



"He didn't *catch* it, he nearly *swallowed* it," Flint was still howling twenty minutes later, but it made no difference — Harry hadn't broken any rules and Lee Jordan was still happily shouting the results — Gryffindor had won by one hundred and seventy points to sixty. Harry heard none of this, though. He was being made a cup of strong tea back in Hagrid's hut, with Ron and Hermione.

"It was Snape," Ron was explaining, "Hermione and I saw him. He was cursing your broomstick, muttering, he wouldn't take his eyes off you."

"Rubbish," said Hagrid, who hadn't heard a word of what had gone on next to him in the stands. "Why would Snape do some-thin' like that?"

Harry, Ron, and Hermione looked at one another, wondering what to tell him. Harry decided on the truth.

"I found out something about him," he told Hagrid. "He tried to get past that three-headed dog on Halloween. It bit him. We think he was trying to steal whatever it's guarding."

Hagrid dropped the teapot.

"How do you know about Fluffy?" he said.

"*Fluffy?*"

"Yeah — he's mine — bought him off a Greek chappie I met in the pub las' year — I lent him to Dumbledore to guard the —"

"Yes?" said Harry eagerly.

"Now, don't ask me anymore," said Hagrid gruffly. "That's top secret, that is."

"But Snape's trying to *steal* it."

"Rubbish," said Hagrid again. "Snape's a Hogwarts teacher, he'd do nothin' of the sort."

"So why did he just try and kill Harry?" cried Hermione.