

won't be so lucky next time. You need to learn to protect yourself from all sides, from whatever spell they may send your way — the Dark Lord may insist that he be the one to kill you, but that won't stop his servants trying to harm you, or your friends."

Harry drew his wand, readying himself at the end of the duelling strip. In all his practice for the third task, he'd gotten pretty good at both defensive and offensive magic. Nowhere near the level of Snape, but he was fairly confident he could hold his own. He'd been doing well at the end of last summer.

Snape faced him, bowing over his wand. "Let's see how much you remember."

The duel began and ended in less than a minute flat. Harry was on his back, staring at the ceiling and wondering how he'd gotten there. A hand appeared in his vision. "Get up, try again."

"You were going easy on me last summer," Harry accused, allowing the man to pull him to his feet. Snape smirked.

"Of course I was, you were thirteen. Things are different now. Death Eaters won't go easy on you because you're a child."

The second duel, Harry managed to last almost five minutes. "Better," Snape approved, hoisting him up again. "Tell me what the problem here is."

"You're still using schoolyard spells." Snape hadn't sent anything stronger than an Impediment jinx his way. The Slytherin nodded.

"I will continue to do so until I can be confident you know how to dodge. Several of the darker hexes cannot be blocked by your average Shield charm. I will, of course, teach you more advanced shields, but should you find yourself in battle with an unfamiliar spell headed your way, it's always safer to dodge than to shield and hope it works." Snape's smirk widened. "Your quidditch reflexes will come in handy here, Potter. Again."

.-.-.

Harry and Snape duelled until dinner, by which time both of them were sweaty, but Snape actually had an expression on his face that Harry might generously consider a smile.

They had taken breaks, to let Harry catch his breath, but even those had been spent with Snape demonstrating some of the curses and hexes Harry might come across in a real battle. By the end of the session, Harry was getting pretty good at dodging most of the spells Snape sent his way.

"Tomorrow I will show you a variant of the Shield charm that will work for stronger spells, but takes more concentration to cast, which is why it's not commonly taught." Snape passed Harry one of the glasses of water Ceri had brought, and Harry drank deeply. "Have you been keeping up your Occlumency shields?"

"Yes, sir." Harry didn't dare let them waver with Dumbledore about.