

they'll just let us take it and go on our way?"

"I'd like to think the challenge is in getting to them in the first place," Harry said grimly. There were all sorts of creatures in the lake that would make it difficult enough. "But I wouldn't put it past them."

"I will just charm zem," Fleur declared, tossing her hair. "Zen zey will 'ave to let me go past."

"Does that work on merpeople, then?" Harry was curious, knowing very little about veela and their charm. "What are the limits of it? Can you charm, like, cats and owls and stuff, or do they have to be humanoid? Or a certain level of intelligence?" Harry presumed if Fleur was capable of charming non-human creatures, she would have tried to charm the dragon in the first task. "Or does it only work on boys? There might be mermaids down there." The dragon was a nesting mother, so maybe that was why it didn't work.

"I 'ave not tested ze specifics," Fleur admitted, looking amused at the line of questioning. "And I am not as strong as a full veela. But a veela's charm will work on anyone 'oo is attracted to 'umanoid women. I would assume merfolk would be similar enough for eet to work."

"That explains why it didn't work on me at the World Cup," Harry murmured in comprehension, realising after a beat of pointed silence that he'd said that out loud. "I mean. Err." His face went hot as the other three stared at him wide-eyed.

"Did you just..." Cedric looked hesitant, like he didn't wait to say it out loud until Harry did.

"Accidentally come out?" Harry confirmed sheepishly. "Apparently. Please don't tell anyone." He wasn't ashamed, not really, but it was attention he didn't really need right now. People were judging him enough as it was without knowing that.

"Your secret is safe wiz us," Fleur promised, reaching over to squeeze his arm fondly. "I admit, I did suspect. I 'ave tried to charm boys wiz you around before, and you did not even seem to notice." Harry blinked, staring at her with raised eyebrows.

"How often do you use that charm of yours?" he asked suspiciously. Her response was an innocent smile, and Harry assumed by the way Cedric and Viktor's eyes turned adoring, she was using her charm right then. Harry laughed.

"I never use eet when eet matters," she promised, the boys turning back to normal after a second. "But sometimes eet is ze easiest way to get boys to leave me alone."

"Not Harry, clearly," Cedric teased, his grey eyes playful without a hint of judgement. "You're stuck with him."

"I haff to say, this makes me feel better," Viktor declared, earning a confused look. "I know you are not the type to interfere with another person's relationship, but I had vorried about the rumours of you and Hermy-own."