

Chapter 80

Chapter Notes

This chapter takes us over the 500k mark! It's something of an interlude; checking in with all the people who aren't Harry, getting some cute relationship fluff and also some smut in the mix there, with a healthy shot of plot progression thrown in too.

Warning for depression/anxiety/PTSD in the Sirius/Charlie section, with Sirius' post-Azkaban struggles.

Also warning for discussions of gender dysphoria and other similar gender-related feels in the Tonks/Kingsley section.

Sirius had woken up cold.

It happened, sometimes. Charlie had been told many times in his life that he was obnoxiously warm to sleep next to, but Sirius had never complained about it — and sometimes, like that morning, Charlie woke up with the dark-haired wizard wrapped around him like an octopus, plastered to his chest as if he was trying to suck every scrap of warmth from Charlie's body.

When he felt the tiny shivers wracking Sirius' body, Charlie knew it was going to be a rough day. Still, he did what he always did on Cold mornings; rolled them over until Sirius was securely cocooned beneath his broad form, and pulled the duvet up to his neck, wrapping it around both of them. Never mind that it was summer, and already boiling in their room.

There was the smallest relaxation of Sirius' shoulders. Charlie's heart clenched. He tilted his head down, pressing the most gentle of kisses to Sirius' temple. "Good morning, sweetheart," he said quietly, trying carefully not to let his full weight rest on the man, else he go from cuddling to crushing. Sirius liked being weighed down, but when he was mentally in Azkaban Charlie always worried he'd smother him.

He waited, occasionally dropping another kiss on his partner's face. Little by little, Sirius stopped shivering. Then, finally, the ex-convict let out a long breath. "Fuck," he muttered, and Charlie hummed against his cheek.

"Want to have breakfast in bed this morning?" he asked. He felt Sirius wavering. "It's a Saturday. We've nowhere to be."

More than once, Sirius had tried to hide his own depression while Charlie got ready for work, so he wouldn't *feel obligated* to stay at home and care for him. Like any part of that was an *obligation*.

Charlie hated the demons in his boyfriend's brain, the way they made him hate himself.