

Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

That one lunchtime seemed to have sparked a trend. Now it wasn't uncommon to go into the Great Hall and lose yourself in a group of mixed-colour robes. Of course, it didn't all change overnight — there were still large clusters of same-colour robes crowded together, looking quite disturbed by all the intermingling. But it was a start. Watching Dumbledore grit his teeth and pretend to be delighted about the development was becoming the highlight of Harry's week.

So of course, something had to bring him down.

"The Yule Ball is a tradition of the Triwizard Tournament," Professor McGonagall declared at the end of their Transfiguration lesson on Thursday, interrupting Harry's rather diligent clock-watching. The sooner she let them go, the sooner he could have a nap before dinner, because after dinner he'd be meeting with the heirs for study group. A study group that would no doubt turn into laughing about Dumbledore's anger and plotting the next step in their slow and careful uniting of the Hogwarts houses.

Well, that explained the dress robes, at any rate. The reactions of the class were a mixture from excited to downright horrified — Harry didn't think it would be so bad, really. It might actually be sort of fun. He'd never been to any sort of formal party before; or, really, any kind of party full stop. There had been one school dance in his last year of muggle primary school, but the Dursleys hadn't let him go. They ended up having to go pick up Dudley early after he pushed a boy into the snack table.

"Potter, a word, please," McGonagall called once she finally released the class, and Harry resisted the urge to swear. He was *so tired*. Between trying to figure out the egg, meeting with Draco, studying with the heirs *and* keeping up with his Arithmancy and Runes for Sirius and Remus, he wasn't getting nearly as much sleep as he probably should.

"If this is about the essay, I know I went off-topic, but I got a bit distracted," Harry started, sure that McGonagall was entirely unimpressed with the eight inch long tangent about the difference between transfigured material and conjured material — in an essay supposed to be about the practical uses of Switching spells. Harry hadn't meant to, but he'd found it fascinating, and the words just sort of spilled out. He couldn't even blame it on spending too much time with Remus in the summer; he'd been turning into a bookworm ever since the Compulsion charm had been removed.

"Potter, your grades are better than they've been in your entire school career, and that 'off-topic' section, as you put it, wouldn't have been out of place in one of my sixth year essays," McGonagall told him, the barest twitch at the corner of her lips letting him know she was pleased. Harry preened. "No, this is about the Yule Ball. The champions and their partners are expected to open the dance. I thought you'd appreciate the warning."