

your little defence club have gathered in the Great Hall to try and begin putting things to rights. The headmistress is... indisposed."

Harry *definitely* didn't want to know what that meant, but he nodded anyway, turning to the open space in the wall. He paused in the threshold. "Remus was fine, when I left that veil room."

Snape's responding nod was terse. "And I am sure he continued to be fine after you were gone."

That was that, and Harry didn't press further, continuing on his way. This time in the Chamber he followed a passage he had never used, but that he knew would take him up to the Great Hall. No one seemed to notice him stepping out from the wall beside the points hourglasses — all of which were entirely empty, now.

The house elf information network had been correct; Harry could see at least half the HA in the centre of the Great Hall, gathered around the Hufflepuff table. The room was in surprisingly decent shape, considering the state of the rest of the castle. But the signs of recent chaos were there if you knew what to look for.

"I leave you lot alone for five bloody minutes!" he burst out, startling everyone. He had to throw up a quick Shield spell at the number of curses that were sent his way.

"Harry!" Angelina exclaimed, going wide-eyed. "Where have you been?"

"It's complicated. I'll explain later." He could feel the intent eyes of the other heirs burning into him. "What happened here? I got a bit of a run-down from the Patils on the fourth floor, but I'll be honest it didn't make much sense. And then there was the swimming pool."

Several people snorted.

"We've got it under control now," Cho assured. "Mostly. We dealt with the worst of it once Umbridge was unconscious."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "Unconscious?"

A number of hands pointed towards the head table, where there was a large pink blob that Harry was only now beginning to realise contained the High Inquisitor. She was encased in some strange sort of bubblegum-coloured slime, limp and distinctly ruffled.

"She's fine. We think," Justin Finch-Fletchley assured him with an uncaring shrug. "She got hit by about sixty different spells so the mix was... interesting. Took a while to reverse it all. We'll get her up to Pomfrey once we've gotten rid of the swimming pool."

"Do we have to?" Colin Creevey sighed. "I've always wished Hogwarts had a pool."

"Maybe not one in the Entrance Hall, though," Harry pointed out, and Colin huffed.

"Spoilsport."