Codewords

by astopperindeath

Is Albus Dumbledore dotty? Or do his words have a hidden meaning?

Chapter One

Chapter 1 of 1

Is Albus Dumbledore dotty? Or do his words have a hidden meaning?

Harry Potter came into the Great Hall confused about so many things. But, at least Hagrid was already there at the Head table, albeit slightly into his cups. He recognized Dumbledore from his chocolate frog card and was surprised when Dumbledore inclined his head slightly in his direction. He wondered what Dumbledore might say to them.

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Every school year, Dumbledore had to compile a new speech. Usually, his speeches stated the same things—promote house unity, stay away from the Forbidden Forest and the Third floor corridor, don't get caught sneaking out to Hogsmeade.

However, there was a system that most of the professors were unaware of—a predetermined set of words that would warn the core faculty of any last-minute problems. And, given the political climate as of late, there was always a need for a failsafe. Constant vigilance, some might say.

He was known for being a bit… quirky—this behavior had been a part of his persona for years. If everyone thought he was a bit dotty, then they would never expect his latent craftiness. So, he came up with a lexicon for his four Heads of House.

Certain words were positive, others horrible.

Having to give this years' speech had plagued him for days. Usually, he actually attempted to weave his words into a speech so well crafted that no one would be the wiser. This year, he'd tried everything he could think of to craft a subtle speech.

But, between young Harry's impending arrival and the knowledge of the truth he was about to impart to Minerva, Severus, Filius, and Pomona, he hadn't finished his speech. He hadn't even started it.

The speech was the easiest way to tell his professors his beginning of the year warnings. It ensured that any problematic forces within the school had no idea that he was talking with them—the portraits were notorious gossips, and even though the Headmasters' portraits were sworn to help the school in whatever way they could, that didn't keep them from becoming listless and passing information to whomever may actually talk to them.

The speech was really Dumbledore's one way to give his highest professors that last-second warning that sometimes could be so crucial.

Composing himself, he looked to Severus and Minerva before standing.

"Welcome!" he said. "Welcome to a New Year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!" He sat back down. Everybody clapped and cheered.

Everybody except his four Heads of House. Pomona's normally ruddy features turned ashen. The pinch between Severus' brows became even more marked. Minerva's mouth pursed harder than ever, and Flitwick twitched uncomfortably in his chair.

Because, each of them had heard the following:

"Unknown Dark force! Possible Death Eater! Watch Harry Potter! Hogwarts is unsafe!"

The feast appeared before them, but the five barely picked at their food. Snape leaned over and spoke softly with Quirrell.

Minerva leaned over to Dumbledore. "What are we going to do, Albus."

Dumbledore looked at her, his blue eyes brimming with unshed tears. "Not now, Minnie," he responded softly.

Knowing he had to ensure that the school was unaware of the exchange of information amongst the senior staff, he rose once again.

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"And now, before we go to bed, let us sing the school song!" cried Dumbledore. Harry noticed that the other teachers' smiles had become rather fixed.

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"Everyone pick their favorite tune," said Dumbledore, "and off we go!"

Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hoggy Warty Hogwarts,

Teach us something, please,

Whether we be old and bald

Or young with scabby knees,

Our heads could do with filling

With some interesting stuff,

For now they're bare and full of air,

Dead flies and bits of fluff,

So teach us things worth knowing,

Bring back what we've forgot,

Just do your best, we'll do the rest,

And learn until our brains all rot.

Minerva's brogue thickened as she sung out a sorrowful tune. Snape's deep baritone rang out across the room, sounding remarkably like the Mourners' Kaddish. Dumbledore sang the words of the song, but all he could think about was how to figure out *who* the infiltrator was and how he could possibly keep his students safe.

AN: Sorry for all of those who know that I normally bash Dumbledore. I had to write something nice for once. This is based on shendricks2004's prompt, given for TPP's Saturday Night Drabbles: "Dumbledore wasn't as daft as he looked - nitwit, blubber, oddment, and tweak were secret code. What were they secret code for?" Thanks to sirius_trouble for the beta read and ladyinthecloak for her final read-throughs for all of us! Quotes in italics come from SS/PS.