

with the spell as you are. I would recommend you learn it as a precaution, but not as your main method for the task.”

“So what do I do, then?” Harry asked, watching Snape think.

“There is no similar limitation to the first task, where you could only use your wand?” the Slytherin checked. Harry shook his head.

“It doesn’t say anything about it, so I assume we’re fine to have other things. If not, I could always summon something again,” he added ruefully. “Why? Are you thinking about some sort of scuba diving apparatus? Because I thought about that but I don’t know how mechanised they are, and I didn’t know if the magic in the lake might mess with it.” The last thing he wanted was for an oxygen tank to fail on him in the middle of the Black Lake.

“No, that wouldn’t work,” Snape dismissed immediately. “But there is a plant — gillyweed. If you eat it, you will grow gills; and also sometimes fins. The effects vary from plant to plant, which makes it a somewhat risky approach, but if you carry enough for a second dose, that will cover you should the first dose lose its effects before you’ve finished.”

“Brilliant!” Harry breathed, perking up. He just had to eat this plant and he’d be all set! “Where can I buy it?”

“It’s rather rare,” Snape told him, making Harry falter. Of course it was. Just his luck. “However, it is used in several potions, so I keep some in my private stores. I will provide you with some when the task is nearer.” The Slytherin smirked. “If anyone asks where you got it, tell them you stole from me. There will be a detention for your efforts, after the task. Remus has been looking for a chance to test your Ancient Runes progress.”

Most of Harry’s Snape-related detentions turned into private lessons these days, so that didn’t bother him too much. “You’ll just give it to me? Really?”

“It would rather upset Remus if I just let you drown,” Snape pointed out mildly.

Harry was hit with a burst of bravery — or perhaps stupidity. “You’d be sleeping on the sofa for at least a week,” he teased. Snape stared at him, unimpressed.

“Don’t make me regret my offer, Potter,” he muttered. Harry just laughed.

“Wouldn’t dream of it, sir,” he assured, before sobering. “Seriously, thanks. I was starting to run out of options.”

“I’m sure Mr Longbottom would have enlightened you, had you shared your dilemma with him,” Snape said, and Harry wondered if that was a gentle reminder to trust his friends more. He was happy to talk about the egg with the other champions — at least, he had been before Viktor had solved the clue — but he’d been keeping it quiet around the rest of his friends, not wanting to worry them by explaining what he was about to undertake.

“But then I still would have had to figure out where to get this gillyweed stuff,” Harry pointed out. “So really I just skipped the middle man.”