

“What the hell happened?” Harry asked, glancing at Kingsley. The bald auror didn’t look too worse for wear, though his robes were singed in several places and there was a thin cut on his head sluggishly dripping blood behind his left ear. Harry gestured to it, and the man grimaced, healing himself.

“No one was expecting it. I’m not exactly sure how it began; one minute I was in Amelia’s office discussing dementor sightings, the next someone’s running down the corridor yelling that the Minister’s dead and You-Know-Who is in the building. We were over-run with Death Eaters before we could even raise the wards.” Kingsley’s mouth turned in a disgusted scowl. “Tonks and I were the only aurors actually fighting on behalf of the Ministry.”

“Where is Tonks?” Harry asked worriedly, looking around as if the other auror might pop up out of nowhere.

“She went to Headquarters to muster the Order,” Kingsley assured. “There’s little good they can do now, but Dumbledore will suspect if we don’t go straight to him on the matter. But Tonks is fine, only a few bruises.”

Harry slumped in relief, looking back at the gathering on the floor. Whatever Snape was doing seemed to be working; the black veins had mostly receded, though Amelia was still unconscious while Snape waved his wand and murmured over her, Remus feeding potions carefully into her mouth. At least Percy’s injury seemed an easier fix, Charlie carefully directing his wand to knit the wound back together.

“How did Percy end up with you?” Harry knew from a few cryptic comments made by Charlie and Bill that the redhead’s devotion to the Ministry was not all it seemed, but he couldn’t see how that may have led to this.

“I was trying to escape the Death Eaters that killed the Minister,” Percy piped up. “And smuggle out some files at the same time. I bumped into Auror Shacklebolt and Madam Bones right as Madam Bones was hit with whatever spell made her unconscious. I carried her so that Aurors Shacklebolt and Tonks could keep fighting our way out of there.” He spoke clinically, like he was delivering a report on the subject, but Harry could see the fear in his eyes. “I— we didn’t expect them. Minister Scrimgeour just had a meeting with Augustus Rookwood. I knew he was a Death Eater, but I didn’t— I wasn’t expecting this to happen. There was nothing I could do. I had to get the files out safely.”

“Why, to stop Scrimgeour being exposed as a fraud after his death?” Kingsley asked sharply. Percy glared at him.

“I couldn’t give a fuck about Scrimgeour; those files are the only paper evidence we’ve got of Dumbledore bribing Ministry officials!” he retorted hotly. Harry wasn’t the only one who gaped at that.

“Easy, Perce,” Charlie soothed, squeezing his brother’s shoulder. “It’s alright. No one’s going to hurt you here, or turn you in; Bill and I can vouch for you.” He looked up at Kingsley, daring him to argue. “And I bet Amelia would love to see those files of yours, once she’s awake.”