

Twenty feet down the corridor from where he knew the entrance to the Hufflepuff common room was.

He gaped again, slipping back behind the tapestry and hurrying up the stairs. The room was exactly as he'd left it, but for three more doors, each engraved with a house crest. Harry knew that were he to follow them, he would find himself not far from each house common room.

"Amazing," he said again, beaming.

It was everything he could possibly need to keep his friends safe. "And other people can use this room too?" There was a vague affirmative feeling in his mind. Harry hummed. This room was incredible, that was for sure — it was also clearly one of the best kept secrets in Hogwarts. And in this room it would be all too easy to assume they were safe. It would just take one untrustworthy person to let the location slip — if not to Umbridge, then bragging to a friend, or wanting the room for their own personal use — and everything would be ruined.

There had to be a way to make sure their secret was kept safe. To make sure this room wouldn't be misused.

But this was an excellent start.

"Thank you," he declared vehemently, feeling the castle's magic warm and happy in his chest. It made him smile. "You don't like Umbridge sticking her nose in any more than the rest of us, do you?"

A feeling of strong dislike, followed by a hint of mischief. Harry laughed, suddenly flooded with a huge wave of confidence.

If the castle itself didn't like Umbridge, she didn't stand a chance.

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Harry felt like he was walking on air the next morning, his smile so bright that Neville gave him weird looks over breakfast. Harry refused to explain anything, just grinning and eating his scrambled eggs.

He had to look into a few things, and he didn't want to get anyone's hopes up before his plan was fully formed. If they were going to do this, it would be done properly.

Neville quickly begged off to go spend time in the greenhouses — which, Harry wondered, might have had something to do with Ginny practically sitting in Michael Corner's lap over at the Ravenclaw table — so Harry was left to his own devices. That sounded like a perfect Sunday to him; he could finish off his Potions homework, get in a little animagus practice, and maybe if he was lucky find the time to sneak away with Draco for a while.

With that plan in mind, Harry went up to grab his books from his dorm, then made his way to the library; the homework Snape had set required them to cross-reference some research in books other than the set text.