

what had happened after Molly had left — but he was snapped out of his thoughts by the sound of apparition in the hallway.

“It’s only me!” Tonks called brightly, then appeared in the kitchen doorway. She seemed to delight in being as loud as possible, now there was no painting of Walburga Black to yell at her for it. “Blimey, I’m that early?”

“Looks like,” Sirius agreed, snorting when she went straight to the pantry and returned with a bottle of butterbeer and a small pork pie. “Skipped lunch?”

“Had to,” she said with a scowl. “Ministry’s a bloody disaster. We’ve got too many Death Eaters to process — they’re trying to delay Pettigrew’s interrogation, like we might just *forget* and leave you on the run, or something.”

Sirius scowled back at her. “Fucking aurors.”

“Tell me about it.”

They were interrupted by the fire flaring green, and Bill Weasley stepped out, closely followed by Fleur Delacour. She was a recent addition to the Order, but Sirius liked her already. Namely because she too held Harry’s opinions much higher than Dumbledore’s.

One after another, the members of the Order of the Phoenix arrived, filling the kitchen. Charlie slipped in behind Mundungus Fletcher, and Sirius waved him over, a seat saved beside him. It garnered some looks — especially when Charlie kissed him on the cheek — but Sirius didn’t give a fuck; everyone he cared about knew, they weren’t hiding their relationship anymore.

Only after the room was full did Albus Dumbledore arrive through the fire, and the quiet whispers stopped immediately like a bunch of naughty school children. “Good, you’re all here,” he greeted, then frowned slightly. “Sirius, must you continue to hold this grudge against Molly? She should be able to attend meetings at the very least.”

“Not until she learns to respect me in my own damn house, Albus,” Sirius replied evenly. That earned him a disappointed frown, but nothing further was said.

Dumbledore launched into an update on Ministry proceedings, stating that a new Minister would be chosen by the end of the week. “It is a relief that Lucius Malfoy is not there to throw his own hat in the ring, but that does not mean Voldemort’s men are absent from the process. I am trying to guide it the best I can.”

Sirius hid a scowl; oh, he bet that was true. Dumbledore would be guiding them towards whichever puppet he could control the easiest.

The only good part of the headmaster’s report was the confirmation that Dolores Umbridge was going to Azkaban for her crimes against the students of Hogwarts.

“Good riddance,” Moody snarled, and for once Sirius agreed with him.