

Chapter 91

Chapter Notes

Here it is, the moment you've all been waiting for ;)

Life went on. Far quicker than Harry anticipated, the students of Hogwarts moved on from the drama of the Amortentia — once Ron was out of the Hospital Wing and he and Hermione had made up, there wasn't really much to gossip about. Romilda hardly showed her face outside meals, and Harry ignored anyone who tried to ask him about it.

Since nothing *awful* had happened, only Ron making a fool of himself in front of the whole school, everyone seemed perfectly happy to just brush it off as a prank gone wrong, look to the next bit of juicy gossip — look back to the question of who Harry was taking to Slughorn's party.

Part of Harry didn't blame them for not wanting to dwell on it. But another part of Harry — the part that was still diligently checking every meal, every drink, refusing anything that was handed to him from anyone he didn't trust — couldn't believe how little they cared about how catastrophic it could have all been.

Then again, with Dumbledore as their example, how could he expect anything less?

As the Christmas holidays — and Slughorn's party — drew closer, the students began to get restless. Harry didn't doubt many of them would be staying at the castle over the break, their homes too dangerous to return to. Since the Floo Network was now being monitored, Professor Flitwick had offered to create portkeys for everyone who wished to go home; which was technically illegal, but so were half a dozen other things the staff were doing, including harbouring Harry Potter. Harry had already been assured that Snape would take him and Draco home with a portkey of their own, and the matter had been cleared through McGonagall. That also meant that McGonagall would assume Harry was spending Christmas at Malfoy Manor, but considering how tight the manor's wards were locked down, Harry didn't see that being a problem.

Ordinarily, Hogwarts would have been abuzz with children eager to go home for Christmas, to have a break from classes and homework. And they were still eager for that, but it was... more wary. Fragile. Like wounded animals waiting for a chance to slink away and heal in private.

Everyone knew what lurked beyond the castle walls. Not everyone was confident in their own safety should they step past them.