

Chapter 83

The *Prophet* were getting bolder in their attempts to defame Harry, full of quotes from Dumbledore and other ‘anonymous witnesses’ about Harry’s *concerning* behaviours at school in the past year. Luckily, according to the letter Harry had just received from Mrs Frobisher, the last issue was enough for her to send one hell of a Cease-And-Desist in their direction.

It won't stop Dumbledore, but it'll give you some peace from the Prophet. And Amelia and I are working on the rest. We're handling this, Harry. Don't worry.

It was a novel feeling, having someone so dedicated to protecting his public image. He knew it would only do so much — the damage had been done with what Dumbledore had already said — but it was reassuring to know that it would all stop soon.

Now that they were securely into August, it felt like the new school year was looming far too close on the horizon. Harry knew a month was a long time — they’d already fit so much into the first month of summer, after all — but even so, the little clock in the back of his mind was ticking ominously.

It was a strange world indeed, when going back to school felt like going into enemy territory.

Still, the rest of the household were determined not to let him get too caught up in his worries. He trained when he could, and still made time for fun things with the others — and if it looked like he was getting too stuck in his own head with all his worries, Draco was happy to drag him upstairs while their guardians pointedly pretended not to notice.

Harry had to fight the dreamy smile that threatened to take over when he thought about his boyfriend, who had become so much bolder since the day after Harry’s birthday, when they had finally taken that step. It was like Draco had been holding his breath, wondering if every chance alone would turn into *the big one*, but now they had... Harry didn’t want to say *got it over with*, but now they had reached that point and both enjoyed the process, Draco was more relaxed in the bedroom than Harry had seen him since before exams.

Though they tried not to spend every night together; not because of fears of their guardians saying anything — it was clear that everyone in the house knew that the two boys were having sex, much to their embarrassment — but because neither of them wanted to get used to falling asleep together and then struggle to separate once they got back to Hogwarts.

Also, Harry was still having visions most nights, and he wanted to make sure Draco got *some* sleep that wasn’t interrupted by his flailing and screaming.

But they weren’t completely co-dependent, and aimed to stay that way — as such, Draco and Narcissa were off catching up with everyone at Malfoy Manor for the day, while Harry was in the library with Remus. Sirius and Charlie were... somewhere in the house, and Harry did not want to contemplate that too closely.