

He was all too aware of the entire school watching him; he only wanted to have to tell this story once. Relaying it to Remus and Snape had been bad enough. So, with that in mind, he sat on top of the Ravenclaw table, his feet on the bench, his body half propped up by Draco at his side. The blond thrust a plate of shepherd's pie in his lap, giving him a pointed look. Harry could eat and talk, he supposed.

"I was walking back to Gryffindor late on Wednesday night. After curfew, sorry professors," he added with a wink towards the blatantly eavesdropping staff table. A few people giggled. "I was tired, so I wasn't really paying attention. Next thing I know I'm getting a high-powered Stunner to the back."

He told the enraptured crowd everything he remembered — glossing over the specifics of horcruxes and the weird *Master of Death* thing, just saying that Dumbledore kept insisting there was evil in his scar and he needed to die to get it out. He made it clear that the headmaster had admitted to the compulsions, with his reasoning that it was a 'precaution' to stop Harry going evil. He also, finally, confessed about the blocks on his magic. That revelation caused more than a few horrified faces in the crowd; those who understood exactly what it would mean to block the family magics of someone like Harry.

"His original plan was to keep the blocks up and then release them while I was fighting Voldemort — kill me, kill the Dark Lord, end it all. Probably kill everyone in a thirty-foot radius, too, but... I don't think Dumbledore really cared about those kinds of consequences, anymore," Harry said with a shrug. "When he realised I'd broken the blocks, I guess he decided he had to kill me himself."

"That's barbaric," someone whispered, their voice carrying over the shocked silence in the hall. Harry's lips twisted wryly.

"So now everyone understands why I've been ignoring the headmaster all year, yeah?" he joked, earning a few weak chuckles.

"Why didn't you say something sooner?" came a bold call from the Gryffindor section of the hall. Harry raised an eyebrow.

"Would anyone have believed me?" he retorted. "Half of you thought I was mad anyway." A lot of people ducked their heads abashedly. "It doesn't matter, now. Dumbledore's out of Hogwarts, and he's going to stay that way." There was no way the headmaster would recover from this. Harry wasn't going to let him.

"What happens now?" someone asked loudly. "Dumbledore was the only reason You-Know-Who stayed away from the school!"

That sparked a flurry of worried mutters, but Harry didn't falter. "If Voldemort thinks the school is vulnerable now that Dumbledore's gone, he should remember that I just duelled Dumbledore and won," he said plainly. "We don't need Albus Dumbledore to protect us. We can protect ourselves."

He looked down at his left, where Luna sat on the bench, her pale eyes intent. She nodded, ever so slightly. Harry smiled. "More than that, Hogwarts can protect itself," he added. "The