

Chapter 15

Making his way downstairs for breakfast, Harry yawned and waved to Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Hermione, Kingsley, Moody, and Tonks as they greeted him.

“Amelia sent an owl,” Kingsley said as he took a seat, handing him the letter. “She wants us to escort you directly to the courtroom this morning. After yesterday, she wants this election over with as soon as possible.”

“Probably a good idea,” Harry said, setting down the letter and taking a bite of his eggs. “The sooner I’m out of office, the better.”

Tonks scoffed, “For you, maybe. I like having a competent Minister for once.”

“Then you’ll just have to hope Amelia wins the election,” Harry shrugged.

“Do we know who’s running against her?” Hermione asked curiously.

“Tiberius Ogden and Yolanda Travers,” Mr. Weasley replied. “They put their names on the docket yesterday.”

“Travers?” Harry asked, the name sounding familiar.

“Markus Travers was a real piece of work,” Moody said, pointing to his fake eye. “Took my eye. Yolanda is his niece. Not nearly as insane, but just as dangerous.”

“So, she’s Voldemort’s pick?” Hermione asked.

“Essentially,” Moody nodded. “I don’t think she has much of a chance, but politics was never my strong suit.”

“Really, I couldn’t tell,” Tonks smirked before turning to Harry with a grin. “I’m sure Bones will win. After the last month, people have a lot of faith in you. If you say Bones should be Minister, they’ll listen.”

“She’s not wrong,” Mr. Weasley smiled.

Harry rolled his eyes and went back to his breakfast. It bothered him that so many people, especially Wizengamot members, were turning to him to lead. These were people that should be able to think for themselves. They shouldn’t have to wait for his opinion to do the right thing.

Sighing to himself, he finished his breakfast and rose with the others who were going to the Ministry. They all Flooed directly to his office and walked directly to the elevator with only a brief greeting to his staff. Mr. Weasley got off on the second floor to go to his office while the others descended to the courtrooms.

Today, there was no show of support from the Aurors, probably because they were all busy looking for the escaped Deth Eaters. The only people waiting in the hall were Penny, Daphne, a couple of guards, and a handful of reporters. Harry ignored the journalists’ shouted questions as he took Penny’s hand and led her into the courtroom. Inside, only about half the seats were occupied. Taking his seat next to Amelia, who was hunched over a thick stack of parchment, Harry sighed and rubbed his eyes.

“Rough night?” Amelia asked, glancing up from her pile of parchment.

“You could say that,” Harry replied, rubbing his scar absentmindedly. “Anything new I should know about?”

"We're still looking for the escapees," she told him tiredly. "So far, none of them have shown up on the streets, and their homes are still empty. We think Voldemort must have set up safehouses in preparation."

"So, we just have to sit around, waiting for them to attack," Harry sighed. "Great."

"Unfortunately," Amelia said, patting his arm. "We've weathered this kind of thing before; we can do it again."

"Amelia," Hermione called. "It seems to me the biggest problem is finding out about an attack quickly enough, right?"

"One of them, yes," Amelia nodded, looking at the younger witch curiously. "Why?"

"Well, I've been thinking," Hermione said, straightening up like she was preparing to give a lecture. "What if we created a device people could carry in their pocket that would alert the Aurors to an attack? I came up with something that could work, but it's pretty simple. I'm sure the Unspeakables could improve on it."

Reaching into the pocket of her robes, she pulled out a sheaf of parchment and handed it to Amelia.

"Sometimes, simple is best," Amelia said, looking it over. "For Merlin's sake, why didn't any of us think of this sooner? I'll send this over to our Researchers and get them working on it right away."

"Oh, that reminds me," Harry said, reaching into his breast pocket and pulling a folded piece of parchment. "When I got home, there was a Gringotts owl waiting for me to let me know the funds from Fudge, Rosier, and Selwyn had been transferred to my vault. I took what I didn't need and made a donation to the DMLE."

“Thank you,” Amelia said, taking the folded parchment when he offered it to her. “We can use all the help we can get.”

Unfolding the parchment, her eyes went wide, her monocle falling from her eye.

“Harry,” she gasped. “I can’t take this.”

“It’s already in the Ministry vaults,” Harry told her firmly.

“Two million Galleons is more than the entire department spent in the last five years,” Amelia hissed.

“Then you should have plenty to hire whoever you need to,” he shrugged. “Oh, and I took care of the back pay we owed those retired Aurors. They should be notified later today.”

“I...,” Amelia trailed off, shaking her head. “Are you sure I can’t convince you to run for Minister?”

“I do a nice thing like this, and you want to punish me?” Harry asked with a smirk.

Rolling their eyes, Hermione and Penny smacked the back of his head lightly. Chuckling, he looked up as Dumbledore entered the room. He hadn’t noticed over the last few minutes, but the room had filled up while he’d been talking. All of the Wizengamot members were in their seats, the reporters had quills poised to write, and the Wireless broadcasters looked anxious to start.

“Madam Bones, Minister,” Dumbledore greeted with a nod of his head. “If you’re both ready?”

“More than,” Harry smiled.

Chuckling quietly, Dumbledore nodded and banged his gavel.

“Witches and Wizards of the Wizengamot,” he called, gathering everyone’s attention. “While I’m sure you will all join me in lamenting the loss of Harry Potter as our Minister for Magic, it is indeed time for us to elect his replacement. Our list of nominees is as follows: from the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, we have Minister Potter’s chosen replacement, Madam Amelia Bones.”

Pausing, he allowed Amelia a moment to stand and be recognized, garnering a small round of applause.

“From the renowned Firewhiskey distillery of the same name, we have senior Wizengamot member Tiberius Ogden.”

An old, smiling wizard with a long, braided mustache stood and waved to a smatter of applause.

“And finally, we have the owner of Travers’ Apothecary, Yolanda Travers.”

A thin witch with a narrow, pretty face, and long, straight black hair stood and smiled thinly as a few people clapped quietly. As she sat back down, Harry noticed she clutched her hands in her lap to keep them from shaking. It made him wonder just how much of this was her choice. Glancing at Amelia, he saw that she had noticed it as well, her eyes narrowing slightly.

“Now, before we begin, is there anyone else who would like to nominate themselves or someone else?” Dumbledore asked.

When no one spoke up after a full minute of silence, Dumbledore banged his gavel gently three times.

“Then I open the floor to opening statements from our nominees,” he continued. “Tiberius, would you like to go first?”

Hermione sat upright and took diligent notes, apparently fascinated by the election process, but Harry found himself bored only a few minutes in. It seemed pretty straightforward to him. Each candidate made an opening statement about what they planned to accomplish as Minister, and then the Wizengamot was allowed to ask all three of them questions.

In his view, Amelia was the clear winner. Travers was nervous and had a long-winded way of saying nothing of substance, while Ogden made vague promises without going into any detail. Amelia, however, answered each question directly, laying out exactly what steps she planned to take.

While the majority of the discussion was focused on the war with Voldemort, Harry did get annoyed with some of the questions about taxes, permits, and stances of flying carpets. It made him wonder if some of those in the Wizengamot even cared about how much danger they were in. There were far more important things to be talking about.

It took a couple of hours for the questions to finish, and then the candidates were allowed a final five-minute speech before voting began. With how long the questioning took, Harry was a little surprised by how fast the election process itself really was.

“Witches and Wizards of the Wizengamot, when I call the name of the candidate you wish to vote for, please raise your wand and light the tip,” Dumbledore said as if instructing a class. “Please wait until all of the votes have been counted before lowering your wand. Now, our first candidate, Tiberius Ogden.”

Out of the fifty-two members of the Wizengamot, Harry counted eleven votes for Ogden. Below him, the court scribe scribbled down the results.

“Now, Yolanda Travers,” Dumbledore called.

Travers got a mere seven votes, but to Harry, the woman looked less upset and more relieved.

“And finally, Amelia Bones,” Dumbledore called.

So many wands went up Harry didn't bother to count them. His shoulders slumped in relief as he realized Amelia Bones was going to be the next Minister for Magic. Finally, his job was done.

“Very well,” Dumbledore announced. “By the powers vested in me by magic and this august body, I name Madam Amelia Susan Bones the duly elected thirty-seventh Minister for Magic.”

Harry felt a slight pull on his magic as control of the Ministry wards was taken from him and given to Amelia. A swirl of air whipped gently around her feet as her robes changed from plum to black, the Ministry crest appearing over her left breast. As the Wizengamot stood to applaud, Harry did as well, a smile on his face.

Stepping forward, Amelia took the podium and waved for silence.

“Thank you,” she said, clearing her throat. “I'm honored to be entrusted with the safety and security of Wizarding Britain. As my first act as Minister, I will be naming David Greene to replace me as Head of the DMLE.”

Harry felt a bit surprised, thinking back to the kindly old man he'd brought back out of retirement. He'd expected the job to go to Matilda or even Kingsley. In the end, he shrugged, trusting Amelia's judgment.

“Since I've worked so closely with Mr. Potter over the last month,” Amelia continued, “I'd like to have another meeting in two days to elect new families to the Wizengamot and update you on our efforts to recapture the escaped Death Eaters. Until then, it looks like I have a lot of work to do.”

Amelia received a few chuckles and another round of applause as she stepped back to her seat.

"If that is all?" Dumbledore asked, pausing with his gavel raised. "Then I called this meeting adjourned."

Bang.

"So, why did you make David the new Head of the DMLE?" Harry asked Amelia curiously as they boarded the elevator. "Not that I'm complaining; I just thought you'd give the job to Kingsley or Matilda."

"Matilda was injured during the Azkaban breakout," Amelia said, continuing quickly at Harry's worried look. "She'll recover, but this time, she's retiring for good. Don't worry. She's a tough old bird. I heard she's already got a new job lined up. As for Kingsley, I felt he would be better remaining in the field."

"Fair enough," Harry nodded.

"I'm glad you approve," Amelia smirked.

Harry raised his hands placatingly.

The elevator came to a stop, and Harry and the others stepped out into a shouting match.

"You've got to be joking," Penny growled angrily.

Harry clenched his fists as he watched Percy Weasley and the rest of the Minister's staff, who had quit on his first day, trying to take back their old position. Fortunately, his new head secretary, Mary, wasn't having it. Harry opened his mouth to ask what Percy thought he was doing, but Amelia beat him to it.

“What the hell is going on here?” she asked, her powerful voice cutting through the din.

“Ah, Minister,” Percy said, smoothing down his dress robes. “We’ve come to take back our positions.”

“Your position?” Amelia asked with surprising calm. “You left a month ago without a word.”

“We left in protest of the way Mr. Potter took the position,” Percy replied.

“You left because your lips were stuck to Fudge’s arse!” Penny yelled furiously.

“We were unaware of the former Minister’s illegal actions,” Percy said, frowning when Harry wrapped an arm around Penny’s waist in an attempt to keep her calm.

“Merlin, I can’t believe you think you can just waltz in here and get your old job back,” Penny scoffed.

“I believe that’s up to the *new* Minister,” he responded, giving Harry a dismissive glance.

“Indeed, it is,” Amelia said calmly. “Why should I hire any of you back after you walked out the way you did on Minister Potter?”

Percy grimaced as if he had a bad taste in his mouth, and the people behind him glanced at each other nervously.

“Minister Bones, we simply didn’t want to work for a *Minister* that stole control of the government,” he replied.

“Stole?” Amelia asked, eyes narrowed. “Right, I’ve had enough of this. Firstly, Potter didn’t steal the position. He took it legally, and he accomplished more in thirty days than Fudge did in his entire career. And you want me to fire all the people here who have worked their arses off for the last month so you can have your job back? Do you have any idea how much we’ve paid out in overtime and bonuses for the incredible work they’ve done? I’m astounded you thought a play like this would work, Weasley.”

“Minister, we would’ve been happy to stay on under proper leadership-”

“What, like Fudge and Umbridge?” Amelia scowled. “Did you consider them proper leadership?”

“Ma’am, we had no way of knowing they were committing such crimes,” Percy said, sweat gathering on his forehead.

“Frankly, that calls into question your competence,” Amelia spat. “Get the hell out of my office, Weasley. If any of you want a job working here at the Ministry, you can apply like everyone else.”

“I believe we have a few openings in the mailroom,” Daphne added with a smirk.

The elevator opened, and Harry glanced back to see who it was. Kingsley, Hestia, Jackson, and Richards stepped out and looked at the group curiously.

“You called, ma’am?” Kingsley asked.

“I did,” Amelia said, her penetrating blue eyes never leaving Percy. “Please escort Mr. Weasley and his friends back down to the Atrium. From there, they can either apply for a position properly, or they can leave.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Kingsley nodded. “If you’ll all come with me?”

Looking shaky and dumbfounded, Percy and his group allowed themselves to be ushered into the elevator. Just as the doors started to close, Tonks stuck out her tongue, and Kim gave him the finger.

"I can't believe him," Penny huffed.

"I don't know where Arthur went wrong with that one," Amelia said, shaking her head. "But, that does remind me. Ms. Granger, Ms. Greengrass, I understand both of you are leaving tomorrow to return to Hogwarts. I just personally wanted to thank you for the amazing work you've done. I'll be leaving you both with a personal recommendation, should you ever wish to work here again."

"Thank you, Minister," Daphne replied before nudging a shocked Hermione.

"Oh, yes. Of course. Thank you so much," Hermione stammered.

"You've both more than earned it," Amelia smiled. "Harry, Penny, could I see you two in my office for a moment?"

"You called me Harry," he smiled as he followed her to the Minister's office.

"You're no longer the Minister," Amelia shrugged, then looked over her shoulder with a smirk. "I could refer to you as former Minister Potter if you prefer?"

"Please don't," Harry pleaded, earning chuckles from a few of the secretaries who overheard.

Walking into the Minister's office, he blinked when he spotted a wizard with white hair already there, setting up an easel and paints.

“Who are you?” Harry asked.

The man turned around and smiled widely under his big, bushy mustache and mutton chops.

“Harry, this is Marco Fontaine. He paints all of the portraits for the Ministry,” Amelia said.

“A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Potter,” Marco beamed, shaking his hand vigorously.

“Nice to meet you, too,” Harry said politely before turning to Amelia. “Portrait?”

“Every elected Minister needs to have their portrait done,” she explained.

“Why didn’t Harry have to have his done?” Penny asked, frowning.

“Ah, there was a bit of confusion over that,” Marco replied. “We’ve never had a Minister that wasn’t elected in some capacity before. It took us a while to figure things out. We found out just yesterday that Mr. Potter, in fact, does qualify for a portrait. I’ll actually be painting both of you today.”

“Er, is that really necessary?” Harry asked.

“Yes,” Penny and Amelia replied in unison.

Marco chuckled as Harry raised his hands in surrender.

“Consider it the last little bit of unpleasantness you’ll have to suffer in office,” Amelia said, taking a seat behind the desk. “You’re lucky. My job has only just begun. Marco, we have a few things to go over before we get started.”

“By all means,” Marco said, bouncing on the balls of his feet with a wide smile. “I’ll just finish setting up my paints. Pretend like I’m not even here.”

He walked back over to his easel, and Harry and Penny took seats across from Amelia.

“Alright, first things first, Penny, would you like to stay on as my Senior Undersecretary?” she asked.

“I appreciate the offer, but I’m going to be going back to Hogwarts,” Penny smiled, taking Harry’s hand in hers. “Professor Flitwick agreed to help me get my Charms Mastery.”

“I know,” Amelia smiled. “I just wanted to make the offer, regardless. You did a wonderful job.”

“Thank you,” Penny said happily.

“Now, Harry, do you have any recommendations for families to take up the three open Wizengamot seats?” Amelia asked.

“Er,” Harry said, not expecting the question. “I don’t really know that many families. Maybe the Weasleys?”

“I thought you’d say that,” Amelia nodded. “They were one of my first choices as well. If you think of anyone else, let me know by the end of the day tomorrow.”

Harry nodded.

“Well, I think that’s it,” Amelia said, setting down her quill. “Unless there’s something you wanted to bring up.”

“No,” Harry chuckled. “The job’s all yours.”

“Then let’s go get your portrait done so you can go home,” Amelia smiled.

Having his portrait painted was even more boring than Harry anticipated. He had to sit in a single position for hours while Marco painted him framed against one of the office's enchanted windows. The only interesting part was when he got to see the enchantments used to animate the portrait. But even then, it was far too complicated for Harry to even begin to understand. Penny enjoyed it, though, and asked Marco numerous questions as he finished up.

“The real trick to making it lifelike is how you extract the memories,” he told her. “You need to draw out those little moments in life that make a person who they are. Far too many magical painters don’t put enough thought into this part of the magic.”

Walking over to Harry, Marco pressed the tip of his wand against his temple. Drawing it back slowly while mumbling a long incantation, he drew out a long, wriggling silver strand. Carefully, he walked back over to the portrait and, still mumbling his incantation, dropped the memory on the canvas. When it hit the surface, it quickly spread across the entire painting and soaked into the paint. Harry waited for the painting of himself to come to life, but it remained perfectly still.

“Finished,” Marco said happily.

“Er, isn’t it supposed to move?” Harry asked.

“Oh, not yet,” he explained, smiling. “Portraits like these only come to life after the subject has passed away. We can activate them early, of course, but that’s what’s in our contract with the Ministry.”

“Oh,” Harry said.

“Since this is currently your office, Minister Bones, where would you like this portrait?”

“Directly across from my desk, please,” Amelia smiled. “That way, I can be reminded of the legacy I need to live up to.”

Harry rolled his eyes, prompting a giggle from Penny.

“I’ll go see if Hermione and Daphne are done cleaning out their desks,” she said, kissing his cheek. “Why don’t we go back to my place and relax for a while?”

“Sure,” Harry smiled.

Hours later, Amelia sighed and set down her quill. On the wall behind her now sat her new portrait. It depicted her smiling softly while leaning against the hearth, arms crossed. Looking up, she smiled at the portrait of the young man sitting on the wall across from her. Out of every portrait in the office, his was the only one where the occupant wasn’t smiling. It was clear from his expression he didn’t want to be there. Chuckling, she poured herself a glass of Cognac and lifted her glass.

“To the man who never wanted to be Minister and still did a better job than the rest of us.”

Two days later, Harry found himself being greeted by parents and classmates alike as he tried to get on the Hogwarts Express. Reporters tried to question him, but he ignored them. Thankfully, Kingsley and Tonks were there to keep him from being mobbed. As he passed Amelia and Susan, he smiled and waved. They waved back, her Auror guard giving him a respectful nod.

Together with Ron and Hermione, Harry boarded the train and found an empty compartment.

“Bloody hell,” Ron huffed as he dropped into his seat. “I thought we’d never get through the crowd.”

“I tried to warn you,” Hermione told him. “Why do you think everyone wanted to leave early?”

“I thought Moody was being paranoid,” Ron said defensively.

Before Hermione could argue back, there was a knock at the door. Looking up, Harry smiled at Daphne and unlocked the door.

“Mind if I join you?” she asked.

“Not at all,” Harry smiled.

Grabbing her trunk, he lifted it into the overhead rack for her while Daphne took the seat next to Hermione. Smiling softly, they held hands and shared a brief kiss. Ron gaped at them, his mouth hanging open.

“Oh, close your mouth, Ronald,” Hermione huffed, her cheeks flushing prettily. “I told you I was dating Daphne.”

“I thought you were joking!” Ron exclaimed.

Smiling, Harry shook his head while Daphne rolled her eyes.

“Weasley,” Daphne greeted him indifferently before turning to Harry. “Is Penny riding the train with us?”

“No,” he replied, shaking his head. “She’s already at the castle. Flitwick wanted to get her situated before the other students showed up.”

“I can’t believe you’re dating Percy’s ex,” Ron said with a shake of his head as he turned to Hermione. “And you’re dating a Slytherin.”

“Yes, Ron,” Hermione replied, rolling her eyes. “I’m dating a witch in Slytherin. Honestly, I don’t know why that’s such a big deal.”

“She’s a Slytherin!” Ron exclaimed as if it should be obvious.

“Yes, we got that,” Daphne said dully. “We’re failing to understand why that’s a problem.”

“Well, it’s – you know,” Ron stammered. “Harry, help me out here.”

“Oh, no,” Harry chuckled. “You dug this hole on your own, you can find your own way out.”

In frightening unison, Hermione and Daphne glared at Ron and folded their arms over their chests. Realizing he was in trouble, Ron gulped audibly.

“Er, anyone want to play chess?” he asked nervously.

Darkness had fallen by the time they arrived at Hogwarts. For the last half of the trip, something had felt off to Harry, and it was only when he stepped out of the compartment and spotted a familiar head of blonde hair that he realized what it was.

“Hermione,” he said. “Don’t you think it’s odd Malfoy didn’t come bother us like he usually does?”

“Maybe he’s finally grown up?” Hermione asked.

Harry, Daphne, and Ron all gave her disbelieving looks.

“What? I said maybe,” she said defensively.

“The only time Malfoy doesn’t make a scene is when he’s trying to hide something,” Daphne said. “Fortunately, he’s not very good at hiding things. I’ll ask around and see if I can find out what he’s up to.”

“Please be careful,” Hermione said, chewing her lip worriedly.

“I’ll be fine,” Daphne assured her. “And stop chewing your lip like that. It makes me want to snog you.”

Hermione blushed as Daphne pulled her by the hand toward the carriages. While they were waiting, she introduced her to her sister, Astoria, and best friend, Tracey Davis. They both seemed happy enough to meet Hermione and Harry, but they were a little wary of Ron. That was understandable, given the suspicious looks he was giving them.

Soon, they were riding as a group up to the castle. Astoria talked a mile a minute the entire trip, skipping from one thing to the next with barely a breath. Harry could hardly believe the two girls were related when they were so different.

Eventually, they reached the castle and headed inside.

“I have to go to my table,” Daphne told Hermione softly.

Giving her hand a squeeze and her cheek a kiss, they separated and took their seats. Harry looked up to the head table and grinned when he spotted Penny waving at him from next to Professor Flitwick. Waving back, he took his seat just as the sorting began.

Once the sorting was done and the houses had welcomed their new members, Dumbledore stood to make his start of year announcements.

“Welcome back to another year at Hogwarts,” he said, spreading his arms wide and smiling. “And I believe this is the first time in the school's history we’ve had the opportunity to welcome back a former Minister as a student.”

Harry smiled as his friends chuckled around him.

“I’d also like to welcome our new Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor, former master Auror Matilda Bennet,” he announced.

Harry turned and grinned as the doors to the Great Hall opened, and Matilda walked in, leaning on a cane for support.

“Finally, a good teacher,” Harry said over the smattering of applause. “This year might not be so bad.”

A/N: That’s the end of this story for now. I may do a sequel to it in the future, but for now, I’m going to move on to other projects. Thanks for reading, and I hope you all enjoyed this fun little story.