

It was the first time Hermione had ever failed to answer a teacher's question. She was staring at her slippers, as still as a statue.

"I think I've got a good idea of what's been going on," said Professor McGonagall. "It doesn't take a genius to work it out. You fed Draco Malfoy some cock-and-bull story about a dragon, trying to get him out of bed and into trouble. I've already caught him. I suppose you think it's funny that Longbottom here heard the story and believed it, too?"

Harry caught Neville's eye and tried to tell him without words that this wasn't true, because Neville was looking stunned and hurt. Poor, blundering Neville — Harry knew what it must have cost him to try and find them in the dark, to warn them.

"I'm disgusted," said Professor McGonagall. "Four students out of bed in one night! I've never heard of such a thing before! You, Miss Granger, I thought you had more sense. As for you, Mr. Potter, I thought Gryffindor meant more to you than this. All three of you will receive detentions — yes, you too, Mr. Longbottom, *nothing* gives you the right to walk around school at night, especially these days, it's very dangerous — and fifty points will be taken from Gryffindor."

"*Fifty?*" Harry gasped — they would lose the lead, the lead he'd won in the last Quidditch match.

"Fifty points *each*," said Professor McGonagall, breathing heavily through her long, pointed nose.

"Professor — please —"

"You *can't* —"

"Don't tell me what I can and can't do, Potter. Now get back to bed, all of you. I've never been more ashamed of Gryffindor students."