

time, there would be absolute *outrage* from the general public if she were to be ousted by the Ministry. A lot of ex-Gryffindors went into Ministry jobs, after all.

“Well,” Umbridge said somewhat weakly, after a well-placed stab at her own teaching prowess. “You’ve certainly been at this for quite a while. One might even say, *too long*.” She giggled girlishly. “We wouldn’t want standards to drop with complacency, after all.” A devious light entered Umbridge’s eyes. “Perhaps a demonstration from one of your students? Just to make sure you aren’t *losing your touch*.”

McGonagall’s nostrils flared. “If you had been paying attention, you would have noticed the students have all been practicing their spellwork for the entirety of our conversation, Dolores,” she bit out. That just made Umbridge smile wider.

“Then they won’t mind doing it for me one more time.” She turned to face the class, eyes sliding right past Hermione as the girl confidently raised her hand. Harry knew what was coming long before she said it. “Mr Potter, perhaps?”

McGonagall gave him a look, and Harry let his lips flicker in the barest of smiles. A year or two ago, this might have spelled disaster, but not now — now, Harry was quickly rising to the top of his class in most subjects. Transfiguration was no exception.

“May I have a new mouse, please, Professor?” he requested, the epitome of a model student.

“Lost your first one, Mr Potter?” Umbridge remarked snidely, but was ignored; McGonagall fished a brand new mouse out of the box on her desk, setting it down in front of Harry. There was a warning in her eyes not to let her down, but Harry wasn’t phased.

He raised his wand, spoke the incantation clearly, and flicked his wrist.

Instantly, the mouse vanished entirely.

“Very good, Potter. Five points to Gryffindor,” McGonagall awarded with a decisive nod. She turned back to Umbridge, whose face was once again turning that Vernon-Dursley-colour. “Does that satisfy your curiosity, Dolores?”

Umbridge let out a quiet huff, and went back to scrawling notes on her clipboard, right up until the bell rang.

Harry wasn’t sure what felt better — the absolute outrage Umbridge showed at Harry being a competent wizard, or the indignant expression Hermione wore; on her desk, beside the still-wriggling tail of Ron’s half-vanished mouse, was one single mouse paw.

.-.-.

Friday night, Umbridge kept Harry in detention until half past eleven; she seemed determined to do as much damage as possible before she had to let him go once more.

“This should do for now,” she declared in satisfaction, once she’d inspected his hand. “I do hope you have finally learned your lesson, Mr Potter.”