

Chapter 81

The morning *Prophet* often made the occupants of Seren Du fill with rage, but this one managed to have Sirius swearing before a single page had been opened.

The front page story covered how a transport of prisoners to Azkaban had been ‘attacked’ and the prisoners — all convicted Death Eaters — had broken free. *Miraculously*, both aurors involved were entirely unharmed.

“Scrimgeour is going to be the death of all of us, that incompetent fool,” Snape muttered, glaring daggers at the newspaper. Harry reached for it, wanting to read just how badly the Ministry had fucked up this time. Their new Minister was much more focused on looking like he was doing something externally than dealing with the many problems within the Ministry itself, so things like this would only keep happening.

“At least they’ve finally admitted they don’t have control over the dementors,” Harry pointed out, gesturing to a section on the third page that was a response to all the calls for harsher punishments, for all the confirmed Death Eaters to be Kissed immediately. It was only a tiny admission, hidden in a much larger paragraph about how the Kiss was too drastic — citing Sirius as an example of how that could go poorly, as if he’d even had a trial the first time round. But there it was; *Azkaban prison no longer serves as the home for the dementors, and their use in guarding prisoners has ceased to be Ministry protocol*. Like they’d just decided against it, rather than had all the dementors bugger off to join Voldemort.

“Well they’ve had to, after all the attacks further north,” Remus reasoned. “They’d rather admit they’ve lost the dementors than pretend they haven’t and take responsibility for that whole village that got Kissed.”

Harry shuddered at the reminder; that had been a truly awful attack to read about.

Not for the first time, Harry wondered if there would be anything left of wizarding Britain by the time he turned seventeen. So much had happened already in the time Voldemort had gone public... what if he couldn’t afford to wait.

“I know what you’re thinking, and stop it,” Draco muttered, bumping his knee against Harry’s. “You’re not responsible for any of this.”

“But I know how to stop him—“

“So does Dumbledore, and he sure as hell isn’t hurrying up with it. Besides, there’s still potentially three more horcruxes we don’t know about.” Draco kissed him, giving him a sharp look. “Stop beating yourself up about this.”

Harry huffed. “Stop being right all the time.”

A cocky smirk crossed Draco’s lips. “Shan’t,” he replied, turning back to his breakfast, both of them ignoring the amused looks on the adults’ faces.