

## Chapter 10

Harry breezed through his exams as the end of the year approached. Unfortunately, the same couldn't be said for his friends. Hermione panicked as usual, while Tonks and Penny stressed out over their OWLs. Harry tried to help them as subtly as he could, but by now, they were used to his uncanny understanding of magic.

While the girls worried about their grades, he was worried about Voldemort. The pain in his scar was an insistent reminder of what was at stake.

When all of the exams were done, Tonks grabbed Harry and Hermione to drag them outside.

"Ah, sunlight," Tonks said, opening her arms wide and laying back on the grass near the shore of the lake.

"I am *not* looking forward to NEWTs," Penny muttered.

Tonks groaned, "Please don't talk about that."

Shrugging, Penny leaned back on her arms and looked out over the lake.

"Thank Merlin that's over," Daphne said as she and Susan joined them.

"It wasn't that bad," Hermione said.

"Easy for you to say," Susan grumbled.

"You alright, Harry?" Tonks asked.

Looking up from staring at the grass, Harry hesitated in answering. This was the moment. Did he tell them his suspicions about who Hagrid got the Dragon egg from, or did he keep quiet and deal with Voldemort on his own?

“Harry?” Hermione called out in concern.

Shaking himself from his thoughts, he looked up at the worried faces staring back at him.

“Don’t you think it’s odd that some stranger happens to turn up with a Dragon egg, the one thing Hagrid’s always wanted?” Harry asked. “How many people just walk around with Dragon eggs in their pocket?”

Immediately, he began to question his decision. All of his certainty that he could keep everyone safe couldn’t stop the ‘what ifs’ from running through his mind.

“That’s a really good point,” Tonks said, her brow furrowed thoughtfully.

“We should go talk to Hagrid,” Hermione said, jumping to her feet.

With an exasperated sigh, Daphne got back to her feet, as did Penny. Together, they quickly walked across the lawn to Hagrid’s hut, where they found him outside whittling some kind of wind instrument.

“Hagrid!” Hermione yelled while pounding on the door.

A moment later, the door opened, and Hagrid smiled down at them.

“Hey, you lot. Finished with yer exams?” he asked.

“Finally,” Daphne grumbled.

“Hagrid, this is important. Who gave you the dragon egg?” Hermione asked.

“Eh?” Hagrid asked a moment before his eyes lit up in understanding. “Oh. Well, I don’t know. He kept his hood up.”

“Did he ask about Hogwarts?”

“Mighta come up,” Hagrid said, stroking his beard. “Hard to remember, I had a bit to drink. Yeah... he asked what I did. I told ‘im I was Groundskeeper and we got ter talkin’ about some of the creatures I look after. That’s when he mentioned the Dragon Egg... said we could play fer it. But he wanted ter make sure I could handle it, didn’t want it goin’ to a bad home. I told after Fluffy, a Dragon’d be no problem.”

“Did he seem interested in Fluffy?” Tonks asked while Hermione worried her lip.

“Of course, he was,” Hagrid said. “S’not often you come across a three-headed dog. I told ‘im though, the trick with any beast, is to know how to calm ‘im. Take Fluffy for instance, just play him a bit of music, and he falls straight to sleep.”

Tonks buried her face in her hands and groaned as Hagrid paled.

“I shouldn’ta told yeh that,” he said. “Now you lot – Hey! Where yeh goin’?”

“This is not good,” Tonks said as she dragged Harry by the hand towards the castle.

“We need to tell Dumbledore,” Hermione said firmly.

Feeling his heart race, Harry went with the others to the second floor where they ran into Professor McGonagall. He had a moment of panic, worrying that McGonagall would listen this time with so many coming to her at once, but again, she told them Dumbledore was gone, assured them the stone was safe and sent them on their way.

"I can't believe she did believe us. What are we going to do?" Hermione fretted.

"We could try Professor Flitwick," Penny suggested.

"He'll just go McGonagall," Daphne said, frowning thoughtfully.

"Then it's up to us," Tonks declared.

"Gryffindor's," Daphne scoffed, rolling her eyes.

"Do you have a better idea?" Tonks asked, raising an eyebrow.

Huffing, Daphne folded her arms over her chest as her frown deepened.

"You know this is going to be dangerous, right?" Harry asked, seriously regretting not doing this on his own. "We could be dealing with Voldemort himself."

The girls came to a stop in the hall and exchanged nervous looks.

"Does anyone have a better idea?" Hermione asked.

"What if we sent an owl to the Aurors?" Penny asked.

“No way,” Daphne said adamantly. “If we’re wrong, or they scare off the thief, we’re all in deep trouble. And that’s assuming they even believe us to begin with.”

With that idea turned down, they all stood silently for a long moment.

“So, we do it ourselves?” Hermione asked.

“I’m in,” Tonks said firmly.

“Me too,” Penny added a couple of seconds later.

“Fine,” Daphne grumbled before letting out an explosive sigh.

“That’s the spirit!” Tonks said, grinning brightly as she patted the blonde on the shoulder.

As one, they all turned to look at Harry. It was heartwarming to have so much support, but it did nothing to help his growing nerves.

“Right,” he said, rubbing his hands together. “We’re going in.”

“Should we tell Susan or Lilith?” Hermione asked.

“We don’t have time,” Daphne told her. “If we’re going to stop You-Know-Who from stealing the Philosopher’s Stone, we need to go now.”

“Wait, I can send them a note!” Penny said excitedly.

Reaching into her robes, she pulled out a sheaf of parchment and jotted down a quick note with a self-inking quill. Pulling out her wand, she tapped the parchment. It folded itself neatly into a paper airplane and flew down the hall before turning at the corridor and disappearing around the corner.

“I told them where we were going and to tell Dumbledore when he gets back,” Penny said.

“You have to teach me that spell,” Hermione said.

“Later,” Tonks interrupted, “Come on, time to kick some arse.”

With Tonks leading the way, Harry and the rest of the group followed her to the third-floor corridor and turned right. The girls all gasped when they arrived to find the door ajar and the sound of a harp coming from the room Fluffy was in. Harry rubbed his thumb along the shaft of his wand nervously, his heart pounding in his chest as they got closer. If anything happened to his friends, he didn’t know if he’d be able to forgive himself.

“Let me go first,” he said, jogging to get in front.

Pushing the door open slowly, he peeked inside to see Fluffy sleeping soundly on the floor, one of his paws twitching. Creeping over to the trap door, he pulled it open before looking over to the girls and waving them over. Harry flicked his wand at the harp to make sure it didn’t stop prematurely while they gathered around him.

“I’ll jump down and tell you if it’s safe,” he said.

“Harry, you don’t know what’s down there,” Hermione hissed worriedly.

“I’ll be fine,” he told her.

Without waiting for her to respond, he jumped down. After falling for a long moment, he landed feet first in a nest of Devil's Snare.

"It's safe, just don't panic when you land," Harry yelled, looking up at the worried faces staring down at him from what had to be three stories up.

A couple of seconds later, he heard the first of a series of soft *thumps* as Tonks landed on his right, followed by Hermione, Daphne, and Penny.

"What is this?" Daphne asked, wrinkling her nose at the damp, black vines she was sitting on.

Hermione gasped, "Devil's Snare."

"What!?" Daphne asked, her eyes going wide.

"Don't panic," Harry told her.

"I'm sitting on a man-killing plant!" Daphne hissed with a glare.

"It'll let you go if you relax," he said.

Harry let his body go completely limp and the vines began winding themselves around him.

"Harry!" Penny cried, the Devil's Snare tightening around her wrists and legs when she tried to move.

"Don't move!" Hermione told her.

Harry smiled reassuringly at the girls as his vision was obscured by the vines swallowing him up. For a brief moment, he felt claustrophobic as he was completely surrounded by the damp vines, an earthy, woody smell filling every breath. Then, he fell out of the bottom and landed on his feet.

"I'm fine," Harry called out. "You just need to relax and let it take you."

"Potter, I'm going to kill you!" Daphne yelled.

"Stop moving!" Hermione told her.

Sighing, Harry raised his wand and cast the same Bluebell Flames Charm Hermione had used the last time. The Devil's Snare retreated quickly, causing the girls to scream as they started to fall. With another flick of his wand, the girls slowed, giving them time to get their feet under them before they hit the floor. Unfortunately, the spell he'd used, which used a gust of air to slow their fall, also lifted up their skirts. Hermione squeaked and held her skirt down to cover her light blue panties, while Daphne glared at him. Thankfully, Tonks and Penny didn't seem too bothered, even though Tonks was the only one not wearing underwear.

"Sorry," Harry said, scratching the back of his neck.

Shaking her head, Daphne looked around and headed for the door while Hermione's face flushed bright red.

"You can be embarrassed later. Right now, we've got a dark wizard to stop," Tonks said, grabbing Hermione's hand and pulling her over to the door as she looked back at Harry and gave him a wink.

Penny giggled, and she and Harry walked over to join the others. In the next room, they all looked up to stare at the flying keys. Between Hermione and Daphne, it only took them a few seconds for them to figure out which key he needed to grab.



“There, the one with the broken wing,” Hermione said.

“Right,” Harry said, mounting the rickety old broom left in the corner.

Briefly, he smiled at the thought of Dumbledore zipping around the room, his long white beard getting in his way as he tried to catch the key. Taking off into the air, Harry caught the key and then tossed it to Tonks while he ran raced away from the hoard of angry keys trying to impale him. As soon as they were through the door, he zipped through while Hermione and Penny slammed the door shut behind him. They could hear the rapid thuds of the keys hitting the other side of the thick, wooden door.

“What the hell is this?” Tonks asked as she stepped forward, squinting into the darkness.

When she stepped forward again, the torches sprang to life and revealed the giant-sized chess set.

“We need to get through this quickly,” Daphne said.

“Why?” Tonks asked.

“Think about it,” Daphne replied with a roll of her eyes. “Nothing we’ve run into so far is that difficult. These traps aren’t designed to stop us from getting to the Stone, they’re here to slow us down. I don’t know what Dumbledore was thinking, but if we don’t get to the Stone soon, You-Know-Who will be long gone.”

The girls all turned and exchanged worried looks before turning back to the massive chess board and pieces.

“So, how do we get through this? It looks like they want us to play,” Hermione said.

“Gryffindors,” Daphne said in exasperation. “We go around it, or through it.”

Taking two steps forward, Tonks raised her wand.

“Bombarda!” she shouted.

A bright red spell shot from her wand and slammed into the queen on the other side of the board. The queen exploded into a shower of fist-sized chunks of stone and dust, the sword in her hands falling to the board with a ringing clang. A second later, all of the other white chess pieces lowered their swords.

“Huh, I think it worked,” Tonks said.

She strode forward and the rest of them followed her as she walked past the inert chess piece to the door on the other side of the room.

“I can’t believe it was that easy,” Hermione muttered.

“I’m positive McGonagall came up with this one,” Daphne frowned. “it’s like she didn’t expect anyone to try and cheat.”

As Daphne shook her head in exasperation, Tonks opened the door to the next room, only to immediately recoil at the stench.

“Urgh! What the fuck is that?” she asked, burying her nose and mouth in the crook of her elbow.

Stepping forward, they found a Troll, larger than the one that got in on Halloween, laying unconscious on the floor with a bloody lump on the top of its head.

“Thank God we didn’t have to fight that,” Penny said.

Walking quickly past the Troll, they exited the room and took in a breath of mercifully clean air. Seeing Snape’s Potions puzzle, Harry felt a sense of relief. Once they solved the riddle, he could go on alone while the girls went waited, safely away from Voldemort.

Between Hermione, Daphne, and Penny, it took them only a couple of minutes to choose the right potion.

“There’s only enough for one of us,” Hermione said, biting her lips nervously.

“I’m going,” Harry said, snatching the potion from her hand before anyone else could take it. “You three go back and tell McGonagall and Dumbledore what’s happening.”

“We’re not leaving you here to face him alone,” Penny said firmly, crossing her arms over her chest.

“One of us should go back while the rest of us stay here,” Tonks said.

The girls all exchanged looks before Daphne sighed.

“I’ll go,” she volunteered, then turned to Harry and poked him in the chest. “And you better not die. I’ll be extremely angry with you if I get sold back to the Malfoy.”

“I’ll be fine,” Harry assured her with a smile, seeing the worry and fear in her eyes.

Nodding, she grabbed his tie and pulled him down for a short yet searing kiss.

“Stay safe,” she whispered.

Stepping back, she turned and headed for the door. When Harry turned back to the others, Hermione threw herself forward and wrapped her arms around him in a crushing hug.

“Please, be careful,” she said quietly with a sniffle.

Smiling softly, he pulled back and kissed her on the lips. Hermione threaded her finger through his hair and kissed him hard before pulling back and wiping a tear from her cheek. Penny and Tonks both wished him luck and kissed him as well before letting him go.

Popping the cork on the vial, Harry downed the potion. He shivered when he felt an icy feeling course through his veins. Setting the vial down, he looked back at the girls one more time and smiled before turning back around and walking through the flames blocking the door.

“Quirrell?” Harry gasped, feigning surprise as the door closed behind him.

“Potter, how did you get here?” Quirrell asked as he whirled around to face him. “No matter.”

Snapping his fingers, Harry felt himself being held in place by an invisible grip. It was difficult to fight the instinct to throw off the relatively weak magic.

“Wait, you’re the one helping Voldemort?” he asked, continuing his clueless act.

“Yes, now be quiet!” Quirrell barked, turning back to stare at the Mirror of Erised. “I see myself holding the stone, handing it to my master, but how do I get it?”

“Use the boy,” Voldemort said hoarsely from under Quirrell’s turban.

“Come here!” Quirrell ordered, holding out his hand to pull Harry towards him.

Harry stumbled slightly as he came to a stop, and used the opportunity to hide the hand holding his wand in the pocket of his robe.

“Tell me what you see,” Quirrell demanded.

Harry looked at the mirror and watched as his reflection smirked before pulling the stone out of his pocket, then slipping it back inside. In his own pocket, he felt the weight of the stone settle against his hip.

“What do you see!” Quirrell shouted.

“You really should ask nicely,” Harry replied.

Throwing off Quirrell's magic grip on him with enough force to make the man stumble, Harry aimed his wand with his right hand while grabbing the stone in his left.

“He has the stone!” Voldemort hissed. “Let me speak with him.”

“But master, you’re not strong enough,” Quirrell said.

“I’m strong enough for this,” Voldemort rasped.

Reaching up to his turban, Quirrell unrolled it from around his head, then turned his back to Harry.

“Voldemort,” Harry said with a glare, staring at the red eyes and snake-like face sticking out the back of Quirrell’s head.

“Harry Potter,” Voldemort rasped. “Give me the stone, and I will give you anything your heart desires. I can —”

“Go fuck yourself,” Harry snarled, the tip of his wand glowing a dangerous red.

Before he could cast a spell, the door to the room burst open and Dumbledore rushed in followed closely by Hermione, Tonks, Penny, Daphne, Susan, and Lilith.

“Good evening, Tom,” Dumbledore said calmly.

“Stay there Dumbledore, or I kill the boy,” Voldemort threatened, then turned his attention back to Harry. “Give me the stone or watch as I kill your pathetic little friends.”

Harry pulled the stone out of his pocket. Voldemort’s red eyes gleamed at the sight of it.

“Harry, no!” Hermione shouted.

“Give it to me!” Voldemort hissed, Quirrell’s hand held out awkwardly behind him.

Walking closer, Harry slowly held out the stone. Suddenly, he let the stone go a few inches away from his hand.

“No!” Voldemort shouted, forcing Quirrell to fall backwards as he reached for it.

As he fell, Harry threw himself at Quirrell’s back, his hand wrapping around the back of his neck as he glared at Voldemort. They landed hard on the floor, Quirrell landing face first with Harry straddling his back.

“You will *never* hurt them,” Harry growled over Quirrell’s pained screams.

“This isn’t over, Potter,” Voldemort hissed.

As Quirrell’s body began to crumble to dust, the black, transparent shade of Voldemort left his body. With a shriek, the shade dove through the wall and fled from the school. Breathing a sigh of relief, Harry climbed off the crumbled remains of Quirrell, picking up the stone and putting it in his pocket as he stood.

“Harry!” Hermione shouted as she slammed into him.

“I’m fine,” he assured her, his arms holding her tight.

She let go a few seconds later, her eyes misty as the other girls all came up to hug him as well.

“I see you’re in good hands,” Dumbledore said with a chuckle. “If you don’t mind, with Voldemort gone, I think it would be best if I returned the stone to Nicholas.”

Nodding, Harry let go of Susan, pulled the stone out of his pocket, and handed it to him.

“Thank you,” Dumbledore said with a smile. “I trust you can make your own way out?”

“I’m sure we can manage,” Harry replied, smiling back.

With a nod, Dumbledore waved to the girls and left.

“That’s it?” Daphne asked incredulously. “Those protections were a joke.”

“They weren’t that bad,” Harry said. “I’m pretty sure the mirror would only just the stone to someone who didn’t want to steal it. If I hadn’t shown up, it might have taken Voldemort days to figure out how to get it. Besides, we don’t even know if that was the real stone.”

“You think it was fake?” Tonks asked.

Harry shrugged, “Maybe. Dumbledore did make a big announcement about where it would be for anyone that knew what they were looking for. What better way to hide than tell everyone where it was, then put it someplace else?”

“That’s brilliant,” Hermione gasped.

“We don’t know that’s what he did,” Daphne told her.

Shrugging again, Harry put his hands in his pocket, only to yank his left hand back when he felt something sharp. Cautiously, he reached back in and grabbed what had poked him. It was a small, flat shard of the Philosopher’s Stone about two inches long by an inch wide.

“Is that...?” Daphne asked, her eyes lighting up.

“I think so,” Harry said. “It must have broken off when I dropped the stone.”

“Shouldn’t we give that to Dumbledore?” Hermione asked.

“No!” Daphne said, then blushed when everyone looked at her. “I mean, just think what we could learn from it. Besides, we don’t even know if it’s real.”

“Oh, so now you think it’s fake,” Tonks said teasingly.



"I didn't say it wasn't, I just said we don't know," Daphne huffed, crossing her arms while Tonks smirked at her.

"Here," Harry said, handing the shard to Daphne. "I'll leave it to you to find out."

Almost reverently, Daphne took the shard and stared at it in awe.

"How do we test it?" Hermione asked.

"It's supposed to turn lead into gold isn't it?" Penny asked. "We just need to find some lead and give it a try."

"Do you think there's any in the Room of Requirement?" Tonks asked.

"We can check," Harry told her.

As the girls talked excitedly, Harry led the way back to the trap door entrance. Having grabbed the broom from the key room on his way through, he flew up to the hatch and peeked through. Fluffy tilted his heads, tongues lolling out to the side, and looked at Harry as he climbed out.

"Hey boy," Harry said, scratching the middle head behind the ear.

Pulling out his wand, he levitated the girls up one at a time. After petting Fluffy and saying goodbye, they left the room and ran straight into Professor McGonagall. Unfortunately, she sent them all off to bed, so going to the Room of Requirement would need to wait until another day.

"Harry," Hermione said, biting her lip as they stood in the empty common room. "Could we stay in the Head Boy's room tonight?"

“Sure,” Harry said softly with a smile.

Once they were inside and Harry had closed the door behind him, Hermione hugged him tightly with her face buried in the crook of his neck.

“Harry, I think I’m ready,” she whispered softly.

“Are you sure?” Harry asked.

Leaning back to look up at him, she bit her bottom lip nervously and nodded. Smiling affectionately, Harry caressed her cheek and then leaned forward to kiss her. As they kissed, they both reached for the other’s tie, their hands bumping into each other. Laughing together, Harry pulled out his wand and stripped both of them instantly, their clothes landing in a neatly folded pile on the desk.

Hermione gasped when his hand came up to cup her breast. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she kissed him hard while his hands slipped down to grab her firm bum. Harry lifted her off the ground, his rapidly hardening length rubbing against her tight as she wrapped her legs around her waist.

Carrying Hermione over to the bed, crawled onto the mattress and laid her down on her back. Kissing down her chin, he slowly made his way down her neck. Moaning, she leaned her head back while her fingers combed through his hair.

“You’re so beautiful, Hermione,” Harry said.

Reaching her collarbone, he kissed over to the center of her chest before making his way down between her breasts. Kissing and sucking at her full, firm mounds, he avoided her nipple for the moment. When he finally hovered his mouth over top, his warm breath ghosting over her skin, Hermione panted in anticipation. Just before taking it into his mouth, he quickly reached up and pinched the other nipple lightly.

With a loud gasp, Hermione arched her back, thrusting her nipple into his open mouth and clutching his head tightly before letting out a long, low moan.

“Harry,” Hermione moaned.

Smiling around the stiff nub, he grazed his teeth lightly over her engorged nipple before giving it a hard suck. Pulling back, he moved over to give the other one the same attention. After spending a couple of minutes enjoying her perky breasts, Harry slowly kissed his way down over her stomach. With each kiss, he could feel her muscles twitching just under the skin. Moving further down, he settled between her legs and kissed the inside of her thighs.

Impatiently, Hermione used her grip on his hair to guide him to her hot, damp mound. Smiling, Harry placed a kiss directly on her lips before slipping his tongue between her taut folds and licking from bottom to top, flicking over her hooded clit at the end.

“Oh!” Hermione gasped, bucking her hips.

Grinning, Harry latched his lips around the swollen nub and sucked lightly while lashing it with his tongue. Hermione gripped the sheets tightly, arched her back, and let out a wanton moan. When he sucked hard, the muscles in her thighs tensed and trembled under his fingertips. Clutching tightly at his hair, she rolled her hips, grinding and mashing her slit against his mouth as she gasped for air.

Attacking her clit hard, Hermione cried in as she reached her peaked. A flood of arousal drenched Harry’s chin her body going tensing up completely and shaking as she gaped for air. A few seconds later, she went from pulling him forward to pushing him away frantically while sucking in trembling breaths.

Grinning, Harry crawled up Hermione’s body, kissing her sweat-covered skin on his way up before kissing her on the lips.

“Wow,” Hermione panted.

Harry laughed and kissed her on the lips.

“Do you want to keep going?” Harry asked.

Instead of answering, Hermione bit her lip and reached between them to grab his length. Rubbing the head between her lips, she placed him at her entrance and wrapped her arms around his neck, their eyes locked.

Gently, Harry pushed forward, slowly slipping between her folds. Taking his time, he slowly thrust deeper and deeper into her. Eventually, he bottomed out and Hermione tightened her legs around him.

“Wait,” she gasped. “Just – give me a minute.”

“You okay?” he asked.

“Yeah,” Hermione said, smiling at him.

Cupping his cheeks, she pulled him down for a kiss. After a couple of minutes, she started rolling her hips. Gently, Harry pulled back about an inch and then thrust back in. When Hermione moaned in pleasure rather than pain, he kept going, pulling back just a bit further each time. Pulling back from his lips, she gasped and raked her nails along his back.

“Feel good?” Harry asked with a grin.

“Yeah, really good,” Hermione said. “You can go faster.”

Chuckling, Harry increased his pace. Hermione gasped and arched her back, her stiff nipples rubbing against his chest. Cupping one of her breasts, Harry rolled her nipple as he thrust

harder. It didn't take long before she stared and panted hard and Harry felt his own climax approach. With a few more hard thrusts, Hermione arch her back and cried out just as Harry buried his length as deep as possible and spilled inside of her.

"Oh! I can feel it!" Hermione gasped.

Harry collapsed on top of her and chuckled while kissing her neck.

"Was that alright?" she asked nervously.

"You were brilliant," Harry told her with a grin.

Pushing himself up on his arms, he kissed her on the lips and then rolled off of her.

"Can we do that again?" Hermione asked.

Smiling, Harry pulled her on top of him.

"I didn't mean now," she admonished, smacking his chest lightly.

While Harry laughed, Hermione laid down on his chest. It wasn't long before they both fell asleep.