

Harry was glad to see that every member of the HA in his year was present in the class, as well as a few other students.

Snape began his class with an appropriately worshipful speech on the Dark Arts, complete with picture examples of what could befall those who did not treat them with the correct respect. The fear in the room was palpable — good, as far as Harry was concerned. They needed to be scared. They needed to take things seriously.

One thing was for sure; this year, they would not have a teacher who would coddle them, or hold their hand as they explored the darker parts of wizarding life. Snape would make damn sure all of them knew exactly what was waiting for them outside the castle — what life would become, should Voldemort win.

He would just be saying it in a way that made it sound like he was excited for the prospect.

“...you are, I believe, complete novices in the use of non-verbal spells,” the man drawled, robes billowing as he paced around the classroom. As he mocked Hermione for her textbook-perfect answer, Harry felt the atmosphere shift, ever so slightly. Several of his classmates were hiding smiles, relief on their faces.

They were not quite the novices Snape expected them to be, thanks to Harry.

As tempting as it was to pair up with Draco, Harry turned to Neville instead; his friend had never quite got the hang of non-verbal casting. And no matter how much Snape glared and sneered at Harry and made disparaging remarks in his direction, they all knew Harry would have no problem with the kind of *mental focus* involved.

So the class got to work, Snape catching out every instance of a quietly-muttered spell — unless of course it came from one of his Slytherins. Harry kept one eye on Neville while the blond boy tried to cast a non-verbal jinx, while his other surveyed the classroom, pride filling him at the sight of the HA members picking up the exercise quickly.

Suddenly a Jelly-Legs jinx came shooting towards him, and Harry silently raised a shield in an instant. He grinned at Neville, offering a thumbs up. That was much faster than usual, for him!

Snape didn't seem to know how to handle the majority of his class succeeding within the first fifteen minutes. He strode through the pairs, dark eyes narrowing with every silent jinx or shield performed. The only members of the class who were struggling were those Harry had not taught — including, to his amusement, Ron and Hermione. Ron was purple in the face with the effort of trying to raise a shield, and while Hermione had managed a non-verbal Stinging hex, it was so weak Ron hardly even noticed it.

The professor suddenly appeared looming over Neville's shoulder, and Harry saw Neville's hand begin to tremble. Snape sneered. “Pathetic, Longbottom. Here, let me show you—“

He raised his wand quickly, but Harry was just as fast; his non-verbal shield leapt into action against Snape's Burning hex, which was strong enough to push both casters back a little. Harry's eyes widened.