

## Chapter 2

Fleur gave an irritated huff as she left the gangly, redheaded fourth year practically drooling by the rose bushes in front of the castle.

How could it be this difficult to find more information about Hogwart's most famous student?

It didn't make any sense. Harry Potter was famous around the world; he'd been attending this school for more than three years, and yet no one knew anything beyond the obvious. Oh, the students were quick to speculate and spread rumors about the young man, but not one of them knew anything for certain. Some of the things they said were just ridiculous, but one thing remained consistent. His friends, Hermione Granger and Ronald Weasley, were always involved.

The redheaded boy seemed to be the best target for getting some real answers. He was Harry's closest male friend, known to be involved in his adventures—assuming any of the tales were even remotely true—and susceptible to her Allure.

Too susceptible, it turned out. The boy's had gone so red when Fleur spoke to him that she genuinely feared he might pass out, and that was before she used her Allure on him. At first, she'd thought that would just make her self-appointed task easier, but his stammering, stuttering responses to her questions were impossible to understand. Out of frustration, Fleur had given him a small nudge with her Allure, hoping it would calm him down.

In hindsight, she should have predicted that it would only make the situation worse.

His rambling, incoherent speech did come to an end, but only so that he could stare gormlessly at her tits while drooling on himself. Disgusted, Fleur had stormed off, more frustrated than ever. Her only hope now was to try and get answers out of Hermione Granger. Given the glares the girl directed at her in the Great Hall after the first task, she didn't think she was likely to get anything more than insults out of her, but it was still worth a try.

It took a couple of days of asking around and searching the horribly designed castle to find Hermione when she was alone. Fleur eventually tracked her down in the library, surrounded by piles of books and stacks of parchment.

“Bonjour,” she said, stopping in front of the table. “May I see?”

Hermione nodded absently, chewing her bottom lip as her quill danced along the parchment. Fleur took a seat across from her and waited for the younger woman to look up, wondering how to word her first question.

“I know why you’re here,” Hermione said, only glancing up briefly with a narrowed gaze before her eyes returned to her paper. “I heard all about the way you cornered Ron the other day.”

“I’m just curious about ‘Arry,” Fleur said.

“Yes, but what I don’t know is why,” Hermione said, setting down her quill and pinning her with a suspicious glare.

Fleur thought for a moment before she replied, “‘E does not act like ze ozzer students say ‘e does. ‘E saved my life, yet ‘e ‘asn’t boasted about eet. ‘E risked ‘is life and ‘is place in ze Tournament for someone ‘e doesn’t know. I just want to know why.”

“Do you really think he would let someone die because of some stupid tournament he doesn’t even want to be a part of?” Hermione scoffed and shook her head. “You really don’t know anything about him.”

“Because no one weel tell me,” Fleur growled frustratedly.

“And I’m not going to tell you either,” Hermione replied, folding her arms over her chest defiantly. “If you want to know more about Harry, then maybe you should just go ask him yourself.”

“Maybe I weel,” Fleur said, narrowing her eyes.

“Good luck with that,” Hermione said, turning back to her notes.

Angrily, Fleur got to her feet and spun around to leave.

“Oh, and Fleur,” Hermione called. “If you do anything to hurt him, Champion or not, I’ll personally make sure you suffer. He’s been through enough.”

Scoffing at the threat, Fleur marched from the library and made her way back towards the Great Hall. Maybe someone there would know where to find him.

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Finding Harry Potter alone was more difficult than it had any right to be. Contrary to what she’d been told, he did leave his closest friends’ side—quite often, in fact. The problem was that he always disappeared. It was like he had an encyclopedic knowledge of the castle and its many hidden routes and secret passageways.

After Charms, she had followed him through the halls, hoping to corner him when they were alone. Trailing him around a corner on the fourth floor, she stopped and stared incredulously at the empty, dead-end hallway she found herself in. Fleur had spent two hours trying to figure out how he had disappeared, all while the portrait of a young woman laughed at her progress. Eventually, she figured out that the portrait hid a passage that led to the second floor, near one of the courtyards. Any triumph she’d felt when she managed to open the passage without the password was wiped away when the portrait spoke.

“He’s long gone by now, dear,” the young woman giggled.

After just three days of trying to corner Harry, Fleur gave up. Perhaps the most infuriating part was that he didn't even seem to realize he was avoiding her. She was so used to men wanting to spend time in her presence that she felt an irrational irritation every time he walked away.

For the next few days, Fleur went back to watching him and listening to the rumors. Mercifully, she caught a break on Saturday when she overheard that the Gryffindor Quidditch team was out on the Pitch. Bundling herself up in a heavy cloak and braced herself against the cool November wind as she raced to the stands and took a seat. Thankfully, there were a handful of other students in the stands watching, so she didn't look too out of place. After layering her area with liberal Warming Charms, she sat back to watch.

Fleur had expected the team to be holding some kind of practice, but what they were doing looked more like friends having fun. The only ball on the field was a worn, red Quaffle, and with only six players, they didn't even have a full team. It took a moment of watching to realize that Harry and the two identical redheaded boys were on one team while the three girls were on the other, all trying to score as many goals as possible.

It was the oddest sight she'd ever seen.

The twins appeared to be trying to get the girls to drop the Quaffle by teasing them incessantly, and Harry seemed set on pulling the most unorthodox and unexpected moves imaginable. It didn't always work. In fact, he usually failed with a smile while the girls laughed off the attempt. But, when it did work, even she had to admit it looked spectacular.

Perhaps the most stunning move he pulled was when he quite literally stole the Quaffle right out from under the pretty brunette. Harry had shot towards them head-on, a trick he had tried to pull before. However, instead of going under the girl and trying to steal the Quaffle as he rolled – a trick he'd only gotten to work once before the girls figured out a way to defend against it – Harry flew over the top of her. The moment he was past her feet, he nosed over hard, doing a somersault in mid-air before shooting back the other way, flying upside down and underneath the brunette. The oblivious girl had looked over her shoulder to see where Harry had gone, only to have the Quaffle snatched away unexpectedly. The twins had cheered and laughed as he belted back in the other direction, the speed of his broom granting him an easy goal.

His crooked smile as the girls flew up to him was infectious, and Fleur found herself smiling with him. Upon reflection, she realized that this was the first time she'd really seen him happy and relaxed. It made her wonder how much pressure this Tournament was putting on his shoulders. She was starting to come around to the idea that he hadn't intentionally put his name in the Goblet. Given what she'd seen from him over the last few weeks, it fit him much better than the idea that he'd entered to keep his fame.

The Gryffindor team flew around for another hour before finally calling it quits and heading for the locker room. Fleur headed down after them and waited around the side of the building, hoping to catch Harry as he came out. It was only a couple of minutes later when she heard the door open again.

"Are you coming, Harry?" one of the twins asked loudly.

"You guys go ahead," Harry yelled back. "I need a shower. I'm covered in mud."

"That's what you get for trying that insane dive," one of the girls yelled back.

"It worked, didn't it?" Harry asked.

One twin snorted, "We scored if that's what you mean."

"We appreciate the commitment, mate, but we need you in one piece," the other said.

"Yeah," the first continued. "We've got a lot of gold riding on you winning this Tournament."

"Of course, that's what you're worried about," one of the girls responded snarkily. "We'll see you back up at the castle, Harry."

"Hey!" a twin yelled.

Fleur peeked around the corner and watched as the tall black witch pushed the twins towards the castle. This was perfect, she thought with a smile. Now, she had the perfect opportunity to talk to Harry alone.

Well, unless there was some secret passage that led from the locker room to the castle.

Looking between the castle and the locker room, she couldn't imagine why there would be one, but Hogwarts did much that made little sense to her. Fleur furrowed her brow as just the thought of Harry slipping away again brought her a sense of irritation. Shivering from the cold, she decided to wait inside where it was warm and where she could make sure Harry Potter didn't leave without her noticing. With a quick glance around to make sure no one was watching, she pulled her cloak tightly around her body and slipped inside the door.

A sigh of relief left her lips as she was enveloped by a pleasant warmth. She could hear water running in the boys' shower as she glanced around at the wooden cubicles. It didn't take her long to find the ruby red jersey decorated with a large white seven and the words Potter stitched across the shoulders. Taking a seat on one of the wooden benches, she ran her fingers over the thick but soft wool just as the water stopped running.

Fleur turned toward the doorway to shower. As he approached, she could hear Harry humming what she vaguely recognized as a Muggle song under his breath. Her eyebrows rose sharply when he walked into the locker room completely naked, his face covered as he toweled his hair dry. She took a moment to gaze appreciatively at his lean but muscular build before he wrapped the towel around his waist, looked up, and squinted in her direction.

"Bonjour," Fleur said with a smirk.

"Fleur!?" Harry gasped, his face turning bright red as he tightened his grip on his towel.

Fleur smiled widely. This was the perfect payback for making her chase him all over the castle.

“Er, I – uh... Sorry, I didn’t think anyone was in here,” he stammered nervously. “What are you doing in here anyway?”

“I wanted to speak wiz you,” she said. “You are very ‘ard to find, monsieur.”

“Er, sorry,” Harry muttered, running a hand through his hair. “What did you need to talk about?”

“I just weesh to know more about ze man ‘oo saved my life,” Fleur replied. “Zere are many rumors about you.”

Harry snorted, “Yeah, I know,” he muttered. “Alright,” he sighed. “You mind if I get dressed before we start with twenty questions?”

“Of course not,” Fleur said.

Crossing her legs, she waited patiently while Harry stared at her expectantly. Slowly, a smile formed on her face as he turned more and more red. Laughing, she stood up and turned her back to him.

“Zis weel ‘ave to do,” she told him. “I do not want you to slip away again.”

“I didn’t even know you were looking for me,” Harry sighed.

Fleur smiled when she heard the rustle of clothes behind her. She was tempted to turn around and take another peek but decided against it. Right now, she wanted answers. Teasing him more could wait until later.

“You can turn around now,” Harry said a few moments later.

She turned around just as he finished tying his shoes. Walking up to him, she looped her arm through his and started leading him toward the door.

“Er, so what do you want to know?” Harry asked as they stepped out into the evening sun.

Fleur hummed thoughtfully, “Ow about I tell you ze rumors I ‘eard, and you tell me ze truth.”

“Alright,” Harry said cautiously.

Nodding, Fleur decided to start with one of the more ridiculous rumors she had heard since coming to Hogwarts.

“Ze First Task was not ze first Dragon you ‘ave seen, oui?” she asked with a teasing smile. “You fought one in your first year?”

“What? Oh, bloody hell,” Harry groaned. “No, I didn’t fight one. Hagrid hatched one in his hut. My friends and I just snuck it out of the castle so he wouldn’t get in trouble.”

Fleur came to a stop and blinked, nonplussed, “‘E ‘atched a Dragon in a wooden ‘ut?”

Harry snorted, “Funny. That’s pretty much what Hermione said when we found out.”

Shaking her head, she started walking again, “And that is ‘ow you knew ze Dragon ‘andler?” she asked.

“Sort of,” Harry said. “He’s also Ron and the twin’s brother, Charlie.”

“I see,” Fleur nodded. “So, you are not learning to tame Dragons during ze Summer?”



Harry laughed, but it was an ugly, rueful sound.

“No,” he said. “I spend most of my Summers with my Muggle relatives, or at the Burrow with Ron and his family. The first time I met Charlie was at the World Cup.”

Fleur nodded and tried to bring the mood back up.

“But you ‘elped ‘Agrid, non?” she asked.

“Yeah,” Harry said, chuckling lightly. “We almost got caught, though. Lost a ton of house points. It’s kind of funny, looking back on it. We were trying to protect him from the other teachers finding out, but if we’d just gone to McGonagall or Dumbledore, we probably could’ve avoided the whole mess.”

“And ze name?” Fleur asked, arching her brow. “Norbert?”

“Hey, blame Hagrid for that one,” Harry smiled. “You know he named a Cerberus Fluffy?”

Fleur laughed and shook her head. She was tempted to ask more about how he knew that, but she had more pressing questions on her mind.

“What about ze rumor zat you killed a professor in your first year?” she asked, smiling.

“Oh, er, well... That one’s sort of true,” Harry admitted.

Fleur’s smile fell, and she stared at him incredulously.

“It was self-defense!” Harry protested. “Really. I mean, it’s a bit of a long story...”

"I 'ave time," Fleur said, tightening her grip on his arm.

Harry sighed and ran a hand through his hair. Looking up at the castle as they approached, he pulled her away from the front door and led her through another entrance that took them into a dusty, abandoned classroom.

"Well," Harry said, taking a seat on one of the chairs. "It really all started when Hagrid came to give me my Hogwarts letter..."

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Four hours later, Fleur made her way back to the Carriage, her mind a muddled mess. Harry had been surprisingly open about his first two years at Hogwarts, but she noticed he seemed to avoid talking much about last year. After everything he'd told her, she'd decided not to push him for more.

She still didn't know what to think about all of it. Harry didn't seem like a liar, but everything he said was just so incredible. Either he was a compulsive liar, or Hogwarts was insane, and his headmaster was actively trying to kill him.

Neither of those thoughts sat well with her.

Fleur was broken out of her thoughts when someone knocked on her door.

"Oui," she called.

The door opened, and Madam Maxime ducked inside. Shutting the door, she stood to her full height and looked down at her.

*"I've discovered the solution to your Egg,"* she said, causing Fleur to perk up.

In her search for answers about Harry, she'd almost completely forgotten about the clue to the second task.

*"Isn't it against the rules for you to tell me?"* Fleur asked.

Madam Maxime scoffed, *"The British have already cheated by having two champions."*

Fleur bit her lip and nodded. Even if Harry hadn't cheated, that didn't mean someone hadn't done it on his behalf. If the stories he'd told her were true, then it would make sense for his school to want such a talented student competing.

*"You need to listen to it underwater,"* Maxime said with a sigh. *"I would have told you sooner, but Dumblydore only just informed me how it works."*

Fleur nodded, and then furrowed her brow as she gazed up at her headmistress.

*"Didn't you create the second task?"* she asked.

*"Yes, but Dumblydore created the egg because he's the only that speaks the language necessary to make it,"* she replied before scowling. *"The contract we signed keeps us from helping you overtly, but we can still give hints without triggering the penalties. No doubt Dumblydore used this to give his Champions more time with the clue. Anyways, listen to it underwater. If you need help, ask, and I will do what I can."*

*"Thank you, headmistress,"* Fleur said.

Smiling, Maxime patted her shoulder gently and turned. Pulling the door open, she ducked through the doorway and closed it behind her. With a sigh, Fleur reached under her bed, pulled out the Golden Egg, and tucked it under her arm.

It was time to focus back on the Tournament, and a nice hot bath sounded good to her anyway.

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Fleur spent every spare moment over the next week trying to figure out a way to breathe underwater. It was surprisingly more difficult than she thought it would be. On the very next Saturday, as she was browsing through the shelves of the library, she happened to spot Harry and Hermione sitting at a table in a dark corner through a gap in the books. They were pouring over a stack of books and murmuring quietly. Fleur wondered curiously if it had anything to do with the second task and crept closer.

“Nothing,” Harry sighed, slamming his book closed. “This is hopeless.”

“No, it’s not,” Hermione said, handing him another without taking her eyes off the open book in front of her.

With another sigh, Harry took the book, set it down, and rubbed his eyes under his glasses.

“I swear, Hermione, when I find out who put my name in that Goblet, I’m going to rip their spleen out of their arseho-”

“Harry!” Hermione hissed, smacking his arm. “Language! There’s no reason to be crass.”

“Easy for you to say,” he muttered. “No one’s trying to find new and creative ways to murder you every year.”

“And with that kind of attitude, they might succeed,” Hermione huffed. “I know you’re under a lot of stress, but complaining about it isn’t going to solve anything.”

Looking over the books in front of her, she sighed and got to her feet.

“I think we’re looking at this the wrong way,” she said, gathering a stack of books and pulling it to her chest. “Why don’t you take a break for a few minutes while I put these back and try something else?”

Nodding, Harry sat back and took off his glasses while Hermione took the stack of books and left. Fleur watched as he put his glasses back on with a troubled look in his eyes. He seemed to age ten years right in front of her eyes as he picked at his robes, grumbling under his breath. It was in that moment, seeing the defeat slump of his shoulders when he thought no one was looking, that she realized she believed him.

Feeling immense sympathy, she put a smile on her face and walked around to his table.

“Bonjour, ‘Arry,” she said, stopping next to him.

“Oh, hey, Fleur,” he muttered, sitting up.

Glancing over the books that remained on the table, she frowned when she noticed many of them were on magical languages. In fact, they were the same books that she had looked at to try and solve her egg.

“You are steel trying to solve ze egg?” she asked, nodding to the books.

“Oh, yeah,” Harry sighed. “The bloody thing just screeches every time I open it. I take it you figured it out.”

“Oui,” Fleur said, her brow furrowed as she wondered why his headmaster had yet to tell him.

More and more, she was becoming convinced that Dumbledore was either as crazy as he pretended to be or he actually wanted Harry to die.

"I don't suppose you'd be willing to give me a hint, would you?" Harry asked with a joking smile.

Fleur opened her mouth to tell him the hint Madam Maxime had given her but closed it when a better idea came to mind. Slowly, a smile formed on her face, causing Harry to raise an eyebrow.

"Even better, I weel show you," she said.

"Really?" Harry asked, surprised. "Wouldn't that be cheating, though?"

"Zere is no rule against it," Fleur shrugged. "You saved my life. It's ze least I can do."

"Well... if you're sure," Harry said.

"I'm sure," she said, smiling at the look of relief that came over his face. "You know zis castle well, non?"

"Pretty well, yeah," Harry nodded, his brow furrowed curiously. "Why?"

"We need a large bath," Fleur said, smiling to herself.

"Er... Well, the biggest one I know of is the Prefects' Bath on the third floor," he said thoughtfully.

"And you can get us in?" she asked.

“Yeah,” Harry replied with a shrug.

“Bon,” Fleur grinned. “Meet me zere in ‘alf an ‘our.”

Spinning around, she walked away with a bright smile. On her way out, she passed Hermione, who gave her a suspicious glare. Still smiling, she waved pleasantly and made her way back to the carriage to get ready.

Half an hour later, she met back up with Harry in front of the grand staircase.

“You weel ‘ave to show me where we are going,” Fleur told him. “Zis place is like a maze.”

“That’s what makes it fun,” Harry smiled.

Leading her up the stairs to an empty hallway, he suddenly stopped and pulled a large piece of worn parchment out of his pocket.

“I solemnly swear I’m up to no good,” he said, pressing the tip of his wand to the parchment.

Fleur watched, impressed, as lines danced across the yellowed paper. A gasp left her lips when she realized just what she was looking at. Not only was it a map of the school, but it tracked the position of every person in the castle.

“Incroyable,” she breathed. “Did you make zis?”

“No,” Harry laughed. “My dad and his friends did when they were students. Come on, it’s this way. Oh, and if you could keep this map just between us, I’d appreciate it. This is one of the few things I have from my parents.”

“Of course,” Fleur said, linking her arm with his.

Quickly, he led her up to the third floor, where they stopped outside of a door with a gilded Mermaid embossed on the front. Harry glanced at the map again, and she looked over his shoulder curiously. A floating banner appeared above the door, on which appeared the words ‘pine fresh.’

“Pine fresh,” Harry said.

The door clicked open, and he pushed it open as they stepped inside. Fleur looked around at the massive bath, dozens of taps containing soaps, and the animated, stained-glass Mermaid and smiled.

Finally, she’d found a room in Hogwarts she liked.

“You ‘ave you egg, oui?” Fleur asked.

“Yeah,” Harry said.

Taking off his backpack, he opened it and pulled out his golden egg.

“Now what?” he asked curiously.

Fleur smiled, “We need to put it in ze water.”

Undoing her robe, she dropped it to the floor, revealing that she was only wearing a blue, two-piece bikini underneath. The Warming Charms she’d needed to keep herself comfortable were well worth seeing the gob-smacked look on Harry’s face. Her giggle broke him out of his staring and caused him to blush heavily.



“Er... I didn’t bring a bathing suit,” he muttered.

“Zen you weel just ‘ave to go naked, non?” she asked, arching her brow.

The wide-eyed look he gave her caused her to laugh again.

“You are wearing boxers, non?” she asked laughingly. “Just go in zose.”

“Er, right,” Harry said nervously.

Smiling, Fleur spun around, giving him a good look at her derrière as she walked over to the bath. She stuck her foot in to test the temperature before stepping in and sighing as the heat warmed her legs.

Privately, she wondered if she could convince Madam Maxime to get her the password so she could visit whenever she wanted. Maybe if she said she needed to use it to practice it for the tournament...

Putting those thoughts aside, she took a seat in the bath and turned back to Harry just as he stepped out of his pants. Still blushing, he grabbed his egg and practically jumped into the water. Fleur smiled as she watched him settle in the water.

“Er, what now?” he asked.

“Now, we listen to ze egg underwater,” she smiled.

Harry nodded, and they both dipped their heads under the surface. Cringing, he twisted the top and opened the egg. Instead of screeching, the melodic sound of Mermish filled their ears. He stared at the egg in surprise and then focused intently on the song. When it ended, they surfaced and wiped the water from their faces.

“You don’t have a parchment and quill, do you?” Harry asked.

Arching a brow, Fleur stood and looked down at herself, “Where would I keep it in zis?”

She smirked when Harry’s eyes trailed down her body, and his face flushed.

“Er, right,” he muttered.

Forcibly turning away, he walked over to the edge, grabbed his bag, and dug out his writing supplies. Bringing them closer, he listened to the egg over and over, copying down each line. Eventually, he pushed the parchment away and sat back thoughtfully.

“Finished?” Fleur asked.

When Harry nodded, she swam over to the taps and turned one on at random. Finding the smell pleasant, she let it fill the bath.

“So, we have to stay underwater for an hour?” he asked.

“It seems so,” Fleur nodded.

“Great,” Harry muttered, rubbing his face. “Well, I suppose that’s one thing down. Now all I have to do is find a way to hold my breath for an hour and figure out who put my name in the Goblet. Oh, and find a date for this stupid Ball.”

“You are not taking ‘Ermione?” Fleur asked curiously.

“No, we’re just friends,” Harry said. “Honestly, I wish I could just skip it, but McGonagall says I have to go.”

Sighing, he leaned his head back and closed his eyes. Fleur stared at him for a long moment. He was good-looking, polite, unaffected by her Allure, and certainly better company than any other boys at this school.

“Zen you can go wiz me,” she said.

Harry lifted his head sharply, eyes wide as he stared at her.

“Wait, what?” he asked.

Smiling, Fleur swam over to him and placed her hands on either side of his head, leaving her breasts inches from his face.

“You can go to ze Ball wiz me,” she said softly. “Unless you’d razzer go wiz someone else, of course.”

“No!” Harry exclaimed. “I mean, I’d love to go with you.”

“Bon,” Fleur purred.

Smiling as his face flushed, she moved to the side and sat next to him.

“Bugger,” Harry said suddenly.

Fleur looked at him and blinked at the look of sheer panic on his face.

“I don’t know how to dance,” he said faintly.

Fleur laughed and patted his hand reassuringly before lacing her fingers through his.

“I weel teach you,” she assured him.