

Eventually the pull stopped quite abruptly, and Harry looked around. He was in one of the corridors between Ravenclaw Tower and the North Tower, home only to a pair of disused classrooms and a boys' bathroom.

And a door, which Harry had never seen before.

It was right in the middle of the wall, bold as brass, and yet Harry was quite sure it hadn't existed the last time he'd walked that corridor. The castle's magic was encouraging as he reached out to open it.

The room he found had his mouth agape. It was *perfect*.

The room was easily twice the size of an ordinary Defence classroom, the walls lined with bookshelves. Harry recognised a lot of the titles — both from the school library, and from the library at Seren Du. In one corner was a pile of soft-looking cushions, while another held a trio of mannequin-like figures; duelling practice dummies. One wall was taken up by an enormous mirror, perfect for someone to watch their own duelling form as they attempted spells.

"This is amazing," Harry breathed in awe. "What is this place?"

The castle's magic, so much stronger in this room, was suddenly wiggling into his mind. *Room of Requirement*, it said, barely a whisper. This was followed by a brief flash of an image, like a memory; Harry himself pacing up and down three times in front of the blank wall, and then the door appeared. Suddenly, he knew how it worked — this room could give him *anything*.

A grin playing at his lips, he narrowed his gaze in concentration. A squashy sofa, identical to his favourite one in the library at home, appeared in the centre of the room. Harry laughed, throwing himself down on it.

This was incredible. A room that could change and cater to his every desire, that could hide away the door once they were all inside — even better, it was several floors up from Umbridge's office, in a part of the castle hardly anyone bothered to think about.

A thought popped into his head, and his joy faltered. It would be easy to access for the Gryffindors and Ravenclaws, but it was a long way to travel for the two houses in the lower half of the school. Not that Harry expected many Slytherins, but there would be at least a few. The Hufflepuffs especially had no reason to be up so high in the castle; it would be tricky for them to get back to their common room without getting caught.

As he thought that, a door suddenly appeared opposite him, sprouting between two bookshelves. Warily, Harry approached it.

It opened up not in the seventh floor corridor, but in a narrow staircase. Harry followed it all the way to the bottom — perhaps two or three floors — and emerged from behind a tapestry of Helga Hufflepuff.