

wait until you're a little older," he added with a grin. Harry pouted.

"Can't I at least find out what animal I'd be?" he wheedled. Sirius barked out a laugh.

"That's a slippery slope, little pup. Once you know, it's hard to wait. Unless you're something awful, like a slug." He stuffed a huge piece of toast in his mouth. When he'd swallowed, he eyed Harry in consideration. "Tell you what, you keep up your grades through fourth year, maybe I'll start teaching you in your fifth. Could come in handy."

Harry brightened up considerably; that was *easy*!. "It's a deal."

"That includes your Arithmancy and Runes grades, alright? There will be tests. Won't there, Remus?"

"Absolutely. Gruelling ones," Remus agreed, perking up now he'd had his second cup of tea. "Harder than your OWLs." Once Harry had finished all his homework, he'd requested his schoolwork sessions be turned into Arithmancy and Runes lessons. He had so many regrets about his choices of elective, but it was too late now.

"I'll pass them," Harry declared confidently. He finished off his orange juice, and Ceri took his empty plate off the table to be washed. "What are we doing today?"

"We don't need to leave until six, so until then, whatever you want," Sirius replied. Harry's interest was piqued.

"Where are we going at six?"

Sirius grinned wolfishly. "It's a surprise."

Harry huffed; Sirius *never* spoiled surprises. "Can we go swimming for a bit?" His prior experience of swimming pools was the obligatory lessons in muggle primary school to make sure kids knew how to not drown. Considering Dudley's favourite past-time in those lessons was actively trying *to* drown Harry, he hadn't really enjoyed them. Now, he found he quite liked being in the water.

"Sounds good to me. What are you two up to?" He turned the question to Remus and Snape, who shared a glance.

"I had no prior plans," Snape replied. "Though I won't be here tomorrow. The headmaster has need of me for something." All four of them shared a dark look at the mention of Dumbledore.

Harry ambled back upstairs to change into his swimming trunks, and he didn't wait for Sirius before heading to the pool, running the last couple of steps to jump in with a splash. He heard a loud bark behind him, and turned just in time to be hit with a wave of water as a huge dog cannon-balled into the pool. Laughing, Harry swam over to the edge, watching Sirius' doggy paddle turn into an effortless front crawl as he changed from dog to man. "Got you there, pup," he teased, ruffling Harry's wet hair. Harry ducked out of the way, diving under the