

“What he means is, Patrick got so pissed off at the noise it was making, he threw it in the fire in the hopes it would stop,” Cho supplied, grinning. Harry snickered.

“I tried ‘exing my egg,” Fleur declared, gracefully stepping over the bench and dropping down opposite them. “Eet did not ‘elp.” Alongside Fleur were two other Beauxbatons students, and a couple of Ravenclaws. Harry recognised one of them as Roger Davies, the quidditch captain.

“What spells did you use? Maybe we can compare lists,” Cedric said thoughtfully.

“It has got to be some sort of creature,” Viktor insisted, sitting much less gracefully on Fleur’s open side. He brought with him a Durmstrang boy, and Cassius Warrington. Cassius caught Harry’s eye, and winked.

“We already faced a creature in the first task, though,” Harry pointed out. “Surely they wouldn’t just make us face a different one? That’s not very imaginative.”

“What if the creature is part of the clue itself?” Cedric suggested. “Like, we don’t have to fight it, but knowing what it is will give us an idea of where it comes from, and that might have something to do with it.”

“Or ze ‘ole thing is just to waste our time, and eet will be anuzzer surprise.” Fleur scowled into her soup as she spoke, clearly fed up with the egg already. Harry could definitely relate.

He saw Neville walk into the hall and do a double-take at Harry’s position, and he beckoned him over, patting the bench beside him. Neville complied, though he looked a little confused at being invited into the odd group.

Neville wasn’t the only extra addition, though. Like a chain reaction, people began to join them; Roger invited a Slytherin girl over, and she brought her Ravenclaw friend. One of the Beauxbatons boys with Fleur managed to flirt enough with Katie Bell to bring her to the table, which of course brought Angelina and Alicia, which naturally brought the twins and Lee Jordan. Cassius swapped places with the Durmstrang boy to sit and talk to his fellow Slytherin, and the next thing Harry knew there were four more Slytherins at the table, striking up a conversation with the Durmstrang boy in what sounded like German. Before lunch was even halfway through, the entire end third of the Hufflepuff table was taken up by students from other houses and other schools. The Hufflepuffs had just spaced themselves between them, happily joining in whichever conversation was closest.

“What if we try making all four eggs scream at the same time? To see if there’s any differences?”

“*NO!*” was the immediate response to Cedric’s casual suggestion, from everyone in the vicinity who had heard the eggs.

“I’ll be so glad when you lot figure it all out,” Cho declared vehemently. “I swear, I can hear that thing in my sleep these days.” Neville nodded in agreement.