

reach up and spike the ball down towards the water, laughing when it made Harry squawk. Needing a minute to catch his breath, Harry swam over to the edge of the pool, leaning his elbows on the stone tiles.

“Good book, Professor?” he called cheerfully to Snape, who glanced up at him.

“Indeed.”

“You should come swim for a bit, y’know,” Harry offered. “Maybe you could try and drown Sirius.”

“Oi!” came the cry from across the pool. Snape’s eyes glittered in amusement.

“Tempting,” he mused. Then, to Harry’s utter astonishment, Snape put his book down and sat up. Seconds later, Harry was looking at his professor’s bare chest as he shed his t-shirt and walked towards the pool. There was a loud wolf-whistle, and when Harry whipped around, the exasperated look on Remus’ face confirmed that he had definitely not made that noise. Sirius on the other hand was smirking, beach ball in one hand.

Snape was pale as snow, thin and wiry, with several faint scars across his torso and biceps. Harry tried not to gawk at him. Snape hadn’t even taken his shirt off when they went to the beach!

The man stepped up to the edge of the pool, diving smoothly into the deep end and reappearing a few feet from Remus’ side. His dark hair stuck down flat, and he glanced askance at Remus. “Am I allowed to drown the mutt?” he asked. Remus sighed, struggling to hold in his amusement.

“I’d rather you didn’t,” he replied conversationally. “But whatever makes you happy.”

“Oi!” Sirius said again, mock-angry. “No drowning the Padfoot! This is a no-drowning pool.”

“What a pity,” Snape drawled, before launching off into the water again. He ignored the three of them entirely, swimming steady lengths along the edge of the pool, dodging the beach ball when necessary. After about twenty minutes, he hoisted himself out of the water, heading back towards his deck chair. As he walked away, Harry caught sight of a nasty, twisted scar running diagonally across his mid-back. It looked almost like he’d been whipped.

“Don’t ask,” Remus murmured softly, his honey eyes on his partner as the man cast a Drying charm on himself, then tugged his t-shirt back on. “He’s trusting you enormously to even let you see them.”

Harry nodded, turning back to the pool. Much to his surprise, he was actually starting to like Snape quite a lot. The man’s quick wit and dry humour were unexpectedly hilarious, and he was a great teacher now he didn’t hate Harry. Harry wasn’t looking forward to going back to school in September, when they’d have to pretend to be enemies again.

They stayed in the pool for a while longer, then eventually dried off and dragged themselves back to the house, Sirius playfully wrestling Harry on the way. Snape and Remus disappeared