

“Thank fuck for that,” Harry declared vehemently. He didn’t have to think about the bloody tournament for three whole months; then they’d be told about the third task, and a month later it would be done. “Merlin, I can’t wait to take a bath.” Cedric laughed as Cho made a loud noise of agreement, and they glanced back at Viktor and Hermione; Viktor seemed to be trying to talk to Hermione, while she just wanted to walk up ahead to talk to Harry. Harry was glad Viktor knew he had no interest in Hermione, or it would all look a bit suspicious.

All Harry wanted was a hot bath, a hot drink, and bed, in that order. And to call Seren Du — he needed to talk to Remus about getting a present for Snape. The man had definitely saved his arse on this task.

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The day after the task was a Saturday, and Harry was inordinately pleased not to have to go to classes. He emerged for breakfast wearing a thick jumper and two pairs of socks, his Gryffindor scarf wrapped around his neck — even after the Pepper-Up and a long bath, he couldn’t quite shake the chill that had settled into his bones. He sat with the other champions and their assorted crowd at breakfast; everyone else who had been in the lake was layered up as well, except Viktor. “I am Slavic,” he said by way of explanation, reaching for the coffee pot.

Fleur had Gabrielle sat on her lap, and was dropping kisses on the girl’s silver-blond hair every few minutes. She was still clearly shell-shocked from thinking she had failed her sister in the worst of ways. Harry squeezed her hand under the table, offering a supportive smile.

“I get that you lot were all risking your lives down there and everything,” Fred remarked from across the table, “but it was a bit boring for the rest of us to watch.”

Harry had wondered about that. “Did they not have screens, or anything with tracking charms so you could watch?”

Both twins shook their heads. “We sat and stared at the lake for an hour,” Cassius confirmed in a drawl. “It was thrilling, really.”

“You’d think they would’ve figured something out,” Cho mused, leaning into Cedric’s shoulder, swamped by a huge Hufflepuff Quidditch Team hoodie with ‘*Diggory*’ on the back. “The tournament being a spectator sport and all. At least the first task was fun to watch.”

“Hopefully the third task will be more entertaining,” Harry said. The other three champions groaned.

“Let’s not talk about the third task yet,” Viktor begged wearily.

After he’d eaten his fill, Harry took advantage of Hermione being distracted by Viktor — and thus Ron being distracted by Hermione — and snuck away with Neville and Ginny back to the common room. The rug by the fire was calling his name.

“I can’t believe you’re tied for first,” Neville mused aloud once the three of them were settled in front of the fire, Harry sprawled out on his belly with one of his muggle fiction books open