

“Good, you’re here,” the Bulgarian said, beckoning them closer. The trio sat down, making themselves comfortable.

“Harry said you’ve figured it out?” Cedric said, and Viktor shrugged.

“I haff made progress. Listen.” Viktor picked up his egg and set it in the shallows of the lake until it was entirely covered, then twisted it open. Harry flinched, bracing himself for screaming, but none came. Instead it sounded like... music? “It is easier to hear when you are under the vater also,” Viktor supplied. “But it is a song. Here.”

He held out a piece of parchment, and the other three champions crowded around it to read.

*Come seek us where our voices sound,*

*We cannot sing above the ground,*

*And while you’re searching, ponder this;*

*We’ve taken what you’ll sorely miss.*

*An hour long you’ll have to look,*

*And to recover what we took.*

*But past an hour, the prospect’s black,*

*Too late, it’s gone, it won’t come back.*

Harry read the words over several times. “I assume your eggs vill say the same,” Viktor said, closing the egg, “but you may want to test them.”

“So we must go underwater?” Fleur presumed, brow furrowed in thought. “To wherever ze creatures ‘ave taken... whatever eet ees zey will take.”

“An hour to look somewhere underwater. Presumably the lake,” Cedric said, glancing out over the expanse of water. “Merlin, there could be anything in there.”

Harry thought about the aquatic creatures he knew of; surprisingly, his brain went to his muggle upbringing rather than what he’d learned since joining the magical world. “Are there merpeople in the lake, do you think?”

The others stared at him. “I think so,” Cho piped up. “I’ve heard some of the Slytherins talking about it before. They have that window to the lake in their common room.”

Harry remembered it; he’d thought it was a bit creepy.

“So merpeople vill take something ve care about?” Viktor surmised. “That seems... simple enough.”