

“You’re right,” Neville agreed. “But... blimey. I never expected this.”

Harry hadn’t, either — he should have, though, with his track record.

When they reluctantly pulled themselves away from the Wardstone, they headed to the door — and all four of them stopped as they were hit with such a strong surge of *gratitude* it left them breathless. Hogwarts was so very glad to have heirs again.

The school was ready to fight. And now, with them at the wards, they might actually win.

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Breakfast should have been unbearable, on so little sleep — when Harry and Neville had returned to their dorms after bidding goodbye to the girls, they were so wired from the influx of magic the sun had been creeping over the horizon by the time they’d finally nodded off.

But nonetheless, Harry had woken at the usual time feeling refreshed and invigorated; more so than he had in weeks, quite honestly. Neville, too, seemed bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, greeting Ginny with a hug so tight it lifted her off her feet for a moment. She squealed and laughed, eyeing her boyfriend in confusion.

“Someone’s in a good mood,” she commented, looking at Harry for an explanation, but he just grinned at her.

Down in the Great Hall, Harry laughed at seeing Hannah sat at the Hufflepuff table wearing a ridiculous hat shaped like a birthday cake, complete with charmed candles flickering on top. She glanced up when they entered, and beamed widely, her brown eyes knowing.

Over at the Ravenclaw table, chatting happily to Sully, Luna was practically glowing with energy — but that wasn’t unusual for the odd girl, so no one seemed to take note of it.

Feeling a little smug, Harry looked up at the head table; Dumbledore was present for once, and he looked a little grey in the face, nursing a cup of tea with a half-eaten slice of toast going neglected on his plate.

It had to hurt, being cut off from a source of magic you’d been shamelessly abusing for decades.

As Harry sat down, he caught the headmaster’s gaze, and automatically raised his Occlumency shields against intrusion, shifting his eyes away. Dumbledore scowled slightly behind his beard. Harry ignored him, reaching for a plate of sausages — the headmaster could glare suspiciously as much as he wanted, he wouldn’t discover the truth of the night before. It wasn’t surprising that he was just assuming Harry had something to do with it.

Harry smiled to himself, wondering what the old man might do if he discovered who else had been involved in cutting him out of the Hogwarts wards. Wondering how long it might take him to figure out that was what happened — with the castle itself shrouding the truth, Dumbledore likely thought it was just more side effects from the curse slowly ravaging his