

It wasn't his uncle. "Hi. Cassius Warrington?" He nodded blankly, staring at the purple-haired auror on his doorstep. "Right. I'm Auror Tonks." He tensed, wondering what sort of trouble he'd been accused of. "I'm a friend of Harry's." That made him blink, and he pushed past his panic to really take a look at her — she didn't look like she was expecting a fight.

She looked like she was about to deliver bad news, actually. The same sort of face his brother had worn when he'd told Cassius their parents were dead.

Dread sank like a stone in his gut. "Oh. Do you— do you want to come in?"

The auror nodded, and he stepped back, letting her enter the flat. "Is— is something wrong with Harry?" Fear gripped him tight once more— had the idiot Gryffindor done something foolish? He shouldn't have, not with Draco there to stop him being daft; but even he knew that Potter was a tricky little bastard when he thought there was something he needed to do.

"Oh, no, Harry's fine," Tonks assured quickly, offering a hesitant smile. "I'm here about something else. I— do you want to sit down?"

"I'd rather stand, actually." Cassius folded his arms over his chest, his right hand ready to draw his wand. He had no idea what this was about — it didn't seem like this auror meant trouble, but she could be lying about knowing Harry.

Then again, how would she know to say that, unless she knew the truth?

"It's about your family," Tonks began. Cassius' shoulders tensed. Had he been accused of something? "There was a Death Eater raid on a couple of muggleborn families last night. I... there's no easy way to say this, Mr Warrington. Thaddeus and Corvus Warrington have been arrested as Death Eaters, and Titus Yaxley was killed in the fight."

Cassius stared.

He felt like he was underwater, the auror's words distorted as they echoed around his brain. His uncle and cousin had been arrested. His other cousin was... dead.

"Oh," he said lamely, struggling to find any other words. How was he supposed to react? Should he look sad? Angry? All he felt was... hollow.

"I know this is a bit of a shock, Mr Warrington—"

Cassius snorted. "Hardly," he muttered, bitterness colouring his tone, "I always told them they'd end up in Azkaban one of these days." He'd always said it like a joke, but he'd meant it in his heart, hoped that some day they might get caught and he would be free.

That day had arrived, it seemed.

What the hell did he do now?

"It's expected that both your uncle and cousin will serve life in Azkaban for their crimes," Auror Tonks explained, her words even and professional, though her grey eyes were