

Chapter 11

"I don't know whether to be happy or worried about Dumbledore's state of mind that he put the real stone in that mirror," Daphne said, a mixture of emotions on her face.

On a battered table in front of her sat a set of scales with lead weights that they'd discovered in the Room of Lost Things. The largest of the weights now gleamed bright gold, having changed the instant she touched the shard of the Philosopher's Stone to it. Penny reached out and picked it up, eyeing it closely.

"Is there a way to test it?" Hermione asked. "We should make sure the whole thing is gold and not just the outside."

Tonks held her hands up as Hermione glanced between her and Penny, the two oldest of their group, expectantly.

"Don't look at me," Tonks said.

"I don't know either," Penny shrugged. "Maybe we could ask Professor Flitwick?"

Daphne pursed her lips, clearly not happy with the idea but not having a better one of her own.

"Can I see it?" Harry asked.

Shrugging, Penny dropped the weight into his outstretched hand. Harry eyed it thoughtfully before setting it on the table and drawing his wand.

"Diffindo," he incanted.

A line appeared vertically down the middle of the weight. Harry poked it with the tip of his wand and the two halves fell over, the inside just as gold as the outside.

“Well, I guess that answers that,” Tonks grinned. “We’re going to need more lead.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Hermione frowned.

“Why not?” Tonks asked incredulously.

“For one, adding a whole bunch of new gold to the economy could cause the value of a Galleon to drop, and that could lead to a lot of problems,” Hermione said. “People will want to know where we got all the gold from, and besides, I don’t think we should keep it.”

“You’re kidding me, right?” Daphne asked.

“It’s not ours,” Hermione said firmly. “It belongs to the Flamels.”

“But think of all the books you could buy with the gold we make,” Tonks said.

“With Voldemort still alive, we need every advantage we can get,” Harry said. “We should hang on to it. Just don’t do anything to draw attention to it for now.”

“But-”

“He’s right, Hermione,” Penny said before turning to Harry. “I don’t like the idea of stealing anymore than you do, but we might need it in the future. We should study it and see if we can make one of our own. If Dumbledore is telling the truth, and the Flamels have destroyed their stone, this could be our only hope of keeping that knowledge alive.”

"I doubt they really destroyed it," Harry said thoughtfully. "I think Dumbledore said that to keep anyone else from trying to steal it."

"Probably," Daphne agreed. "They've been around for centuries, and I doubt Voldemort is the first dark wizard to try and steal it."

Seeing all of her friends set on keeping the stone, Hermione sighed and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Fine," she huffed. "We need to get some books on Alchemy."

"Hold on a tick," Tonks said, waving her hands. "So we're keeping the stone but *not* making money from it?"

"Yes," Daphne said.

Tonks' bright pink hair wilted and faded to yellow as she groaned disappointedly.

Harry smiled, "Tonks, have you forgotten where we are. This place is full of stuff you can sell."

Tonks lifted her head to look at him, her hair perking up and flashing pink.

"I knew there was a reason I kept you around," she beamed.

Marching forward, she kissed him hard, leaving him a little dazed and with a bemused smile on his face.

"Come on, girls. Let's go shopping," Tonks said.

“Maybe we can find some books on Alchemy,” Penny added.

Splitting up, Harry and the girls began searching the room. An hour into their search, Susan and Lilith joined them after finishing their Muggle Studies class. In their search, Hermione found several books she wanted, only two of which were on Alchemy. Tonks found a ruby the size of her fist, along with a vintage Shooting Star broom she said was worth more than her parents made in a year.

Over the next couple of hours, they searched only a small section of the room, but all of them came away with things they wanted to sell or keep. Harry smiled at seeing his girls so happy and excited. Since he already had a mountain of gold sitting at Gringotts, he wasn't interested in any of that. Still, even he managed to find something useful. Under a pile of chairs, and easily mistaken for a bird bath, he found a Pensieve.

The Pensieve would allow him to not only go over his own memories but share them with others if the need arose. He was sure that at some point, he would need to tell the girls the truth about being a time traveler, and being able to show them his memories would help immensely. Harry also offered to bring it with him when he visited Hermione over the Summer so she could show her parents what Hogwarts was really like. That earned him an excited squeal followed by a rib-cracking hug and a searing kiss.

The last thing Harry did before they left for dinner was to place the Philosopher's stone shard inside an old locket before giving it back to Daphne.

“I trust you to keep it safe,” Harry told her.

Smiling, she grabbed hold of his tie and pulled him down for a kiss. Meanwhile, Penny had grabbed a handful of bags she'd found and cast Expansion Charms on the inside so they could all store their stuff. With bags slung over their shoulders, they made their way out of the Room of Requirement and down to dinner.

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The whistle sounded, and Harry shot into the air, his hair whipping in the wind. A broad grin was etched on his face as he glanced over the crowd and saw his girls all grouped together in the Gryffindor stands, cheering wildly.

Suddenly, he barrel rolled, causing the Bludger aimed at him by Warrington to zip past where his face had been a moment earlier. The smile never left his face as he flew by Warrington tauntingly. Snarling, the fifth year hammered a second Bludger towards him. Harry pulled up and shot upwards, leaving the leather-covered iron ball to slam into Higgs' stomach. The Slytherin Seeker had the wind knocked out of him and doubled over on his broom while the Slytherins in the stands groaned.

Leaving the two to scream insults at each other, Harry scanned the field. As usual, the Slytherins were being extremely physical. Katie, Angelina, and Alica were being battered by the bigger, heavier Slytherin Chasers. The team's plan seemed to be to forget about the score and simply take Gryffindor out of the game.

First year Harry would have tried to find the Snitch as fast as possible, but being older and more experienced, he now had a better idea. As Pucey shot forward to ram Katie, Harry turned his broom over and shot straight down between the two. He flew so close that he felt the bristles of his broom graze the Slytherin's robes. Pucey startled and pulled up out of panic. A moment later, he crashed into Marcus Flint, nearly knocking him off his broom.

Three quarters of the school laughed as the Slytherin team was left in disarray. With four players more focused on arguing with each other than playing Quidditch, the Flying Foxes ran up the score.

"And it's another ten points for the gorgeous Angelina Johnson," Lee Jordan yelled. "Potter is really giving the Slytherin team problems today. Maybe if they didn't try to cheat--"

"Jordan!" Professor McGonagall shouted.

Harry laughed as he zipped past the Keeper, Bletchley, causing him to lose sight of Katie just before she took a shot at the goal. Bletchley moved towards the left hoop, only to have the

Quaffle sail through the right hoop. Grin still in place, Harry flew about fifty feet above the hoops and circled around, looking for the Snitch. Higgs finally caught back up to him and tailed him closely with a glare.

Every time the Slytherin team tried to get back into a rhythm of battering his teammates, Harry dove down, disrupting their play. More than once, Higgs crashed into one of his own Chasers, trying to follow him. The twins kept control of the Bludgers for the most part, and the few that came towards Harry were easily avoided.

“Do something about Potter!” Flint screamed at Higgs as Harry charged through the Slytherin Chaser line, disrupting the play and allowing Alica to steal the Quaffle.

Harry smirked to himself as he took off, Higgs right on his tail with an angry glare. He led Higgs around the pitch in circles a couple of times, waving at his girls as he passed by. Suddenly, Harry jerked left and pushed his broom as fast as it would go.

“I think Potter’s seen the Snitch!” Lee screamed. “Go get ‘em, Harry. Show those slimy-”

“Jordan!”

Smiling, Harry rolled over and nosed over, sending him straight towards the ground. With the ground approaching fast, he pulled up at the last possible moment, his feet skimming the grass. Glancing over his shoulder, he looked just in time to see Higgs plow into the soft, soggy earth face first. He hit with such force that his body indented the ground, his broom embedding itself in the dirt where it remained standing on end.

For a moment, Harry worried that he’d gone too far. The whistle blew, and the Slytherin team landed around their teammate, with the exception of Flint, who was arguing with Madam Hooch.

“Potter did that on purpose! He should be thrown from the game!” Flint yelled.

“It’s well within the rules,” Madam Hooch told him firmly.

“That was unbelievable,” Oliver said with a nearly reverent expression. “I’ve never seen a Wronski Feint that good outside of a professional match. Where did you learn that?”

Harry flushed as the rest of his teammates gaped at him.

I just wanted him to stop tailing me,” Harry shrugged.

Looking back over his shoulder, a wave of relief washed over him when he saw Higgs climbing unsteadily to his feet.

“Right,” Oliver said. “Everyone, keep doing what you’re doing. We’re up 60 points. Harry, get me that Snitch. We’re so close to winning that cup.”

Harry could see just how much it meant to his team to win the Quidditch Cup and be the ones to finally dethrone Slytherin.

“Consider it done,” Harry said.

As Higgs wobbled into the air, Harry and his team took to the air. While Slytherin deserved a pummeling for the way they’d played and acted over the years, Harry realized that he’d been acting like a bit of a prat. Now, he focussed solely on finding the Snitch. Flying over the pitch, he weaved constantly to keep himself from becoming a target as he searched for a tiny speck of gold.

Without his efforts to distract them and a Seeker who was still shaking his head dazedly, the Slytherin team became even more brutal. Katie took a hard hit to the ribs while taking a shot at the goal. She scored but visibly winced as she threw the penalty shot. Bletchley blocked it easily and sneered as he tossed it back to Flint.

Just as Harry was thinking about taking another run through the Chaser Slytherin line, he spotted a glint near the Hufflepuff stands. With Higgs a good fifty feet away, he took off after it like a shot. The crowd cheered as Harry caught up to the winged ball and chased it passed the stands. He flew so close to the crowd that the wind generated by his passing ruffled the hair and cloaks of the students.

Hand outstretched, Harry leaped forward, sending his broom tumbling end over end. When he came to a stop, he grinned broadly at the feeling of wings fluttering against his skin. Thrusting his hand into the air, three quarters of the school leapt to their feet, their cheers sounding like an explosion.

“Potter’s done it! He’s caught the Snitch! Gryffindor Wins!” Lee shouted, screaming himself hoarse.

Harry flew a victory lap, a wide grin plastered on his face. By the time he landed, half the school was already on the pitch. A sea of Gryffindors swarmed the team the moment his feet touched the ground. Oliver had tears in his eyes when Madam Hooch flew over and handed him the Quidditch Cup with a smile. Hugs were shared all around, and Harry was patted on the back so many times he was sure he’d be bruised. Still, the grin never left his face.

The party that night was one that would go down in history. For the first time in anyone’s memory, members of all three other houses were invited into Gryffindor Tower. Because he was the hero of the game, no one even questioned him inviting two Slytherins into their sanctuary, though they did get some odd looks. Professor McGonagall even visited around midnight. Instead of sending everyone off to bed, she grabbed a Butterbeer from the supply the twins had acquired and congratulated the team on a game well played.

When she spotted the girls surrounding Harry, including Tonks, who was in his lap, she actually smiled and awarded him twenty points. McGonagall stayed for another twenty minutes before sending the first and second years off to bed and wishing everyone a good night.

As the night wound down, Hermione offered to let Daphne and Lilith stay in her dorm for the night. Surprisingly, none of her roommates spoke out against the idea. In a matter of minutes, the idea snowballed to all of his girls having a sleepover in the first year dorm. After all of them

had given him a kiss, including Hermione, to raucous cheers, they all headed to bed. That night, Harry went to bed feeling happier than he had ever been in his life.

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The last few days of the school year passed in a blur. Tonks and Penny buckled down for their OWLs while the rest of the girls got ready for their own tests. Hermione panicked a bit, but Harry now had a very pleasurable way to distract her from studying too much.

Once the tests were finished, everyone calmed down and had a chance to relax. The day before they were scheduled to leave, the girls decided to go outside and enjoy the sun while Harry had been called to Dumbledore's office.

"Come in," Dumbledore called when Harry knocked.

"You wanted to see me?" Harry asked.

"Yes. Please, have a seat," he said, gesturing to a chair on the other side of the desk.

As Harry sat, Fawkes crooned in welcome.

"I know we have discussed this before, but I was hoping you would reconsider staying with the Dursleys. You would only need to stay there for three weeks to recharge the wards," Dumbledore said.

"No way," Harry replied adamantly. "I am *not* going back to that place. Especially when I can use magic to defend myself."

Dumbledore sighed but surprisingly, he didn't look as upset as Harry expected.

"I know you don't enjoy living there, and I can't blame you, but it really is the safest place for you," Dumbledore said. "Once the protection is gone, I won't be able to put it up again. Too much time has passed."

"It's not worth it," Harry said. "Did you know my bedroom was the cupboard under the stairs until I was thirteen and couldn't fit in it anymore? After that, they gave me Dudley's *second* bedroom. They even had a guest bedroom where Marge stayed when she visited for a couple of days every two or three years. That's just the tip of the iceberg. The way they treated me should have them in prison."

Dumbledore sighed and nodded sadly.

"I'm sorry you had to go through that," he said.

"You know, a visit now and then would have helped," Harry told him. "A few threats and they would've treated me a lot better."

"In hindsight, I should have," Dumbledore admitted. "I placed Mrs. Figg there with the hope that, should anything go wrong, I would hear about it. Unfortunately, I underestimated how much your aunt feared magic, and she was much better at hiding it than I expected. I'm sorry, Harry. It seems that nothing I do ends up the way I expect when it comes to you."

Harry sighed. A part of him wanted to rage at the old man for never bothering to check up on him, but he knew it wouldn't do any good. It was in the past, in more ways than one, and yelling about it now wouldn't change anything.

"May I ask where you will be staying?" Dumbledore asked after a moment.

"I bought a house in Devon over Christmas break," Harry sighed. "Sirius will be staying with me until we can get Grimmauld Place clean enough to live in. I had the Goblins put up some pretty heavy wards around it, and I plan to add to them when we get there."

“Would you like me to look them over? Not to sound immodest, but even without the Elder Wand, I am quite proficient at the subject,” Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling.

“Sure,” Harry shrugged.

“Are you free the day after tomorrow?” Dumbledore asked, to which Harry nodded. “Excellent. I’ll let you get back to your friends-”

“Actually, there’s something I wanted to talk to you about,” Harry interrupted. “Does the Ministry know what happened to Quirrell?”

“They know that he is dead,” Dumbledore nodded. “I felt it best not to tell them about Voldemort, considering what you told me of Fudge’s reaction.”

“Actually, I think it might be better to tell them,” Harry said, continuing at the headmaster’s raised brow. “Part of the reason things got so bad after fourth year was because people only had rumors about me to go on. I hate the attention, but if we start telling people the truth now, they’ll be more likely to believe me in the future.”

“I see,” Dumbledore said thoughtfully. “You do make a good point.”

“We need to tell more than just Fudge, though,” Harry said. “He’s too likely to just ignore it or make up some excuse. Maybe we could bring in Madam Bones as well? I could show them my memories in your Pensieve. Seeing it might make it easier for them to believe it.”

“Very well,” Dumbledore said. “Shall I call them now?”

Harry sighed, “Might as well get it over with.”

It was two hours later that Harry trudged tiredly out of the headmaster's office. Madam Bones had not been pleased that the Philosopher's Stone had been hidden in a school full of innocent children, one of whom was her niece when Dumbledore knew someone was after it. Fortunately, the old man managed to talk his way out of it, but Harry still didn't know how he managed it.

Fudge had been useless as always. After bumbling about trying to make up excuses for how Voldemort couldn't possibly be back for over an hour, Harry forcibly grabbed his hand and pulled him into the Pensieve. Whimpering like a schoolgirl at the sight of two red eyes sticking out the back of Quirrell's head, he was finally forced to admit Voldemort was as dead as they thought. Madam Bones berating him and threatening to bring him up on charges if he ignored the obvious threat might have helped.

With that taken care of, Harry turned his thought to next year. There was no way he would allow the Chamber of Secrets to be opened again. Fortunately, he knew where the Diary would be and when. Remembering how things had happened last time, a grin slowly formed on his face as he built a plan in his mind.

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Harry sat surrounded by Hermione, Neville, and his Quidditch teammates for the end of year feast. While he wished the rest of his girls could have joined him, this was one of the few times you had to sit with your house. Still, it didn't stop him from laughing and joking with his friends, a much needed reprieve after dealing with the Ministry.

With the house points they'd earned from winning the last Quidditch game, Gryffindor had won not only the Quidditch Cup but the House Cup as well. That left the Gryffindors feeling rather jubilant for breaking the stranglehold Slytherin had had on both for the last seven years. Privately, Harry also wondered if part of that was also down to Snape's improved attitude after the visit from his mother. The man still wasn't pleasant by any means, but he'd stopped verbally attacking students, taking unfair points, and assigning undeserved detentions. No one, apart from Harry, knew why he'd suddenly changed, but everyone was glad about it.

Well, nearly everyone, Harry thought, looking over at the Slytherin table. The entire table looked dour as they picked at their food. Looking up, Malfoy caught his eye and sneered before whispering to Crabbe and Goyle.

As Harry turned back to Hermione, listening as she began talking about what elective she wanted to take in two years time, he noticed the chatter around them dying out. Looking up, he saw dozens of owls diving down from the rafters. One landed lightly in front of Hermione and offered her a copy of the *Evening Prophet*. Fishing a bronze Knut out of her pocket, she paid the owl and unrolled the paper. The gasp that left her lips was echoed around the Great Hall. Curious and worried, Harry peeked over her shoulder.

Harry Potter Does it Again!

By Jennifer Green

“Bloody hell,” Harry groaned.

What followed was a complete account of what he’d told Fudge and Bones earlier in the day. The only upside was that it hadn’t been written by someone like Rita Skeeter. Harry knew he should have expected something like this to happen, but the thought hadn’t crossed his mind. Considering the truthfulness of the article and the lack of wild speculation, he wondered if Bones had spoken to the press instead of Fudge.

The sound of whispers began to build as people finished the article, and Harry could feel the eyes of the hall fall on him. As he dropped his head in his hands, Hermione set down the paper and rubbed his back soothingly.

“If I could have everyone’s attention,” Dumbledore called, causing the hall to fall silent. “As most of you have read, earlier this week, Harry Potter, along with a few of his friends, stopped Lord Voldemort from stealing the Philosopher’s Stone.”

Several younger students shrieked at the sound of Voldemort’s name, and people began talking loudly. It took a cannon blast from Dumbledore’s wand to get them to quiet back down.

“I know this is worrying, but I can assure you, Hogwarts remains safe,” Dumbledore said, causing Harry to snort quietly. “For his brave and selfless actions, Harry Potter will be given an award for special services to the school. I would ask that you do not pester Harry with questions about what happened. As you might imagine, being faced with Lord Voldemort was not an enjoyable experience.”

A few people chuckled, and Katie leaned over to give him a hug.

“Are you alright?” she whispered.

Looking up from the table and seeing the concerned looks of his friends, Harry smiled.

“I’m fine,” he said. “Thanks.”

The rest of dinner was a bit more subdued, and Harry did his best to ignore the stares. If he had looked, he would have seen the supportive looks he was getting from all but the Slytherins and a few others.

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Harry had hoped to spend some time with his girls in the Room of Requirement, but after the article, there was no way he’d be able to slip away unnoticed.

The next morning, they all joined him at the Gryffindor table for breakfast. A few of the braver students tried to ask him questions about the article, but a glare from Tonks sent them scurrying away. Unfortunately, the same couldn’t be said for Malfoy.

“Scared, Potter?” Malfoy smirked, Crabbe and Goyle laughing behind him. “I bet you hid under your covers and cried all night, worrying about the Dark Lord coming after you.”

“Are you really that stupid?” Tonks asked. “Did you miss the part where Harry sent that wanker running with his tail between his legs, or have you just not learned to read yet?”

Malfoy’s cheeks colored as he glared at her. Crabbe and Goyle stepped up beside him and cracked their knuckles menacingly.

“Go away, Malfoy,” Hermione said. “No one here cares about what you think.”

“No one asked for your opinion, Mud-”

Harry’s wand was in his hand before anyone could blink, and Malfoy’s mouth vanished. With a panicked look, the blonde reached up to feel the smooth skin where his mouth had been.

“Do ever call her that again,” Harry growled before reversing the hex. “You know, for someone who goes on and on about how superior he is, you sure seem eager to be branded like cattle and do someone else’s bidding.”

“You’ll pay for this one day, Potter,” Malfoy said, his confident sneer ruined by the way he kept glancing at Harry’s wand. “The Dark Lord will make you all pay, just like he did your stupid parents.”

“Maybe,” Harry shrugged. “But if I do, at least I’ll die on my feet rather than live on my knees.”

Malfoy scoffed and turned to leave, only to stop and glare at the cat sitting in his way.

“Get out of the way, you stupid cat,” he said.

The cat leapt out of the way as he threw a kick at it.

"Is that...?" Tonks asked.

Harry smirked as the cat transformed into a very unhappy Professor McGonagall. Malfoy blinked, his eyes wide and face pale.

"Mr. Malfoy," she said, visibly restraining herself from shouting. "You've just earned yourself a week's detention next year. These little visits of yours to the Gryffindor table will end now, and if I ever catch you calling Ms. Granger or anyone else by that disgusting term, it'll be a month. Messrs. Crabbe, Goyle, a night's detention for both of you. Now get back to your table."

Cheeks pink with embarrassment, Malfoy slunk back to his seat at the Slytherin table.

"Thanks, professor," Harry smiled.

"I'm afraid I'm going to have to give you a night's detention as well for that hex," McGonagall told him. "The next time something like this happens, I expect you to let me or one of the other professors know. Is that understood?"

"Yes, ma'am," Harry said as the others nodded.

With a tight nod of her own, McGonagall continued to the Head Table.

"I can't believe she gave you detention," Tonks huffed.

"It was worth it," Harry shrugged.

"What was he going to call me?" Hermione asked.

Harry shifted uncomfortably and looked to Tonks, but it was Penny who answered.

“He was going to call you a Mudblood,” she said. “It’s a really bad name for Muggleborns. It means dirty blood.”

“Oh,” Hermione said, her shoulders wilting.

Harry wrapped his arm around her shoulders and hugged her to his side.

“Don’t let that prat get to you,” Tonks told her. “He’s just jealous. It’s hard to claim that Purebloods are better when a Muggleborn beats him in every class.”

Hermione smiled and perked up.

“And he’s jealous of Harry,” Lilith signed. “He has all of us, and Malfoy only has those two Trolls and Parkinson.”

Hermione giggled and kissed Harry on the cheek before pulling away from him.

“You’re right,” she said. “I’m being silly.”

“We should go get a carriage before the train fills up,” Daphne said.

Nodding, the group finished their breakfast and split into two carriages that took them to the train station in Hogsmeade. Climbing onto the train, Harry helped the girls stow their trunks. It was a tight squeeze to fit all seven of them in the compartment, but Tonks was happy to sit in Harry’s lap.

“So, what are you doing over break?” Penny asked.

“I’m going to France for a couple of weeks,” Hermione said.

“Oh, that reminds me,” Harry said. “You’re all invited to come visit me in my new house any time you want.”

“Brilliant,” Tonks grinned.

“Hermione, your parents can come too, if they want,” Harry smiled. “With Sirius in the house, you can do all the magic you want.”

“Oh, they’d love that!” Hermione gushed excitedly. “I’ll talk to them about it and – oh no, I don’t have an owl.”

“Hedwig can deliver it,” Harry told her. “Just write the letter, and she’ll know to pick it up.”

“Really?” Lilith signed.

“That’s not normal owl behavior,” Daphne added. “Where is she, anyways?”

“Flew on ahead,” Harry shrugged. “I don’t like putting her in a cage.”

“Do you mind if my parents come too?” Penny asked. “I’ve shown them some magic before, but I have to be careful of the neighbors. I’d love to be able to show them what the magical world is really like.”

“Sure,” Harry smiled. “Just let me know when you want to come, and I’ll get the bedrooms set up.”

“Just how big is your new place?” Susan asked curiously.

“Twelve bedrooms,” Harry said. “It’s a massive manor on the cliffs with its own private beach. I haven’t seen it yet, but Sirius said it just needs some new furniture.”

The girls excitedly began talking about how they could decorate the house. Harry smiled and hugged Tonks to his chest. This is the life he should’ve had, he thought.