

Harry leafed through the information in the book Perenelle Flamel gave him. Protego Diabolica was a difficult spell to master, going by the information that was available in the book. Still, it looked like a more useful and safe spell than the Fiendfyre curse. He had no idea there was a spell of this scale hidden away from his sight. He could not recall whether such a spell was ever mentioned in the Harry Potter books or the movies, which was the extent of his knowledge of the wizarding world.

Anyway, unlike the Fiendfyre curse that was fueled by rage and unsatiable hunger for destruction, the spell he was trying to master was much more benign. The spell was constructed more as a trial of fire based on loyalty and commitment to the castor. If those two criteria were not met, the fire would devour everything in its path. The interesting bit was that the mind arts were a huge part of the spell, which also made it challenging to master. The wand movements and incantations were relatively easy to learn, but the trick was projecting a field of Leglimency probe using the energy of the fire from the spell as a conduit. The flames would work as a medium of exchange that'd facilitate a small portion of magical energy from the castor to intermingle with another sentient creature and ascertain its loyalty and commitment to the castor. Should the subject fail the test, the fire would consume the subject leaving not even ash in its wake. Unlike the Fiendfyre curse, the spell could be used in a controlled environment which was a great advantage.

Although, Harry supposed a skilled practitioner of the mind arts could potentially hoodwink the spell. After all, Occlumency was specifically designed to combat all types of mental intrusions. Harry doubted it was ever attempted to subvert this particular spell as the easier solution was to escape the spell's reach or use a shield charm.

"Mater Harry."

Harry jumped in his bed as he found Kreacher standing beside him with a suspiciously twitching face at his reaction.

"Dinner is ready, master." said Kreacher.

"You purposefully did that, didn't you?" Harry accused, looking at the old house elf of the Black family.

"Kreacher knows not what young master says." Kreacher muttered, but Harry could see the elf had snuck into his room without making a sound to startle him.

"Uh-huh." Harry eyed the Black family elf suspiciously, who was fast becoming a skilled troller in Grimmauld Place. "Lead the way, Kreacher."

Harry found Sirius already waiting at the table, looking a bit unhappy.

"Still grumpy, huh? I told you; you can go to France with Brigitte." Harry said, plopping himself down on a chair across from Sirius.

"I won't be going anywhere without you, especially with that dark tosser around. Who knows what might happen?" Sirius shook his head.

"Then let me assuage your fears. Voldemort will be so busy breaking out his Death eaters from Azkaban to care about me."

"Wait a minute! What do you mean?" Sirius looked at him with wide eyes.

"What is there to not understand? Voldemort is planning to have his most loyal Death Eaters rescued from Azkaban. I suspect the Dementors will also join Voldemort before the vacation is over." said Harry, happily cutting into the delicious stew and beef dumplings Kreacher had prepared.

"Are you sure about this? How can you know Voldemort is going to free his Death eaters?" Sirius asked.

"I know things. Anyway, the point is you can go to France without any worries. Besides, I'll be spending most of my time at Greengrass Manor. I'll be quite safe." said Harry.

"No. I can't do that." Sirius shook his head, adamant about not going with Brigitte.

"Oh, I think you are." Harry stared at his godfather confidently.

The following day Sirius was fully packed, ready to go with Brigitte to France. Harry had to spend a better part of his time last night convincing Sirius to go to France. Ultimately, he managed to convince the old Marauder with some carefully articulated arguments and a healthy dose of emotional blackmailing. All he had to do was consistently remind Sirius that he lost more than a decade in prison, which was a sore subject for the guy. Then he twisted the knife further by saying that James Potter would've wanted his friend to have a good life instead of being stuck in Grimmauld Place. But the final push that forced Sirius to get going on his trip to France was his subtle hints that Brigitte might find some other dude to shack up in France if he was not brave enough to go with her to meet her family.

Sirius fell for the bleak picture he painted. He felt slightly guilty for playing with Sirius's insecurities, but it was for a good cause. The man needed to take some vacation time away from the dark walls of his family home. Besides, it was not as if Sirius would be gone for the whole vacation. After a few days of staying with Brigitte's family, Sirius would return, and everything would be back to normal.

"How'll you be going to the Greengrass manor?" Sirius asked, shrinking his trunk into a small box and keeping it in the pocket of his coat.

"I'll have Kreacher take me." answered Harry.

"All right then." said Sirius once they reached the backyard of Grimmauld Place beyond the reach of the wards protecting the home of Blacks. "I guess it's time for me to depart. Do you have anything to say to Fleur? I can pass on the message."

“Why would I need you to pass a message to Fleur when I can just speak to her?” Harry asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I thought you two weren’t talking, considering how things ended between you two...” Sirius trailed off awkwardly.

“Why would you think so? We keep in touch through letters.” Harry waved dismissively.

“Well, that’s a relief.” Sirius let out a relieved sigh.

“Convey my best wishes to Fleur and Brigitte. Oh, and tell them that I’ll have their gifts sent when they return from France.”

“Will do.” Sirius gave him a thumbs up. “Oh, and before I go, I want you to stay out of trouble and not give too much trouble to your babysitter.”

“Oh, all right. You know me. I’m a... wait, what! A babysitter?” Harry looked in askance as Sirius smirked at him before turning on his heel.

“Sirius! What do you mean?” Harry screamed into the empty air as Sirius apparated away, leaving only swooshing air in his wake.

‘Maybe, he’s just pranking me.’ Harry thought.

Harry stood before Perenelle Flamel, who was holding on to a staff of all things in her hand. The ancient witch was dressed in a red dress and black breeches accompanied by a red cloak wrapped around her shoulders. Harry took out his wand from the holster on his left wrist as he faced his maternal grandmother.

“Did I tell you to take out your wand?” Perenelle asked, glaring at him. ‘

“You seem to be under the misconception that I need your permission to do something.” Harry said, staring unimpressed at the redhead witch.

“Cheeky.” Perenelle muttered. “At least you have the presence of mind to blindly follow instructions, which is better than what most could claim.”

“So... Are we going to do something, or are we just going to trash talk each other?” Harry asked with a raised eyebrow.

Perenelle tapped her staff on the ground, and a surge of energy passed through the floor. A glowing white dome formed around the room, attaching itself to every nook and cranny of the expansive hall of the Greengrass manor.

“That should ensure no damage comes to the room.” said Perenelle before turning her attention back to Harry. “Now, you claimed you were going to ‘deal’ with the Giants using the Fiendfyre curse. Explain to me how exactly were you going to do that?”

“Is this really necessary? I thought we were...”

“You want to learn the spell or not?” Perenelle cut him off.

“Yes.” Harry said slowly.

“Then play by my rules.”

“All right.” Harry sighed. “I was going to threaten the Gurg of the Giants, and if he didn’t back off, I would’ve used the Fiendfyre curse to kill it and force the other Giants to obey me.”

“I see. And you know to use the Fiendfyre curse?” Perenelle asked curiously.

“Yes.” Harry nodded.

“Impressive for your age. I wonder who taught you that or where you practised the spell to make such a bold claim.” said Perenelle, looking at him suspiciously.

“Does it matter how or where I learned the spell?” Harry asked. s

“No.” Perenelle shook her head. “But can you pull back the spell once you unleash the hellish flames?”

“No.” said Harry, even though he had a spell that could seal away the flames into the folds of space.

For now, he was going to keep that little detail to himself. There was no point in sharing all the details with his grandmother.

“Then show me the Fiendfyre curse.”

Harry did a double take upon hearing that.

“You want me to use the Fiendfyre curse right now? Here?” Harry asked incredulously, looking at his grandmother as if she had gone insane.

“Yes. I’ve placed barriers inside the room. Your spell won’t harm anything.” Perenelle assured him. “Now, show me the spell.”

"You told me not to use the spell last day, and now you want me to use it?" Harry looked at her funny.

"I told you not to use the Fiendfyre curse in the open. This, on the other hand, is a controlled environment under my protection." said Perenelle, tapping the floor with her staff, and the barrier flared to life all around them.

Harry let out a sigh as he clamped down his mind using Occlumency. Purging his mind of all emotions, he pushed rage to the forefront of his mind.

'Devour! Destroy! Burn!' Harry thought as he opened his eyes and made a tiny flick with his wand.

His rage and the intent for unimpeded wanton destruction manifested in the form of roaring red flames with specks of gold that burned bright. The flames poured out of the tip of his wand like a tidal wave. Harry tried to control his rage and reel the spell back in, but he could already feel his control over the spell slip by slowly. The hellish flames attempted to consume the floor and the walls, but its long tongues of fire were rebuked by the barrier, keeping the flames contained within the large hall.

"Make the flames corporeal." Perenelle shouted over the sound of roaring flames as they flooded the room and continued to grow, feeding off the magic in the air.

"I can't." Harry shouted back as he managed to cut off the spell.

But the flames just continued to pulse, twist and grow in size and power. At one point, Harry was just about ready to put up a shield around him and escape from the room. The moment that thought crossed his mind, he felt a pulse of magic wash over him with an oppressive aura. The flames flickered momentarily, and then they got sucked into a vortex at the tip of his grandmother's raised staff. The hellish flames disappeared from the hall, leaving it in pristine condition and with breathable air.

"Do you understand now, grandson? It's not just rage that powers the spell but finesse and will to command the most potent flames known to wizardkind. The flames of Fiendfyre require a rigid mind to control them. But the flames of Preotego Diabolica, on the other hand..."

Perenelle raised her staff and tapped twice. Black flames sprouted out from the ground in a perfect circle around Perenelle.

"...requires fluidity of the mind. Your emotions need not be blunt instruments to master this spell. The trick is to let them flow like a stream, gently nuzzling the rock inside the riverbed." Perenelle breathed out, moving her free hand in an aesthetic manner.

Harry watched with wide eyes as a long tongue of black flames followed her hand like a gentle gale, behaving as if the flames were harmless vapour. He could not feel the malice he

felt in the hellish flames of the Fiendfyre curse from this spell. Nonetheless, he knew it was a bad idea to so much as touch a speck of the black flame.

The flames were pulled back into the circle in the blink of an eye.

“I assume you’ve read about the spell from the book?” Perenelle inquired softly.

“Yes.”

“Then you know the Mind Arts are extensively used in the spell. You need to hold two thoughts in tandem within your mind if you are to master this spell. You need to seek the destruction of your enemies and the embrace of your friends in your mind while you use the spell. Project those two thoughts into the spell and let it be unleashed.”

Harry waited to see whether there was more explanation, but his grandmother remained silent and merely observed him.

‘I guess, it’s practice time.’ Harry thought before raising his wand to cast the spell.

Daphne neared the ornate doors of the ballroom with a frown on her face. Her father and mother were tight-lipped about who the redhead woman was or what she was doing with Harry inside the ballroom of their manor. The only thing she knew so far was that the woman was somehow important.

The closer she reached the ballroom, the tension became palpable. Her hands sweated a little bit for some unknown reason. She first tried to look through the windows to see what was going on, but the blinds were on, invalidating her plan to sneak a peek. She tried to keep her ears to the walls, but nothing could be heard from the inside. For a moment, she thought about using the unlocking charm on one of the windows and sneaking a peek, but she discarded that idea.

‘It’d be incredibly rude. Mother will kill me if she finds out.’ Daphne thought.

So, she circled back to the entrance door and knocked twice. She waited for either Harry or the woman to open the door, but it remained closed. Frowning at the door, she decided to open it. To her surprise, the door came unlocked when she turned the doorknob. Daphne slowly pulled the door open and looked inside. Her eyes widened as she saw Harry let loose black flames from his wand that tried to strike at the redhead woman who defended against the flames with a shield. Then a torrent of black flames converged on Harry from his back. Before Daphne could warn her boyfriend of the flames, Harry had already put up a shield around him that kept the flames at bay.

It looked like the flames nearly covered Harry's shield, but then they retreated, leaving Harry safe behind his shield.

"Enough for today. Young Daphne seems to have something to say." said the redhead woman, pointing at Daphne with her staff.

The door swung open fully, making Daphne jump back. The redhead woman walked towards the doorway with her strange-looking staff in hand.

"Lunch is ready. Mother asked me to invite you both..." Daphne trailed off uncertainly as she came face to face with the strange woman's glowing green eyes that were so familiar.

"I see." The redhead woman eyed her for a moment and then swept past her.

Daphne let out the breath she was holding after the woman left.

"This is not how I imagined you'd be spending some time in my home, Harry. What's going on?" Daphne muttered, looking at the sorry state of her boyfriend.

Harry was sweating profusely, with his clothes scorched on many parts.

"Are you sure you're all right?" Daphne asked in concern.

"Yeah. Let me just catch my breath." said Harry, sitting down on the smooth floor.

"Who is she?" asked Daphne, kneeling beside him and cleaning off his sweat and soot with several cleaning charms.

"Her name is Lilith. For now, that's all I'm allowed to say." said Harry, climbing to his feet. "Let's not keep your family waiting. Besides, I'm famished."

Daphne eyed her boyfriend suspiciously but led him to the dining room all the same without prying. She found the redhead woman, whose name was Lilith sitting close to her mother and whispering quietly amongst themselves.

"Who's she?" Astoria suddenly asked, pointing at their guest, startling everyone at the table.

"Astoria!" Damien hissed at her daughter.

"It's quiet, all right. My name is Lilith. I'm an old friend of your mother."

Daphne looked at her father and then her mother. She had a feeling this Lilith was not at all a friend going by the stricken look on her parents' faces and her father's glare on her younger sister.

"Why haven't I ever seen you before?" Astoria asked, heedless of the looks she was getting from her parents.

“That’s because I do not live in the British Isles. I became familiar with your mother when she was in Germany.”

Daphne could see her sister was only going to pry some more, so she took the eggnog on the table and offered some for Astoria to shut her up. Thankfully, Harry also understood what she was trying to do and distracted everyone with the topic of the intercontinental Quidditch tournament between Britain, Japan and Australia. As the conversation turned to a safer topic, Daphne couldn’t help but look between Harry and Lilith. She had seen Lilith was helping Harry with magic, but she could not fathom why Harry was keeping that a secret. Not to mention why her parents were walking on eggshells around Lilith.

Letting out a sigh, she took a small sip of the eggnog.

‘Mmm. Tastes better than last year’s eggnog. Probably why Astoria shut her big mouth.’ Daphne thought, sneaking a peek at her younger sister, who was happily gulping down eggnog without a care for anything else.

The next few days, Harry continued to come to her home sharp and seven and spent the rest of the day with Lilith in the ballroom, training with magic. She even saw some unfamiliar wizards join in from time to time until, finally, everything stopped on Friday. Harry said his goodbyes on Friday evening and told her he wouldn’t be coming to their home on Saturday evening. True to his word, Harry didn’t come on Saturday, but he promised to come to collect her on Sunday for their date. She was excited about that and looked forward to where Harry was going to take her. He always did have a flair for dramatics and secrecy whenever he took her on a date.

“Loui Bourbon.” Harry said the name aloud. “Any chance you are related to the former royal house of France?”

“Who knows? I might just be of royal blood.” the Frenchman shrugged.

“Hmm.” Harry hummed, keeping his eye on the Giants’ camp protected by several Death Eaters stationed around the camp.

“Captain Bourbon. Acknowledge.”

A small whisper was heard from the coral bead band on Loui’s wrist.

“I acknowledge. What’s the word, Aicart?” Loui spoke, bringing the band close to his mouth.

“We’ve reached the edge of the camp, Captain. We encountered no wards so far, but this place is crawling with Death Eaters. We’ll need additional backup to deal with them as we are outnumbered.”

“I’ll have additional men sent.” Loui said before going about sending an additional team towards the Death Eater camp.

Harry paid it only half an ear as his eyes remained on the camp of the Giants. Even though the hills were shrouded under the veil of darkness of the night, the huge campfire lit in the Giant camp gave it away.

“We’ll need to position ourselves better and take out the pockets of Death Eaters before moving on to the Giants. We can’t bypass them without confronting them.” Loui said, returning from the conversation with his men.

“Chances of too many casualties on our side. Besides, if our fighting attracts the attention of the Giants, they’ll charge at us like dumb trolls.” said Harry.

“All right, kid. What’s your plan?” Loui asked indulgently.

Harry looked at the brown-haired hit-wizard for a moment.

“All right, here’s the plan. Instead of first attacking the Death Eaters, we attack the Giants. When the Death Eaters learn that the Giants’ camp is under attack, they’ll move towards the camp to protect them. When their back is turned, take them all out with fatal attacks.” Harry laid out the plan.

“And how do you suggest we attack the Giants’ camp?” Loui asked with a scoff.

“Not we, I. As for the how...”

Harry assumed his spectral form, becoming weightless and, most importantly, wisps of grey smoke.

“You deal with the Death eaters while I take care of our Giant friends.” said Harry before shooting out into the clouds in his spectral form, leaving some awestruck hit-wizards on the ground.

Harry flew among the clouds bypassing the wards and patrolling Death Eaters down below. His eyes zeroed in on the brightly lit campfire atop a clearing on a hill. He circled the perimeter taking stock of the disposition of the Giants inside the camp. After observing the camp for a few minutes, Harry stopped circling and took a dive from the skies.

The Giants were startled when sparkling grey mist fell down from the starry skies into the midst of their camp. They muttered amongst themselves as the grey mist solidified into a wizard, making their grumblings far more audible.

“My name is Harry Potter. I’m looking for the one Giant who goes by the name of Golgomath.”

“Who dares to say my name?” A behemoth of a Giant growled with a mean-looking face filled with scars and red eyes.

Harry didn’t move even as he came to look up at the huge chief of the Giants. S

“Gurg Golgomoth. I’m Harry Potter. I come seeking your friendship and as a friend of the Giants to warn you about the unsavoury intentions of your current allies, the Death Eaters.”

“Kill this chattering stripling.” Golgomath ordered dismissively.

A giant took up a club clumsily and looked to take a swing at Harry. He was not going to wait around for the Giant, so he raised his wand and fired off a spell at the club.

“Wingardium Leviosa.”

The levitation charm worked splendidly, and the Giant was left staring at the floating club confusedly.

“I had a feeling we would end up not seeing eye to eye.” Harry said, smirking at the Giants before he made the club swing with full force.

The Giant that attempted to smash him screamed as Harry used the club to smash open the Giant’s head. The Giant fell with a thud that shook the ground howling in pain, holding its bleeding head.

“As I was saying. Your Giants are in great danger if you ally yourself with the Dark Lord, Gurg Golgomath. Any ally of the Dark Lord becomes my enemy.” Harry said coldly, as more and more Giants woke up, surrounding him, attracted by the commotion.

“Kill the little wizard!” Golgomat screamed in rage.

“Pity.” Harry muttered as he spun on his feet, flourishing his wand and drawing a wide circle.

“Protego Diablolica.”

Harry called out the spell using Parseltongue. He could feel the ground tremble as a huge wave of black flames surged out of the circle he drew around him. The Giants surrounding him screamed as their usually magic-resistant skin boiled and burned away under the black flames. Their wooden and bronze weapons turned to dust as the black flames devoured everything they came into contact with except for the sand on the ground. Long tongues of black flames lashed out at the Giants that tried to throw stones and trees towards him. In the end, everything they threw at him only increased the potency of his spell.

Harry compressed a condensed ball of magical energy into the palm of his hand and let it loose. The Black flames that protectively surrounded him were expelled in a tidal wave that swept away everything from the hilltop. Seeing that the screams of the Giants start to fade down a little bit, Harry reined back the spell. When the last speck of black flames disappeared, there were not even ashes around Harry. An eerie silence permeated the air for a moment, only to be broken by the screams of men down below. He could see flashes of light coming from beyond the tree lines.

‘Well, I can’t let some Frenchmen hog all the fun.’ Harry thought, looking at the watch that showed him he had a few more minutes before the trace got activated and the Ministry started detecting his activities.

He assumed his spectral form and flew straight into the tree line. The Horus glasses gave him clear eyesight despite the darkness of the night. He saw a pair of Death Eaters engaged in a duel with one of the hit-wizards in his group. Harry’s wand hand materialised along with his Holly wand as he fired off a spell.

“Angustium.”

The pale green spell struck one of the Death Eaters square on his back. It was the lung-collapsing spell, and the effect was immediate. The Death Eater fell to his knees, unable to breathe as the man’s lungs shrunk down. Harry didn’t wait to see what came off his little help as he immediately flew towards another site where he saw a group of Death Eaters huddling behind trees.

“Bombarda Maxima.”

The ground exploded around the Death Eaters, uprooting trees and stones. The servants of the Dark Lord were thrown away by the force of the explosion, but Harry did not stop there.

“Defodio.”

The gouging curse Harry fired off clipped a Death Heater on his chest. The Death Eater fell with a scream as a chunk of his flesh was gouged out by the spell. Harry quickly turned his wand on another Death Eater who tried to fire off a spell in his direction.

“Confringo.”

The blasting curse clipped the Death Eater straight in his face. The nameless Death Eater fell with his neck broken and turned at an odd angle. Harry continued to fly around the area, taking down any Death Eater that unfortunately came into his range. The hunt for the servants of the Dark Lord continued for a while until finally, Harry activated the portkey, teleporting away.