

He disappeared into the kitchen, and Tonks turned the volume up, belting out the lyrics as she danced around the living room, waving her arms and shaking her hips. Her hair cycled through a dozen colours as she purged the negative emotions, kicking off the tight auror-regulation trousers and ripping open the front of her button-up. She kept dancing through the first song, and the second, and by the third she felt somewhat human again. When she spun around at the end of it, she saw Kingsley leaning in the doorway, watching her with two plates in his hands and so much love in his eyes it hit like a punch to the gut. “You’re beautiful,” he told her, as she stood there in her pants and socks and an open shirt, her skin flushed and hair in disarray from her dancing. There was total honesty in his voice — and Tonks knew that he’d say that no matter what shape she morphed her body into. “Feel better?”

He approached, offering one of the plates with a sandwich on it, and she took it gratefully. “Much. Thanks.” A wave of her hand had the volume of the record turned down to a much more reasonable level. They collapsed together on the sofa, Kingsley’s feet propped up on the coffee table while Tonks tucked her legs underneath her. He was still in his full uniform minus the robe; the only concession to comfort he’d made was undoing the top button of his shirt, and rolling his sleeves to his elbows. Tonks trailed her fingers over the corded muscle of his forearm, tracing the line of the tattoo half-hidden against his dark skin.

The sandwich was delicious, and once her belly was full Tonks could finally let go of that last little bit of anger simmering inside her. “At least we’ll only have to deal with Proudfoot for a year or so.”

Kingsley raised an amused eyebrow. “So convinced he’ll be too incompetent to keep the position?”

“Convinced Harry won’t let Scrimgeour stay Minister that long,” she corrected. “Soon as he offs You-Know-Who, we’ll get someone competent instead. Someone who understands that the Head Auror position has had your name on it for years.”

His lips twitched. “If I become Head Auror, our relationship will be even more against the rules than it is now,” he pointed out, and Tonks just smirked.

“Rules, schmules,” she said, waving a hand dismissively.

“That’s not the correct attitude for an officer of the law, Auror Tonks,” he said, his voice serious even when his eyes were laughing, though Tonks doubted many people would notice it. They always thought he was so severe, so stern; they couldn’t see his wicked sense of humour. It just made it all the more precious, to Tonks.

“The auror department knew what I was like when they hired me,” she teased, “and if you gave a fuck about *those* rules you’d never have agreed to go on a date with me.”

“You’re surprisingly persuasive,” he remarked, and she laughed.

“Persistent, more like.” She’d spent at least eight months making a fool of herself trying to make him laugh before she’d gathered the courage to ask him out.