

Once Harry had sent a letter to Mrs Frobisher explaining Rita Skeeter's secret animagus form, it had slipped from his mind entirely in favour of all the other things he had to worry about. As such, he was surprised when three people in dark grey robes burst into the Great Hall one lunchtime, their wands raised. Harry's wand was in his hand before he could even think about it, but Neville gripped his shoulder.

"They're aurors," he breathed. Now Harry looked closer, he could see the Ministry crest on their robes. The man in front, a muscular black man with a shiny bald head, strode up to the head table.

"Headmaster Dumbledore," he greeted, his baritone voice holding a hint of a Caribbean accent. "Apologies for the disturbance, but we have reason to believe there is an unregistered animagus hiding in this school." For one heart-stopping minute, Harry thought he was talking about Sirius. "May we have permission to check the hall?"

"Absolutely, Auror Shacklebolt," Dumbledore agreed, looking vaguely bemused by the intrusion. The auror nodded, then turned back to his colleagues, nodding sharply at them.

Harry's gaze fell on the one female auror, and his eyebrows rose when he realised he recognised her. Her hair was ice blue and down past her shoulders this time, but she was Charlie's friend from the Quidditch Cup. As she walked past the Gryffindor table, she caught his eye, and winked.

The three aurors positioned themselves at the edges of the hall, their spell loud and clear in the silence hanging over the students. All of a sudden, a tiny black dot rising towards the door grew larger, until Rita Skeeter was immobilised in mid-air, a look of shock on her face. Several people gasped.

"Rita Skeeter, you are under arrest for trespassing, unlawful gathering of journalistic information, and the use of an unregistered animagus form," the bald auror declared, walking calmly towards the woman. "You have the right to an attorney, but please be aware, anything you say in the course of your arrest may be used as evidence in trial." With a wave of his wand, Skeeter was on her feet with her hands bound behind her back. Only then was she released from the Immobilising jinx, and her face turned an angry red.

"Injustice!" she screeched as the aurors dragged her from the hall. "You won't get away with this! I'll have all of you sacked, just you watch!" Her words grew faint as they left the hall and shut the door behind them, and there was a long silence, before Dumbledore clapped his hands together.

"Well, that was a break from our usual afternoon routine!" he said, as if it were some sort of organised performance piece. "However, I believe all of you have classes to be getting to soon. Eat up!"

That prompted a wave of chatter to flood the hall, everyone baffled by what had just happened.

"An animagus!" Hermione exclaimed. "That explains so much! No wonder she was able to overhear Viktor and I at the lake." Harry smirked to himself, turning back to his sandwich.