

Title: Imperius Maximus  
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Summary: Cornelius Fudge is saved by Kingsley Shacklebolt and repays his debt by helping protect the Muggle Prime Minister.

Timeframe: The afternoon of Bill and Fleur's wedding in Book 7  
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Category: The Untold Story  
Warnings: Evil Violence  
Length: 19 pages

## **Imperius Maximus**

### Chapter 1 -- Scrimgeour's End

Cornelius Fudge awoke with a start. He had apparently fallen asleep at his desk at the Ministry. He looked at his watch. It was four o'clock Saturday afternoon. The Minister wanted Fudge's report sitting on his desk when he arrived Monday morning.

Pages of the draft report were scattered in front of Fudge on the desk. He could hardly make sense of the text for all the cross-outs, marginal edits and arrows pointing for various bits to go there instead of here. He had worked on the report all day Friday, then into the evening and overnight. The last thing he remembered was thinking he would take a break and have a late breakfast Saturday morning.

His stomach rumbled.

Fudge was beginning to think he had made a mistake agreeing to become an advisor to Scrimgeour. This Minister for Magic meant business and was extremely demanding. He treated Fudge more like a personal assistant than his predecessor in office. At least Scrimgeour had let him keep his former junior secretary, Percy Weasley, as an assistant. If he could get the report finished by Sunday morning, he'd have Weasley come in and put together the final draft.

Otherwise, he would have to ask Scrimgeour for more time. Scrimgeour would not like that, but this was, after all, a very difficult subject -- *A Proposal to Form an Alliance with the Goblins Against He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and His Followers*.

Who, after all, would take such a proposal seriously? To Fudge, an alliance with non-human magical beings was simply preposterous. What could the Ministry possibly offer them -- surely not the right to carry wands as the Minister was proposing?

The silence was broken by a muffled scream which came from the Minister's adjoining office. Normally, the Muffliato Charm on the office prevented Fudge or anyone outside the Minister's office from hearing any conversation from within. Had another such scream just awoken him?

Fudge jumped up from his desk. He rushed to door connecting his office to the Minister's and threw it open. He froze in surprise because he could not believe what he was seeing.

Scrimgeour was spread-eagled on his back across his large office desk. It looked like his wrists and ankles were bound at the corners of the desk, but they were not. It had to be a spell of some kind. His body was straining at the invisible bonds with tremendous effort and his face was contorted with pain. His mouth was open as if here were still screaming, but no sound came out.

Yaxley, the Death Eater, who only two months before had been found stunned at the top of the Hogwarts astronomy tower the night Dumbledore was killed, stood over Scrimgeour holding his wand pointed at Scrimgeour's head. Yaxley had a look of delight on his face, which changed instantly to surprise on seeing Fudge standing frozen in the doorway.

Yaxley had been sent to Azkaban. 'How could he be here?' thought Fudge, clearly in shock.

"*Petrificus Totalus*," said Yaxley, almost casually, moving the tip of his wand to point at Fudge, who's had only just recovered enough to begin reaching for own his wand in his robe pocket.

Fudge's legs snapped together, as did his arms to his sides; he toppled backward into his office, hitting the floor with a resounding thud. He was completely frozen, his eyes directed at the ceiling -- but could hear clearly.

"We'll deal with you presently, Fudge, but we must first attend to the Minister. After all, proper protocol *must* be followed," said Yaxley sarcastically, feigning ministerial decorum.

Fudge heard someone else laugh in the Minister's office. He recognized the voice of Pius Thicknesse, the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

Fudge was shocked again. This was not just an assassination attempt on the Minister. It was a coup. Thicknesse was a trusted ministry official.

Fudge tried desperately to will his wand out of his pocket and into his hand, but it was no good. He wondered how many other conspirators there were.

How was he going to get out of this?

Yaxley began speaking again. "Minister, I'll ask you again -- where are you hiding Harry Potter?"

Scrimgeour began moaning. It was pitiful to hear. Fudge tried not to listen, but it was impossible. It chilled him and made him think of what they were going to do to him. He did not know where Potter was either.

Then Thicknesse spoke calmly. "He is obviously using Occlumency against you, Yaxley. He is quite accomplished -- much more so, I think, than your skills as a Legilimens."

"Shut it!" spat Yaxley. Thicknesse did not respond.

This surprised Fudge -- Yaxley giving the orders? Thicknesse must be under the Imperius Curse. This was more than a coup by Thicknesse. It was the take-over of the Ministry by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named!

Fudge now knew he was doomed. There was no way he could talk his way out of this. He had seen and heard too much. His hope that Yaxley might only put him under the Imperius Curse evaporated.

Scrimgeour was screaming again. Yaxley must be using the Cruciatus Curse on him.

When the screaming stopped, after what had seemed to Fudge several unbearable minutes, Yaxley spoke angrily, "This is your *last* chance, Minister. Where is Harry Potter?"

Fudge could hear Scrimgeour breathing very heavily.

After several seconds, Thickness spoke again. "He's never going to talk." He sounded droll, without any hint of emotion, given what he had just witnessed.

Yaxley cried out in rage, "*Avada Kedavra!*"

Fudge saw the flash of green light and knew Scrimgeour was dead.

"You really must do something about that temper," intoned Thickness. "I suppose that officially makes me the new Minister for Magic."

Thickness paused and then continued matter-of-factly, "I have already drawn up the necessary documents, including Scrimgeour's signed letter of resignation. My first act is to appoint you the new head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Your first assignment is to clean up this mess and have my office ready for me first thing Monday morning. I'll send in Runcorn to give you a hand."

Then sounding rather pompous, he said, "In the meantime, I shall inform the Dark Lord of our successful takeover. Then I shall order the immediate lifting of all existing Ministerial protections on our *enemies* so that an official Ministry round-up may begin at once. There will be no more safe houses for Harry Potter and his friends."

There was a short pause, after which Thicknesse added with a chuckle, "Oh, and I must also inform the Daily Prophet. I'm sure there is sufficient time to make the Sunday morning edition -- no doubt, front page news."

Was Thicknesse under the Imperius Curse after all? It now seemed to Fudge that he was a willing participant.

Fudge heard the door to the Minister's reception area open and close and then heard Yaxley mutter, "Damned git..."

Fudge realized that Runcorn must be standing guard in the outside hallway or Thicknesse would have just called him in from the reception area. Regardless, the situation looked grim to Fudge.

Moments later he heard the door open again and heard Runcorn's deep voice. "Thicknesse said you didn't find out anything... In all that time? You're *slipping*, Yaxley." It was supposed to be a joke, but Yaxley did not think so.

"Think it's funny, do you?" snarled Yaxley. "Let's see if you have better luck with *him*."

"What the...?" said Runcorn in surprise.

Yaxley continued, "Seems old 'Fudgie' here was eavesdropping. Find out if he knows where Potter is while I take care of this garbage."

A chill ran down Fudge's spine as Runcorn stepped into view and looked down on him, grinning broadly, and pointing his wand at Fudge's face.

Without warning, Runcorn was blasted backward by a jet of red light. Fudge saw a long, robed arm with a dark hand holding a wand extending through the doorway of his office. In instant after the first, another jet of red light fired from the wand tip. Fudge heard Yaxley yell and his body hitting the floor in the Minister's office. Then he saw the face of Kingsley Shacklebolt looking down on him and his deep voice saying quite calmly, "We need to get out of here *right now*."

## Chapter 2 -- Urgent Business

Kingsley freed Fudge from the Full Body Bind Curse and helped him to his feet. Fudge looked into the Minister's office and confirmed that Scrimgeour was dead. Yaxley and Runcorn were both out on the floor, obviously stunned.

"Shouldn't we do something...?" Fudge started to say.

"No time," said Shacklebolt. "Let's just make our way quickly, but calmly, to the atrium and Disapparate. I'll take you where you can be safe."

“Wait!” said Fudge, excitedly, talking very fast. “Thicknesse may be under the Imperius Curse, but he has done everything necessary to make himself Minister for Magic. You-Know-Who must already have control all of key personnel in the Ministry to have taken out Scrimgeour today. The Ministry has fallen! Thickness said he was on his way to lift Ministry protective enchantments on all safe houses and conduct raids looking for Harry Potter and his supporters. We must warn them... *right now!*”

“Right,” said Kingsley. He pointed his wand into the center of Fudge’s office. A ghostly silvery-white translucent ball burst from the tip and hovered a few feet away. Kingsley spoke quickly but clearly, “**The Ministry has fallen. Scrimgeour is dead. They are coming.**” Kingsley flicked his wand and the ghostly ball momentarily transformed into the image of a lynx, then split into a dozen or more pieces and disappeared.

“I’ve sent my Patronus to warn all the safe houses I know about. They will spread the word.” He continued after a moment, sounding resigned. “We’ve been expecting this for some time, but there’s no time to talk now. Let’s go.”

However, they took their time getting to the atrium unseen, taking a route that would minimize the chances of running into Thicknesse or other high officials. Still, it had only taken them five minutes to get there, but things were already different. Ordinarily, it would have been nearly empty late on a Saturday afternoon. But now there were many small groups of witches and wizards scattered about the vast room. Kingsley recognized a couple of Aurors from his department among them. Ominously, however, he did not recognize many of the others -- who seemed to be in charge. Each group seemed to be receiving instructions from the strangers. As he and Fudge watched from a passageway just off the atrium, one of the groups paired off and Disapparated. Then another group did the same.

Kingsley and Fudge looked at each other knowingly. Without saying anything, Kingsley grabbed Fudge’s arm, stepped into the atrium and turned on the spot. They Apparated into what appeared to be a very nice one room efficiency apartment. The afternoon sun shone brightly through the open curtained window.

“Where are we?” inquired Fudge.

“Ten Downing Street, adjoining the Muggle Prime Ministers’ Office,” said Kingsley matter-of-factly.

“What?” exclaimed Fudge. “Impossible! I’d have known about this!”

“Dumbledore...” started Kingsley.

“Dumbledore!” exclaimed Fudge again, angrily cutting across him. “Always interfering in Ministry affairs...”

“Please let me finish,” interrupted Shacklebolt. “For your sake, you’ll be glad he did.”

Fudge shut his mouth abruptly and demonstrably crossed his arms while staring sharply at Kingsley.

Kingsley shook his head slightly at Fudge’s temperamental behavior and then continued, “Dumbledore created this room himself soon after Vol...”

“He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named!” insisted Fudge, interrupting Shacklebolt.

“As you wish,” said Kingsley, raising his eyes in exasperation, but complying.

“...after You-Know-Who announced his plans for Muggle domination nearly twenty five years ago. So it predates your term as Minister. It was used by the Order of the Phoenix to provide additional protection to the Muggle Prime Minister whenever deemed necessary.”

Fudge snorted, but Kingsley ignored him and went on. “But it was primarily intended for use in case what happened today ever did. I suspect that only a wizard with Dumbledore’s prodigious skills at transfiguration could have created it. Few everyone in the Order know about it. Only those who have ever been assigned by Dumbledore to protect the Muggle Prime Minister know of it and are sworn to secrecy.”

“This is your safe house, Fudge. There is no better one in England, but it comes with a price. To stay here you must accept the mission to protect the Muggle Prime Minister -- so long as You-Know-Who remains a threat.” He paused and then said very slowly and deliberately, “Do you accept?”

Fudge stammered, “But what..?”

Kingsley cut him off. “There will be no negotiation. Do you accept -- yes or no?”

Fudge looked at Kingsley resentfully, but after a short pause said, “Yes.”

“Good. But I warn you; you need to mean it,” said Kingsley quite seriously. “If you are not truly willing to perform the duty of protecting the Muggle Prime Minister, the room will cast you out when I leave. It can be quite nasty about it.”

Kingsley grinned.

Fudge’s eyes widened. Then he said, “I do mean it.” He paused for a moment and then continued, “I should have seen it coming, Kingsley -- the Dark coup, I mean. They wanted to know where Potter is hiding. Scrimgeour didn’t know, but wouldn’t say anything, even under torture. He died bravely. I have a lot to make up for.”

Kingsley nodded approvingly and then went on, “Then I’ll give you a brief overview of the room.”

“The room will provide everything you need except food. But you can easily summon that from the kitchen. It is quite excellent. That door...” Kingsley pointed to the only door in the room (the toilet area only had a privacy wall) “...is to the Muggle Prime Minister’s office. When a witch or wizard opens that door from his office, this room appears -- but only if he or she he has been given the location by the secret keeper. When anyone else opens that door, the Minister’s personal bathroom appears. No Muggle can accidentally enter this room. If you opened the door and entered and they followed right behind you (or vice versa) you would end up in this room and they would end up in the bathroom. But if you hold onto the Minister (or any Muggle) they will enter this room with you. Clear so far?” asked Kingsley.

Fudge nodded.

“Next...” Kingsley pointed to a very large mirror on the wall next to the door. “You can use that mirror to see into any room in this building that has a mirror. Most do -- certainly any room the Minister is likely to be in. Just say ‘Show the Minister’ and it will show you the Muggle Prime Minister.”



The mirror instantly showed what appeared to be a drawing room with the Minister sitting in a winged back chair reading a newspaper.

“When the Minister is in his office, the mirror will automatically show him there. You can comfortably view the mirror from anywhere in this room. Saying ‘Show me’ returns the mirror to its normal function except when the Minister is in his office. See?” as the mirror suddenly reflected the safe room. “The reasons for this command will soon become obvious. Everyone needs privacy performing certain *activities*.”

Fudge coughed, “Of course.”

Kingsley continued, “You can hear anything said in the Minister’s office from this room, but not elsewhere in the building. The mirror does not provide remote sound. A Muffliato Charm prevents anything said, or any sound short of an explosion, in this room from being heard in the Minister’s office.”

“Finally, as I indicated, this room is protected by the Fidelius Charm. I am one of the secret keepers. You will not be able to tell anyone how to get to this room. You can use Apparation to come and go, but I would advise against leaving this building for any reason -- given your circumstances. Only use Apparation within this building to protect the Minister from You-Know-Who and his followers. Bring the Minister into this room in such situations, but don’t tell him about it until then.”

“Clear?” asked Kingsley. Fudge nodded again, though he began to look a little overwhelmed. Shacklebolt ignored this.

“Now, I need to go find out if the Death Eaters suspect me in helping you escape. I don’t think Runcorn or Yaxley saw me, but, in either case, it will affect what I do next. I will be back shortly because we need to prepare for a visit from Pius Thicknesse. I expect him to introduce himself to the Muggle Prime Minister early next week, if not first thing,” said Kingsley. “You already know the Muggle Prime Minister, so that should make these new arrangements easier.”

Fudge nodded in agreement.

“When I get back, we’ll discuss how we’re going to protect the Muggle Prime Minister,” said Kingsley. “I also need to teach you about a more powerful version of the Imperius Curse. Dumbledore learned it from Grindelwald...”

“Grindelwald!” exclaimed Fudge in surprise.

“Yes,” said Shacklebolt with a grim smile. “Dumbledore said he learned it from him soon after they first met -- when they were planning to take over the wizarding world... I’m sure you’re aware of Skeeter’s book on Dumbledore.”

“Of course,” said Fudge.

“Well, Grindelwald was a brilliant wizard, and his study of the Dark Arts was extensive, even at an early age. We know he was expelled from Durmstrang for it. One of the things he worked on was layering and nesting the Imperius Curse so he could create double or even triple agents. If he were to determine one of his own supporters were Imperiused by his enemies against him, he could use a more powerful version to work around the original curse without breaking it. The enemies would think they still had their agent, but he or she would now actually be working against them. The Imperiused agent wouldn’t even know.”

“Ingenious,” said Fudge.

“Quite,” said Kingsley. “Still, it’s very confusing to me. Apparently, there are multiple versions of the Imperius Curse depending on the results you want. I only know the basics,” admitted Kingsley. Then he looked as if he weren’t sure he should say what he said next. “At times, I’ve wondered if Dumbledore was using it on Snape. But I don’t think so.”

Fudge was not quite sure what Shacklebolt was referring to, but did not ask.

“Is there anything else you need to know before I leave?” asked Shacklebolt, looking at Fudge, who now looked a bit shell shocked.

Fudge seemed to gather himself after the question and asked, “Why were you there?”

“Pardon me,” said Kingsley, not understanding.

“You saved me,” said Fudge. “How was it you came to my office?”

“Ah,” said Kingsley. “I was on my way to give Scrimgeour an update on the Muggle Prime Minister -- I had been assigned by Scrimgeour as his Auror bodyguard -- when I saw Runcorn standing in the hallway outside the Minister’s

office. He looked nervous and it didn't look right. Fortunately he didn't see me and I moved out of sight. A few seconds later, Thicknesse came out and Runcorn went in. I waited until Thicknesse was gone and then went down the hall. The door to the Minister's office was locked so I knew something was wrong. I decided to try going in through your office in case they had an alarm spell on the Minister's door. You know the rest."

Fudge nodded. For the first time, he seemed to have somewhat recovered from the ordeal but not from missing so much sleep in the last day and a half. He held out his hand to Kingsley and said very sincerely, "Thank you for saving my life."

Kingsley smiled and shook Fudge's hand. Then he relinquished it, stepped back and Disapparated.

### Chapter 3 -- The Muggle Prime Minister

The Muggle Prime Minister arrived in his office quite early on Monday morning. The only reason he had not worked all weekend was his wife's insistence that he take some time off and relax -- as if that were possible.

The number of unusual deaths, many of which were obviously murders -- some quite grisly and disturbing -- had been steadily increasing since the 'Other Prime Minister' had informed him of the return of their world's dreaded Dark Wizard. The public was becoming alarmed and some in the press were suggesting a death cult was operating throughout the country. Members of Parliament were demanding an official investigation. One opposition member had even proposed a law banning death cults. The situation was getting out of hand.

The Minister was reviewing the draft of a speech on the matter when he heard the familiar cough of the froglike little man in the small oil painting in the far corner of the office. That cough had always meant an announcement of the imminent arrival of the 'Other Prime Minister.' If this had not always meant bad news, he might have welcomed it now, since he was anxious for an explanation of the increasing number of strange deaths.

"To the Prime Minister of Muggles," said the portrait, "the new Minister for Magic, Pius Thicknesse, will be arriving shortly to introduce himself."

'A new Minister for Magic -- so soon?' thought the Muggle Prime Minister. He wondered if Scrimgeour had also been sacked, like Fudge, because of the increasing mayhem and deaths. It did not give him comfort that it might also eventually mean his own political undoing. He stared nervously at the fireplace.

He waited only moments and then green flames erupted. A tall thin man in very elegant purple robes with gold embroidery stepped out of the flames and onto the hearth rug.

Without speaking, the man began to raise his arm and point a wand at the Minister, who had just begun to rise in welcome from the chair behind his desk.

*"Imperio Prioritas!"*

The booming command had come, not from the tall well-dressed man facing the Minister, but the far side of the room to his left. In fact, it had come from the Minister's private bathroom, because two men he recognized, Kingsley Shacklebolt and Cornelius Fudge, were striding out from it. Both had their wands pointed at the visitor.

The Minister quickly shifted his eyes back to the tall visitor thinking he was about to witness a wizard battle, but the tall man now stood like a manikin. Both arms were hanging at his sides. He still held his wand, but it was pointed at the floor. His eyes were clearly out focus.

"Don't worry, Minister," said Shacklebolt reassuringly. "Everything is under control. You are safe. We will explain everything."

"Was he going to kill me?" asked the Minister, who now sat heavily back into his desk chair. "It happened so fast... Who is he -- surely not the new Minister for Magic? But the portrait had announced his arrival. Has your ministry been compromised by the Dark Wizard that Scrimgeour warned me about? I'm supposed to call security in such situations, but now I suppose I should wait?" The Minister had asked all these questions a rush.

"Yes. Please wait, Minister," said Shacklebolt holding up his hands. "Let me explain."

Meanwhile, Fudge continued to point his wand at the tall man.

“Fine... I’m ready. It can’t be *good* news,” said the Minister, now leaning forward and placing his hands on his desk.

“It is a long story, but I’ll summarize it for you. Fudge can fill you in on the details after I go,” said Kingsley. “Before I begin, I’ll mention that we won’t be disturbed until we’re finished. After you arrived this morning, we placed a charm on your office door that will make anyone who touches it forget why they wanted to come in and return to what they were doing before. Also, we disabled your silent alarm to security as a precaution -- for *their* safety.”

The minister’s eyebrows rose slightly, but he did not say anything.

Kingsley continued. “The Ministry of Magic has indeed fallen to the Dark Wizard, as you refer to him, that both Fudge and Scrimgeour told you about. Scrimgeour has been killed, and Pius Thicknesse, the man standing there,” Kingsley gestured at him, “is his puppet Minister for Magic. We guessed that he would visit you, but we don’t know what he was going to do. Clearly he was about to perform magic on you -- before I intervened -- and we are now going to find out what. I hit him with a curse that puts him under my control.”

Kingsley turned toward Thicknesse, pointed his wand at him and said, “Tell me what you were going to do to the Muggle Prime Minister.”

In a dull monotone, Thicknesse said, “I was going to put him under the Impirius Curse and order him to create a series of scandals in the government leading to a crisis of confidence. He would prolong the crisis as long as possible and then commit suicide. I would repeat the process with each succeeding Muggle Prime Minister until there was anarchy, in order to pave the way for the Muggle takeover by the Dark Lord.”

The Minister gasped.

For the first time, Fudge spoke. “Minister, I think now you fully appreciate the danger He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named poses to your world too.”

The Minister nodded, but Kingsley responded curtly, “No time for lectures, Cornelius,” and then stated, “It’s a nasty situation, but manageable.”

“How do propose to manage my ‘suicide’?” asked the Minister dryly.

“If it comes to that, we’ll have you disappear until the crisis is over,” said Kingsley. “You will just have to use your considerable political skills to slow-walk the situation. Just start the investigation you were planning and drag out the process. The Dark Wizard and his followers think Muggles are stupid and incompetent. If you seem to be doing something, they will accept it as slow progress for a long time. They are currently focused on consolidating the takeover the wizarding world. This is just preliminary work in your world, and they won’t be paying that much attention to it.”

The Minister did not look happy, but nodded.

“As I said, Thicknesse is under my control,” said Kingsley in a more reassuring tone, “but I must be very careful about what I order him to do... for two reasons. First, he is already under the same curse from another wizard to ensure he follows the Dark Wizard’s commands. Even though my curse is stronger and takes priority, it would create a conflict if I told him not to carry out his orders from the first wizard. It could drive him mad -- which can happen anyway if a wizard tries to resist this second curse.”

Kingsley was clearly enjoying his explanation. “In his case, madness under the first curse is very unlikely; it almost never happens and Thicknesse was already sympathetic to the Dark Wizard before he was selected to be his puppet Minister for Magic. It was the position Thicknesse, a very ambitious Ministry official, coveted anyway. So, he is unlikely to ever resist the first curse. But if I gave him conflicting orders under my curse, it could trigger madness that would ruin everything. So I have to give him orders that will not create any serious conflict. But it also means he must actually carry out his first instructions, and have a real memory of it, so he can speak the truth about it. A memory charm has limits, especially around the ‘Dark Wizard’. Because of this, Minister, you need to play a key role,” finished Kingsley, looking intently at the Muggle Prime Minister.

“What...?” was all the Minister was able to say.

Kingsley looked at Fudge, who pointed his wand at the Minister and said, “*Imperio Prioritas.*”

Fudge then added, “Done.”

Kingsley looked at the Minister, who had not changed position, but now had a cheerful expression on his face.

“I’m sorry, Minister,” said Kingsley sincerely. “There was no other way. This is for your own protection. As a Muggle, you have no ability whatsoever to fight the Imperius Curse, but it also means you would not risk madness from it. You can’t help but feel an unwavering compulsion to carry out your instructions. It will even feel good to do so. Because this is the first curse, and an especially strong version that few wizards are aware of, you will carry it out even if you receive one from another wizard, who will almost certainly use the common version. Given the instructions Fudge gave you, there is virtually no chance of a conflict, so inconsistent behavior is not a concern.”

“I don’t understand?” asked the Minister appearing confused. “I don’t feel anything?”

“That’s because nothing has happened to trigger a response to your instructions,” answered Fudge. “The instruction I gave you is simply to notify me or Kingsley if someone places another Imperius Curse on you. And to notify us as early as possible when you can safely do so without the person who did it knowing. Otherwise, you will carry out the other instructions.”

“But wouldn’t carrying out those other instructions faithfully be exactly the opposite of what you want?” asked the Minister.

“Certainly,” responded Kingsley, “But as soon as you notify us, we will come and lift the other curse. Only ours will remain in place. You will remember what they told you to do and we will decide together on the course of action to ensure Thicknesse, or whoever, thinks you are still under their curse.”

“Are you ready?” asked Kingsley.

“Ready for what?” replied the Minister.

“I told you this would be too complicated for a Muggle to understand,” said Fudge in an I-told-you-so tone.

“Not now, Fudge,” said Kingsley sounding a little irritated. “Minister, we are going to go back into your bathroom for a few minutes. Just start to get up out of your chair when you hear me speak -- just like you were doing when Thicknesse stepped out of the fireplace.”

The Minister nodded, looking a little nervous.

Kingsley and Fudge retreated behind the bathroom door. Their wands were barely protruding through the slightly open door.

The Minister heard Fudge say what sounded like, "*Obliviate*" with a Latin pronunciation and then Kingsley say, "*Imperio Prioritas*" again.

The Minister started to rise from his desk chair extending his hand and looking at Thicknesse. At the same time Thicknesse's eyes snapped into focus. He raised his wand, pointed it at the minister and said, "*Imperio*."

The Minister stopped raising his hand. He stood upright, walked around his desk, kneeled before Thickness, and bowed his head. Thicknesse proceeded to lecture the Minister on the Muggles coming debasement, the wizarding world taking its rightful place over the Muggles under the leadership of the Dark Lord, and the Minister's role in bringing it about. He then had the Minister kiss his shoes. He spat on the Minister's back and then, with a laugh, turned and walked back into the green flames of the fireplace while throwing a pinch of power and muttering, "The Ministry of Magic."

As soon as Thicknesse had left, the Minister stood up and, without thinking, immediately called out, "Kingsley, Fudge!"

The two wizards emerged from the bathroom door.

"What were you two doing in my bathroom?" asked the Minister suspiciously, but then suddenly said in a monotone, "I was just put under the Impirius Curse by Pius Thickness." Then his tone returned to suspicion. "You shouldn't be in here without my permission. You should go now. I have a lot of work to do..."

Fudge pointed his wand at the Minister and said, "*Imperius Novus Finite*."

The Minister shook his head like he had just woken up, then his eyes widened. "Oh my God, I remember! He ordered me to do all the things he said earlier. And I wanted to do them -- like it was my only goal in life. However, after he left, I had a desperate urge to call you and tell you that I had been cursed by Thicknesse. But as soon as I'd done so, I was back on course with what Thicknesse told me to do."



Kingsley said, "Exactly as planned, Minister." Then he said to Fudge, "Help the Muggle Prime Minister forget everything he witnessed after Thickness first arrived and until I gave Thickness the second *Prioritas* command, which is to continue to obey the instructions under his first Imperius Curse -- unless I tell him otherwise."

But the Minister did not seem to be listening. He waivered unsteadily and leaned heavily against his desk. He shuddered and said, "I've never experienced such *evil* before. I want to help you *fight* it."

Kingsley shook his head and said, "Sorry, you can't. You have to play your role. If the 'Dark Wizard' became aware of Muggle resistance, it would cause wholesale Muggle slaughter. It has to be this way."

"I understand, but I *don't* like it," said the Minister bitterly. Then he asked, "How do I contact you if you aren't here?"

Kingsley said, "Fudge is going to be here permanently. I'll still be working undercover for the Ministry of Magic as one of your assistants until I'm ordered to stop, which I expect to happen very soon. But once open warfare begins, I'll have to leave in any case. That's why I brought in Fudge. He will remain in the shadows -- invisible to your staff. If you call him and he does not appear, use this watch."

Kingsley produced a fine looking gold wrist watch from his robe pocket and handed it to the Minister. "Tap the glass face of the dial sharply three times with your fingernail and one or both of us will come as quickly as possible. You can practice with Fudge later. You must wear it at all times... Remember, your life depends on it," Kingsley added for dramatic emphasis. "I need to leave now for the rest of the day. Fudge will answer all your questions."

"How can I thank you?" asked the Minister.

"No need," said Kingsley. "We're all fighting together." He bowed to the Minister, nodded to Fudge, and walked back into the Minister's bathroom.

The Minister turned to Fudge and said, "How can we *lose* with men like that on *our* side?"

Fudge smiled briefly and said, “Yes, he is very impressive. To be honest, I always saw him as a potential rival. I’m betting he’ll become Minister for Magic if we win this war.” Then, changing back to the matter at hand, he asked, “So what are your questions?”

“I’m sure I’ll have many questions later,” said the Minister, “but for now I have only one. Why did Thicknesse go on that verbal rant? The real instructions he gave me... I heard them inside my head.”

Fudge nodded. “It just proves that Thicknesse is truly a Muggle-hating Dark Wizard who is willingly carrying out the commands of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. It had nothing to do with him being under the Imperius Curse. He didn’t need to say anything out loud to get you to do what he wanted.”

“I suppose it doesn’t matter, but it makes me feel better knowing that Thicknesse is *evil* rather than a good person being made to do evil against his will,” the Minister said earnestly.

Fudge shrugged.

The Minister then said, “I’m starving. I can order us some breakfast...”

“No thank you, Minister. What I desperately need is more sleep,” said Fudge. “Call me if you need me. Also, for non emergencies, you can use just two slow taps on the watch, and I’ll come as soon as I can to assist you.”

Fudge smiled, pointed his wand at the office door and the Minister’s desk and said, “I’m just removing the Confundus Charms on the door and security call switch.” Then he performed a silent *Obliviate* on the Minister as Kingsley had instructed. Finally, he turned and walked through the bathroom door and closed it.

Fudge was exhausted. He wasted no time. He collapsed onto the bed in the safe apartment without pulling down the covers or taking off his robes. He was asleep almost immediately.

With a quizzical look on his face, the Minister walked over and opened the bathroom door and went in. He admitted to himself he was not surprised when he did not find Fudge inside. He just reminded himself to ask Fudge later how it worked.

The Minister closed the bathroom door, returned to his desk and picked up the telephone intending to have breakfast sent up.

Instead, his eyes briefly unfocused and he proceeded to dial a very long telephone number. The line made various electronic sounding noises and clicks for some time. Then it finally seemed to make a connection. However, no one spoke at the other end. The line hummed in a very odd sort of way.

Then the Minister said, “For the greater good...”

When he had finished making his report, he hung up. His eyes refocused. Then, without remembering anything about the call he had just completed, he picked up the phone again and ordered breakfast.

The End

End Notes:

Chapter 2: Text in **bold** is an excerpt from Chapter 8, “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” by JK Rowling.