feel Theseus staring at the back of her head. She felt a little like she was on an assessment, and being observed.

When Dumbledore had joined them, the man had beamed at Newt before shooing him out of his seat. Newt had rounded the table and stood beside Tina’s chair. That had been over twenty minutes ago, if the small dial on the side of one of Dumbledore’s contraptions were to be believed.

At the moment, Newt perched precariously on the arm of Tina’s seat. It was taking all of her energy to stay focused on what Dumbledore was saying, and not the close proximity of the man that, only an hour ago, had been half naked and on top of her. She was trying her hardest to follow the conversation, but her eyelids felt heavy, sleep was starting to catch up with her, and she just wanted to curl up in Newt’s arms for just a hour’s rest. But she would settle for a gentle snooze in the beam of light that warmed her through the window. The only thing that was stopping her from doing just that was the burning feeling she was being watched. She shoved it to the back of her mind…it was probably just the overprotective eye of Jacob, of the questioning eyes of Theseus, who had watched them like a hawk since they had left the kitchen.

“So…this obscurial in Rio, do we have any more information?” Dumbledore asked the Scamanders over the top of his arched fingers.

Newt’s voice made her jump slightly when he spoke, her mind starting from the dull call of sleep that had crept upon her.

“The infinite possibility machine takes time, but the logic is sound...or as sound as anything Ade Scamander can ever put his name against.”

“Well, that at least gives us some sort of plan, or at least a start,” Dumbledore said, looking towards Theseus as if waiting for the man to say something,

Tina found herself doing the same thing.

“Yes…the logic may be sound, Newt…but I don’t hold much hope for something that can blow itself up, then meet itself again a week before the incident to compare notes,” Theseus replied.
Tina smiled her own little secret smile. Theseus was so easy to read, after all the time she had spent trying to understand Newt.

“Well at the moment, It’s the only lead we have so...unless you have another idea?” Newt address Theseus over the top of her head.

The latter shook his head, defeated, as clueless as the rest of them on how to proceed.

“Then it’s settled! Return to Dracholm, and I shall join you this evening after my last class, and we can discuss this further.”

Around her, the men started to move towards the door, but Tina remained, eyes fixed upon Dumbledore.

“What about the pact?” Tina found her voice, addressing the professor as he made his way from behind his desk.

“Thank you for reminding me. I must arrange for Bishop to have a look at it, as he often sees what Wizards do not. He may be able to illuminate the situation.” Dumbledore's hand flicked to the pocket that held the trinket.

The motion was so quick that Tina only noticed because she was waiting for it.

“However that is not currently our main concern, we need to find out as much as we can about Mr Barebone. Whatever Grindelwald’s plan, our friend appears to be the crux of it's execution. Our only consolation is that Miss Goldstein is with him, and I believe that may be a blessing, as well as our curse.”

Tina bit back the response that had formed, this wasn’t the time, How dare he call Queenie a curse!

Newt must have felt her annoyance, because he moved closer to her, putting a barrier between herself and Dumbledore.

“May I have a private word with Newton and Porpentina?” Dumbledore asked Theseus and Jacob.

What does he want to speak to just the two of us for? Tina wondered.

When Jacob and Theseus had taken there leave, Dumbledore fixed his gaze upon herself and Newt.

“Albus?” she prompted when the man did not speak immediately.

“Gellert has taken an interest in the two of you,” he sighed. “He has always been aware of my fondness for you Newt. You are someone that he has no hope of manipulating. You only do what you believe to be right...as do you, Tina.” His words were tinged with regret.

“He will find a way to use what he can against you both.” He gave her a mournful look, “He has your sister...he will use that against you. He is not afraid to use our own emotions against us.”

“This isn’t news, Dumbledore...we knew this already.”

“Yes but you both need to be prepared for when he tries to use recent developments between the two of you as part of his manipulation.” The look on his face was an echo of the sadness he had shown last night as they talked about Dumbledore’s own attachment to Grindelwald. “Sometimes our biggest weakness, and our greatest strengths are one and the same, I, more than others, understand this...as does Gellert. He will try and use it against you.”
“He can try,” Newt growled

“...and he will.”

“He already has! He knew exactly what he was doing in Paris, and we lost Leta because of it.” Tina wanted to reach out to calm Newt down, but that was exactly the thing Dumbledore was trying to warn them against.

The older wizard’s hand went to the pocket that Tina knew held the pact: it was becoming a nervous habit, and needed to be gotten rid of as soon as possible.

“We need to work out why he was so desperate to get you all in the same place at the same time. It cannot be a coincidence, Gellert does not chance, his every move is far too calculated for that.”

And you would know all about calculated, wouldn’t you? It wasn’t a harsh thought, but she hated herself for even thinking it, she was growing to like Dumbledore even if his methods were somewhat machiavellian.

“We need to get Miss Goldstein and Mr. Barebone back with us: both may be vital in the next move against Grindelwald...both in terms of power, and knowledge!”

“Nothing to do with the fact that it’s Tina’s sister, or that Credence doesn’t deserve to be manipulated, then?” Newt said through gritted teeth, glaring at Dumbledore.

“It has everything to do with that Newton.” The calmness that the older Wizard was projecting slipped, his voice wavering at Newt’s outburst.

“Then maybe, just maybe, lead with that in the future.”

Tina did reach out this time, placing her hand over Newt’s trembling one as it gripped the edge of the chair, his knuckles turning white.

Dumbledore’s eyes fell upon the gesture, watching as Newt unclenched his grip and offered the palm of his hand to Tina’s outstretched one.

“You know I respect you Dumbledore. You have never once lost faith in me, despite my stupid decisions. But I have, and I always will tell you when you cross the line.” Newt gave her hand a reassuring squeeze. “Queenie and Credence are not pawns, they are people, they are our family our friends. Forget that, and you are no better than him.”

Tina watched as the two men stared each other down. To Tina’s surprise, it was Dumbledore who looked away first.

“As ever, you are right, Newt,” he sighed, “Knowledge is a burden, and one does sometimes lose sight of what is important.”

Newt nodded. He looked calmer, now that he had called out Dumbledore’s shortcomings.

Tina had a feeling this wasn’t the first time. It surprised her...that Newt stood up to the man when
nobody else would, she would not have expected this dynamic yet here it was.

“Dinner is at six, don’t be late. Ursula will only take it out on the rest of us.”

Tina found herself being pulled to her feet, Newt not taking his eyes off his old professor.

Dumbledore didn’t speak, as if he knew that this was the end of the conversation. He nodded his acknowledgement to dinner, watching as the two of them headed to the door.

When Tina pulled the door closed behind them she finally spoke. “You do that often?”

Newt smiled grimly “Sometimes even the best of us need to be told when we go too far.”

Chapter End Notes

as always thank you, Sara, for taking time out to beta...

see you all in the next one

grumps
With feet sinking into the soft sand, and the cool breeze ruffling her hair, Tina followed Newt across the beach and towards the clearing in the woods ahead.

The sweet smell of the moorland heather drifted to her on the briny gusts that ruffled the trees and made the leaves rustle with a gentle hum over the bay.

There was a serenity in the triangle. Tina couldn't be sure where it emanated from, until she saw the look of relief on Rhea Scamander’s face as both of her son’s came into view. It was a family's love. It reached every part of the rolling hills and wooded headland: each tiny alcove where the sea and the sand collided, each and every pebble that dotted the rocky shoreline, it was all touched by so much unconditional love it washed over anyone who entered its boundary.

The same something spoke to her from a long forgotten memory, making her miss her own mother in ways she hadn’t considered in a long time.

Rhea’s stricken face filled Tina with sadness. Watching the older woman as she pulled her oldest son into her grip, trying to get as much of him into her arms as physically possible. It tugged at each and every part of an already emotionally strained and tired mind. The look of hopelessness that crossed the woman's face, made Tina almost want to cry.

“It’s okay mum,” Theseus said from the depths of the hug.

Tina wasn’t sure if his voice was muffled because of the bone-crunching embrace, or from emotion...it could well have been a mixture of both.

“Don’t lie to your mother,” Rhea said to him softly, smoothing the hair on the back of Theseus’s head. “It won’t be alright for a long time.” She placed a tender kiss on the top of his head. “But we will get through it, Theseus ...because that’s what Scamander’s do.” Behind Theseus’s back, Rhea waved them on towards Dracholm.

Tina nodded in recognition: Rhea wanted to be alone with her son.

Tina felt a wave of guilt. They had dragged Theseus through all of their trauma, and he was still mourning the loss of Leta. He hadn’t really grieved...hadn’t stopped for two minutes to actually contemplate the loss. No wonder he had broken down. This was the first time he had seen his mother since it had happened.

Tina felt awful for being so unyieldingly selfish. She nudged Newt and Jacob towards the house, aware that the two men were probably oblivious to Rhea’s request.

They both followed her lead, not questioning her directions, and falling into step behind her.

The sun lit the treehouse with a pleasant glow, warming Tina’s heart. As she pushed the door open, the quiet was broken by the sound of voices drifting along the corridor from the kitchen. The three of
them followed the noise until Ade stepped out in front of them, stopping abruptly in front of Tina, an indignant expression on his face.

“I asked you to do one thing, Tina...one bloody thing!” he growled at her.

Tina’s heart sank: he had asked her not to break Newt’s heart, and then, less than twelve hours later, that was exactly what she had done.

She already felt awful about Theseus, she forgot about how much chaos she had caused to Newt’s family. But everything is fine now! She tried to convey her thoughts in a look, but she wasn’t sure if Ade understood.

“Dad, leave them alone! They’ve only just walked through the door,” Arty said, breaking the tension.

Tina peered hopefully around Ade, look for the source of the voice.

Newt’s father was leaning against the wooden table in the centre of the kitchen, flicking through a newspaper that lay open before him. He hadn’t taken his eyes from the newsprint as they walked in.

Ade muttered under his breath, making him even less intelligible to Tina’s untrained ear: she chose to take that as a blessing, even more so when Ade took Arty’s advice and stepped to one side.

Newt looked at her, confusion etched on his features as he tried to work out his grandfather's words. Trying to read her expression, his eyes bored into her own as if he was trying to pick the answer out of them.

Behind Newt, Ade gave out a triumphant chuckle. “Oh, hold on...ignore me, I know nowt, as you were... young un’s, honestly! It was all so much easier in my day...” he shook his head and wandered over to join Arty at the table.

For the first time, Tina noticed Nagini sitting quietly at the table, smiling at the three of them. A feeling of relief washed over Tina: with everything else that had been going on, she hadn’t even registered the worry that she held for Nagini. Now that she saw the woman was safe, the feeling in her chest was like coming up for air.

‘You ok ?’ Newt mouthed, reaching out to her, but holding back. Dumbledore’s words still resonating from earlier.

Still...we trust everyone in this room...don’t we?

As they made their way to the table, Newt still looked slightly shell shocked from Ade’s welcome.

“Mr Scamander, this is my good friend Jacob,” Tina said, introducing the baker to Newt’s father.

Newt glanced at his grandfather with a curious look on his face.

“Ah yes, I’ve heard a lot about you, Jacob! I hope Newton hasn’t been too much of a bad influence on you?” Arty extended a hand to the man as he took a seat next to Nagini.

“Depends on what you call a bad influence, sir? Life’s most definitely gotten a lot more interesting since we became friends.”
Tina hovered near the back door, wanting to sleep...wanting to be away from everyone, even if only for an hour.

Everyone was safe... for now. She needed to rest: her body ached and her eyes stung from exhaustion.

Nagini watched her, possibly recognising her own natural tendency to bolt. She slipped out of the chair.

Jacob watched her go with a questioning look that she answered by placing a calming hand on his shoulder smiling.

“Tina needs sleep,” she said to the table at large, her eyes landing on Newt. She raised an eyebrow as if challenging him in a battle of wits.

Tina could tell Nagini wanted him to stay with the other men: part of Tina immediately longed for Newt’s company, but the other part understood that Nagini knew what was going on. Tina needed someone to talk to... and sleep.

_I need sleep! I’m no good to anyone, not even Newt, if I don’t rest._

Tina expected Nagini to lead her back towards the guest room, but she turned and nodded towards the back door, leading Tina down the winding back steps to ground level.

“Where are we going?” she asked as her feet hit the soft forest floor.

Nagini looked at home, manoeuvring across the mossy ground as if she had always been part of the surroundings, her fawn-coloured dress almost camouflaging her against the green and brown foliage that surrounded Dracholm.

“Arty and Ade have been busy. If we're going to be using this place as a safe house, it's not much good only having one guest room...it would get a bit personal quite quickly, don’t you think?” The smile that she threw over her shoulder at Tina was laced with playfulness. She hadn’t seen this side of Nagini before: the smile spoke volumes.

Tina felt safe...safe enough to drop her guard...slightly, at least.

“Although I’m sure the boys would keep us warm if we asked them nicely?”

Tina was too tired to tell if Nagini was joking or not. She was still trying to work it out when the woman dropped back, linking Tina’s slender arm with her own. For the first time, Tina noticed that the flesh near the woman's wrists had failed to return to her normal olive skin. The pigments had kept the shape of the scales.

Nagini noticed the glance, the hope in her eye fading slightly. “It’s getting harder to turn back. It’s a curse for a reason,” she sighed, guiding Tina in the direction of the Dragon enclosure.

“Is there really no cure?” Tina found herself asking. Nagini seemed to be such a gentle soul, the torment she faced seemed to be a punishment that she didn’t deserve.

Nagini didn’t answer. She halted, becoming unnaturally still, eyes scanning the trees bordering the path ahead.

Tina was aware of movement in the corner of her eye, but as soon as she turned to catch the origin of the shadow, it was gone.
“Did you see that, too?” Nagini said, sniffing at the air.

“It’s probably just a kneezel,” Tina suggested hopefully, even though she remembered how Newt had halted in almost the same spot the other night.

Nagini shook her head, “It was too big to be a kneezel,” she said, searching the forest with a keen eye. “I keep thinking I’m being watched. Theseus thinks I’m paranoid from all the years in the circus, but I’m sure I saw someone.”

“Nothing human can get into the reserve without setting off the alarms,” Tina replied, even so, I'm sure I saw something too… Tina searched the forest where she had felt the presence.

Nagini’s dark eyes scanned the treeline, a frustrated look on her face as she drew air in over her slender lips.

“It’s no good, I can’t taste it!” she grumbled.

“Taste it?” Tina questioned, scanning the same patch of trees Nagini did.

“The scales aren’t the only thing that sticks around when I change back.”

Tina looked at the woman: she looked so resigned to her fate. How does that work? What else can you do? I wonder if Newt knows any of this… maybe he can help her?

A crunch behind them made them both jump, and Tina’s hand flew to her wand, tiredness now replaced by acute alertness.

Nagini gripped her arm tighter, sniffing the air desperately.

Another crunch.

Tina was just about to cast a stunning spell …when a Hare jumped out into the path locking it’s two beady black eyes on them, before bounding off again.

Nagini relaxed, emitting a nervous laugh as she did so. “Oh thank goodness, I couldn’t smell anything over the scent of you and Newt.”

Tina looked at her dumbfounded. “What?”

“Newt… I can smell him all over you! It’s a very interesting blend the two of you make…” The mischievous grin had returned to her face, now that the potential danger had passed. Tina knew she was standing slack-jawed, was it that obvious?

“You can smell us?” she asked. She knew that when it came to her condition, Nagini could be a little cautious.

Nagini spoke as they walked further down the path, both sets of eyes still scanning the area, just in case. “I could taste you and Newt on the air as soon as you got here.” She smiled, “It depends on how much snake sticks around, but sometimes I can taste and smell colours and shapes. I can see a person’s personal scent palette. I can tell if they are a friend or foe, even when the snake takes over.”

“That sounds…annoying” Tina admitted.

Nagini laughed deeply, something that Tina was not expecting, the hearty laugh did not sound like it came from such a poised and elegant beauty. I wonder what we smell like? If she were braver she would have asked the woman. Nagini’s soothing presence calmed Tina: if she didn’t perceive a
They took a slight diversion from the main trail, following a track that lead them to a clearing. Tina was sure this space had not been here when Newt had led her through the trees the night before last. But you were a little distracted...it would have been easy to miss. Her eyes fell on two large tents, and Tina immediately recognised one from the photos of Egypt that hung in the guest room.

Alice Scamander’s tent stood in the clearing, looking as if it had been picked straight out of the photograph. Tina could picture a young Ade, looking ever so much like Newt, sitting under the stars...staring at Alice with the same look of adoration that Tina had seen flash across Newt’s face only this morning. Tina was sure she would have loved Alice, if she had the chance to meet her. If Ade had always been this eccentric, she might have picked up some tips for dealing with her Grandson.

The second tent was very different, more of a wigwam than a tent, Tina wondered if Ade hadn’t picked it up on one of his adventures. Even so, Tina wasn’t sure that two tents were going to be adequate guest quarters. Maybe Nagini hadn’t been joking about the boys keeping them warm.

“It’s bigger on the inside,” Nagini said as she lead Tina towards Alice’s tent. Once inside the canvas, Nagini’s words proved right.

The tent looked as if it had been expanded with the same charm as Newt’s case. What, from the outside, looked like one sleeping space, expanded to several: a stove and a small kitchen area sat near the entrance, a large sofa finished the living space nicely. It was as if they had walked into a small cottage.

“It’s good isn’t it?” Nagini said, looking around with a critical eye, “I figure it’s the same as the big top we had at the circus...only this smells a lot better.”

Nagini nodded in the direction of one of the rooms, Tina let her lead the way.

The room was separated from the rest of the tent by a fabric door, but that was the only indication that they were in a tent at all: a large double bed filled the space, looking incredibly inviting...practically calling to her in her exhausted state. Her case from the fleece lay by the foot of the bed, as did a large basket of Newts belongings, she felt the red flushing her cheeks again. Did she really smell of Newt to the woman by her side? Assumptions had obviously been made that Newt and Tina would be sharing the same room. In fact, on further inspection, Einstein's sisters were sleeping in the basket next to Newts belongings.

Her face must have shown her barrage of conflicting thoughts, because Nagini began laughing again at her sudden trepidation.

“How long?” Nagini asked, once she had regained her composure.

“How long what?”

“You and Newt?”

Tina wasn’t sure what to say. She hadn’t ever been one to have other female friends --other than Queenie, anyway. She wasn’t good at what Queenie would refer to as girly talk. She had a feeling that Nagini was in the same position. Tina found herself just once in her life wanting to be a normal woman, not a hard-faced Auror who pushes everyone away.

“It’s complicated.”
“Isn’t it always?” Nagini sat herself down on the edge of the bed, patting the large grey blanket beside her. Tina followed her prompt, kicking her shoes off and crawling up on the soft wool. Sleep would come easy as soon as her head hit the pillow, Tina was sure of it. So many emotions in one day had worn her out. The image of a shirtless Newt floated to her mind, causing her to blush.

“Something's happened since I saw you last “

Tina nodded.

“You going to share?”

“Dumbledore wants to see you about the Infinite probability machine,” Newt said as his grandfather watched him carefully. He was well aware of how quickly Ade’s moods could change, having been on the receiving end of the man’s personality switch himself. He hadn’t liked the way his grandfather had spoken to Tina, but he let it go for the moment...for the sake of his own sanity. He was aware that he was almost too tired to function correctly: he had been running on adrenaline and emotions for the last day and a half, and now his body craved the comfort of a warm bed and sleep.

The older wizard looked at his son and grandson, disgruntled and chewing on the end of his pipe. He weighed up his words, “He’s not getting anywhere near Betsy...don’t want him getting his hands on her. he’s too close to Grindelwald. Don’t get me wrong, I like young Albus, I just…”

“He’s not going to steal a bunch of old tractor parts dad.” Newt’s father said, glancing up from his paper to frown at his father.

“He might...you never know with them Dumbledore’s! Strange bunch. His dad was the same...never knew if you were coming or going with him, put him in Azkaban myself! The boy is far too clever for his own good. Don’t get me wrong...I would rather have him on our side, but sometimes showing him all your cards before the game seems a bit ridiculous.”

Newt found himself nodding, he often felt the same about Dumbledore. He trusted him --he really did-- but there always seemed to be an ulterior motive in his actions.

*How many times now has he manipulated the people around this table in just as many ways as Grindelwald?* “Even so Gramps, we need to try and work out his next move. Dumbledore knows him better than anyone! His information might help the machine work out the algorithm faster. You don’t have to tell him how it works, just what the thing produces.”

“Still don’t like it, Tadpole.”

“You don’t have to like it...you just have to do it.” Newt said, yawning, sleep finally showing a physical, visible effect on his body. “Nan, would have done it.” He knew it was a twisted move, but he knew the ‘Alice card’ always worked on his Grandfather.

Ade’s anger dissolved at the mention of his beloved wife, his resolve broken. “I’m not teaching him how to use it,” he grunted, defeated, “but if he gives me the information, I’ll run it through Betsy...just hope the old girl’s up to it!”

“Dad, you built it! If the end of the world comes, that thing will still be throwing out answers long after we’re gone.” Arty returned to his newspaper, his opinion now stated.
Newt had always admired his own father's ability to shoot one of Ade’s rants straight out of the air with one sweeping statement, and he often wished that he had inherited his father’s way with words.

Arty ignored the agitated huffing coming from Ade as he angrily drew on his pipe, preferring to turn his attention back to the puzzle page of the Prophet, tapping at the crossword with his wand, “five across… five letters, alternative for the clown in King Arthur's court….jester doesn't fit…”

“Idiot” Jacob volunteered, eager to be part of the conversation.

Arty smiled up at the baker, “That the answer to the crossword, or your opinion of my dad?” he chuckled.

“Wouldn’t like to comment, Mr. Scamander.” Jacob looked at Newt nervously.

“Both I should think,” Newt offered, getting to his feet, “I’m going for some sleep…” He started to head towards the guest room.

“Tina’s in the tent out back,” Ade offered with a wink.

“He said he needed sleep Dad…” Arty chuckled, not looking up from his crossword.

Newt felt his face flush, sometimes --just sometimes-- he hated his family.

“I dunno young’uns these days...no staminer,” Ade chuckled.

*Sometimes grandads mood changes are exhausting!*

*Ade* turned to his son, nudging him in the side. “He gets that from you. You never could keep up with Rhea.”

Newt was mortified.

Jacob laughed nervously from the table at the implications of the conversation.

“I kept up enough to have two wonderful sons,” Arty replied, without looking up from his crossword, “You, alas, only ever had me, father dearest--”

“OK enough!” Newt shook his head. “I’m going to SLEEP,” he sighed.

“Course you are son...your stuff’s in the tent with Tina.” Arty’s smile was full of mischief.

“And she needs sleep as much as me… I will be in the guest room,” he said, shaking his head and closing the hall door behind him.

He stood on the other side of the door for a moment composing himself half listening to the conversation that had continued in the kitchen now that he had left.

“You two should give him a break,” Jacob said almost defensively, “The two of them are just getting used to it themselves.”

“ That explains why he’s so tired!” Newt’s father's voice travelled.

Jacob gave an apprehensive chuckle.
“Oh...let me have some fun!” Arty’s chided. “He will have to toughen up--”

“--a Scamander boy always falls for stupidly independent women--”

“--feisty beasts--”

“--angry and passionate--”

“--slightly terrifying--”

“--and we somehow get through it, because we do nothing but torment the living hell out of each other--”

“--Thes got it relentlessly over Leta--”

“-- you told him she had managed to wipe Newt out by the age of seventeen remember--”

“--he hexed you, didn’t he--”

“-- burped frogspawn for a week… worth it though--”

“--It’s Scamander tradition--”

Newt shook his head. He had known it wasn’t going to be easy, but he was hoping that his Dad and Gramps might go easy on him, what with them being on the cusp of war.

“Tina’s going to eat him alive!” Ade chuckled,“Lucky bugger.”

“Oh well, he will at least die happy.” Jacob offered up with a chuckle.

“I like you, Jacob!” Arty laughed, “Welcome to the family.”

Chapter End Notes

So...
Yeah life happened .
If you follow me on tumblr you know all about it .

Thanks as ever to Sara who managed to get this beta read as life attacked her too this
last few weeks.
Hopefully normal life will resume soon.

But yeah sorry for the delay. This is why i don't do a scheduel you can just have a nice random one lol

You know the drill coments make me feel a lot better and not a complete falure at life .. so yeah you know how much you lot push me to keep going ...
‘Betsy’ spun and twirled in the cavern: something had clicked deep in its mechanics causing the once silent gears to spring into life. Steam flowed through tubes, pistons fired and jostled into rhythmic tappings. Although nobody was about to hear the machine’s cry, it rung out in the empty cave, resonating in each crevice and crack.

Blue and white lights flickered, buried in the centre of the machine, exploding with a dangerous blast of energy that had not been there even a moment before. Flickering images compressed and extracted from thoughts for easy deduction, shimmering with each new processed memory.

Small flickers of magic drew intricate swirls in dust particles sweeping and dancing along copper pipes, whilst ink splats danced upon tattered parchment calculating a probability that had not been in existence up until moments ago.

The machine gave out a pitiful shudder, causing the typewriter attached to tap loudly four times.

Then it ground back into silence.

From his hiding place up high in the cave, Dougal was shaken from his rest, his eyes growing wide as he watched the futures running through the strange thing the wizards had built below him. He swung down, stopping only when the machine finally stuttered to a halt.

Dougal was cautious: the wizards were not known for being all that clever, and whatever this machine was it had been silent up until now. Edging towards the contraption, Dougal raised himself up to full height to grab hold of the parchment.

The Demiguise looked down at the thing in his hand, tracing the ink on the parchment with a finger trying to work out the meaning.

H

E

L

P

Dougal was confused, he didn’t know these shapes.

*Mummy... mummy will know.*
Tina was woken by a tapping on the fabric cloth that separated the outside world from her solitude.

Pickett uncurled himself from her hair as she sat up, sliding down to her shoulder. He chirped nervously, making Tina wish she could speak Bowtruckle...if even just a little.

Her feet hit the floor, wand in hand, she had not forgotten the uneasy feeling of being watched earlier. A quick glance around her told her two things: Nagini had left and Newt had not joined her. Pushing the disappointment to the back of her mind, she moved across to the doorway.

Pushing aside the fabric, she peered around. The main tent was empty.

Tina was momentarily confused, until she felt the soft brush of Douglas transparent fur on her bare foot as the Demiguise pushed himself into the room. She spun on the spot, watching as the bed dipped under Dougal’s invisible weight

“I can’t see you, Dougal, can you show yourself?”

The light shimmered slightly as the Demiguise slid in to focus. He glanced around the room as if looking for someone, wringing the bit of paper he had tightly clutched in his hand. He circled the bed, his eyes constantly shifting colours. He was looking for Newt.

*Oh great even the creatures are in on it, are they?* “He’s not here Dougal,” she said quietly sitting down next to the flustered creature. He stopped pacing the bed and slid onto her knee, offering up the parchment to her with worried eyes.

“What you got there?” Tina asked, taking the offering from his paw. *He looks worried.* For a creature that she knew could see multiple futures, the fact that he was bothered by them all made her slightly nervous.

Ursula placed a large bowl of potatoes down on the makeshift table in front of Dumbledore. The overturned weather-bleached tree had been laden with plates overflowing with Ursula and Ade’s cooking. The smell of fire-charred food floated on the air as Newt sat on the soft cushion of earth near the edge of the beach.

Beside him, Einstein darted over the ground looking for stones, picking up and examining each one, before bringing them to Newt for further inspection. Tiny paws offered up sea glass and smooth coral for his expert opinion. Until his cast was laden with the niffler’s bounty. Newt was only half-focused the young niffler, his attention squarely on Dumbledore: watching him in much the same way he would one of the creatures, looking for some sort of tell that would give away the pain or secret it was hiding.

Ade’s words had hung on his mind as he had tried and failed to get some rest. Ade was a good judge of character, it had always been something that Newt had admired about the man, but maybe he was wrong about Dumbledore.

Newt owed his old Professor a great debt, but still...something bothered him about the man. Grindelwald’s words echoed in his head. *Do you think Dumbledore will mourn you?*
The ever-present feeling that they were all just part of his master plan was never too far from Newt’s mind.

Glancing up from a rather interesting shell that Einstein had brought him, Newt noted that Theseus had joined them again, shirt sleeves rolled up as he helped Ursula carry the last of the food. Dark bags hung under his eyes, and the smile didn’t quite reach them as he greeted Nagini with a hug before joining her on the mat. He looked exhausted.

“You eating, Tadpole? You gotta keep that strength up.” Ade said, barely hiding the amusement in his voice as he settled down to eat. He had placed himself as far to the other end of the tree from Dumbledore as possible.

Einstein jumped onto Newt’s knee, tugging at his waistcoat. Looking down, he was presented with a small round dark green stone, smoothed flat by the waves with a large hole in the middle. The niffler looked particularly pleased with his find. Looking around to see who else he could show his treasure to, his face sagged a little when he realised that Tina wasn’t about.

“I should go get Tina,” Newt said, scooping the creature and the stone up with his broken hand and popping them both in his pocket. “She must be starving...we haven’t eaten properly since yesterday.” He heard his father mumble something under his breath, causing Theseus to laugh and his mother to scold him.

“I’ll be back in a few,” he said, quietly turning towards the house and avoiding the gaze of his family. He could feel the eyes of them all on his back as he turned.

Einstein popped his head out of Newt’s pocket, looking apprehensive. Tiny paws clawed their way out of his pocket as he made his way up to Newt’s shoulder, making it very clear that he didn’t want to be squashed again. He had most definitely been in Tina’s pocket this morning...the dirty looks confirmed it.

“Don’t look at me like that! It’s bad enough when they do it...don’t you start,” he said quietly to the cautious creature.

Einstein squeaked back to him.

I need to learn niffler, I’ve never known one as talkative as him...if that’s what that is at all...he could just be mimicking... Newt thought as he watched the creature squeaking away to himself on his shoulder.

Einstein shoved the green stone into his pouch and smoothed down the fur over his hips in such a Tina-like gesture, that Newt found himself wanting to take notes. It was crazy to think that the small thing had made such a bond with Tina in such a short amount of time, but I did exactly the same! Newt was so caught up in his musings that he almost didn’t see Tina as he rounded the thicket of hawthorns that hid the tents from view.

“Newt!” She started, almost dropping Dougal who sat perched on her hip. The two of them looked perturbed, it was something he hadn’t seen with Dougal in a long time.

“What’s wrong?” Newt asked anxiously, watching as Pickett clambered from the depths of Tina’s hair to squeak a string of nonsense, Newt reached up a hand, letting him climb on, before dropping him in the pocket Einstein had just vacated.

“Dougal woke me up, looking for you... he had this...” Tina held up a strip of crumpled paper
offering it to Newt “Any ideas?”

“Help?” the words were typed with such force it had almost shredded the paper. “Dougal, did you get this from Betsy?”

The Demiguise looked at him his thick brow wrinkled with concentration. He’s not going to know what Betsy is you idiot “Dougal did you get this in the cave?” he offered, the beast’s eyes grew wide nodding in acknowledgement.

“Tina, this has come from Gramp’s machine. Dougal, was anyone with you when this came off?” Dougal shook his head once then buried his face into Tina’s neck.

Newt knew Tina was looking to him for answers, but right now he had none. He looked back down at the message, “Keep this to ourselves for the moment,” he said folding the paper and putting it in his pocket with Pickett.

“You think it’s something we should worry about?” Tina asked calmly, adjusting her grip on Dougal.

“I don’t do worry remember?”

“Really? Could have fooled me Mister!” she scoffed, sliding her wand back into her pocket. “If you don’t know what it is, maybe we should ask your Gramps?”

“I don’t think it’s anything to worry about while we have company.”

“Dumbledore is here?” Tina deduced, glancing around him, back the way he had come.

“Down on the beach. We can ask Gramps later.” Whatever this was he wanted to understand it before sharing the knowledge with Dumbledore, just in case.

Newt watched as Tina comforted Dougal, her long slender fingers entwining in his fur as she stroked the back of his neck. Newt was starting to get a little worried that his beasts were getting a little over clingy with Tina of late. They would be unbearable when she left.

She isn’t going to leave Newt, stop doing this to yourself.

But she might.

And tomorrow you might get hit by a bus, struck by lightning or eaten by a dragon, stop doing this to yourself! She wants to be with you!

He reached out to her, wrapping his arm around her waist, pleasantly surprised when she leaned into him with a sigh.

“We will talk about it when we have all the facts. I think we have let enough bits of paper dictate our lives for the time being.” He kissed her on the top of the head, smoothing down her bed hair with his other hand.

“Not letting me forget that are you?”

“Never.” He smiled into her hair as she snuggled closer to him. “Did you sleep well?”

He felt her nod against him, “Did you know they put all your things in my room?” she asked him pulling away slightly so she could see his face.
“Ah...yes well you see... it wasn’t anything to do--”

“--shut up Newt. I’m not accusing you of anything. Your family, however...” she rolled her eyes playfully, “they do seem to have made a few assumptions.”

Newt felt his face beginning to flush. Tina needed to understand that this was just the way his family was...it had nothing to do with him. He really wished his Father’s side of the family were not so brazen, and his grandfather not so bloody obvious.

“Do you mind?” he asked

She smiled. It was so genuine and loving, he couldn’t believe that it was directed at him.

“Not at all. Why...do you?” her smile dropped for a fraction of a second, “Because--”

He leaned in, catching his lips on hers before she had a moment to finish the sentence. It was just a gentle kiss, but enough to assure her that he was fine with the idea, at least it’s not just me that finds this strange and unusual, Newt thought relaxing slightly.

Tina loosened her grip on Newt, and on Dougal as he moved away from them, seeking the safety of the ground.

“Well, now that’s settled ...” Tina’s face was flustered, cheeks flushed against her pale skin, Newt felt a certain sense of pride, knowing that it was his doing.

Dougal reached up, offering a hand to Newt, with the other he reached up to Tina who took it in her own. He tugged them both along behind him, as he guided them towards the smell of the food, his concern now moved to his stomach and from the paper now in Newt’s possession.

Tina felt uncomfortable with the amount of people, having become accustomed to the quiet company of only a few. But now the beach was full of noisy chatter, and trying to follow conversation was becoming a chore. The food had been wonderful, and she felt considerably better on a full stomach, her energy had been drained by lack of food as well as lack of sleep. Once the food had been consumed, Ade had brought out his special reserve, brewed in a firewhisky casket. It warmed against the chill that had nothing to do with the weather. The shadow from earlier haunted her: did it have something to do with the strange message that Dougal had handed her?

Tina found herself wanting to make excuses to leave, the wall of sound was becoming overpowering, causing her to want to seek out solitude. She wasn’t sure what had stopped her from making a polite exit as soon as she saw the barrels of Cider, but she had a feeling most of it was to do with the current company.

She sat on the rocky outcrop, her toes almost touching the water as it lapped around the headland.

Theseus sat next to her, his legs dangling off the side of the large rock, his feet ankle deep in sea water. They watched Nagini following Newt across the shallow rock pools that danced in the light of the setting sun. It was a strange feeling, to be part of a family, after only having Queenie for so long, and this was quite a family. Maybe not a conventional one...but a family nonetheless.

She watched Theseus, his hands wrapped around the metal tankard that would occasionally be refilled with the cider. Every so often he would take a drink, shaking his head at his brother in an amused fashion. Behind them on the rug Jacob slept, head propped against the same rock that Tina
and Theseus now sat: the cider had been too much for the no-maj, or maybe the last few days had caught up on him as well. So much had happened in the last few weeks that she had almost forgotten how calming Jacob’s presence could be, if you let it.

The creatures had all flocked to Jacob, drawn in by the same charm that bewitched everyone else.

Dougal slept, stretched out across the baker’s chest, the rest of the Nifflers curled up in his lap.

Einstein had even given him a tentative sniff, before climbing up and curling up next to Dougal on the sleeping man’s chest.

Tina gazed across the bay, the setting sun disappearing behind the wooded headland. The view really was magical. Ade must have been in a very dark place to want to end it all in such an enchanting place.

“You start work on Monday.”

Tina broke from her reverie to look up at Theseus. He reached for the bottle of Cider, filling his tankard and reaching over to fill the one that Tina held in her grip.

“You still want me to work for you?”

“With me… and yes. We need to get things back to normal. Well as normal as things can be.”

Tina watched Newt as he held his hand out to help Nagini keep her balance as they headed back towards the shore. Life wasn’t normal, not anymore, not for her not for any of the people that she cared about, but Thes was right…they had to regain some sort of normality. If this new normal revolved around the man she loved, and working for his brother…well, it wasn’t that bad a reality, in the grand scheme of things.

“Then I start work on Monday.”

Theseus moved closer to her, dropping his voice.

“Just so I’m on the same page...you and Newt...?” His eyes scanned hers. It was unnerving how much they reminded her of Newt, especially when he was trying to get an answer out of her. It was going to be very difficult to hide anything from him, she knew that before she even started working for him.

“Yes… and no, it won’t affect my work...before you ask.” She took a drink of the cider Theseus had just poured, trying and failing to hide the flush that had risen in her cheeks.

“Shame…I quite enjoyed the excitement your tangled love life brought to the Ministry—”

“--I don’t make a habit of it!” she said, nudging him with her elbow causing him to jerk out of the way, he wobbled almost slipping from the rock. Reaching out, he grabbed her, catching his arm around her shoulders to steady himself, just as Newt and Nagini reached them.

“Are we interrupting something?” Newt asked, his eyes glancing to where Theseus held her.

Tina started. Slipping out of Theseus grasp, she nudged him again with her elbow. This time the older Scamander did slide from the rock, landing in the sea with an unceremonious splash. Tina sprung to her feet, and with one bound was at Newt’s side. Wrapping her arm around Newt’s waist, she pulled him closer. Tina knew she was being watched by Nagini…Theseus too, probably, but she didn’t care…both of them knew what was going on, No point in hiding it from them! if she was being
honest with herself, she no longer wanted to, either.

He returned the embrace, looking only half surprised at the public display. He smelled like the sea, fresh and inviting, mixing temptingly with the earthy smell she was so fond of. Newt flashed a grin at her before turning to his brother. “No wonder we never won a house cup if you can’t even take a little knock!”

Theseus was soaked to the waist, but had managed miraculously not to have dropped a single sip of his cider. Tina was impressed.

“I thought you Aurors were supposed to have cat-like reflexes?” Newt chortled as he helped his brother back to his feet.

“We do! But Tina used her womanly charms to distract me, it was almost the perfect crime!” Theseus proclaimed, before returning to his rescued drink.

Nagini laughing hysterically as she perched on the rock, eyes darting to Tina to gauge her reaction.

“I did nothing of the sort!” Tina shook her head incredulously.

Newt looked at her, his eyes full of a playful joy that she hadn’t seen before. He looked so relaxed and full of hope. He really did come out of his shell around his family.

“You are quite distracting... I understand the predicament. For future reference, to really get him, all you have to do is...” Newt swiftly kicked his leg out without even looking, sweeping Theseus’s legs straight from beneath him, sending him crashing down a second time. This time his cider wasn’t so lucky. “... He never expects a second attack.”

Theseus looked up at them, the waves gently lapping around him.

Tina couldn’t help but think he looked ridiculous, more like Newt than himself and a million miles away from the upstanding Auror that she knew him to be. He looked like a child, not a fully grown man sitting waist-deep in sea water and trying desperately to save his cup of cider from the ravages of the deep. She buried her face in Newt’s shoulder trying to stifle the laughter.

“You two are a bloody nuisance!” Theseus said as Nagini moved to help him up.

The woman made a point of getting in between the brothers, her amusement evident as she looked a soggy Theseus up and down, wrapping her slender hand in his, and helping him to his feet, the skin on her arm starting to change to the scales of her other self now that the sun was setting.

Again, Tina wondered if there was anything Newt could do to help the woman.

“Come on Thesy, you can walk me to the tent. I need somebody to lock me in anyway, might as well get you a change of clothes.” Nagini said, dropping his hand and, taking his cup, she placed it on the rock next to Tina’s discarded one.

“I can just dry them!” Theseus laughed, looking down at the shorter woman.

“Yes you can, but I think you have had enough to drink tonight already...magic might not be the best idea?”

Theseus looked at her for a few moments before rubbing the back of his neck and giving out a nervous laugh.
“Newt … why do you keep bringing home bossy women?”

“Less of the ‘bossy’.” Nagini nudged him, nearly sending him tumbling for the third time.

He yet again flung his arms out to steady himself this time grabbing on to Nagini, who despite her size managed to keep him upright.

She clung on to his arm. “Right, you! Bed!” she said, shaking her head and dragging him towards the beach.

Theseus looked back at the two of them standing together in the shallows. “You going to help me? Or am I getting accosted by this wild woman?”

“Oh be quiet Theseus!” Tina shouted up the beach after them. “If he misbehaves, Nagini, you have my permission to bite him!”

Nagini smiled over her shoulder “If he tastes like he smells, I really don’t want too!” she winked as she maneuvered the stumbling Theseus,

He righted himself, glancing back at them before whispering something to Nagini.

The slender woman laughed before pushing him forwards into the thicket of trees.

“Well they seem to have hit it off.” Newt laughed as Dougal chased the two of them into the trees.

“Well, I start work with him on Monday. I hope I don’t have to jinx him too much.” Tina continued staring at the space that her friends had entered the woods.

Theseus’ laugh rang out in the fast-approaching night.

After the guilt of the morning, Tina couldn’t help the smile that crossed her face at the sound.

“Should I be concerned about you and my brother?” Newt teased, bringing Tina’s attention back to him. He did look rather handsome in the fading daylight, his cheeks flushed with the coolness of the night air and the effects of the cider.

Her eyes lingered on the patch of freckles that stood prominent on his nose, the sun having made them stand out even more.

“I think you know the answer to that, Mr Scamander…” she hooked her hand in his braces, pulling him to her. She let her hand trace the outline of his chest, as she gazed into the depths of his eyes. “Or do I have to remind you?”

“I seem to be having a momentary lapse of memory,” He moved his undamaged hand to her face, lifting her head to meet him. “You should remind me…it might be for the best, you know. Just in case I end up breaking his nose too.”

Tina bridged the gap, taking her time and savoring his lips moving gently in time with hers. This closeness was becoming less strange and more natural now, and for a moment, she forgot about the darkness in the world.

That was until Ade’s voice broke the silence.
“Hoy Tadpole…need you in the cave… bring the missus.”

Tina sighed. Could they not just have five minutes happiness where the world didn't want to get the last say on the matter.

Chapter End Notes

As ever thanks Sarab for being the best beta in could ask for.
Serious be glad you don't have to read the rough ones anymore...

Thank you all so much for the lovely words in the last batch of comments. You guys made me feel a lot better in a shitty time so thank you.

See you in the next one
X grumps
“It’s quite a remarkable machine.” Dumbledore moved around the cave, scanning Ade’s contraption with eager eyes. “So you put the thought’s into the pensive here and then what on earth does it do with it?”

Ade took a long draw from his pipe. Newt could tell he was weighing the next words up carefully, not wanting to give too much information about his beloved machine to the man he trusted so little.

Newt watched as the men had a silent battle that his grandfather ultimately lost.

“It calculates all the probable outcomes of a situation. Then it interprets the facts to work out the idea with the most probability of success. Sometimes it just weeds out the truth from the over complicated memories lies and thoughts” Newt watched as Ade replaced the tobacco in his pipe, never once taking his eyes off Dumbledore. “It just makes sense of the nonsense that runs through the average brain...connects the dots that we sometimes miss. I’ve had it running calculations on the probability of locating an old friend of mine. Betsy is close, but something keeps getting stuck in the lower incantation tube. She keeps overheating and blowing a duct, she just types rubbish when that happens.”

Newt felt his hand move to his breast pocket: Pickett still sat on the paper Dougal had brought them. He could sense Tina’s eyes glancing his way, even if he couldn’t see her.

“So it leaves me to ask…” Dumbledore leant back against the cave wall observing the magic and the way the mechanical beast drew everyone into its every move “ Why do you need me here?”

Newt stood up straight, observing the two older men. He had been wondering the same thing, Why does Gramps need Dumbledore?

Ade untucked his wand from his jacket lighting the end of his pipe with a spark from it before speaking. “Way I see it, you know the enemy better than anyone. Something in that brain of yours must have some idea as to where he is...what his plans are? Even if you haven’t realised it yourself. Figure if we put that information into Betsy and jiggle it about, a bit something useful might pop out.” Ade paced now, tapping random components of the machine, each part springing to life as his wand touched it.

Dumbledore considered Ade’s words, weighing up the options, as he stood with both hands in his pockets.

Newt wondered if that was where he was keeping the pact. He doubted it would be left unguarded back at Hogwarts.

“I have my own Pensive Ade, do you not think that I haven’t already tried that?” Dumbledore exclaimed moving his hand anxiously over his beard.

“I don’t for a second think you wouldn’t have, but this machine looks at it objectively, something a
“human couldn’t do...not even the great Albus Dumbledore!” Ade turned to face Newt and Tina, his voice softening “You two, I’m going to need your thoughts too, everything you remember from your encounters with Grindelwald, no matter how trivial. Sorry Tina, need all you know about your sister too...never know what might come in useful.”

Tina moved forward, watching the machine with as much intrigue as Dumbledore, the red and green lights from the magic caught up in the tubes danced across her delicate features, catching her eyes as she tried to process the logic behind the behemoth that stood in front of her. She nodded, not looking away from the machine. “Whatever you need. Are we any further forward on Rio?”

Newt could tell by the tone of her voice that this was the Auror side of Tina talking, it had that hardness to it that he had been on the receiving end of more than once.

“Working on it. I have a basic idea, but sending you off on a wild goose chase ain’t gonna help anyone.” Ade shot a sidelong glance at Dumbledore: the man was quiet, caught up in a memory that was far away from the current moment. Ade sighed “I don’t want to be sending you into danger after an Obscurial that might not even be able to help us.”

Around them, the machine tried its hardest to spring to life. Clanking and groaning as if it were trying to answer Tina’s question itself. All eyes turned to the swirling centre compartment where tiny explosions of magic ricocheted around the dome, crashing together in shattered rainbows of colour. Dumbledore’s eyes trailed the faint wisp of black that floated through the tubes.

“I would have thought that, at this point, any knowledge would be helpful? Even if only to point us in the right direction?” Dumbledore pressed, earning him a grunt of disdain from Ade who spun on the spot to stare the man down.

“At this point, I’m more concerned about keeping my family safe, Dumbledore! None of them is worth losing over a stupid choice...you of all people should know that. The wrong choice quite often leads to a disaster.”

Dumbledore glared over the top of the machine at Ade, his eyes darkening with anger.

Newt found himself reaching for the wand at his side, Tina mirroring his action, at the dangerous look that crossed Dumbledore’s face.

“No need for wands,” Dumbledore said, composing his features.

Newt looked to his grandfather, who, to his credit, hadn’t even flinched, Once an auror, always an auror.

Dumbledore’s voice was calm when he spoke next, surprising Newt, who still hadn’t re-holstered his wand “You know my story better than most, Ade. That was a low blow...even for you.”

“I was the one that had to tidy up the aftermath of your stupid choices in the past, Albus...I remember.” Ade stepped confidently forward, picking up a handful of tubes and moving towards Dumbledore. “I know how far this little web of yours has been spun. I saw the damage it did with just the two of you at the centre! He’s got a bloody army this time! You ain’t kids no more, boy. I’m not even going to try and work out what the hell you were thinking, but we have to try and stop him. You felt the loss and the pain of his relentlessness first-hand. You don’t have youth as an excuse this time. Don’t push me...you know I won’t stand by and let him rip my family apart more than he already has.”

Newt was lost, he knew that his grandfather had been the one to lock up Dumbledore’s father in
Azkaban but that had nothing to do with this. This was something different entirely. Why did he suddenly feel like his grandfather knew more about Grindelwald than he was letting on.

Dumbledore visibly sagged, his eyes turned down to the rocky cave floor. “Then best give me the bottles and let me get on my way. I know when I have outstayed my welcome.” he held his hand out taking the small glass tubes from Ade.

“You haven’t outstayed your welcome. I promised your mother that I would look out for you before she died. Even back then, she knew what you were like. Kendra knew you spent far too long looking at the bigger picture...that you forgot the little details. You might not have anything left to lose, but I have my whole family” Ade closed his hands over the top of Dumbledore's, clasping them tightly. “Don’t you think I know how hard it is to know that the ones we love are hurting because of our choice?” Ade pinned the professor with an intense gaze, “Sometimes choices...well...they fade away into nothing, but memories...and well...,” he sighed heavily, “that might be the best place for them. But right now, we need yours to help us.”

Tina made to move towards Dumbledore, who suddenly looked a lot older than his years. The same sadness filled his eyes that Newt had seen buried deep in Tina’s in the days after Queenies betrayal. Tina must have sensed it too: she looked disgruntled as Newt put an arm out to stop her, just as Dumbledore raised his wand to his temple with his free hand, wrapping silver tendrils of memories around it, weaving them tightly to the wood. Pulling his hand free from Ade’s grip, he syphoned them off into the glass bottles.

“I trust you to dispose of these after,” Dumbledore said, handing them across to Ade, who busied himself putting them into the pensive where they glowed red before fading to a dusky grey and being sucked into the machine.

“I might be a crazy old man, but I ain’t stupid,” Ade prodded the machine into life with his wand, “Betsy wipes them when she’s got the info she needs, a good auror never leaves a trace, ain’t that right Tina?”

“Yes, sir.” Tina agreed quietly.

Newt felt his broken hand move to the small bruises on the back of his neck that fit Tina’s hand so well. A smile formed on his lips as he thought about Tina being so caught up in the moment that she slipped completely out of her work persona. Tina caught his eye when he made the move. He raised an eyebrow, rubbing his neck. Tina’s thoughts must have almost echoed his own, as she blushed deeply. never leaves a trace, do you?

The machine churned the memories in its centre. The metallic sound had dulled now to a gentle hum, it resonated in every inch of the room, reverberating through the bones of the contraption, as well as the wizards that stood around the glowing machine.

“I should go,” Dumbledore said eventually. His voice sounded hollow as if he were speaking to them from a far off place.

Newt wondered where the man went when he got lost in his thoughts, from the tone in his voice it was a dark place full of regrets.

“I’ll walk you to the boundary.” Tina offered, leaning into Newt she whispered, “He needs someone to talk too.” She squeezed Newt’s hand gently before following Dumbledore out of the cave.

Newt watched her go, aware of the awkwardness that still hung heavy in the air even now that Dumbledore had left.
Ade messed with knobs and dials, acting as if he were deep in the middle of something. Newt knew this move, it was one he employed himself on many an occasion when he didn’t want to continue the conversation, or just wanted to be left alone. It was not a trick that he was about to fall for.

“You aren’t happy unless you’re causing trouble, are you?” he leaned against the large wine barrel that held up an obsolete part of the machine.

“Got what we needed, didn’t I?”

“You’re methods are a little lacking.”

“Nowt wrong with the way I do stuff, Tadpole! You ain’t old enough yet to understand, but sometimes you have to be a bastard...it’s the only way.” Ade didn’t look up once when he was talking, busying his hands with anything he found in his reach.

Newt ground his teeth, biting back the retort he had formed. The sheer stubbornness of his family was going to be the death of them all one of these days. “You went too far that time Gramps.”

“You don’t understand, Newton...you’re just a child!” Ade’s tone was harsh, still angered from his confrontation with Dumbledore.

Newt tried to calm his anger that was building, but his grandfather really was being a bastard. *He doesn’t have to take it out on me!* Newt slammed his hand down on the tube next to his gramp’s head.

“Yes Newt...a child! The world ain’t broken down into good and bad…” Ade got to his feet, turning to face Newt, looking angrier than Newt had ever seen him. All humor was gone from his face, replaced by a flinty expression that must have served him well in his younger days as an auror. Everyone told Newt that his gramps was a formidable force to be reckoned with, and he could see it now. “Sooner you get your head around that the better.”

Newt tried to calm his anger that was building, but his grandfather really was being a bastard. *He doesn’t have to take it out on me!* Newt slammed his hand down on the tube next to his gramp’s head.

“Ade grimaced, stepping back and shaking his head, “You’re as pig-headed and stubborn as the rest of us, Newton...don’t let it get you killed.”

“What aren’t you telling me?”

Ade slid his wand into his jacket, watching Newt as he did so. He stood quietly for a few moments contemplating his response. Beside him, Betsy hummed processing the syphoned thoughts.

“What did you have to clean up, gramps?” Newt pressed on, he needed to know why his grandfather distrusted Dumbledore. He had thought it had always been for the same reasons as himself, that Ade disliked his manipulative nature, but there was more to it than that, and now whilst his grandfather was so angry it might be the best time to get it out of him.

“It’s nothing for you to worry about”

“Gramps, if it affects us…” Newt pushed on, he could see his grandfather's resolution fading. Ade sighed reaching for his pipe.

“You met Alberforth?”

Newt nodded, he had met him a few times when the beast department had been sent to retrieve one or more slightly questionable pets from the man’s care.
“Ever wonder why the two of them don’t talk…”

“-Come on Thes, you need to go to bed!” Nagini resolutely pushed the man into the large compartment of the main tent, he was stubbornly hitching his heels into the mossy ground trying to make himself a dead weight. He was being awkward, and she really could do without this right now, it was getting late: the snake was bound to raise its head at any moment now. She could do without him being so bloody stubborn.

“I don’t want to go to bed…” he sulked, hooking his arms so that he caught her wrists behind his back. “Stay up with me, get drunk…”

“I would say it’s a bit late…you are already drunk, Theseus.”

He swung around almost toppling the two of them in his enthusiasm, “Yes, but you as yet are not!” He winked at her, shaking his head in an amused way. “You know what my mother said to me this afternoon? She said Theseus…Theseus…life's too short to live in the past, life is for living…”

“Well that’s--”

“--shudup I’m still waffling … give me a second… I was going somewhere with this…”

Nagini bit back a laugh, she was growing increasingly fond of the man in front of her, he was becoming as close a thing to a family as she had ever had. He felt like safety, even when he was drunk and rambling nonsense.

“What was I saying?” he said, bursting into laughter.

“Something about not living in the past?” she said, trying to manoeuvre him into the tent while he was distracted, and failing completely.

“That’s the one!” he chuckled scooping her up and trying to hitch her over his shoulder, it was a brave move on his part: the last person who had tried that with her ended up with quite a nasty set of bite marks the next day. Theseus swayed a little under her weight.

“Let’s get drunk and have an adventure…” He found his footing, after spinning them on the spot a few times.

“Thes, I have to…”

“Have to what? Turn into a snake? Look about Nagini, it’s night already…” he said, putting her down. Once her feet touched the solid ground, she looked up above the tree line. Thesus was right! It had turned to night and she was still in her human form! Looking down at her arms the faint outline of scales shimmered in the light from the tent. I didn’t change?

“Just because it happened in the past doesn’t mean it has to happen now!” Theseus said raising his wand, a light blinked into existence and hovering just above them.

“How did--”

“--you did, you weren't thinking about it so it didn’t happen!” Thes beamed at her, “Now! Stop
thinking about it! You started changing on your neck as soon as you did!”

Her hand moved to her neck where the scales had erupted as soon as she thought about her transformation. Shock rocked her to the core: she hadn’t changed. She wasn’t sure when the last time was that she hadn’t changed into her other form when the sun went down! It had happened almost nightly since she had been sold to the circus, the shift happening as regular as clockwork. She would be forced to change during the show, then again later that night, the snake would force its way back out. It had been drummed into her that that was just the way her life was, but here she stood...in the moonlight and under the glow of a wizard’s wand. A friends wand, she corrected herself. Theseus was her friend.

“How did you--”

“-- I told you...you pick some things up when Newt is your brother…and ‘you’ happens to be me...and rather amazing…”

“Beginners luck,” she quipped. The tears that welled up in her eyes this time were from pure joy. Throwing her arms around the man in front of her, she let the tears fall onto his already soggy shirt.

“Those had better not be sad tears! I’ve had too many of them today. Sad tears get you kicked off my ‘fantastic Theseus drunken adventure’!”

She chuckled through her tears.

“That’s better! Leta always said that my ego was the funniest thing she had ever encountered...seems she wasn’t wrong.”

Nagini pulled away slowly, smiling up at him as the light from his wand bounced around them.

His smile was genuine, reaching all the way to his eyes: this memory of Leta didn’t sting. Whatever his mother had told him earlier seemed to have calmed his soul.

“Nobody likes a showoff,” she said, wiping her eyes on the sleeve of her blouse.

Theseus was about to retort when the sound of footsteps on dry twigs made them both turn on the spot.

Theseus pushed her behind him protectively, raising his wand in the direction of the sound.

Peering from behind his towering figure, Nagini sniffed in the direction of the crunching. It was no good...she couldn’t make it out. Whatever was moving out there, its scent was masked by the heavy smell of the sea and the cider that lingered on Theseus’s clothes.

She went to move around him, but he pushed her back with his free hand, shielding her behind him.

“I can look after myself!” she snapped as she tried to identify the source of the cracking that passed by.

“I know you can, but I’m the one with the wand. Until we get you your own, I’m not taking chances. I’m not losing someone else I care about,” he said, casting a quick glance at her over his shoulder. He took a cautious step forward.

Nagini stuck to him like a shadow, half torn between dragging him back to the tent, and turning into her snake form to see if she could find the source of the noise.
Slowly they moved into the woods, the trees blocking out all but the dullest trace of moonlight. Her senses alert, she tasted the air, finally getting past the scent of Theseus, who still kept her close. It was faint, but she picked out a scent: she could pick out steam vents, boot polish, and the cleaning solution that reminded her of being stuck behind bars. *Credence?* Nagini formed the name on her lips, just as a light broke through the brambles ahead.

Tina walked into the clearing. She looked at Theseus, with his arm held out in front of him, and Nagini pressed as close to him as she could, as he shielded her body behind him.

“Do I dare ask?” she said, with an amused look on her face.

Of course, it was Tina. Nagini cursed herself for getting her hopes up. How many times had she picked Credence out of Tina’s scent?

“We heard something,” Nagini said, straightening up and moving out of Theseus’ shadow. It’s starting to become a habit, around here.”

Tina looked at Theseus with his wand still raised. “And what was our drunken hero going to do, breathe on them and hope they got drunk by proxy?” Tina smirked. “Back to the tent with you!”

“You can try if you want, but he says he’s going on an adventure.” Nagini felt Theseus looking down at her, she could smell the cider on his breath.

“Traitor,” he whispered, “You are no longer part of this expedition.” He pocketed his wand, puffing out his chest as he did so.

“And dare I ask what sort of adventure you were off on ?” Tina asked.

Nagini could tell she was trying to keep a straight face.

“Well, it was going to start with getting this one drunk, then… well, we didn’t get that far did we?”

Nagini was watching the slow creep of realisation on Tina’s face: the sun was long set now, yet there was no snake to be seen. At the thought, Nagini could feel her body aching to change, she should get back to the tent, she would hate to change and hurt someone. She glanced down at her arm the skin was beginning to change, the last thing she wanted now was to injure her friends. Ducking under Theseus arm she set off to the tent at a run, determined not to jeopardise her new found family.

Tina watched as Nagini disappeared into the night. Why hadn’t she changed? Why were the woman and Theseus wandering around the woods after dark anyway? It had been a long day and Tina had ended it with almost as many questions as she had at the start.

Theseus watched Nagini go. before turning to Tina, looking crestfallen.

Tina walked over to him, taking his wand off him, and patted him on the shoulder. “Tent,” she said, pointing him the way that Nagini had fled.

“You always this bossy?”

“You always this annoying?”

“You are starting to sound like Newt…”  he said, reluctantly moving towards the clearing, “Where is
he anyway?”

“With Ade...he won’t be long.”

When Theseus stalled at the entrance to the tent, Tina nudged him forward. He reluctantly moved, swaying slightly as the two of them entered. Looking around the room, she could see the fabric door that lead to her and Newt’s room still hanging open. Across the way, another room was tightly fastened, Nagini’s shoes sitting outside the fabric door. That left just the room next to Tina’s own. As she manoeuvred the resisting Theseus towards the gap, she waved her wand towards the kitchen area, and a canteen of water flew towards her as she pushed Theseus into his room.

He laughed deeply as he let her push him towards his bed.

“What! One Scamander, not enough for you?” he said, wagging his eyebrows suggestively as he sat back on the bed.

She sighed in exasperation, *He is so hammered!* “Don’t flatter yourself Thes!” Tina threw the water at him, the sealed cantina landing on his stomach and causing him to buckle slightly.

“Nice shot,” he said as he unscrewed the lid and drank heavily.

Tina watched him from the doorway: his facade was slipping now... his head sagging from more than just the alcohol.

Tina knew that the nights were the hardest...the slow ticking of time that never seemed to pass without adding another layer of pain to an already tortured soul.

“You ok, Theseus?” she said quietly when he hadn’t looked up from the brown fabric of the water bottle after a few moments.

When he didn’t acknowledge her, she moved into the room further, from there she could see the silent tears that ran down his face.

Tina froze, unsure what to do: leave him, or comfort him? Eventually, the latter won out. She moved over to the bed, sitting down and wrapping an arm around him.

He didn’t move. “I miss her so much,” he whispered, closing his eyes under her touch, the tears falling freely now.

Tina said nothing, simply stroking his back in what she hoped was a reassuring manner. This was not something she was naturally good at, but she knew he was hurting...a lot more than he had been letting on, and he needed to let it out.

“I miss her complaining...I miss the way she used to moan about waiting around for me at work, or how I would leave paperwork all over the counters...how she would pull the crusts off her sandwiches at lunch, and feed them to the ducks on the walk home...Her smile, when they used to fuss around her...it could light up a room!” He wiped his eyes on the bottom of his shirt, trying and failing to compose himself. “She would have loved you! You are quite something, Tina...I knew you must have been, to have captured my stupid little brother's attention.”

“Hoy...less of the ‘stupid’, you!”

Tina’s eyes snapped to the doorway, where Newt stood quietly watching them, his hands in his pockets, and a mournful expression on his face.
“I knew you were there, Fido...stop being such an easy mark.” Theseus yawned, trying to disguise his red eyes as lack of sleep, not from letting his guard down. She knew Newt wasn’t fooled for a moment.

“I need to talk to you in the morning Thes...when you're sober.”

“Ah, Newt, I might just stay permanently pissed...it’s so much more fun! You be the grown-up for a bit, and I'll have the adventures.” He moved out from Tina’s touch, and nudged her towards Newt in the doorway. With one last glance at the two of them, Theseus, shooed them away and rolled onto his side facing away from them.

Tina knew he wanted to be alone, *I don’t blame him.*

As Newt held his hand out to her, she slipped her own into his with a gentle squeeze, noting how worried Newt looked.

“What's wrong ?” she mouthed, not wanting to alert Theseus to his brother's distress.

Newt held up a finger to her, indicating to hold the thought. ”'Night, Thes,” he said quietly.

“'Night, Fido.”

Tina placed Theseus’s wand on his dresser, and allowed Newt to lead her out of the bedroom.

Newt waved his wand over the canvas of the door flap, and a silencing charm fell over his brother’s room.

“What’s wrong?” Tina asked again. Newt’s face was ashen now...whatever was eating away at him was scratching to get out. She cupped his face between her hands, gently guiding him to look at her. He resisted, but finally gave in when he released she wasn’t going to drop her grip on him.

“Newt..” she tried to calm him, stroking her thumb across his cheek, “what is it?” Whatever was distressing him, it rumbled through him now: she could feel him shaking under her touch.

“I just found out something… something I would rather not know. It’s nothing..”

“We both know that’s a lie Newt… what is it?” She didn’t like seeing him flustered this way It reminded her of when they tried to take his case from him in New York: the information was bothering him to the point of agony, and she wanted to help shoulder the burden.

He sighed, reaching up to tuck some of her hair behind her ear...something that was slowly becoming a habit. “I just found something out about Dumbledore I would rather not know.” His eyes darted across her face, trying to read her expression. *What did you find out that upset you so much?*

It couldn’t be that fact that Dumbledore and Grindelwald had been a couple...Newt wasn’t like that. Was he? Maybe she didn’t know him at all? No, it couldn’t be that. *Newt doesn’t care about relationships and couples, not unless it affects his creatures!* It still surprised her that he thought about her the way that he did, not that she wasn’t thankful for it. *If not that, then what is it?* “Is it about what Ade said in the cave?” Tina whispered.

Newt nodded into her hands, closing his eyes, trying to find the words...she was getting good at reading him now: he was going to tell her...he just needed to figure out how to phrase it right. “The mess gramps spoke of… There was … an incident… somebody died… Dumbledore and Grindelwald--”
“--His sister, it was his sister.” Tina finished for him, her stomach dropping No wonder Albus’s brother didn’t speak to him. If anyone did anything to hurt Queenie, she would kill them herself!

Newt’s eyes sprung open with a look of confusion.

“He mentioned her, when he found me in Hogsmeade,” she explained softly. “He said ‘we do stupid things when the heart is involved’.” She dropped her hold on Newt’s face, lifting his broken hand with a rueful smile. “Case in point.”

“Yeah but nobody--”

“--Leta...Queenie… I could go on Newt…” She stroked his broken knuckles with her thumb, and he leaned into the touch. “Ade saw the aftermath, I gather. Like you have said a million times now, we have to have all the facts before we jump to conclusions. We don’t know what happened...we shouldn’t judge. Whatever occurred between the two of them, Dumbledore made the choice to move against Grindelwald.”

After a moment Newt spoke, “Do you trust him?”

“Do you?”

“No.”

“Then that’s both of us. I don’t trust him...I want too, I really do. But there is something about him that makes me a little uneasy. I think he has the best of intentions, but that can be said about both sides. I know he wants to stop Grindelwald, and that alone puts him on our side.” She reached up again, pushing Newt’s hair from his face. He looked so lost and worried. Every inch of her wanted to take that worry away, to pull him into her arms and make the world safer.

“Come here,” he said, beating her to it, and wrapping his arms around her protectively.

“This mess just gets worse by the day.” She sighed, “I'm starting to see why you prefer beasts.”

“People are complicated--”

“--beasts are not.” She closed her eyes, relishing the gentle glide of his hands rubbing circles on her aching back.

“They have it figured out,” he said thoughtfully, “Hunt. Mate. Sleep. Although, some of their complex social structures…”

She raised her hand to silence him, placing a finger over his lips. “I want to hear the end of that… I really do, but can we do it in bed? I’m sure you can hold on a few minutes before explaining the social interactions of a mooncalf.”

“How did you know?” he murmured against her finger playfully.

“I have this rather good book, written by this handsome oddball… you might have heard of him…”

“Less of the oddball.”

“Yes but you're my Oddball,”

“Handsome oddball, I heard that bit...you can’t take it back.”

“Mr Scamander, I wouldn’t want too… now, can we please just go to sleep?”
Hi my little nifflers!
Thank you for all the good vibes!
I am no longer a jobless bum so to celebrate I'm giving you a new chapter a few days early because I don't know if I will get a chance to update over the weekend.

I have one more chapter I have back from the lovely Sarab (I love my beta she knows this. You all should too!) But there may be a gap after that but it won't be a big one... cause I have my life to get back in track and my beta is away.
I'll still be over on tumblr if anyone want's a chat.

Also everyone watch good omens.
Even if it's just to look out for minaLima (the best shop in the world honest I've spent hours in the place and a small fortune) in the background (aziraphales book shop Is 19 Greek street and they are about 7 doors down)
As my other half pointed out all my favourite writers have characters called Newt in their work.

Anyway

You know where the comments live...

X grumps
Credence lay in the dark. Around him, the world spun and twisted as lights and sound danced before his eyes: a rainbow of colours all colliding with flashes of light as it danced across the darkness. He tried to recall the parts of him that roamed but they refused to return, lingering in parts he didn’t know.

He had found one fraction of himself, however. He curled protectively around Modesty, her blond hair neatly tied, face clean and well fed as she played in the fresh summer air. She was so far away from the miserable existence they had been subject to before. He would catch her every so often pausing, her head tipped to the side while she stared at the space the wisp of him inhabited. She would stare until something else moved her thoughts along, her new parents, a sibling that wanted her attention, she seemed so happy, yet Credence couldn’t let her go.

He had wanted to protect her...and in a way he had: she seemed to be safe, yet she still lay awake at night, scared of the things that moved in the shadows, jumping at every slight noise, the silence of the country loud and engulfing after the constant noise of the city.

“Credence?” Her voice was soft, low so as not to wake her sleeping sister. Her hand reached up in the darkness, almost touching the small crack the wisp of him lay in. Modesty clambered to her knees, pressing her face against the cold wall, listening hard as she pressed her ear to the crack.

“I miss you,” she whispered reaching a hand along the rift. The darkness wrapped itself around her small fingers, pressing into the grooves and ridges of the girl’s fingertips, trying to make the nothingness he was, into something solid, something real that she could hold on to even momentarily.

“You’re cold.” Modesty smiled into the darkness, “And you tickle.” she said sinking back upon the knitted blanket that lay across her bed, lifting her hand she sat staring at the snaking shape that wrapped her fingers.

“I’m ok, I’m safe, you can go…” she said raising her hand up to the window where the top pane didn’t quite sit, “Thank you Credence. Come find me when you’re whole…”

She watched as the darkness slid through the gap and off into the night.

His heart pounded in his chest, banging so violently that he was sure that it was about to explode. That hadn’t been a dream...he was sure of it.
In the darkness, beside him, Queenie reached out grabbing his hand. “Credence…”

He sat up, his mouth dry, sweat clinging to him, despite the chill of the night air. His eyes focused on the tall windows where the snow-capped peaks glistened, moonlight reflecting back into the room, causing the outside world to look unearthly in the eerie glow it cast. It echoed the strange feeling that gripped his soul and rumbled like thunder in the cavern of his brain.

“Credence.” Queenie squeezed his hand again,

*Queenie did you see that?* He couldn’t speak…couldn’t form the words. He could almost still feel Modesty’s fingers as if she were there in the room with them now.

He cast his free hand at the lamp that stood near the bed, and it spluttered to life without a word or a wand. He looked down at his hand. She had felt so real.

“How did she know you were there?” Queenie looked at him, her eyes wide with shock, her soft features twisted with confusion.

*I could feel her Queenie! I could feel her touching me… she said I was cold.* He watched as Queenie listened to the replay in his head, her face reacting with shock as her thoughts began processing the information.

“How?” she whispered, kneeling now to look at him closer.

Credence felt her heart racing as he turned his hand under her own. “I don’t know.” He looked at her, a mixture of terror and confusion coursing through him.

Queenie placed the back of her free hand against his forehead, looking anxious and alarmed. “You’re burning up,” she said, breaking the grip she held on him.

He watched as she got to her feet and walked over to the dresser, pouring water into the bowl, she dipped a washcloth into it. Pushing the sleeves up on her dressing gown, she wrung out the excess water and shuffled back to the bed in her slippers.

She offered the cloth to him, and he nodded, letting her place it on his forehead. He wouldn’t have been surprised if steam hadn’t risen from the touch.

They fell silent, listening to the sound of the castle around them.

Credence felt himself wanting to pull apart...to break into a thousand parts again, just to get out of the confines of this oppressive place! He would have, a million times over, if it had not been for the woman beside him. He couldn’t leave her...not to the mercy of the black hearts that roamed these halls. He couldn’t let Queenie fall between the cracks, just because of one bad choice: she was a light that burned in the darkness...he couldn’t let that snuff out just because *he* was weak.

Credence shook, the violent way he had started from his other thoughts had made him feel on edge, Sensing it in him, Queenie pulled him toward her, holding him close. “I’ll hold you together honey,” she whispered into his ear, her words calming. It was almost as if she really was pulling the parts of him back from the darkness...he couldn’t let that snuff out just because he was weak.

Credence shook, the violent way he had started from his other thoughts had made him feel on edge, Sensing it in him, Queenie pulled him toward her, holding him close. “I’ll hold you together honey,” she whispered into his ear, her words calming. It was almost as if she really was pulling the parts of him back from the darkness.

The two of them sat quietly as the panic passed, the ache falling from his bones until he no longer shook.

Queenie broke contact first, with a weak half-smile “The stronger you get, the worse it gets when
you come back.”

“We have to think of something, more of me slips away each day! We must be able to use it some way, before it’s too late,” he said in a voice that sounded calmer than he felt. A claustrophobic feeling that he now associated with the castle gripped him: the rich fabrics and tapestries that once instilled awe in him, now sickened him at the sight of them, associated as they were with death and despair, not hope and family they once promised.

He had heard the screams of the ones that had betrayed Grindelwald...the tortured yells of the ones that no longer served as part of his master plan...the dozens of no-maj that he had used, then discarded like yesterday's newspaper.

The monster had made Queenie and Credence listen as others had questioned the traitors, and the supposed lessers, on the floors below.

Grindelwald had smiled when neither Queenie or himself had reacted with the slightest emotion.

The two of them had returned to Credence’s room shortly after, fear and anger mixing into a tear-filled resolve that they would get through this together, no matter what it took. It had been over an hour before the two of them had managed to calm each other, repulsed by their actions. Cursing their own stupidity, and mourning the innocents that had been taken: unable to do anything to help them, silently listening to their deaths, while smiling at the spider who wove them further into the middle of his web.

Queenie got to her feet, offering him her hand, ”You’re in shock...you need sugar.”

Reluctantly he got to his feet. Credence hated walking the castle at night: every shadow had a face, and every movement could mean death.

Even if Queenie could hear the thoughts of anyone lurking in the shadows, he still didn’t trust anyone but the blond who tucked her arm into his own, walking them towards the door.

They had just reached the end of the long ornate corridor, flanked with marble busts of the dead, when a movement caught his eye.

Queenie tightened her grip on him, leaning in to kiss him on the cheek.

\textit{Abernathy? Credence thought.}

"Mnuhu," Queenie muttered into his ear.

Credence slid his arm around her waist, thinking bitterly, \textit{That man’s a snake in more than just tongue.}

Queenie gave out a playful laugh, slapping Credence lightly on the arm as they rounded the corner “Creedy Honey, that’s awful…” she giggled, trying hard to avoid looking at Abernathy. as he stepped into sight.

“Where you of to Queenie?”

“Oh Mr Abenathy, we was just going to get some cocoa! You wanna join us?” Queenie reached up to straighten out the lapel of the housecoat that Credence wore over his pajamas, pressing herself even further into him. “I gotta to keep his energy up, don’t I sweetie?” She beamed up at Credence.
Reign it in Queenie! Too much…. “You do” Credence glanced down at Abernathy, who looked away red-faced.

“Just the boss don’t want anyone roaming the castle tonight, he’s got something on. I’d hate for you to get hurt.” Abernathy chanced a glance at Queenie, who reached out and patted him on the nose in a condescending manner.

“Well ain’t you a gem, worrying your pretty head about little old me! I promise…soon as I’ve made cocoa, we will pop right back to Creedy’s room and you won’t hear a peep from us. Scout’s honour.” Swinging back around to face Credence, she wrinkled her nose up against his cheek again. “Well, not too many peeps…” she said with a sly wink.

Abernathy blushed even harder, trying to make himself draw back into the shadows. “You better be out of the halls by the time I get back…” he ducked his head and stalked off, blending back amongst the shadows of the castle.

They listened until the footsteps fell away to nothing.

Queenie dropped her grip on him, sagging with relief now that her old boss was gone.

“I wish he didn’t have to be so vulgar,” she said, shaking her head. “I hate what he thinks about me! If my Jacob could hear him, he would punch him so hard, he wouldn’t know what week it was.”

“Queenie… shush!” Credence said, his eyes darting up and down the corridor, aware that walls had ears.

Their main protection was keeping up the pretence that they were a couple: it bought them extra time together and nobody questioned it. The amount of time they spent together as teacher and student had become suspicious…so, as far as everyone else was concerned, their relationship had blossomed into something more. So far, it was working, but their luck could change any second, even if sometimes it felt like he had to remind Queenie to keep up the act.

“It’s ok. There ain’t nobody about, I would hear them. Anyway, he’s buying it…he really hates you,” she said, beaming at him. “You still want cocoa?” she asked nudging him towards the kitchens.

Her fingers wrapped around soft fur. Tina turned her face into the pillow, and wrapped one leg around the blanket, burying herself into the softness of the mattress even further. For the first time in a long time, she just wanted to lay here, the sun warming her back as the mattress engulfed her in a much-needed hug. The scent of the sea mixed delightfully with the crisp aroma of the woodlands and the delightful scent of breakfast that emanated somewhere nearby. She flexed her fingers, causing the owner of the pelt under her hand to roll away, untangling from the arm that stretched above her head. No matter how much she wanted to cling on to the embrace of slumber, the world trudged on relentlessly. At her side, she felt Newt move as the Demiguise clambered over his side of the bed: up until moments ago, Dougal had been sleeping on her head. Tina heard the beast's paws hit the floor and scuttle off.

Calloused hands traced her back, cradling her hip as he moved in closer to her.

Tina lifted her head, slightly opening one eye to look at him: his eyes were still closed, his hair sticking up on end. As she was tipping her head to get a better look at him, Newt pulled her closer, his touch light.
She wantonly moved into his touch.

“You going to make me get up?” he asked quietly, his eyes still closed, the corner of his mouth twitching into a smile.

Tina nudged her hip into the not so subtle bulge that pressed against her leg with a little chuckle. Her mind shooting back to the day before in his case. Never before had she felt the need to be that close to someone. It had scared her slightly...the way that she had found this person who drove her to such a delicious torment. She nudged into him again before rolling on to her side to face him.

“Tiny… that is beneath you!”

“But right now it’s not!”

The laugh that came from her sounded so unlike her, even Newt opened his eyes to look at her. His smile sweeping finally into a grin as the laugh rippled through his chest. His eyes were bright green in the morning light, and Tina found herself drowning in his gaze...sinking and she didn’t even care. She nudged him again, encouraging him to roll onto his back. Throwing her leg over him, she carefully pinned down his arms, and --making sure not to lean on his broken hand too much-- she leant down, catching his lips in her own, pressing him into the soft mattress beneath them.

He tried to break her grip, but she tightened it more, deepening the kiss, feeling as if she was proving to herself that yesterday had been real.

Newt gave up his half-hearted fight, letting her take full control.

As soon as she felt him submit, she laughed, rolling back onto her side, and curling up on his chest.

“You are...” he trailed off, the grin on his face speaking far more than any words he could muster.

He looked so handsome when he was caught off-guard like this. Tina made a promise to herself to try and catch him off-guard at least once a day from now on, just to see the dazed, yet dashing, look that he wore right now. It was worth the frustration and lust that built up inside her for him to look at her as if she was the only other person in the world.

“I bloody love you,” he whispered into her ear as he nudging her with his nose before gently lifting her head to meet her lips again, this kiss brief, but no less passionate.

“Even when I lead you astray?” she teased as her hand ran across his shirt.

“Oh, more so when you do that.” he halted her wandering hand with his cast. “Makes a change it being the other way around.” He lifted her hand to his lips, kissing her wrist. “We really do have to get up...I have to see to the creatures.” His eyes were wide and apologetic as he slowly unfolded himself from her.

“No … WE have to see to the creatures. If I start work tomorrow, I’m not letting you out of my sight today.”

“Does Pickett have competition?”

“He does today.”
Newt slipped his hand into Tina’s as they walked out into the main part of the tent.

Her eyes found his from below her hair as she looked up from where their hands intertwined.

He could read her expression: you sure?

He squeezed her hand tighter in answer, hoping that she was ready for the barrage of inappropriate comments that were about to be cast at her before she had consumed her first coffee.

His family had already jumped to conclusions. He had nothing to hide: he loved this amazing woman, and the world could shove there archaic standards of propriety, sod what the world thought was right! As long as Tina was safe and happy and at his side, it had nothing to do with anyone else.

The world already thought him strange, different... Might as well live up to the reputation.

The only thing that he found himself lingering on was the feelings of his best friend and his brother: to be happy, when both of them had their lives fractured and broken, seemed selfish. However, Newt had taken both men's anger at him --for being stupid enough to let Tina go-- as a blessing. He never wanted to see Jacob angry like that again. As for his brother, Theseus had finally started to mourn. Newt’s fear of irrational behaviour seemed to lessen knowing this fact more than any other.

The smell of food cooking drifted from outside the tent. Blinking, the two of them stepped into the clearing where Newt's family had gathered.

Nobody noticed their arrival but Nagini, the others all too caught up in fussing over the Knezel kitten that sat on the table, being bottle fed by Ursula, under Ade’s watchful eye. The small ginger ball of fur was swiping at anyone but Ursula if they went anywhere near it. Newt watched her as they approached: he knew that her powers worked on Pickett...did they work on other animals too? The kit was very young, it must have only just been separated from its mother.

Jacob sat chatting to Newt’s mother. The man had such a natural ease with everyone, it hardly surprised him that his mother had taken to the baker. How anyone could dislike Jacob seemed almost ridiculous to him.

Nagini sat at Theseus’s side watching the proceedings around the table: the kinship between the maladictus and his brother seemed to be growing. Tina had told Newt about finding them in the woods. It was good for Theseus to have someone to talk to other than his family. Nagini caught Newt’s eye, nudging Theseus as she did so.

Theseus beckoned them over to him, indicating the bench at his side.

Newt couldn’t help but notice that his brother looked rested for the first time in weeks, the bags under his eyes beginning to fade, even if he did look incredibly hungover. He wondered if Thes’ statement about staying permanently pissed was working for him.

Newt weighed his options: he could be nice to his brother, and sympathise with his situation, and the resulting hangover, or he could do what he would normally do in this sort of situation and torture his brother relentlessly. He slid on to the bench next to Theseus, making a point of banging his cast on the table with a loud thud as he did so...he would hate to break a habit of a lifetime.

Theseus flinched.

“A little bit tender this morning are we?” he said, louder than need be, and closer to Theseus’s ear than was really necessary. He was going to enjoy tormenting his brother.
“The cider monster crawled into my mouth and died,” Theseus said, rubbing his temples and wincing at the sudden loud noise. “Could have done without you two as a wake-up call. What did you both find so funny this morning? I mean other than just Fido in general, that is?” Theseus cocked his eyebrow, waving the sausage he had just speared from the pile on the end of his fork in a suggestive manner.

Tina reached across Newt hooking the sausage from the fork before Theseus knew what was happening and placing it on her own plate, she rolled her eyes at his brother, before turning her attention to stabbing the sausage with her fork “Newt, when you get that cast off make sure to hit him will you?”

“It’ll be off by the end of today...I have to go back to work tomorrow too. Someone has to make sure you don’t kill each other before the day is out!” He flexed his fingers, “Almost as good as new...see?”

“He just wants to make sure you don’t go turning anyone's heads in my bloody department” Theseus, scoffed.

“It’s nothing of the sort.” Newt protested, already ticking off the idiots in his brother’s team in the back of his mind.

“She’s working with me, Newt. Anyway, you’re more than capable of looking after yourself, aren’t you Goldstein? If you behave, I’ll even let you sneak off to see this one here on your lunch break. No one ever goes down to the beast department...you can be as loud as you want....”

Tina helped herself to coffee with a wave of her wand. She shrugged, looking at him with a smirk on her face. “The idiot has a point.”

Newt felt his ears going red at the suggestion, probably the same shade of magenta that had just flushed Tina’s neck, causing Nagini to laugh.

Tina looked away first, turning and watching as the Nifflers that had followed them from the tent ran about, grabbing at everything and anything shiny that they could find.

He watched as the smallest of his girls ran up to his father, trying to grab at the silver chain that hung from his pocket watch.

“Dad, you’re about to get robbed,” Newt called down the table, alerting the rest of his family to his presence. As soon as he opened his mouth, he realised his stupidity at drawing attention to them.

Beside him, Tina slid closer. Biting the bullet, he slid his good arm around her, making sure it was visible to them all, and that his mother, especially, saw the gesture.

Rhea Scamander beamed at him, her face full of pride.

“So you two do come up for air, do you?” his father said, looking up from his crossword, “We were going to send an expedition for your extraction, if you didn’t emerge soon.”

“Hark at you Artimus! When you first brought this charming thing home, I didn’t see you for a bloody fortnight…” Ade nudged his son before pointing to Newt’s mother.

Rhea laughed as she buttered her toast. “Oh they were the days!” she placed the knife down, resting her head on her hands and looking across at her husband, “You were so handsome Arty! Only Auror I ever met that had long hair and didn’t wear a stuffy suit... you remember that jacket you had? What happened to that?” she said wistfully.
“Probably still in the cupboard someplace? Could get young eddy to look for it if you like?” He cocked his head to the side looking at his wife, a playful smile on his face “Hold on, back up a second…. Were so handsome? You saying I look like the arse end of a fire crab now?”

Rhea got to her feet, walking around the table to her husband, and resting her head on his shoulder, she kissed him on the cheek “No darling, you look more divine by the day… although I do miss that hair of yours.” she said running her hand through his thinning hair playfully.

“Blame that on our sons! One keeps doing acts of life-threatening idiocy, and one likes to worry me to death… Not that I can tell you who does what these days… it changes on a weekly basis…”

“I resent that!” Theseus grunted from Newt’s side, causing Nagini to nod in agreement with Arty

“From what I’ve gathered in the short time I’ve known you, Thes, I would say that was a good description for both of you”

“I’m too hungover for this… “ At his side, Theseus sulked, pouring himself more tea into his metal cup, he took a sip, screwing up his face at the taste.

Laughing, Nagini reached over and popped a sugar cube into the liquid… exactly the thing he had forgotten to add in his disgruntled outrage.

Newt watched as his family reacted to the gesture: Rhea looked at the interaction with a look of concern, which Newt felt it was a little presumptuous. His mother had always had problems with her sons having female friends, wondering what their ulterior motive was, but Newt was happy the two of them had found this friendship. If it helped them through the dark times, who was he to judge.

Tina nudged him. Then she nudged him again: Ursula was offering up the baby Knezell to him, and he hadn’t even noticed.

He took the creature, gently wrapping it in his arm.

Ursula handed Tina the bottle.

As the tiny thing began to cry, Tina carefully tilted the bottle to the creature's mouth, waiting for it to latch on, when it took the bottle she excitedly looked up at him grinning. “A bit smaller than a mooncalf but I guess it’s the same principle?”

He nodded down at her. The fact that she remembered, even if it was just that small thing, from all the way back when he was in New York, it just made him love her more.

“Oh look I’m an uncle,” Theseus quipped from behind him, earning him a kick in the shin under the table.

Newt knew the rest of the family were being just as bad as his brother, but it all faded to background noise as he watched the woman he loved give life to the tiny creature.
Hi guys! thanks for all the lovely good luck messages on the last chapter. this is the last chapter for a little bit as my Beta is away and you really don't want my chapters without her watchful eye having been cast over them. The next chapter is almost done. It's sitting waiting to be edited and put together in a neat tidy flow of conscious thoughts.

Again thanks for sticking with me!

I promise a horrendously cute fluffy chapter soon just to make up for life ... as ever all the love to the wonderful SaraB who makes this rambling so much easier to understand.

Be good to each other.
xx Grumps
Tina had to admit that out of the three Ministry buildings that she had been in, the Ministry in Britain was the most confusing and confounding. If it wasn’t the owls that flew around delivering letters, it was the ever-changing layout of the place. The serpentine nature of the corridors seemed to constantly change direction, and Tina was acutely aware of the fact that, on more than one occasion, she had been turned completely around, and ended up back where she started.

She found herself wishing she was back at home with Newt whenever the building made a personal attack on her like that...at least the only dangerous creatures she had to worry about at Dracholm were easy to placate with a belly rub and a dead ferret!

Tina wondered if the same technique would work on Judith, Theseus’s secretary. The woman had taken an instant dislike to Tina. Judith reminded Tina strongly of the women in the typing pool back at Macusa...all air and no substance. The kind of women who would not normally have any opinion of Tina, she was too bland to be of interest, but something had triggered the vulture, and she felt Judith’s dark, beady eyes following her on a regular basis. She was the sort of woman that only cared if there was a scandal involved, so no doubt she knew every single thing that had happened when Macusa had been visiting. Queenie would often come home with tales from the hens' nest, about who was stepping out with who and the inevitable disaster that would be the end of some high flying courtship.

Tina had never really been on the giving or the receiving end of the gossip hounds...that was until her first day working as an auror alongside Theseus.

“You will be fine,” Newt reassured her as they walked into the cavernous entryway.

Tina had dropped in behind him, wiping the non-existent soot from her clothes, and fidgeting with her jacket nervously: she didn’t feel right in an outfit that she hadn’t chosen herself. The skirt wasn’t practical, and the blouse didn’t feel like it had enough room to move...it would be no good in a life or death situation, something that was becoming far too regular an occurrence for Tina’s liking. It made her feel vulnerable, and that was not the best start for the first day in a new job on hostile grounds. She felt far too self-conscious, well aware of the fact that the last time both of them had been on ministry premises hadn’t exactly been the highlight of her career thus far.

It had taken all of Newt’s bumbling charms to persuade her that everything was going to be fine... and she really wanted to believe him, but nagging doubt wouldn’t leave her mind Though she had very little control over the anxiety clawing at her overworked mind, she was angry at herself for the weakness...she had almost been sick...twice! As he had walked with her, Newt had tapped a slow rhythm out on the back of her hand: one , two , three . one , two, three… it had helped to ground her...to stop the nervous energy from consuming her.
But now her hand was empty, void of Newt’s reassuring warmth.

The two of them stood side by side in the hall waiting for Theseus to emerge from the flames...torn between acting like themselves, and keeping up a professional appearance, causing them to hover in each others space, never quite touching. Dumbledore’s warning about the other side was still very much at the front of both of their minds.

When Theseus finally showed his face in the flame, he looked just as worried and self-conscious as Tina felt. This was to be Theseus’s first day back. At least, his first proper full day back since the events of Paris.

Tina knew that Newt was just as concerned for his brother as he was for her. She wished she could calm his mind, but Theseus had been right: they had to get back to normality, it had been almost a full month now, they couldn’t spend forever just existing without living. That wasn’t a life.

“Ah, Misters Scamander!” The dark-haired security officer welcomed from behind the desk at them as they turned towards the bank of lifts. The older man observed them from behind round glasses that made him look like an oversized owl.

Tina watched as Newt dropped his wand on to the long tray, attached to a set of scales. It clicked, and green writing swirled into existence on the silver faceplate. *Newton Scamander level 2b clearance.*

The security wizard handed Newt back his wand. Reaching out to take hold of Theseus’s dark oak wand next, the owlish man nodded as he twisted the wood in his hand. The wand had hardly touched the flat surface before the writing danced into place. *Theseus Scamander Level 1a clearance.*

The man in question took his wand back, tucking it into holster, and turned to face Tina, “We have to take your wands particulars. We only do it once, but it means if any questionable spells or wands are detected we know straight away.”

Tina twisted her wand nervously at her side, feeling rather protective of it.

Theseus glanced at the action before continuing, “It also means that if we ever go to a ‘code black,’ the only person who can use your wand will be you...not anyone who's stolen it and is pretending to be you... or the like.”

Tina tried her best not to look amused at the slight dig at the American ministry. If they had that precaution in place, Grindelwald would not have managed to infiltrate Macusa, masquerading as Graves.

Theseus caught her eye, almost causing her to burst out laughing at his incredibly forced straight face. Nodding, she shot a warning look at the security wizard.

She felt his bird-like gaze fall over her.

Tina repressed the urge to punch this stranger in the face by reminding herself that she loved her job, and no two-bit security wizard would be able to take that away from her.

Theseus held out his hand.

Begrudgingly, Tina handed him her wand, missing it's reassuring touch as soon as she let it leave her fingers.
This time when the wand fell upon the channel, the writing turned golden, words forming at a slower pace: 13.5-inch ebony, horned serpent core … please assign…

“If you wouldn’t mind picking up your wand and performing a simple Lumos spell, please?” The security wizard smiled at her in a way that made Tina want to hex him, tipping his head to indicate the wand.

_Ade was right then! Wonder how he worked it out? Even I didn’t know what my wand core was!_ Tina thought as her hand wrapped around the familiar curve of the wood, and raised her hand slightly, casting the simple Lumos charm that she had been able to cast —wandless— since she was seven years old.

Porpentina Sc...Goldstein. Level 1b clearance. The script faded to the same dark green that had declared both Newt and Theseus’s names moments before.

The Security wizard Handed Tina back her wand with a smile. “Welcome to the ministry family, Mrs. Goldstein.”

“It’s Miss,” Tina replied curtly. She glanced awkwardly at Theseus who was trying not to laugh, then at Newt, who shook his head in amusement.

“Ronnie, we’ve been through this! Stop assuming that all the women who come to work at the Ministry only do so because their husbands want to keep them out of trouble.”

“Sorry Auror Scamander...old habits and all that.” The man looked flushed around the ears as Theseus reprimanded him. “Just assumed ... what with the machine struggling with the name … Should get that looked at sir! I’ll get an elf to send it to repairs.”

“Auror Goldstein here is my new partner, and you need to show her as much respect as you would myself or any other member of my department, got that?”

At the other security desk, two women were looking over now trying to see what the hold up was, staring and whispering eagerly between the two of them.

Tina silenced them with a scathing look.

“Auror Goldstein?” Ronnie looked her up and down.

Tina’s hand tightened on her wand. Theseus had warned her that the organisation in England didn’t have many high-ranking women...there was only one other woman working at the Auror department under his command. She had expected to cause a stir, but she expected it from the other Aurors, not the grumpy old man at the front desk.

“Yes Ronnie, Auror Goldstein Now, if you don’t mind … I have a bunch of lazy oafs who have probably done absolutely nothing productive since I went on sabbatical. I’d hate to give them another day of drinking tea and talking cricket with gay abandon wouldn’t you?”

Tina was impressed that Theseus hadn’t once raised his voice, but the man behind the desk had shrunk away into almost nothing under his words.

“Sorry sir,” he nodded, waving them on towards the lifts.

Newt fell into step beside Tina, grinning at her from ear to ear, even if he did look confused. “Horned serpent?” he said, nodding at her wand, still clutched protectively in her hand.
“You don’t know what a horned serpent is?” she said, smirking at his confusion. “You...the world’s leading expert on beasts?”

“I never said that I didn’t know what it was, ju--”

“--you didn’t think it was real?” she finished. To be fair, she had never seen one either. No doubt they were in hiding after the wizards decided that they were too much of a threat to life.

“Just seems strange that your wand has that core when you were a Thunderbird, that’s all.” he shrugged as he held the gate open for her to step into the lift.

“So...you were paying attention?” Tina had been sure that he had tuned out as soon as she started to talk about her old school. After all, in both the Scamander brothers cases, they perceived Hogwarts to be the final say in wizarding schools.

“I’m always paying attention Tiny...especially to you.” The safety gate clunked into place, and Newt turned, “Yet again, you surprise me in the nicest of ways.”

“You know, I think I liked you better when you avoided work and didn’t speak, Fido.” Theseus scoffed, reaching around Newt to hit a button on the panel jerking the lift to life.

“I can go back to avoiding you, if you like, but it might make trips to your floor a bit difficult.”

Theseus stepped back, looking at Newt, he shook his head smiling at the floor, the affection and irritation for his brother in diametric contradiction. “I can’t remember the last time you voluntarily came to my department--”

“--that’s because you spend most of your time trying to get me to come and work for you, You have Tina now...she should keep you distracted for a bit, straighten out the status quo as it were.”

As the lift slowed, Newt ducked around his brother, stepping towards Tina and placing a quick kiss on her cheek. “This is me, Tiny. I will come find you for lunch. Try not to curse him,” he nodded in the direction of Theseus who now leant on the wall of the elevator looking on with an exasperated but proud expression.

“Keep out of trouble!” Theseus called down the corridor after his brother as two owls flew into the confined space carrying memos, Theseus had to duck, the gate closed and the lift sprung back into life, moving them on to the next department.

“You wanted Newt to be an Auror?” Tina asked, ducking out of the way of a rather enthusiastic screech owl.

“Once you see him track some beast of his for four days, or you have been under his observation for a day and not even noticed, you will realise that Newt would actually have been a fantastic asset to my team. Merlin knows I’ve tried in the past! But as I’m sure you know Newt doesn’t take orders...he never has, and he never will.”

The lift slowed again, grinding to a halt at the end of a red-tiled hallway. Wanted posters hung on the walls, including the faces of her sister and Credence. Theseus must have seen her looking, because he raised his wand…

“It’s ok Thes, she’s wanted...nothing I can do about that.” She placed her hand on his arm, gently pushing his wand arm down. On the walls around her, Queenie stared back at her beaming.

“You don’t look like her,” Theseus said, comparing her to her sisters' portrait.
“No… I guess not.”

Queenie’s portrait blinked a few times, then fell still.

“I don’t know what I did wrong Thes,” Tina murmured.

“There’s no need to ask yourself that. We all make our own choices. We can’t make our siblings do what we want, even if we try. Their decisions are theirs alone…sometimes they get it right..” He patted her hand, still lightly resting on his wand arm, indicating that he approved of Newt’s actions in regards to herself, “…and sometimes they don’t.” He nodded at the poster on the wall. “Can’t beat yourself up over their free will. I understand though…you do anyway, the downside of being the firstborn.” He tugged her towards an open door at the end of the corridor, where watchful eyes of the department of law enforcement gazed at them. “Right, Auror Goldstein, time to feed you to the hippogriffs.” When Tina’s eyes fell to the end of the corridor, there was a sudden scramble as the Auror’s pretended to get back to work.

“They can get lost if they think I’m bowing to them.”

Theseus dropped his arm from her grip chuckling to himself, “If you’re as formidable as Graves likes to make out, It will very much be the other way around, I’m sure.”

It had taken up until lunchtime for the first set of inquiring aurors to be bold enough to venture into Theseus’s office. After a brief introduction, some of the juniors had wandered in, to look at her like she was an exhibit in the zoo.

Tina had been appointed a desk in the small reception room that adjoined the head auror’s suite. Not that Theseus spent much time in his office, preferring to use the large desk across the narrow walkway from the desk that Tina now sat, being watched by eager faces that looked like they wanted her to catch a fish, or do some sort of trick.

Theseus had humored them with questions about Tina’s transfer, before ushering the men back out to the open plan floor of the department, leaning on the wall and looking out across his team from behind his alternative desk. When asked, Theseus would say it was because he liked to keep an eye on the floor.

Tina couldn’t help but wonder if it was more to do with the loneliness of power. She knew better than most that throwing yourself into the job could make for a lonely life…climbing the ladder shut many a door solidly behind you. How many friends did Theseus have? No one had come to the office to see if he was alright. No one had sought out his company since Tina had been introduced to a room full of men hours before.

It was strange to think that in his own way Theseus was just as much an outsider as Newt. however, Newt relished in his solitude, Tina found herself getting angry on Theseus’s behalf at how cold-hearted the rest of his department seemed to be towards him.

Tina had just been about to ask where she could get a decent cup of coffee, when one of the women from the entrance hall earlier had knocked on the partition that separated the rest of the open plan office from the area Tina and Theseus now sat.

“Auror Scamander, Sir?”

The woman was short and slim, her dark hair cut in a style that would be almost a bob if it wasn’t for
the violent kink that caused it to curl around her ears. She wore a deep ruby dress that almost
matched the dark tile of the Auror department.

_active camouflage? What is she after then?_ Tina thought, as the woman slid into the office space.

The woman sashayed in heels that indicated that she was not an auror: no decent fighter would wear
such delicate shoes to work. They were not the shoes of someone who pursued others for a living, or
at least not criminals at least. She ignored Tina as she headed to the vacant seat at the side of
Theseus's desk.

Tina observed the woman more now that she had a better view: red painted lips, and the hint of a slip
poked out from between the delicate straps of the dress she wore. She twisted the cord of the long
necklace she wore around a slender finger, trying to draw in Theseus’s eye.

“What is it, Judith?” Theseus briefly looked up at the woman before turning back to the paperwork
on his desk.

“We… that is to say, I … we wondered if you would like to come over to the Siren after work?” She
battered long eyelashes, trying to get his attention.

Tina was dumbfounded. Leta hadn’t even been dead a month, and already the vultures were circling.

“I can't, I'm afraid. I promised someone I would take them to Diagon alley after work. Maybe next
another time.” Theseus didn’t look up at her, too busy poring over one of the many files that lay on
the desk. “Could you do me a favour and pull all the files on the contraband we seized at Calais?
Tina…that is to say, Auror Goldstein… will need them to follow up on a case we have been working
on.”

Judith acknowledged Tina for the first time.

_Well, doesn’t she look like she just fell face first onto a pile of dragon dung!_ Tina nodded in
acknowledgement as the woman glared at her.

“Yes, sir,” Judith said, getting to her feet and tottering slightly upon her heels. “Can I get you
anything else, sir?”

“That will be all, Judith.” Theseus dismissed her without looking up.

The woman gave Tina another contemptuous look before storming out...or at least storming out to
the best of her abilities in an outfit more designed for being horizontal than vertical.

“Who...or what...was that?” Tina said, getting up and filling the vacant seat next to Theseus.

“Is she gone?” Theseus kept his head inclined as Tina glanced out into the main room. The woman
couldn’t be seen, but Tina knew Judith. Everyone knew a Judith, and, like all gossip, she would not
give up on any small chance to get there hands on some scandal. Just because you couldn't see her
didn’t mean that she wasn’t in earshot.

“It’s all clear,” Tina said as she watched the woman totter out of the office, casting them both a look
of disdain as she left.

“I was hoping that she might have left by the time I returned to work! Leta hates her, and apparently
Newt wasn’t all that much of a fan either.”

It was as if Newt had been summoned into existence at the muttering of his name: He slid into the
department looking flustered, his eyes cast down to the ground, shuffling towards them.

Tina felt her stomach flutter slightly at the sight of him. It felt like a lifetime since she had seen him last, even if the clock on the wall proclaimed it had only been hours. Newt had filled so much of her existence recently, his absence was tangible.

“Why in the name of Merlin is Judith still working here?” He shook his head like he was trying to dislodge some sort of memory from his mind. It gave Tina the impression of watching an overgrown puppy shaking rain from its drenched fur.

“She probably has a nice fat nugget of gossip on Travers that she is using for blackmail. It’s the only plausible excuse...it’s not because she’s good at her job.”

Theseus stretched “You’d better hope she doesn’t get a whiff of you two! She still thinks there’s a chance that you’re an animagus and married a dragon in the war. That one was quite imaginative for someone who can’t even spell her own name.”

“I hadn’t heard that one!” Newt laughed, turning to Tina. “I can’t and I’m not, by the way.”

Tina tried her hardest to look shocked, but failed spectacularly as images of a teal-colored Dragon being tempted by sweets caught hold of her imagination. “Shame, I have a way with dragons, don’t you know?” The look of adoration that crossed Newt’s face almost made up for the mock sound of outrage that emanated from Theseus beside her.

They need not have worried. By the end of the day, the general consensus of most of the Ministry grapevine was of the opinion that Tina was Theseus’s new squeeze, something that amused Theseus greatly, and annoyed Tina more than she liked to admit.

Newt had been the last to find out about it but it always had taken a little longer for office politics to get down to the beast department.

“Why does everyone think that I am in a relationship with your brother?” she said, storming his office, one strand of hair flying erratically skywards out of her neat, tidy bob.

It had been a week now since they had returned to work, and Newt had managed to even turn up to all of his shifts on time and almost willing to do the paperwork...if it meant that he got to see Tina, even if it was just for lunch. He took his wand from his mouth, where he had been holding it, as he dissected a guano sample that he had been sent from a crime scene. “Because he’s not up to his eyeballs in dung I should imagine.” Newt wiped his hands on the cloth on his desk “Plus the way you two bicker it’s like watching an old married couple fighting over who forgot to feed the snapdragons.”

Tina huffed and puffed, disgruntled, in the doorway.

*She is so stunning when she is quietly outraged!* Newt thought, staring at her fondly.

“Well I’m getting sick of it.” she crossed her arms, glaring at him. “This is your fault. ‘Scamander punched that American in the face!’” She mimicked the ministry receptionists so well that Newt felt like he should give her an award.

“So, what am I supposed to have done? I was defending your honor! I won’t bother next time...,” the merth was thick in his voice. He should be just as mad at the rumors about his brother and his …
what was she? His girlfriend? He should be, but he found her anger so delightful, he couldn’t bring himself to get mad. Anyway it was just gossip...he didn’t need to go around breaking his hand on any faces.

“How could anyone think I was with Thes? He’s so...he’s so...” she threw her hands up in the air, exasperated.

“Like you?”

“Exactly!” Her face broke a smile at that, the rage ebbing away.

Newt nodded her towards him as he magiced the last of the samples away to be looked at again on Monday.

She nudged the door closed behind her, and moved to his side as he busied himself collating the things in to his bag.

“Well I for one think you are nothing like him, otherwise it would be ever so weird when I did this--” he reached out twirling her into his arms and raising his hand to her hair, smoothing down the wild tuft before pulling her into a kiss. Tina giggled against his lips, which tickled, causing him to want to deepen the kiss, to feel that giggle ripple through him in all the ways that made him giddy. He was just getting into the swing of things, when he heard the door close and, glancing up, saw a short, dark head bob past his window.

“We’ll I think we just gave the gossips something else to talk about.” he said, laughing as they pressed foreheads together, gazing deep into Tina’s eyes.

“It’ll be a twisted love triangle in the Prophet by the end of the week…”

It took two weeks, but by that point most of the Aurors were too scared of her to be stupid enough to bring it up.

Chapter End Notes

So I am back!

So this is the second bit of the storyline. The colours are finally gone (I was running out so that makes me happy!)

I'm refreshed and ready to go.
In between work and playing wizards unite obviously.

I have no words for how much I appreciate everyone for reading and there are not
enough amazing words to say how supportive and wonderfully amazing my beta Sara is.

Anyway you know I love the comments x
Hey Guys!
Life has been hectic lately so sorry for the delay.
This is only half beta-read as my lovely Beta Sara is having issues with getting online so I apologise, you should be able to spot the point where I go in on my own. no doubt once its been properly checked I will come back to it but I didn't want to leave you all hanging too long.

Newt waited. He was getting very good at waiting. Waiting for Tina wasn’t anywhere near as bad as waiting for anything else. He had discovered that waiting for Tina was like a small torment that he had become rather accustomed to over the short time they had been together, and he kind of liked it. If that made him even the slightest bit strange in the eyes of anyone then he would just have to add it to the list of strange things that the world knew about him. It was worth waiting to see her face when she looked down the hallway and saw him stationed by the lifts, her beam of a smile engulfing him in a warm blanket of love.

Newt ignored the idle gossiping and the background noise that filled the hallway on the late Friday afternoon. He wasn’t ignorant he knew what the gossip entailed, he was aware of the headlines that declared Tina to have taken up residency as Theseus’s right hand, the word was that Tina and Theseus were more than just friends.

It was a test of how far he and Theseus had come that the headlines had become somewhat of a joke between the whole Scamander clan, Tina the scarlet woman playing both of them off each other, the scandal!

Newt couldn’t help but think that his mother was enjoying the attention a little too much, she had attended five bake sales in the space of the last week alone due to the weight of the hearsay that hovered around her sons. However, not one to turn down such an opportunity Rhea had become a somewhat keen investigator. Not only had she learned the names of several members of Grindelwald’s inner circle, but she had also gathered a substantial amount of information about the circus that Nagini had been sold to.

“Alcohol and bored women make good bedfellows, Tina...and never underestimate how men will gossip if you bat your eyes just right... it falls right out their mouth. Poor, dumb things... “

Tina had regarded his mother with a look of respect his mother's charm uncovered things that no auror had even managed to touch on. With Jacob in her wake, Rhea Scamander loosened even the most sealed lips, either with charm or with one of Jacob's many baked goods.

The two made quite the team.
“Newt!” he had been so distracted people-watching, that he hadn’t noticed Tina sliding up to his side. She had obviously been talking away for some time, and he just hadn’t noticed, while Einstein sat in her jacket pocket, shaking his head from over the dove-grey fabric.

“Sorry...I was miles away,” he blustered, offering up his arm for Tina to hold.

“You better be sorry,” Tina teased, slipping her fingers on to the crook of his arm. “I was saying, Your mom’s lead on the ringleader turned up a few interesting smuggling rings, I will get them to pop the files on your desk.”

“For the love of Merlin, don’t tell my mother that! She is bad enough at the moment, without you feeding into her new hobby.”

“Rhea is a useful asset, don’t you go upsetting her just because you didn’t find it before she did.”

“I’m just saying, for dad’s sake, let's not get her too deep, he needs her at home.” he tried to keep his voice calm, but his voice cracked at the end.

Tina looked at him her eyes full of concern.

“What happened?”

Newt paused to let a group of international delegates pass them at the entrance, snatches of Russian and German mixing in the chattering as the wizards rushed towards the exit and the floo, eager to get home for the weekend.

Newt cast his eyes down to Einstein, the creature looked up to him curious as ever to the world, Newt gently placed a finger on his fur stroking gently down the side of the animals face, it nudged into him, taking the Knutt that appeared from thin air. Without a second thought, the beast ducked in to the relative safety and camouflage of Tina’s pocket, hidden from the muggles that would meet them on the other side of the ministry boundary.

“Newt?”

He paused then the words cascaded from his lips, information travelling faster than the words could form, tripping and stumbling there way into the world “Bunty sent an owl, dad is struggling to remember basic stuff again. I’m not worried as such, I just don’t want anything bad to happen to her to make him worse.”

He didn’t need to see Tina’s face to know that a shadow of despair had crossed her features She stroked the skin of his wrist, reassuring him of her presence, not questioning his slight panic. Tina understood, she always did.

Newt gently manoeuvred them towards the busy road. The streets were alive with the business of a Friday afternoon. The banking district never seemed quite as busy as the rest, especially when most of the bankers had already headed home for a long weekend. Summer hung in the air, offices were no place to spend a day like this.

“I take it we aren’t going to meet up with your mom now?” Tina offered, her hand falling to join his, fingers intertwined.

“No, she and Jacob have gone back to Featherdown, Jacob wanted to help.” Plus I think he’s sick of Gramps Newt added to himself. “Thes and Nagini are still going to meet us for dinner. I thought we
should make the most of the afternoon to ourselves instead?"

“Can we still go for a walk?” Tina looked at him hopefully, he couldn’t deny her anything, really, not when it was something as simple as a walk and such a simple thing made her so very happy.

“Anything the lady requires, the lady shall have.”

Her eyes lit up at the prospect, tugging him forward into the late afternoon sun.

The streets were cleaner around the shadow of St Paul’s, even the pigeons seemed to look cleaner...fatter, too. Newt looked up at the spires of the cathedral, it seemed like another lifetime that he was last upon the domed towers: Dumbeldore’s request to travel to Paris seemed like it had happened to another version of him, one that felt a lot younger and a lot less jaded.

Newt pulled Tina towards their usual disapparation point down a side alley, only for them to reappear near the Mall in an even more empty space devoid of working muggles at this time on a Friday afternoon. The muggy heat caused even the most ardent worker --muggle or wizard-- to grind to a slow crawl, brain fogged and longing for good drinks and better company.

They walked towards the embankment, taking in the horse guard’s parade, not really talking about anything of importance, slowing only so Tina could watch the ducks gathering at the corner of the pond in St James Park.

Newt watched as she pulled out the crusts of the sandwiches saved from lunch, folded neatly in a napkin, smiling as she broke the crusts into morsels that she tossed out to to the elegant swans and the greedy moorhens. Newt watched her with reverence, as she threw the small scraps from the palm of her hand. Whenever he saw her feeding any creature, she always had a look of contentment upon her face. She had been positively ecstatic when he had introduced her to the squirrels in regents park. Watching her now, he made a mental note to take her to visit the zoo: her happiness at normal, unmagical animals rivalled that of her adoration of their magical counterparts.

They stood in the shade of a large willow tree for some time, Tina watching a mother duck tend to her brood of ducklings, Newt explaining that swans mate for life, having been known to die of heartache if separated. Tina gazed after the large white birds as they glided over the hazy pond water, a hint of sadness shifting over her delicate features.

“Thes said that Leta liked to feed them on the way home,” Tina offered as a way of an explanation, her eyes not looking up from a rather pushy black swan that had come up from the bank and sat at her feet. It was alone, no mate in sight.

“But?” He hadn’t expected that. The strange, dead weight that existed in his chest...where memories of his old best friend lingered...gave a pathetic moan of despair. She was still so present, even though she had been gone for over two months now, How did Theseus manage to even get through a day without breaking down? Every little action he had was wrapped around her, work, home. At least his own memories of Leta had the decency to only jar him on the odd occasion. He watched Tina, they had been careful to try and cross their own work-life as little as possible, at least that way, if something happened, they would still have somewhere to escape to that didn’t constantly remind them of the other. However, the line was beginning to blur again: Tina was in his office now almost
as much as she was in her own...he should really keep at least that distance...just in case… Tina beamed at him, and the thought was pushed deep into the back of his mind. He couldn’t keep thinking like that...it wasn’t a life.

“I saved the crusts, I knew we were meeting your mom here so—”

“-You thought you would feed the ducks?”

“I thought...well...I thought it would be nice to pick up the tradition?” Tina walked up to the bench that sat facing the river that ran through the park.

Newt followed her lead, helping himself to some of the crusts in the napkin, as he wrapped his arm around her shoulders. He allowed himself some time to compose his thoughts, watching as life went on around them: the Park was alive with activity, people rushing from place to place, children playing, couples enjoying the late summer sun as it stretched out warming the city with a radiant golden kiss. Newt flicked a bit of bread at a rather fat looking goose that had waddled up hopefully, it looked at him in disdain after tasting the offering, and turned tail to saunter off towards the two gentlemen sitting on the next bench along.

The foul walked up and helped itself to the contents of the skinny, red-haired man's pocket. Beside him the man’s companion watched on, waiting for the first to realise the predicament. It was a slow realization, but the second man looked on with such a fondness, that it was evident that this was not the first time this had happened.

Newt watched as the first gentleman straightened his sunglasses, shrugging off the amusement of his friend. He made a show of turning out the rest of the contents of his pocket to the hungry bird. The goose seemed happy with its lot, as did the companion who beamed at him, and the man in the sunglasses' cheeks turned ever so slightly red, as he looked back at his friend with a heartfelt grin.

Newt looked away quickly when he realised he had yet again been staring. He hadn’t meant to, but with his mind still musing upon his mother and father, and the way the two of them were slowly losing each other, his mind was a little all over the place.

It jumped from his family to his feelings about Tina, to the loss he felt when he thought that he had lost her. It raced through the actions that had led to his grandfather contemplating his own death. It lingered on Theseus...on Leta...on Dumbledore: he had found the interaction between the two strangers almost bringing his mind’s wandering to a physical manifestation.

“You aren’t with me again are you?” Tina asked gently, as she followed his line of sight, watching the world unfold in front of them. Life goes on...regardless of all the darkness that bubbles below the surface.

Newt hated the fact that he couldn’t just centre his attention, just for once only on Tina. His mind, jumping from thought to thought, was draining. Tina deserved his full attention.

“I am. I’m just thinking, that’s all. My mind is a little all over today.”

“Share?” She leaned into him, as she folded the now empty napkin up and placed it back into her trouser pocket.

“I’m just trying to piece together patterns that’s all.”

As the two of them watched, the ducks moved on to the couple at the next bench along, swarming around their feet as the seamlessly endless supply of bread found each greedy beak.
Tina laid her head on his shoulder, pulling his arms tighter around herself and wrapping her fingers into his own. “Don’t look for too many patterns, or you start seeing things that aren’t there.” She kissed him gently on the temple. “I’m sorry for bringing up Leta,” she whispered.

“It’s fine.”

“Is it though?”

He didn’t answer...he knew it was rhetorical.

The sight of a solid brick wall had confused Tina the first time Newt had told her they were going to visit the wizard shopping district in London. Even now, the sight of the brick wall falling away to reveal a hidden world on such a grand scale shouldn’t surprise her in the way that it does.

If Whip-ma-wop-ma-gate had been a marvel, Diagon Alley was heaven on earth.

Tina gazed at the window of the bookshop, where Newt’s book was piled high, the words “best seller” emblazoned in big letters on a fancy notice beside it. The smile that crept up on her caused her cheeks to ache, and her pride in him to grow two-fold.

Newt avoided the shop completely. Muttering something about wanting to avoid his publishers upstairs at obscurus books, he dragged her towards the ominous looking building at the end of the street.

It loomed in the fading sun, a sandstone behemoth, leaning into the encroaching skyline.

“Where are we going anyway?” Tina managed to just about keep up with Newt’s loping steps as he lead the way.

“To the bank.”

Glancing over his shoulder, she became aware that he slowed his pace slightly, now aware that she was not quite as agile as him at manoeuvring through crowds. Newt took it in stride, dodging people as if he were weaving his way through saplings and trunks as old as the earth itself.

“The bank?” she asked in confusion, following him up the short flight of steps and into a large marble chamber lined with brass and wood. She paused for a second, taking it all in. A memory came flooding back to her: a peacock coat, a stuttering explanation, a niffler in a muggle bank... two piercing eyes whose owner didn’t understand what it was he had done wrong...

“Einstein had better stay in your pocket... we don’t want to lose him in here,” Newt said, nipping her fingers gently under his own, his own grin sneaking to his lips. Tina knew his mind had gone to the same place as her own, a bank on the other side of the ocean, the beginning of a new chapter in both of their lives.

Tina was about to ask why they had come to the bank when she was interrupted by a goblin who coughed loudly to get Newt’s attention.

“Mr Scamander, do you have your key?”

With a nudge, small green fingers pushed a copper key from the inside of Newt’s waistcoat pocket.
Pickett took a tentative glance over the flap, ducking away again when the Goblin glared at him.

“Still keeping a Dragon in the lower vaults Anvilak?” Newt asked, barely hiding the displeasure in his voice.

“Yes, wizard. As such, we have seen fit to move your vault to one of the upper levels…lest you give them ideas.” Hooded eyes looked up at them, the displeasure in them speaking volumes. “The twig is to stay upon your person at all times…follow me.”

Picket grumbled from his hiding place, but his head never appeared. Tina knew there was a story to do with her favourite lock pick, but she knew better than to ask while under the observant eye of Anvilak.

They followed the Goblin down a spiral staircase, and into a long dimly lit corridor.

The bank was nothing like the ones at home, Tina wondered how long the building had existed, and if the vaults had existed before the building had even been a thought in the wizard mind.

They reached a large copper door and the Goblin placed the key in the slot, the door clinked open.

“How much do you need?” Newt asked, turning to her.

“What?” She dropped his hand. She didn’t want his money! He could keep it. She had practically ripped his head off with the venom in her one word.

Newt’s face dropped. He looked so hurt, standing in the hazy glow of the lamplight. “It’s payday. I got them to put your wages into my vault, as you don’t have your own yet! You were saying you wanted to get some new clothes for work?”

Tina tried to process this new information. “You did what now?”

“Well, I say ‘me’… It was Theseus really… we need to get you sorted out… Jacob too, the takings from the bakery… it’s all so mundane after everything we have been… it’s all so normal-” Newt was rambling, flustered and flushed, and tried to avoid her gaze.

Tina felt the flash of anger slip away, she couldn’t stay mad at that face for long.

“I hadn’t even thought about getting paid.” her words sounded so honest that Newt paused in his rambling. The goblin beside them gave out a loud disgruntled snort obviously displeased with this showing of human emotion.

“Enough of that Anvilak or I shall have to investigate the high-security vault. There was a lot of paperwork last time, the minister insists on it in triplicate these days. I’m sure all your beast permits are up to date?”

The Goblin glared at Newt but stood back from the door, Tina gazed around Newt into the vault, the gold copper and bronze gave off a dull glow, but the pile of silver shone with an almost ethereal haze. Newt followed her gaze…

“Gran’s nest she got from the sphynx, Gramp’s left it to me and Thes. well the bits that didn’t get used on one of his experiments.”

Looking closer at the pile Tina could make out a box with a number of inscriptions engraved upon its silver faceplate, it was surrounded by solid silver instruments that Tina vaguely recognised from the divination device Abe had in his front room. This was old magic, you could feel the history peeling...
from it in waves. Beside it a very early luna scope, she had seen the one that Newt kept about him, but the intricate sculpt of this dainty device gave off the impression that it was watching her as much as she was it.

“That was Gran’s.” he smiled picking it up and placing it in her hand, carefully he wrapped her fingers around it securing it in her grip, under her touch the silver moved from tingling cold to searing warmth. She let out a gasp at the change. “It’s yours now,” Newt said nonchalantly, turning away and pocketing some of his own money from the shelf beside him. Tina tried not to look, but couldn’t fail to notice it was more money than she had ever set eyes on herself.

“I can’t possibly--”

“-- Too late it’s already yours, look at the side.” he didn’t turn to look as she manoeuvred the device in her hand, *Tina*, her name now etched in with the twisting star charts engraved on the precious metal. “No point arguing with the magic of a sphynx, you won’t win...that’s your shelf by the way” he indicated a shelf to the right of the door, a sizable mound of money sat upon it, Tina felt her mouth drop. She had never had that much money in one go before … if ever.

“This can’t be right?”

“Not enough?”

“Too much!”

“You’re the deputy head of the auror department, personally I think you need a pay rise, if just for putting up with Judith.” Newt’s arm wrapped around her waist. “You deserve it, Tina, you’re the best Auror I have ever known… and I come from a family of them.”

Tina couldn’t place the feeling that had swelled in her chest. The praise tingled in a way she had never really felt before, it wasn’t the same pride she felt when Queenie complimented her. The words filled her with a warmth, a love that she hadn’t realised she needed until it was bestowed on her. Coming from Newt the words took on a meaning all of their own, wrapping her in a blanket of adoration, did Newt feel like this when she praised his book? She could only hope he felt the same wave of love that had just washed over her with his words.

Maybe Newt could feel the fact that she was struggling with this new sensation, for he reached out and took a handful of galleons and placed them in her free hand. Folding them in exactly the same way he had the Luna scope.

“You can buy dinner.” his lips lingered near her ear as his words fell barely above that of a whisper. “You get paid better than me after all.”

Tina had never been one to shop, not for things that were not absolutely necessary. So the three paper bags that she now held in her hand seemed positively extravagant in comparison to her normal shopping habits.

The clothes had been necessary, the fancy new quill and the pouch for her wand had been an extravagance she had struggled to accept, even under Newt’s gentle persuasion.

She waited now, Einstein snuggling up to her on her locket watching as Newt bought a bag of sherbet skulls for the dragon’s back home.
“You shouldn’t encourage their bad habits.” Tina mocked as he joined her back alongside, he reached into the bag taking a skull out and offering it up to her. Tina pursed her lips for a few moments before accepting the treat and letting it dissolve on her tongue.

“Are they up to opal eye standards?” he teased as he licked the excess sherbet of his thumb, Tina watched him, there was a wicked temptation in that action.

She couldn’t help feeling that he teased her sometimes, testing the resolve to take things slow.

It was getting harder.

Each morning was like a test in itself, waking up to find him pressed up against her, all freckles and muscles and life earned scars, the pull of him catching her own orbit. It caused parts of her to ache for his touch, the promise of the passion that had shown on the cards under the Vertisurm picking at the edges of her waking thoughts.

The glint in his eye spoke volumes, he knew exactly how she felt, he teased himself just as much in a back and forth of pent up frustration.

“M...hu.” she hummed not quite able to form a sentence as her mind wandered over other places Newt could nip and lick with that mouth of his … as if he had read her mind he leaned into her, hugging her to his side his fingers hugging the curve of her waist.

Tina’s mind wandered, she barely registered the fact that they had wandered into the Leaky cauldron, aware only of the calloused hands causing friction against the fabric of her shirt, wondering if Newt realised how much of a distraction he really was. Tina had a fair idea that he did it deliberately to throw her thought pattern although what she was being distracted from became evident as they made their way to the quiet back booth that Newt favoured, both for its solitude but also its clear line of sight towards both exits, new wanted posters had been festooned upon the walls a photo of Queenie and Credence arm in arm looked down upon them. Tina bit down on her lip, trying to bite back the urge to dry heave at the sight of her sister, the bags under her eyes, the way Queenie linked her arm around Credence the latter looking just as tired just as many dark circles as the first.

Nagini sat at the table with Theseus, one of the wanted posters torn down and placed on the table a drink holding down the sign.

Nagini looked like Tina felt, the pain was etched upon her face, her fingers tracing the ink where the two fugitives arms linked. Hurt and pain flashed across her face in waves, beside her Theseus hovered his hand above her shoulders, not sure what to do with himself.

Tina slammed her fist down on the desk breaking Nagini from her staring, the wanted poster curled at the corners bursting into flames and then disintegrating into nothingness. Newt dug his grip in tighter on her side as Tina lifted Nagini’s face to look at her.

“Wanted or not we still love them, we will get them back.” Tina was shocked at how steady her voice sounded, it almost convinced herself, almost.

Nagini nodded, reaching to take Tina’s hand in her own when she spoke her voice was filled with hope.

“I believe you”
I love you all,
you know I love your comments
x grumps
“...-well at least they are safe?” The question mark hung in the air like a dead weight...Queenie knew this wasn’t going to end well.

Credence had been so tightly strung the last few weeks that she was surprised he had managed to keep the parts of him that were here with her together. He sat across from her now, staring at the newspaper print --glaring would be a more fitting description...in as much as one can glare at a sheet of paper-- his wand, on the desk next to him, sparking of its own volition.

Queenie tried to find the words in his head, but it was as if all the tiny parts of him were screaming out in unison...but not necessarily in the same language. They had come so far! He had managed to almost tame himself, but now they were back to square one. I know your hurting...let me help. Queenie wanted to wrap him in her arms and protect him, but she had her own pain, her own aching deep in her chest, to deal with first.

Even upside down, it was clear what --and who-- the picture centred on: Newt’s hair was a giveaway and Tina...her hair was a little longer, her face a little fuller, and she was smiling…a broad, happy smile...a smile that hurt Queenie to think about. Tina was happy without her, happy and with Newt. You could see it in her eyes, even in the newsprint: that smile, it reached all the way to her eyes, burning with a passion that she had never seen on her older sister's face before.

Tina looked positively radiant, her arm tucked alongside Newt’s, fingers entwined...eyes only for the other.

There were others in the photo, and it was the other figures that ignited Crediances rage.

Nagini his mind screamed in pain, as he traced her face with a gentle fingertip. The name was the only thing that Queenie could pick from the tangle of thoughts that ran at a million miles a second through all of his minds. Sadness and anger mangled together in incoherent thoughts.

As he pushed the newspaper away, Queenie scooped it up, scrambling at the chance to see the image the right way up...scanning for the face she had desperately wanted to see in the background.

He’s not here! Why isn’t Jacob with them? Had something happened? Had something happened to Jacob, something so bad that even Credence couldn’t feel it? Had Jacob gone back to New York? If he had, Macusa would surely have wiped his mind...he knew too much, too much about everything. He was a threat to both wizarding securities and to the master plan: a no-maj stuck between two worlds.

Queenie’s stomach squirmed. What sort of world was she creating? She found herself lost in thoughts of her future: the part that held Jacob seemed to be fading, much like his memory of her if Macusa had their way.

An angry sob brought her back to reality: Credence was on his feet, pacing now...muttering about the article.

Queenie pulled her eyes away from the image, glancing over the columns of newsprint.

' Scamander triangle more like a square' the headline read, so the gossip section, then, Queenie
surmised and there she was, thinking England was a bit more up-class than New York. ‘Just when the jury was out on the complex rivalry between Auror Scamander and his Author brother, social circles have been atwitter with the news that Auror Scamander has been seen out and about with a mystery raven-haired witch. If we thought that the speed that the esteemed Auror had moved on after his doomed engagement, this new romance seems to be a million miles from the upstanding, if not unorthodox, Auror Goldstein. This turn of events comes hot on the heels of rumours that the American Auror( who has taken up the vacant deputy head role at Auror Scamander’s left hand) has been seen getting up close and personal with the younger Scamander brother. A reliable source is said to have seen them behind closed doors. Could a happy union be on the cards? After the recent disappearance of Miss Leta Lestrange, the Scamander household could do with some happy news…”

So that is Theseus then. Queenie looked across the image again, yes, you could see the likeness to Newt, it was all around the eyes. She hadn’t really had a chance to look at the man back in Paris, but she would have known he had been some relation to Newt. Unlike the slight passing resemblance between herself and Tina, the physical similarities between the brothers was obvious. So this is Nagini. The article didn’t state her name, but the image matched the one that Queenie had grabbed snippets of in Credence’s mind: long dark hair and a dazzling smile.

The image was a candid photo, a snapshot of some sort of private conversation, Nagini appeared to be leaning up to Theseus a tentative hand on his elbow.

It looked innocent to Queenies eyes, but she knew that Credence would not see it that way, not after the way he had seen the two of them in his fragmented form, the rage rippled off him, his wand jumping all over the table as he paced. Queenie watched him, wanting to calm him but unsure what the best words would be to placate the man, unsure if the pain she felt was the absence of Jacob or if it was the pain edging off Credence’s broken heart.

She felt helpless as she watched him burst into his other form, the dense black fog wrapping around her, engulfing her in darkness.

Tina pulled the workload closer to her. The star charts were starting to make more sense now, even if they were for different skies than the one above her own head.

She flipped through long-forgotten star charts, accounts of Bizzare maritime happenings, and international newspaper reports, looking for anything that could help narrow down the erratic nonsense that kept spewing from Betsy.

She chewed at the end of the pen as she lay back against Rex, his large scales quivering as he snored gently. Newt was still not brave enough to let her visit the dragons alone, but at least she no longer needed to wear his coat, a fact that she was ever more thankful for as the heat of summer wore on. She watched as Newt gently removed the cone from one of the Runspore’s heads, under the vigilant eye of the other two appendages, and an opaleye who seemed to want in on the action. Newt looked flustered, his cheeks red from trying to reason with the other two heads, and the looming presence of the dragon to his rear.

Tina contemplated getting up and helping him, but when he looked like this, all wrapped up in his work, it really did do things to her insides that she had no control over.
The way he treated each and every one of creatures, as if they were his children, un lodged something deep inside her, making the images of raven-haired children she had seen when on the Hogwarts grounds wave back into a possibility. *He really would be a wonderful father*, not that she thought the two of them would have the faintest idea how to raise an actual child! A blush crept up her cheeks, *Stop getting ahead of yourself Tina, you’re living on the run, you aren’t even married...* she chastised herself over it time and time again. They were potentially walking into a death trap...everything else would have to wait. Well almost everything else: daydreaming didn’t hurt though, she would allow that.

She watched as the serpent slithered off, now divested of its cone, Newt having magicked it away. He turned to stroke the overprotective dragon’s muzzle, running his hands over the glistening scales that gave the impression that the beast was almost fluid. The way he handled the creatures only reminded her of how good he could be with those nimble hands that could be just as delicate as they could secure and sturdy, Her mind wandered again. She needed to concentrate...this wasn’t getting her anywhere.Tina caught his eye momentarily, blushed, and then turned her attention back to the task at hand. She needed to find a connection --any connection-- to all this information and Queenie. Daydreaming about stripping the last of Newt’s clothing from his back was not helping in the slightest.

It helped even less when he joined her. He stretched out his long limbs, staring at the star maps and comparing them. He was the ultimate distraction: his shirt sleeves turned up and his top few buttons undone, he lay there looking like the original temptation, and Tina couldn’t help but let her eyes linger on the way his waistband hugged his hips, the way that his freckles were becoming more dominant as he spent more and more time out in the triangle with the beasts. She wanted to reach out and stake a claim on each and every exposed freckle on display.

Tina wasn’t sure where this need to indulge in these primal urges came from, but it was becoming detrimental to her research. Her mind kept wandering to the lingering touch of skin against skin that refused to settle in to the depths of her memory, constantly prodding the creature in her chest, edging it closer to the resolution in craved.

Tina wondered if Newt felt the urge as strong as she did. Sometimes he moved as if he wanted to take things further: a hand on her hip, a gentle kiss behind her ear as he moved his arms around her in the case to reach something. The feel of his hands as they coated her waist as they embraced before sleep. The longing was almost too unbearable. She was finding excuses now to visit him in his office, to accompany him on assignments, it was as if the creature in her chest was afraid that if she let him out of her sight for too long it would never get the fulfilment it pined for.

Tina watched him now as he flicked through her discarded notes, star charts, and reports surrounding him, fluttering in the breeze created by the dozing dragon’s breath beside them.

Newt rolled onto his back lifting two of the maps in front of his face comparing them at arm's length, a flick of his wand and they hovered obediently.

“Tina … I think I’ve found a pattern.” He tipped his head towards her indicating she should come closer.

She scooted along till she was laying next to him looking up at the charts, the sun behind them making the paper almost translucent, Newt lay the two images over the top of each other, the lines matched perfectly through the backlit page. The sky chart lined up neatly with the map, it was a coastline that Tina did not recognise. Not until she sat up and looked closer, *Kristu bedêto ~ Cristo Redentor, why do I know that?* Christ the… the statue… she had read about it in the No-Maj paper...
“Newt--” Tina sat up, turning her attention back to the records that surrounded them on the ground frantically looking for something, the file was here she knew it.

“We have our lead! Gramps said Rio...he was bang on the nose.” Newt said, eyes sparkling.

“That’s the statue of Christ the Redeemer, it was designed by a French guy… that night when we fell asleep on the window… back in your apartment, I had seen an image that I recognised, but I couldn’t put a finger on where from…” her hands scraped across the offending pile of papers until it fell on a stack of newsprint. The image of the boxes that she had seen on the harbour at Calais, an article about the Artist Landowski and his larger than life project.

Tina felt her head spinning. She now had more questions than answers. What did this guy have to do with anything? Was it just a coincidence? She was an auror... coincidences were never coincidences in her experience.

Newt sat up suddenly, “Do you think this means that Grindelwald might already have people out searching for Anya?”

“Would you be surprised if he did?” Tina stared down at the pile of papers in her hand, this all came down to the same goal: he wanted an obscurial. If Grindelwald knew Anya existed, then he would have plans in place to find her. It was a fact that seemed as clear as day, now that Tina had reasoned it out.

“What are we going to do if he has? I still have a travel ban!” Newt scratched at his neck in agitation, red marks forming as he rubbed at his skin,

Tina reached out, taking his hand away, and kissing at his knuckles “Because that stopped you last time didn’t it ?”

Newt blushed, but looked no less worried. It would take a lot more than that to calm his nerves, Tina was learning his habits but some things were ingrained too deeply to be accommodated for. She loved him all the more for it.

“We’ll worry about that when we get to it” Tina waved a hand over the workload, it formed neat stacks and shrunk in size to fit in her pocket, her wand still tucked in her holster, untouched.

“I still can’t get over how good you are even without your wand, you know.” Newt clambered to his feet, offering her his hand, while she found her own.

Tina let her fingers intertwine with his, pulling him towards the fence. She still wasn’t used to this touch, this warmth that radiated out from where palms folded into one. It was a security that she was growing to crave as much as his company.

She dropped his hand as they got to the fence putting one foot on the lower rung and vaulting it with now well-practiced ease. She turned, leaning over the fence towards Newt, as if to kiss him, stopping short “Maybe if you practiced a little more, you wouldn’t have so many teeth marks in your wand, Scamander.” she turned away, grinning as she started towards the house.

As Newt hopped the fence after her, she felt him touch down with a gentle grumble at her observation skills, but he didn’t voice it loud enough for her to retaliate, not until he caught her up again, wrapping an arm around her waist, and pulling her closer. She sunk into the groove of his hip, wrapping in tightly at his side.

“You are so bossy.” His lips gently danced upon the skin by her ear, the shiver that followed was involuntary, her body reacting to the very thought of it.
Tina had seen the way he reacted to her when she did boss him about, “You love it!”

Newt’s breath felt warm on her neck as he pressed in closer. “You’re right, I do.”

Lips pressed in to her neck, a gentle nip of the skin between his teeth, enough to set every part of her on high alert then… then he moved away, dropping her from his grip as he strode on ahead.

Turning in the path, he began walking backwards, grinning like the cheshire cat from his grandmother’s stories, “Come on Auror, we have work to do.”

Tina felt a spring in her step as she jogged a little to keep up.

“How in the name of …” Theseus didn’t finish his sentence, he watched as the memories in the machine lit the map and the star chart. He could feel the metric ton of trouble this new lead was going to cause, he was already dreading the paperwork “…Newt, how are we going to get anyone to Brazil without someone from his side working out we are up to something?”

He looked at the bench, Tina looked up at him, her face impassive, she looked as clueless as Thesus felt. Newt however looked almost impressed.

“Got to say, this is an improvement…Grindelwauld instead of the ministry was your first thought? Have you finally seen sense?”

“Who says they aren’t the same thing anymore?” It felt strange to voice it out loud but it was only what he had been thinking, the ministry almost felt like he was walking head first into a nest of vipers these days; whether it was because of the way they had reacted when he returned to work or the overwhelming feeling that he could trust nobody but Newt and Tina, he wasn’t too sure.

Newt got to his feet, beginning to pace. Theseus watched him go. He could almost guess what the next words out of his brother’s mouth were going to be and cut him off before he muttered them.

“You can’t go Newt, you’re under a travel ban still.”

“And?”

“You want to end up in Azkaban? If they find out--”

“-- then we need to get it lifted! If he gets his hands on another obscurus--”

“--we don’t know if that is his plan-- “

“--he might get Credence or Queenie killed, and I can’t have that Thes! Tina and Nagini--”

“--get yourself killed--”

“--need them--”

“--I need you Newt!” Theseus could feel the anger building up in him but he knew it was the truth as soon as the words left his lips.

The two of them were standing an inch apart. His stupid, stubborn baby brother --yet again using his own brand of reasoning-- had forced his own confession. He needed Newt, his brother was his last
link to Leta, his last stable link to his family: his father was slipping away, his mother was always closer to Newt...and his grandfather? Well, it wasn’t as if they always saw eye to eye. was it? The one annoying thing that never ever changed in this whole big confusing world was Newt.

A delicate hand on both of their arms broke the stand-off, Newt’s eyes flicked away from his own as Thesues felt a little more of his world transfigure around him. Newt, the one stable thing that never changed, was changing. The one constant in his life was suddenly on a different orbit. It was a blow, and he hadn’t even seen it coming. So much change going on around him, he didn’t even know how to comprehend the sudden shift in his mind, but it was an instant realization. More real than the sun or the ground that he stood on. No matter what he said or did, Newt would move without him. Not to aggravate or rebel as he was wont to do, but because his axis had turned. He revolved around Tina now. Theseus knew in himself that the world was no longer the same. He had to be the protective older brother again...he had to protect Newt. The only thing that mattered was that his brother and Tina made it out the other side of all this, no matter what.

“We will think of something.” I have no idea what? But something non the less Theseus added in his head.

Tina caught his eye, Thank you went unspoken in them as she directed Newt back to the bench.

“First things first… we need to get this travel ban lifted.”

Theseus could almost see the pile of paperwork expanding in to a mountain.

Chapter End Notes

Thankyou to Sarab x I've missed her ! Glad to have her back .
You all know where the comments live .x
Better get back to fleshing out the next chapters then ...

Love you my little nifflers x
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time may have been of the essence, but that didn’t stop it taking far longer than any of them had bargained on to get Newt's travel ban lifted. Summer had slowly turned to autumn and the deep green of the forest around Dracholm faded to crisp auburn and chestnut, although signs of life flourished through the fallen remains of summer. The litters of Knezells that had been born under the bright summer sun now slinked through the dusky overgrowth, hunting Imps and pixies through fallen leaves, casting them up into tiny, blustering tornadoes of commotion.

The air felt colder now, gathering in a clouded breath as nights crept in earlier each cycle, the sea fret causing an eerie low-lying fog to roll up the beach and kiss at the crescent of the forest. It was a gentle reminder that it could take the land as its own with one good surge.

Down in the bay, the waves crashed against the rocks. Ursula crouched on the outcrop, her face bent low over the water, before plunging her head under the swell of the unassailable sea.

From the safety of the shore, Newt watched the interaction between the Siren and her abandoned pod. He knew that it was difficult for Ursula to speak to her family...they had disowned her over her fondness of humans, unable to see them as more than just a food source. The woman had wanted to go alone, but both Theseus and Newt had refused to let her go without them as a backup. Ade had almost cursed them all to oblivion for bringing the pod this close to Dracholm, but Ursula had been adamant that it was the best thing to do...showing that she trusted them to do the right thing. After all, sirens falling to the wrong side of a war—with their ability to manipulate—was something they wanted to avoid, if at all possible.

“What are the chances that they have the information we need ?” Newt asked as he pulled his coat a little tighter around him, the fog caused the air to feel damp and bitter, the moon struggling to break the heavy cover.

“We only need to know if they have seen anything strange in international waters. If they have it will solidify the theory we already have.” Theseus wrung his hands together, trying to gain enough friction to warm his numb fingers against the biting cold. “It will make the difference of me being able to take action on the case, or me sending just you and Tina. I would rather not let you go without backup if I’m honest.” his voice wavered, unable to hide his concern.

“I know you think—”

“—I know you are more than capable of looking after yourself Newt,” Theseus cut across him, causing Newt’s protest to taper off into nothingness. “I would just rather not put you in a situation where I could have helped and hadn’t. I don’t like the idea of sending you and Tina into the centre of one of his schemes knowing that I could be there helping.”

“No point arguing?”

“No, I’m afraid not, my mind is set.”

Newt looked at his brother, and all he saw was his father. The stubborn streak, the urge to do what was right, the rebellious bent that ran through Newt was beginning to show in Theseus: possibly the byproduct of having nothing left to lose. It was as if, for the first time since they were small, the two
of them were finally acting like the brothers that their father had always thought they were.

In the last few months, he had found himself spending more and more time with Theseus.

Tina had mentioned that Theseus, although popular, didn’t seem to have any actual friends.

Newt hadn’t noticed...he had spent so long avoiding social commitments that the fact that Theseus was just as much an outsider as he had completely bypassed him. To see his brother’s face light up when chatting to Jacob, to have something that wasn’t work to look forward to...it had taken some of the weight that Theseus dragged around behind him, and set it free.

“And what happens if the pod says all is well?”

“Then you go on ahead and Tina sends me word the second you get off the ship that I’m needed, I will find a way to get out to you.”

“You still don’t trust the Ministry, do you?”

“We have a leak somewhere. Until I’m sure, I’d rather make it look as much as I can like an international security breach. It will at least give us an excuse to be going to Rio. It may not fly completely under the other side’s nose, but it might buy us enough time to figure out what he is up to and hopefully find Anya before he does.”

A high pitched wailing pierced the night air, making both men jump and draw their wands.

Ursula stood upon the rocks, head tipped back to the sky, her true face screaming into the air amidst a tangle of blue-green seagrass hair. It was a sound filled with anger and hatred.

In the far distance, the retreating pod echoed her pained cry: it mixed with the sound of the waves crashing into the sound of the sea as if the waves themselves were crying out in pain.

Ursula crumpled to her knees, her whole body sagging under her own weight.

Newt wasn’t sure who reached her first, but it was Theseus who lifted her, cradling her like a child, her body shivering and convulsing with sobs, her true form on display...no glamour to hide the pain in her eyes.

“Ursula?”

“When you boys find him, you kill him,” her voice rasped from somewhere in the folds of Theseus’s coat. “Some creatures are evil to the core, and he is one of them.”

Theseus looked down at the ragged body in his arms, “What did they say ?” he coaxed gently, not wanting to upset her further.

“He killed them...the young ones! The pod is slain. Only the old like me remain. He knows what he does.” She muffled a gulping sob against the wool of Theseus's coat, “You kill him...you rip his vocal cords out...you make him suffer for what he has done!”

Newt looked down at the helpless form in front of him, a fit of anger building inside him. He knew that he needed to channel it, but all he could think of was the bodies of the slain.

“We will get him, Ursula. We will make him pay for what he has done.” It was Theseus who spoke, so soft and caring...something that Theseus had never show towards the siren in his arms. It was so out of character, that Ursula looked up at him, tears now falling from two sea-blue orbs.
"I will make him pay." Theseus said solemnly looking straight at her. "Nobody hurts our family and
gets away with it," he added, getting to his feet and repositioning her. "Let's get you back to
gramps."

The woman silently nodded her head, wrapping her arms around Theseus’s neck as he carried her.

Newt followed close behind. The rage sunk into his chest and made itself comfortable it was going to
wait for its turn to rise, he would use it when he needed it, right now his priority was to the woman
his brother carried up the beach.

Ursula lay on the bed her head resting against Nagini.

Ade had stormed to the shore to shout his spite into the wind, not wanting to upset the woman he
loved. His anger had been palpable as he slammed the door of the Tree house sending shockwaves
through the entire structure.

Newt had made to follow, but the gentle touch of Tina’s hand on his wrist stopped him.

“I’ll go,” she said quietly, placing a soft kiss on his cheek. “You need to stay… Ursula isn’t exactly
your brother or Nagini’s field of expertise.”

Newt was confused, it must have shown on his face because Tina added “It’s not like she’s human,
Newt.” She shook her head kindly before stepping back from him. Pulling her hair back in a tie she
reached for her hat and coat. “Recon he headed to the beach?”

Newt nodded solemnly. Tina had swiftly become such a solid member of his family, his heart
swelled at the thought of her reaching out this way to his grandfather.

They may not have started on the best of terms, but Tina and Ade were both learning to see past their
trade-taught stubbornness, and learning from each other. They were often caught deep in
conversation over cold cases and long forgotten mysteries, heads together over coffee and a slice of
cake.

Tina knew what to say sometimes when words failed him, especially around his own family.

Because of that, Newt was finding it harder and harder to imagine a world where she wasn’t in it.

Tina just seemed to know what to say, and when to say it...seeing the things that he took for granted:
Theseus, Ursula… what had he done without her? Had he really distanced himself so far from the
people who loved him so much? It seemed like the last few months had flown, but at the same time
they felt as if they had been the whole reason for his existence up until this point. This coexistence
with another, so different yet constantly feeling as if she fell into the space that had been missing in
him for so long, like his other half had finally come back to him.

He almost felt complete.

Tina transferred Einstein from her necklace to Newt’s top pocket, where Pickett made the bare
minimum amount of fuss, possibly sensing that this was not the right time to protest too much.

“Stay with your pops, it's too cold out.”
The niffler was almost too big to fit in the top pocket of his shirt now, but he gave it a gallant try, Pickett climbing up to sit on Einstein’s head.

“Pops?”

“We can’t both be mommy! It gets confusing.” She kissed him on the cheek again, her face flushed. “Sort out Ursula, I’ll sort out Gramps,”

Newt watched as she strode along the hallway following in his grandfather’s footsteps. A blast of cold air carried down the passage as she swung the door open, it was a coldness that he associated with the darkest part of his nightmares of the war. Not for the first time, his thoughts that dementors and siren may well be of the same build raised its theory in his mind. Once upon a time, he would have been drawn to write and investigate this theory, but right now, Ursula was the top priority, she may not be human but she was family. He had to focus.

The siren lay on the bed, her face hovering between her real face and the glamor that she chose to hold, the strain of trying to maintain the illusion was draining her energy. No one image remained for longer than a few seconds, flicking to the next unnervingly. She needed to rest, and he told her so in no uncertain terms.

“You don’t have to prove anything to us.” Nagini brushed the long strands of snake like hair away from Ursula’s forehead. “Rest, you’re in shock.”

Newt watched as the glamour faded and the siren’s green sallow skin returned, she knew it took a lot for her to show such vulnerability: in the wild it could get her killed.

“Where is Thes?” she whispered, her voice breaking, the missing melodic temptation causing her tone to come out in discord.

“Contacting the people who need to be contacted.” As Newt busied himself with his field kit, his hands fell across the empty vials from his veritaserum, that morning seemed like another life now. Pushing the thought of Tina to the back of his mind, he located the pepper-up potion he was looking for and handed it to Ursula. “You are in shock. Take this and rest, no glamour till at least morning.”

The siren made to protest, but Newt held up a hand. “Not one person here would bat an eyelid if you had two heads that looked like squid, we just want you to be okay, and you won’t be if you don’t do what you are told. Rest!”

Ursula looked at the potion, then at Nagini who nodded in encouragement. Shen downed the potion in one swallow.

Newt waited till the steam settled before bidding the women good night, happy that the potion had helped the same way it would on a human.

The tents had become cottages with the turn of the season: the thicket had been cleared a little more and now two stone cottages stood side by side, slightly better prepared for the harshness of a northern winter. The occupants of the two cottages changed constantly, Newt and Tina were the only permanent residents, having deemed Newt’s flat far too easy to track them to still.

Theseus split his time between Featherdown and Dracholm. If he spent any time at his old flat in
Waterloo, he hadn’t mentioned it to anyone. Jacob and Nagini spent equal time between Featherdown and Dracholm. However, Jacob was still taking alchemy lessons from Bishop, becoming good at almost everything he set his mind to, including the workings of Betsy. He spent many a night poring over the random type that Betsy produced, removing spent memories and thoughts, and recording results.

Newt sat by him now as he looked over a small vial that looked as if it held a pitch-black cloud. It spun itself violently against the sides of the glass, a gentle rhythmic tap accompanying each blow.

Jacob picked it up, holding it to the light.

"What are you?" he muttered under his breath, shaking the substance to see if it changed the pattern of the mist.

"Pardon?" Newt looked up from his notes. He hadn't really been concerned with his work...more interested in watching Pickett try and climb the twisted branch that acted as a candlestick in the middle of the table.

"Sorry buddy, wasn't talking to you, I was talking to this," a quick hand gesture indicated the vial. "I’m stumped.” The baker shrugged, “I can’t work out what the base component is...it’s not a thought or a memory we have been feeding into Betsy. This is somethin’ different.” he placed it on the table, apart from the other vials, a look of disdain as he did so.

“Different how?”

“It has no base element...no base compound to indicate its come from something else...it's an unknown.”

“So where did it come from?”

“That’s just it, I don’t know!” Jacob’s brow furrowed in frustration, for every one small thing they found they took two steps back. It was infuriating enough for Newt, he dreaded to think what it must feel like for Jacob: knowing that the longer they took, the more likely it was that they would not manage to return Queenie to his side.

Talk of the younger Goldstein had become taboo. Jacob refrained from speaking of her as much as possible, the hurt pulling him through his own personal torment.

Newt had found him several nights sitting alone outside, staring at the stars. “She’s under the same stars somewhere,” he had said when Newt silently joined him, a comforting hand on his shoulder, no words to be said to make it better, because words were not enough to even begin to make it right.

Throwing himself into learning seemed to help, although the anomaly in front of them seemed to be bothering him greatly. Maybe it was this on top of the day’s events, but the unknown began to bother Newt just as much.

He looked at the other vials on the table, when the redundant threads were separated, they all shone unique hues. Jacob’s threads of thought and memory glimmered as a peach couloured mist, Newt’s an almost midnight blue, Tina’s a pale golden yellow colour, like the first glimpse of sunlight on a winter morning: inviting and such a contrast next to the deep ocher that could identify as Dumbledore’s. So different yet so alike.

The black mist that swam before them was void of all light, just a dark swirling mass.

“It reminds me of the obscurial you had in the case, the way it moves.”
“It’s too small to be an obscurial.”

“I never said it was a full one.” Jacob huffed. Turning his attention to the other vials, and placing them carefully into the box, cataloging them.

“It does remind me of Cre--” the black mass began banging frantically against the side of the glass “---dance”

Both men froze, staring at the reaction.

“Credence?” Jacob ventured.

The tapping on the glass intensified so much, that the vial that had been resting between them toppled over.

Jacob jumped back in shock, almost up-ending the rest of his research all over the tiles on the floor.

“You don’t think?”

Newt reached out, picking up the container in his hand, scared to say the name again in case the thing in his hand vibrated again and shattered.“Jacob...go get the girls and my brother.”

Newt felt as if he hadn’t blinked in hours, when he finally heard the sound of the front door of the cottage open and close again. He could tell Jacob had found both Tina and Nagini by the sound of the steps on the stone tiles. He could tell Theseus was with them by the way the door had slammed shut behind them.

“What’s going on Newt? I had just gotten back with Ade when Jacob nearly steamrollered me!”

Tina’s hand was on his hip now, peering around him to look at the container in his hand.

It hummed slightly at the sound of her voice.

“Jacob said you found something?” Theseus sunk into the vacant seat.

Newt finally blinked, it was as if his entire body had been scared to react to the potential chaos in his hand when he was alone, as if looking away would ignite the fuse.

“No, Jacob found something.” He was aware of Jacob and Nagini moving in closer.

He waited until they were closer before he spoke. “Jacob separated this from the spent threads of Betsy.” He held up the mist to the light, showing the group He passed it to Jacob, indicating for him to go on...the floor was his.

Jacob looked shocked to be the centre of attention, but took the invite. “It’s not one of ours, it’s not something that is a thought or a memory it’s not a byproduct of the machine, it’s an oddity, it’s been bothering me for days but we were talking about how much it reminded us of the Obscurial that Newt had in the case...”

Nagini stepped closer to Jacob to look at the vial, her eyes wide. “Credence?”

At the sound of her voice the vial vibrated.

With a loud crash, it fell to the floor.
The black mist twisted around Nagini, clinging to her hair, circling her...causing her to panic. Theseus jumped to his feet, swatting at the black mist before it disappeared into nothingness.

A thousand miles away, Creedence woke with a scream.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my little nifflers I'm going to attempt to get another two chapters up before my vacation in September call it a research mission ...Hogwarts awaits. I'll try and que up so it goes up while I'm away if your following me on insta and tumblr I'll be about updating my epic Florida adventures as and when I can .

I love you all but I've saved for 5 years for this trip .

Like I say I will try and get one more up before I leave and have one on que for when I'm away

Thankyou all again for the comments and the kudos. You know it makes me happy .

Thanks as ever to my beta sara xxx much love
Hyperarousal

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was as if a numbness had snuck upon her; it wrapped around her, paralyzing her senses...barring her from everything but the very essence of the one person who had been missing from her life for what felt like an eternity. The reptilian part of her longed for him, trying to cling onto the very last wisp of Credence before they disappeared into the ether. Her vision fogged, she could feel his pain...it was palpable, the taste of it upon the cold night air calling to her. Sound turned to feeling, turned to taste on the crest of a dying thought.

Nagini slumped into two strong arms, but they were not the ones that her body sought, the snake in her trying to chase down the warmth of the person it longed for...the person it regarded as its home...its safe space.

Whoever these arms belonged to, they were not right: the muscles were wrong, the scent incorrect, she could feel tendons and strength in places she knew her home did not carry them, but more than that, she could taste the fear.

This was not safe.

The need to shift encompassed her, striking out, fangs attached to flesh ripping and slashing before everything became dark.

“-put pressure on it!”

“-get her out of here Newt!”

“-I've got Thes! Go!”

Newt held the snake at arm's length with a binding charm. Near his feet, Theseus lay crumpled and bloodied.

Tina bent close, pressing down on the open wound, while Jacob restricted the blood flow with his tie lashed tightly around Theseus's bicep.

It had all happened so fast; the smash had triggered something...suddenly surrounded by screams of pain, and the flash of scale and fang.

Newt wasn’t sure, but he would wager the screams of pain had come from the docile snake that now floated in the air before him.

Nagini did not fight against her bonds, her eyes glazed as the binding curse held her.

As much as it pained Newt to restrain her this way, he had seen little choice in his actions. It had been so sudden...one moment Nagini had stood before him every bit the gentle person he knew her to be then the next…

He took the stairs two at a time, making sure that Nagini’s body was supported the whole way,
before turning into her room and laying her on the bed. Her body lay rigid in its attack position, poised mid-blow.

He lifted the binding curse, but left her under the confundus charm, at least until he was sure that she wasn’t a harm to herself.

Whatever had taken over when the black mist had escaped the vial, it had affected his friend in ways he didn’t understand. Nagini wouldn’t attack Theseus like that unprovoked: their friendship was one of the strongest bonds that Newt had seen. Nagini trusted Theseus! She had confided that fact in Tina. For her to strike out like that must have come from her losing control of herself.

*If only I could speak parseltongue!*

Right now, the dazed snake that lay before him may as well have been an unknown creature.

Nagini stirred and Newt took that as his cue to leave, charming the door as he closed it.

The sound of panic hit him as he descended the stairs, Tina’s commanding voice directing Jacob towards the medical bag under the sink where Newt had stashed it the last time he opened a wound of his own.

Newt watched as Tina treated the open gash that ran along Theseus’s arm and neck. Nagini had inflicted nothing but a flesh wound upon his neck, where Tina had syphoned off the blood. The dittany she now applied knit the flesh back together neatly, with only a faint green haze left behind on his skin. However, where the fangs had pierced the tight skin across the auror’s arm, the blood bubbled and congealed, oozing around the edges with a venomous-looking green hue.

Newt hovered in the stairwell, watching as Tina calmly mixed and administered an antivenom to the puckering and blistering skin on his brother's arm.

Under her touch Theseus’s pained face seemed to relax and his breathing regulated. His eyes remained closed however, the shock still rocking through his body.

Tina worked swiftly, aided by Jacob.

Newt felt as if he were watching a well-practiced team of healers, not his best friends. They worked so well together, not even looking up at the sound of his decent.

Finally, Tina looked up at Jacob, offering him a weak smile.

“I’ve done the best I can.” Tina wiped her hands against her trousers, before wrapping the wound with the white bandage Jacob had just provided her. “I’m not sure what antidote would be best for the venom in Nagini’s bite so I went with the theory that ground boozier works best in most poison cases… venom can’t be all that different?” She was talking to herself rather than anyone in the room. Her voice seemed calm, and her hand steady, but Newt could pick out the twinge of concern that peppered her words.

Jacob pressed his fingers to the pulse point in Thesus’s neck, “His heart rate is normal. I don’t think we need to worry, but we best monitor him all the same, if it drops or he comes out in a fever, we need to get him to a doctor.”

“I can call the healers if we need them.” Newt offered, he felt almost as if he were a spare part, hovering on the outside.

“He should be fine,” Tina offered, getting to her feet and clearing the gap between them. “How’s
Nagini?” There was not a shred of blame in her voice, only concern. Her eyes bored into him...a mixture of worry for both her friends.

“She will hate herself in the morning.”

Tina pulled him into an embrace, wrapping her slender arms around him and pulling him close. Her head tucked into his neck, causing him to breathe in the calming scent of her perfume as it mixed with the smell of the ointment she had just applied to his brother. The grounding effect of her touch calmed him, in a way.

Newt wasn’t sure that it wasn’t her own brand of magic: no one seemed to have this hold on him but Tina. He pulled her into him, feeling the warmth running through each point that she touched.

Tina’s composure began to slip slightly at the contact, her body began to shake as the adrenalin worked its way out of her body.

“You guys go get some rest.” Jacob’s voice broke the moment.

Newt looked over at him as he pulled a throw over the sleeping Theseus. When he continued, Jacob made it quite clear he was not to be argued with. “I will stay with him tonight. If I need you guys I’ll holler. It’s been a hell of a day...get some rest.” The baker grabbed the other throw and pulled the large wingback chair over beside the couch that Theseus lay on.

Newt and Tina watched as he grabbed the dustpan and brush, and cleaned up the broken vial before gathering his notes and heading back to the chair.

“I said go. I got this. We can talk about everything in the morning. You’re only next door if I need you.”

Newt reluctantly lead the way from the front room, Tina following him, ‘It’s only next door.’ he told himself as he closed the door on the two of them. “I’m going to nip down to the main house and let Gramps know what’s happened.”

Tina handed him his coat, her face was drawn with the worry that she could no longer conceal. “Don’t be too long.” Leaning forward, she gently placed a kiss on his lips, “I have a feeling we are going to need all the rest we can get.”

Tina sat on the edge of the bed, waiting for the tell-tale sound of the front door catching at the wind chime. Newt had only been gone half an hour, but it felt like a lifetime.

Her eyes stung from the tears that she fought to hold back. How could life go from relative calm to absolute chaos in such a short amount of time?

What had started as reconnaissance, had lead to Ursula’s breakdown. The woman was beside herself with grief: almost an entire species...reduced to a handful of beings. It should be something that everyone should lament, but the genocide of non-wizards would not even register as a blot on Macusa’s radar. It made Tina’s blood boil, and her insides itch, to think that she had ever had anything to do with such an organisation.

The ministry was not much better: they may well still classify any non wizard as a lesser, but at least Newt made sure that this sort of action didn’t go without reprimand.

How could anyone see Ursula in the turmoil that currently held her, and think of her as anything
other than a loving being, was beyond Tina’s comprehension. Her mind kept thinking back to her own despair when she lost her own family...each loss etched into every breath, the pain never far from each thought constantly simmering in her heart never quite able to settle. Tina didn’t need to know anything about sirens: just by the hollow yearning that had cradled each of Ursula's words, that her heart ached just as much at the loss of her family. Tina’s heart would never truly be whole while her sister was missing, hope could only hold out for so long.

Would she too feel the sharp sting, discovering the loss of her only kin via hearsay and second hand news?

*Grindelwald.*

He would not be the deciding factor in her life. Tina’s resolve strengthened with each tear that fell from her tired, aching eyes.

"Tina?"

Newt was suddenly all she could comprehend, surrounding her like a cocoon. Unable to focus, she closed her blurred eyes against the itch of wool, face pushed tightly against waistcoat, fingers gripping tightly around his slender waist, holding on to him as if her existence depended on it. Maybe it did.

For his part, Newt held her just as tightly. She could feel the tight grip on her neck, his face buried deep in her hair...the only indication that he too sobbed coming from the telltale ragged breath that echoed in her ear.

Tina doubled her grip, pulling him closer. She had to protect him. He was all she had left in this world… this world that seemed to be dead-set against them.

She sought out the warmth of his skin beneath her fingers as she wrapped herself deeper into his embrace, her fingers working the hem of his shirt free until she could feel the comforting softness, the expanse of bareness pulling her closer to the only thing in the universe that she was completely sure of.

Newt tightened his grip on her as Tina ran her hand along the expanse of his spine, following the curve...urging him to draw her in closer.

Wrapping her hair tighter around his fingers, he pulled her head back, red-rimmed eyes searching hers in the dim light of the lamp’s glow, pupils dilated, looking for permission to continue, his eyes darting from her own to her lips and back.

It was as if something had finally broken between the two of them...the need to be as close as possible building up inside her was echoed in the hungry face that longingly, greedily stared back at her.

In the past she would have scoffed if you had told her such a feeling existed: the need to consume and quell this burning that grew in every inch of her core, a flame that engulfs so strongly it threatened to consume her from the inside out. It was a light that grew stronger with each glance, each ragged, wanting breath that passed between two souls so entangled. It reached out from Newt, pulsing through the palms and the grip that held her, coursing its beat through the fingers that entwined her hair, drawing her in, the lips that wantonly crashed down to meet her own with just a small nod of knowing agreement.

In the past she wouldn't have believed you if you told her that she would welcome the harsh smell of
sulphur, the remnants of a day in the field, the saltiness of sea air and sweat, mingling with the sweet honey remnants of tea upon the lips of a man who found the very breaking point of the rules and prodded at them, daring them to fight back to break and realign to his own way of thinking.

In the past she wouldn't have had the faith to trust herself completely to the hands of another, but right now, with each other’s names upon their lips, chasing kisses and benediction, she had faith in this. This love they had was something to cherish, to believe in, even if everything else crashed down around them, they would have this.

There was no eagerness: this was not the same as the urgency that had consumed them before, the difference was night and day.

This was more than lust, more than a basic human need: this was longing, desire… with each kiss came the feeling of complete adoration.

Tina wanted to consume him...worship him, until there was nothing left of herself to give. Or she would, if he would let her.

His lips glided from her own, kissing his way down her neck, singing their fate with each devastating blow. Each tiny touch fueling the flame and causing the beast that lived in her to relish in the heat, basking in the blaze that burned for the man that worshipped her far more than she felt she deserved.

The creature reached out to the adoration, basking in it. With each kiss and shedded layer, it edged closer to its own destruction, born of flame and destroyed by pleasure.

As they lay entangled, freckled skin against pale, a mass of limbs and adoration, the creature purred, basking in its own destruction: born anew, nestling into a pale blue flame warmer and stronger than before, one that would never burn out.

Chapter End Notes

This is me giving blanket permission for anyone to use this to fill in the missing scene. Like seriously... free range smut fic if you like . It doesn't go with the flow of my story and I wouldn't do it justice not when I know theres much better people out there that can write it. Plus I second hand cringe when I try so theres that.

As ever I love you all. Hopefully I will have one ready to post when I'm away if not be good to each other!

As ever thank you sara for being a gem and beta reading my awful brain farts . You make me happy almost as much as duck butts and I really love duck butts . Honestly when was the last time you saw a sad duck . Anyway enjoy .
“...for the last time it wasn’t your fault so stop blaming yourself!” Shouting carried up the stairs, as Theseus’s voice roused them from the sweet grip of Morpheus,

Newt could feel Tina stirring against his chest, her arms clinging to him.

As Newt ran through the events of the previous night in his head, the love he felt towards the creature in his arms was something he never envisioned, but now he couldn’t imagine what it would be like to live in a world where that constant pull towards her did not hum constantly just below the surface. He gently traced the curves of her soft skin with a steady hand, he liked this...this softness that choice few got to witness.

The hard spikes...reminiscent of her namesake...that she wore like armor, momentarily discarded, to lay here with him like this.

“Will the two of you calm down?” Jacob’s voice carried as the door slammed.

“No, not until she admits it wasn’t her fault.”

Newt focused his gaze on the small patch of skin on Tina’s left shoulder.

*Another scar?*

He would have to ask her about that one sometime. He tried to convince himself that he wanted to move, but he was failing: he wanted to stay where he was, if he could just freeze this moment and grasp on to it for just a few more moments…

“Nagini, You can’t think…” Theseus’s voice sounded strained, but it didn’t compare to the strain of Nagini’s raised voice when she replied with a biting remark.

“Theseus Scamander… Do not tell me what to think!”

Tina moved suddenly, almost hitting him in the nose with her head with the sudden action. Nagini never raised her voice, in fact sometimes it was almost impossible to hear her even when she spoke at full volume...to be riled up enough to shout at Theseus was a big deal.

Newt begrudgingly moved to get out of bed, while Tina was already on her feet, eyes scanning for the discarded clothing scattered on the floor at the foot of the bed. Newt located his trousers and was just buttoning them, when there was a loud pounding on the door.

“Newt, will you please come and help me break this up?” Jacob sounded as though he was trying to pound his way through the door.

Newt shot a look at Tina who had just pulled her jumper on, she shrugged.

As far as Newt could tell, if Theseus was on his feet and able to make his way to their cottage, then he must be all right....Tina seemed to have reached the same conclusion.

Tina nodded towards the door, indicating that it was fine to open it.
Newt reached for the doorknob, wishing that he could have at least enjoyed the comfort of snuggling with Tina for just a little longer. Even now, part of him wanted to jinx his brother and friends for pulling him out of such a blissful moment. They were few and far between to begin with.

Resigning himself to the fact that it would be a long morning, he pulled open the door.

Tina watched Newt's face as he reacted to the scene on the landing before him. He had looked just as disappointed as she had been to be woken with a start. To wake up, wrapped so closely in Newt, had pulled at her in new and unknown ways: she wanted to protect that feeling, but life, as was its wont, had other ideas.

*Doesn't it always,* she thought bitterly, as she pulled the sweater over her head, cursing at the world.

If it hadn't been for Nagini raising her voice, Tina would have happily ignored the shouting. She was used to the background noise of New York...she could sleep through almost anything if she felt safe and in Newt’s arms...it was the safest she had been in a long time. The vulnerability that she allowed herself with him was sometimes a shock, but she knew at least it was something that they shared, this mutual inability to let anyone but the other into the space they shared. To see Newt drop his guard made her love him even more, that softness edged in a passion that burned bright as the sun. She couldn't help but feel a twinge of sadness as Newt had fallen back behind the layers of clothing worn to hide from the world. It had taken so long to finally break down the last barrier between them, that she found herself resenting each layer of clothing he returned to his body.

She tried her best to focus her mind on the situation at hand, but she couldn’t help feeling that the world was against them more with each and every passing catastrophe that seemed to follow them.

Newt had joked once that they should just run away.

It was a tempting thought, even if it could only remain that, a thought, tantamount to a daydream that fractured as the harsh reality shredded in to it.

Out on the landing, the wake-up call at least had the decency to look a little ashamed of their actions.

Nagini stormed past Newt, her brow furrowed and teeth set in a grimace. The scales had not yet subsided on her neck, ringing around her chest, they stood out violently against the softness of her skin.

Tina instinctively stepped between the woman and Theseus, who had made to follow her. Theseus, although on his feet, still looked pale: the dark rings that had faded over the last few months had returned to haunt his face. The sofa he had slept upon had left lines on his face, a face that still looked a little green for Tina's liking.

"Tell her it's not her fault!" he pleaded with Tina. For some reason, it seemed that Theseus was blaming himself for the actions of the night before.

"It's nobody's fault," Tina sighed. "It's just something that happened."

"I could have killed you Thes, I should leave..."
“No! Please Nagini.” Theseus tried to reach around Tina to get to her, but Tina felt Nagini tense.

Theseus must have seen it, his eyes becoming even more dark, the pain of this rejection etching itself into his already worn face. “I can’t lose you over something stupid like this, you didn’t mean to do it.”

“But what if I can’t help it?! What if I attack someone else? What if I hit my target true next time it happens?!” her voice was mixed with rage and sadness, it called to the very part of Tina that had hidden away for so long from Newt...the call of something that desperately wanted to belong, but the sound dispersed into an echo chamber, lost in a void of nothingness.

Tina glanced at Jacob and Newt: they both stood in the doorframe watching as everything unfolded before them. Rather than help, the two of them looked positively terrified.

*If you want something done, do it yourself.*

As Tina took a step towards Theseus, he took a step back, seeming to shrink into himself.

Tina wasn’t good at this sort of thing, but the two of them needed to be separated or one of them was going to either have a melt down, or explode. Tina made her decision quickly, taking another step towards Theseus and gesturing towards Newt. “Go with him, the women need to talk.”

Newt gave her a panicked look, but reached out, grabbing his brother by one elbow as Jacob took Theseus by the other.

The restrained man at least had the common sense not to argue, and allow himself to be maneuvered out of the room with minimum fuss.

Newt mouthed ‘*sorry*’ as the door closed behind him.

Tina felt the thud behind her as Nagini slid to the floor, crumpling in on herself. Moving quickly, Tina moved in to try and comfort her, reaching out a hand to rest upon her slender shoulder. Under her touch, the woman sobbed, tears running down her worn-out face before throwing herself into Tina’s arms. This at least was familiar territory: there had been many a night that Tina had fallen asleep comforting her sister in this way. She waited for the woman to stop trembling before she spoke, worried that she might shift in to her snake form at any moment if the instinct to do so kicked in.

*She’s safe, she has this,* Tina thought, before hating herself for thinking it at all.

“You ok?” she asked tentatively.

“I could have killed him Tina, I could have killed him and over what? A memory? Isss that what that wasss?” her tongue dragged out the words, but even through the sobs Nagini was somehow composing herself, calming the ever itching beast below the surface, Tina watched as the scales danced beneath her skin gently fading to nothing, but the snake remained the hiss appeared in the words as she spoke them.

*It’s Nagini...i have nothing to worry about.*

Tina repeated the mantra in her mind, pressing the woman closer, trying to show her that she wasn’t afraid. She hoped it was enough to contain any additional outbreaks.
“But you didn’t. You called yourself back...Theseus is fine, and as stubborn as ever.”

“But I could have, Tina!” Anger at herself edged the words in to bitterness. “I should leave... before
I hurt someone, before--”

“--you will do no such thing!” Tina pushed the woman away from her, gripping her shoulders so that
she could look her in the eye. “You belong here with us! You attacked Theseus. So what?! Join the
club! I think at this point the only one who hasn’t is Jacob! I don’t know if you noticed, but he’s a bit
of a... what’s the word Newt uses? Prat? At least you have an excuse.” Tina replayed the day in the
ministry in Paris in her mind. She had an excuse, but being in a rage with Newt didn’t really excuse
attacking Theseus that way. Even if he probably did deserve it at the time.

“I thought...I thought I had control of it. I hadn’t changed in weeks...I was just fooling myself.”
Nagini looked so small and scared, so much like the night they had met, that Tina couldn’t help but
pull her in to another protective hug, wrapping her in tightly.

“And you do. I don’t know what that was last night. But we will figure it out. Stay...at least until we
do? For Theseus?” she spoke into the tangle of hair that Nagini had piled upon her head. “I know he
won’t say it because he's too stubborn, but he needs you. We all do.” She knew the truth in it as she
spoke the words. This wasn’t family by blood, but it had become one through choice: Nagini needed
to know that, she needed to know that, whatever happened, Tina was going to be there to protect
her. “I need you. Who else is going to defend me when I'm outnumbered by pig-headed men?”

That at least got a snort of laughter. “When you put it like that.”

“You scared us. We were worried about you...not what you could do to us. About what you could
do to yourself!”

Nagini pulled back from Tina’s arms, eyes rimmed red but face determined. “I should go talk to
Thes.”

“Go easy on him,” Tina said, getting to her feet and holding out a hand to help Nagini do the same.
“You put him through a lot last night. Try not to get him too wound up.”

Nagini dropped her gaze, biting the corner of her lip. “How bad was the bite?”

“He’ll have a scar, I imagine...enough of one to remind him not to get on your bad side.”

Nagini at least picked out the jest in the tone of her voice, almost managing a slight smile.

“Go, find Thes. He doesn’t blame you, none of us do.”

“Really?”

“Yes really! Now go! I need to wash up and get ready.” Tina shooed her towards the door.

“You really do.” Nagini arched an eyebrow towards her as she passed “You stink of Newt.”

There was a knowing smirk on her face as she ducked out of the path of the pillow Tina threw at her.

Theseus watched as she walked quietly over to him, her head bowed until she reached his side.
Newt had somehow managed to calm him down, leaving him alone with nothing but the dull ache in his arm, and the sudden feeling of loneliness in his heart.

When Nagini had walked out of the cottage and towards him, he had felt that loneliness start to fade: the gaps that the world had created were buffered at the edges by this sweet, kind heart. To think she blamed herself for her natural instincts tormented him more than any physical wound.

It wasn’t until she threatened to leave that he had realised just how much she had filled the vacant place in his life...the friend that he had needed for longer than he cared to remember.

The boundaries of friendship were pushed at each turning, the edges blurring occasionally. However, the world seemed to be a brighter place when Nagini was in it, and he wasn’t about to lose that light just yet.

“You have a heck of a jaw, woman,” he said as she slid into the vacant space on the uprooted tree at his side.

She huffed, pulling the oversized green cardigan closer around her --engulfing herself in the layers of warmth they provided.

“Fight or flight a good enough excuse?” Her voice was small and still wavered.

“Good enough for me,” he said, nudging her with his hip. She was so slight compared to him, so much like Leta in so many ways, yet so vulnerable and fragile in a way Leta would have never let herself be.

“Sorry.”

“No need.”

“Do you really want me to stay?”

“I know I don’t want you to leave.” ...and he meant it, from the very bottom of his tortured self, he knew that if she left it would be his undoing.

She turned her head to look up at him, tucking her neck further into her cardigan, giving her the appearance of a very small bird looking out of a very large nest. She smiled at him and he felt a little bit of himself click back into place.

“Then I would like to stay.” She turned her attention back to the patch of woods before them leaning gently into his side.

There was something comforting in the silence.

The faces around the table looked stressed and worn.

Ursula sat wrapped in her blanket nearest to the fire at the head of the table, her glamour working again she had taken on the long red hair of her usual appearance although her skin still glowed in a slightly greenish hue that was closer to her unguarded form. No person around the table had questioned her presence at the head of the table.
Ade looked worn...his face carrying the weight of the world and looking older than Newt had ever seen him. He seemed reluctant to even do so much as remove his arm from around Ursula...as if he were her anchor to the world.

Every so often, the glamour would slip, and he would pull her closer...as if pouring himself into her to keep her strong through his touch.

Theseus spoke in hushed tones with Tina, his eyes darting to Nagini.

Newt knew that resolved look was only going to end one way...Theseus’s way. There would be no point in arguing the toss with him over coming to Rio: he would be going whether Newt liked it or not. The only question would be if Nagini would follow along, too, once she learned the nature of the mission.

Nagini sat transfixed, looking at the tray full of vials that lay on the table before them. One stood apart: black, in contrast to the rest of the containers, but not quite as black as the darkness that had triggered the falling out the night before.

It was Jacob who broke the silence, “This is everything out of Betsy. We wound her down to a standstill this morning, just to be on the safe side”

“Do we tell Dumbledore about this?” Tina asked shifting her gaze from the baker to Theseus, who answered with an abrupt shake of his head. “Then we act alone?”

“No. He knows we are going to Rio...he’s got his network trying to find us an in…” Theseus reached out and held up the black tube “We don’t tell him about this. About C--”

“--Don’t say it!” Nagini jumped to her feet, stepping towards Theseus and grabbing at the vial. “We don’t want you getting bit again, do we ?” She forced a smile as her fingers wrapped around the hand Theseus held the thoughts in. Theseus stared at her fingers before letting go of the tube, carefully unfolding his own digits from hers.

That’s new, thought Newt as Tina caught his eye, the same thought etched on her face.

Theseus seemed to be pondering something. Looking at Nagini, he seemed to come to some sort of mental resolve before sliding his hands into his pockets “No not really.” he sighed, resolved in whatever decision he had formulated in his mind “But we don’t tell Dumbledore about this--” he nodded at the vial, “He’s too connected to Grindelwald, even if they are on opposite sides now. If an obscurial is high on his list of interests who knows what lengths he will go to to get this bit of information.” Theseus looked across at Newt.

Newt knew that look all too well: it was Theseus waiting for him to say something he shouldn’t, only this time it seemed his brother wanted to hear it.

“We might be dealing with something I don’t understand, but if even a tiny shadow of smoke can survive so far from the host acting of its own volition then our ‘friend’ is of no use to him anymore. He will have no need to keep him close...gnorance is keeping him safe.”

The room fell silent, all eyes on Nagini’s tightly clenched fist. It was she who finally broke the silence, “But if that’s the case, then why did it react the way it did last night when we said his name?”

Newt had been thinking about what had happened last night for the better part of the morning. “ I think it needs the host... when the girl in the sudan died…” his voice cracked a little thinking of her, “the obscurus became docile only reacting when invoked. Last night our little shadow here seemed
aggravated, as if it was fighting against something. It’s acting of its own free will, not under any restraints. It’s alive in its own right...it has a presence, but I think it still links back to our friend.”

“The weird feeling of being watched!” Tina said suddenly getting to her feet and coming around to Newt’s side, her eyes lit up as she spoke. “We’ve all said we thought we saw something in the woods, Nagini you said you smelt something familiar, maybe … maybe its been part of Cr- the obscurial? Our little shadow seems to be following us around.”

“So you think this is actually a part of Cr- him?” Nagini held the vial up to her eyes, watching the smoke dance, the last of the essence highly diluted...almost grey in places.

“I think it could be.” Newt didn’t want to hope, but yet he still found he couldn’t help it he reached into his pocket and pulled out a scrap of paper that Dougal had given them from Betsy, and handed it to Nagini.

“If that really is a part of Cr-- our friend, he’s been stuck in Betsy. Maybe he’s been trying to contact us.” Newt watched as the woman unfolded it, paper pressed against the glass of the container she read the word typed onto the page, she sank backwards into the chair someone had summoned to land behind her.

Someone appeared to be Theseus, who’s hand found her shoulder as he orbited her to crouch at her side. “Help?”

“It came off Betsy?” Nagini asked, fingers wrapping around the part of Credence that danced in the glass.

“Dougal brought it to Tina. It wasn’t until last night that itt started to make some sort of sense.”

Ade spoke for the first time. “That’s not how she works, Tadpole.”

“Maybe it’s the probable answer derived from Cred--”

“-don’t say it!” Both Theseus and Nagini spoke in unison, cutting Tina off, their hands both moving to wrap around the vial as it began to shake in the woman’s hand violently. Tina’s hand shot to her mouth, cutting off her own words.

When the glass stopped shaking quite so violently, Nagini raised it to eye level so both she and Theseus were looking at it from either side. “If your going to Rio to find another obscurial, I’m coming with you. I have to find a way to help him, Theseus! I have to.” The pleading in her voice reminded Newt so much of Tina, that he reached out to grab her and pulled her closer.

Across from her, Theseus gave one definitive nod of agreement.

“How are we going to get her to Rio?” Tina said quietly into his ear.

Newt shrugged. They would come up with something, but getting a woman who, by all accounts, doesn’t exist onto a boat and into the Americas was going to be no easy task, even with a magical case and two Aurors at his side.

In front of them Nagini looked away from Theseus and back to the swirling substance in her hand, her face mixed with pain and determination as she addressed the mist “I’m coming for you, little shadow.”
Chapter End Notes

I'm back.
Holiday blues are very real.
I miss the warmth and the wizarding world already very much.
As ever thanks to sara. This has been ready to post for over a week but I kept getting distracted.
My hotel room looked over a volcano. Not a real one but close enough.
Wind whipped around the harbor as the waves smashed against the man-made barricades holding back the raging North Sea. Swells crashed against polished brickwork as fishermen dragged their boats in from the relentless storm-battered waters. The harbor buzzed with life: a storm, no matter how fierce, would not slow the fishermen and their wives from processing and sorting their daily catch, fresh from the ever-giving wash.

The high cliffs on either side of the harbour told tales of horror and love, supernatural beings the Muggles would believe were untrue. Newt knew they had basis in folklore, tales from the old countries. It wasn't hard to fathom how vampires and werewolves had etched their way into the everyday life of people on the Yorkshire coast.

How many of the people who shuddered behind closed doors on dark nights mistook the howling winds for the souls of the damned? The bitter cold forever rattling bones and raising fevers and chills. The sky burned blood red as the sun sets, ebbing its light from behind dark, doomed clouds. There was something ironic in this being the place that the ship they now waited upon would sail into... a port made famous by a Muggle writer who told tales of monsters from across the sea.

Newt made his way towards the look out. The cliff road below the abbey was lined with cottages, and kipper houses that made his stomach rumble in hunger.

His mother wrapped her coat tighter against the wind whipping around them as they stepped out of the windblock of the smokehouse and its glorious smell of kippers, and into the bracing cold of the north sea.

Rhea’s hair whipped around her face as it broke free from her scarf, her hat long abandoned back at the tea house in the safety of her husband.

Newt watched as his mother walked towards the wooden fence that lined the edge of the cliff and raised her arms to the biting wind, the look of sorrow that had been a permanent part of her face for the last few months evaporating as she embraced the wildness of the planet as it raged around her. The years seemed to fall off her face when she was like this... free to be herself and not be the things she was expected to be: a mother, a wife, an upstanding member of society.

“Never be what others expect you to be, Newton. It only leads to someone being disappointed, and don’t ever let it be you.”

“But what if they think I’m odd, mum?”

“Then let them! We are what we are, Newton... be true to yourself, or you will disappoint yourself and you are the one that has to live with that, nobody else.”

“What if I disappoint you?”

His mother turned to face him, looking at him as if he were the most precious thing in the world.
“You exist Newton, I could never be disappointed as long as you exist.”

“Mum?”

Rhea turned to him, the smile only slightly dimming as she stepped back from the edge of the precipice. He cleared the last few steps, reaching the wooden fence and looking down to the white swells that broke against the cliff face. He had no idea why that image had come to mind: the image of his mother, welcoming him home from school for the Christmas holidays, telling him it was fine to be on the outside, that he didn’t have to fit in. Maybe it was seeing his mother act so much more like the woman he remembered from his childhood...acting with such abandon in the churning wind and rain.

“I’m not a disappointment, am I?” his voice sounded so much like the voice from his memory that he shocked himself. It sounded so small and childlike.

Rhea lift one arm and pulled him close, the smells of his youth wrapped him in a warm embrace, chasing away the winter chill.

“What’s brought this on?” she asked as she searched his face, trying to find what bothered him so.

“Nothing… it’s just… well… “

“You’re scared you might not come back from this next big adventure?” she asked quietly, holding his face between two gloved hands. “You will! Your a Scamander. You always come back.” She tried to make her voice sound sure, but her eyes gave it away: she was just as worried as both of her sons about the journey across the seas.

Newt’s voice cracked when he spoke “I’m worried about dad.”

Thesesus had let out the Knezzles, and Newt just knew it would be him who got the blame. He had almost rounded up the last of the litter and was just pushing the biggest one in to the wooden cage when his father walked through the door. His eyes darted around kitchen taking in the utter destruction before setting his eyes steadily upon Newt who was covered in scratches and holding a wriggling ball of hiss and spit to his chest like a child.

An eyebrow raised , a smile across his face and a chuckle. “You’re brother thinks I’m stupid, Newt...but unfortunately for him, I am not.” He walked over, retrieving the creature from Newt’s arms, and locating it back into the cage. Waving his wand hand, he returned the last two missing creatures from behind a stack of old newspapers in the corner. “Theseus must think I’m stupid! He must!” Arty laughed, lifting Newt into his arms, healing the scratches that the knezel had clawed deep in to Newt’s young skin. “The amount of mischief that happens when he comes home from school is vastly more than the amount of mischief you get yourself into when you are here alone, Newt!” Bright eyes sparkled as his father looked down at him...he was a busy man, but he had always managed to find time to spend with Newt, teaching him to read maps, to understand languages...to understand that actions could speak volumes when words couldn’t be found to say what you really mean. Newt just knew that he was going to miss him terribly when he left for school. His father was his hero.

“Did I ever tell you about the time your uncle tried to feed me to a bloody great snake? And then he
tried to blame it on me?”

“Don’t you go worrying about your dad...that’s my job.” Rhea looked confused. “Why would being worried about your dad make you think I was disappointed in you?”

Newt looked to the horizon, searching for a ship he knew very well that he wouldn’t see until it was a lot closer to port...anything to avoid his mother’s gaze. It felt stupid. The thoughts that had been going through his mind the last few days, but he needed to voice them, somewhere, anywhere … except towards Tina, he didn’t want to scare her away just yet...

“--just imagine what your mam would say young Arty! She always knew any grandkid of hers would be damn clever, but Youngest Auror! Thes, come here my boy!”

Newt watched as Theseus rolled his eyes, embraced in the vice-like grip that Ade had around his neck.

“Well, hopefully my own grandkids will follow in the family tradition.”

Newt could feel the eyes on the back of his head, he couldn’t help but think about the massive fight he had just had with Leta before leaving for Christmas half-term. Women were more trouble than he could be bothered with. Newt felt his dad’s hand on his shoulder as he sunk to the floor behind him, reaching round to help himself to a sweet mince pie from the plate on the bench.

*His dad caught his eye and winked before turning towards Theseus with a grin plastered on his face. “Hurry up and make me a grandad Thes, your a working lad now.”*

Newt almost choked on the bit of pastry he was eating.

“Dad it’s only my first day on monday! At least give me a week?”

“What are we talking about?” Rhea slid in to Newt’s other side, handing him a glass of milk and patting him on the back to loosen the bit of food caught in his windpipe.

“Dad is just telling Thes he wants to be a grandfather by the end of the week?” Newt offred once his airway was clear.

“You're aware it doesn't work like that, right Arty?”

“Well yes dear, but wouldn’t it be lovely to have a little girl running around the place?”

“It would, but that is no excuse to encourage such behaviour in our son!”

“It’s not like I’m saying it to Newt!”

Newt looked from his father to his mother and back to his father who looked down at him with a weird look in his eye “Now let's not start anything. It’s Christmas … who would like a butterbeer?”
“I just--”

“Just what?”

“I have that same feeling in my stomach, the one I had when Grandma died. I’m scared if we go, we might not have him when we get back.” Newt’s voice trailed into nothingness.

Beside him his mother’s face had drained of all color, she pulled the woolen scarf tighter.

“I didn’t want to say anything mum, but he’s been getting worse, hasn’t he? He hides it well but--”

“--he’s fading yes.”

Newt had never seen his father look so broken: not mad...just disappointed.

Newt’s wand sat in a safety box between them on the table in the kitchen of Featherdown.

It had been delivered by a house elf on order of the school.

Up until it arrived near moments before, Newt was sure he would never see it again.

His father’s eyes skimmed the wand, then skimmed over him.

Newt could feel each inch of the stare, the skin almost felt as if it were being jinxed.

His father reached out, pouring himself a cup of tea, and with trembling hands took a sip.

The anger that coursed through him was visible.

Newt felt awful for doing this to him...his dad had always been so proud of him, proud of his strange little Newt. Never had he been referred to as ‘The Boy’ until he had been called in to the headmasters office, and he had not said a word since.

Artimus Scamander was fiercely proud of his son, would defend him till his last breath.

But this time, Newt had pushed him just a step to far.

Arty slammed the lid of the box closed and got to his feet, taking the box to the fireplace and holding it near the open flame.

The burning grip of fear clung to Newt’s insides, bile burning in his chest.

The man opened the lid, looked once more upon the wand then snapped the lid closed.

Without looking at his son, he placed the box safely on the mantel above the fire.

Taking a step back, the man seemed to buckle under his own weight. Legs crumpling under him.

Newt jumped to his feet and ran to his father’s side.

Crouching down, he looked to his father for answers.

“It’s ok son, it’s just been a long day.”
Newt had been watching his father: he had been struggling more than usual, finding he needed to use both walking sticks to walk more and more. His memory grew worse...asking the same question time and time again, and he had seen his grandfather's face, trying so hard to be strong for them all, as his son slipped into the same despair as his wife.

Ursula’s breakdown had broken down the old man’s defenses, and now the pain was clearly visible on Ade’s face whenever he looked at his son.

Newt couldn’t help but think that even if his father lived to see their return, he might not even recognise his own sons.

“But what has your father's health got to do with disappointing us?” Rhea asked quietly.

Newt pulled his coat tighter, it all sounded so stupid when he tried to put it in to words, but he would try.

“You have to be kidding me?”

Theseus looked shocked at the sudden outburst. “It can’t be a surprise?”

“Is she pregnant? Is that it? Your only getting married because she’s pregnant, right? Dad will kill you.”

“More like mum, but no Leta isn’t… that is to say we aren't and if we were I would tell you first Newt!”

This was just typical of Theseus! Newt finally returned to England with news that would finally make his father proud: a fully ready to publish a book...a woman who had stolen his heart! He couldn’t wait to tell his dad all about Tina...but no Theseus had to come upsetting it all! Giving his father what he always wanted! If Leta was pregnant, and if it was a girl... he would never be able to make up for the disappointment he had brought upon his father...to fight back against the guilt of the illness that claimed him.

Newt hated himself everyday for causing the sickness, no matter how many times he was told that his father’s illness was nothing to do with him, Newt couldn’t separate the spiral of the illness from his own disappointment in the eyes of the man.

“Congratulations then.” Newt hated the spite that came out mingled with the words, but he would try and fight it.

At least one of his children hadn’t grown up a complete failure.

“I’m sorry! Im sorry Leta died! Im sorry I haven’t been the best son! I’m sorry dad won’t be around to hold any of his grandchildren! I’ve been nothing but a disappointment to you both...I’m so sorry mum.”

Rhea pulled him into a bone breaking hug.

“You are far away from being a disappointment. You silly boy, just know that your father is so very
proud of you, and he adores that charming wonderful clever woman that you have brought in to our lives...as do I. I can’t speak for your father completely, but I have never been more proud of both of my wonderful sons than I have been in the last few years.” she kissed him on the crest of his hair before pulling him closer again. In the distance, the lighthouse sounded the foghorn as the ship they had been waiting for broke the horizon.

“Newt, life happens! It can change in the blink of an eye. Me and Arty have only ever wanted you to live the life you had to. It isn’t to be lived for me and your dad.”

“But--”

“No buts...you don’t get to tell me how I feel about my own sons, no more than I can tell you how to sort that lovely complicated mind of yours out. Although I believe you’re over-thinking things again Newton, I don’t think this has anything to do with disappointing your father and everything to do with change.”

Newt watched the ship as it edged into the harbour, thinking over his mother's words. How did she always do this? How did she always tell him things he didn’t even realise that he needed to hear? His mind raced through all the times that his mother had given him advice.

“Newton, you cherish that woman...every little bit of her, because there might be a day when one of you will look at the other and all there will be is memories.” Rhea’s voice filled his memory, this hadn’t been about his dad...not really. It’s about Tina...it’s always about Tina.

“Did I ever tell you what your dad said when he proposed?” Rhea asked almost reading his mind, as she lead him back down from the lookout to the harbour.

Newt shook his head, pausing to buy some kippers from the stall that had tortured them all morning with its tantalizing smell.

“He said ‘Rhea, I might fuck everything else up in life, but not you...never you.’ Then he asked me to marry him. Even your dad, the old romantic that he is, thought that he had messed everything up, I guess that crippling self-doubt it a Scamander thing?” she paused as Newt started to descend the step to the pier and the ship they had been waiting on.

“Newt, do me a favor...when you finally get round to asking Tina to be a Scamander, please act like my side of your family, not your dad’s, mmm? There’s a good lad.”

Newt paused, watching as his mother caught up.

Well that changed direction quickly.
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