

“You should’ve heard the *speech* she gave. The Ministry don’t like the things Dumbledore’s spouting, so they’re determined to interfere in Hogwarts and undermine him. No doubt Fudge has his little sycophant searching for something he can use to get Albus sacked.” Truly, Severus wouldn’t mind that outcome — if there was any way to trust that whoever the Ministry replaced him with wouldn’t be a thousand times worse. Better the devil you know, after all.

“Well, that explains the bloody Slinkhard book,” Remus muttered derisively. “I suppose we should be grateful she didn’t set someone more like Argent.”

Just the name of the man who wrote books detailing the number of ways to *dispose of* werewolves and other dark creatures made Severus hiss angrily. “No, instead we’ll have a whole year of children learning nothing but *theory*, and being told to shut up and let the Ministry handle everything,” he spat. “And I have to sit at the same bloody table as her for every meal of the day and *somehow* not slip poison in her tea.”

The woman was utterly foul — responsible for half the woes of the last fifteen years of Remus’ life, and here to cause trouble in *his* school besides.

Remus stepped forward, hands sliding over Severus’ shoulders, kneading at the tense muscle. “With any luck, the curse on the position will take care of that for us,” he joked quietly, brushing a kiss across Severus’ cheek. The Potions Master couldn’t help but lean into the touch, turning towards his Gryffindor like a flower seeking the sun. “She’ll come after you,” Remus murmured knowingly. Severus was a Marked Death Eater, and they knew damn well Fudge didn’t believe anything about him being a spy for Dumbledore. “But not until after she’s already gone for Hagrid, and Flitwick, and every teacher on staff who takes offence at her presence. She’s there to keep the students downtrodden and complacent — who does that better than Professor Severus Snape?”

His amber eyes were dancing teasingly, Severus could hardly believe how calm he was being. The woman had made his life hell, would be making his family’s life hell for the next year, and here he was making *jokes*. Severus would have been plotting a dozen or more *accidents* for her to befall while on staff.

He already had eight lined up in his mind.

Soft lips pressed to his, a hand cradling the back of his neck. “She’ll be after Harry,” Remus continued. “And his friends, if she ever realises they’re just a year or two away from completely tearing her beloved Ministry apart. And look on the bright side — if she’s busy at the school, she won’t have the time to pass any more of her barbaric creature laws.” Remus paused, looking up at him. “Has Dumbledore taken proxy of her seat?”

It was hard for Severus to think with those gentle fingers stroking the short hairs at the base of his neck, and it took a couple of seconds for him to answer. “No, she’s kept it. Fudge’s doing, I’m sure.” Remus frowned, but stepped in closer.

“Shame. But this isn’t the end of the world, Severus. This is an enemy we know. And this is an enemy you, my devious snake, can easily outwit.” When the Gryffindor pulled back, his eyes were glowing, lips curled in a wolfish grin. “She’s going to think she can take on our