

The Rescue

“Next up, from Beauxbatons Academy, the lovely Ms. Delacour will take on the Welsh Green!” Ludo Bagman announced.

The crowd roared as Fleur nervously got to her feet. Clenching her hands into fists to stop them from shaking, she took a deep breath and took a step forward.

“Good luck.”

Fleur stopped and turned to look at Harry, the only other person left in the tent. He looked like she felt. His face was pale, his leg bouncing restlessly as a trickle of nervous sweat dripped down his brow. She repressed her first thought, which was to scoff.

Of the two of them, it was Harry that needed luck. Fleur was the best her school had to offer, while he was just an arrogant little boy desperately trying to hold onto his fame. Looking at him, however, and seeing the fear in his bright green eyes, she couldn't bring herself to mock him like she wanted to. The boy already knew he was in over his head.

“You, too,” Fleur said.

Turning to the exit and putting him out of her mind, she straightened her shoulders and marched forward determinedly. The crowd cheered loudly the moment she stepped out into the oval-shaped arena. Towering stands circled the top of the enclosure, where students and visitors stomped their feet and cheered. The floor of the arena was made of grey, dull bedrock that stuck out from the top of the hill that the stadium had been built on. Across the Quidditch pitch-sized enclosure, Fleur caught sight of her dragon.

The Welsh Green's scales glittered in the sun as it roared and thrashed against the chain around its neck. Underneath its massive body, in the shadow of its bulk, sat a nest. It held four giant white dragon eggs, and there, in the center, sat the Golden Egg Fleur needed to retrieve.

With her goal in sight, a surge of adrenaline rushed through her veins. Seeing the dragon distracted by the cheering crowd, Fleur crouched down and crept closer, using the rock outcroppings as cover. Once she was close enough for her planned spell, she took a deep breath and tightened her sweaty grip on her wand before stepping out into the open.

Instantly, the dragon turned its bright yellow eyes on her with a glare. Letting out a threatening roar, it took a step closer to her, and further from her nest. Fleur held her wand with both hands, the tip pointed straight up between her breasts, released her full Allure, and began to sing.

The dragon shook its head and let out a furious roar as it felt the magic wash over it. Steeling her nerves, Fleur kept singing. Her magic washed over the entire arena, causing some of the more Allure-susceptible boys to stare at her in a trance, their eyes slowly drooping. Shaking its head again, the dragon roared and blew fire in random directions.

Fleur was just out of range, but she still felt the blast of heat hit her face and hands. It caused her to falter for just a moment, but she went right back to singing. As the dragon's roar trailed off, it collapsed, shaking the ground under her feet with its massive weight. Giving Fleur a baleful glare, it curled up in a ball in front of the nest and rested its great head on the ground. Slowly, its eyes began to droop, blinking closed for long and longer until, finally, they closed completely.

Fleur kept singing for several more seconds to be safe before she ended her song. Thankfully, the audience was silent, just as entranced as the dragon. Letting out a nervous breath, she took a tentative step closer, then another, and another.

"It looks like she's done it," Bagman said quietly. "I don't believe it. The dragon is completely asleep."

Fleur shot the man a glare before her eyes flicked back to the dragon. It took a deep breath and curled in tighter on itself as she took another step closer. Walking quietly past the dragon and marveling at its size, Fleur crept carefully toward the nest and plucked the golden egg from the middle. Smiling in triumph, she cradled it to her chest with her free hand and marched, head held high, toward the exit.

Suddenly, the Beauxbatons section cheered. Fleur's eyes widened when she heard the dragon shift behind her. She spun around, wand held at the ready, while her classmates quieted and sat back down. As she watched nervously, the dragon took in a deep breath and let out a burst of flames. Fleur danced out of the way, quickly putting out the edge of her skirt, which had caught fire, and then turned her wand back on the dragon.

Mercifully, it was still asleep.

Letting out a shaky breath, Fleur took a step back. A gasp left her lips as her foot slipped. Flapping her arms to try and catch herself, the egg fell from her arms. She twisted her body to try and catch herself with her arms, only to realize too late that her foot was caught in a crevice. Fleur hit the ground on her side as a sickening *pop* left her ankle. Intense pain caused her to scream out before she could stifle it.

Her eyes widened, and her heart raced as she heard the dragon growl. Rolling over, she watched in horror as it got to its feet, its furious yellow stare moving from the egg to her prone form. Throwing its head back, it let out a ferocious roar that rattled Fleur's bones and hurt her ears. In a panic, she scrambled to find her wand. Her heart sank when she spotted it on the ground just a few feet away, just out of reach.

"Oh no!" Bagman cried. "Ms. Delacour appears to be in real trouble. We may need to send in the dragon handlers."

Fleur desperately stretched and reached for her wand, only to cry out again when her ankle throbbed in agony. Turning back the other way, she tried to free her foot, swallowing hard when she saw the unnatural angle her ankle was bent at. Her foot, wedged tight, refused to move as she saw and felt the dragon stalking closer.

Suddenly, two large wooden doors swung open, drawing her attention, as well as the dragons. Fleur's heart leapt when she spotted the dragon handlers rushing down the tunnel. The hope that welled in her chest plummeted when the dragon spun with shocking speed and blew a jet of searing hot flames directly at them. The dragon handlers dove out of the way, but the flames just kept going. With a loud creak and a *snap*, the beams over the doorway collapsed. When the

dragon stopped breathing fire, Fleur's heart fell into her stomach. Thick, fiery beams blocked the dragon handlers from the arena. Even as they tried to put out the fire, the dragon turned its attention back to her, and she knew they'd never get to her in time.

"Great Scott!" Bagman shouted. "The dragon handlers are trapped! Oh, this is not good. Not good at all."

Fleur stared up fearfully at the dragon as it turned to her and stalked toward her, its yellow eyes glittering malevolently. Grabbing her leg, she tried once more to free her foot. She pulled so hard she felt the bones shift, and a pain-filled scream left her lips, but it still wouldn't budge. The crowd screamed as the dragon opened its mouth, and Fleur curled up into a ball.

Intense heat washed over Fleur, and a tear leaked from her eye as she prepared to be burned alive. Despite the blistering heat, there was none of the sharp, burning pain that she expected. It took her mind a moment to realize that she wasn't dying. Cautiously, she uncovered her head, opened her eyes, and gasped.

Through the bright light of the dragon's fiery breath, she could just make out the silhouette of a man standing in front of her, protected by a powerful blue shield. A shuddering sigh of relief escaped her lips. One of the dragon handlers had made it to her just in time. Fleur could see him struggling to hold back the torrent of flames, his body shuddering from the force with which they struck his shield.

"I don't believe it!" Bagman shouted just as the dragon stopped breathing fire and let out a furious roar. "Harry Potter just came out of nowhere to rescue the Beauxbatons champion! What a save!"

Fleur gasped as she stared at the figure in front of her. Facing away from her, it had been impossible to tell who it was, but at Bagman's words, it all clicked into place. His size, stature, the disheveled black hair – it all fit perfectly. Harry Potter had just saved her life.

Glaring at Harry, the dragon tried to move to the side to get a better shot at Fleur, but he moved with it, defiantly blocking its path. Turning its malevolent gaze back to the young man, the

dragon let out another deafening roar. Harry's wand snapped up, a wordless Stunning Hex firing from the tip. Fleur stared at it incredulously, her heart sinking. If he thought such a simple spell would do anything to that kind of beast, they were both dead. Yet, even as she thought that his spell hit the roof of the dragon's mouth with unerring accuracy. Its roar cut off abruptly as the dragon staggered to the side, shaking its head.

"Herbivicious Incarcerous!" Harry shouted, twirling the tip of his wand and then jerking it up.

Thick, dark brown roots and thin, green vines slithered out of cracks in the bedrock all around the dragon. They shot toward it, wrapping around its legs, wings, neck, and tail before pulling it taut. The dragon roared angrily as it tried to rip itself free. What few vines and roots that it managed to break were immediately replaced by more. Opening its mouth, the dragon unleashed a torrent of flames on the roots holding its front right leg. The roots crackled and burned away.

"Bugger," Harry muttered.

Twirling his wand again, more roots crept from the cracks and wrapped around the dragon's body. The dragon responded by letting out more intense flames, burning them away as fast as Harry summon more. It was a stalemate.

Glancing over at the dragon handler entrance, she could see them still putting out the last of the fire, but the wooden beams still blocked the way. If Harry could just hold it off for a little bit longer...

When she turned back to him, she saw him glancing around the arena, eyes searching for something. Raising his wand, he pointed it at a small outcropping and gave it a familiar swish and flick. Harry grunted, the muscles in his arms straining as he levitated a boulder the size of the Beauxbatons carriage into the air. Slowly, he moved it between them and the dragon.

Fleur felt a surge of hope. If he used it as a shield while the dragon was busy freeing itself, he could free her. If she could just get to her wand-

“Depulso!” Harry shouted.

He stumbled backwards slightly as the boulder shot forward like it was fired out of a canon. Fleur gasped as it hit the dragon in the chest and sent it crashing to the ground. With a grunt, Harry twirled his wand and wrapped more roots around the beast. Her pulse raced when she saw several thinner ones trying to tie its mouth shut, but the dragon noticed them and burned them to ash with a quick puff of fire. Turning its head, the dragon burned away the roots holding its neck and then went back to trying to free its body.

“Oh, come on,” Harry huffed tiredly.

Glancing around the arena, he planted his feet shoulder-width apart and squared his shoulders. Extending his free arm and his wand, he gave the tip another swish and a flick.

“Wigardium Leviosa,” he said through gritted teeth.

Three boulders roughly the same size as the last slowly and jerkily rose into the air. Fleur stared at Harry in amazement even while he grunted under the strain and his body trembled. With great effort, he maneuvered the boulders until all three hovered in front of him.

“Depulso!” Harry screamed, swinging his hands together.

The boulders launched forwards, and he dropped to his knees, sweat dripping from his brow as he panted. One of the boulders glanced off of the dragon’s side, making it roar in pain. The second hit its side, sending it crashing back to the ground a moment before the third hit it square in the head. The great beast fell forward, eyes closed.

Fleur’s breath caught as Harry whipped his wand forward. Roots and vines wrapped around its mouth, tying it shut, while more roots bound its body to the ground. Blinking its yellow eyes open, the dragon tried to move.

“Please stay down,” Harry pleaded softly. “Please don’t make me kill you.”

Fleur glanced at him incredulously. Did he really think he was capable of such a thing?

The twin jets of flame that left its nostrils did nothing to help its situation as it glared balefully at Harry. With the roots anchoring it to the bedrock and its mouth tied shut, the dragon couldn’t move.

Suddenly, the crowd erupted, startling Fleur.

“Merlin!” Bagman gasped. “I don’t believe it! Harry Potter has just singlehandedly defeated a fully grown dragon. I hope this counts towards his points. What a performance! And here come the dragon handlers!”

Getting to his feet, Harry looked utterly exhausted as he trudged over to Fleur and dropped to his knees next to her.

“You alright?” he asked.

Fleur licked her dry lips and nodded.

“My foot,” she said. “Eet’s stuck.”

Looking down at her ankle, Harry winced in sympathy.

“Don’t worry, Madam Pomfrey will fix you right up,” he told her reassuringly as he raised his wand. “Fractus.”

The crevice Fleur's foot was stuck in barely moved, only tiny cracks appearing at the ends. Letting out a frustrated growl, Harry jabbed his wand forward.

"Fractus!" he barked.

Fleur cried out when the crevice suddenly widened and released her foot, causing it to fall at a painful, unnatural angle. Closing her eyes, her stomach churned at the sight. She felt Harry shift closer and gently cradle her foot. Biting her lips to stifle a groan, she turned her body slightly so he could set it back on the ground.

At the sound of rushing footsteps, Fleur blinked her eyes open. Several of the dragon handlers rushed over to the dragon but looked puzzled about what to do next. One dragon handler, a short, stocky redhead, knelt down next to Harry and conjured a splint for her ankle.

"Thanks, Charlie," Harry said, moving to sit on the ground and wrapping his arms around his legs as he took several deep breaths.

"Sorry we didn't get here sooner," the man, Charlie, responded, clapping him on the shoulder. "The organizers thought it would look better for the papers if we made an entrance. I told them it was a stupid idea."

Harry snorted derisively and muttered, "Figures."

"Nice job with that dragon, by the way," Charlie smiled. "Don't tell mum I said this, but if you ever want a job working at the reserve, I can get you one after a performance like that."

"I think I've had enough dragons for one lifetime, thanks," Harry smiled back.

Chuckling, Charlie clapped him on the shoulder again before turning to Fleur.

“Are you alright, Ms. Delacour?” he asked. “Any other injuries?”

“Non,” Fleur said, wincing in pain. “Just ze ankle.”

“Well,” he said, glancing over his shoulder. “Looks like your headmistress is on her way over. Do you want to wait for her here, or do you want me to carry you over to the medical tent?”

“I weel wait,” Fleur replied.

The man seemed fine, but she didn’t want to give him the chance to take liberties while she was injured. Charlie nodded and turned to look back at the other dragon handlers while Fleur reached over and grabbed her wand. Just having it in her hand sent a wave of relief flowing through her.

“How’s Norbert?” Harry asked.

“He’s doing great,” Charlie smiled. “We almost brought him for the tournament, but they wanted nesting mothers.”

“I’m glad you didn’t,” Harry said. “Hagrid’s going to be mad enough at me for fighting this one.”

Charlie laughed while Fleur stared, her brow furrowed. Had he spent time around dragons before? Is that how he knew how to deal with one?

Suddenly, the dragon let out a long, pitiful groan that caused everyone to look at it sharply. It stared at the Golden Egg sitting on the ground near Harry and tried to edge itself closer. The dragon handlers raised their wands, but the roots held it in place. Fleur relaxed her grip on her wand when it laid back down with a low whine.

Glancing between the dragon and the egg, Harry picked it up and got to his feet.

"I need to borrow this for a second," he said to Fleur. "I promise I'll bring it right back."

Before she could ask why Harry needed it, Harry turned and marched towards the dragon. Looking startled, Charlie raced to catch up with him.

"Harry, what are you doing?" he asked.

"I just want to show her its fake," Harry said.

"Fleur!"

Fleur turned her head and watched Madame Maxime kneel down next to her.

"Fleur, are you hurt," she asked.

"Just my ankle," Fleur said, turning away to watch Harry.

"What in Merlin's name is he doing?" Professor McGonagall asked.

They all turned to watch as Harry continued toward the dragon. Charlie looked to be trying to talk him out of whatever he wanted to do but gave up and threw his hands in the air when Harry marched right past the other dragon handlers.

The dragon stared at the egg longingly and tried to scoot closer as Harry slowed his approach.

"It's alright," Harry said, holding up his wand in a placating gesture. "It's not yours. It's fake. Look."

The dragon squirmed and growled as he knelt in front of it and picked up a small rock. Lightly, he tapped it against the side.

Ting!

The dragon froze and cocked its head to the side, eyes narrowed. Harry tapped the Golden Egg again before setting the rock down and edging closer.

“See?” he asked. “It’s metal.”

The Welsh Green thrust its nose forward and sniffed the egg for a few seconds before leaning back and glaring at it. Its yellow eyes moved to the dragon handlers and organizers, pinning them with an accusatory glare. Harry, however, was spared from her hateful glare, Fleur noted.

“Your eggs are over there,” Harry said, pointing to the nest. “They’re fine, I promise.”

As if it understood, the dragon followed his finger and stared at the nest. Letting out a mournful whine, it tried to move towards them but was stopped by the roots holding her in place. Harry looked at the dragon sympathetically and bit his lip as he got to his feet. Rolling his wand between his fingers, he suddenly raised it up and brought it down with a slash. The roots and vines holding the dragon to the ground went limp, and it surged to its feet.

“Are you insane!” a female dragon handler shouted. “Stunners, on my mark!”

“No!” Harry yelled. “Put your wands down. She just wants her eggs.”

He stood, still facing the dragon, his arms splayed out to the side. The Welsh Green crouched and glared at the handlers angrily, its baleful yellow eyes moving from one to the next. They all stood in a silent standoff for a handful of breaths before Charlie lowered his wand.

“Do what he says,” he said.

“What!?” the woman yelled, sounding as incredulous as Fleur felt.

“Julia, trust me,” Charlie pled. “Harry knows what he’s doing. Why do you think she hasn’t attacked yet?”

Julia huffed angrily, her face set in a scowl. Growling, she lowered her wand, and the other dragon handlers nervously followed her lead.

“See?” Harry asked, drawing the dragon’s attention back to him. “No more fighting. You can go to your eggs.”

Glancing at the dragon handlers with a glare, the dragon slowly back towards her nest. It kept an eye on the humans as it bent down to sniff them. Seemingly satisfied, it laid down and curled around the nest protectively, though it continued to eye them suspiciously.

“I’ll be damned,” Charlie muttered with a smile.

“That kid’s going to get himself killed pulling stunts like that,” Julia grumbled, crossing her arms as she came to stand next to Charlie.

“It worked,” Charlie shrugged. “Besides, it’ll be easier to get her back out of here now that she’s calmed down a bit.”

Julia grunted and shook her head while Harry turned around with a smile on his lips and walked back over.

“Mr. Potter, what on earth were you thinking?” Professor McGonagall asked sternly.

“She just wanted to protect her kids, professor,” Harry said with a shrug. “You can’t really fault her for that.”

The strict woman’s gaze softened, and Dumbledore chuckled.

“Indeed, we cannot,” he said amusedly. “Would you mind escorting Ms. Delacour to the medical tent? I believe the judges and I need a moment to determine how to proceed.”

“Alright,” Harry said, aiming his wand at Fleur. “Mobilicorpus.”

Fleur tensed and winced when her foot throbbed as she rose to waist height. The walk to the medical tent was mercifully smooth and didn’t hurt too bad. Harry was very cautious and gentle with her as he levitated her into the tent.

“This bed, Potter,” the Hogwarts Healer said, standing next to the closest bed, where she had an array of medical supplies at the ready. “How bad is it?”

“Her ankle’s broken,” Harry said, setting Fleur down gently.

“Any burns?” Madam Pomfrey asked, glancing at her singed skirt.

“Non,” Fleur said, wincing when the splint was vanished.

Casting a few charms, the Healer handed her a Pain-Relieving Potion and clucked her tongue.

“Dragons,” Pomfrey muttered. “Take a seat, Potter. I’ll check on you in a moment.”

“But I’m fine,” Harry protested.

Pomfrey stopped what she was doing and pinned him with a glare.

"I'll be the judge of that," she said firmly. "The last time you told me you were fine, you'd just fallen off your broom from more than a hundred feet up. Now, sit."

Raising his hands in surrender, Harry sat on the bed next to Fleur's with a sigh. Hearing a chuckle from across the room, she looked up at a smiling Cedric Diggory. Half of his face was covered in a bright orange paste, but he seemed in good spirits. Next to him, Krum sat with a sour look on his face and a bandage on his shoulder.

"Alright there, Fleur?" Cedric asked.

"Oui," Fleur said, cringing and then sighing in relief as the Healer mended her bones. "What 'appened to you two?"

"Well, we both got our eggs," Cedric said, gesturing to the floor, where they both sat under their beds. "I thought I could distract the dragon by transfiguring rocks into sheep. It worked for a bit, but I got burned on my way out."

Nodding, she turned to Krum.

"Hit dragon with Conjunctivitis Curse," Krum grunted. "Made it blind but angry. Dislocated my shoulder vith tail when I grabbed egg."

"Here, drink this," Pomfrey said, thrusting a goblet into her hand. "It's a Bone-Mending Potion. You should be fine to walk in twenty minutes. Now, Potter, let's see what you've done to yourself this time."

Harry threw his hands up and laid back on the bed as she scanned her wand over him. Raising a brow, Fleur looked at Cedric, who chuckled again.

“Harry has a habit of ending up in the hospital wing for really weird things,” he explained. “I swear, he spends more time in there than the rest of the Quidditch players combined.”

“I do not,” Harry argued, lifting his head.

Madam Pomfrey pushed his head back down onto the pillow with her hand.

“Yes, you do,” she told him. “Now, lie still.”

Fleur smiled, and Cedric chuckled as Harry grumbled under his breath. As Pomfrey waved her wand over him and clucked her tongue, the tent flap was pulled open, and the Judges stepped inside. Ducking to keep her head from missing the roof, Madame Maxime stood next to Fleur’s bed and rested a hand on her shoulder.

“How is he, Poppy?” Dumbledore asked.

“Physically, he’s fine,” she sighed.

“I told you,” Harry grumbled.

“However,” Pomfrey continued with a glare, “he’s magically exhausted.”

“Then he’ll have to forfeit,” Karkaroff said.

“Surely, that’s not necessary,” Bagman said, smiling nervously. “I’m sure Madam Pomfrey can give him a little pick me up, and he’ll be fit to compete.”

"I'm afraid she can't," Crouch said, smoothing out his robes. "The rules are very clear. No champion can be given a performance-enhancing potion before a task."

"And I wouldn't give it to him anyways," Pomfrey said, crossing her arms over her chest. "There is no cure for magical exhaustion. The only potions I could give him are dangerous and could possibly cause permanent damage."

"Then he forfeits," Karkaroff said, smirking nastily.

Harry shrugged and rested his hands behind his head, "That's fine with me."

Fleur furrowed her brow as she stared at him. Was he really going to give up so easily?

"But that's not fair!" Cedric said, sitting up on his bed. "He just beat a dragon, for Merlin's sake! Can't you judge him on what he just did? I mean, he basically just did the task anyway."

"Barty, would that be possible?" Dumbledore asked.

"If the judges were to agree," Crouch nodded, his eyes staring into the distance thoughtfully.

"But what about Fleur?" Maxime asked.

"Technically, her task was completed when Potter intervened," Crouch replied after a moment. "The task stated that she had to retrieve the egg, which she did. It did not say she had to make it to the exit."

"This is ridiculous!" Karkaroff yelled.

“You designed the task,” Crouch shrugged.

“Perhaps we should ask the Champions how they feel about this,” Dumbledore suggested, stroking his beard. “They’re the ones competing, after all.”

“Give Potter score,” Krum said.

“Ha!” Cedric cheered while Karkaroff began speaking rapidly in Bulgarian.

“I vill not cheat to vin,” Krum told his headmaster firmly.

Karkaroff growled and folded his arms over his chest as everyone turned to look at Fleur.

“Oui,” she said. Looking up at her headmistress, she was relieved to see her smiling. “Arry deserves a score.”

“Well, then, I believe that settles it,” Dumbledore smiled. “Igor, your dissent will be noted, and Harry, I’ll have someone bring you your egg. We’ll call you out for your scores once the arena has been cleared. I’m sure the dragon handlers will be relieved to hear they don’t need to bring out the Horntail.”

Turning, he left the tent, and Karkaroff stormed after him with a scowl. The other judges followed at a more sedate pace, with Madame Maxime giving Fleur’s shoulder a supportive squeeze before she left last.

“This is brilliant,” Cedric grinned. “It’s only fair you get a score, too, right Harry? Harry?”

Fleur rolled over to look at the younger man and blinked incredulously when she found him sound asleep on his bed.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Cedric said, shaking his head. “When did he fall asleep?”

“Right after they said he would have to forfeit,” Pomfrey replied, pulling a blanket over him. “I told you he was magically exhausted.”

“Git,” Cedric said, smiling good-naturedly. “So, what scores do you think we’ll get?”

“I weel get ze lowest,” Fleur said, laying back with a sigh.

“I don’t think they’ll take off too much,” Cedric tried to reassure her. “It was an accident that could have happened to any of us. What about you, Krum?”

He pointed at Harry, “First,” he said, then pointed to himself, “second,” he said, pointing to Cedric, “third,” and finally, he pointed at Fleur, “fourth.”

“What makes you think you did better than me?” Cedric asked, a teasing smirk on his lips.

“Was faster,” Krum replied, turning his lips up in an awkward smile.

The boys continued to banter back and forth while Fleur got lost in her thoughts. Her mind vacillated between berating herself for breaking her ankle and thinking about Harry. Nothing the Hogwarts students had told her about him matched with what she’d seen today. Yes, he’d played the hero and come to her rescue, but he didn’t seem to gloat over it like she would have expected. He didn’t even seem concerned about his score.

Was he just too tired, Fleur wondered.

Furrowing her brow, she vowed to watch him closely for the next few days and try to find out more about him.

A few minutes later, Professor McGonagall returned and told them it was time to get their scores.

“Oi, Potter!” Cedric yelled, climbing out of bed and shaking him awake. “Wake up. It’s time to go get our scores.”

“What?” Harry asked with a yawn. “But I forfeited.”

“Well, if you’d stayed awake, you would have heard them change their minds,” Cedric grinned. “You’re getting scored based on how you handled Fleur’s dragon. Now, come on.”

Looking surprised and confused, Harry threw off the blanket and climbed out of bed. Fleur narrowed her eyes curiously when he grumbled unhappily. The young man’s demeanor made no sense, and it was beginning to irritate her.

Together, they walked back out into the arena to loud cheers from the crowd and turned to face the judges.

“Well, now,” Dumbledore said, clapping his hands with a smile. “This certainly turned out to be more eventful than we anticipated. We shall give you your scores in the order you completed the task. First, Mr. Cedric Diggory of Hogwarts.”

The Hogwarts section roared, waving banners as they stomped their feet.

“For your impressive use of advanced Transfiguration to distract your dragon, the judges award you forty-two points,” Dumbledore said, pausing for a moment for more cheering. “Points were deducted for being the only Champion to take over ten minutes to complete the task and for the minor burns you received. Overall, an excellent performance.”

Cedric grinned widely as the crowd clapped, and Dumbledore turned to Krum.

“To Viktor Krum of Durmstrang,” he continued, causing the crowd to fall silent. “For being the fastest to complete the task and your use of the complicated Conjunctivitis Curse, the judges award you forty-three points.”

Dumbledore paused as the Durmstrang section erupted in cheers. Stomping their feet in unison, they chanted ‘Krum’ over and over until the Hogwarts headmaster waved for them to be quiet.

“Yes, excellently done,” he smiled. “Points were deducted for damage to the surrounding eggs, and the injury to your shoulder.”

“I’ll beat you in the next one,” Cedric whispered with a grin.

Krum smirked, “We vill see.”

“To Fleur Delacour of Beauxbatons,” Dumbledore said, drawing Fleur’s attention back to the judges. “For your flawless use of the Sleeping Charm, we award you forty points.”

The Beauxbatons section cheered loudly, and Fleur blinked. She hadn’t expected to be scored so highly compared to the others.

“Yes, yes, most impressive,” Dumbledore said, waving the crowd quiet. “Points were deducted for being the only Champion not to exit the arena under your own power and for your injuries.”

Fleur smiled and nodded to the judges. She hadn’t done as well as she had hoped, but her score could have been much worse.

“And finally, Harry Potter,” Dumbledore announced, causing the crowd to fall eerily still and silent. “For your heroism in protecting a fellow Champion and defeating a dragon in single combat, as well as the compassion you showed afterward, we award you forty-eight points.”

Harry looked stunned as the crowd erupted in the loudest cheer yet. Fleur watched him mouth the word 'what' incredulously and shake his head. While the applause continued, Charlie ran up, clapped Harry on the back, and thrust a Golden Egg into his hands. They shared a few words Fleur couldn't make out over the roar of the crowd before the grinning redhead jogged out of the arena.

"An exemplary performance!" Dumbledore yelled, finally quieting the audience. "Points were deducted for not waiting your turn."

After the laughter died down, he continued, "The next task will take place on January twenty-third. Your eggs are a clue that contains vital information about what the task will entail. I wish you all the best of luck."

As Professor McGonagall escorted them back to the medical tent, Fleur watched Harry closely. He ducked his head in embarrassment when Cedric slung an arm over his shoulders and congratulated him on getting first place. The young man acted nothing like the glory hound she'd been told he was.

It was time she learned the truth about Harry Potter.