

After observing for a few minutes, Harry shot up another firework, grabbing their attention. “Okay, not bad,” he said, rolling up his shirtsleeves. “But certainly room for improvement.” He surveyed the group, wondering who might be best for a little demonstration. “George, can I borrow you for a minute?”

The redhead grinned, happily strolling to face Harry. “I’m going to disarm you, and I want you to try and resist me.”

George nodded, face set determinedly. In an instant, Harry’s wand was raised, a spell was spoken — and George’s wand was flying into his hand. The redhead blinked, shocked. “Blimey, Harry.”

Harry couldn’t stifle his smirk as he handed the boy his wand back. “Did everyone see that?”

“See what? That was bloody quick!” Lee Jordan called out, to several nods of agreement. Harry’s smirk widened.

“Exactly. In here, you’re not trying to show off your perfect wand movements or your excellent pronunciation. Hell, if you can manage it, wordless magic is much better in a fight.” To demonstrate, he disarmed George silently; this time, the redhead just looked amused. “You all know the proper form, that much is obvious. But you have to *mean* it. Intent goes a long way with magic. The stronger your intent, the less effort you need to put in with the movement and incantation. And the smaller your movement, the more you’ll keep your opponent off guard. They can’t defend against something they don’t see coming. And if a well-placed Expelliarmus is your first spell, it could well be the only one you need.”

He could see in their eyes, the slowly dawning understanding. He grinned. “Keep going. Anyone who finds it easy, do what you can to make it harder. Just watch out for the people around you.” The room might be big enough, but there was still risk of disaster from a wide-flying spell.

The room was soon full of shouted incantations, and Harry walked around the pairs of students, offering advice and corrections. “Try and bring that elbow in a bit tighter,” he said to Ernie, who was giving his wand an extra wide flourish when he cast. A few times, Harry would repeat the spell himself — slower than his instinct, but still quicker than most in the room — to show someone what it looked like.

Slowly, he began to see improvement. People who before had been miscasting entirely or failing to put enough power behind it were now sending their opponent’s wands soaring. People who had cast well enough at the beginning of the lesson were stepping up their game, trying to dodge or defend against it. He saw Angelina with a vicelike grip on her own wand, while Alicia tried her best to magically wrench it from her grasp.

“If you’ve got the hang of it, practice directing their wand back to you,” he called over the din, putting a little Sonorus magic in his throat to make himself heard. “If you can get their wand away from them, great. If you can get it in your own hand, even better.” Sending the wand flying was nice, but came with the risk of them being able to run and grab it, or summon it back. “In a real Death Eater fight, I’d be telling you to get your hands on their wand and snap it.”