

control of the Ministry buildings and its departments, but no new laws or regulations could be passed — it wasn't an ideal situation, but it could have been a whole lot worse.

"Oh, look, Harry," Sully piped up, pointing at a section of the open paper. "They've put a price on your head already."

Harry frowned, reaching for Susan's abandoned copy of the paper to take a look for himself. Sure enough, there was a small article declaring that a reward of five thousand galleons would be offered to anyone who could capture Harry Potter, on suspicion of '*conspiracy against the Ministry*'. Harry snorted.

"Good to know how much I'm worth, I suppose."

"Can they even do that?" Parvati asked, wrinkling her nose. Harry shrugged.

"Probably not, but it's Voldemort; he's not exactly playing by the rules. Not like they can send aurors to the school for me." Or, rather, not like they would try; not with Dumbledore and a school full of students in their way.

Harry would just have to be careful in Hogsmeade, and when wandering the school alone. But he doubted any of the students would try anything with him.

"I just hate that we don't have a single source of unbiased news in this country," Susan muttered, scowling. "It's alright for us; we've got people in the know, and we've got Harry — we know the truth. Everyone outside the school, however..."

It was like the year before, but much, much worse.

"Why don't you bring the *Quibbler* into the mix, hun?" Daphne asked Luna, but the blonde Ravenclaw shook her head.

"I would like to help, but something awful will happen to Daddy if he gets involved. The nargles have told me."

Several of them grimaced; they knew better than to go against Luna's creature warnings, especially ones that were quite so explicit.

"It'll be fine, for now," Harry assured, sounding far more confident than he felt. "They don't have enough manpower to kill everyone at the Ministry who doesn't actively support them, not without running the country to the ground. Let them try and convince people to their politics — we'll get them, when the time comes."

Just under a year, until Harry turned seventeen. They could handle things until then.

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There was one more person at the school Harry had yet to greet properly now he was back — after breakfast, with a promise to spend time with Draco after lunch, Harry snuck down to the Chamber of Secrets, happily greeting Salazar's painting; and immediately launching into a summary of everything that had happened since he'd last been in the office.