

“Brilliant.”

When she disappeared through the door to the Hufflepuff corridor, Neville turned to Harry. “Are you sure about that? If he catches on before you’re ready...”

“I don’t know when I’ll be ready,” Harry admitted, “but knowing the way my life goes, it’ll be sooner than any of us anticipate. I want to make sure I don’t leave *any* chance for that meddling bastard to worm his way out of the consequences.”

If he didn’t have the measures in place to slap Dumbledore with an arrest and a trial that would absolutely destroy his reputation, ready to go as soon as Voldemort was defeated, Harry knew the old man would be right there to turn the crowd in his own favour — and paint Harry as the next Dark Lord, if necessary.

He was playing chess with the chessmaster himself, and he had to be several moves ahead.

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Sirius shuffled down the corridor of Grimmauld Place, hands in the pockets of his cardigan. He was feeling cold, today — really, had been a little cold ever since Moony left for the werewolf packs. Merlin, he missed being able to feel sun on his face whenever he wanted.

He turned a corner, then paused. Tonks was stood at the top of the stairs, looking... quite different. Square shoulders, with an entirely flat chest and more masculine waistline. A more masculine jaw, too — similar to Sirius’ own, just without the stubble. And cobalt blue hair, shaved close at the sides and longer on top.

A suspicion began to appear in Sirius’ gut. He cleared his throat. “Is that my t-shirt?”

Tonks whipped around, looking down at the Guns N Roses insignia, offering up a guilty smile. “It was. But then I nicked it.” Voice a touch deeper. Nervous, too.

“I’ve been looking for that,” Sirius mock-grumbled. He raised an eyebrow at his younger cousin. “You feeling alright?”

Tonks’ cheeks went pink. “Yeah. Just. Y’know.” An awkward glance to the side. “Feeling a bit more masculine today.” This was followed by a strained laugh.

Sirius’ suspicion grew. “Fair enough. Changing pronouns?”

Tonks froze. Electric blue eyes widened. “You— Um. He is good. When I’m like this. Which isn’t often, but— sometimes.”

Sirius nodded, his suspicion confirmed. “Will do. Now, are you *actually* feeling alright? That was a nasty curse you caught last night.”

The whole reason Tonks was even at Grimmauld was because of a concussion sustained in a raid the night before. Kingsley had been worried enough to insist upon keeping his partner somewhere that was easy to supervise. Since Sirius — supposedly — never left Grimmauld, it had been the logical place.