

Chapter 1

Harry tossed and turned in his bed the night before his trial. Despite his best efforts to relax or even distract himself, his mind kept asking him, 'what if?'

What if he lost? What if they snapped his wand? What if he was expelled? What if he was kicked out of the Wizarding world, never to return?

Would he be forced to go back to the Dursleys? Would they Obliviate him? Would he even be able to remember his friends?

Rolling over onto his side, Harry punched his pillow three times and then tossed himself back down onto it. He managed to lie still for a second and a half before he rolled back the other way.

Maybe Fleur could help him get into Beauxbatons, he thought.

Huffing, Harry sat up and brought his legs up to rest his forehead on his knees. Suddenly, he heard a loud tap. Head snapping up, he looked over at the window and squinted, trying to see through the dark room. He reached over to the nightstand and, grabbing his glass, pushed them onto his face. As he climbed out of bed, he saw a brown barn owl blinking at him from the plant box on the window sill.

Brow furrowed, Harry wondered who would be sending him a letter as he walked over and pushed open the window. With a grateful bark, the owl flew in and landed on his dresser. From her perch in the corner, Hedwig glared at the intruder and ruffled her feathers before turning her back.

"Don't be rude, Hedwig," Harry said. "He's just the messenger."

Hooting, the barn owl held out its leg. Harry took the thick roll of parchment. Relieved of its burden, the owl took to the air and flew out the window.

“That was odd,” Harry said.

Turning her head to look at him, Hedwig flew over and landed on his shoulder. Smiling, he reached up and scratched her feathers while sitting down on the edge of the bed. With a tug, he pulled the ribbon holding the roll of parchment together loose and set it aside. Unrolling it, his brow furrowed as he read.

What they're doing isn't right. I hope this helps. Good luck.

There was no signature at the bottom or anything on the back when Harry turned it over. Seeing there was another page underneath, he set the top page aside and looked at the second. It took a few seconds of reading before he realized what he held in his hand. Eyes widening, he grinned and stood up.

“We’ve got it, Hedwig,” Harry said excitedly. “I need to go to the library.”

Hooting bemusedly, Hedwig gripped his shoulder tightly with her claws as he rushed out of the room.

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“I can’t go in with you, I’m afraid. I’m not allowed,” Mr. Weasley said apologetically.

Harry nodded, worried his breakfast might come up if he spoke. Mr. Weasley patted him on the back as he walked forward and pushed open the door. The large, dark room felt oppressive as he stepped inside, and the sudden gaze of the entire Wizengamot made him want to turn around and run.

“You’re late,” Fudge barked, seated behind a raised dais in the center of the semi-circle of benches.

Seeing the man that had called him a liar, maligned him in the press, and now wanted to bring him up on false charges, Harry gritted his teeth angrily and squared his shoulders.

“I didn’t know the time had changed,” Harry said, his voice echoing in the room.

Every head turned back to the Minister to see his response.

“That’s not the Wizengamot’s fault,” Fudge blustered. “Now that we can begin – finally – disciplinary hearing of twelfth of August into offenses committed by Harry James Potter of Number Four Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey. Chief Interrogators, Cornelius Oswald Fudge, Minister for Magic, and Amelia Susan Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law enforcement-”

Harry only half listened as Fudge read out the expected charges. Reaching into his pocket, he rubbed his fingers along the rolled piece of parchment and Glanced at Amelia Bones. He knew she was Susan’s aunt, and everyone in the Order spoke highly of her.

“- how do you plead?” Fudge asked, pulling Harry out of his thoughts.

“Not guilty,” Harry replied, his tone firm.

“Did you not cast a Patronus Charm in a Muggle residence, knowing full well the illegality of your actions.?” Fudge asked.

“I did,” Harry said.

“There we have it!” He exclaimed, thrusting a finger into the air with a triumphant look.
“Witches and Wizards of the Wizengamot-“

“I only did it because of the Dementors!” Harry yelled.

The whole room froze for just a moment before hushed whispers broke out around him.

“Dementors?” Bones asked, a raised hand quieting the room.

“Yes, mama,” Harry said. “My cousin and I were coming back from the park when we were attacked by two Dementors.”

“And you drove them off with a Patronus?” she asked.

“Yes, I -“

“A fully corporeal Patronus?” Bones pressed.

“Yes, I -“

“Impressive,” she said with a nod.

“And it is still against the law!” Fudge barked angrily. “The Dementors are under the control of the Ministry, and they were not in Surrey. I say we take a vote -“

“I have proof!” Harry yelled, pulling the roll of parchment out of his pocket and thrusting it into the air.

Around him, the Wizengamot broke into loud whispers once more. Fudge banged his gavel loudly several times.

“Order! Order!” he shouted, sweat beading on his forehead. “What is this nonsense?”

“Yes, please explain,” Bones said, eyeing Fudge out of the corner of her monocle.

“Someone sent this to me last night,” Harry said. “It’s an order from the Ministry to send two Dementors to Little Whinging to Kiss a dangerous criminal.”

“Let me see that,” Bones said at the same time Fudge shouted, “Give that here!”

Staring at Fudge’s quickly paling face, Harry marched up to Bones and handed her the parchment. She read it over quickly, a frown forming on her face, before taking out her wand. Waving it in an intricate pattern, the parchment glowed bright gold.

“It’s authentic,” she announced.

“Let me see,” Fudge barked, his hand held outwards expectantly.

Bones pinned him with a stony glare for several seconds before Fudge swallowed thickly and leaned back in his seat.

“Delores Umbridge,” Bones said loudly. “It says here you were the one to order the Dementors while Fudge was the one to sign off on it. Explain.”

“Hem, hem.” A squat witch cleared her throat with a sickly smile. “It must have slipped my mind.”

“Let me get this straight,” Bones said, eyeing Umbridge intently. “You signed for two Dementors to look for a wanted criminal – who isn’t named in this order, by the way – in a Muggle neighborhood, without requesting Auror support to ensure there were no mishaps? What the hell were you thinking?”

“This criminal has killed over a dozen people, and I wanted to ensure one of our venerable Aurors wasn’t his next victim,” Umbridge said, her sickly sweet smile fading quickly.

“And just who was this unnamed criminal?” Bones asked.

“Sirius Black,” Umbridge replied.

Harry snorted a bit too loudly and looked abashed when everyone turned to him.

“Sirius Black,” Bones said. “Why wasn’t I told of this, and where exactly did you get this information?”

“The information I received was from a highly trusted source and time sensitive. There simply wasn’t time to let you know,” Umbridge said.

“We will be talking about this source of yours later,” Bones told Umbridge firmly. “Why wasn’t I informed after the fact.”

“There was nothing to tell,” Umbridge replied with a simpering laugh. “The Dementors returned empty handed.”

“So, you sent two Dementors into a Muggle neighborhood – without supervision – and conveniently forgot about it hours later when you came storming into my office to tell me Mr. Potter would be subjected to a full criminal trial for the use of the Patronus Charm,” Bones said with a glare.

“How was I to know where Mr. Potter lived,” Umbridge asked innocently.

“You had the notification of underage magic with his address on it in your hand,” Bones barked before turning her glare on the pale and sweaty Minister. “And you, Minister? Did the fact that you sent out two Dementors slip your mind as well?”

“Come now, Amelia,” Fudge said with a nervous smile. “You can’t think this was done intentionally. You know how many papers I have to sign in a day. This is just an unfortunate mishap.”

“A mishap?” Bones asked incredulously. “You call this – this stupidity a mishap? It shouldn’t have happened in the first place! We have policies in place to protect against just this sort of thing.”

“Certainly, you’re not saying we shouldn’t go after escaped murders,” Umbridge asked with an insufferable giggle.

“Not at the cost of innocent lives, Muggle or magical,” Bones said firmly. “It was only luck that Mr. Potter could cast a Patronus and save himself from a fate worse than death!”

The room went silent as the two witches glared at each other while Harry balled his hands into fists. He knew this would happen, but he couldn’t believe they were going to get away with trying to kill him. They’d claim it was just an accident and then go back to calling him a liar and insulting him in the press.

“As heir to the House of Potter and the House of Black, I invoke the Founding Family Protection Agreement, section eight, clause four,” Harry announced loudly.

There was a loud gasp from the benches as the thick tome in front of Percy filled open on its own. As if blown by a gust of wind, the page flipped rapidly for a few seconds until they came to a sudden stop.

“Are you sure you wish to do this, Mr. Potter?” A wrinkled, bald wizard asked. “You are aware of the consequences?”

“Yes, sir,” Harry said.

“Weasley, for those that don’t know the law Mr. Potter has just invoked, could you read it from the book?” Bones asked, eyeing Harry speculatively.

Leaning over the book, Percy traced his finger along the words as he read them out.

“Clause four; Should the Ministry, or Minister, make a concerted effort to end the line of one of the twenty-eight original Founding Families – or fail to take sufficient action should a member of the Ministry attempt to do so - this clause may be invoked. Should a family invoke this clause, the eldest member – or otherwise chosen member – of the offended family shall be given thirty days in the position of the offender to make his or her case.

“To ensure equality, only magic shall judge the parties involved. If, at the end of thirty days, the offender is proven guilty, they shall be stripped of all titles, monies, and properties to be given to the offended. Should the accusations prove false, the invoking family shall be stripped of all titles, monies, and properties and henceforth banished from the magical world.”

“This is preposterous!” Fudge blustered. “You can’t actually expect me to agree to this – this farce!”

“You accepted it when you took the oath of office,” Bones told him. “Your only other option is to resign.”

“I will not!” Fudge blustered.

At those words, the book in front of Percy began to glow bright gold. It rapidly built to a blinding flash that forced Harry and everyone in the room to shield their eyes. When it died,

Harry blinked the spots out of his eyes and found himself wearing the same plum robes as everyone else in the room. Over his right breast sat the Potter crest. Looking up, a snort escaped his lips before he could cover his mouth. Fudge was too busy rubbing his eyes to realize he was now seated in nothing but his boxers. Umbridge took off her outer robe and threw it over his shoulders with a menacing glare at Harry.

“Congratulations, Minister Potter,” Bones said with a respectful nod.

Harry nodded back, his mirth fading abruptly. Just as he opened his mouth, the door to the courtroom burst open.

“Witness for the defense!” Dumbledore announced loudly as he strode in, his plum robes covered in sparkling moons.

He was halfway to Harry before he seemed to realize something was off and slowed his walk, his head tilted curiously.

“Right,” Harry said, taking a deep breath. “Here’s what we’re going to do. Madam Bones, I want the DMLE to fully investigate this Dementor incident.”

“Of course,” Bones said with a nod.

“Second, Fudge and the Prophet have been spreading a lot of lies about me lately, and I think it’s well past time to set things straight,” Harry said.

“Absolutely not!” Fudge barked, jumping to his feet and nearly knocking over Umbridge. “I’ve already told the Wizengamot everything they need to know.”

“Really?” Harry asked scornfully. “Did you bother to tell them Barty Crouch Jr. is the one that put my name in the Goblet? Did you tell them he impersonated Moody for the entire school year, that you had him in custody, and instead of questioning him, you had him Kissed?”

“What?” Bones hissed as murmurers filled the room, her eyes narrowing as she glared at Fudge.

“Well, I – That’s classified,” he stammered, beads of sweat gathering on his forehead.

“Wait, you mean it’s true?” a witch asked incredulously.

Fudge paled as he realized his mistake, and the murmurers grew louder.

“Well, I’m declassifying it,” Harry growled. “Professor, can I borrow your Pensieve?”

“Certainly,” Dumbledore said.

“Pensieve memories are not allowed as evidence,” Umbridge said, her tone growing shrill.

“Then it’s a good thing no one is on trial,” Bones said, glaring at the squat woman. “Memories cannot be presented at a trial, but they have regularly been used to present evidence to the Wizengamot. Unless, of course, you believe the members of this august body incapable of determining whether a memory is false or not.”

Umbridge glared at bones furiously as the members of the Wizengamot muttered in agreement. It was only when she threw herself into her chair petulantly that Harry realized she’d been standing in the first place.

He was jerked out of that amusing thought and startled when there was a flash of fire above his head. Fawkes sang as he circled around and dropped Dumbledore’s Pensieve lightly into his hands. Making a sharp turn, he lighted on Harry’s shoulder.

“Did you have to scare the hell out of me?” Harry asked, reaching up to stroke his crest.

Fawkes could only give what could be described as an amused thrill. Preening Harry's messy hair, he took back to the air and vanished in a ball of fire.

"So, how do I put my memory in there?" Harry asked quietly, nodding towards the swirling silver mist.

"Just close your eyes and focus on the memory you want to show them," Dumbledore replied. "And we'll need to talk about why you felt this was necessary later."

Harry rolled his eyes, "Maybe if you hadn't ignored me all Summer, I wouldn't have had to. Anyways, can you take out more than one memory at a time?"

"It is possible, but it requires practice. For now, just focus on one memory at a time," Dumbledore said.

Nodding, Harry closed his eyes and focused on the nightmare he'd been forced to relive in his nightmares nearly every night. He felt the tip of Dumbledore's wand touch his temple for a moment before the feeling disappeared. When he opened his eyes, Harry saw a long silvery strand hanging from the tip. With a light flick, Dumbledore dropped it into the swirling mass of memories.

They repeated the process twice more before turning back to the whispering, curious Wizengamot.

"If everyone is ready?" Dumbledore asked.

Fudge shifted nervously as everyone else murmured in agreement.

"Amos, are you sure you want to stay for this?" Dumbledore asked.

Harry felt the bottom of his stomach drop out as he looked over at Cedric's father.

"I need to know what really happened to my son," he replied stonily.

Dumbledore looked at him intently for a moment before nodding and turning back to the Pensieve. Tapping three runes on the side of the Pensieve, the pool of memories glowed silver and produced a life-size projection of the Triwizard maze just above it.

The courtroom was silent as they watched Harry and Cedric argue over who should take the Cup before agreeing to take it together. In a swirl of color, they were Portketed to the graveyard in Little Haggelton. Harry had to look away when he screamed out and grabbed his scar in the memory, knowing what would happen next.

"Avada Kedavra!"

The room gasped as one.

"That's Pettigrew!" someone shouted.

Harry looked over at Fudge and glared daggers at the man. Not that he noticed, He was too busy staring in horror at the memory playing in front of him. Gathering his courage, Harry looked back and watched as he was tied to the statue and Pettigrew completed the Ritual.

Gasps, screams, and shouts echoed around the room when Voldemort stepped out of the cauldron.

"Quiet!" Bones barked.

The room quieted down while Voldemort talked as he waited for his Death Eaters to return. When they Apparated in minutes later, there were more shouts from the benches. Some were

angry, others scared. Dumbledore had to pause the memory and let loose a canon blast from his wand. After everyone had quieted down, he started the memory back up again.

Harry watched himself closely as he fought against Voldemort and frowned when he saw just how outmatched he was. By the time their wands connected, he was determined to improve. When he finally reached Cedric's body and summoned the Cup, he was surprised when numerous people stood and applauded.

Flushing slightly, Harry ducked his head and looked at Dumbledore. Smiling under his beard, the headmaster tapped the Pensieve and brought up the second memory. With the second memory playing, everyone sat back down to watch. Again, there were exclamations of outrage, this time when a supposed dead man was found to have taught at Hogwarts for a year. There was quite a bit of murmuring when Dumbledore fed him the Veritaserum, and Harry belatedly realized that, perhaps, that might not be entirely legal.

Looking over at Dumbledore, he was relieved to see him wink. Any anger at the Hogwarts headmaster for using truth serum vanished when they learned the truth about Barty and what both he and his father had done.

This time, the memory had barely collapsed before Dumbledore started the third and final memory. Since he already knew what was going to happen, Harry took pleasure in watching Fudge's face lose what little blood it had left as he was forced to watch himself. There was a rumble of muttering when the Wizengamot saw how little thought and investigation had gone into the death of a student and the possible return of a terrifying Dark Lord. That turned into outrage when they saw McGonagall announce Barty had been Kissed before even being questioned by the Ministry.

Fudge pulled Umbridge's plum colored robes tighter around his body and slouched in his chair as the Wizengamot members got to their feet and began bombarding him with furious questions. Bones stood and let out a stream of sparks from her wand. Immediately, most people calmed down and retook their seats, but a few continued to yell.

"Why weren't we informed of this?"

“This is outrageous! I will not stand for members of my houses being slandered by this boy!”

“How did that bastard escape!”

The last shout came from Augusta Longbottom, Neville’s grandmother, who looked ready to throttle Fudge where he sat.

“Enough!” Bones shouted, silencing the room. “Minister, how would you like to handle this situation?”

Harry blinked, his mind taking a moment to realize she was talking to him.

“Oh, right,” he said, grateful Hermione had given him a crash course on how the Wizengamot worked. “The first thing we need to do is elect a Chief Warlock. It’s ridiculous that Fudge took the position himself.”

“I agree,” Bones nodded. “Do we have any nominations?”

Amos Diggory stood immediately.

“I nominate Albus Dumbledore,” he said.

“I nominate Tiberius Ogden,” a middle-aged witch with dark hair said.

As a couple of other names were called out, Harry spotted Fudge whispering furiously to Umbridge. Frowning, he decided to put a stop to whatever they were trying to do. Walking up to the bench, he stopped next to Fudge, who glared up at him.

“I need my seat,” Harry said.

Fudge's face went red as he stood up and jabbed his finger at Harry.

"If you think –"

"Is there a problem, *mister* Fudge?" Bones asked sharply.

Looking around and seeing the vast majority of the room glaring at him, including two Aurors, Fudge dropped his hand and stepped back. With one last glower, he turned on his heel, stumbling slightly down the steps, and walked over to the gallery. As Harry took his seat, Umbridge sniffed imperiously before getting up and moving several seats down.

He was immensely grateful Bones took charge of calling out the nominees and counting the votes. There was a bit of pomp and circumstance to their words that he didn't quite understand yet. In short order, Dumbledore was back in his old position.

"I would like to thank this august body for once again seeing fit to elect me as its leader," he said. "I'm sure that all of you are also as disturbed by what you've seen here today as I am. Fortunately, I'm certain our new Minister will be up to the task of handling this troubling situation. Make no mistake, while Mr. Potter may be young, he has yet to find a challenge he could not meet. And as you may have noticed, Mr. Potter has faced some daunting challenges in his short life."

Harry nodded gratefully as Dumbledore took his seat, and Harry took the podium.

"I'm sure all of you have a lot of questions," he said. "So, I'm going to try and explain everything as best I can before taking questions. So, this all started two years ago..."

For the next half an hour, Harry gave a condensed version of everything that led up to Voldemort's return. During his speech, he watched as the faces staring at him gradually grew more troubled, none more so than Fudge, who looked horribly constipated.

“Any questions?” Harry asked.

“You said that Minister Fudge *knew* Pettigrew was alive?” Amos asked, his face stormy.

“My friend and I told him, but he refused to listen to us,” Harry said.

“How much of this were you aware of, Amelia?” Augusta asked.

“Far less than I should have,” Bones replied. “I knew nothing about Pettigrew surviving and Black’s possible innocence or Barty Crouch Jr’s survival and subsequent execution. I was not even notified that Black had been captured until after he escaped from the school. I can assure you, I would not have taken just two Aurors and a Dementor to bring him into custody, nor would I have allowed him to be Kissed before interrogating him.”

Augusta nodded before retaking her seat while a bald, wrinkled wizard with a pip a few seats down stood.

“I have a question for Fudge,” he said in a deep, gravelly voice. “Why weren’t the Wizengamot or DMLE notified about such important information.”

Fudge cleared his throat as he stood, his hands fiddling with his robe nervously.

“You see, Mr. Potter’s claims about Black and Pettigrew, at the time, sounded outrageous. Surely, none of you here have ever suspected Black to be innocent,” he said.

“We never had a reason to,” a witch with short grey hair and a scar over her eye said. “What about Crouch. Why was he Kissed before being questioned?”

“Ah, well, yes. As I’m sure you can understand, he presented a danger to society. He successfully impersonated Alastor Moddy for nearly a year without getting caught. After Black’s escape, I didn’t want to risk another, especially inside of a school.” Fudge said nervously.

“And why weren’t we told about him?” Augusta demanded.

“Well – ah hem - we didn’t know if he had an accomplice-”

“Something you could have easily found out if you had bothered to question him!” Augusta bit back.

“What about my son!?” Amos yelled. “You convinced me his death was an accident! You told me you investigated!”

“What about You-Know-Who?” a witch asked frightenedly. “What are you going to do about him?”

“Now, now. We still don’t know that he’s really back,” Fudge said with a nervous smile. “This could all be some kind of trick. That could’ve been someone under a Glamour Charm, for all we know.”

“I’d rather not take my chances,” Ogden said. “And, frankly, I find it disturbing that you would take such a risk.”

“Mr. Potter,” a tall, square jawed man with short blonde hair said as he stood. “I’d be interested in hearing your plan to combat You-Know-Who and his followers.”

“I’ll be working with the DMLE to find out exactly what our options are, as well as raising their budget. I wish I had a better answer for you, but I kind of threw myself into the deep end,” Harry admitted.

“Do you know when you’ll be able to present us with a plan?” he asked.

“As soon as possible,” Harry said. “I hope to have things moving by the end of the day, if not sooner, and a more detailed plan within a few days.”

“I can assure you, Mr. Greengrass, the DMLE will be making this our highest priority,” Bones said.

Harry blinked at the name and wondered for a moment if he was related to Daphne Greengrass, a Slytherin in his year.

“I look forward to hearing your update,” Greengrass nodded before retaking his seat.

“If there are no other pressing questions, perhaps it would be best to let our new Minister get to work,” Dumbledore said. “Is there any other business? Then meeting adjourned.”

“Fudge, Umbridge, my office, now,” Bones barked.

“Oh, you’re fired, by the way,” Harry told Umbridge.

The squat witch puffed up like a frog, her entire face turning red as she glared at him.

“You have no right to fire me,” she hissed.

“Actually, he does,” Bones said.

“On what grounds!?” Umbridge demanded.

“How about sending two Dementors after me and then trying to have me expelled for defending myself?” Harry asked.

Umbridge fumed silently, her face turning a puce he had believed only Vernon was capable of.

“Dawlish, Jones, please escort Mr. Fudge and Ms. Umbridge to my office,” Bones said.

“You’ll pay for this, you disgusting little Half-blood,” Umbridge snarled.

When Hestia tried to grab her arm, Umbridge pulled away roughly and thrust her chin in the air as she stalked off.

“Minister, I need your permission to search their office,” Bones told him quietly.

“Anything you need,” Harry said.

“I’ll send you a note as soon as I’m done so we can have a meeting,” Bones said before turning away.

Sighing, Harry began to walk towards the door. He made it only a few steps before Amos stopped him.

“Mr. Potter – Minister – I just wanted to thank you for bringing my son back,” he said emotionally.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t save him,” Harry said.

“It wasn’t your fault,” Amos said. “Even if Cedric knew what was going to happen, he still would’ve gone with you.”

With teary eyes, Amos patted him on the shoulder before walking away hurriedly.

“It’s going to be a long day,” Harry sighed.