

“Isn’t he like, loads older than you?” he asked, brows furrowed. Tonks shrugged.

“Eighteen years; it’s nothing in wizarding terms. When I’m seventy and he’s eighty-eight, no one will give a toss.”

Harry, used to thinking in muggle lifespans, supposed that made sense. “Fair enough.”

“You don’t see it, do you?” Tonks asked knowingly. Harry shrugged.

“Not really,” came his apologetic response. Far from being offended, Tonks laughed.

“S’alright. Lots of people don’t. Took Charlie a while, and he’s always been into older blokes, so I figured he’d be the easiest to convince. But... Kings is different, when he’s off duty. Not much different,” he added at Harry’s doubtful face. “I know he and I are chalk and cheese, but we like it that way. He keeps me grounded, and I remind him to loosen up a bit. He’s got a wicked sense of humour once he stops being all stoic and unmoving and whatnot.” He waved a hand. “You only see him for Order business, he’s in work-mode then.”

“I’ll take your word for it.” Kingsley had no reason to show anything but his usual stoic auror self to Harry, after all. “If you trust him, you can tell him what we’ve told you,” he offered. “It’ll be good to have another auror on board if Dumbledore escalates things. And — he’s on the Wizengamot isn’t he?”

“Yup,” Tonks said, popping the P. “All that politics stuff goes over my head, but he loves it. He’ll get a right kick out of Amelia’s little niece planning to take over the whole thing; he’s been saying for years they need a shake-up. Always ends up coming down to Lucius Malfoy versus Albus Dumbledore.”

“I’d like to talk to him about it all sometimes, if he’s willing.” Harry had heard plenty from his friends, but none of the adults in his life had actual experience of sitting in a Wizengamot seat. Harry wanted to know what he was preparing himself for.

“I’ll let him know,” Tonks assured. Then he jumped clumsily to his feet, hair turning bright purple. “Let’s see this brilliant bedroom of yours, then. Make me feel less bad about that dump at your muggles’ place.”

Harry grimaced at the reminder. “It’s this way.” He had missed his room more than he’d expected, though his room at Grimmauld was nice. Maybe he could move some of his posters over, now Sirius had taken that awful wallpaper down...

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With the twins in charge of distractions, no one noticed Sirius and Harry had been gone for hours — when they got back, it was to see that the twins had turned the entire stairway into one giant slide. Sirius laughed, eyes bright. “I love it,” he declared, and without hesitation he sat down, whooping as he went flying down the spiral slide.

The twins got a dressing down from their mother, but since no one had gotten hurt it was considered a minor incident, and life in Grimmauld moved on.