

Harry mock-pouted, looking back at his boyfriend. “You heard the headmistress. Rain check on that, I’ll catch you later.” Then he stepped up to McGonagall’s side, not a hint of his previous teasing on his face. “Let’s go, Professor.”

McGonagall was still using her original office for the time being, not wanting to intrude on what everyone still saw as Dumbledore’s — and not having the time to go through the numerous things he left behind there in case any were sinister.

So Harry, the headmistress, and the six bound attackers all squeezed into the room, and McGonagall turned to Harry. “Explain.”

Harry did so, beginning with the moment he noticed he was being followed, reporting everything right up until Sprout and Neville arrived. McGonagall’s face got more severe with every word.

When he was done, she turned to her captives, adjusting her spells enough for them to talk but not move. “And what do you have to say for yourselves?”

“He’s lying, Professor!” Dunbar exclaimed. “Potter attacked us out of nowhere! He used his weird Slytherin magic to stop us from fighting back! He’s dangerous, and he needs to be expelled!”

McGonagall looked distinctly unimpressed, even as the other five backed up Dunbar’s words.

“I can provide pensieve memories, if you like,” Harry offered, but the headmistress shook her head.

“I am attuned to the wards as well, Potter — I can tell when students are in danger, and I can *certainly* tell when the Cruciatus curse is being cast on school grounds! Miss Wilkins, your wand, if you please?”

The Slytherin girl went milk-white. McGonagall snatched the girl’s wand, holding it up in front of her. “*Priori Incantatem*.” Smoke blossomed from the end of the wand, forming a tableau of Harry on his knees and screaming — her intention for the spell, if not the result.

“Potter stole my wand and cast it,” Wilkins tried immediately, cowering against McGonagall’s raised eyebrow.

“I highly doubt that.” She set the girl’s wand on her desk, surveying them sternly. “You six leave me no choice. For the attempted kidnapping of a fellow student, I hereby expel all of you from Hogwarts School, effective immediately.”

Harry felt it, the moment the magic kicked in, the moment they became *other* to the wards. Not students, not staff. Intruders. They all flinched in unison.

“As such, I have the right to destroy your wands. The house elves will pack your bags, and you will return to your homes as soon as possible.”

“You can’t do that!” Turpin argued.