

Chapter 14

Harry smiled as he looked out over the pool from his lounge chair next to the pool and watched the girls run around in their bikinis under his sunglasses. Dora, Jennifer, and Amanda relaxed in the pool on inflatable rafts while Jenna and Michelle sat in the shallow end. The adults sat under the shade of the patio, leaving Sirius to tend to the grill. They'd even convinced Frank to come this year, although Harry had to hold back a smirk when he looked at the man. He looked completely out of place in his black suit and tie, especially when he stood next to Sirius, who wore board shorts, a t-shirt, and a 'Kiss the Chef' apron.

"Foods ready!" Sirius yelled.

Levina perked up and scooted closer to the grill expectantly.

"Yeah, yeah, I made some for you, too," Sirius sighed and muttered, "Bloody overgrown pigeon."

Levitating a rack of beef ribs from the grill, he tossed it in her direction. Levina snatched it out of the air, the bones cracking between her powerful jaws as she swallowed it in seconds.

Harry lingered in his chair for a moment, taking the time to enjoy the view as the girls climbed out of the pool. Dora, the last to get out of the water, glanced over her shoulder and rolled her eyes when she caught him looking. With a smile and a shrug, he got to his feet and walked over to her. He wrapped his arm around her waist, his hand landing on her ass. Dora giggled as they walked over to the table and sat down to eat.

When Jennifer and Amanda gave her a questioning look, Dora rather blatantly threaded her fingers through his and gave them a defiant look.

"Are you two dating?" Michelle asked curiously.

"They better be," Andromeda muttered.

While the girls gave her a curious look, Jenna covered her mouth and laughed. Even Frank looked interested as everyone looked around the table for an explanation.

“Andi found Dora in Harry’s bed this morning,” Sirius smirked.

Jennifer and Amanda burst out laughing while Michelle blushed and turned her head down to look at her plate. Lunch was filled with teasing and laughter before Marlene brought out the birthday cake. Sirius stuck to his tradition of singing as loudly and off-key as possible before Harry blew out the candles.

“Ready for your presents?” Ted asked with a smile once they’d devoured Marlene’s excellent chocolate cake.

Before Harry could answer, he pulled out a small, colorfully wrapped cube and handed it to Harry.

“This is from Andi and I,” he said as Harry tore into the paper.

Opening the hinged box inside the paper, Harry grinned and pulled out the silver wristwatch for everyone to see.

“It’s a tradition among British magical families to give a young man a watch when he turns of age,” Andi explained.

“I love it,” Harry said, strapping the watch to his wrist. “Thank you.”

“Who’s going next?” Sirius asked with a grin. “I want to save the best for last.”

Michelle handed Harry her present next, which turned out to be a book on dueling that had only recently been published. Jennifer and Amanda had gotten him a voucher for a clothing store in Salem, Marlene and Jenna gifted him tickets to a Quidditch match for his favorite team, and Frank gave him a wand holster that could be configured to be worn on the hip or worn as a shoulder holster.

With a smug smile, Sirius handed Harry his smallest present yet, a square box that fit in the palm of his hand. Tearing into the poorly wrapped gift, Harry pulled off the lid and stared at the single silver key attached to an old keyring advertising an Indian restaurant in London.

“No way,” Harry said, lifting the key out of the box.

“Sirius, you didn’t,” Andi said, sighing in aggravation.

“I did,” Sirius grinned.

“When I said you should get rid of that thing, I didn’t mean give it to Harry,” Marlene said, shaking her head.

“Oh, let the kid live a little,” Sirius replied. “Go on, Harry. She’s all yours.”

Grinning widely, Harry jumped from his seat and hugged him tightly.

“You’re the best!” he said.

Sirius chuckled and patted him on the back. Pulling back, Harry turned to Dora and held up the key.

“You want to go for a ride with me?” he asked.

“Hell yeah,” Dora beamed.

Harry took her hand and started pulling her towards the house.

“Put some clothes on before you ride that thing!” Andi yelled as she and everyone else got up to follow.

“What did you get him?” Harry heard Michelle ask.

He never heard the reply as he pulled Dora into the garage and flipped on the light. Walking over to the sleek, black Triumph motorcycle tucked in the corner, Harry threw his leg over the seat and grinned before turning to Dora.

“Open the door and hope on,” he said.

With a smile to match his, Dora hit the switch for the garage door and quickly climbed onto the back of the bike. As the door slowly opened, Harry could see everyone gathered in the driveway to watch. Inserting the key into the ignition, he started the engine, kicked it into gear, and rolled forward. Jennifer and Amanda laughed and cheered when he rode past them towards the road.

“Helmets!” Andi shouted.

Harry pretended not to hear her as he revved the engine and turned onto the dirt road. After getting a few hundred yards from the house, he turned around and glanced over his shoulder.

“Ready?” he asked.

“Ready,” Dora said, hugging herself against his back.

Grinning, Harry revved the engine a couple more times and then took off. He accelerated hard, running through the gears rapidly. Just as he passed the driveway where everyone was watching, he thumbed a switch next to the throttle. The wheels gently left the ground, and they took off into the air. Dora whooped in his ear as they climbed. Levina swooped in front of them with a loud, joyful cry as they cruised high above the desert.

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Andi sighed as he brought in the last of the plates from the patio and set them in the sink. The guests had left a short while ago and, as usual, when it came to clean up, Sirius and the kids had disappeared. Turning away from the sink, she decided to see if she could find Harry and Dora to help her. They were both adults now, and it was time they started acting like it.

She glanced outside first but didn't see them by the pool. Hoping that they hadn't gone back out on that bike, she walked into the living room to see if they were watching the telly.

Andi gasped when she spotted them on the couch. They were still wearing their swim suits, though only barely. Dora was straddling Harry on her knees as they snogged heatedly. Harry had pushed her top up, exposing her breasts, while her hand was jammed down the front of his open shorts.

"Harry! Nymphadora!" Andi yelled.

They stopped kissing and turned to look at her, but the fact that neither of them looked the least bit embarrassed only angered her further.

"What the hell are you two thinking doing that in the living where anyone can see?" she asked, crossing her arms over her chest. "Get in the kitchen and help me with the dishes."

Nymphadora groaned as she pulled her hand out of Harry's shorts, fixed her top, and climbed off of Harry's lap. Quickly fixing his shorts, Harry followed after her. The moment they were in the kitchen, she heard Nymphadora giggling.

Shaking her head, Andi drew her wand and cast a couple of charms on the couch. As she turned back to the kitchen, Nymphadora was leading Harry by the hand towards her bedroom door.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Andi demanded.

“Dishes are done!” Nymphadora yelled over her shoulder.

Pulling Harry into her room, she slammed the door closed. It glowed blue a moment later, signaling a Silencing Charm was in place. Throwing her hands up in frustration, Andi walked back into the kitchen. The dishes in the sink were cleaning themselves, but the sponge only cleaned the middle of the plates, leaving the edges dirty. Angrily, Andi canceled the charms and redid them properly. With a sigh, she went back to cleaning up the rest of the mess and putting away the food by herself.

Not half an hour later, just as she was finishing up in the kitchen, the Caterwauling Charm Andi had placed on the couch trigger. Huffing, she stormed into the living room.

“What did I tell you two about doing that on the cou-” Andi stopped mid-sentence as she stared at the couple on the floor.

Sirius lay on his back, blinking up in confusion as Marlene pushed herself on his chest. The front of her shirt distended away from her chest where his hand was still trapped under the fabric.

“Are you kidding me!?” Andi yelled. “Stop shagging on my couch!”

As she continued to lay into them and explain why the couch was charmed to a confused Sirius and embarrassed Marlene, Harry and Dora sat off to the side, laughing so hard tears fell from their eyes.

Just a few days after Harry's birthday, they were back in upstate New York for the annual International Dueling Championship. When he and Dora moved to get in line to sign up for the competition, they spotted Professor Wilkinson talking to Flitwick and a guy about Harry's age with straw-colored hair. The moment he noticed them, Professor Wilkinson waved them over.

"Hello, Mr. Potter, Ms. Tonks," Flitwick said, smiling brightly. "I'd like you to meet Ernie McMillan. I was hoping he'd be your competition from Hogwarts this year, but Boris here tells me you'll be competing in the under twenty-one bracket this year."

"Professor Wilkinson thought I needed a bit more of a challenge," Harry shrugged.

He didn't mention that a large part of the reason he'd agreed was to push himself harder than he had in the past. After being kidnapped and put in a wheelchair for six months, he wanted to make sure he was never rendered so weak and helpless ever again.

"Well, I guess that's one less duel we have to worry about," Flitwick smiled. "I wish you the best of luck. You're going to have some stiff competition this year."

"I'm looking forward to it," Harry smirked.

Flitwick chuckled while Ernie scoffed quietly and crossed his arms over his chest.

"You know, this means we might have to duel each other," Dora said as they moved forward in line.

"I hope not," Harry muttered. "You fight dirty."

"I do not," Dora huffed.

“You hexed my nuts the last time we practiced,” Harry argued.

“It was an accident!” she protested, then moved her lips close to his ear and lowered her voice. “Besides, I made it up to you later, didn’t I?”

Harry smiled at the memory.

“That part was pretty good,” he admitted.

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When the tournament organizers posted the dueling bracket, Harry was relieved that he wouldn’t be dueling Dora. Despite what she said, he didn’t think there was any chance he’d get laid for the next week if he eliminated her from the competition. Fortunately, there was another familiar name on the board that Harry was anxious to duel again. Fleur Delacour.

Sure, he’d been in a wheelchair at the time, but she’d still handed him his first loss. He was anxious to get back in the ring with her and see how he did when he wasn’t stuck in one place. And, hopefully, he could get his win back.

Joining his family in the stands, Harry and Dora watched the younger duelists go first. Ernie was one of the first to duel in the under-eighteen bracket, and despite being under the tutelage of Filius Flitwick, he wasn’t that skilled. He won his first match but lost his second in short order.

While the finalists for the two younger brackets went off to rest and wait for the championship matches, Harry and Dora got ready for their first duels of the day. Dora went first, taking on a Romanian wizard. It was a long, drawn-out duel that gave Harry a good idea of what to expect. Professor Wilkinson, who sat next to him, pointed out the things he needed to look out for as they watched.

“This is the point where a duel becomes much more about intelligence and less about skill,” he told him. “Think of it like a chess match. You need to maneuver your opponent into a vulnerable position before you can make your move. But never forget that they’re going to be trying to do the same to you. You’re never as safe as you think you are.”

Harry nodded and watched as Dora continued to test and probe her opponent’s defenses. Eventually, she spotted a pattern and used it to her advantage. She sent a hex at his head, and like he had every time before, her opponent raised a shield. It protected his face but also left him blinded for just a moment. Dora used that time to lock his legs together. While he pinwheeled his arms, desperately trying to keep his balance, her Disarming Hex hit him in the chest.

Everyone cheered loudly for her well-fought victory. With a beaming smile, Dora returned to the stands. She was still slightly out of breath with rosy cheeks when she took her seat next to Harry. Wrapping his arm around her waist, he kissed her temple and congratulated her while he waited for his first match.

He didn’t have to wait long. His first opponent was a Bolivian Witch four years his senior. Walking down to the straw-covered arena, Harry stopped in front of her as the referee read the usual rules. He didn’t hear them. Nor did he hear the witch’s name when it was announced alongside his own. He was utterly focused on the duel ahead.

“Bow and take your places,” the referee said.

Harry bowed, turned, and took five steps before spinning back around to face his opponent. He waited anxiously, his muscles tensed, for the signal to start the duel. The moment bright red sparks shot from the referee’s wand, Harry and the witch standing across from him leapt into action. Hexes and jinxes were traded back and forth so fast that he barely felt in control. At any second, a single mistake could cost him the match.

And Harry would be damned if he was knocked out in the first round.

Gradually, he forced himself to calm down and think. Almost immediately, he noticed his aim and timing improve, giving him a moment to relax enough to watch his opponent's reactions. Sweat dripped down his temple as he used a mixture of spells to test her and find an opportunity to end the duel. As he fired a Bludgeoning Hex, he noticed that, thanks to the furious pace, her shield was rushed and slightly malformed. It worked fine to stop his hex, but he knew it would fail if she were pressed to stop two or three in a row.

Just as a plan formed in Harry's mind, the woman across from him waved her wand in a wide arch. After spending the last couple of minutes defending the same textbook Hexes and Curses, the sudden change threw him off. It took him a moment to realize she'd used a Suffocation Hex.

Despite its rather ominous name, it was only really dangerous if you didn't know how to counter it. Its main strength was that it could be cast over a wide area, requiring virtually no need to aim and affecting multiple people at the same time. In the time it took him to remember the Counter Curse, the magic washed over. It felt like a large hand had wrapped around his throat, cutting off his air. Only the fact that he knew what was happening and knew how to get out of it kept him from panicking.

But that did nothing to stop him from being angry with himself.

Silently, Harry cast the Counter Curse and slapped aside the Disarming Hex his opponent sent his way, hoping to finish the duel. Before she could regroup and try something else, he angrily returned fire with a Bludgeoning Hex. Once again, the witch threw up a hasty, imperfect shield, and Harry pounced on the opportunity. He let loose with two more in rapid succession.

The first hex hit her shield and was easily deflected off to the side. She looked like she was going to drop it for just a moment before she realized there was more coming. The second hex caused her to stumble back a step, and before she could get her feet under her, the third broke her shield. As she fell backward onto her ass, Harry landed a Disarming Hex and snatched her wand out of the air.

"Your winner, Harry Potter!" the referee announced.

Letting out a breath, Harry smiled as he walked forward, gave the witch back her wand, and shook her hand. As he returned to the stands, he wiped the sweat from his forehead and tried to slow his breathing.

“That was awesome!” Dora yelled, hugging him tightly.

“An excellent performance,” Professor Wilkinson agreed as Harry was hugged and congratulated by the rest of his family.

“Thanks,” Harry said, taking a seat with a sigh. “That took a lot more out of me than I thought it would, though.”

“That’s the adrenaline,” Professor Wilkinson said, patting his shoulder. “This is the first time you’ve really been pushed in a duel. Don’t worry. You’ll get used to it.”

Nodding, Harry paid close attention to the next few duels, trying to learn everything he could from them. Unfortunately, Dora lost her next match against the Romanian witch that had won the year before. He thought she could have easily taken second or third place if the brackets had been ordered differently.

Harry was more fortunate when it came to his opponents. Maybe it was because he was less nervous or because his next two opponents were only three years older than him, but he won his next two duels in a much more convincing fashion than his first.

“And that’s it for day one of the competition, folks,” the announcer said with a beaming smile under his black top hat. “Tomorrow, we’ll be holding the semi-finals and finals for all age groups. Good luck to all our duelists.”

The crowd applauded as he took a bow and left. As Harry, Dora, and their families made their way out to play a few games and enjoy a few rides before they went home, Fleur waved and made her way over.

“Bonjour, ‘Arry, Tonks,” Fleur said with a smile.

“Hey,” Harry said, waving to her, her sister, and her mother.

As waved back and smiled brightly, Dora took his hand in hers and gripped his bicep possessively.

“I am glad to see you back on your feet,” Fleur said, brushing her long blonde hair over her shoulder. “Are you ‘ealed?”

“Better than ever,” Harry smiled. “And I plan to put up more of a fight in our next duel.”

Fleur smiled back and lifted her chin slightly.

“I look forward to seeing what you do,” she said. “I weel see you tomorrow.”

Harry waved as they started to walk away, but Fleur turned back a moment later and looked at Dora.

“I ‘ope you get chosen as ze Champion of your school next year,” she called loudly.

“Champion?” Harry asked, turning to Dora, who looked just as confused. “What’s she talking about?”

Dora shrugged.

“I think she’s talking about the Triwizard Tournament,” Sirius said. “It’s a competition between the three best students from the three biggest schools in Europe, Hogwarts, Beauxbatons, and Durmstrang.”

“But why would she think I was going?” Dora asked.

“I don’t know,” Sirius said, his brow furrowing. “I’ll ask around and see what I can find out.”