

“Probably Dark supporters. Or just bribed to bugger off for the night.” His experience of the Ministry was not one of moral integrity, for the most part.

“Well, isn’t it good for us, that it’s this quiet?” Daphne reasoned. “Less obstruction.”

She was technically right, but it didn’t make Harry feel any better about it. “Either way, we know something’s certainly not right.”

“Harry,” Susan said suddenly. When he turned to look at her, she was pale. “Do you— I’ve seen the aurors, and some other people Aunt Amelia works with, do this thing with their Patronus where they send messages. Can you— do you know how to do that?” Her voice was hopeful. Harry frowned.

“In theory, yes.” He’d asked Remus to show him in the summer when he’d seen the man summon Snape from his lab that way. “I’ve never done it very far, though. Why?”

“Aunt Amelia should know what’s happening,” Susan told him. “She knows who to trust. If we could get a message to her... maybe she can gather up the Ministry workers who would actually fight back. Or at the very least stop us getting arrested once we’re found here.”

She had a point. Harry palmed his wand, pulling together his magic. “Expecto Patronum.” Prongs appeared, silver light glittering off the shiny marble floor. “Take a message to Amelia Bones. Tell her — Death Eaters are in the Ministry. I am there, so is Susan. Bring whoever you trust.” The stag nodded its enormous head, and then dashed off towards a wall, disappearing from sight. A few seconds passed.

“Did it work?” Neville asked hopefully. Harry shrugged.

“No idea.” Once the Patronus was gone, it was hard to tell.

“We should get moving,” Luna said, voice echoing with an urgency that none of them wanted to argue with. They hurried over to the lifts, and all of them winced at the racket made when the golden grilles slid open.

“Fuck,” Neville whispered, hurrying into the lift. Susan immediately pressed the button for level nine, and with more horrendous clanking, the lift began to move.

“Susan,” Harry said after a beat, “I’m very glad you came with us. Because I didn’t actually know where we were going.”

Susan giggled, a slightly hysterical sound. “I’ve been down there with my auntie before,” she explained. “But I’m glad I came with you, too.”

Harry just hoped she didn’t change her mind about that once the fighting began.

The lift ground to a thunderous halt, the cool female voice declaring that they had reached the Department of Mysteries.

*Now things looked familiar.*