

More than one person was murmuring about Fudge needing to be sacked, and up at the head table Umbridge had a white-knuckled grip on her knife and fork. Harry was surprised she wasn't trying to take house points for the blatant defamation of her beloved Minister; perhaps she realised she didn't have a good argument against the truth, this time.

Wishing he could do something to stop the tremors he could feel running through Neville's body, Harry turned to look at the rest of the school, stomach clenching at the sight of so many fearful, horrified faces. Even the Slytherin table wasn't immune to it — while there were some poorly-hidden expressions of triumph, there were just as many who looked like they might be ill. Several of the children Harry knew to have Death Eater parents were among them; did they know, what now awaited them when they left school? Did they expect these Azkaban escapees to be waiting for them, ready to welcome them into the fold?

His gaze landed on Draco, who was making a valiant effort at pretending to be unaffected; pleased, even. But Harry could see the faint shake of his hand, the terror in his eyes.

He knew they were all very likely at his home, now. He knew that Bellatrix Lestrange would be *delighted* to see her little sister again.

Harry forced himself to look away, before he did something stupid. He let his eyes trail over the other Slytherins; Blaise and Daphne had their heads down, huddled together with some fourth years. Pansy was halfheartedly picking at a bowl of fruit, while beside her Tracey Davis was actually *laughing* at something, trying to get the attention of Theodore Nott — who, oddly enough, was looking over at the Hufflepuff table. At Susan.

Susan had mentioned spending time with him over Christmas, catching him up on all the heirs' plans. Maybe they were friends, now.

"Have you seen the rest of it?" Ginny asked suddenly, making Harry's heart sink. There was more??

Ginny flipped the pages of the paper, showing him a smaller article — practically hidden amongst the extended coverage of the escapees and their crimes. '*Tragic Demise of Ministry of Magic Worker*'. Apparently some man named Bode had been sent a Devil's Snare disguised as a pot plant to his bed in St Mungo's, and it had killed him.

"I've heard Dad talk about him before," Ginny murmured quietly. "He works in the Department of Mysteries."

Harry tensed, and felt Neville do the same beside him. A blatant assassination — no one sent Devil's Snare *by accident* — of an Unspeakable, who was already in the hospital in suspect circumstances? That couldn't be anything good.

A bell rang, and half the hall jumped — in light of the news, most of them seemed to have forgotten they had classes to go to.

The absolute last thing Harry wanted to do right then was go and listen to Binns drone on for forty-five minutes. But life went on; there was nothing they could do about the break-out from within the school.