

His skin crawled like he could feel unfamiliar hands touching him, gripping his magical core and twisting.

“Please empty your pockets and remove your glasses, and any other enchanted items you may possess,” Gorrak requested. Harry took a few moments to do as asked, then stood somewhat awkwardly with his hands at his sides. He’d never had so much as a medical check-up, let alone a magical one. What was he supposed to do? “Keep still, this will only take a moment.”

Gorrak murmured something in a language Harry didn’t recognise — Gobbledegook, probably — and a strange prickling feeling washed over Harry from head to toe. He resisted the urge to flinch away. Gorrak said something again in his language, but from Farlig’s reaction in the corner it was probably an expletive of some kind. “Someone has done you a great wrong, Mr Potter,” Gorrak declared. Harry’s heart sank.

“Am I dying?” he asked flatly. It would be just his luck if after all his run-ins with Voldemort, he was due to die from some slow-acting curse or something. Gorrak barked out a laugh.

“No faster than the average wizard,” he assured. “However, the block is not the only magic acting against you. There’s some kind of spell, I’ve never seen it before but it looks more recent, perhaps two or three years old, and it’s familiar. The same magic that belongs to whoever blocked your family magics.”

Slowly, pieces started to come together in Harry’s mind, dread gathering in his belly. “And what does this spell do?”

“I can’t be entirely positive, Mr Potter. If I were to guess, I would say it is something to do with your behaviour. It appears to encourage impulsiveness — or limit rational thinking. Something along those lines. Perhaps with the side-effect of making you more suggestible, easily influenced. Whoever cursed you wanted you to trust without reason, and act without thinking, no doubt to leap head-first into all those dangerous situations I’ve heard rumour of. It’s an incredibly powerful compulsion spell, Mr Potter; I’m amazed you have any sort of self-restraint whatsoever.”

Harry could only think of one person who would have means and opportunity to perform both the magic block and the compulsion spell, and the answer made his heart clench.

Dumbledore.

His parents would have trusted the headmaster with their baby, even alone for several hours. And even if they hadn’t, there was the time after their death, before Aunt Petunia found Harry on her doorstep — he couldn’t have been there *all* night, he would’ve frozen to death. Dumbledore was easily powerful enough to put the compulsion spell on Harry when he started at Hogwarts, too. He always seemed to be up to something — gently nudging Harry in certain directions, playing everyone around him like puppets and always seeming to know more than he should. Making Harry impulsive and easily influenced was one thing, but what did Dumbledore stand to gain from limiting his family magic?

He didn’t want to believe it, but it was the only thing that made sense.