

Unusually Loved

by from_n_to_h

A story that follows Nymphadora Tonks. I have some ideas where we're headed, but I make no guarantees!

Note: Each chapter will only feature the characters mentioned in that chapter. This is because I don't know who will make an appearance until they do so! There is also currently no second category. This may change.

Before the Beginning (Prolouge)

Chapter 1 of 12

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Andromeda rubbed her belly. The baby responded with a gentle push against her hand. A smile crossed the pregnant woman's face. Soon, Ted would awaken, and they would both enjoy the morning, their unborn child, and each other. But these few moments belonged to her and her little one.

Andromeda had originally thought that something was wrong with her baby; nothing in the Muggle or wizarding books had mentioned the power that would randomly surge through her body, giving her different magical powers. But she had asked her Healer, as well as several witch mothers. Apparently it was simply a foreshadow of the baby to come, and it should thrill her rather than worry her. Apparently Molly Weasley had become very good with magical theory during her first pregnancy, and now that they were both pregnant, they discussed the magical surges. Still, no one she knew had ever woken up with a different nose while pregnant.

Ted stirred. She rolled onto her side, as far onto her belly as she could. She knew that in only a few weeks, she would no longer be able to do this. Molly was already unable to sleep in any position except sitting up. Mrs. Tremlett had only been able to sleep on her side with her belly resting on a pillow. Miss Barbary was not looking forward to any of this. She had just joined the Expecting Club, as it was affectionately called by husbands and former members. Current members tended to announce it as the "I'm as big as a house and I can't stop eating earwax Bott's Beans with kidney pie!" club. As Ted slowly woke, she leaned over and kissed his shoulder lightly.

"Morning, love," he mumbled gently to her as he opened his sleep-filled eyes. "Baby been keeping you up?"

"No, I slept wonderfully, although I had to get up several times after kicks to my bladder. We were just waiting for you to get up and feed us." Andromeda smiled. She knew that he would whinge a bit about her being able to walk, but would feed her because he always did. He loved to make her breakfast and rub her back and legs while she ate. They followed what had become their routine, and after she had set her plate in the sink, she went to the couch. Andromeda was currently working from home, as Apparating was not suggested for women as far along as she. Ted went to ready himself for the day at his own job. He appeared again in a few minutes, robe open to reveal the Muggle clothes he still preferred underneath.

"You've got your mirror, love?" He asked her with the air of slight concern. She sighed and responded that yes, she had it and no, she wouldn't need it. "I just want to be sure you can get a message to me immediately, so that I can get you into St Mungo's if the baby arrives early."

"I've still got 3 weeks until my due date, and Healer Shimmin said that first time mothers almost always go past the due date. I'll be fine. But I had a dream last night, and I

think we're having a girl. Do you still like Nymphadora?"

Ted kissed her on the forehead as he finished fastening his robe shut. "I think it's a beautiful name."

Be a Good Girl

Chapter 2 of 12

Tonks comforts her mother when a sister is lost to her forever.

Andromeda threw herself to the bed and cried. How could Bellatrix do this? Andromeda knew that she was the black sheep of the family, and had not spoken to Bella since marrying Ted, but had hoped that Bella's actions were a result of an Imperius curse. With He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named gone, however, Andromeda was forced to realize that Bella's actions against the Longbottoms were her own choice. It was the final, horrifying truth. Bella truly believed in the pure-blood supremacy and would go to Azkaban for it. They would never be true sisters again.

Nymphadora wandered in. "Mommy, are you sad? Please don't cry Mommy, I don't want you to be sad!" The little girl crawled up onto the bed and into her mother's arms. Andromeda wiped her tears away, but did not stop crying entirely.

"I am sad, baby girl, but it's not your fault. I'm sad because your Auntie Bella was naughty and she hurt someone. Do you remember Auntie Bella?" Even though Bella had disowned Andromeda and refused to admit she had a niece, Andromeda resolutely sent pictures and kept pictures of both her sisters about the house.

"She's the lady with lots of black hair. I wish my hair was pretty like Auntie Bella's." Nymphadora's own hair was magically dyed blond, as her natural color was the most unnatural shade of green. Andromeda had asked the Healers, but apparently none of them knew what had happened. They suggested that perhaps the problem would solve itself once the child reached magical age.

"We can change your hair color to black, baby, but I thought you liked looking like Auntie Cissy." Nymphadora shook her head and tugged on the locks in question. Andromeda sighed and sat up on the bed, pulling her only child into her lap. "Will you promise me that when you grow up, you will be a good girl and never judge a person until you've spoken to them yourself?" The little girl said she would and climbed down from the bed.

"I will always be a good girl, Mommy. I'll be your very good girl and then you'll never be sad about me." Nymphadora turned to run from the room, but tripped and landed on her hands and knees. The girl had been born clumsier than an ox. She looked back at her mother, eyes showing worry that she was being bad. Andromeda leaned over and tapped her daughter on the nose. Sometimes the love in her heart swelled so that she felt it would burst through her body. It certainly helped cut through the grief of losing a sister who had chosen a life worse than death.

Special Rules for Special People?

Chapter 3 of 12

Tonks plays with the Weasley children and is reminded that she is not like everyone else.

"Ha! Take that, Charlie! Ooof!" Nymphadora missed getting bludgered by Bill only because she'd fallen off her broom of her own accord. Luckily, the ground couldn't get too far away on toy broomsticks. The twins giggled as six-year-olds are wont to do when someone falls down. Tonks blushed, and her hair turned red as did her cheeks.

"Dora, what happened to your hair?" Percy was deeply involved in some Muggle game called Risk, but looked up when the Fred snorted. Dora burst into tears and ran into the house, slipping on the snow as she went. Molly Weasley looked up from her conversation with Andromeda and saw the commotion. She scooped up the hysterical child and cuddled her. Andromeda knew from the color of Nymphadora's hair what had likely happened. Her daughter couldn't quite control her magic yet, and that applied to her appearance as well.

"I fell off my broom and Gred and Forge made fun of me! I'd like to see them get knocked off a broom." Nymphadora could manage an exceptional pout. Molly lifted her head and was about to summon her long-suffering twin boys, but Andromeda intervened. She would not have a child that couldn't handle a little mocking without running to tattle. The child was eleven in three days time, after all.

"Well, Nymphadora, what are your options? You can sit in here with us boring old moms, or you can go knock the laughter out of them." Molly looked horrified at the thought. "Don't worry, Molly, they can't hurt other that badly. They're children, and children will scrap." Nymphadora smiled and headed out to go scuffle with the boys. As she ran, she suddenly popped from her normal small size to the size a half-giant would be at her age. Let those mean old twins mess with her now! Molly and Andromeda had just returned to their conversations of self-stirring cauldrons and their effect on food when the noise of children scuffling died. The two women looked at each other for half a glance and bolted toward the door. That many children suddenly silenced could not be a good sign. The sight that met their eyes was that of Charlie and Nymphadora holding their Hogwarts letters. Charlie was reading his with little surprise and interest, but Nymphadora looked confused. She held it up to her mother, who read the general letter with no surprise, but then arrived at the postscript.

PS- I am sure that you have by now realized your child's special condition. While Hogwarts has always accepted all children regardless of background or magical specialties, I'm afraid that your child will have additional rules to follow, specific to his or her needs. A list of staff members and which students they advise on these delicate matters is enclosed. Please instruct your child to report to this staff member within a week of arriving at Hogwarts.

Andromeda scanned the list. Metamorphosis was not a handicap, and having it referred to as something that must be additionally controlled and specifically enforced

incensed her. Her daughter was not a freak or a curiosity. She was a beautiful child with a spectacular ability. Nostrils flaring, she scanned the list: Poppy Pomfrey, werewolves; Rubeus Hagrid, half-giants; Filius Flitwick, children with Goblin Ancestry; Minerva McGonagall, children born with natural Animagi strengths; Pomona Sprout, children with one or more Squib parents; and Rolanda Hooch, Metamorphagi. The fact that so many children must have special rules did not quell her anger.

"Mum, does that mean I can't go to Hogwarts? I promise, I'll learn to control my hair by then! I promise! Just let me go to Hogwarts!" Nymphadora struggled to hold back tears. Ever since Bill had come back from his first year at Hogwarts, both Nymphadora and Charlie had been awaiting their birthday letters. They sometimes had even pretended Hogwarts School, acting out some of Bill's stories.

Andromeda pulled herself to her full, although diminutive height. She knew Rolanda Hooch personally, and would not wait another six months to find out just what "special rules" the school intended to force upon her daughter. They would go now. "Nymphadora, you are going to Hogwarts. We shall go speak with Ms. Hooch right now, if you'd like." Nymphadora liked Rolanda Hooch very much, as Rolanda was a Metamorphagus herself. They were currently the only Metamorphagi in Great Britain. Nymphadora nodded and moved to hang onto her mother's leg for Side-Along Apparation. Andromeda said her good-byes and apologized for a sudden departure, but some things must be dealt with immediately. Molly nodded and gathered her brood to avoid Splinching.

With Great Power...

Chapter 4 of 12

Tonks and her mother chat with Rolanda Hooch about what it means to be a Metamorphagus at Hogwarts.

When they reached the summer home of Rolanda Hooch, Nymphadora could no longer contain her frightened tears. They ran down her cheeks as she sniffled silently, clinging to her mother's robes like a toddler. At least she wasn't still half-giant sized.

Andromeda knelt down beside her daughter, smoothing the little child's currently red hair. "Nymphadora, don't fret. I know that you're going to Hogwarts. We're talking to Ms. Hooch right now. If there are special rules, then we'll either learn them or challenge them with the board of governors. Don't cry." Nymphadora looked up, gave a few final sniffles, and then squinched her eyes shut and balled her fists. There was a soft *pop*, and her hair was back to its "natural" brown color. Andromeda knocked upon the door. It was opened by a witch with spiky grey hair and yellow hawkish eyes.

"Ahh, Andromeda, I thought it might be you. Got that bloody postscript, then?" Rolanda ushered them inside.

"Rolanda, you know I hate it when you swear in front of Nymphadora. But yes, what is the meaning of such demands? Special rules? There's nothing wrong with my daughter, she doesn't pose any threat to any other student!" Rolanda quietly let Andromeda rant, the woman would eventually run out of angry things to say, and then would better listen to reason. After a few more sentences on where the school administration could stick their wands if they thought Andromeda wouldn't use her maiden name to get her daughter into that school, the woman was finished and sat on the couch with a huff. Nymphadora spent the rant time openly admiring all the cool things that Ms. Hooch owned. Ms. Hooch used to play for the Harpies, and her broom and trophies from that time were in a special glass display case. Nymphadora never tired of looking at them. Maybe she'd be a Quidditch player someday.

Rolanda sat down and conjured some tea with honey. She poured three cups. "Nymphadora, peel your eyes away from that Comet 260 and come over here. I have something that both of you need to hear." Nymphadora complied and climbed onto the couch next to her mother. "The special rules phrase applies more to the werewolves and half giants. Yes, Nymphadora has one special rule. She may not use her Metamorphing ability to give herself an edge in classes not based on transfiguration. For example, she may not impersonate a teacher to gain access to their office to read written exams. She may use her ability during classes where they are learning to Transfigure items. If becoming rat-like in appearance will help you turn a rat into a teacup, then you are perfectly welcome to do so. To quote an American Muggle comic book: 'With great power comes great responsibility.' Nymphadora must learn to be responsible with her abilities." Andromeda was ready to rant again, but Rolanda held up her hand to indicate she was not finished. "And since you're already here, we'll go through the process I would have taken Nymphadora through during the first week of school. She must re-register her abilities, now that she will start using magic. This will help the Ministry know when she is using her natural ability outside of school or if she is using illegal magic. There is also the option of one extra class per week, with me, on her skills. While most children in the situation Special Rules need extra health care or sometimes counseling to deal with certain aspects of that need, Nymphadora will likely not need counseling, as her ability is generally regarded as highly desirable and easily controlled. The extra lessons would include a history of Metamorphagi, advanced uses of her innate abilities, and assistance with classes that may prove difficult for someone whose magic is more inclined to Transfiguration."

Andromeda nodded, and Tonks smiled. "I get to take extra classes with you, and my only rule is that I have to play fair?" Rolanda nodded, smiling warmly. She was glad to have found another Metamorphagus after all these years. "Mum, is it okay with you? I still want to go to Hogwarts; I can be a good girl and play fair!" Andromeda looked at her daughter's shining, excited eyes, and said yes. The three finished their tea and then completed Nymphadora's paperwork.

Just Tonks!

Chapter 5 of 12

Tonks sheds her first name.

Nymphadora fell back on her bed and used her wand to pull the curtains shut around her. If she heard ONE MORE person say ANYTHING about her name, she was going to scream and bash them over the head with One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi. She had never before realized just how stupid her name sounded, and how ridiculously girly it was. Maybe she could shorten it. But shortening it to Nymph would not help anything with the taunts she was getting, and Dora was just... boring. She didn't feel like a Dora. The only part of her name she liked was her last name, and no one got to go by their last name.

'I don't feel like History of Magic today. All he ever does is drone on about the book. I'll just re-read today's chapter and skive off.' A Ravenclaw, Tonks usually didn't want to skip classes, but Binns was already so boring, and she did not feel like enduring yet another class of her name being slaughtered and mocked. She flipped out her book to the chapter entitled "Goblins and Goblin Wars." Reading about this subject would be exciting if Bathilda Bagshot had not been almost as boring Binns. Tonks wished that she could sneak into the library and check out a book on the goblin wars actually worth reading.

Perhaps she could. She tried to remember what year students started getting free periods. Bill didn't have them, but talked about them with desire. Well, seventh years certainly had free periods, she could try to be a seventh year. She was just starting to focus and think about how to use her Metamorphagus ability to be older when she heard a clang.

The noise was someone coming up the stairs, as Nymphadora had jury-rigged a tin can to fall and make a noise if someone were attempting to disturb her. *'Bugger,'* she thought to herself. The last thing she needed was some prefect thinking she was crying. She crouched onto her bed and held her wand at the ready. Bill had taught her and Charlie a few jinxes on the train, claiming that he did not have time to look out for them and did not want a Howler from his mum.

Nymphadora went over the wand movement and words for the Bat Bogey Hex in her head. Whoever it was seemed to be walking towards her bed. She pulled the curtains aside and shouted, "Chiroptera Mucosa!" The Head Girl, who had indeed been coming over in an attempt to play mother hen, quickly turned tail to avoid her own snot beating her about the head, yelling that she was docking points from Nymphadora.

"If you want to dock points, you'll have to take them away from Tonks! I don't use that wretched name anymore!" Tonks giggled and let her new identity take hold in her, reveling in the new independence that had come with naming herself. Just Tonks. Who really needed a first name anyway? She squinched her eyes shut and focused on looking like that obnoxious Head Girl, minus the bat-bogeys. Smiling when she felt the change, she set off to the library for a good book on goblins and goblin wars.

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Author's Note: There is no canon incantation for the bat-bogey hex. However, I used the "chiroptera," which means hand-wing and is the scientific name of the bat family. Mucosa should be self-evident. I think the bat-bogey hex is possibly the worst forgivable curse in Potterverse, but I have a snot phobia myself.

## Good Enough?

*Chapter 6 of 12*

Tonks tries out for Quidditch

Tonks took a deep breath to settle her nerves. She could do this. Failing last year did not mean that this year would work the same way. She was a third year now; chances were better. And she wasn't trying out for anything; she was trying out for Beater. Tonks thought back on her previous tryout. The only position open had been Seeker, and she was a horrid one. But she had tried out anyway, because all she wanted was to be on the Ravenclaw Quidditch Team, to be a Quidditch player just like Madam Hooch. Madam Hooch had not been disappointed at all last year. Just a quick nod of her head and a statement that next year would be a better chance, with Beater and Chaser positions.

She heard her name. Panicking, she tried to remember all that Bill and Charlie had taught her. Charlie was a bloody speed demon on a broom, which was why he had been such an obvious choice for Gryffindor Seeker. Bill was a smashing Keeper, and between the two of them, they had whipped her into proper form. If only she could remember how to swing the bat one way and make the Bludger go the other!

"Tonks! Get on the damn field!" Bulrich Morgan hissed and shoved her towards the field. Oi, she was going to miss her try out! Clearing everything out of her head, Tonks stepped onto the field and kicked off with the school broom Madam Hooch had tried to fix up for tryouts. She felt the thrill of flying, the ground sank from beneath her and the wind got stronger.

The captain was waiting for her. There were three Bludgers being held onto by the current two Chasers and Seeker. "Ready, Tonks?" Tonks swallowed and nodded. The captain gave out a shout and the three Bludgers were loose. They would go only for Tonks and her "teammates" right now, and she had to bat them off herself and against the green dummies set up about the field. Some were moving and some where not. There were also some blue dummies (her teammates) that she was supposed to protect. She blanked for just a second as a Bludger came straight for her head, but then a calm set in and she knew exactly what to do. She swooped and missed the first one, coming up behind and knocking it neatly into a green dummies, which vanished. Good, the impact was hard enough to knock that player out of the game. Another Bludger started for two of the blue dummies that had floated towards each other. Tonks flew at the speed of sound and reached it with ages to spare. She knocked it lightly away and then followed it for a second, giving it a second good tap when she knew she could hit the green dummy guarding the goal posts. Hit, but no vanish. Bugger, she thought. But the next one was already right there; it hit her in the arm. She used the hit to push her arm away from her body and deflected the Bludger to the closest green dummy. A Bludger was batted away from a blue dummy and vanished a green one. Another Bludger was headed towards her Keeper, was deflected with the gentlest of taps and then re-directed a second later to the other end of the field. Slowly, the green dummies were vanishing. Finally, they were only blue dummies on the field. None of them had been hit even once. Tonks smiled and rubbed her arm. She looked down and noticed a very large and ugly bruise forming. Oh, well, battle scars and all that.

"Alright, Tonks, we'll let ye know!" The Chasers were smiling like they'd struck gold. Tonks sank to the ground and watched the rest of the tryouts through a haze of exhaustion and amazement. And when she was tracked down in the halls the very next day and told to send home for her broomstick, Tonks was so delighted that she lost control of her hair and turned it bright pink.

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Author's Note: Here's one of the big reasons that I put Tonks in Ravenclaw rather than Gryffindor. I wanted her to play Quidditch, and I didn't want to AU the twins out of their Beater rights when they get to Hogwarts! Also, I'm mostly making up other student characters as I go along; there don't seem to be a whole lot of canon for people Tonks' age. If any one wants a canon character included, just let me know; I'm sure they'll find their way in. Stay tuned for class time and a first romance!

I'll Be Home For Christmas

Chapter 7 of 12

Tonks has a strange dream her first morning home from Christmas break, and her parents are both enjoying having her home.

Tonks felt the sunlight beat down on her eyelids and stifled a groan. First day of Christmas break and she'd forgotten to pull the curtains across her window. You'd think a fourth year would be in the habit of pulling the damn curtains, but you'd be wrong. She pulled her pillow from under her head and smothered out the light. Ahh, darkness. She started to drift back into her world of dreams.

"Come on, Tonks! I'm waiting for you!" Charlie held out his hand, which held a Snitch. Tonks huffed and puffed to keep up, but she wasn't any faster on the ground than she was in the air. He was going to go without her, she knew it. Why couldn't he just wait for her?

"Charlie, you know I'm not that fast! Wait!" Suddenly she was upon him, the distance between them had vanished. She was still running and knocked him over. "Och, I'm sorry! Sorry, Charlie, didn't mean it!"

Charlie just laughed from beneath her. He rolled their bodies and now she was on her back, with Charlie leaning over her. "You're such a typical Beater, Tonks. Can't do anything with finesse, have to knock everything over." He brought his face closer to hers, still smiling his Weasley smile.

Tonks was still smiling, but a look of confusion was creeping into her eyes. What was Charlie doing? Why did it feel like her tummy had been invaded by Cornish Pixies?

Charlie kissed her.

"Geeaaaack!" Tonks sat up straight and sent the pillow flying. She was breathing as though she's just run from Hogwarts to the Burrow. *What the bloody hell was that? Charlie kissing me?* Tonks tried to get out of bed for a glass of water. She discovered too late that the sheets had wrapped themselves around her legs, tumbling to the floor with a loud *KA-THUD!*

Her mother was outside her door in an instant. "Nymphadora? Are you alright? I heard a noise." Tonks threw her hands in the air and silently asked for sanity.

"Fine, Mum. I'm fine. Just fell out of bed." Andromeda was apparently not satisfied with that answer and opened the door anyway. "Mum, I've explained this. Nothing in this bedroom can hurt me more than I do to myself on the Quidditch Pitch. I don't need you to come in every time you hear me make a noise. Usually I'm just falling over. Got it from Dad." Tonks started unwrapping the sheets from around her legs. Her T-Shirt and boxers revealed themselves, to Andromeda's dismay.

"Nymphadora, I bought you that lovely nightgown at the beginning of the year. Have you outgrown it already?"

"No, Mum, I just like wearing these clothes. Dad bought them for me. This Culture Club is his favorite Muggle band." Tonks held out the T-shirt, showing her mother the face of Boy George, the lead singer. Andromeda didn't know if the person on her shirt was male or female, but had learned not to ask such questions.

"Who mentioned Culture Club? Could it be my Quidditch Beater?" Ted Tonks had gotten up for coffee and seen his two favorite girls sitting on his daughter's floor. "Nymphadora, did you fall out of bed?"

"Yes, Dad. Had a startling dream, is all." Ted smiled, helped her up, and could see by her eyes that she didn't want to talk about this dream in front of her mother.

"Have those all the time. Andromeda, why don't I take Nymphadora out for breakfast? It's her first day home, and you know I love to spoil her with Muggle pancake houses." Andromeda smiled and nodded. Tonks leaped and hugged her father.

"Daddy, you're the best! Pancakes, pancakes!" She bounded into the bathroom to start getting ready. Her parents both smiled at their daughter and each other. Ted went to get dressed himself, and Andromeda decided to go back to bed. They would bring back her favorite breakfast, like always. She would pretend to be nosy about what they talked about, like always. They wouldn't tell her a thing, like always. Traditions were good.

There Could Never be a Father Who Loved His Daughter More than I Love You

Chapter 8 of 12

Ted and his daughter have a tradition and they talk about her.

Ted pulled out his daughter's chair before he sat down at Al's Pancake World. "So, tell me about your Quidditch season so far. That new Keeper working out for Gryffindor?" He flipped open his menu, pretending they actually cared about the pancakes. Tonks followed his example, although they both knew exactly what would be ordered. This tradition was almost as old as Tonks was.

"Bill decided that he needed to focus on his NEWT clases, so they've got this second-year named Oliver Wood. I got him with a Bludger to the head in his first game, but

he's a quick study and hasn't gotten knocked out since. What have you been doing?"

"Eh, same old, same old. Making Cauldrons is not a glamorous job, but I like what I do. You know that. Although business is up because some o' the international makers are making cauldrons with really thin bottoms." The waitress arrived and took an order for potato pancakes and an order of blueberry-strawberry pancakes with whipped cream. "So, Nymphadora, tell me about this dream. Get chased by something?"

Tonks rolled her eyes at her father. "Daddy, I told you I want to go by Tonks. And no, the dream was not about being chased. It was about Charlie. I dreamed that he kissed me." She made a face at the idea, although a very, very small part of her knew she didn't mean it. "I've never liked Charlie like that, Dad. I just don't get it."

Ted smiled. His baby girl was growing up. "Maybe it doesn't mean anything at all. Maybe you miss him from school and your brain got confused. You've got all sorts of hormones going crazy right now; it happens at 14-almost-15. But if it does mean something, Charlie will come around. Until then, he's your best mate. You'll see him in few days; see what your tummy does." The food arrived, and both father and daughter were quiet for a bit while they ate the pancakes in front of them. The waitress came by with a check. "Feel better, Little Firecrab?" Tonks smiled at her father's use of his oldest nickname for her.

"A lot. Just talking about it makes my tummy feel less flustered. And it isn't a school holiday until we've had our pancakes. Should we order Mum's biscuits and gravy?" Tonks slid over to her father and snuggled into a hug.

"I put the order in when the waitress came to check on us and you were still face first in your whipped cream." She giggled. The pair arose from the table and paid the bill. As they were leaving, Ted leaned over and said, "A green ponytail with streaks of red. I like it." He tugged it gently and they Apparated back home. Andromeda was there, waiting for her food, and they sat as a family with coffee while she ate.

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Author's Note: Al's Pancake world is a reference to Gilmore Girls, a show that I love. The title of this chapter is a lyric from Paul Simon's *Father and Daughter*, which I adore.

## Learning is Fun.

*Chapter 9 of 12*

Tonks faces her crush.

Tonks walked behind her mother, eyes downcast. She'd had more dreams about Charlie kissing her. She always woke up with a shock, but sometimes the funny feeling was lower than her stomach. Perhaps she could avoid Charlie completely. Play with Percy instead. Wait, no one ever wanted to play with Percy; he was a boring prat. Bill? He'd be too busy studying. She couldn't fake studying for herself; she hadn't brought her books and everyone would know something was wrong.

The door opened with a happy and red-cheeked Molly Weasley waiting for them. "Come in, come in. I've invited the Diggorys over. They'll be here soon. I've got some pie waiting to be eaten. Nymphadora, you look like they've been starving you at school.

"I'm fine, Mrs. Weasley. I promise. My school robes are already tight." Charlie was in the kitchen and looked up at the sound of Tonks speaking. He looked happy to see her, and his smile made her blush, but she forced herself to return his smile as though nothing was wrong. He was her best mate and she couldn't think of him like that. Fred had wandered into the kitchen just in time to hear Tonks make her statement.

"Tonks, that's not you putting on weight. That's you finally getting an ass and tits." The twins snickered and Molly hit Fred in the back of the head. "Sorry! It just came out!" Well, now Tonks really had a reason to blush.

"Umm, I think I'm going to take a walk." Tonks sidled to the door. She needed to quiet her mind, which was screaming at her to look at Charlie and admire his freckled face and messy ginger hair. She wanted to act out her dream, and more. But her thought of reprieve would quickly turn into torture.

"I'll go with." Charlie hopped up from the table and opened the back door. Tonks followed him out, not having any idea how to say that she was taking this walk to avoid him. They walked quietly next to each other, each lost in their own worlds. What did you say to your best mate when you suddenly woke up wanting to snog them until their lips were bruised? Charlie finally broke the silence by grabbing Tonks arm. "Tonks, I...well, you're my best mate, you know that. But, I've been...well, I've been having funny dreams. And I think they mean...well, I don't know if they mean anything at all, but what I'm trying to say is... Bugger! Tonks, canikisshou?"

"What? Charlie, what are you talking about?" Charlie didn't have the nerve to ask again, so he did the only thing he could think of. He kissed her. She made a startled noise at first, but quickly leaned into the kiss. Screw being best mates, he liked her too! They stayed like that, kissing like two Dutch dolls, leaning into each other but not touching anywhere but that kiss. When Tonks finally took a step back, she was smiling. "Funny dreams? Did they involve Snitches?"

Charlie smiled his goofy grin. "No, but I think I just saw some." He stepped into her space, placed his hands over her elbows, and kissed her again. Her hands slowly rose to his shoulders. Neither was a pro at this kissing thing, but what fun it was to learn with your best mate!

## Meow!

*Chapter 10 of 12*

Tonks is reminded to think about others BEFORE she uses her abilities.

"Tonks, sit down or I will use your first name." What Rolanda Hooch really wanted was the girl's attention, and threatening use of the Dreaded Name was a sure way to get it. And if the kid would stop cursing, that'd be nice.

"But you don't get it, Madam Hooch! I wasn't impersonating Professor McGonagall to steal test answers! We haven't even got a written exam in Transfiguration this year! Sixth years never do! I was impersonating her to see if I could become an animal by mimicking an Animagus, and then Charlie thought it was funny when my voice came out of her mouth, so we thought it would be funny if I walked down the hall and spoke only in 'meows'! I WASN'T CHEATING ON ANYTHING!!" Tonks had stopped pacing for this outburst; she now returned to wearing a hole into the rug with a vengeance. Rolanda conjured chai tea, a new favorite of hers. She sipped until Tonks finally sat down.

"Thank you, Tonks. You are here for impersonating a teacher, yes. I know you were not cheating, but Professor Snape needs more convincing than I do. While you live as a Ravenclaw, your punishment is solely the discretion of Professor Sprout, and she has kicked you back to me because of the nature of the offense. Are we clear on why we are here?" Rolanda pushed an empty mug towards the still-seething girl. Tonks was angry enough to have lost control of her abilities, which meant that her hair was a very tangled mousy brown, hacked at random lengths. But she still took a mug and filled it from the teapot, gripping it hard enough to almost shatter it. "I want you to take pause and think about how Professor McGonagall might feel about being impersonated and then mewled. Yes, everyone knows she is an Animagi after his or her third year here, but I am certain that she has never conversed only in 'meows' when in her human form. If I were to disguise myself as you and attend your classes and break up with Charlie by announcing that I had just snogged Professor Snape in the bathroom, would you be upset?"

Tonks lost all color in her face. Her hair remained mousy brown, but her anger had obviously dissipated. "You wouldn't... Gross!" she breathed.

Rolanda smiled warmly. "Now take those feelings and step into Professor McGonagall's shoes." Rolanda stood up and came around to the other side of the desk. "Minerva needs to feel respected in her workplace. You know as well as I do that she never allows herself to be seen as anything but her best, even by her own house. You have shamed and embarrassed her. This has nothing to do with cheating. It is about being a good person and using your abilities responsibly."

Tonks set down her mug, having never even sipped at it. "What should I do? I didn't even think that the professor would care. Half the time I forget that the professors care what we do." Rolanda smacked the table with her hand, making a cracking noise.

"Tonks, don't be stupid. Of course the teachers care about their students, or we wouldn't be here. Most of us don't care if you mock us. But Professor McGonagall does, and I leave it up to you to decide reparations. How should you correct your error in how you treated Professor McGonagall?"

Tonks sighed, knowing exactly what she had to do. "I need to apologize to Professor McGonagall. I need to ask her for my detentions, as she would be the person most able to decide what I deserve. I need to serve the detention with no complaints or wallowing. And I need to tell the people who saw me meowing that it was me and not the professor." She hung her head, shamed and corrected. She stood up and recited a Metamorphagi rule. "I know better than to steal the faces of others."

## The Letter

### *Chapter 11 of 12*

Tonks is given her big opportunity.

It was breakfast, and she was in a dreadful need of coffee. How most people got on with just tea, she had no idea. She'd spent most of the night pushing Charlie's hands away from her tits while she studied for her Transfiguration N.E.W.T. She needed at least an O to get into the academy. Tonks glanced up when the owls came flying in with their daily letters and packages. When a Ministry owl landed in front of her, she wasn't even aware of it until the bloody thing bit her.

"Ow! Dammit, what?" She untied the letter it held out for her. Why was she getting mail from the Ministry? Her mother never sent her anything from work. And Dad didn't work for them. She was of age, couldn't get anymore of those stupid "Underage Restriction" letters. Idly, she left it unopened, stuffed into her satchel. She'd get to it later, right now she had to go to Charms class, and then she had a strong suspicion that Snape would be eager to harass all of them during Potions. Although he wasn't a pain in the ass to her. Tonks thought it had to do with the fact that her father had given Snape a few free cauldrons when it had been discovered that Snape only liked TNT Cauldrons, his brand. The letter lay forgotten.

"Ms. Tonks, are you paying attention?" Tonks glanced up. She had been paying attention, but her attention was not on Snape. It was on her potion, where she had thought it was supposed to be. "Ms. Tonks, class is over. You were to bring me a sample of your potion thus far. Not skip your next class to finish it."

"Yes, Professor, and I did. It's on your desk. But I was intent upon finishing it, rather than letting it go to waste. I could really use some Pepper-Up, what with N.E.W.T.s right about the corner." Tonks hoped he fell for it. Really, she just didn't want to go study her other subjects. "I've got a free period right now, but if you have a class coming in, I'll dump the potion."

Snape was not impressed with her sudden dedication. He sneered, but allowed her to continue working. After all, her class had been the last of the day, and she was in need of the practice for Potions. He knew that she wanted to be an Auror, and for that she was going to need an A in Potions. He knew she was hovering right at the grade, and he was not the one to bump students up just because, but she could study her way into the grade. He noticed a letter poking out of her satchel. "What is that, Ms. Tonks?" She glanced up, already absorbed in her work again.

"Just some letter from the Ministry, sir. I was going to open it later." Snape saved her the trouble. In his classic superior fashion, he simply assumed that because it was in his hands, he could do whatever he liked with it.

"You really should open letters from the Ministry immediately. Often they are as time-sensitive as Howlers. 'To Nymphadora Tonks, per your application.' He continued to read, not noticing how her head suddenly perked up. "We here at the Academy of Magical Law Enforcement, Auror Division, would like to tell you how pleased we were to accept your application. Normally, we choose our entry class in June and letters go out to accepted and rejected applicants in August. However, due to your extraordinary abilities, we felt that an expediated acceptance was required in your case. As of March 10th, we chose to accept you, on the condition that you finish your final term at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and earn all required grades for acceptance. We hope that your unique talents will be as obvious to you during your training as they are to us. Truly, The Academy of Magical Law Enforcement." Snape looked up from the letter, ready to congratulate the girl, but she was gone. She had knocked over her cauldron in the process of her exit. He sighed and placed the letter in her ingredients drawer, as he was fairly certain the girl would be back for it. He would make her clean up the Pepper-Up mess she had created when she did.

# Break Away

## *Chapter 12 of 12*

What happens to high school love? The story has jumped to PG-13 in this chapter.

"Charlie, what are you doing?" Tonks was laying on her stomach with the sheet carelessly thrown over her waist. It covered her, but if anyone walked into Charlie's room without knocking, they'd likely still see everything anyway. Molly was being quite nice about letting her and Charlie sneak off for sex. It was probably because they were both of age and finally finished with Hogwarts.

Charlie sighed and lay on his back next to her, pulling his hand away from the patterns he'd been tracing on her back. "I was just writing down all the dragon breeds that live in the Sanctuary. I'm nervous about going. Mum cries a bit sometimes, and I think it's about me leaving. She cried a lot more when Bill left for Egypt, though."

Tonks sighed and rolled up onto her side. She hadn't heard Charlie say that much at once since they'd left school three weeks ago. He'd been drowned out by the twins and quiet about leaving for Romania. "Charlie, we haven't talked about what we're going to do when you go away." There, she'd said it. She would say that she didn't want him to go or that she loved him so much she thought she might die without him. "Do you think we should keep dating?"

Charlie went still and quiet. So much for all the talking he'd just done. Finally, after what felt like hours, he spoke. "I love you, Tonks." He sat up. "But I don't think we should keep going together once I leave. You're in for three years and I don't know how long I'll be in Romania. We'll always be best mates, but..."

Tonks picked up what he didn't want to say. "S'alright. We'd eventually drift apart anyway." Inside, she felt she might shatter into a thousand pieces. "This way we will always be best mates. It won't get bunged up by trying to have a long-distance romance." She hoped the tears didn't show in her eyes or her voice. She sat up, but did not make a move to put her clothes on yet.

Charlie either didn't notice or pretended not to. "D'you think this should be our last time? I'd like to be your boyfriend as long as I can, and I don't leave for another three weeks."

She didn't know what to say. Which would hurt more, continuing knowing he was going to leave anyway, or just ending it now? She started getting dressed, keeping her back to him while her body threatened to turn itself inside out. "I'm headed home today, and I won't get back to the Burrow until after you've left. I think it's better if we just leave it like this." She turned to him and smiled. "And yeah, we'll always be best mates."