

“Go on, then.”

The Hufflepuff froze. “What?”

“Disarm me,” Harry challenged. “It’s a second year spell. You’re a fifth year. Should be easy, right?”

Suddenly, Zacharias was not quite so confident. Harry heard the Weasley twins snigger.

“It might be basic, but there’s a reason it’s taught so early. If you can get your opponent’s wand away from them, you’ve ended the fight.” Unless they were capable of wandless magic, but that was fairly uncommon. “Of course, it’s a fairly easy spell to block, too, but it’s worth trying if you can get your opponent off guard.”

Everyone was listening intently, and Harry kept going. “Pair up, take turns disarming each other. If you find the spell itself easy, practice trying to block it, or resist it. It’s all a matter of willpower — someone else wants your wand, you want to keep your wand. You have to make your will stronger than their magic.” There were enough sixth and seventh years in the group that he expected at least some of the group would find this first lesson simple. “In a fight, your opponent isn’t going to wait for you to be ready before they start casting spells. They’re not going to politely take turns. You have to be ready to react to *anything*. It’s not just about knowing lots of spells, or complicated magic. That’s flashy competition stuff. I’m teaching you to survive a life or death, no rules, anything goes fight.”

Had Harry been watching himself, he would’ve realised how much he was channelling Severus Snape — which, considering Snape had been the one to teach him such things, only made sense. He was pacing in front of his gathered students, a serious look on his face. They *needed* to understand that real life was not like school.

“So give it a try, and we’ll see how it goes. Then, if it goes well, maybe I’ll tell you all about the time I disarmed Voldemort,” he added with a wink, sending a ripple of shock through the group.

He didn’t mind talking about bits and pieces of his past, if it helped people understand what was coming for them. What it was like to face the Dark. Besides, many of these people were Cedric’s friends, his classmates — they deserved a better explanation than the bullshit Dumbledore had given them.

He clapped his hands together, and immediately everyone scrambled into action.

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Harry was disappointed, but not surprised, to see how many people struggled with a simple Expelliarmus. Despite Zacharias Smith’s derision over the second year spell, it seemed many people had not brushed up on it in quite a while. Even the people who could successfully cast the charm were doing so with exaggerated wand movements or wide open weak spots, giving their opponent plenty of time to figure out what they were doing and respond in turn.