

Harry surveyed the group, counting heads. "Where's Lee?" he asked, remembering what Padma had said. Angelina scowled.

"With Pomfrey. That *bitch* didn't have him under for long, luckily, but... it was awful."

Harry, who had experienced more than his fair share of Cruciatus curses, nodded in sympathy.

"And the professors?"

A sea of sheepish faces. "Most of them are upstairs, dealing with the sixth floor," Blaise volunteered. "It got... difficult."

Harry *definitely* did not want to know.

"Right, then." All he wanted was to curl up in a corner and sleep, but clearly the universe had other things in store for him. "I think stories can wait a bit. Let's get rid of that pool, yeah?"

The group made for the doors, and Hannah slipped into the space beside Harry. "Where are the others?" she whispered urgently.

"Safe." Harry hoped that wasn't a lie.

Groans rang through the hall as the HA came to disrupt the impromptu pool party, and Harry raised his wand, pointing it at a purple rubber duck floating nearby.

And so that was where Dumbledore found him twenty minutes later; fishing second years out of the pool while they begged him to let it stay for just a couple days. The headmaster didn't look nearly as alarmed as Harry would have anticipated, given the state his school was in. Indeed, he chuckled as one ballsy Gryffindor flung himself back into the water as soon as Harry's back was turned.

"Mr Potter, a word, if you don't mind?" Dumbledore called, and a cheer went up at the sight of him, but all Harry could feel was cold dread. Nonetheless, he levitated himself over the pool, landing by Dumbledore's side, and followed the man back up the stairs.

"I was surprised not to find you waiting in my office, Harry."

"Yes, well I was surprised to find myself in there to begin with," Harry returned evenly. "Involuntary portkey, not a fun experience. Especially not with my history of them."

"Ah, I do apologise, but was necessary to remove you from that situation. Cornelius is already quite... volatile lately, I did not want to risk your safety," Dumbledore told him. Harry held back a snort; a likely story. More like Dumbledore didn't want interruptions when he spun whatever lie suited him best.

"And what about the safety of my friends? Where are they?"

"They have all been removed to the Hospital Wing," Dumbledore informed him. Immediately, Harry turned down the corridor that would take him in that direction;