

The headmaster seemed to constantly pop up in the corner of Harry's vision; crossing him in corridors between classes, watching him during mealtimes — he'd even been caught strolling away from the quidditch pitch one evening, right after a practice that Harry had ended prematurely due to one of the bludgers acting particularly aggressive towards him.

Snape had warned him of Dumbledore's *revelation* that Harry needed to die, but Harry could hardly believe the headmaster was trying to kill him already.

"I think he's trying to put me in the Hospital Wing," Harry told his friends in the heir's meeting, his face grim. "He tried to trip me at the top of the sixth floor staircase earlier today." Only Harry's quick reflexes had saved him from plummeting several floors down.

The Patil twins gasped, horrified. Even Daphne looked ill.

"But why? What could he possibly gain from injuring you like that?" Anthony asked, brow furrowed.

"Maybe he wants to put the magic blocks back on me," Harry thought aloud, shrugging. "Or maybe there's some new ritual he wants to do to me. Fuck if I know — either way, he needs me alone and unconscious, I'd bet. The old man's plans are getting wilder and wilder the closer he gets to popping his clogs. Merlin only know what he's got up his sleeve these days."

"We won't let him get to you," Neville declared vehemently. Harry shot him a quick smile.

"I appreciate that. But I was thinking... if he's upping his game, so should we." A cluster of perplexed faces stared back at him. "I think we should let out the information that he put compulsions on me as a first year."

Susan sucked in a sharp breath. "Just the compulsions, or the magic blocks too?"

"Just the compulsions, for now. Telling people about the magic blocks might make it sound too unbelievable." The general trust in Dumbledore might be waning, but he wasn't sure it was that low yet. "We can even throw in that he got Ron and Hermione to pretend to be my friend, to keep an eye on me. They know that I know about that, now." If it meant the rest of the school hated them, even better.

"We can do that," Parvati assured him. "How much detail do you want to go into? Y'know, about the result of the compulsions."

"Don't say too much," Draco piped up. "If the rumours are too detailed, it'll look suspicious. Let it lie at having Harry hate all Slytherins, and trust the headmaster. The gossip mill will supply the rest."

Harry nodded in agreement — the ideas the rest of the school could come up with would likely be far more damaging than anything he could spread.

"That should be easy enough," Parvati said with a devious smile. "If there's one thing the people at this school love to talk about, it's Harry Potter."