

“Sorry, Professor. But every evening this week? That’s outrageous!” Then a thought occurred to him, and he laughed. “Oh, that’s brilliant!”

“I beg your pardon, Potter?” His housemistress was eyeing him like the rumours of his insanity might not be too unfounded. Harry grinned at her.

“A whole week of detention, just for pointing out some facts — that’s gonna make her look *really* in control, isn’t it?” If she had just dismissed him out of turn, given him the one detention and ignored the rest, she would’ve shown that his words didn’t matter to her. But a whole week’s worth — everyone would see that Harry had struck a nerve.

She thought she was making an example of him, but really, she was only making one of herself.

There was a flicker in the Transfiguration professor’s eyes — something like pride, if Harry looked carefully. “Be careful, Potter,” she reiterated. “Dolores Umbridge has friends in some powerful places, and you cannot afford to have your future limited so young.”

“Oh, don’t worry about me, Professor,” he said cheerfully. “I’m going to play professional quidditch after graduation. I don’t think the Ministry has any say in that.”

McGonagall stared at him, her lips twitching like she was trying very hard not to laugh. “Then I’d best see that trophy remaining on my shelf this year,” she said, glancing at the Quidditch Cup, still in pride of place after Harry’s third year. He beamed.

“I’ll do my best.”

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As expected, *everyone* knew about Harry’s clash with Umbridge at dinner time.

Of course, many people were taking it as confirmation that he’d lost his mind, but mostly people just seemed entertained by Harry’s bold and unashamed call-out of the Ministry. Especially once it was confirmed that a dementor had indeed Kissed a muggle teenage boy in the middle of Surrey, and the Ministry had covered it up.

Umbridge looked *furious*.

“I can’t believe you,” Neville declared, shaking his head. “No, I *can*, actually. That’s the worst part.”

Harry grinned smugly, feeling quite pleased with himself. “All I did was point out that there seem to have been a lot of *tragic accidents* under the Ministry’s purview,” he said, shrugging. “Not my fault she got upset about it.”

“You’re going to be in detention for the *entire* year,” Neville despaired.

“Nah.” Harry wasn’t bothered. “Not with Umbridge, at any rate. Snape will miss me cleaning his cauldrons.”