

The Ministry was in an uproar over the aftermath of the fight between the Dark Lord and Harry Potter. The fact that the entire event transpired inside the Ministry premises was more than enough to spell the end of Fudge's term. No one knew this better than Cornelius Fudge himself, and that was why the man was grovelling at Dumbledore's feet.

Amelia could only look on with amusement as she watched Minister Fudge all but wash the feet of Dumbledore with water and drink that water as if it were the greatest cure for all ailments. But she doubted Fudge would find much luck with Dumbledore. On the other hand, the illustrious Headmaster of Hogwarts was pretty much set on events to play out naturally without his interference. There was no doubt after tonight, Fudge would be pressured out of his office even if Dumbledore chose to support the man. Dumbledore remains a well-respected wizard and holds enormous influence among the Wizengamot members. But that influence had proven to be fickle with the latest witch-hunt by the Ministry.

Fudge didn't succeed in keeping Dumbledore suppressed for nearly a year because of his skill but because of the enemies Dumbledore cultivated after the first wizarding war. A silent minority within the Wizengamot and the Ministry had wanted Reformation, and they were cheated out of that by Dumbledore and his insistence on keeping the status quo. When Dumbledore compromised his ideals to shake hands with the likes of filth like Malfoy, Mcnair and Nott, a permanent fissure was created in the base of Dumbledore's political base in the Ministry. It was that same group that tactically aligned with Fudge to let Dumbledore reap his just desserts.

And now, that same group was going to pull Fudge down. After all, she had worked diligently in the shadows to set up Fudge for the big fall. But merely pulling down Fudge was not enough. The entire Ministry needed to be purged and rebuilt from the ground up. There was no other time than wartime to accomplish such a task, and she now had the backing and resources to pull off such an ambitious task.

"You must do something, Dumbledore. You must help me." Fudge begged.

"I warned you last year, Cornelius. I warned you about Voldemort's rise, and what was your response to my warnings? You declared war against me instead of preparing the Ministry to face Voldemort."

"I know Dumbledore. I know..." Fudge let out a pitiful groan while rubbing his face tiredly. "I was wrong. I made a mistake. Can we put this behind us and work together?"

"I'm afraid it's not that simple, Minister." Amelia spoke up, earning the attention of both men in the room.

"What do you mean, Amelia?" Fudge asked warily.

"I've just received word from some Wizengamot members. There have been some movements within certain factions, and the topic under discussion pertained to your removal from the post of Minister." said Amelia, staring impassively at Fudge, whose chubby face now looked like melted ice cream.

"It won't be long before the Prophet starts printing the whole story about a bunch of teenagers breaking into the Department of Mysteries to fight and capture Death Eaters. They'll also know Harry Potter fought a very much alive Dark Lord to a standstill and cut off his arm in a duel all on his own. While all this was happening, not a soul in the Ministry was aware of what was going on."

"I... Amelia...! You... How am I going to get through this?" Fudge groaned, putting his sweaty face into his palms.

Amelia could only feel a surge of excitement seeing Cornelius Fudge. But the man was a corrupt wastrel who was not really the object of his ire. He was just the product of the corruption in the Ministry. Her ire had always been on people like Dumbledore, who promised change and attracted the young of their world to waste their lives on false promises like her brother and sister-in-law. Her entire family, including her parents and grandparents, had paid the price for her brother's misadventure in joining Dumbledore's stupid crusade to 'reform' murderous scum who should have been put down like rabid dogs. Not only did Dumbledore fail to reform the Death Eaters, but the old man was directly responsible for allowing them to grow in strength and blocking her path over the years to make them pay for their crimes in the interest of keeping the status quo.

She had lost all hope and was ready to slink back into the shadows to care for her orphaned niece, but she received an unexpected visitor who offered an alternate route. Amelia hadn't blindly taken the words and offers of a stranger for granted. She had seen for herself with her own eyes about the visitor's claims replicated in other wizarding communities across the world. The visitor offered no grand utopia, but she was convinced things could be better and leaving wizarding Britain as it was would only spell disaster down the line.

"Maybe Harry Potter can help me, Dumbledore." Fudge suddenly sat up straight with an excited gleam.

This time Amelia couldn't hold herself back from grinning at the buffoon who adorned the post of the Minister of Magic.

"How exactly do you expect Harry to help you, Cornelius?" Dumbledore asked passively.

"He can help me, Dumbledore. If Harry says certain things in favour of the Ministry...yes...why yes – it could work splendidly. All Harry has to say is that the Ministry was aware, and everything happened with my full blessings."

Amelia looked at Fudge like the man had grown another head. She marvelled at the depth of idiocy and ignorance on display by the Minister of Magic. But she held her tongue and let the man walk into a hole of his own making.

'Besides, it's almost time for the fun to begin.' Amelia thought.

Just then, the door to the Minister's office swung wide open. Amelia's eyes fell on the faces of Damien Greengrass, Sirius Black and Harry Potter. Behind the trio were a few Wizengamot members, all members of a secret faction that was carefully built over decades with careful planning and patience.

"H...Harry! How wonderful to see you. We were just talking about you." Fudge's eyes lit up with delight, and the blubbing man climbed to his feet with his bowl hat in hand.

Amelia couldn't help but roll her eyes, lamenting at the fact that an idiot who could not even read the room somehow ended up as the Minister of Magic. Then again, that was probably why most of the Pureblood maniacs supported the man in the first place. While Minister Bagnold was as corrupt as they come, at the very least, she managed to hold the Ministry together when the Dark Lord was in his prime.

On the other hand, Fudge was chosen by the Wizengamot as the Minister of Magic precisely because he was easy to control through bribes and threats. But that was soon coming to an end. It was now time for the rot infecting the Ministry to be cut out without mercy.

“Minister Fudge. You’ll immediately declare a nationwide emergency in the wake of Voldemort’s sighting inside the Ministry atrium. After which, you’ll resign, thereby transferring your post to Amelia Bones, who in your absence becomes the natural head of the Ministry in her capacity as the Head of the DMLE.” Harry declared, leaving Fudge to gape like a fish.

Amelia could feel her smirk widen as she stared at the surprise on the two men she hated most, Albus Dumbledore and Cornelius Fudge.

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“You want Amelia Bones to become the interim Minister with all the emergency powers assigned to her position? She was trying to put Sirius in prison a year ago.” Harry whispered furiously at Damien Greengrass.

“Because she plays her part well, Harry. Amelia Bones is Lady Lilith’s creature through and through. She’ll do anything to maintain her position in the Ministry, including pretending to harass you to gain the confidence of the likes of Fudge and many other players who wanted Sirius silenced.” Damien explained earnestly.

“She was working for HER?” Harry asked curiously.

“Yes, Harry. Once Fudge declares a nationwide emergency and resigns, Amelia will be in a position with unlimited power without facing an election. We’ll make our move on the Wizengamot members supporting the Dark Lord and Dumbledore’s stooges who obstruct the Ministry from using deadly force. We’ll use the Aurors and Lady Lilith’s men to bring them into our cause. Those that won’t turn will be quietly disposed of. Within a few months, we’ll have the Ministry under our command. Then, the real purge will start, removing all obstacles from your path to eradicating the Dark Lord and his cause.”

“But still... Amelia Bones...” Harry trailed off hesitantly, unable to believe that the head of the DMLE was a Flamel loyalist all this time.

“Why do you think she sent her aurors on a merry chase across the continent for your godfather? She was instructed not to capture Sirius by Lady Lilith. But she had to act in a certain way to ensure the likes of Malfoy and Nott were not tipped off.” said Damien.

Harry let out an angry huff and proceeded to walk back and forth in the lobby while he thought over what to do.

“Harry, we don’t have much time to waste. We must press the advantage while we still hold it. Fudge is like a cat in a boiling water. We must turn up the heat, and that’ll be enough to make him jump to save his own hide.”

Harry was hesitant to go ahead with Damien’s plan because he could not trust them, and his own plans were entirely different. However, he acknowledged this was an excellent opportunity to hijack the Ministry. The confusion and fear would soon settle with Dumbledore’s cooperation. It’d give the Ministry bureaucracy the breathing space to step in and keep the status quo until the elections happen. The time it takes for fresh elections to be conducted would be the lifeline for Voldemort and the bureaucracy to act.

“All right. We’ll do it your way. But I have a condition.” Harry agreed, keeping in mind that he could turn the tables around on Perenelle Flamel by having her carefully constructed faction in the Wizengamot transferred into his control in exchange for access to Slytherin’s Chamber and the secret hidden inside.

“Name it, Harry.” said Damien.

Harry stared at Daphne’s father silently for a moment before he whispered his demand into the man’s ear. While a bit confused by the demand he made, Damien vowed to abide by his demand.

Harry managed to convince Sirius to go along with the plan by the skin of his teeth. He was not the only person to hold a grudge against Madam Bones. But Sirius was eventually convinced that Amelia Bones would be a manageable figurehead they could use against the supporters of Voldemort and Dumbledore. After that, Harry had to get reacquainted with some of the major Wizengamot players under his grandmother’s thumb. Some of them he had met at the ball hosted by Daphne’s family last summer. There were only a few new faces he had to acquaint himself with, like Amir Shafiq, Olivia Blair, and Lachlan Brown, before stepping into the Minister’s office.

Harry led the delegation into the Minister’s office and saw Dumbledore sitting across from Fudge. He knew he had to go for the jugular from the start if the plan made the desired result.

“Minister Fudge. You’ll immediately declare a nationwide emergency in the wake of Voldemort’s sighting inside the Ministry atrium. After which, you’ll resign, thereby transferring your post to Amelia Bones, who in your absence becomes the natural head of the Ministry in her capacity as the Head of the DMLE.” Harry said, leading with a dialogue he thought would unsettle the Minister of Magic.

Going by the wide eyes and the impression of a gaping fish made by Fudge, Harry was certain he nailed it.

“Wha...? Pre...Preposterous!” Fudge spluttered, looking like melted ice cream.

“On the contrary, Minister Fudge. We are as serious as we can get. We have enough proof to prove your financial dealings with the likes of Malfoy. If you don’t cooperate, all the evidence we have amassed about your collusion with the captured Death Eaters will get into the Wizengamot and the Daily Prophet. When all is said and done, you’ll be lucky not to be called a Death Eater.” Damien threatened, loudly dumping a thick file on Fudge’s table.

“D... Death eater? Me?” Fudge asked, gulping audibly.

“Should you do as we ask, these records will never come to light. You can quietly retire and lead an enjoyable life with no one bothering you. However, if you remain in the post of Minister, you’ll find yourself incarcerated in Azkaban for aiding the rise of a Dark Lord.” Amir Shafiq threatened, glaring at the sweating Minister of Magic.

Fudge looked helplessly at Amelia Bones, who only stared back at him coolly.

“You have no other moves left, Cornelius. It’s time that you retire from the Ministry.” said Damien Greengrass.

“I... Dumbledore. Please help me!” Fudge begged, turning to the old wizard in the room who so far had stayed silent and merely observed everyone quietly.

“Is this how you want to pursue this war, Harry, Sirius? Do you think I'll stay a silent spectator as you overthrow the Ministry in this manner?” Dumbledore asked, staring down at everyone through his half-moon glasses with a disappointed look.

“On the contrary, that's exactly what you'll be doing, Albus Dumbledore.” said Harry, looking coolly into the blue eyes of the Headmaster of Hogwarts.

“You've stayed silent all these years as this corrupt Ministry released some of the worst scum of this world into the open and declared them upstanding citizens. You've had nothing to say for over a decade as murderers, rapists and criminals escaped justice while their victims starved for justice. You've remained silent as those same scum cropped up another generation of mini Death Eaters and sent them off to Hogwarts, where they continue to celebrate and profess the ideology that killed thousands of innocent people.” Harry said coldly, moving close to Dumbledore, never taking his eyes off for a second.

“So, you'll stay silent now while I do what I must to clean up the mess you left, Dumbledore. You lacked the will to bring justice and thought to smother yourself under shadows. Unfortunately for you, I'm committed to exposing those shadows that you worked so tirelessly to conceal.”

“And this is how you right the wrongs of the past, Harry?” Dumbledore asked tiredly.

“Yes, by shining a little bit of light on you all. If it is becoming uncomfortable for you, that's only because you've been living for too long in the shadows.” Harry retorted rather nonchalantly.

“The light spreads warmth and comfort, Harry. Not fear and despair.” Dumbledore said sagely.

“Yes, indeed. But you forget the light also eradicates darkness, Professor. Those who have thrived in darkness for too long will find that the light burns them whole.” Harry calmly countered.

“I tire of this conversation, Professor Dumbledore.” Harry said before turning his sights on Cornelius Fudge, who looked like he was a minute away from having a heart attack. “Will you do as I ask, or are you brave enough to face Azkaban?”

“I...I...I'll do as you all say.” Fudge stuttered out, keeping his head bowed low.

“Good.” Harry smiled, nodding at Damien to finish off everything so that no backdoors were left open to challenge their decision.

The first thing Damien did was call on the Head of the Department of Mysteries, Saul Croaker, to witness Fudge signing the declaration of a nationwide emergency followed by his resignation, thereby charging the Head of the DMLE with emergency powers. All of this was completed in the swiftest manner possible, as time was of the essence. All the paperwork was done within half an hour, which conferred Amelia Bones with emergency powers until a new election could be called in a Wizengamot session. Harry waited patiently until Fudge vacated his seat, and Amelia Bones took the seat of the Minister for Magic.

And that was it. It was now official. Amelia Bones was now the interim Minister until fresh elections were called. If all went according to plan, Madam Bones would also become the next Minister for Magic.

“Now, then. I assume everyone is happy with what has transpired.” Dumbledore spoke up after all the official ceremonies were finished.

“So far, yes. Maybe some biscuits and tea would've smoothed over the ceremony.” Sirius quipped.

"I'll have that arranged in the next ceremony, Lord Black." Madam Bones commented.

"Wonderful! Now, Harry. You're out of bounds when you should've been sleeping soundly in the Gryffindor tower. I believe you'll not protest when I ask you to return to your dorms." said Dumbledore.

"Naturally." Harry nodded at Dumbledore.

"Good." said Dumbledore before fishing out a sock from his robes and tapping it with the tip of his wand.

*"Portus."*

The sock glowed a bright blue before settling down, and just like that, a portkey was created inside the Minister of Magic's office in violation of a plethora of laws.

"An illegal portkey? You created it inside the office of the Minister with two senior heads of the Departments of the Ministry and several Wizengamot members as witnesses. My...my...you must be slipping in your old age, Albus." Saul Croaker said, an admonishing look on his old face.

"Quite necessary, I'm afraid. With Voldemort out in the open, I don't believe it's wise to take Harry through the floo. A portkey to Hogwarts from the most secure room of the Ministry is the safest mode of transportation for Harry, no?" Dumbledore said with twinkling eyes.

"Dumbledore has a point. The aurors have yet to vet the floo network to see whether they were tampered with." Madam Bones also agreed with Dumbledore's portkey idea.

"Very well," said Harry, shrugging his shoulders. "What about my friends?"

"I'll send them over after you and Harry...please don't get into any more trouble. It's only a few hours, and you can leave Hogwarts to your home," said Dumbledore.

"I'll think about it." Harry quipped, taking the offered portkey.

"I shall see you in half an hour, Harry." Dumbledore muttered before moving a few paces back.

"One...two...three..."

Harry felt the familiar sensation of a tugging in his gut as reality warped around him. But unlike the last time he used a portkey, Harry saw a bright golden sphere form around him, and soon, a myriad of colours appeared around him in the form of smoke.

"What the hell...?" Harry muttered in disbelief as he saw the smoke getting sucked into his jacket.

Harry parted his cloak slightly and saw a time turner hanging loosely from his pocket, absorbing the golden light around him and spamming out a myriad of colours from its other side. He winced as the whooshing energy around him grew into a storm of colours, and he felt the brightly polished floor beneath him disappear. When the bright colours around him dimmed, Harry stood on a grassy hill surrounded by forest on all sides. The time turner continued to glow an eerie bright gold in his pocket while its many needles and rings continued to spin, making Harry worry. To make matters worse, he could see a slight crack in the glass holding some sand inside a small hourglass of the time turner.

He did the only thing that made sense in the situation despite the growing fear that something had gone wrong in his mind. He applied a stasis charm on the time turner and kept it safely in the inner pocket of his jacket. Harry looked around the area bathed in moonlight but saw no familiarity.

'I think I'm stranded far away from Hogwarts in a good scenario. In the worst scenario...'

Harry shook his head, as such thoughts were not helpful in his situation. He could see a hill ahead of him that looked covered in grass, similar to the one he was standing on. Assuming his spirit form, Harry flew straight towards the hill and settled himself on its peak. The view he got once he settled on the hill was both comforting and troubling at the same time.

Standing before Harry was the towering castle of Hogwarts in all its glory. But there was one glaring problem. He could see several globes of fireballs being thrown at the castle as if Hogwarts was under attack by some foe. Another disconcerting observation he made was that he could not find the village of Hogsmeade anywhere near the castle.

Under the extraordinary circumstances he found himself in, only one thing came to Harry's mind.

"What the fuck is going on?" Harry asked no one in particular, but he only heard the sound of crickets and the booming sound of the bombardment of Hogwarts Castle.