

She said this just as McGonagall happened to be walking past the Gryffindor table. The grey-haired witch froze, turning on her heel to stare down Harry. “Did I hear correctly?” she said, raising an eyebrow. “*More* detention, Potter?”

“Another week with Professor Umbridge,” he confirmed meekly. McGonagall’s lips thinned.

“After the conversation we had last week?”

“She said unsavoury things about Professor Lupin,” Harry argued, jutting his chin defiantly. Her expression softened for a moment, but it didn’t last long.

“I think we both know that Professor Lupin would not want you to go to the trouble of arguing on his behalf,” McGonagall said shortly. “Especially against someone whose opinion he values so little.”

That addition, a quieter remark than the beginning of her sentence, made Harry grin. “Of course, Professor. Won’t happen again.” She was right, naturally; Remus wouldn’t want Harry to waste his breath on Umbridge. She was just so *infuriating*.

“See that it doesn’t,” was his housemistress’ terse reply, before she carried on up to the head table.

Angelina looked taken-aback by the conversation — perhaps at McGonagall’s blatant, if quiet, disregard for her fellow teacher. “Well,” she stuttered, frowning at Harry once more. “You’re missing Thursday practice, but there’ll be another one on Saturday. You’re lucky I know how good you are, Potter.”

“I really am sorry.”

Angelina waved off his excuses, giving him one last stink-eye before heading back to sit with the twins.

After his little exchange with McGonagall at breakfast, Harry was quietly delighted when he walked in to Transfiguration later that morning to see Umbridge settled in the corner of the classroom, while McGonagall greeted her students as if entirely unaware of the intrusion.

What followed was perhaps the most entertaining Transfiguration lesson of Harry’s *life*. McGonagall was absolutely masterful in her curt, bone-dry take downs of Umbridge’s every interruption; Harry was impressed by her even temper, and even more impressed by the way she made Umbridge look like she’d been slapped in the face on multiple occasions. She made a point of listing all her qualifications and accolades — of which there were many — and briefly caught Harry’s eye as she did so, gaze shining with well-hidden amusement.

She had heard the specifics of his criticisms of Umbridge, then.

It was beautiful to watch; there was no teacher in the school more qualified, competent or accomplished than Professor McGonagall, and even Umbridge knew it. Even more, McGonagall had been both Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor for such a long