

Harry opened his mouth to speak, but Snape raised a hand first, lifting his wand and performing several warding charms. Only then did he lower his hand with a gesture for Harry to speak. "Do you know what Professor Moody is doing in his classes, sir?"

"I know he recently performed all three Unforgivables," Snape said with a disparaging curl of his lip. "I do not know if anything more recent has occurred."

"He's putting us under the Imperius curse." Snape dropped his quill. Harry continued. "He says that Dumbledore wants us to know how it feels, so we can learn to fight it."

One of Snape's long-fingered hands rose to clasp the bridge of his nose, and he let out a frustrated sigh. "Of course he does," he muttered derisively. "Potter, you're shaking." He got to his feet quickly, urging Harry into the chair opposite his desk.

"I almost threw it off the first time," Harry told him. "Professor Moody put me under it another four times, until I could ignore his orders completely."

When he looked up a few moments later, Snape was thrusting a vial of Pepper-Up potion his way. "Five Imperius curses in a half hour period? You're lucky you can still form sentences," he muttered. "What the hell is he playing at? Dumbledore's Golden Boy is no good to him with his brain leaking out of his ears."

After the potion, Harry immediately felt better. "No one else in the class was able to throw it off. I think he just wanted to get the better of me."

"I told Albus it was a foolish idea to bring that madman out of retirement," Snape said. "He's had one too many curses to the head."

"What am I supposed to do?" Harry asked helplessly. "I can't go to Dumbledore because it was his idea. But I can't go to anyone else because then it'll be obvious to Dumbledore I'm not obeying him anymore." A thought occurred to him, and he froze. "Will he know I got rid of the Compulsion charm? Since I was able to shake the Imperius?" The charm was supposed to make him more suggestible, after all.

"If anything, this probably works in our favour. He'll believe his Compulsion charm is so strong it overrode even Moody's Imperius," Snape assured him. "But I agree, you can't say anything about it." He pursed his lips, silent for a moment. "I'm sorry to say, Potter, that I think you're going to have to just keep at it. With any luck, once you can throw off the curse every time, Moody will get bored and move on. And it *is* a good skill to have. Even if the methods are... questionable." He took the empty vial from Harry's still-trembling fingers, setting it aside. "Just be careful; repeated short-term exposure to the Imperius curse can be dangerous. I want you to come to me if you feel any unusual symptoms, or if he puts you under more than three times in a row again."

"Yes, sir." Harry bit his lip. "Not Madam Pomfrey?" Snape frowned in response.

"Until I have ascertained who on the staff is under Dumbledore's thumb, I think it best we keep this to ourselves," he said eventually. "Regardless of Poppy's loyalties, I don't like the idea of you spending any length of time in the Hospital Wing. It's much easier for the