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Ceri dropped Harry off at the Dursleys' at half past one on Thursday. With his trunk at his side, he didn't have to bother trying to make the room look lived-in. His door was locked from the outside, he knew; all eight latches. This had to be believable, and there was no way the Dursleys would have left him home alone with the door unlocked, regardless of how long they might be. They'd let him piss on the floor before they gave him free access to their house.

Harry sat on the edge of the bed, stroking Hedwig's feathers through the bars of her cage. She seemed unimpressed by the change of scenery, but they had to keep up appearances.

His knee bounced as he waited. He forced himself not to think about his aunt and uncle, what they might be doing — had the service started yet? Were they carrying the coffin to the cemetery?

He was torn from his thoughts by the sound of apparition; multiple people, downstairs. Even though he'd been expecting them, he still jumped up, wand in hand and pointed at the door. He heard muffled voices; some familiar, some not.

The footsteps on the stairs were strange; a rhythmic shuffle-thud, almost like someone had a limp, or walked with a heavy cane. "Potter!" The bark sent a shiver down his spine. He shook it off, reminding himself that this was not Barty Crouch Jr — this had to be the real Alastor Moody. "Merlin's balls, have you got enough locks on there?"

"Locks?" A female voice, again familiar, though Harry couldn't quite place it. "What, on the outside?" Someone jogged up the stairs. Harry felt his cheeks burn — how many people had come, to gawp at the truth of the home life of the Boy-Who-Lived? How many members of the Order had decided to see why he hadn't left the house all summer?

"Give us a moment, Harry." He relaxed; that was Remus. He heard several clicks in quick succession, and the door swung open.

Squeezed together on the small landing outside his room stood Moody, Remus, and the bright-haired auror who was friends with Charlie. This time, her hair was bubblegum pink. She grinned at him, waving. "Wotcher, Harry!"

Her name was Tonks, Harry remembered. Nymphadora Tonks — Andromeda's daughter. She was Sirius' cousin.

Harry didn't lower his wand. "Moony," he greeted neutrally. "What creature was in the tank in your office the first time we had tea together?" The only one of the three he actually knew; he wasn't taking any chances. Even though he could *feel* with his magic that it truly was his pseudo-godfather, it didn't hurt to check.

"A grindylow," Remus replied promptly. Harry lowered his wand, sliding it back into his holster.

"Constant vigilance!" Moody barked, a smile twisting his scarred face. "Good lad, Potter."