

Dumbledore running the school meant people left it oblivious and complacent; oblivious and complacent people naturally voted in oblivious and complacent leaders.

No wonder it had been so easy for the Dark to thrive.

“We’re all going to fail our OWLs,” Padma moaned, voice trembling. “I’ll never get into the Warding Academy without at least an E in Defence!”

“Why don’t you get Harry to teach you,” Blaise suggested quietly. When Harry looked at him, the tall boy was smirking. “In fact, why don’t we *all* get Harry to teach us. Not just how to pass our exams. Fudge might have trifle for brains, but... becoming an army to take down the Ministry sounds rather fun, doesn’t it?”

Harry blinked incredulously. “You... you want me to what?”

“It’s not a bad idea, actually,” Hannah said, looking thoughtful.

“I’m not training you all up to storm the Ministry!” Harry protested — how would he even *go about* that?

“No, that’s my job,” Susan replied with an aggressive grin. “But you’ve been saying since last year that the fight is coming, and now You-Know-Who’s back... we ought to be prepared. We’re all targets, as heirs. We need to know how to defend ourselves.”

Harry could hardly believe what he was hearing. “I’m just a fifth year. I don’t know anything.” Sure, he’d been training with Snape and Remus and Sirius over the summers, but... half of that wasn’t anything he could teach students.

“You’ve faced the Dark Lord more than anyone else who’s still alive,” Draco reminded him gently. His silver eyes were earnest as he locked gazes with Harry. “You know what it’s like. The fact that you *duelled* him and lived, last year...” He trailed off, shaking his head.

“You’ve always been the best at Defence. And I know you — you know more combat spells than any other student in this school, I guarantee it.” His lips curled at the edges, a challenging smirk. “If nothing else, think how peeved Granger will be when we all get better OWL results than her.”

Harry snorted despite himself — that last point was *very* tempting.

Susan was right, though he hated to admit it. They were all targets, and Voldemort had already proven that he didn’t care whether someone was a student or not before he killed them. The idea of any of his friends being caught in a fight and unable to defend themselves, when Harry had the chance to help... it made his stomach turn to lead.

“Fine,” he agreed. “But if we’re doing this, it’s not just us. We’re not the only targets — muggleborns and half-bloods, he’ll go after all of them. They need to be able to defend themselves, too.”

“The more people involved, the higher the chance of Umbridge finding out,” Anthony warned dubiously.