

Pomfrey wrapped a towel tightly around Harry's shoulders, then thrust a vial into his hand. Harry recognised it as Snape's extra-strength Pepper-Up potion, and downed it happily, sighing as the steam began to gush from his ears.

"Gabrielle first," Fleur insisted stubbornly when the matron turned to her. Pomfrey huffed, but obligingly wrapped the girl in a towel and gave her a potion too — only then did Fleur allow her to start healing her wounds.

"Alright, Harry?" Cedric asked, his grey eyes dark with concern. "You were down there a long time."

"I'm fine," he assured, casting a Drying charm on himself. He cast one on Gabrielle too, and the girl's violent shivers lessened. "You? Cho?"

"We're both okay," Cho promised, managing the barest smile. "I don't really remember much, to be honest. One minute I was in Dumbledore's office, the next I woke up in the middle of the lake." Cedric definitely didn't look impressed by the proceedings, and Harry didn't blame him. He would probably be far more furious himself if it had been Neville or Draco or even Ginny — especially Ginny, after her ordeal with the Chamber two years ago — but obviously Dumbledore had done the choosing, if he thought Ron was who he'd miss most.

"Harry!" Hermione gushed, eyes bright. "You did it! You worked it out all by yourself!" She sounded equal parts surprised and impressed, and Harry smirked; no one would even believe him if he admitted to getting help from Snape of all people.

"I told you I had it sorted."

"You haff a water beetle in your hair," Viktor said to Hermione, reaching up to gently brush the beetle away. Hermione smiled at him, but turned back to Harry.

"What were you thinking, going back for Fleur's sister like that? You wasted so much time! Viktor said you were there before any of the others."

"I was thinking I wasn't going to let a nine year-old *die*, Hermione," Harry bit out, wondering how she and Ron both could just trust Dumbledore when he said nothing bad would happen. The first task had been *dragons*, and they thought everything was going to be perfectly safe?

He could see Dumbledore conferring with the mer-chief at the edge of the water, and then gathering the other judges to discuss something. Harry barely paid attention to the scores — he didn't care if they gave him a zero, as long as he was done with the task. Still, it didn't surprise him to hear that Dumbledore had somehow managed to spin his decision to save Gabrielle into some sort of example of martyrdom, giving him extra points for it. He was tied for first with Cedric now.

"Just one more to go," Cedric said as they were all herded up to the castle, towels still draped around them. "Then it's all over."