

was told of a disruption in the Gryffindor common room,” she declared, tone firm. “What, may I ask, is the meaning of this?”

“Harry beat Viktor Krum at quidditch!” Seamus piped up from the back of the room. McGonagall pursed her lips.

“I am aware. I was present,” she said. “That does not explain why the common room is overrun. This is supposed to be a space for Gryffindors!”

“The school rules say we’re allowed to bring guests, Professor,” Katie Bell pointed out. McGonagall didn’t look impressed.

“One guest, Miss Bell,” she retorted sternly. “One guest per person.”

All of a sudden, the crowd shifted. George reached out to sling an arm around Cassius’ shoulders. Fred put a hand on Cedric’s arm. Harry reached over to grab Cho’s hand. All over the common room, Gryffindors were claiming their non-Gryffindor companions, until everyone was in pairs. Every single guest was accounted for.

McGonagall’s face was tight, her lips a thin line that most people assumed was her trying to stifle her anger. Harry knew better — his housemistress was trying really hard not to smile. “Very well,” she said eventually. “Just keep the noise down. And make sure the password is changed by this evening, Miss Dunn.” The seventh year prefect nodded, smiling with her arm linked with Beatrice Haywood from Hufflepuff.

“Yes, Professor,” she chirped, cheeks dimpled. McGonagall nodded curtly.

“Carry on, then.” She let the music resume and turned on her heel, leaving them to their party. Harry let go of Cho’s hand with a grin.

Perhaps the Gryffindor housemistress wasn’t quite as much under Dumbledore’s thumb as he thought.

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The day after the now-legendary seeker’s match was Christmas Eve, and Harry was up in the dorm alone, reading quietly before lunch. He was sore after all that flying, and not really in the mood for being down in the crowds after the day before. Peace and quiet was becoming a rare thing, and he’d take what he could get.

Leaning back against his headboard, Harry blinked when a piece of parchment suddenly appeared between the open pages of his book. It was a small note, with only two words in a very familiar handwriting. *Come down.*

What did Snape need him for on Christmas Eve? Harry had assumed the man would be back at Seren Du with Remus. Maybe Remus had come to Hogwarts instead!

Perking up, Harry marked his page and set the book aside, burning the note with a quick spell. Grabbing his presents for the three adults — at the very least he could send Snape off