

Swine Floo!

by christev

How does the Ministry deal with an epidemic of the Swine Floo?

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"Did you see this?!" Hermione's voice had that edge, as it carried up to the second floor back bedroom of number twelve, Grimmauld Place, where Ron had just finished changing out of his work robes. He hurried downstairs to the kitchen.

"Good day at work, Lumpkins?"

"Here!" She slapped the evening *Daily Prophet* down in front of him.

SWINE FLOO EPIDEMIC REACHES MINISTRY!

(London) Although no official announcement has been issued, this reporter has learned that representatives from several offices within the Ministry of Magic have been dispatched to investigate rather disturbing occurrences of unauthorized Floo usage.

The first known incident took place just off Hogsmeade's High Street, in the home of a Mr. Florian Whoosits. "Well, me and the Missus was gettin' ready to go to her sister's fer Saturday dinner like always, but when we fired up the Floo, out comes this porker! She's took to her bed ever since – the Missus, I mean. It were quite a shock." When asked where the pig went, Mr. Whoosits indicated the pen in the back, where the guilty animal was sleeping peacefully. "Them Ministry blokes wanted to take it as evidence, but I told 'em no. I ain't one to waste what Providence bestows. Nothin' like a good chop fer Sunday dinner."

Madam Rosmerta, proprietor of the well known establishment, The Three Broomsticks, had a similar report: "When I first heard the squeal, I thought it was either some Hogwarts students acting up or Lucius having another... er, or something similar. But then the little hog came flying out of the Floo like it was demon-possessed and ran around the dining room, upsetting tables and chairs. Finally, it found the door and took off running like a bat out of hell. I don't know where it ended up, but someone's got to pay for the damages."

The magnitude of the problem was made painfully evident in the Entry Hall of the Ministry of Magic when numerous employees arriving at work were unexpectedly accompanied by swine of various shapes and sizes as they exited the Floos. The pigs scattered, finding their way to all floors and departments (the Unspeakables refused comment, so it remains unknown whether the pigs reached the Department of Mysteries). "I didn't realize they could run that fast," reported Mr. Amos Diggory. "The Aurors trying to catch them didn't have a chance."

The Prophet has heard of no less than thirty-one additional complaints of pigs mysteriously ejected from Floos. One eyewitness declared, "I knew this would happen when the mark of the cloven hoof appeared in my teacup. It's a sign, to be sure, of a very dire portent! Danger approaches when pigs fly!" When reminded the pigs were Flooing rather than flying, the witness appeared surprised to see the reporter and hurried away, mumbling something that sounded like, "Beware the corkscrew-tailed stranger!"

Other Hogsmeade residents were quick to speculate on a culprit behind the mysterious abundance of travelling pork. "Those joke shop owners are always upsetting someone's apple cart, or what about that fella what always smells of goats? Is it such a coincidence he calls his place the Hog's Head? Eh?"

The proprietors of Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes expressed dismay that they hadn't thought of this first. Mr. Aberforth Dumbledore was unavailable for an interview.

Citizens are advised to restrict travel to Apparition, broomstick, or Muggle means. If you experience any symptoms of this epidemic, please contact Ms. H. Granger of the Floo Network Office. (Owls only, please.)

"Erm, gee, Hermione, this sounds kinda bad –" Ron began feebly.

"Kind of bad doesn't begin to describe it! More like terrible! Catastrophic!" Hermione was working herself into a slather, pacing restlessly in the small room. "Thank ~~heaven~~ we know it's not your brothers! But I swear I heard that sneak Mundungus talking about livestock prices just last week!"

Fortunately for Ron, Hermione wasn't able to see the queasy expression that came over his face at this pronouncement.

"Uh, yeah, well, at least there's no real harm done. Rosmerta's just touchy from when she got ~~imperio'd~~. Besides, it was like a windfall for some people, right?"

"No harm done? Windfall? Do you know how much this is costing the Ministry? Hunting down clues, corralling pigs – it's no easy task, let me tell you! I swear he's not getting away with it this time..." Hermione continued to rant and pace; Ron's stomach continued to twist.

He should have known not to trust in the "sure thing," when Dung had requested his help. But with Hermione's birthday approaching and the promise of quite a good amount of Galleons for just a little bit of his time, it was too good to pass up. And that nice set of dress robes in Gladrags' window was just the perfect color for Hermione's eyes.

Dung had needed to move a huge quantity of pork to his buyer. Ron had decided it would take too long to Apparate them all one by one; the Floo would deliver the pigs much faster. Only the whole herd didn't seem to end up in the same place as Mundungus, who had gotten to his buyer with only the one swine in hand, so to speak. Ron hadn't learned where the others went until Hermione started yelling.

"I guess it's just as well we're low on Floo powder, since we mustn't use it until they've got this all settled." Ron smiled weakly at his girlfriend in a vain attempt to calm her down.

"Ronald! I don't believe you understand the seriousness of the situation. I'm working extra hours already. If we don't get this solved soon, it'll mean canceling our mini-break next weekend."

Stricken, the confession forming on his lips was interrupted by the fire flaring green, and Harry stepped out of the Floo. His call of "I'm home!" was cut short by a piercing squeal, followed by an equally piercing screech from the Savior of the Wizarding World. Ron's nerves were shot, and he couldn't contain a snicker.

"Ronald!"

A/N: Original prompt by ApollinaV was, "It's mass hysteria!!! Please detail the Wizarding World's reaction to Swine Floo!" 1000 words exactly, according to MS Word, not including title and note.

Thank you very much to Lyn_F for the beta.