

“Some rules are worth breaking,” he declared, pressing a kiss to the top of her head. Happiness fizzed in her belly, and she leaned against him, setting aside her empty plate. Her shirt opened wider, and Tonks didn’t miss the way Kingsley’s eyes trailed over her pale stomach, up the line of her sternum.

“If Proudfoot ends up with frogspawn in his desk drawers tomorrow, you’ll give me an alibi, right?” she asked, fluttering her eyelashes hopefully. He chuckled, the low baritone rumble sending electricity down Tonks’ spine.

“You’re good enough not to need an alibi,” he told her. “But if he comes after you, I’ll back you up.” He slung an arm around her, hand resting at the bottom of her ribs. “You’re not the only one who hates him, after all.”

That was true; the only aurors who *didn’t* hate Proudfoot were the ones who were also Death Eaters. “Maybe the twins will give me something good to get him with,” she mused, mentally going over what she knew of the shop’s stock. There was bound to be something Proudfoot wouldn’t immediately pin on her. Something with a time delay... Fred and George wouldn’t disappoint.

“You can go over and see them on Tuesday. Just don’t spend the whole day.” Kingsley’s eyes darkened, and Tonks’ skin prickled. “It’s rare we both have the same day off. We should make the most of it.”

Arousal chased through her veins, but on top of that was a sliver of guilt. “I... I promised Harry I’d go over to the house on Tuesday, actually. He wants to test his skills against an auror, see how he does.”

The playful light in Kingsley’s eyes dimmed, and the guilt grew bigger. “That’ll be good for him,” the senior auror remarked. “Though after watching the lad at the Ministry I’d say you better watch your step.”

Tonks snorted; that was an understatement. Watching Harry duel Lucius Malfoy had been a real eye-opener. “I keep telling him I’m not the auror he needs to be testing himself against,” she agreed. Then she bit her lip, anxiety curling tight. “I... I want to bring you, to the house,” she confessed, like it was some sort of deep, dark secret. “I just... the way that Mum talks about it, you have to understand... it’s the family summer home.” It sounded silly, put like that. But it was one of the two Black properties that wasn’t even on the Gringotts property register; as far as the world was concerned, it didn’t exist. Only those who were of the Black family, or as good as, were invited there. Sirius was pushing it a little having Remus there, but those two were brothers in everything but blood.

He was *certainly* pushing it moving Charlie in, but she knew her best friend; he’d been waiting half his life for someone to get domestic with, and from what Remus had told her Sirius was exactly the same, for all his teenage tom-cattling around. Now they’d found each other, she was certain there would be wedding bells somewhere down the line.

That was what it meant, to invite someone to the family summer home. It was an agreement that they were welcome in the Black family — and an expectation that they would *always* be welcome in the Black family, would never betray those secrets.