

People were scared of her, now. And Harry wouldn't stand for that.

The Hufflepuffs had been as diligent as their house animal; all the heirs were gathered in short order, all looking disgruntled. "I can't be here long," Harry warned. "I've got another detention with Umbridge at five, and I really want to make sure I eat something." If he was going to be shedding blood all night, he didn't want to give her the satisfaction of him passing out.

"*Again?*" Ernie asked incredulously.

"You need to learn to keep your mouth shut, Potter," Pansy drawled. "Though, out of interest — what did you mean about Quirrell having the Dark Lord on the back of his head?"

All eyes whipped to Harry, and he waved them off. "Long story, I'll tell you another time." Of course, most of his end-of-year adventures had been a total mystery to the rest of the school. "What did you need us for, Susan?"

"This whole High Inquisitor shit changes things. I take it we've all had at least one inspected lesson?" Everyone but Sullivan nodded. "Well, it's clear she's out for blood."

"She was *awful* to Professor Trelawney," Parvati huffed.

"Forget Trelawney," Cassius dismissed. "She pulled out a *measuring tape* on Flitwick."

Harry sucked in a sharp breath — *how dare she??*

"Now she's got the power, she can add any rule she likes to the Hogwarts Charter, as long as Fudge signs off on it," Susan explained to the grim-faced group. "We can't let it stop us, but we have to be careful."

"You read the paper," Anthony piped up, "she's here to get Dumbledore out. That's what she's going to focus on."

"Yes, but she wants him out because she thinks he gives students too much *freedom*," Susan spat. "She'll curtail any freedoms she can, to try and make the headmaster angry."

"Like actually using magic in classes," Padma muttered derisively. That reminded Harry of something Sirius had said, on the mirror the night before.

"I heard from — *a friend*," he stuttered evasively, "outside Hogwarts, who says Fudge doesn't want us using magic in Defence class because he thinks Dumbledore is training students up as his own personal army, to take over the Ministry."

At first thought, it sounded like something straight out of the *Quibbler*. But Harry could see the words settle in the minds of his fellow heirs with a heavy resonance.

"How in *Merlin's name* did we end up with such an absolute moron in charge of our country?" Susan sighed in despair, head in her hands. Harry grimaced in sympathy.