

The lights dimmed of their own accord, and the only sound was the steady breathing of the two boys, entwined together like they would never again let go, slowly drifting off to sleep.

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McGonagall's first act as headmistress was to cancel all of Friday's classes, so everyone could adjust to the events of the week. None of them were going to argue with that. At breakfast — after a brief detour to the Hospital Wing, where Madam Pomfrey confirmed Snape's findings on Harry's health — Harry sidled up to the staff table, where the new headmistress was reading a scroll with one hand and eating toast with another. "Is there anything myself or the other heirs can do to make things easier for you?" he asked, earning a keen-eyed look from the woman.

"I daresay you've enough on your plates as it is," she returned. "Not to worry, Mr Potter — there has been enough disruption to this school year that I feel a little more cannot make things much worse." Her lips quirked ruefully. "Though for future disruption, a warning would be appreciated."

Harry laughed. "I'll do my best, but no promises." In response, McGonagall just clicked her tongue and shooed him away, back to where Draco sat with their friends. The mood in the hall was somber, almost shell-shocked. Even those who knew the truth of Dumbledore had not expected him to fall so far so fast.

"I wonder how long it'll take for word to spread," he mused, glancing around as the morning post arrived. It was barely a handful of owls these days, most of which were *Prophet* delivery birds. Since returning after Christmas, the whole population of the school seemed to have agreed that they were buckled down for the long haul, a small pocket of sanctuary away from the disruption of the rest of the world. Letters to loved ones were risky, now.

The news that Albus Dumbledore had kidnapped and tried to murder Harry Potter would likely make it out of the castle sooner rather than later, but with practically everyone outside of Hogwarts either in hiding or under Voldemort's thumb, it may not make it much further than that.

"Likely just rumours, until after the war," Draco pointed out. "Even if the *Prophet* did write anything, no one would believe it these days." He sent a disparaging glance at Susan's copy of the paper; she was the only one of their group who bothered, insisting that *someone* needed to be aware of the enemy's propaganda.

"It's a shame we can't spread word some other way," Harry sighed. "I can't— I don't want this getting swept under the rug as just more war bullshit." A lot of questionable actions would be forgiven in the name of wartime, and he worried most of Dumbledore's crimes would end up under the same umbrella. Even with the old man dying from a dark curse, the idea of people heralding his name and idolising him long after he was dead made him sick to his stomach.

Albus Dumbledore deserved to be thought of with disdain, posthumously.