

As the tension rose, the Order began to shuffle unconsciously into two sides — those with Moody, and those with Kingsley.

Harry wondered if he was being premature in thinking the fighting was over.

“You can’t say you condone this!” one of the wizards on Moody’s side exclaimed. “Just because we all know Potter needs to fight You-Know-Who doesn’t mean he should let kids in the fight as well!”

“I don’t think those kids had a choice when the Death Eaters started attacking them!”

They argued all at once, only snippets even audible over the combined din. Meanwhile the crowd gathered, staring incredulously at these grown adults bickering like children over a fight they’d been too late to help with.

It was too much for Harry. With an impatient growl, he raised his wand, creating a loud cracking noise that had everyone going silent at once. “Look. I don’t care what you think. The fact is, you were too slow. We had to fight, or we would have died. *Children* would have died. What’s done is done. Now, you can either fuck off back where you came from and sulk about a bunch of students stealing your thunder, or you can help us get our injured back to Hogwarts where they can be seen to. And you can deal with these scum,” he added, glancing at the downed Death Eaters in disgust. “I don’t know what you want to do with the alive ones. Can’t exactly take them to Azkaban these days.” Later, he might worry about how many of them weren’t truly loyal, were working for Voldemort just to save their own skin or their family’s. But right now he was in pain and tired and pissed off, and it was tempting to just kill every one of them and be done with it.

“We’ll handle it, Harry,” Kingsley assured. Then he turned to Moody, scowling. “And if this is the direction you’re taking the Order, you can count me out. I refuse to let children die just because the adults want to shelter them from reality.”

With that, Kingsley strode off towards the nearest group of students, healing charms already on the tip of his wand. A beat, and Sirius stepped forward. “What he said,” he agreed, glaring at Moody. “You can take whatever Albus bloody Dumbledore has told you and you can shove it up your arse. Stay the hell away from my godson.”

One by one, the Order fractured — Remus, Tonks, the Weasley siblings; all of them gave the rest of the Order disgusted looks and went to work on clearing up the aftermath.

“Throw your lot in with him, then!” Moody snarled. “You’re only signing your own death warrants!”

Then he glared at Harry one last time, bent down to grab a dead Death Eater, and apparated away.

The remaining Order members looked uneasy — some of them did the same, picking up a corpse and leaving to dispose of it. A few went to go aid in the repairs, but they were eyed with distrust.