

A hush fell over the table, and it took Harry a minute to realise it was because Dumbledore was approaching. He didn't look amused. "Mr Potter," he greeted, his voice cheerful enough. "You and several of your friends here seem to have lost your way to your house tables."

Harry wasn't sure how the headmaster could pin this one on him, or how he could declare forty-odd people, half of whom Harry had never spoken to, 'his friends'.

"There's no rules about having to sit at our tables every meal, sir," Cedric piped up innocently. "Only during formal feasts."

"We're just trying to make the other schools feel welcome," Angelina agreed. She was sat beside a Beauxbaton girl with hair down to her waist, and was fixing it in several tiny braids down her back.

Dumbledore stared at them all for a long minute, then smiled. Harry was sure he wasn't the only one who could see the angry fire hiding in those twinkling blue eyes. "Excellent, excellent." He said nothing more, continuing on his way to the head table, and slowly the chatter started back up. Harry looked up at Susan Bones, who was sat with Parvati and Lavender, discussing dress robes. Susan caught his eye and grinned.

It was beginning.