

after the rumours floating around from third year, and he was sure they must have seen him use it against the boggart dementor in the maze during the Third Task. Had his attacker been hoping to get him expelled? His wand snapped, banned from Hogwarts — an easy target for Voldemort?

He looked up when another owl flew in through the still open window. This one was larger, and had a longer letter, though it too didn't stay for a reply.

*Harry,*

*I'm so very sorry about what happened to your cousin. This is a truly terrible event, and rest assured I have people investigating the matter as we speak.*

*I have spoken to members of the Ministry who deal in covering up instances of magic use in front of muggles; due to the nature of the way Dudley was found, they have told the muggle officials the boy died of natural causes. The Ministry is also trying to bury this information amongst its people; I'm afraid Minister Fudge is still unwilling to see the truth of Voldemort's return, and refuses to believe someone other than the Ministry might have control over the dementors. It is being treated as an outlying incident, and no doubt will have vanished from record by the morning.*

*Stay inside the house, and don't do anything rash. A Ministry official will likely be by shortly to discuss your whereabouts and explain the truth to your aunt and uncle. Answer any questions they may have — you did nothing wrong here, Harry. This is all just a cruel and unfortunate case of poor timing.*

*I will keep you updated as the case progresses. Stay safe, and stay alert.*

*Sincerely,*

*Albus Dumbledore*

Harry had to read the missive several times over, staring incredulously at the elaborate cursive.

A cruel and unfortunate case of poor timing?? His cousin was *soulless*. Someone had purposely tried to endanger Harry, and Dudley was dead as a result. Here Dumbledore was acting as if it was just a bit of a mix-up!

He snorted in disgust, shaking his head and tossing the letter aside. He wasn't remotely surprised the Ministry was trying to cover it all up. It wouldn't be great for Fudge's reputation if it got out that not only had a dementor gone on a jaunt far from Azkaban, but it had hunted down the Boy-Who-Lived and kissed a muggle in the process.

Abruptly, Harry realised that his hands were trembling, his breath coming short and fast. He tucked his knees up to his chest, trying to steady himself. He was fine, why was he panicking? The danger had passed — he'd never been in any danger to begin with! Only Dudley had.