

“How did you figure the egg out, anyway?” Cedric asked curiously. The Durmstrang boy blushed.

“I, ah, accidentally dropped it off the edge of the ship,” he admitted sheepishly. “It opened when I was diving to get it back.”

The rest of them laughed, and Viktor merely smiled.

“So we know what we’re up against, then,” Harry said. “We should all work alone from here on out. Don’t want any of our solutions looking too similar.”

The others agreed, and Viktor pocketed his egg once more. “No more talk of tasks until February 24th, then,” he declared.

Harry wondered if Fleur and Cedric had as much of an urge as he did to check their eggs sang the same song. “Well, if we’re calling it there, I’ve got a Transfiguration essay to write,” he said with a grimace. “Unless any of you would like to help me with that?” Unsurprisingly, they all suddenly had places to be, and Harry snorted. “Some help you lot are.”

“Why don’t you go ask your *girlfriend*,” Fleur teased, nudging his shoulder. She was getting far too much joy over the rumours of Harry’s Yule Ball escapades, especially the ones that involved her.

“I thought I just did, dear,” Harry replied sweetly, making Viktor and Cedric laugh.

“Away wiz you,” Fleur said playfully, making a shooing motion. “I must study also.”

The five of them parted ways, Cedric and Cho wandering off towards a different part of the lake, possibly to go test Cedric’s egg. Harry continued back up to the castle, lost in thought. He really did have a Transfiguration essay — but now he also had some research to do.

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The new term began on a bit of a sour note, in the form of another Rita Skeeter article. This one cutting far, far too deep. *Dumbledore’s Giant Mistake* was the headline they woke up to on the first day of classes, and the more Harry read, the deeper his frown grew. “I mean, didn’t everyone know that already about Hagrid?” he asked. “Just look at him. Bit obvious, isn’t it?”

“There are other ways to get that big, with magic,” Neville pointed out. “I think most of us assumed he got hit with a dodgy Engorgement charm as a kid or something. Giants... they’ve got a bit of a bad reputation.”

“Well so have werewolves, and Remus is alright,” Harry retorted. “How the hell did Skeeter get this information, though? If he’s never told me, I can’t see him telling her!” She wasn’t even supposed to be on school grounds outside of task days. She hadn’t even been able to get permission for the Yule Ball; a photographer had been sent, but a different reporter was along with them. The write-up had been a tasteful article about the whole affair, with a rave review