

Chapter 53

With the heirs study group keeping a low profile since Umbridge's new appointment, Harry spent his Saturday morning with Neville, Luna and Ginny — the weather wasn't quite good enough to be outside, but it wasn't raining, so with some warming charms and a privacy ward they managed to make a cosy little spot for themselves under a tree by the lake. Harry and Neville had both brought homework with them, though Harry wasn't particularly enthusiastic about his — Friday's DADA class had ended with Umbridge setting them an essay on the defensive theories outlined in chapter two of Slinkhard's book, and it was such utter garbage he was having trouble holding his tongue.

"Have you thought any more about what Susan said, Harry?" Neville asked him. It took a few moments for Harry to realise what he was referring to — and he sent a cautious glance towards the two fourth year girls. Of course, if they did start a secret defence club, Luna and Ginny would absolutely want to be part of it.

"A bit." Harry enjoyed daydreaming about it during his detentions, thinking up increasingly outlandish ways to annoy Umbridge without her even realising. "It's a good idea — though I'm still not sure I'm the best person to be teaching it. And we'll have to be careful. If Umbridge catches us..."

"What are you two talking about? What did Susan say?" Ginny pressed. Setting his parchment aside, Harry told her about the idea for the study group — framing it as a conversation with some of the Hufflepuffs, rather than a secret meeting of Wizengamot heirs — and her brown eyes lit up with glee. "That's brilliant. Oh, please say you'll do it, Harry! I'm *dying* of boredom in Umbridge's classes."

"It does sound like fun," Luna agreed. "I think you'll be a great teacher, Harry."

"Thanks, Luna." Harry smiled at the blonde girl. "I'm certainly game for the idea. I'm just wondering how we'll pull it off. The number of people who might end up getting involved... It'll be hard to hide a group that size." Even if the publicly-dark-aligned Slytherins couldn't risk being present, that was still eleven heirs, plus anyone they deemed trustworthy — Ginny and Luna, the twins, the Gryffindor chasers, Cho Chang. And those were just the people Harry might want to invite.

"Hogwarts is massive, though," Neville pointed out, looking up at the castle towering over them. "There's bound to be somewhere we can hide a study group. Especially with all the privacy wards you know, Harry."

"It's not like it's a History of Magic group, though — Defence needs space for people to move about. If I'm teaching people how to survive in a real fight, they need to be able to get up and dodge." Duelling and defence were very physical forms of magic. They might be able to cram enough people into an empty classroom, but if Harry had to have people take turns to try their hand at spells it would take forever to teach them anything useful.

"Why don't you ask the castle for help?" Luna suggested dreamily. Ginny sniggered.