

**Yes**

“Come on! We’re going to be late!” Remus Lupin sighed as he glanced at his watch.

“I’m coming!” Tonks called, her voice muffled from the inside of the cupboard. “Have you seen my scarf? The dark blue one that – oh.” She stopped as she saw Remus holding the scarf out, a sardonic smile on his face. She took it from him and wound it around her neck, then reached up and kissed him on the cheek.

“Ready now?” Remus asked, his wry smile changing to a pleased grin.

“Yep. Have you got all the presents?”

“They’re all sorted. Let’s go.”

They apparated to just outside of The Burrow, which looked almost as though it could have been on the front of a Christmas card. Crisp, white snow covered the lawn and gate, but the snow on the path was marred by a variety of footsteps leading up to the door.

Tonks slipped her hand into Remus’ as they walked down the path, and as they neared the house they could hear the sounds of chatter from inside, and the faint strains of music from the wireless.

Remus knocked on the door, and moments later it was opened by Molly Weasley, who had a harried look on her face and was wearing an apron covered in flour.

“Remus! Tonks! Come in, come in,” She opened the door wider and gestured them in. “Hang your coats up in the hall cupboard, then go on through to the living room. You’re the last to arrive, everyone else is here.”

She led them into the living room and then went back into the kitchen to finish making the mince pies. As Molly had said, everyone else was already there – and the room looked fit to burst.

There was Arthur, of course, along with all of the Weasley children and their significant others. Harry had defeated Voldemort in the spring, and life was just about returning to normal. The majority of the Death Eaters had been rounded up and sent to Azkaban. Hogwarts had opened again on September the first with Professor McGonagall as headmistress, and the Ministry was just starting to get back on its feet.

Remus looked around the room as they entered, and smiled as he saw Harry whisper something in Ginny’s ear which made her blush, Fleur cradling her newborn son, Henri, and Fred telling a raucous joke to Bill, Charlie and Charlie’s girlfriend Mariana.

Arthur was the first to notice that they’d arrived, and he called a welcome from his chair near the fireplace.

“Remus, Tonks, good to see you both!”

This called everyone's attention to the fact that they'd arrived, and soon they were seated on the sofa, joining in with the chatter and jokes.

A little while later, Molly brought a tray of mince pies and mulled wine into the room, along with the announcement that Christmas dinner wouldn't be for another hour or so.

At this, Ron sighed loudly and grabbed two more mince pies from the tray, then glared as Hermione swatted his hand and told him off for being 'a greedy pig'.

At this everyone laughed, and munched on the mince pies in silence until Percy suggested they play a game.

"I brought my backgammon set with me," he said, "I thought we could perhaps have a little wager of sorts?"

"Nah, backgammon's boring Perce," George said, nodding at Fred who seemed to understand this silent communication.

"We've got a much more interesting game," Fred added, putting his hand into his pocket and pulling out a small box. "It's something we've been working on for a couple of months, and this," he held up a small black ball, "is the prototype."

"A magic eight ball?" Harry said, frowning as he leaned forward to get a closer look. "The Muggles have had those for ages."

"What our financial backer says is true," George nodded, "but this is not just any magic eight ball – this is a one and only Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes Magic Magic Eight Ball."

"Nice name," Ginny said sarcastically, "but what does it do exactly?"

"Good question, sister-of-mine," Fred replied, "it works in a similar way to a normal magic eight ball. Look, let's just sit in a circle and we'll explain how it works as we go along."

Remus smiled to himself as everyone bar Arthur, Fleur and himself moved to sit in a circle on the floor. It would be interesting to see what Fred and George's latest invention did, but he didn't really want to participate.

"Come on Remus," he felt Tonks tugging on his hand from where she was seated cross legged on the floor, "aren't you going to play?"

"I don't think so," he replied, frowning and sitting back on the sofa, "it's not really my thing."

"Aww, come on! It'll be fun!" Tonks reached out for his hand again, but he pulled away before she touched him. He wasn't really sure why he didn't want to play – just that it wouldn't feel right. Everyone else was watching him expectantly, with Fred

tossing the ball from one hand to the other impatiently.

“I don’t want to play,” he said again, and stood up, “I’m too old anyway for a game like this. I think I’ll go and see if Molly needs any help.”

As he left the room he could feel Tonks’ eyes boring into the back of his neck, and he flushed. He knew she hated it when he talked about their age difference, but he couldn’t help the way he felt.

He was just about to enter the kitchen when he felt her hand on his shoulder. Turning around, he found himself face to face with a very angry looking Tonks.

“Why couldn’t you just play?” She said in a hushed whisper, “That was really embarrassing! I hate it when you bring up our age difference – how many times have I told you that it doesn’t matter?”

“I can’t help how I feel, Nymphadora,” Remus replied, knowing that the use of her given name would annoy her further, but not really caring, “I don’t know what you’re doing with me anyway! A decrepit old werewolf almost twice your age! You should be with someone younger, someone who will play silly games with you.”

“Ugh! I’ve said before that it doesn’t matter to me how old you are or the fact that you’re a werewolf! It’s not-” She cut herself off and sighed, “You know what? Forget it. I’m not in the mood to argue and I don’t want to ruin the Weasley’s Christmas. I’m going for a walk outside.”

She turned and marched down the hallway, not stopping to put on her coat or scarf, and stormed out of the door. She’d almost closed the door behind her when she called back to him.

“And don’t call me Nymphadora!”

Remus sighed and massaged his temples with the tips of his fingers. How could things have gone from good to very very bad so quickly? He peered back into the living room and saw everyone else in the midst of the game, passing the Magic Magic Eight Ball around the circle.

He wondered if he should go after Tonks, but then decided against it. He knew from past experience that it was best to leave her to cool down after a fight – especially when he was the one at fault.

And he knew that he was at fault this time, and he knew that he shouldn’t have brought the issue up again. They’d had the same argument so many times during their two-year relationship, and he knew she was right. The age gap wasn’t important – they were in love and that was all that mattered.

“Lupin, you’re an idiot,” he muttered under his breath, kicking the wall in frustration.

“What was that dear?”

He jumped and turned around to see Molly looking at him concernedly.

“Nothing Molly,” he said, and plastered a smile onto his face, “is there anything I can help you with?”

“Well I was just about to set the table, actually,” she replied, “you could help me with that if you wanted.”

“All right.” He followed her into the rarely used dining room and helped her lay out the many places needed.

“I’d best go and check on the turkey,” Molly said, when they’d finished putting out the cutlery, “there’s just the crackers to set out now. They’re in the bottom cupboard of the dresser. Muggle ones, you know. Hermione brought them.”

Remus nodded and moved to find the crackers as Molly left the room. He’d just put the last one down when he was hit by a sudden burst of inspiration. If he could do this right, he’d be able to make up with Tonks and show her that he didn’t really think the age gap mattered.

Making his mind up, he apparated quickly back to the house they shared and retrieved something from the drawer on his bedside table. Tucking it into his pocket, he disappeared and arrived back in the dining room of The Burrow before anyone even knew he was gone.

He put the next stage of his plan in motion, and then casually sauntered back into the living room, trying to keep the grin from his face. They’d finished their game and he could see that Tonks had come back from her walk, for she was sitting cross legged on the floor talking to Ginny and Hermione.

He wasn’t sure if he should go over to her or not, to try and apologise, but he was saved from making a decision when Molly called that dinner was ready.

“About bloody time,” Ron shouted, leaping up and hurrying into the dining room. Remus noticed Tonks laughing along with everyone else, but she stopped when they made eye contact. He looked away first, knowing that if he didn’t he would start grinning, and then she’d know something was up.

A little while later, they were all seated at the table, and Molly, with the help of Ginny and Hermione, served the dinner.

Remus glanced nervously at Tonks seated beside him, hoping that his memory hadn’t played tricks on him and that she was in the right seat.

Molly had made a wonderful meal of sumptuous turkey, vegetables, stuffing and chipolata’s – all traditional Christmas fare, but Remus barely tasted any of it. His nerves were beginning to get the better of him, and he started to wish he hadn’t set this up.

Once the main course had been eaten, and the plates magicked back into the kitchen,

it was time to pull the crackers before Molly brought out the Christmas Pudding for dessert. Hermione, who was seated on Tonks' other side, turned to Ron to pull her cracker, and so Tonks was forced to pull hers with Remus, even though it looked as though she didn't want to.

Remus could barely contain his grin as her cracker burst open, and the contents spilled out onto the table.

Tonks unravelled the paper hat, placing it atop her spiky pink hair, and then glanced at the joke, and smiled to herself as she saw her 'prize' – a mini toolkit.

But the grin on Remus' face had been replaced with a look of panic. Where was it? He picked up the tube from the inside of the cracker and peered down it. Nothing.

Perhaps his cracker was the one he'd meant to give to her? Without waiting for someone to pull it with, he ripped off the paper and tore into the cardboard tube. But it wasn't there either.

He was beginning to panic now, and glanced quickly around the table. Harry and Ginny had pulled theirs, and so had Ron and Hermione. Fleur's and Bill's were still resting on the table, as they were tending to Henri, and Fred and George were just about to do theirs – both at the same time.

"Are you all right, Remus?" Ginny said, from her seat opposite, "You've gone very pale."

"I'm, er, fine," he replied, gazing worriedly at the twins as they pulled their crackers, and then groaning as he saw the black box he'd planted fly out and land on the carpet.

"What did you get?" He heard Fred ask his brother.

"A tape measure," George replied, as he placed his paper hat on his head, "you?"

"Dunno," Fred said, as he leaned down to pick up the box.

Remus groaned again as the redhead opened it, and whistled. "Looks like I got a diamond ring, George."

"A what?" Molly overheard that last part of their conversation and stared at her son, "What is it?"

"A diamond ring," Fred replied, sounding bemused, as he placed the open box onto the table.

"That's typical, isn't it?" George said, "He gets a diamond ring, and I get a bloody tape measure."

"Whose is it?" Molly asked astutely, looking around the table, her glance falling firstly on Ron, then Harry, Charlie, and lastly Remus.

“It’s,” Remus began, horrified when he heard the squeaky tone of his voice, “It’s mine...erm, well, that is to say, it’s...” He trailed off and chanced a look at Tonks. She was staring at the ring blankly, although there was the slight ghost of a smile on her face.

“Oh sod it,” Remus said, and stood up suddenly, his chair scraping against the wooden floor. He gestured to Fred, who snapped the ring box shut and tossed it across the table. He caught it in his right hand, and then turned to Tonks, whose gaze was now focussed on the floor.

He slid down until he was on one knee, and opened the ring box, completely unaware of the fact that across the table Molly was sobbing happily into a handkerchief, and that little Henri had started to cry.

“Tonks,” he began, reaching out to take her hand. The gesture made her look up from the floor, and he was surprised to see tears shining in her eyes. “Tonks,” he said again, then, “Dora. I love you more than I ever thought I was capable of loving another person. I didn’t mean what I said earlier. I don’t care about the age gap. Will you marry me?”

Tonks glanced at the floor again, before looking up and meeting his gaze.

Remus began to panic when after a minute, she hadn’t said anything, but his fears were alleviated when she leaned forward, kissed him soundly on the lips, and then murmured, “Yes,” as she pulled away.

“Yes?” He repeated, feeling slightly dazed, still holding the ring out in front of him.

“Yes.” She smiled, and leaned forward to kiss him again, but he stopped her before she could, taking the ring out of the box and slipping it onto her finger.

“I love you,” he said again, and then closed the gap, sliding his fingers into her short hair as he kissed her.