

## Chapter 1

Stretching as he woke, Harry fumbled blindly on the nightstand until his fingers closed around the temple of his glasses and the wristband of his watch. Sliding his glasses onto his face, he pushed himself up into a sitting position and looked down at the time; it was four past eight in the morning.

A small, happy smile spread across his face as he looked at the gold, slightly dented wristwatch. Just a few days earlier, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley had given it to him for his seventeenth birthday, along with his own hand on the Weasley family clock. It was one of the few bright spots in his life over the last year.

First, he'd been entered against his will into the Triwizard Tournament. Then, he'd watched a fellow competitor and friend murdered in front of his eyes before being forced to take part in Voldemort's resurrection. Although he'd managed to escape and warn Professor Dumbledore, things had only gone downhill from there.

Sent back to Privet Drive, Harry relived the end of the tournament and the death of his friend over and over again in his nightmares, all while the Ministry refused to believe him. They even went so far as to insult him in the press at every turn. Not a day went by that he didn't come across some disparaging buried within the pages of the *Daily Prophet*.

Just when Harry thought things couldn't possibly get worse, two Dementors showed up and tried to Kiss him and his cousin. And what did he get for defending himself? A joke of a trial where he'd only just managed to remain in the wizarding World.

At least I get to spend time with my friends and Sirius, Harry thought.

Sighing, Harry threw off the covers and climbed out of bed. He was really glad Sirius had decided to give him his own room. He had enough trouble sleeping without having to listen to Ron's constant snores.

Throwing on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, he went to the bathroom before heading for the kitchen. On his way down the hall, he heard Hermione yelling at Ron to wake up. Still a little angry over his friends' lack of letters over the Summer, Harry walked quickly past the room without looking inside. Grimacing at the severed House Elf heads stuck to the wall along the stairway, he rushed down the stairs.

As he reached the floor, he spotted Tonks just stepping through the front door. She waved at him with a bright smile, her hair shifting from red to purple. Because her eyes were on him, she didn't see the Troll's Leg umbrella stand. Seeing what was about to happen, Harry rushed forward just as her toe caught the edge. Tonks pitched forward, her arms flailing as she tried to catch her balance.

"AH!" she yelled.

As her arms stretched forward to break her fall, his arm wrapped around her waist. Harry stumbled under her weight and tightened his arm around her while his other hand pressed against the wall to brace himself.

By the time they came to a stop, they had ended up in a position that was both awkward, and embarrassing. Tonks was bent at the waist, her rather fit bum mashed against his groin. Only his hand on the wall kept the both of them from falling face first to the floor. With a grunt, Harry hauled Tonks back so he could get his feet under him. Once he did, she was able to stand up herself.

"Whoa, thanks, Har," Tonks said with an infectious grin as she turned to face him. "That would've been a right nasty fall."

"You're welcome," Harry smiled.

"Well, if you're done groping my cousin, Molly has breakfast ready."

Harry looked up and blushed lightly when he spotted Sirius leaning against the doorway of the kitchen with a suggestive grin on his face.

“Eh,” Tonks shrugged. “I’ll take a grope over a fall any day.”

“I’ll be sure to let Dung know,” Sirius grinned.

“Watch it, mutt,” Tonks growled, her hair flashing red as she pointed her wand at him.

With a bark-like laugh, Sirius turned and walked into the kitchen. Shaking his head with a smile, Harry followed Tonks as she trailed after him with a huff and pocketed her wand.

“Oh, good morning, dears,” Mrs. Weasley greeted them with a smile.

“Morning,” Harry said through a yawn.

“Wotcher,” Tonks said with a wave.

Harry took a seat at the table across from Sirius and Mr. Weasley while Tonks hopped up onto the counter and snatched a piece of bacon.

“Ow, hot!” Tonks yelped.

Tossing the piece of bacon back and forth between her hands several times while blowing on it before she popped one end into her mouth. It must have still been a little too hot because she winced slightly and chewed quickly.

“Nymphadora, what are you doing?” Mrs. Weasley asked exasperatedly. “Get off the counter and go sit at the table like an adult. The food will be done in a minute.”

“Ish Tonks,” the now pink haired witch said through a mouthful of bacon with an annoyed glare.

Harry grinned as he poured two glasses of orange juice, setting one in front of Tonks as she took the test next to him.

“Cheers, mate,” she said, taking a sip.

For the next few minutes, the conversation turned to the stupidity of the Ministry while Mrs. Weasley began setting platters laden with eggs, bacon, sausage, and toast onto the table. As if summoned by the smell of food, Ron came stumbling into the kitchen tiredly while Hermione, Ginny, and the twins followed.

“Why can’t I just use a Pensieve or Veritaserum to prove I’m telling the truth?” Harry asked.

“That wouldn’t work, I’m afraid,” Mr. Weasley replied. “Even if Fudge allowed it – which he wouldn’t – it would only prove you’re not lying. Fudge would argue your mind has been tampered with or that you’re delusional. I know you’re not,” he said quickly when Harry opened his mouth to interrupt. “But that’s what he would say. Unfortunately, it would probably take him seeing You-Know-Who himself before he admits he’s back.”

“And You-Know-Who is far too happy to remain in the background for now to let that happen,” Sirius added.

As Harry sat back in his seat dejectedly, he watched Tonks change her nose to look like a pig’s.

“I think I know a way that he can,” Harry said excitedly.

“Harry,” Sirius started in a placating tone.

“Listen,” Harry interrupted forcefully. “Fudge doesn’t actually need to see Voldemort; he just needs to think he did, right?”

“Well, yes but-” Mr. Weasley started.

“What about Tonks?” Harry asked, getting a surprised look from the witch. “I could show you my memory of that night, and you can make yourself look like Voldemort. All you need to do then is get you someplace where Fudge can see you.”

“Cor, that’s brilliant!” Tonks said enthusiastically, her hair turning bright yellow.

“That’s – not a bad idea, actually,” Sirius admitted, stroking his beard thoughtfully.

“We’d have to run it by Albus,” Mr. Weasley added. “And we’d have to be extremely careful. If any of us were caught, Dumbledore would lose any credibility he has left.”

“It’s workable, though,” Sirius said. “If we got him isolated with just a couple of Aurors-”

“That’s enough,” Mrs. Weasley barked. “Harry, dear, let the adults worry about things like this. Now, if you’re all done eating, we have some more cleaning to do today. Fred, George, You’re with me in the drawing room.”

The twins groaned.

“Tonks, can you check the spare bedrooms for cursed items so we can start cleaning them?” Mrs. Weasley continued.

“Sure,” Tonks shrugged.

“Good. Now, the rest of you can finish spraying for Doxies in-”

“I’ll help Tonks,” Harry volunteered. “That spray left me with a headache for hours last night. Maybe I can learn some of those Detection Charms from Tonks.”

“It’s really not safe for you, dear,” Mrs. Weasley said in a patronizing tone that made him bristle.

“He’ll be fine, Molly,” Tonks said, rolling her eyes. “Besides, it’d be best if I had someone with me, especially if we come across something with a Compulsion Charm on it.”

“I could call Bill and see if he can help,” Mrs. Weasley offered.

“He’s working, Molly,” Mr. Weasley told her. “They’ll be fine. Tonks knows what she’s doing, and it’ll only help for Harry to have some experience with this sort of thing.”

“Fine,” Mrs. Weasley huffed. “Ron, Ginny, Hermione, you three can finish spraying for Doxies in the lounge.”

When she turned to the cupboards to get out the spay, Harry gave Tonks a grateful smile. She gave him a wink and then gestured with her head toward the door. Nodding, she and Harry slipped out of the kitchen.

“Thanks for sticking up for me in there,” Harry said as they climbed the stairs.

“You’re welcome,” Tonks smiled, then rolled her eyes when they heard Mrs. Weasley loudly scolding Fred and George. “Honestly, the way she treats you lot. It’s like she thinks you’re still in nappies.”

“Tell me about it,” Harry sighed. “I know she’s doing it because she cares but...”

“Don’t worry, I get it,” Tonks said. “Come on, let’s start in here.”

Pushing the door open to one of the unused bedrooms, Tonks wrinkled her nose cutely as a wave of musty air washed over them.

“Urgh. Right, first things first. An Air-Freshening Charm,” Tonks said.

Waving her wand in a wide arch with a little wiggle in the middle, the air suddenly smelled much better. Two more quick flicks spread open the motheaten curtains and opened the window.

“Much better,” she muttered, stepping inside the room. “So, did you really want to learn some Detection Charms?”

“Yeah,” Harry said. “I know I can’t actually cast them, but knowing them might come in handy.”

“I’m gonna let you in on a little secret,” Tonks grinned, slinging her arm around his shoulders and leaning in to whisper. “You can use magic here.”

“What!?” Harry hissed.

“Don’t tell Molly I said anything, but the wards here mean the Ministry can’t detect anything,” she said, winking as she patted him on the back. “Molly just doesn’t want her kids using magic and ‘getting into trouble.’”

Feeling a flash of irritation, Harry sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Right, take out your wand,” Tonks said.

Smiling at the chance to use magic, Harry did as she asked.

“Now, this first one is a general Detection Charm for dark magic,” she explained. “Anything with dark spells or enchantments will light up dark purple. Like this.”

With a grin, Tonks changed the color of her hair.

“The incantation is Deprendo Obscurus, and this is the wand movement.”

Tonks drew a checkmark in the air with the tip of her wand. Holding out his own, Harry practiced the movement a few times until he was sure he had it.

“Well, give it a shot,” she told him.

“Deprendo Obscurus,” Harry muttered with the wand movement.

Around the room, three places glowed with a purple light, the same color as Tonks’ hair. The first was a hairbrush, the second was a music box, and the third light came from a dresser against the wall. Oddly, the light coming from the dresser was much brighter than the other two.

“I think I messed up a bit,” Harry said as the light faded.

With a thoughtful look, Tonks did the spell herself and got the same results.

“No, you did it right,” she said. “Whatever’s in that dresser is really nasty. The brighter an object glows, the more powerful it is. We’ll have to be really careful with that one. Alright, now



that spell shows you dark magic, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's harmful. That's what this spell is for..."

Tonks proceeded to teach him a second charm with the incantation *Laxo Precilum*, which had a wand movement in the shape of a W with a wiggle at the end. The more complex wand movement took a little longer for him to learn, but he got it in just a few minutes. Strangely, only the hairbrush glowed red, revealing a dangerous spell on it. The dull red of the light showed that whatever it did was far from life threatening.

"There's more Detection Charms, obviously, but the ones that show exactly what spell or enchantment take years to learn," Tonks said. "I'm sorry I don't have to teach you, but I can get you a book if you want."

"That'd be great," Harry smiled.

Returning his smile, Tonks turned her attention to the two weaker cursed items. After a few minutes, she determined that the hairbrush would make a person lose their hair, while the music box made a person fall asleep until it was shut.

"And that's the danger," Tonks told him. "Even though this didn't show up as dangerous, it could still kill you if you slept too long."

"So, what do we do with these things?" Harry asked.

Tonks shrugged, "We'll just put them in a box for now."

Transfiguring a box out of an old robe, Tonks levitated the hairbrush and music box into it after spelling the lid closed.

"Let's see what's in the dresser. Moody said you can throw off the Imperius Curse, right?" Tonks asked.

“Er, yeah,” Harry said, his brow furrowed in confusion at the strange question.

“That’s impressive,” Tonks said. “I can fight it a bit, but I’ve never been able to throw it off completely. If there’s a Compulsion Charm on this, you’ll be able to fight it better than I can. Hmm. Alright, I’ll take a look, but I’ll need you to pull me back if I try to touch it, alright?”

“Got it,” Harry nodded.

As Tonks stepped towards the dresser, Harry stayed close, his hand ready to grab her while he peeked over her shoulder. Using her wand to open the top drawer, they found nothing but old, neatly folded clothes that looked like they’d been chewed on by some kind of rodent. With a flick, Tonks moved the clothes out of the way to reveal an ornate silver dagger at the bottom of the drawer. Seeing Tonks’ hand move forward, he placed his hand on her shoulder, but she only waved her wand to levitate it.

The dagger gleamed in the sunlight filtering through the window as it floated in front of them, slowly rotating in place. With a look of concentration, Tonks waved her wand in several complex patterns while muttering incantations under her breath.

Tonks whistled and lowered the dagger on top of the dresser, “That’s a right nasty piece of work.”

“What’s it do?” Harry asked curiously.

“Even a small nick and this’ll slowly drain all the blood from your body,” Tonks said with a shudder. “It’s stuff like this that makes me glad mum was kicked out of the family. Hand me a rag or somethin’, would yeh?”

Taking his hand off her shoulder, Harry bent down and tore off a piece of one of the tattered robes. When he handed it to Tonks, she spelled it to wrap tightly around the blade before carefully levitating it into the box.

“One down, only about a dozen more to go,” Tonks grinned.

Harry smiled as she bent down to pick up the box of cursed items, discretely admiring the way her jeans pulled tight over her round bum. Moving into the room across the hall, Harry performed the Detection Charm again. This time, they found a black quill Tonks called a Blood Quill and a hat pin laced with what she suspected was Manticore Venom. That led her to teach Harry a spell specifically designed to reveal potions and poisons.

“Works on food and drinks, too,” Tonks told him, her lips turning up in a smirk. “Might come in handy if any of those girls at Hogwarts decide to slip you a Love Potion.”

Harry snorted, “I doubt I have to worry about that. They all pretty much think I’m a nutter.”

“Trust me, girls love a bad boy,” Tonks purred while trailing her finger down his chest before laughing at his blush.

Harry rolled his eyes but couldn’t stop a smile. Moving back across the hall, they entered a room with a bronze plate that said ‘Regulus Arcturus Black’ on the door. Knowing that he was Sirius’s brother, he expected to find several cursed objects in the room, but surprisingly, they only found one. That one, however, glowed brighter than anything else they had found so far.

“Bugger, that’s a right nasty one,” Tonks grimaced as the wardrobe lit up like a beacon. “Right, same things as last time. If anything feels off, we get out and call for help.”

“Right,” Harry said nervously, his wand held tightly in one hand while the other rested on Tonks’ shoulder.

Flicking her wand to open the door, she quickly cast another Detection Charm. There, at the bottom of the wardrobe, behind a pair of old Dragonhide boots, sat a large, golden locket. Harry was so transfixed by the sight of it that he nearly missed Tonks reaching out as if in a trance.

“Don’t touch it!” Harry yelled, tugging on her shoulder.

Stumbling back slightly, Tonks blinked her eyes and shook her head as if to clear it.

“Bloody hell, thanks, mate,” she said.

Harry barely heard the words as he stared at the locket. The magic coming off of it felt familiar, and it took him a moment to place it. The Diary.

“That belonged to Voldemort,” Harry said, his throat suddenly dry as he swallowed.

“What?” Tonks asked. “You’re sure?”

“Positive,” Harry nodded. “I’ve felt it before, with the Diary in second year and in the graveyard. I know that magic anywhere.”

Unconsciously, he reached up and rubbed his tingling scar.

“Well, fuck,” Tonks huffed.

Looking around the room, she walked over to the desk and grabbed a quill box. Dumping out the quills, she brought the box over and set it on the floor. With a swish and flick, she levitated it into the box and closed the lid with a flick. A tap on the lid caused the box to glow faintly blue as it sealed itself with a squelch. Harry slowly let out a breath he hadn’t realized he was holding.

“I’ll give this to Dumbledore when he comes for the meeting tonight,” Tonks said, then turned to Harry with a grin. “It’s a good thing I brought you with me. Who knows, maybe it’s even something really important.”

"I think it is," Harry said. "That felt just like the Diary that he used to nearly come back in second year."

"Cor," Tonks breathed. "We've already got one Dark Lord to deal with. If there were two... Okay, now I'm really glad I brought you along."

Harry shivered at the thought.

"Yeah, me too," Harry said.

"Yeh know, Charlie told me about what happened to Ginny in a letter, but I never got the whole story," Tonks began tentatively as she took a seat on the bed. "Would you mind fillin' me in?"

Harry stared at her for a moment, then shrugged and took a seat next to her.

"Well, it all started when we ran into Lockhart at Flourish and Blott's..." Harry started.

Harry had only intended to give Tonks an abbreviated version of the story, but oddly, it felt good opening up to someone about it. He ended up telling her about not only his adventures but also some of the other problems he had to deal with at Hogwarts. Like people believing what they read about him in books and the *Prophet*, or how everyone, even people he considered friends, turned on him in his second year and again in his fourth.

Tonks' irreverent, snarky humor helped ease him and actually made him want to keep talking. Before they knew it, three hours had passed, and Mrs. Weasley called them down for lunch. As they stood to leave, Tonks surprised him by giving him a hug.

"Thanks for telling me," she said with a smile. "I wish you were a few years older so we could've gone to school together. Sure would've made things interesting, and it makes what I had to

deal with seem like nothing. Next time you have a problem, send me a Patronus, and I'll come help you out."

"Patronus?" Harry asked curiously as they made their way down the stairs.

"Yeah, you can send messages with a Patronus," Tonks said. "It's not hard if you once you can do the charm. I'll show you after lunch.

Entering the kitchen and taking a seat next to Tonks with a smile, Harry was startled to find Ron glaring at him jealously. He glanced over at Hermione, who bit her lip and looked between the two of them before shaking her head. Sighing in annoyance, Harry ignored the redhead and turned his attention back to Tonks. Her bubbly attitude and irrepressible energy never failed to lighten his mood.

After a quick lunch of sandwiches and soup, Mrs. Weasley shoed them all off back to their chores.

"But it's Summer," Ron whined.

Harry rolled his eyes as he followed Tonks out of the kitchen.

If Ron thinks this is bad, he should try living with the Dursleys, Harry thought. Uncle Vernon would've had him working from sun up to sun down without any lunch and a threat of no dinner if he didn't finish in time. Even if he did finish, there was no way the meager scraps he would be giving could fill the bottomless pit that was Ron Weasley.

"Hey, Tonks," Harry asked as they moved to the next room.

"Yeah?" she replied, casting the Detection Charms herself this time.

“Well, you said you had some problems at Hogwarts?” he asked uncertainly.

“Eh, nothin’ like what you went through,” Tonks said as they gathered the four cursed items in the room. “I just had some trouble cus’ of what I am. Girls were pretty jealous that I could make myself look however I wanted, and the boys all looked at me like I was a wet dream. It didn’t get too bad until my sixth year, your first.”

“Really?” Harry asked in surprise, having thought Tonks was older than that.

“Yup,” Tonks smiled. “You were a cute little firsty. I’m not surprised you remember me. I was in Hufflepuff, and I looked different back then. McG didn’t like me having colorful hair during class; said it was a distraction.”

Harry nearly choked on his tongue at the thought of calling Professor McGonagall McG to her face.

“Anyways,” she continued, “sixth year, some of the girls really started getting nasty when I started dating Chris Weathers. They spread all sorts of rumors about me. I got back at ‘em, though. I’d wear their faces and then go out after hours. ‘Course, when they didn’t show up to the detentions they were given and said they didn’t know about it, they only got in more trouble. They knew I was doin’ it, but they couldn’t prove it.

“None of that was too bad - until I found out Chris had heard the rumors about me turning into anyone a boy wanted to get attention and was only dating me because of it. Arsehole took me over to the Shrieking Shack during a Hogsmeade visit and asked me to blow him while looking like Mary Greenstead, one of the girls spreading rumors about me. He didn’t take it well when I kindly told him he could blow himself – tried to grab me and said I owed it to him.”

“He didn’t...?” Harry trailed off worriedly.

Tonks looked over at him and smiled softly.

“Nah, I booted him in the balls and hexed the shit out of him,” she said, causing him to let out a sigh of relief. “Course, that’s when old Mad-Eye showed up. I thought I was in trouble at first. I wasn’t gentle with the prick, and the Ministry has a history of taking the side of Purebloods like him over Half-bloods like me. Mad-eye didn’t care, though, kicked Weathers in the gut and told him to scram before he pressed charges for assault. I thought he was a bit creepy, yeh know, but I always wanted to be an Auror. I thought of it as a way to make up for all the horrible stuff my family did.

“The rumors got worse after that, so I spent the last two years working my arse off. Never really tried dating much after that. I thought things would get better when I joined the academy but, turns out, blokes don’t like a girl who can kick their arse in a duel.”

Harry couldn’t understand why someone would find a strong witch a turn off, then he thought of all the times Ron insulted Hermione for doing well. Yeah, he could definitely see someone like him taking out his insecurities on someone like Tonks.

“I know how much rumors like that can hurt,” he said. “Practically the whole school turned on me second year despite my best friend being a Muggleborn, and then against last year when my name came out of the Goblet. Hell, even Ron turned on me then.”

“Those idiots are worth worrying about,” Tonks said before her eyes took on a teasing gleam. “Besides, you still had Hermione, didn’t you. Seems like you two are pretty close.”

Harry knew what she was getting at and rolled his eyes.

“Why does everyone think that?” he sighed. “I love Hermione - she’s a great friend. Better than I deserve sometimes, but she’s like a sister to me.”

“Really?” Tonks asked with a raised eyebrow. “There must be some girls interested in you at school.”



“There are, but they’re more interested in the Boy-Who-Lived than me,” Harry sighed.

“Hermione even overheard a couple of sixth years talking about slipping me a Love Potion and intentionally getting pregnant so I either had to marry them or pay them for the rest of my life.”

“Seriously!?” Tonks asked incredulously as they moved to the next room.

Harry nodded, “Yeah. Thankfully, they didn’t try to go through with it, but...”

“That’s fucked up,” she said, shaking her head.

“Did you ever play Quidditch?” he asked, hoping to change the subject to something more pleasant.

“Nah, I like Quidditch, but some people take it way too seriously,” Tonks said. “There was this one time one of Beater’s got sick and...”

The two of them continued to talk and share stories of their lives while they searched the rooms. When Tonks commented about the Dursleys, he even opened up a bit about his life before Hogwarts, something he’d only ever talked about with Hermione before. Time flew by, and they ended up finishing all of the room on the second floor well before dinner. Eventually, they made their way down to the drawing room, where Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Sirius had finished with the Doxies and were now cleaning out the drawers and cabinets. Once again, Ron glared at him sullenly, but he ignored it.

“We already cleaned out anything cursed, so you shouldn’t have to worry about anything like that,” Sirius told them.

Suddenly, Ginny shrieked, causing Harry to spin around, drawing his wand. He sighed in relief when he found her sitting on the floor next to the couch, giggling at the pile of Dust Bunnies in her lap.

“Harry, you can’t use your wand. You’ll get in trouble again,” Hermione exclaimed worriedly.

“It’s fine,” Sirius said, waving off her concern and running a hand through his hair. “The Ministry can’t sense magic here; even if they could, the Trace doesn’t trigger when you’re close to an adult witch or wizard.”

“But, Mrs. Weasley said-” Hermione started.

“Molly just doesn’t want you doing magic,” Sirius said shortly. “With all the stuff in this house, I don’t want any of you getting hurt because you’re worried about getting in trouble. If you need to use magic, use it.”

“Wait,” Hermione said, her eyes going wide. “If the Trace doesn’t work around adult witches and wizards, does that mean kids with magical parents can do magic over the Summer?”

“Well, yeah,” Sirius shrugged. “A lot of parents teach their kids Family Magic during the Summer break.”

“But that’s not fair!” Hermione exclaimed.

“Did she really just stomp her foot?” Tonks whispered amusedly in Harry’s ear.

Harry bit back a snort and nodded his head.

“I know it seems that way, Hermione, but for once, this isn’t about prejudice,” Sirius said, trying to calm the outraged witch. “Magical parents can fix things or call the Aurors if something goes wrong. Plus, their houses are warded against Muggles already. Imagine what would happen if you did magic in your house and couldn’t reverse it or if a Muggle saw it. By the time an owl reached the Ministry to tell them, it’d already be too late.”

"It's still not fair," Hermione grumbled, arms crossed over her chest.

"But why didn't mum tell us we could do magic at home?" Ron asked.

"You'd have to ask her," Sirius replied. "I think part of it is because your dad works for the Ministry and while you *could* do magic, it's still not strictly allowed."

"Part of it might be because of the twin, too," Ginny added with a scowl. "Could you imagine what it would be like if those two could use magic whenever they wanted growing up?"

Ron grimaced and as if summoned by their names, Fred and George Apparated into the room with a loud *pop*. Ron nearly jumped out of his skin while Ginny screamed, sending Dust bunnies flying as she flailed.

"You called?" they asked in unison with identical grins.

"You prats!" Ginny glared. "Stop doing that!"

"Doing what?" Fred asked innocently.

"Fred! George!" Mrs. Weasley screamed from a distance.

A moment later, the house was filled with shouts from Walburga's portrait.

"Damn it!" Sirius growled, rushing from the room.

"I think it's time we take our leave, George," Fred said as the twins turned to face each other.

“Agreed, I think we’ve caused enough chaos for the moment.” George nodded.

“Bye,” they said with a cheery wave.

With another loud *pop*, they vanished just as Mrs. Weasley stormed into the room, face red and wand drawn.

“Oh, those two,” she huffed irritably. “Well, they have to eat sometime. You lot, finish up in here and stay out of trouble while I go start dinner.”

“What did we do?” Ron asked as his mother stormed out of the room.

She nearly knocked over Sirius as he returned, causing him to glare at her back. With everything calmed down a bit, Harry and Tonks joined the others in cleaning out the drawing room. As Harry was pulling things out of a box in one of the cabinets, something stabbed sharply into his index finger.

“Ow!”

Yanking his hand out, he saw a drop of blood dripping down. For once glad he was wearing one of Dudley’s old shirts, he wrapped it around his finger with a hiss.

“You okay?” Tonks asked.

“Yeah,” Harry said. “Something poked me.”

“Here, let me see,” she said, holding out her hand.

Pulling his hand away from his shirt, he placed it in hers. Tonks briefly looked over the oozing puncture before tapping it with her wand and muttering an incantation. Harry felt a sensation of heat for a moment before it disappeared, and she removed her wand. A smile crept over his face when he was met with a perfectly healed finger.

“Thanks,” he said.

“No biggie,” Tonks smiled. “One of the perks of being so clumsy is I got pretty good at basic Healing Charms.”

After smiling back, Harry turned back to the box. Much more cautiously this time, he reached in and pulled out the only sharp looking object left inside. It was a gold necklace with a star shaped gold and silver pendant. In the center of the pendant sat a bright red ruby, its multifaceted face cut in the shape of a circle. On one of the silver points, Harry could see a thin trail of blood that dripped down to the stone.

“Well, looks like that’s what stuck me,” Harry said.

“A bit gaudy, but I guess it could be worse,” Tonks grinned.

Taking the necklace from his hand, she looked it over before holding it up to her neck.

“What do you think?” Tonks asked.

Turning her head, she puckered her lips in a parody of a model’s pose. Harry grinned, but before he could say anything, the end of the chain separated and snaked themselves around her neck. Tonks’ eyes went wide, and a moment of panic filled him, wondering if the necklace would choke her. When nothing happened, he looked up into her worried eyes.

“Bugger.”