

Chapter 9

Tonks sighed as she closed the door to her apartment behind her and tossed her Auror robes over the back of the couch. Walking into her tiny kitchen, she opened the refrigerator. Looking through the shelves, she pushed aside a half full carton of Indian take out and grabbed a bottle of Butterbeer. Closing the fridge, Tonks twisted the top off of the bottle and tossed it into the bin as she walked into the living room and collapsed tiredly onto the couch.

Ever since Umbridge's arrest, Bones had kept the Auror Department busy investigating Fudge and looking for the escaped Death Eaters. With Fudge finally knocked off his pedestal, he couldn't stop her without raising eyebrows. Frankly, Tonks was astonished he'd managed to keep his job after getting caught the way he had. He'd put all the blame on Umbridge, and for some unknown reason, the stupid toad refused to say anything against him. She figured Fudge had some dirt on her she really didn't want made public.

The good news was that with the Minister's Office facing such a huge scandal, much of his support had distanced themselves from him. That gave the Aurors room to work without his constant interference. It also had a lot of people questioning what they'd been told about Harry. Poor Arthur had been grilled by several parents that worked at the Ministry about him. Tonks hated that so many people were trying to pry into his life, but she was also glad to see some of them starting to pull their head out of their arses and give his claims about You-Know-Who some real thought.

Things were going better at Hogwarts, as well. Without his other positions taking up his time, Dumbledore had taken over the Defense post for the rest of the year. Tonks was a bit disappointed about that when she heard, but she doubted she'd have been able to get the time off work to take off the post herself anyways. She'd been so busy that she hadn't even had time to visit Harry on his last Hogsmeade weekend. They'd had to settle for talking to each other through their mirrors most nights.

At least he's finally caught a bit of a break, Tonks thought to herself.

While Dumbledore was still ignoring him, he had made Harry's little group an official school club. According to Harry, he now had over fifty new members, including a few Slytherins, that wanted his help. Outside of that, the whole atmosphere of the school had lifted. The Educational Decrees had all been removed, along with the position of High Inquisitor, and the Inquisitorial Squad had been disbanded. Those involved that were prefects had had their badges revoked for abusing their power, and Tonks shook her head, wondering why Dumbledore would allow someone like Draco Malfoy to become a prefect in the first place.

It was a good thing Harry didn't need to take Occlumency lessons from Snape anymore. The greasy bastard would probably blame Harry and use it as an excuse to bully him again. Tonks shuddered to think of what Harry would have gone through if she hadn't taught him first. All Snape had done was batter his mind for hours on end before sending him back to his dorm with the worst instruction possible. Fortunately, Harry had gotten to the point where Snape couldn't even enter his mind in just a few weeks with a lot of practice and a little instruction from her.

Now, Tonks found herself eagerly awaiting the end of the school year for the first time since she'd been a student herself. In just three weeks, she'd be free to see Harry anytime she wanted. Just the thought of that had her smiling as she took a sip of her Butterbeer. She already planned to have a word with the Dursley's about the way they treated him, and there was no way in hell she was going to let them get in the way of spending time with her man.

Frowning, Tonks stared down at the bottle in her hand as she picked at the label with her fingernail. As fun as it had been to sneak around during the Holidays, she wanted more than that now. She didn't want to have to worry about explaining why she was spending so much time on guard duty or having to hide their relationship when he got to Grimmauld place. The problem was, she had yet to work up the courage to talk to Harry about it.

Sighing, Tonks knew she'd have to be the one to tell Molly. The last thing she wanted was for her to say something that would hurt Harry or damage his relationship with her family. The Weasley's were a source of emotional and physical support he couldn't afford to lose. That brought her to the most frightening part, telling her mother.

At the clock struck seven, Tonks shook herself from her thoughts and stood from the couch. Walking into her bedroom, she grabbed a new set of lingerie from her dresser with a smile. Laying the black bustier and tiny thong out on the bed, she picked up her mirror from her bedside table and placed it next to the lingerie.

Harry's gonna love this, she thought with a smirk.

Spinning around, Tonks walked into the bathroom. Taking a quick shower, she slipped into her lingerie before checking herself out in the mirror with a smile.

Bang!

Tonks jumped in shock as her front door was blasted in.

“Oh Nympha-dora!” came a sing song voice as she snatched up her wand.

A shiver traveled down her spine. Tonks didn’t need to recognize the voice to know who it was.

“Come out, come out, and pla-ay!” Bellatrix sang.

Taking a deep breath, Tonks peeked out of her bedroom door and let loose a Crushing Hex straight at the mad witch’s chest. Laughing, Bellatrix slapped it aside with disturbing ease before sending back a black bolt of magic just as Tonks ducked back inside the room. She threw up a shield, not knowing what the spell would do, then watched as her bedroom window, along with most of the wall, exploded outwards.

“Is that any way to treat your dear auntie Bella?” Bellatrix asked in a mock child’s voice.

“I’m not really dressed for a family reunion. Mind coming back tomorrow?” Tonks asked as she send a Patronus to Kingsley through the hole in the wall.

As Bellatrix cackled, she heard sirens in the distance.

“Oh, you won’t need to be worried about how you’re dressed where we’re going,” Bellatrix told her, and Tonks could hear the grin in her voice. “I have a few friends of my own who weren’t happy you managed to escape.”

Gritting her teeth furiously, Tonks peeked out the door and sent a Piercing Hex aimed at Bellatrix’s heart, then ducked back behind the wall before she could see if it hit. She heard the sound of her spell impacting a shield a moment before the wall next to her exploded. Tonks was hurled back against her bed as chunks of wood and drywall bashed and cut her bare, exposed skin.

Scrambling to her feet, she barely got a shield up in time to stop the Asphyxiation Hex aimed at her head. Before she could react, a Knockback Hex sent her tumbling onto the bed. Rolling with the momentum, she managed to keep her balance as she landed on the other side, broken glass biting into her bare feet as she stood just inches from the gaping hole in her wall leading to a three story drop to the street below. Bellatrix stalked towards her, walking through what used to be an interior wall with a malicious glint in her violet eyes.

"I'm going to enjoy watching the Dark Lords followers break you," she said, grinning dangerously.

"Got to hell, bitch." Tonks growled furiously.

"Police! Show me your hands!" a voiced shouted from the front door.

As Bellatrix whirled around to face the three police officers standing outside the front door, Tonks sent a Cutting Curse at her neck. Without looking, Bellatrix slapped it aside before turning back to her with a glare.

"Avada Kedavra!" she hissed.

Tonks' eyes widened as she twisted frantically out of the way. The Killing Curse just missed her shoulder, but she lost her balance and fell out of the hole in the wall. As the street rushed towards her at an alarming rate, Tonks gripped her wand and Disapparated with a pop.

Bellatrix seethed as she watched her niece vanish.

"Drop the weapon!" the disgusting Muggle yelled behind her.

Whirling around, she screamed in rage while slashing her wand and launching them into the air. All three Muggles were whipped across the flat before crashing into the walls with bone shattering force. Bellatrix panted furiously as they crumpled to the ground.

"Nymphadora Tonks," called a voice.

Spinning around, Bellatrix looked around for the source.

“Nymphadora Tonks,” the young, male voice called again.

Furrowing her brow, Bellatrix looked through the rubble, where the sound was coming from. As the voice called again, a glint caught her eye. Bending over, Bellatrix picked up the dust covered mirror. Slowly, a grin stretched across her lips. Striding towards the front door, she never broke stride while jabbing her wand at one of the moaning Muggles. A purple Curse struck him in the back, causing his body to slump back to the ground with a *thump* as she strode out the door, past the wards, and vanished with a *crack*.

“Nymphadora Tonks,” Harry called third time.

When no response came after several seconds, he sighed and slipped the mirror back into his pocket.

“Move it, Potter,” Angelina barked from the entrance to the locker room.

“Coming,” Harry called back, rolling his eyes.

Now that he and the twins were back on the team, Angelina was determined to win the cup. So determined, in fact, that she had called a surprise practice after dinner when she learned the pitch was free because the Hufflepuff captain had detention. Harry had hoped to tell Tonks he was going to be late, but she wasn’t answering.

She’s probably still at work, Harry thought, knowing Madam Bones was working the Aurors hard at the moment.

Shaking his head, Harry shouldered his broom and left the locker room for the pitch.

After three and a half hours of brutal practice and relentless criticism from Angelina, it finally came to an end when Madam Hooch told them to stop before curfew. Angelina tried to argue

for more time, but thankfully, Madam Hooch wouldn't budge. Sore and exhausted, Harry and the rest of the team trudged back into the locker room.

"This is really getting out of hand," Katie grumbled.

Plopping down onto the bench next to Harry, she leaned against his shoulder for support as he nodded in agreement.

"Someone really needs to talk to her," he said while looking at Fred.

Following his gaze, Katie, Alicia, and George all looked at him as well.

"Don't look at me," Fred said.

"You're dating her," Alicia reminded him.

"Which is exactly why I *shouldn't* say anything if I want her to keep snogging me," Fred replied.

Katie snorted while Harry smiled and shook his head. Everyone fell silent a moment later when Angelina walked into the locker room. In an uncomfortable silence, everyone moved back to their lockers to take off their pads and cloaks. Angelina was the first to finish and leave for the castle after reminding them they had another practice the next night after dinner. Everyone watched her leave in silence before turning back to Fred.

"No," he said resolutely.

"I'll talk to her," Alicia said, closing her locker.

"I'll help," Katie told her. "It might be better coming from both of us."

"Thanks," Alicia said with a smile, looking relieved.

Harry dawdled as the others quickly changed, hoping to have another chance to call Tonks before heading back up to the castle. Katie and Alicia finished first, followed by the twins not long after.

“Harry Potter,”

Harry’s blood ran cold at the sound of the voice. Grabbing his wand, he spun around, frantically looking for the source. When he saw nothing, he closed his eyes to use his Occlumency, but there was nothing to fight against.

“Harry Potter,”

Feeling like a ball of lead had just dropped into his stomach, Harry pulled the mirror out of his pocket with clammy hands.

“Voldemort,” he said.

He waited for image of his reflection to change, but it never did. Remembering how the mirror worked, he tried again.

“Tom Riddle,” Harry said shakily.

His reflection shimmered and went cloudy before clearing into the image of Voldemort’s smiling face.

“Where’s Tonks?” Harry asked instantly.

His red eyes glimmering maliciously, Voldemort looked to the side and nodded his head.

“Crucio,” a female voice shouted not too far away from the mirror.

An instant later, a woman screamed in agony.

“Stop it! Stop!” Harry shouted desperately.

Voldemort made a motion and the scream cut off.

“What do you want?” Harry asked through gritted teeth, his hand clutching his wand in a white knuckled grip.

“I want the prophecy,” Voldemort said.

“What?” Harry asked, confused.

“Dumbledore still hasn’t told you?” Voldemort asked mockingly. “Haven’t you ever wondered why I came after you that night?”

“Me?” Harry asked, his heart pounding and hands shaking.

“Yes, you,” Voldemort said with a tight-lipped smirk. “Your parents were a nuisance, nothing more. I never would have wasted so much time and energy just to kill them.”

Harry glared and his grip tightened around the mirror so hard the edges began to cut into his hand as Voldemort spoke so dismissively about his parents.

“It was you I was after, Harry. We are linked, you and I, through fate itself,” Voldemort told him. “Eighteen years ago, before you were even born, a woman made a prophecy about the one with the power to defeat me. One of my Death Eaters overheard the beginning but was stopped before they could hear the rest. I decided to be cautious and take care of the child before it could become a problem, and in the end, it was you that fit the prophecy. And I was right to be concerned, no ordinary child could have survived me so many times.”

Harry felt as if he had been punched in the gut. It was his fault. His parents’ deaths, Sirius spending sixteen years in Azkaban, Tonks being captured again, it was all because of him.

"I will know what the rest of that prophecy says, and then I will end you once and for all," Voldemort hissed, his eyes glinting dangerously. "In Hogsmeade, behind Honeydukes, there is a Portkey in the form of a black leather glove with a snake on it. You will take it to the Ministry, where you will retrieve the prophecy for me. If you are not here in ten minutes, I will kill the girl."

Voldemort's image swam, and then Harry was left staring at his own pale reflection. Stuffing the mirror into his pocket, he wiped the cold sweat from his face. There wasn't time for him to run back to the castle to tell anyone what was happening and get to the Portkey in ten minutes. Even on his Firebolt, he would be cutting it too close. Grabbing his broom, Harry raced from the locker room. As soon as he was outside, he pulled out his wand.

"Expecto Patronum," he said.

His bright, glowing stag leapt from his wand and turned to face him. Harry swallowed down the guilt he felt at seeing something so connected to his father. Although he didn't know how to send messages with a Patronus, he knew he had to try. Hopefully, even if it didn't carry the message, they would know something was wrong just from seeing it.

"Go to Hermione, tell her Voldemort has Tonks at the Ministry and I'm going to rescue her," Harry said.

His Patronus bowed, then turned and galloped towards the castle. Praying his message got through, he mounted his broom and shot towards Hogsmeade faster than he'd ever flown before.

He never noticed the cloaked, blonde haired figure skulking behind the stands with a triumphant smirk on his face.

Tonks stumbled as she shot out of the elevator and sprinted towards the Department of Mysteries.

"Slow down, girl," Moody growled. "You're going to get yourself killed."

As worried as she was, and as much as she wanted to charge in, she knew he was right. Pausing at the door, Tonks took a deep breath to calm her racing heart as the rest of the group caught up. Kingsley patted her shoulder and looked at her sympathetically.

“Alright, let’s move. Don’t forget to check your corners,” Moody said.

As the rest of the group nodded and readied their wands, he pushed open the door with his gnarled hand. Cautiously, they entered a circular room with several doors spaced out evenly. As soon as the last person, Hestia, entered, the door slammed shut behind her and the wall began to rotate around them.

“Shit, where do we go?” Tonks asked anxiously.

“Here,” Moody said, pointing to one of twelve doors.

Limping up to it, he pulled it open and marched inside. Tonks followed in behind, and then gaped at the mess. The room was massive and looked to have been filled with shelves stacked with white, smoky crystal balls. There were a few still standing in the distance, but a huge section had been knocked over, scattering twisted metal and broken glass all over the floor.

“I’ve got blood,” Kingsley called out.

Tonks looked over to find a small pool of blood at his feet not too far away.

“They’re not here. Let’s keep looking,” Moody said.

Moving back into the circular room, Tonks bounced on the balls of her feet impatiently as they waited for the room to stop spinning.

“We should split up,” Tonks said.

“No,” Moody barked. “We don’t know how many there are. We stick together.”

“Moody,” Remus called out.

Moody’s eye swiveled, and Tonks looked over to find Remus pointing at one of the doors. Next to the wooden door, there was a small scorch mark along the stone wall. Tonks raced ahead of Moody as they moved over to take a closer look. She really wished she could see what Moody was seeing as he used his eye to look into the room.

“Looks like Potter’s putting up one hell of a fight,” Moody said.

“What?” Tonks asked anxiously.

In lieu of answering, Moody pushed open the door. Walking into the room, Tonks saw several destroyed cabinets littering the floor. One Death Eater was slumped against the wall, while another bumbled around the room with the head of a baby. Looking at them, he wailed and sat down on the floor. Moody stunned him and bound both Death Eaters before making his way to the end of the room.

“They’re through here,” he said quietly. “Disillusion yourselves. We’ll need to take them by surprise. They’ve got Potter cornered.”

Quickly, Tonks and the rest of the group tapped their heads and faded into the background. Moody threw up a Notice-Me-Not Charm before slowly pushing the door open. Tonks had to fight the urge to run when she spotted around ten Death Eaters, including Lucius Malfoy and Bellatrix Lestrange, backing Harry against an odd-looking arch in the middle of the room. They entered from above, and crept down row after row of circular stone benches.

“Give me the prophecy, Potter,” Malfoy demanded. “Give it to me now, or I’ll make sure your little girlfriend has a slow and painful death.”

“She’d be here if you had her,” Harry said, clutching a crystal ball to his chest while aiming his wand at Malfoy’s chest.

“Oh, wittle baby Harry knows how to pway,” Bellatrix said before cackling madly.

As Tonks circled slowly around the edge of the group, she got a better look at Harry and the Death Eaters. Nearly all of them had lost their masks, and a most had small cuts, bruises, and tattered robes. Tonks smirked, proud of Harry for putting up such a good fight against such overwhelming odds. Even Bellatrix looked worse for the wear with her wild hair sticking up at all angles and a cut on her cheek.

“Give me the prophecy, now, Potter,” Malfoy shouted, his voice echoing around the chamber.

Harry looked around at the group in front of him, and she could see the resolve in his eyes. He knew he had no chance of winning, but he was going to fight anyways. Tonks felt her heart breaking for him. She wished she could reassure him that she was there, but she knew she couldn’t make a move until Moody did, or things could go really bad for all of them.

“Haven’t you ever wondered why the Dark Lord went after your family?” Malfoy asked, his voice taking on a silky quality. “Don’t you want to know what Dumbledore kept from you for so long?”

Harry gripped the orb in his hand and glanced down at it.

“I’ve waited seventeen years,” Harry said softly.

“I know,” Malfoy said with false sympathy.

Tonks clutched her wand tightly, wishing she could Hex that smirk off his face.

“I think I can wait a little longer,” Harry said, causing Malfoy to glare at him. “You want it so bad? Here, catch.”

In an underhand toss, Harry pitched the orb into the air. All of the Death Eaters were so focused on it, the failed to notice him raise his wand.

“Reducto!” Harry shouted.

The orb shatter just inches from Malfoy's face, showering it in chunks of glass. With a scream, he clutched at his eyes as blood leaked from between his fingers.

"No!" Bellatrix screamed in rage.

"Kill him!" Malfoy hissed furiously.

Moody finally struck, dropping his Disillusionment Charm to Curse Dolohov in the side. All around the Death Eaters, the rest of the Order members picked a target and attacked. Tonks took out Goyle and raced over to a shocked looking Harry.

"Tonks!" Harry yelled in relief.

"Come on, babe. Time to kick some arse," Tonks said with a grin as she took his hand in hers.

He barely had time to smile at her before they were separated by the Lestrangle brothers. Harry dueled with Rabastian while Tonks took on Rudolphus. She worried about how he would hold up against an adult wizard, but she quickly realized there was a reason he had made it this far on his own. Seeing Harry was more than able to hold his own against Rabastian, Tonks focused on dealing with Rudolphus.

After finishing him with a Bludgeoning Hex to that head that knocked him unconscious, she turned to help Harry, only to find herself face to face with Bellatrix. There was no taunting this time as she ruthlessly attacked Tonks. She struggled to keep up with aunt as each spell hit her shield with the force of an out-of-control lorry. As she backpedaled from the relentless barrage, Tonks' foot caught on a step behind her, fell backwards, and hit her head on the hard stone floor.

Shaking off the stars bursting behind her eyes, she gripped her wand and lifted her head, only to stop when she found Bellatrix standing over her with her wand aimed at her chest. Her aunt's eyes glinted madly as she grinned down at her.

“Avada-”

Bellatrix cut off as she was forced to shield from a bright orange spell coming from her right. She managed to block it in time but stumbled under the force of the Curse from a furious Harry. Before she could recover, Harry blasted her with another spell that slammed into her shield and send her flying across the room. As she got back to her feet, Sirius jumped in and began dueling her.

“Nice one, Harry!” he shouted.

Harry rushed over to Tonks and helped her to her feet.

“You alright?” he asked.

“Yeah, thanks for the save,” Tonks said with a smile.

Harry smiled back and rested his free hand on her waist as they turned back to the rest of the room just as Dumbledore burst into the room.

“Finally,” Tonks said with a sigh.

Half of the Death Eaters had already fallen, and with Dumbledore’s arrival, the rest began to fall quickly.

“Come on, let’s-”

Harry broke off as they watched Sirius take a green curse to the chest. He dropped to the ground like a puppet with its strings cut, his eyes open but unseeing.

“NO!” Harry shouted.

Tonks stood there numbly as he took off at a sprint. She tried to follow a moment later, but stumbled into Remus while he was still dueling with Crabbe. Furiously, Tonks knocked him out with a powerful stunner. Looking back up from binding him, she looked over at Sirius with a lump in her throat but didn't see Harry. Swiveling around, she finally spotted him sprinting after Bellatrix as she raced from the room.

"Stay here, I'll go after Harry," Dumbledore instructed just as Tonks started to move after him.

"Nymphadora, help me, quickly," Moody shouted.

Tonks grit her teeth and blinked back tears as she turned back to curse at him. There was no way she was going to stay here when Harry needed help.

"He's not dead," Moody told her just as she opened her mouth.

"What?" Tonks asked, her mind not registering the words.

"Black's not dead, now get over here!" he barked.

Numbly, Tonks scrambled over to him as he knelt down with difficulty next to Sirius' unmoving body.

"I need you to cast the Resuscitation Charm as soon as my spell ends, got it?" Moody asked.

Struggling to hold back her emotions, Tonks knelt down on the other side of Sirius and nodded.

"On three. One, two, three!" he counted.

On three, Moody flipped his wand around to hold it like an ice pick and stabbed it down at Sirius' chest. There was a bright flash of light, and Sirius' pale skin began to take on more of its natural color.

“Now!” Moody barked.

Tonks aimed her wand at Sirius’ chest, and a bright blue spell rippled over his body. There was a brief pause where nothing happened, then Sirius suddenly jolted to life with a loud gasp. Tonks nearly wept in relief as he groaned and moved his hand to his head.

“Bloody hell,” Sirius groaned.

“Go help Potter. We’ll clean up here and meet you in the Atrium. If Lestrage is looking to escape, that’s where she’ll be headed,” Moody told her.

“Thank you,” Tonks said gratefully.

As Moody stopped Sirius from trying to get up too soon, Tonks raced out of the room and back to the elevator. The wait was agonizing as the elevator slowly made its way to the top floor. She just prayed Dumbledore had already caught up to them.

When the door opened, Tonks stepped into absolute chaos. Dumbledore was dueling with Voldemort while one of the statues from the Fountain of Magic Brethren blocked Harry. He looked like he wanted to help, but the statue kept blocking his path. Tonks raced over to him, taking his hand in hers.

“Sirius is alive,” she told him.

“What?” Harry gasped, his eyes full of hope.

“It wasn’t a killing curse. Sirius is fine,” Tonks said.

Harry breathed out a shuddering breath of relief before they both turned back to watch the duel. Voldemort screamed in rage, his magic lashing out and shattering the windows in the

Atrium. Raising his wand over his head, the shards of broken glass raised into the air and pointed at them like daggers.

Suddenly, they shot forward just as Dumbledore threw up a transparent, barely visible shield. As soon as the glass touched it, the glass turned into white sand. Harry grabbed Tonks and wrapped his arms around her protectively as the sand pelted his back. They turned back to look at a furious and frustrated Voldemort just as the fireplaces sprang to life. Fudge and several Aurors stepped out and froze at the sight of the Dark Lord.

“He’s back,” Fudge gasped.

Behind them, the Order members stepped out of the elevator and readied their wands as the Aurors behind Fudge did the same. Looking around, Voldemort sneered as his body morphed into a black cloud. The spells the Auror shot passed right through him as the black mass drifted quickly towards Harry and Tonks. Before it reached them, Harry shoved Tonks behind him. She watched helplessly as the smoke flew into his body through his nose and mouth. A sense of horror filled her as his body stiffened and fell to the ground.

“Harry!” she shouted, dropping down next to him.

His muscles tightened while his eyes and mouth opened wide. In his dull, distant gaze, there was nothing but fear and pain reflected in them. Tonks took his hand in hers and cupped his cheek as tears fell from her eyes. Suddenly, Harry’s back arched, and she jumped back as black smoke shot back out of his nose and mouth. Tonks pulled Harry into her lap and held him tightly with one hand with the other aimed her wand at the smoke.

It flew a short distance away before reforming into Voldemort. The evil wizard screamed in agony as he materialized on his knees. Tonks heart leapt as the Aurors, Order, and Dumbledore sent spells at him.

Just before they reached him, Voldemort Disapparated, shattering the Ministry’s Anti-Apparating wards. He reappeared a few feet away, grabbed Bellatrix, and Disapparated again before anyone could stop him. There was a long moment of silent stillness as everyone waited with baited breath to see if it was really over.

“Harry, are you alright?” Dumbledore asked as he walked over and knelt down.

“What happened?” Harry asked weakly.

“You were possessed,” Dumbledore said, causing Tonks to gasp. “Can you stand?”

Groaning, Harry sat up and began to climb to his feet. Tonks wrapped an arm around his waist and help support his weight.

“Albus!” Fudge yelled in a panic. “Albus, it’s him. He’s really back.”

“Yes, I had noticed,” Dumbledore said.

“What do we do?” Fudge asked helplessly.

“Perhaps you should ask your advisors?” Dumbledore offered as he bent down and picked up the head of a broken statue.

“But you have to help, I could lose my job,” Fudge pleaded.

Harry lurched forward and his fist slammed into the Minister’s jaw, knocking him on his arse. Dumbledore caught Harry before he could fall over, and Tonks rushed forward. She wrapped an arm around him tightly, not sure if she was holding him up, or holding him back.

“Your job!?” Harry spat furiously. “You’ve given Voldemort a year, a fucking year, to get his followers back.”

Fudge blinked up at Harry in shock as he held his jaw.

“You hit me,” he said disbelievingly.

"Be glad he was the only one," Bones said as she walked up to them.

Pausing next to Fudge, she glared down at him.

"We'll be talking about why the alert about the attack on the Ministry never reached my home, later," she said, causing him to pale. "Right now, I want to know what happened, and why Sirius Black is standing next to several of my Aurors and isn't in cuffs."

"Sirius Black!" Fudge yelled, scrambling to his feet.

"He's innocent," Harry said strongly as he stepped forward.

"I will be happy to explain everything, once I get my charge safely back to Hogwarts," Dumbledore said.

Tapping his wand to the statue's head, it glowed blue briefly. Before Tonks could move, he thrust it into Harry's hands and tapped it again. In a blink, Harry was gone, taken back to Hogwarts by the Portkey.

Harry ambled through the halls of Hogwarts, his mind whirling from the revelations of the past hour. Dumbledore had finally explained the prophecy to him, and why he had been ignoring him all year. On top of that, he'd somehow managed to ensure Sirius would remain free until he was given a fair trial.

It was all so much to take in, Harry felt like his head was going to explode.

"Mr. Potter," McGonagall called out.

Harry looked up, blinking as he realized he'd been wandering aimlessly around the second floor.

"Yes, professor?" he asked.

"I know you've had a long night, but there's a guest in my office that insists on seeing you," she said with an uncharacteristic smile.

Harry looked at her curiously as she waved him over to her office. Harry sighed and followed her, wondering who would have come to see him this time of night. He hoped it wasn't Madam Bones looking to question him.

As soon as he stepped into McGonagall's office, he was pulled into a tight hug. It took his overwhelmed mind a second to realize it was Tonks. Harry hugged her back and buried his face in her short, purple hair, inhaling her familiar scent.

"I'll give you two some privacy," McGonagall said with a small smile. "Try not to stay out too late, and don't make me regret this."

With that final word of warning, she left the room and closed the door. Harry and Tonks held each other for a long moment before they pulled back slightly to look at each other.

"I had to tell McGonagall we were dating before she'd let me stay. I'm sorry, but I just really needed to see you," Tonks said.

"It's fine," Harry said, smiling as he reached up to stroke her cheek.

Returning his smile, Tonks leaned forward to kiss him briefly. Taking his hand, she pulled him over to a desk, pushed him into the seat, and then planted herself sideways in his lap with her arms wrapped around his neck.

"You were brilliant tonight," she told him with a proud smile.

"Yeah, I fell into a trap and nearly get everyone killed," Harry said dully. "Brilliant."

“Don’t talk like that,” Tonks said sternly. “What made you think they had me anyways?”

“Voldemort called me on my mirror,” Harry said. “I thought they must have had yours to do that.”

“He did,” Tonks said, causing him to look up at her quickly. “Bellatrix attacked me at my flat earlier tonight. I had to leave my mirror behind when I escaped.”

“She must have heard me try to call you on it,” Harry said with a groan.

“Hey, it’s not your fault,” Tonks told him firmly. “I’d have done the same thing in your position. Besides, we all made it out, the Ministry finally knows You-Know-Who is back, and Sirius is getting his trial. I’d call that a win.”

Harry smiled and pulled her close, kissing the top of her head.

“What took you so long to get out of Dumbledore’s office?” she asked.

His smile fading, Harry took a deep breath and told her everything. Tonks ran her finger through his hair soothingly as he told her all about the prophecy and everything else Dumbledore had told him about.

“I can’t believe he waited this long to tell you,” Tonks said. “But at least you know the truth now, right?”

“Yeah, right,” Harry said with a sigh.

“You, okay?” Tonks asked.

“Yeah, it’s just – a lot to take in, you know?” Harry asked.

"I'm sorry," she said sympathetically.

"It's not your fault," he told her.

Running a hand through his hair, Tonks gave him a lingering kiss and then rested her forehead against his.

"I love you," she said softly.

"I love you, too," Harry replied, a smile on his lips.