

in Dumbledore flipping his lid, preferably somewhere public. It would help enormously once Harry started trying to tear the man's reputation to shreds.

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For the rest of the week, Harry watched as Umbridge tried to ferret out the copies of the *Quibbler* interview that were clearly circulating the school, the woman growing increasingly flustered and frustrated as her efforts fail. The Hogwarts students were truly ingenious, disguising the pages as homework, or cuttings from *Witch Weekly*, or letters from home. Even the teachers were in on it, though due to the Educational Decrees they couldn't discuss any of it with their students. McGonagall's ire at Harry didn't last long — especially once Angelina confirmed that Ginny Weasley would make a suitable temporary replacement seeker — and he started earning house points in half of his classes for the most mundane things. Everyone in the school was talking about the article, and Luna told him delightedly that their sales were even better than the issue he'd contributed to the year before. Every day, more letters came in; plenty were still from people accusing him of trying to slander the Minister, but more and more people told Harry they believed him, that they were preparing for the Dark to rise again.

Judging by the low-level fury burning in the corner Harry's mind, right around his scar, there was someone else who wasn't particularly happy about it, either. Voldemort even got so irate one night that he forgot to block Harry, giving him insight into a meeting with a Death Eater named Rookwood, where Harry learned that Bode had been Imperiused into removing something, which was how he ended up in St Mungo's to begin with.

So that was what happened to someone who touched a prophecy that didn't belong to them.

It was awful information, but it wasn't anything useful, so Harry pushed it from his mind, happy to focus on Umbridge's utter outrage at the *Quibbler*. She had given him a few more nights detention — obviously mad that banning him from the quidditch team had not devastated him in the way she hoped — but even that couldn't dampen his spirits, and the first night he was free he happily went down to duel in the Chamber with Snape.

Ever since Harry had introduced him to Salazar, Snape had started pushing him even harder in their lessons. Harry wasn't sure if it was the man's way of thanking him, or just ensuring Harry had all the skills to stay alive longer so Snape would continue to have access to the portrait, but either way as the looming exams began to weigh heavy on his shoulders, Harry was more than glad to let off some steam.

"You're improving well," Snape complimented, once they finished their sixth duel of the night. Harry was sweaty and aching, but his magic was *singing*. "If only we had access to more people, so you could try your hand at duelling multiple opponents at once."

"I've done a bit of that with the HA," Harry told him, gratefully accepting the conjured goblet of water Snape handed over. "Obviously not with the kind of spells you use, but, y'know. Having a bunch of people come at me at once." From the amount of times he'd been outnumbered in a fight, he'd thought it helpful to teach his friends how to handle themselves in such a situation, and get some practice in on his own.

"Indeed?" Snape cocked a curious eyebrow. Harry grinned at him.