

## Інформація

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Гарри Поттер с

технологической системой

Книги и литература

216 глав

3.3 млн просмотров

Автор:

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(46 оценок)

Синописис

In an innovative reimagining of the Harry Potter universe, this novel introduces a unique twist to the beloved story, focusing on Harry Potter's journey enhanced by the Technology System (TS) and his interactions with Nigel, an AI assistant.

The narrative follows a young Harry Potter, who is not just a budding wizard but also a tech-savvy genius, thanks to the advanced Technology System embedded within him. This system, operating through a symbiosis of magic and technology, provides Harry with unprecedented magical analysis, data storage, and real-time spell and potion assistance. At the heart of this system is Nigel, an AI with the personality of a British gentleman, known for his dry humor, sarcasm, and witty remarks that often add a humorous touch to Harry's adventures.

As Harry prepares for his first year at Hogwarts, he delves into potion brewing and spellcasting with a proficiency far beyond his years, thanks

to the Technology System's virtual environments and Nigel's tutelage. His unique approach to magic, combined with his technological edge, sets him apart, promising a future where he surpasses his canonical counterpart.

The Technology System, especially the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, becomes a pivotal tool in Harry's magical education, allowing him to experiment and master potions in a safe, controlled environment. This feature, along with the System's ability to analyze and store vast amounts of magical knowledge, becomes indispensable to Harry's growth as a wizard. The novel is a fresh take on the Harry Potter story.

### 1. Smart MC

Expect a Harry Potter who is not just magically gifted but also technologically adept, using the advanced Technology System to enhance his magical abilities and knowledge. This version of Harry demonstrates a level of intelligence and problem-solving skills that surpasses his original portrayal.

### 2. Witty and Sarcastic AI Companion

Nigel, the AI assistant with a personality reminiscent of a British gentleman, brings humor and sarcasm to the narrative. His interactions with Harry are not just helpful but also entertaining, adding a unique flavor to the story.

### 3. Evolved Relationships

Watch as the dynamics between Harry and his family, especially Aunt Petunia, transform dramatically. The story explores the emotional growth and understanding that develops between them, influenced by magical and non-magical factors.

### 4. Enhanced Magical Skills

Harry's proficiency in magic, particularly in potion brewing and

spellcasting, is heightened through his use of the Technology System. His approach to magic is more analytical and precise, leading to a faster and more profound mastery of magical arts.

#### 5. Manipulation

Lots of and lots of manipulation.

#### 6. Adventure and Exploration

Harry's journey is filled with adventure and exploration, amplified by his technological edge. From uncovering family secrets in Gringotts to experimenting with new magical techniques, each chapter brings new discoveries and challenges.

#### 7. Unique Magical Training

The Virtual Potion Crafting Room and other innovative features of the Technology System offer a unique perspective on magical training.

Harry's learning process is more interactive, experimental, and efficient, showcasing a different approach to mastering magic.

#### 8. Humor and Levity

Nigel's presence ensures that the story, while rich in magical lore and technology, does not lack humor. His witty comments and sarcastic quips provide moments of levity throughout Harry's journey.

#### 9. A Fresh Take on Canon

The novel reimagines the Harry Potter universe, offering a fresh perspective while staying true to the essence of the original story. Expect familiar settings and characters, but with new twists and turns that set this novel apart.

No

One 17 and Under Admitted

Chapter 20: Diagon Alley with

Aunty

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Until one Sunday, everything changed. Petunia seemed out of sorts, her usual stoic demeanor replaced by a mix of excitement and fear. "Get dressed, Harry," she said, her voice wavering slightly. "We are going out." Harry, puzzled by her sudden change of behavior, complied without question.

Harry paused, unsure of what to make of this sudden change. He dressed quickly, choosing his best yet simple clothes. Descending the stairs, he found Petunia waiting, dressed more neatly than he had ever seen her. Her attire was not flamboyant but elegantly simple. Her red hair, reminiscent of his mother's, and green eyes, akin to his own, gave her an air of elegance he hadn't noticed before. Since Vernon's departure, Petunia had been more attentive to her diet and fitness, and it showed in her athletic physique. Harry couldn't help but acknowledge her beauty, a quality overshadowed by years of stern expressions and sharp words.

As they prepared to leave, Petunia reached out and took Harry's hand, a gesture so foreign and unexpected that it sent a wave of warmth through Harry's body. The unfamiliar sensation of her touch sparked a flurry of emotions within him. He looked up at her, seeing her in a new light, almost as if he was glimpsing the young woman she once was before life had hardened her.

Their destination remained a mystery as they walked in silence. Harry's mind raced with possibilities. Could she be taking him to Diagon Alley? Or somewhere else entirely? The uncertainty kept him on edge, his thoughts oscillating between hope and caution.

As they walked, Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind, laced with its

usual blend of sarcasm and insight. "Ah, Master Harry, it seems we're embarking on a most unexpected journey. One wonders what has spurred dear Aunt Petunia into such a surprising action."

Harry, maintaining his composure, replied silently, "I've been working on her, Nigel. Maybe it's paying off. Or maybe it's a trap."

"A valid concern," Nigel chimed in. "But remember, every step in this dance of manipulation is a gamble. Be prepared to adapt as the music changes."

Their walk led them through the familiar streets of Little Whinging, Petunia's grip on Harry's hand unwavering. It was a surreal experience for Harry, walking side by side with his aunt, who had always maintained a strict boundary of indifference and often hostility towards him.

Finally, Petunia broke the silence. "Harry, what I'm about to show you is something I've kept buried for a long time. It's... it's part of your mother's world."

Harry's heart skipped a beat at her words. This was it, the moment he had been strategically working towards. He had to tread carefully, to ensure that whatever revelation Petunia was about to share didn't close the door he had been slowly prying open.

Soon they arrived at a bus stop, the very one Harry had become familiar with in recent weeks. They boarded the bus in silence, traveling towards London, each lost in their own thoughts. The journey was quiet, the air thick with unspoken anticipation.

As they arrived in London, Petunia led Harry through the bustling streets with a purposeful stride that he had rarely seen from her. Eventually, they stood before The Leaky Cauldron, its old, unassuming exterior blending seamlessly into the surrounding buildings.

Looking at the pub, Petunia sighed deeply, a sound so laden with emotion that it seemed to carry the weight of years. Clutching Harry's hand tightly, she stepped forward and entered the pub.

Harry's heart pounded in his chest. He had often asked Tom, the owner, to open the path to Diagon Alley for him. If Tom recognized him, it could unravel the careful narrative he had woven for his aunt. But, to his utter surprise and relief, Tom was too preoccupied with ogling Petunia to notice Harry. When Petunia requested, "Can you be a gentleman and open the path please? I have business in Diagon Alley," Tom nodded fervently and obliged, waving his wand to reveal the hidden passage. As they walked through the magically concealed brick wall, Petunia inhaled deeply, taking in the sights and smells of the bustling magical street. "I missed this," she muttered, more to herself than to Harry, but he heard every word.

Harry, his mind racing, knew he had to tread carefully. This was unfamiliar territory, a delicate dance of reality and deception where one misstep could shatter the fragile bond he was building with his aunt.

At the same time, Nigel reported in Harry's mind, "Quest: Magical Bonding Completed. Objective: Convince Aunt Petunia to accompany you to Diagon Alley. Rewards: 30 points. Unlocks Technology System Virtual Potion Crafting Room." Harry felt a surge of excitement at the completion of the quest but knew this was not the moment to focus on his rewards.

Petunia's emotional state and their delicate situation in Diagon Alley were his immediate priorities.

Petunia, seemingly drawn by a sense of nostalgia, led Harry directly to Florean Fortescue's Ice-Cream Parlour. She was visibly moved, a mix of joy and sadness in her eyes as they sat down at a small table. "I used to come here with Lily," she said softly, a faraway look in her eyes. "She

loved the chocolate raspberry swirl."

Harry watched her closely, sensing the depth of her emotions. He knew he had to approach the subject of magic carefully, weaving his narrative to make her resonate with the magical world rather than recoil from it.

"Aunt Petunia," he began tentatively, "do you ever wonder what it would have been like if things were different? If you had been part of this world too?"

Petunia's expression hardened slightly, the mention of her exclusion from the magical world a sore subject. "I've spent years trying to forget all this, Harry. It's not a world for me. I chose a different path."

Harry nodded, understanding the delicate balance he had to maintain. He chose his next words with care, aiming to appeal to her sense of loss and curiosity. "But don't you think it's fascinating, Aunt Petunia? All these wonders, this magic, it's part of our family's history. It's part of you too, in a way."

This was a gamble, one that even made Nigel question whether Harry was truly a child or not. Since discovering that accessing his Potter Vault would immediately alert Dumbledore, Harry had been cautious. His plan now hinged on the possibility that Lily might have had her own account, separate from the Potter wealth. Access to his family's resources was crucial, but he couldn't risk Dumbledore's involvement. In his mind, he formulated a plan, one that hinged on Petunia's connection to Lily.

As they sat in Florean Fortescue's, Harry's mind raced with strategies. He needed to tread carefully, weaving his words to create a sense of shared history and loss. "Aunt Petunia," Harry began, his tone gentle, "I can't help but wonder about Mum's world. It's part of our family history, isn't it? And maybe, just maybe, there's more to it than we know."

Harry didn't know if Evans family had wizard lineage, but he didn't have

to. All he had to do was to convince Petunia enough to make her doubt.

That was enough.

Petunia glanced at Harry, her eyes reflecting a mix of intrigue and discomfort. "Are you implying that Lily might not have been the only one with magical blood in our family?" Harry, recognizing the critical juncture of their conversation, leaned in, his voice a mix of earnestness and calculated innocence.

"Exactly, Aunt Petunia. The owner of that little shop spoke of squibs - those born into magical families but without magical abilities themselves. They sometimes leave the wizarding world to live among Muggles. It's possible that our family's history with magic goes further back than we thought."

Petunia's reaction to the term 'squib' was almost visceral, a subtle cringe at the label that might apply to her. If Harry's theory held any truth, it would mean that she, too, was part of the magical lineage, albeit in a non-magical capacity. This revelation seemed to unsettle her, challenging her long-held perception of her place in the world.

Nigel, observing the conversation with his trademark analytical detachment, whispered in Harry's mind, "Careful now, Master Harry. You're treading on delicate ground. The idea of being a squib might not sit well with her. It's akin to being an outcast in both worlds."

Harry nodded inwardly at Nigel's advice, aware of the sensitivity of the topic. "I mean, Aunt Petunia, it doesn't change who we are," he said cautiously. "But it might help us understand our family's story a bit better. And who knows? Maybe there's something in this world that could help us in our own."

Petunia, lost in thought, slowly stirred her tea, her mind evidently grappling with the implications. "I suppose there's no harm in learning a

bit more," she conceded after a long pause. "But Harry, we must be cautious. This world... it's not like ours. There are dangers we might not understand."

Harry, sensing her growing acceptance, felt a spark of hope. "I agree, Aunt Petunia. We'll be careful. I just... I feel like there's a part of Mum's life that I want to connect with. And maybe, in some way, it's a part of us too."

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Chapter 21: Gringotts

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Hey there! A lot of people have been asking about this, and I want to shed a bit of light on this subject. To be honest, I'd rather not say it, but I

shall. The name of the novel, and thus the system, is one of the biggest foreshadowings of the novel. There. I hope that makes it clearer now. It's not a major spoiler, won't change anything, but yeah, I feel like it would be better left unsaid. But I also understand it might sound a bit out of place.

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As they finished their ice cream in silence, Harry pondered the next phase of his plan. He needed to explore Diagon Alley further, particularly the possibility of accessing the Evans family's potential magical resources. This could be the key to unlocking more about his mother's past and perhaps even gaining a degree of independence from the Dursleys.

After leaving the ice cream parlor, Petunia suggested a brief walk through Diagon Alley. The street was bustling with witches and wizards going about their business, the air filled with the chatter of magical commerce and the occasional whoosh of a passing owl. Petunia walked with an air of cautious curiosity, her gaze lingering on the various shop windows displaying magical wares and artifacts.

Harry, seizing the opportunity, guided her towards Gringotts, the wizarding bank. "Aunt Petunia, I've been thinking. If there's any record of the Evans family here, it would be in Gringotts. Maybe we could learn something about Mum's side of the family."

Petunia's question caught Harry off guard. "How do you know that place?" she asked, eyeing him with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion.

Harry cursed inwardly. 'Shit,' he thought. He had to think fast to avoid arousing further suspicion. Quickly, he replied, "I overheard people talking as we passed by, Aunt Petunia." He then cast his gaze downward, adding, "It's a skill I picked up at home. I had to understand Uncle Vernon's mood from his mutterings."

Petunia's expression softened at this, a flicker of guilt passing over her features as she was reminded of the years of neglect and mistreatment Harry had endured under their roof. Sighing, she conceded, "Okay. There's no harm in asking."

Harry felt a surge of relief. His plan was working. As they approached the imposing façade of Gringotts, the goblin-run bank, two new quests completed notifications popped up in his mind. Nigel, ever the dry observer in his mental landscape, reported, "Quest: Gradually introduce the idea of the magical world to Aunt Petunia in a positive light.

Rewards: 40 points. Increases Aunt Petunia's openness to magic. Strategy: Share stories of Lily's magical experiences, emphasizing the wonder and beauty of magic."

"And," Nigel continued, his tone suggesting a smirk, "Quest: Emotional Alchemy. Objective: Transform Aunt Petunia's fear and resentment into curiosity. Rewards: 50 points. Opens new dialogues about magic and family history. Strategy: Gently challenge her beliefs, present magic as a bridge rather than a barrier between them. Two Quests Completed!"

Harry nodded to himself, acknowledging Nigel's update. They stepped into Gringotts, the cool interior of the bank a stark contrast to the bustling warmth of Diagon Alley. The goblins, perched behind their counters, eyed them with a blend of indifference and faint curiosity. Petunia clung to Harry's arm, her usual bravado diminished in the face of the goblin bankers. Harry approached a counter, his heart pounding. To the collective astonishment of everyone present, including Petunia and the goblin banker, Harry greeted the goblin in fluent Gobbledegook. "May your vaults gleam with the treasures of ages, and may the rivers of your enemies' blood flow as crimson as molten gold beneath the moon's gaze." The goblin, visibly intrigued and pleased by this show of respect in

their native tongue, "May our coffers overflow and our foes tremble, as the rivers of their blood run deep and swift beneath the night's shadow."

The exchange, though brief, seemed to set a tone of mutual respect between Harry and the goblin.

Petunia, wide-eyed, leaned closer to Harry and whispered, "Since when do you speak... whatever that was?"

Harry, with a shrug that belied his inner pride, replied, "Must be innate talent, Aunty." The goblin, overhearing this, let out a grunt that could have been interpreted as amusement.

Nigel, observing the scene, commented in Harry's mind, "Well, well, Master Harry, a linguist and a diplomat. I dare say your talents are as varied as a Niffler's hoard."

Ignoring Nigel's quip, Harry turned his attention back to the goblin. "Sir, I was hoping to inquire about the Evans family. My mother, Lily Evans, might have had an account or some connection here. Her sister, Petunia Evans is here to do the bloodtest."

Harry, fluent in Gobbledegook, spoke to the goblin banker in the goblin language, leaving Aunt Petunia bewildered. Despite her growing acceptance of the magical world, the sight of goblins still unsettled her, and hearing Harry effortlessly converse in their native tongue was both impressive and disconcerting. As the word 'freak' almost slipped out, she caught herself, remembering she was no longer Vernon's wife bound by his prejudices, but Lily's sister, exploring a part of her family's past.

The goblin, intrigued by Harry's linguistic prowess, responded in kind, their conversation flowing smoothly. Petunia, standing a bit uncomfortably next to Harry, was a mixture of awe and discomfort.

Harry, sensing her unease, gently squeezed her hand, a silent reassurance that all was well.

After a brief exchange, Harry turned to Petunia, explaining, "I asked about Mum's family, the Evans. I'm trying to find out if they had any connections here at Gringotts."

Petunia nodded, still processing the surreal experience of standing in a goblin bank, a world away from the mundane life of Privet Drive. "Did they say anything?" she asked, her voice tinged with curiosity.

Harry nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation. "Blood never lies," he affirmed. "That's what he said. They will test our blood to see if we have any magical ancestry." Petunia, though apprehensive, silently agreed. The goblin at the desk rang a bell, and another goblin quickly appeared. "Take our guests for the blood test," instructed the first goblin. As they were about to be escorted away, Harry leaned forward, allowing his hair to shift and reveal his scar, hidden until now. In fluent Gobbledegook, he asked the goblin, "Is it possible to omit a certain bloodline from the reports?"

The goblin's eyes flicked to Harry's scar, a smirk crossing his face. "No worries. If you don't touch that vault, we will not report anyone." Harry exhaled a sigh of relief and nodded, allowing the new goblin to lead them away.

The walk to the testing room was short. Inside, they were greeted by another goblin. Harry once again addressed him in Gobbledegook, "May your coffers shine with boundless riches, and your enemies cower in fear as their blood flows like a crimson river"

The goblin responded, his voice gruff but respectful, "And may your days be filled with prosperity, as your adversaries meet their fate in rivers of crimson fury."

The goblin snapped his fingers, and a thick, ancient-looking rule book materialized on the desk. He opened it to a specific page and began to

read the rules aloud in a clear, authoritative voice.

"Rule One: The blood test shall be conducted in a controlled environment, ensuring no external magical influence can alter the results.

Rule Two: All participants must willingly provide a blood sample; coercion or deceit invalidates the test. Rule Three: The blood's magical lineage will be traced back so long as the bloodgiver has droop of lineage. Any magical ancestry beyond this is deemed irrelevant for the purpose of the test. Rule Four: The results shall be confidential, disclosed only to those who partake in the test and any other parties they designate. Rule Five: Any attempt to tamper with or manipulate the test or its results will be met with severe penalties, as per Gringotts' policy."

As the goblin finished reading, he looked up at Harry and Petunia, his expression unreadable. "Do you agree to these terms?" he asked in a stern tone.

Harry nodded, a sense of gravity settling over him. "We agree," he said solemnly, glancing at Petunia, who nodded in affirmation.

The goblin then greeted Harry and Petunia, his voice softening slightly.

"Welcome to Gringotts, the most secure place for all your magical and financial needs. My name is Glimmergob Snicklenook."

In response, Harry, fluent in Gobbledegook, replied, "May your vaults be impregnable, and your wealth flourish beyond the ages, Master Glimmergob Snicklenook" The goblin nodded in appreciation of Harry's respect for their customs.

Petunia, still processing the surreal experience, whispered to Harry,

"What did you say?"

Harry, suppressing a smirk, translated, "Just a formal greeting, Aunt Petunia. Goblins appreciate it when you respect their culture."

Nigel, observing the scene, couldn't help but interject in Harry's mind,

"And here I thought your charm only extended to the human species.

Seems you're quite the goblin whisperer too, Master Harry."

The goblin gestured for them to follow him to a small, austere room where the blood test would be conducted. Inside, a simple wooden table and two chairs were the only furnishings. The goblin produced a small, sharp instrument resembling a dagger.

"This will only take a moment," he assured them. "A drop of blood from each of you will suffice."

Harry offered his finger first, bravely enduring the quick prick of the blade. A single drop of blood fell into a small crystal vial. The goblin then turned to Petunia, who hesitated for a moment before extending her finger. As her blood dripped into a separate vial, joining the one with Harry's at the goblin's side, he sealed both with stoppers, and uttered a series of incantations in Gobbledegook.

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Chapter 22: Lineage

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A great shout-out to Taylor, Sedeho, Farhaan Talati, Michel Wagner, Jaylon Cain, Steven, Alexandre Cherprenet, Cory Wayenberg, Mr. Azerus, Jack Perkins, corbeau white, Jayden, Deividas Seputis, pop\_tarts, TheFuzzySamurai, Matthew Dixon, Ysmir! I thank you all for supporting me! You help more than you realize! Much appreciated!

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Glimmergob Snicklenook then produced two parchments and dropped blood on each. Soon, inscriptions started to form on them. Harry caught some words, understanding them. He gasped as he saw those names, some of which were so important that they were in Nigel's education on the basics of the Magical World. Some he had also encountered in the books he had studied.

Snicklenook took Petunia's parchment first, and his brows furrowed. "Ms. Evans," he began, "your lineage goes back to some of the oldest Magical Families, including Slytherin, the founder of Hogwarts. It branched from a squib, as Evans left for the Muggle World. However, Slytherin's Vault has a condition to inherit, and sadly, you are a squib. Thus, you do not meet the conditions. Lily Potter nee Evans also has a vault, but she named an heir, namely Harry James Potter. You also can't access that vault."

Petunia exhaled a heavy sigh, one laden with years of unspoken feelings and misconceptions. The revelation seemed to wash over her, reshaping her understanding of her sister and, by extension, Harry. Her gaze shifted

to Harry, a mixture of confusion, realization, and a hint of sadness in her eyes. She finally learned that Lily was not a freak; they were squibs.

Snicklenook didn't wait and took the other parchment.

"This, on the other hand, is something else," Snicklenook continued.

"Harry James Potter, descendant of Slytherin from your mother's side, Heir of the Potter Family, a direct descendant of the late Lord Potter, James Potter. What only a handful of people know is that both the Slytherin and Potter families descend from two brothers of the Peverell Family, connected by marriage."

As Snicklenook revealed this hidden lineage, the room seemed to hold its breath, and Harry and Petunia exchanged surprised glances, realizing the profound implications of their magical heritage.

Harry was unfamiliar with the Peverell Brothers, but the fact that two ancient and noble families descended from them piqued his interest.

Snicklenook then added "Peverell Vault is the first Vault ever created in this Bank. To be honest, even the land this bank was built on is theirs.

Their vault has been amassing riches for thousands of years just from the rent we pay yearly." His tone carried a certain greed as he looked at Harry, hoping that this young man would inherit and return a significant fortune.

Harry couldn't resist his curiosity and asked, "What are the conditions?"

Snicklenook's grin widened, revealing his sharp goblin teeth. "You have to figure it out yourself. But keep in mind, Harry James Potter. For both Slytherin and Peverell Vaults, you are not the only heir trying to access them. Although you have purer blood for Peverell lineage, inheriting two distinct brothers' blood, the condition of the vault prevails over blood purity."

Harry's brow furrowed, not knowing whom he was up against in this race

to unlock the vaults. He then nodded thoughtfully and asked, "Can I access my mother's Vault?"

Snicklenook nodded. "Lily Potter's Vault is accessible to you as her designated heir. You may visit it whenever you wish."

Following the earlier goblin, they were soon taken to Lily's Vault. The vault itself was a sight to behold, filled with a few chests brimming with galleons, sickles, and knuts. There were also some books, family photos, a collection of baby clothes and toys, and finally, two letters. Harry carefully picked up the letters, noting that they were addressed to both himself and Petunia. He also gathered some gold and left the vault.

The goblin handed them a key for the vault to use for their following visits and escorted them back to the entrance. Following the enlightening visit to Gringotts, Harry and Aunt Petunia exited the bank, the weight of newfound knowledge palpable between them. Petunia seemed to be in a reflective state, grappling with the revelations about her lineage and the potential implications for her family. Harry, while equally contemplative, was also focused on the practical aspects of their discovery.

As they stood at the entrance of Gringotts, Petunia turned to Harry, her eyes lingering on the two letters he held in his hand. "Are you going to read it?" she asked, her voice tinged with a mix of curiosity and apprehension.

Harry glanced down at the letters, one addressed to him and the other to Petunia, his mother's handwriting unmistakable on the envelopes. "Let's read them when we reach home," he replied, a hint of solemnity in his tone. The letters, potentially filled with personal sentiments and revelations from his mother, deserved a private and thoughtful reading.

Petunia nodded in agreement, her gaze still fixed on the letters as if trying to decipher their contents through the paper. Sensing an

opportunity to shift the mood, Harry gently broached another topic.

"Aunty, I need some supplies. Can we get them?"

Petunia seemed to ponder the request for a moment before sighing, a sound that spoke of resignation mingled with an emerging sense of responsibility. "Fine. But don't you dare cause a ruckus or make a mess," she warned, her tone firm yet lacking its usual sharpness.

Harry's smile was genuine, a reflection of his relief and gratitude towards the subtle changes he was witnessing in his aunt. "Thank you, Aunt Petunia," he replied warmly. With his hand holding hers, a gesture that had become surprisingly comforting, Harry guided her towards Slug & Jiggers Apothecary.

The shop, nestled among the bustling array of magical stores in Diagon Alley, was a haven for potion enthusiasts. As they stepped inside, the rich aroma of herbs and potion ingredients filled the air, an olfactory tapestry of magic and mystery. Shelves lined with jars of colorful powders, dried plants, and liquids of every hue stretched from floor to ceiling. Harry felt a surge of excitement, his mind already racing with the possibilities these ingredients could unlock.

Petunia, however, seemed slightly overwhelmed by the array of unfamiliar items, her eyes darting around the shop with a mixture of curiosity and caution. Harry, sensing her discomfort, squeezed her hand reassuringly. "It's alright, Aunt Petunia. I know what we need."

He led her through the aisles, his steps purposeful yet considerate of her pace. Reaching the section for beginner potion-makers, Harry carefully selected the essential items: a standard-sized cauldron, a set of glass phials, a mortar and pestle, and a beginner's potion kit that included basic ingredients for simple but effective potions.

As he gathered the items, Nigel's voice, always present in his mind,

offered a humorous observation. "Master Harry, I do believe you've found your natural habitat among these concoctions and brews. Just remember, we're not cooking up a storm in the Dursley's kitchen."

Harry chuckled inwardly at Nigel's remark. He then turned his attention to the ingredients, selecting a few additional items that caught his eye. Dried nettles, powdered moonstone, and a vial of dragon's blood were among the more exotic ingredients he added to his basket.

Petunia, observing Harry's confident selections, finally spoke up. "You seem to know your way around these things, Harry. Where did you learn all this?"

Harry hesitated for a moment before answering Petunia's question about his potion-making knowledge. He couldn't very well admit to the secret guidance and education he had been receiving from Nigel. Instead, he opted for a half-truth, attributing his newfound expertise to the mysterious uncle from the chocolate shop. "The uncle gave me a book," he said, hoping this explanation would suffice.

Petunia hummed in response, not pressing the matter further. She seemed content to let Harry take the lead, a noticeable change in her usual demeanor. As they continued browsing the aisles of Slug & Jiggers Apothecary, Harry followed the list of ingredients outlined in the first-year potion book he had already scanned into the Technology System. He meticulously picked out each item, ensuring he had everything he needed for the basic potions he planned to brew.

PS: Added Petunia Pic to Characters Chapter and here. Will add more later.

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Chapter 23: Letters

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The news of another player contending for the inheritance of the Slytherin and Peverell Vaults weighed heavily on Harry's mind. It instilled a sense of urgency within him, prompting him to act swiftly and strategically. He was keenly aware of the competitive nature of this unseen adversary and the potential challenges that lay ahead in claiming what he believed was rightfully his.

After gathering all the necessary potion ingredients, Harry and Petunia left Slug & Jiggers Apothecary. Remembering that he couldn't possibly carry a cauldron back to London in his arms, Harry sought out a shop that sold expandable bags. He found a quaint little store tucked away in a less crowded corner of Diagon Alley.

The shopkeeper, a kindly old witch with twinkling eyes, showed Harry a

selection of bags. "These are no ordinary bags, young man," she said with a wink. "They'll hold more than you can imagine and still feel as light as a feather."

Harry was intrigued. He browsed through the bags, finally settling on a nice-looking backpack of moderate size. Given the limited amount of gold he had taken from the vault, he had to be mindful of his spending. The backpack, while not overly extravagant, was just what he needed – inconspicuous yet magically efficient.

As he paid for the backpack, Nigel's voice piped up in his mind. "Ah, Master Harry, venturing into the world of magical fashion accessories, are we? Let's hope this bag doesn't end up swallowing you whole."

Harry couldn't help but smile at Nigel's comment. With the new bag securely on his back, he and Petunia left Diagon Alley, returning to the familiar streets of London.

The journey back to Privet Drive was quiet, both Harry and Petunia lost in their own thoughts. Harry mulled over the information he had gleaned from Gringotts, particularly the revelation of his connection to the Peverell family and the potential inheritance that awaited him. He knew that unlocking the vaults would not only provide financial security but also offer him greater insight into his family's history and the magical world.

Petunia, on the other hand, seemed to be grappling with the newfound knowledge of her magical ancestry. The idea that she might be descended from one of the founders of Hogwarts, a squib from a prestigious magical line, was clearly something she was struggling to come to terms with.

As they approached the Dursley home, Harry sensed a shift in Petunia's attitude towards him. The revelation of their shared magical heritage, albeit in different capacities, had bridged a gap that had long existed

between them. It was a small step, but a significant one in their tumultuous relationship.

Once inside, Harry and Petunia sat down in the living room, the two letters from Lily Potter lying on the table between them. Petunia reached for her letter first, her hands trembling slightly as she broke the seal. Harry watched her closely, curious about the contents but respecting her privacy.

After reading the letter with a myriad of emotions flickering across her face, Petunia began to read aloud, her voice wavering with each word. The letter, written by Lily Potter, her sister, was filled with sentiments of regret and longing. Lily expressed her deep sorrow over the estrangement that had grown between them, a divide that stemmed from a fundamental misunderstanding.

"My dearest Petunia," Lily's letter began, "as I sit here, penning this letter, my heart is heavy with regret. Our paths have diverged in ways I could never have imagined, and for that, I am truly sorry. The world of magic, which has brought me so much joy and wonder, has also been the source of our greatest rift."

The letter continued, Lily's words painting a picture of a sister torn between two worlds - the magical and the mundane. "I remember our childhood, Petunia, the dreams we shared, the secrets we whispered under the stars. Those memories are treasures I hold dear. But as I ventured into the world of magic, I realize now that I left a part of me behind - a part that belongs with you."

Petunia's hands trembled slightly as she read on, Lily's words echoing in the quiet room. "You were always more than just my sister; you were my confidante, my partner in mischief, my best friend. The day I learned of my magical abilities was the day I felt a wedge drive between us. I wish I

had the wisdom then to bridge that gap, to show you that my love for you was unchanged."

The letter took a more personal turn as Lily spoke of her child, her voice imbued with a mother's love and a sister's hope. "Petunia, I have a child now, a beautiful little boy named Harry. He is the light of my life, and every day, I see a bit of us in him. It is my deepest hope that one day, you will meet him, that he will know his aunt Petunia, the woman who was a cornerstone of my childhood."

As Petunia read these lines, her eyes welled up with tears, the weight of years of estrangement pressing down on her. She paused, taking a deep breath before continuing. "I want you to know, Petunia, that no matter what happens, no matter where our paths take us, you will always be my sister. My love for you is unwavering. If fate allows, I dream of the day when our families can come together, when Harry can play with his cousin, and we can share in the joys of both our worlds."

Petunia's voice broke as she finished reading the letter. The room was thick with emotion, the silence punctuated only by the soft rustling of the paper in her hands. Harry, who had been listening intently, felt a knot form in his throat. The letter had revealed a side of his mother he had never known - a woman torn between her magical destiny and her love for her sister.

Harry then turned his attention to his own letter, his hands slightly shaking as he broke the seal. Lily's handwriting was familiar yet foreign, a connection to a mother he had never known. He began to read, his voice soft but clear.

Reading the first line, Harry's voice choked with emotion. "My dear son, if you are reading this, it means I am no longer in your life," he read, each word heavy with a meaning he could only begin to fathom. "It is the

most difficult thing for a mother to imagine leaving her child, especially under circumstances I cannot control."

Harry paused, gathering his composure, as Nigel's voice offered a gentle nudge in his mind. "Take a breath, Master Harry. Your mother's words, though heavy, are a testament to her love for you."

Encouraged, Harry continued. "I want you to know that you are the most precious thing I have ever brought into this world. Your father and I loved you from the moment we knew of your existence, and every decision we made was with your safety and happiness in mind."

As Harry read on, the letter revealed the depth of Lily's foresight and her hopes for him. "I have always believed that you were destined for greatness, Harry. Not the sort written about in books or sung in ballads, but a greatness born of kindness, courage, and a heart that sees beyond the superficial divides of our world.

PS: I hope your Godfather doesn't lead you astray."

Nigel's voice, typically marked by its levity, took on a somber tone. "Your mother, it seems, saw the world not just as it was, but as it could be. A rare gift, indeed."

Harry felt a swell of pride mixed with a profound sense of loss. "In these pages, you will find my hopes for you, my advice, and perhaps most importantly, my love. Love that does not wane with distance or time."

The letter delved into practical advice, Lily imparting wisdom about the wizarding world. "Trust in your abilities, Harry, but remember, true strength lies not in power, but in the choices you make. Be wary of those who seek to use you for their gain. Surround yourself with friends who value you for who you are, not what you represent."

Nigel chimed in, "Sound advice, Master Harry. The company one keeps often charts the course of one's journey."

Lily's letter also touched on the unique challenges Harry would face.

"Being different can be a heavy burden, but it can also be a source of immense strength. Embrace who you are, Harry. You are a part of two worlds, and both will shape you in ways you cannot yet understand."

The letter ended with a heartfelt message. "I wish more than anything that I could be there to see you grow, to guide you through life's complexities. But know this, Harry, my love for you transcends the boundaries of our mortal world. It is with you always, in every laugh, every tear, and every triumph."

As Harry finished reading, the room was silent, save for the soft ticking of the clock on the mantle. The weight of his mother's words settled around him like a warm blanket, offering comfort amidst the sorrow.

Nigel offered a final piece of counsel. "Your mother's legacy, Master Harry, is not just in her words, but in you. Carry it with grace and the strength she knew you possessed."

Harry nodded, feeling a renewed sense of purpose. He looked at Aunt Petunia, who was still processing her own letter, and felt a bridge forming between them, however fragile. They were, after all, linked by Lily's love, a bond that, despite everything, remained unbroken.

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Chapter 24: Virtual Potion

Crafting Room

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With the evening drawing in, Harry knew the time had come to focus on the tasks ahead. The inheritance, the mysterious adversary, and his burgeoning place in the wizarding world all beckoned. Yet, amidst these considerations, he now carried the warmth of his mother's words, a guiding light in the uncertain path he was about to tread.

"Let's prepare for tomorrow, Nigel," Harry said resolutely, "There's much to be done, and I have a feeling we're just at the beginning of this journey."

Nigel, back to his usual self, responded with a hint of his characteristic dry humor. "Indeed, Master Harry. The road ahead is long, but fear not. We shall navigate it with the wit and wisdom befitting a wizard of your potential. And perhaps a bit of mischief for good measure."

Harry couldn't help but smile, the weight of the day's revelations lightened by Nigel's words. He was ready for whatever lay ahead, armed with his mother's love, Nigel's guidance, and a newfound sense of identity.

The next day, Harry awoke early, the events of the previous day still

fresh in his mind. He quietly made his way downstairs to prepare breakfast before Aunt Petunia stirred. While he cooked, his thoughts were focused on the tasks ahead. Harry was determined to complete several quests related to the first-year curriculum of Hogwarts before his acceptance letter arrived. After that, he planned to buy his wand and begin practicing officially.

As he flipped the last of the pancakes, Harry turned his attention to potion crafting, a skill he was eager to develop. "Nigel," he began, "What is this Technology System Virtual Potion Crafting Room I unlocked earlier?"

Nigel's voice, clear and distinct in Harry's mind, responded, "Ah, the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, a marvel of the Technology System. It's a simulated environment where you can practice potion-making without the risk of blowing up your aunt's kitchen."

Harry, intrigued, asked for more details. "How does it work?"

Nigel elaborated, "Imagine a virtual space where you can experiment with various potion ingredients and brewing techniques. The room simulates real-world conditions, providing a safe and controlled environment for learning and experimentation."

"Does it feel real?" Harry asked, curious about the experience.

"It's quite lifelike, Master Harry. You'll see, smell, and even feel the ingredients and potions as if they were physically present. It's an excellent way to hone your skills without the constraints of the physical world."

Harry's excitement grew. "And the potions I make there, are they just virtual, or can I use them somehow?"

Nigel replied, "The potions are simulations, but the knowledge and experience you gain are very real. You'll understand the properties of

ingredients, the nuances of brewing, and the effects of various potions.

It's an invaluable tool for a budding potioneer."

Harry nodded, absorbing this information. "So, I can practice as much as I want without worrying about running out of ingredients or making a mess?"

"Exactly," Nigel confirmed. "The room provides an endless supply of virtual ingredients and equipment. You can brew to your heart's content."

Nigel then added, "There is an Advanced Feature that you can use in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, Master Harry. It's called Mastery-Based Potion Creation, and it's quite the ingenious addition to your magical repertoire."

Harry, intrigued, prompted Nigel for more details. "Mastery-Based Potion Creation? What's that about?"

Nigel began to explain. "Well, Master Harry, as you might surmise from the name, this feature becomes active once you've demonstrated a high level of proficiency in potion-making. It's like a graduation from virtual brewing to actual potion creation."

Harry was curious about the specifics. "How does it work exactly?"

Nigel then explained, "The Mastery-Based Potion Creation feature within the Virtual Potion Crafting Room is a bit like having your own personal potion master at your disposal. It's designed to track your progress as you learn and practice various potion recipes in the virtual environment.

Think of it as a virtual potion apprenticeship, if you will."

Harry's interest was piqued as he listened to Nigel's description. "So how does it assess my proficiency in potion-making?"

"Well, the system has an algorithm that continuously evaluates your performance," Nigel began. "Every time you brew a potion in the virtual room, it analyzes your technique, the precision of your ingredient

measurements, the timing of each step, and the overall quality of the final product. It's rather like having an invisible potions professor overseeing your work."

Harry was fascinated. "And once I reach a certain level of mastery, what happens then?"

Nigel's voice carried a hint of pride. "Once you've demonstrated a high level of skill - specifically, when your mastery level for a particular potion recipe surpasses 80% - the room unlocks its advanced feature. This allows you to create real potions using the knowledge and techniques you've honed virtually."

"But how can a virtual room create real potions?" Harry asked, his curiosity mounting.

"Ahh, that's where the magic truly happens," Nigel said, his tone imbued with a sense of wonder. "You see, once you've provided the room with the necessary real-world ingredients for a potion you've mastered virtually, the system takes over. It replicates your virtual brewing process in the physical world, using the ingredients you've supplied. The result is a potion crafted with the same level of care and precision as your virtual attempts."

Harry marveled at the concept. "So, I can practice a potion in the virtual room, and once I'm good enough, the room can actually make the potion for me in the real world?"

"Exactly, Master Harry," Nigel confirmed. "It's a seamless transition from virtual practice to tangible results. The system ensures that the quality of the potion is consistent with your virtual brewing abilities. You could say it's a bit like having your cake and eating it too - only in this case, it's potions, not cake."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's analogy. "That's incredible. It means I can

perfect my skills without wasting resources or dealing with the consequences of a botched potion."

"Indeed," Nigel replied. "And it's not just about saving resources or avoiding mishaps. This feature allows you to experiment and innovate. You can try different variations of a potion in the virtual room, fine-tune the recipe, and then produce it in reality once you're satisfied with the outcome."

Harry nodded, absorbing the information. "This will be a game-changer for my potion-making. I can't wait to start using it."

"As always, Master Harry, I am here to guide and assist you in your magical endeavors," Nigel said. "Whether it's mastering the art of potion-making or navigating the complexities of the wizarding world, you can count on my support. And, of course, a healthy dose of sarcasm and dry humor to keep things interesting."

Harry smiled, grateful for Nigel's presence in his life. The AI's wit, intelligence, and guidance had become an integral part of his journey, offering not just practical assistance but also a sense of companionship. With a renewed sense of excitement and determination, Harry finished setting breakfast and went to wake up his Aunt. Petunia, still sullen from yesterday's revelations, moved like a specter through the house. The realization that Lily had still cared for her, wanted to reconnect, and never thought her inferior had carved a deep scar in her heart. For years, she had harbored the belief that Lily had despised her. Now, reflecting on how she had treated Harry, a wave of regret washed over her. She wanted to cry, to release the pent-up emotions, but the sight of Harry's caring and sweet demeanor held her back. In her heart, she knew there was still time for redemption.

As they sat down for breakfast, an unusual silence hung in the air, broken

only by the clinking of cutlery and the occasional sipping of tea. The atmosphere was markedly different from the usual tense and silent mornings. Petunia, lost in her thoughts, barely touched her food, while Harry ate quietly, respecting her need for space. Petunia, her gaze lingering on Harry, finally broke the silence. "Harry, what are your plans for the day?" she asked, her voice softer than usual.

Harry, surprised by her interest, replied, "I thought I'd spend some time studying, Aunt Petunia. I have a lot to learn about potions."

Petunia nodded, a faint glimmer of curiosity in her eyes. "Potions? That's part of your... magic school?"

"Yes, it's a crucial subject," Harry answered, keeping his tone gentle. "I want to learn as much as I can."

"That sounds... complicated," Petunia said, her voice laced with a mix of bewilderment and intrigue.

"It is, but I'm getting the hang of it," Harry assured her, sensing her attempt to understand his world.

After breakfast, as Harry was about to clear the table and do the dishes, Petunia, to his absolute shock, said, "Go on, Harry. I will finish up here."

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Chapter 25: Cure for Boils

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After breakfast, as Harry was about to clear the table and do the dishes,

Petunia, to his absolute shock, said, "Go on, Harry. I will finish up here."

Harry stood frozen for a moment, unable to believe what he had just

heard. A small, grateful smile spread across his face. Nodding, he replied,

"Thank you, Aunt Petunia," and headed to his room, leaving a surprised

yet contemplative Petunia in the kitchen.

In his room, Harry opened the library in his mind, a vast digital

repository of knowledge. He located the first-year Potion book and began

to read it from cover to cover.

Harry read the first sentence of the potion book with intense focus, his

mind absorbing every word, every nuance. The book, titled "Magical

Drafts and Potions" by Arsenius Jigger, was a comprehensive guide for

beginners in potion-making, detailing the basic principles and methods of

this intricate and often perilous art.

"Let's see here... 'The art of potion-making is an exact science, demanding

precision and patience,'" Harry read aloud, his voice a mix of enthusiasm

and concentration. The book went on to describe the importance of

understanding the magical properties of each ingredient, the precision

required in measuring and combining them, and the meticulous control

needed over the brewing process.

"Precision and patience, huh?" Harry mused. "Sounds more like a recipe for disaster in my hands."

Nigel chimed in, "Ah, but remember, Master Harry, disasters can often lead to discoveries. Though, in the realm of potion-making, I would advise against too many 'discoveries' of the explosive kind."

Harry chuckled at his comment, as he continued reading, delving into the first chapter, which covered the basic equipment needed for potion-making. Cauldrons, phials, stirrers, and measuring scales were all discussed in great detail, each item accompanied by a note on its importance and proper use.

As Harry read about the different types of cauldrons - copper, brass, pewter, and silver - and their respective effects on potion efficacy, Nigel's voice offered a nugget of information. "Did you know, Master Harry, that silver cauldrons, while the most expensive, provide the most stable brewing environment? A bit of wizarding trivia for your collection."

"I'll keep that in mind, Nigel," Harry replied, mentally noting down the tip. He then turned the page to a section detailing various potion ingredients - from the common, like nettles and daisies, to the rare and exotic, like unicorn hair and phoenix feathers.

Each ingredient was described with its magical properties, origins, and typical uses in potions. Harry was fascinated by the wealth of knowledge, his mind eagerly absorbing the information.

"Nigel, how do you suppose I'll remember all this?" Harry asked, feeling slightly overwhelmed by the sheer volume of details.

Nigel's response was reassuring. "Fear not, Master Harry. The Technology System is designed to aid in information retention and recall. Besides, with practical application, these details will soon become second nature

to you."

Harry nodded, comforted by Nigel's words. He continued reading, now moving on to the chapter about basic potion recipes. The first recipe was for a simple Cure for Boils, a beginner's potion designed to teach fundamental brewing techniques.

As Harry read through the steps, Nigel interjected with a suggestion.

"Why not try brewing this potion in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room? It would be an excellent way to put theory into practice."

"That's a great idea, Nigel," Harry said, excited at the prospect of virtually brewing his first potion. "Let's do that."

Closing the book, Harry focused his mind, calling up the Virtual Potion Crafting Room. In an instant, he found himself standing in a well-equipped potion laboratory, complete with cauldrons, shelves lined with ingredients, and a workbench. The room, though virtual, felt incredibly real, every detail meticulously rendered.

Harry approached the workbench, where a cauldron was already set up over a magical flame. He then selected the ingredients for the Cure for Boils potion from the virtual shelves, each item appearing in his hand as he thought of it.

As Harry willed it, the ingredients for the potion levitated in the air around him, creating a magical carousel of herbs and liquids. Captivated by this dance of components, he had a sudden thought. "Nigel, could you show each ingredient's information on a virtual screen beside them?"

Nigel, always ready to assist, responded promptly. "Certainly, Master Harry. A novel approach to learning, I must say." As he spoke, translucent screens appeared beside each floating item, displaying detailed descriptions.

Harry walked from ingredient to ingredient, reading each screen. The

first was Nettle Leaves. The screen detailed their use in healing potions due to their anti-inflammatory properties. Next was Snake Fangs, ground into a fine powder. Their role was more complex, acting as a catalyst to enhance the potency of the other ingredients.

"Snake fangs, huh? Sounds like something out of a horror story," Harry remarked, half-jokingly.

Nigel's response came with a hint of amusement. "Perhaps, but in the potion master's hands, they're more likely to be part of a healing tale than a horror one. Pardon the pun, Master Harry."

Harry couldn't help but smile at Nigel's comment, glad the AI's ability to infuse humor into the learning process.

Moving on, Harry examined the Porcupine Quills. The description noted their use in potions to add viscosity and stability. Then came the Horned Slugs, which, when boiled, released a mucus that acted as a binding agent, ensuring the potion's ingredients fused properly.

He paused at the next item, a jar labeled "Flobberworm Mucus." The screen explained it was a common thickening agent, essential for ensuring the potion had the correct consistency. The final ingredient was a vial of distilled water, the universal solvent in potion-making, crucial for dissolving and combining all the components.

Harry stepped back, contemplating the floating array of ingredients. His mind worked furiously, trying to understand the underlying science of potion-making. "Nigel, there's a pattern here, isn't there? Each ingredient plays a specific role, like in a chemical reaction."

Nigel's response came with a hint of intrigue. "Indeed, Master Harry. Potion-making is akin to chemistry, albeit with a magical twist. The ingredients interact at a fundamental level, altering their properties and combining to form something entirely new."

Harry's gaze returned to the ingredients. "So, it's about balance and reaction. Getting the right ingredients in the correct proportions and order."

"Exactly," Nigel affirmed. "The art of potion-making is about understanding these interactions and manipulating them to achieve the desired effect. Your task is to maintain control over the process, ensuring each reaction occurs as intended."

Harry nodded, deep in thought. "So, when I brew this Cure for Boils, I need to be mindful of how each ingredient contributes to the potion. It's more than just following a recipe; it's about understanding the 'why' behind each step."

"Astute observation, Master Harry," Nigel commented. "You must consider not only what you're adding but also why you're adding it and how it will interact with the other components."

-Picture of Virtual Potion Crafting Room (Check Comments)

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Chapter 26: Virtual but Painful

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Harry focused on the first step of the recipe, adding the nettle leaves to the cauldron. As he did so, the virtual fire beneath the cauldron flickered, heating the leaves and releasing their essence into the water.

He then carefully added the ground snake fangs, watching as they dissolved, creating a reaction that turned the mixture a light green hue. The precision of his movements was crucial; too much or too little of any ingredient could skew the entire potion.

Harry suddenly stopped in the middle of his potion-making, lost in thought. The cauldron in front of him started to react unpredictably, its contents bubbling more vigorously. "Master Harry..." Nigel called out, trying to get his attention, but Harry was deep in contemplation.

"Master Harry, the potion!" Nigel's voice grew more urgent. Harry snapped out of his reverie, but it was already too late. The cauldron began to shake violently. "Take cover, Master Harry," Nigel warned.

"Why, isn't this virtual?" Harry questioned, confused about the need for caution in a simulated environment.

In the next second, he understood all too well. As the cauldron exploded, Harry was thrown back, feeling an intense sensation of burning on his skin and a sharp pain in his stomach. "Nigel? What the hell?" he exclaimed, both startled and in pain.

"Master Harry, this room emulates all feelings to make the experience as realistic as possible. In some potions, you need to feel the heat to

determine the next step, so yes, pain is quite real too," Nigel explained, his tone a mix of concern and a matter-of-factness.

Harry grunted as he walked back to the center of the room, where a new cauldron had magically appeared, ready for another attempt. "Why did you freeze?" Nigel asked, his voice tinged with curiosity.

Harry smiled, still rubbing his sore abdomen. "I was wondering about the snake fangs. Why are they ground and not cut? Or why not grated? The recipe specifies ground, so I can't just throw them in whole, but what about other possibilities? Is it feasible to experiment with their form?"

Nigel's response carried a hint of pride. "This is the first step of discovery, Master Harry. Asking questions. The form of an ingredient can indeed influence a potion's properties. Grinding increases the surface area, allowing for a more rapid and complete reaction."

Harry, his curiosity piqued, prepared for another attempt at the potion. This time, he approached the process with a newfound appreciation for the importance of each step and the potential impact of even the smallest variations.

As he carefully added the ground snake fangs to the cauldron, ensuring they were evenly distributed, Nigel offered more insights. "Potion-making is not just a science; it's an art. The precision of your technique, your understanding of each ingredient's role, and even your intuition all play a part in the final outcome."

Harry nodded, focused on the task at hand. He followed the recipe meticulously, adding each ingredient at the precise moment and in the exact quantity required. The potion gradually changed color, first to a light green, then to a deeper emerald hue.

"Notice the change in color, Master Harry. It's a good sign. It means the ingredients are reacting as they should," Nigel observed, his voice calm

and encouraging.

Harry then added the porcupine quills, stirring the potion slowly to ensure they were fully dissolved. He watched with satisfaction as the mixture began to thicken, turning into a consistent, smooth texture.

"The key is in the stirring, Master Harry. Not too fast, not too slow. Just like life, it's all about finding the right balance," Nigel quipped, his tone lightening the seriousness of the moment.

As the potion neared completion, Harry's confidence grew. He had learned from his previous mistake and was now more aware of the subtle cues indicating the potion's progress.

"Almost there, Master Harry. Just a few more stirs and you should be done," Nigel guided, his voice a steady presence in Harry's mind.

Harry took a deep breath, feeling a sense of accomplishment as he completed the final steps of the recipe. The potion in the cauldron now had a rich, velvety texture, and its aroma was a complex blend of the various ingredients he had used.

"There you have it, Master Harry. Your first successfully brewed potion in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room. Well done," Nigel praised, his tone genuine and warm.

Harry, feeling content but driven to improve, requested Nigel to show his mastery level of the potion. A virtual circle appeared in his vision, filling up with a blue bar that climbed steadily before halting at 56%. "Not bad for a first attempt," Nigel commented, his tone devoid of the usual sarcasm, but Harry shook his head in mild disagreement.

"This is the most basic potion, Nigel, using only four ingredients. There's nothing particularly praiseworthy about it, especially since I followed the instructions exactly," Harry reasoned, his voice reflecting a mix of determination and humility. "To increase my mastery to 80%, I need to

not only perfect this recipe but also enhance it, right?"

"Indeed, Master Harry," Nigel replied, the corners of his virtual mouth hinting at a smirk. "Perfection is a journey, not a destination. And in your case, the journey involves bubbling cauldrons and the ever-looming threat of an explosive disaster. Quite thrilling, if you ask me."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's dramatic depiction. He then set about cleaning up the virtual potion lab, his mind already racing with ideas on how to improve the potion. As he worked, Nigel's voice continued to offer insights and occasional quips, keeping the atmosphere light yet focused.

"Master Harry, have you considered the impact of varying the boiling time for the snake fangs? Or perhaps experimenting with the order in which you add the ingredients?" Nigel suggested, his tone indicating genuine curiosity.

"That's an interesting thought," Harry mused, pondering the possibilities. "The boiling time could affect the potency of the fangs, and changing the order might alter the potion's properties in unexpected ways."

"Exactly, Master Harry," Nigel affirmed. "Potion-making is as much about experimentation as it is about following recipes. It's an art form where creativity can lead to remarkable discoveries."

Harry nodded, feeling a surge of excitement at the prospect of exploring the uncharted territory of potion innovation. He exited the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, his mind buzzing with ideas.

Once back in his room, Harry decided to spend some time studying the history of magic, particularly the origins of potion-making. He opened his digital library, scrolling through the virtual pages of an old tome titled "The Alchemical Arts: A Historical Perspective."

As he read, Nigel's voice provided commentary, adding context and occasional humorous observations. "Did you know, Master Harry, that

some of the earliest potions were brewed in cauldrons so large they could fit a grown man? Makes your standard-sized cauldron look rather quaint, doesn't it?"

Harry laughed, picturing the absurdity of such gigantic cauldrons. "I suppose potion-making has come a long way since then."

"Indeed, it has," Nigel replied. "From alchemists' secretive concoctions to the refined art it is today, potions have always been a blend of science, magic, and a dash of mystery. And let's not forget the occasional explosion for good measure."

"It's fascinating to see how potions have evolved over the centuries," Harry remarked, his eyes scanning the pages of the digital book. "The principles remain the same, but the techniques and applications have become so much more sophisticated."

"Ah, the relentless march of progress," Nigel quipped. "Today's potion masters stand on the shoulders of their predecessors, each generation adding their own discoveries and innovations to the cauldron of knowledge. Quite poetic, don't you think?"

Harry smiled, appreciating Nigel's way of making even the most mundane topics seem intriguing. "It is poetic, Nigel. And it's amazing to be a part of this legacy, learning and hopefully contributing to it one day."

"As you will, Master Harry," Nigel said, his voice carrying a hint of pride.

"With your curiosity and determination, I have no doubt you'll leave your mark on the world of potion-making. And who knows, perhaps one day, future students will be reading about your groundbreaking concoctions."

The idea of being remembered for his contributions to the magical world filled Harry with a sense of purpose and excitement. He closed the digital book, feeling a sense of accomplishment after a day of productive study and experimentation.

"Thank you for your guidance today, Nigel," Harry said, a note of gratitude in his voice. "I couldn't have done it without you."

Nigel's response was a rare moment of sincerity, devoid of his usual sarcasm. "It's been my pleasure, Master Harry. Assisting you on this journey is as rewarding for me as it is for you. And remember, our adventures have only just begun."

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Chapter 27: Pizzazz

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Suddenly, Harry jumped from his bed, a sudden realization dawning upon him. "Uh oh!" he exclaimed, a note of panic in his voice. "What time is it, Nigel?"

The AI answered calmly, "A little over 17, Master Harry."

Harry dashed downstairs, his mind racing. "I forgot to cook dinner," he muttered, worried about his aunt's reaction. But as he arrived in the kitchen, he was greeted by an unexpected scene. Petunia was humming to herself, a melody Harry faintly recognized from his early childhood. She was cooking, something that had become a rarity since Harry had taken over the kitchen duties as part of his chores.

Peering between Petunia's arms, Harry saw she was preparing his favorite dish - Roast Beef. The aroma was tantalizing, stirring memories of simpler times. He approached the kitchen, his surprise evident on his face.

Petunia turned and smiled at him. "Done studying? I cooked your favorite," she said, her voice carrying a warmth Harry hadn't heard in years.

Harry was taken aback. "How did you know?" he asked, his voice a mix of surprise and curiosity.

Petunia giggled, a sound so rare and unexpected that it made Harry stop in his tracks. "Of course I know, silly. I am your Aunt," she said, her tone light and playful, a stark contrast to her usual stern demeanor.

Harry was speechless. This was a side of Petunia he hadn't seen since ever. The harshness that had defined their relationship seemed to have softened, if only for a moment. Without saying another word, he walked up to her and hugged her. It was a spontaneous gesture, one that spoke volumes about the changes unfolding within their household.

Petunia, taken aback by the hug, stiffened for a moment before relaxing into the embrace. It was a small but significant moment of connection, bridging years of misunderstanding and resentment.

As they sat down to eat, the atmosphere was different from the usual

tense and silent dinners. Petunia seemed more relaxed, occasionally glancing at Harry with a softness in her eyes that he hadn't seen before. Harry savored each bite of the roast beef, a dish that was not just delicious but also steeped in nostalgia. It had been ages since Petunia last cooked for him, and the effort she put into preparing his favorite meal did not go unnoticed. The meat was tender, infused with a blend of herbs and spices that created a symphony of flavors in his mouth. It was, without a doubt, a pleasant surprise.

"Amazing," Harry remarked, his tone genuine. He looked across the table at Petunia, whose face lit up at the compliment. There was a softness in her eyes, a glimmer of the aunt he vaguely remembered from his very early years.

Petunia, visibly pleased with Harry's reaction, leaned forward slightly.

"Well, I have a surprise for you, but first finish your meal," she said, a hint of mystery in her voice.

Harry's curiosity piqued, but he obliged, enjoying the meal with a gusto he hadn't felt in a long time. This was more than just a well-cooked dish; it was a sign of changing times within the Dursley household, no Evans household, a possible thaw in the frosty relationship that had persisted for so long.

As he took the last bite, his mind wandered to what the surprise could be. Petunia hadn't been one for surprises, at least not pleasant ones, in all the years he had lived with the Dursleys.

Finally, with the meal concluded, Petunia stood up and disappeared into the kitchen. She returned moments later with a dessert plate in her hands. On the plate was a treacle tart, its golden syrup glazing shining under the dining room light, the crust perfectly baked to a delicate crisp. Harry's eyes widened in disbelief. Treacle tart was his absolute favorite, a

rare treat that he had long associated with happier times.

"This is for you," Petunia said, setting the plate down in front of Harry.

Her voice carried a tenderness that Harry had never heard before, and it warmed his heart. He couldn't remember the last time she had made him a treacle tart. In fact, he couldn't recall her ever making it for him.

Harry looked at the treacle tart, then at Petunia, a mix of emotions swirling inside him. "Thank you, Aunt Petunia," he said, his voice filled with a gratitude that was as much for the gesture as it was for the dessert.

As he took a bite of the tart, the sweet, rich flavor of the treacle mixed with the buttery crust exploded in his mouth. It was a perfect balance of sweetness and texture, each bite bringing a wave of comfort and contentment. Harry closed his eyes, savoring the moment, the dessert bringing back memories of his mother, whom he never knew but always felt connected to through such simple joys.

Petunia watched Harry with an expression that was difficult to read. It was as if she was seeing him for the first time, not as the burden she had long considered him to be, but as a person, her nephew, Lily's son.

The room was quiet, save for the sound of Harry enjoying his dessert.

Nigel, who had been a silent observer throughout the meal, finally spoke up. "It seems, Master Harry, that the winds of change are blowing through the Evans household. And they bring with them the sweet aroma of treacle tart."

Harry smiled, acknowledging Nigel's observation. "It's more than just a dessert, Nigel," he said, a reflective tone in his voice. "It's a symbol of... I don't know, hope, maybe? A sign that things can get better."

"Indeed, Master Harry," Nigel replied. "Life, much like potion-making, is full of unexpected reactions. Sometimes, all it takes is a simple

ingredient, like a well-cooked meal or a treacle tart, to catalyze a change."

As Harry finished the last morsel of the tart, he felt a sense of peace, a feeling that had been foreign in the Evans household. The evening had unfolded in a way he never could have anticipated, and for the first time in a long while, he felt a glimmer of optimism about his future at Privet Drive.

He helped Petunia clear the table, their movements synchronized in an unspoken dance of cooperation. The usual distance between them had lessened, even if just for the evening, and Harry cherished this newfound closeness.

Returning to his room after dinner, Harry once again accessed the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, ready to experiment with the Cure for Boils potion. His belly full and his heart content from the evening's unexpected turn of events, he felt a renewed vigor to push the boundaries of his potion-making skills.

The virtual room materialized around him, its familiar setup welcoming him back. The shelves were lined with all manner of ingredients, and the cauldron sat waiting for him, ready for another round of brewing. Harry approached the cauldron with a sense of purpose, his mind already formulating plans for enhancing the potion.

"Now, Master Harry, let's see if we can't add a bit of pizzazz to this rather mundane concoction," Nigel said, his voice echoing in Harry's mind.

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Chapter 28: Over Thousands of

Experiments

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Harry, standing in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, called in his assistant in his mind, Nigel, with a look of determination. "Nigel, please create a list of all materials. Then calculate how many experiments I have to conduct for each change, including manner of adding materials, preparations of materials, namely grinding, grating, cutting, throwing them whole, dusting, boiling time, simmering time, heat, stirring, for example clockwise, opposite, mixture, chaotic. There are four ingredients."

Nigel responded promptly, "Of course, Master Harry. Let's break it down systematically. For your Cure for Boils potion, you have four key ingredients: Nettle Leaves, Snake Fangs, Porcupine Quills, and Horned Slugs. Each element offers a unique variable to your experiment. Shall we begin with the Nettle Leaves?"

"Start with the grinding," Harry replied, his mind focused on the task at hand.

"For the Nettle Leaves, we have five preparation methods: fine, medium, and coarse grinding, grating, cutting, using them whole, and dusting.

That will give you five separate experiments. Next, for boiling, try durations of 5, 10, and 15 minutes. As for simmering, experiment with low, medium, and high heat. Another six trials for you, Master Harry.

Now, regarding the Snake Fangs..."

Harry nodded, jotting down notes. "And stirring?"

"A critical aspect indeed," Nigel continued. "For stirring, let's consider four methods: clockwise, counterclockwise, a mix of both, and a rather chaotic approach. Four trials for each ingredient, giving us sixteen in total."

Harry calculated the numbers. "So, for each ingredient, we have 5 (preparations)  $\times$  3 (boiling times)  $\times$  3 (simmering times and heats)  $\times$  4 (stirring methods), which equals 180 experiments per ingredient. With four ingredients, that's 720 experiments. What about adding the ingredients in different orders?"

"Ah, sequencing - a subtle but impactful variable. With four ingredients, you have 24 possible permutations. This will significantly affect the potion's outcome," Nigel explained.

"Adding those together," Harry concluded, "we have a grand total of 744 experiments to conduct. This is going to be an extensive project, Nigel."

Nigel nodded in agreement, "Indeed, Master Harry. But with meticulous planning and execution, I am certain we will find the optimal potion composition."

Harry pondered the daunting task ahead, realizing the immense scope of his experiment. "There will be more variables as we go on. That will

increase numbers exponentially. There will be more than 1000 variations," he mused, surveying the expanse of the Virtual Potion Crafting Room. His eyes scanned the empty space, envisioning the complexity of the undertaking.

Nigel, in his mind, waited patiently, sensing Harry's gears turning. "Nigel, how many potions can I work on at the same time?" Harry finally asked, looking for efficiency in his approach.

Nigel, pleased with Harry's ambitious thought process, responded, "Depends on your mental capacity, Master Harry. The virtual environment can accommodate a significant number of concurrent experiments, limited only by your ability to manage them."

Harry hummed thoughtfully. "Create 100 cauldrons. Each cauldron should have a virtual screen for the variation I am testing. I should be able to see it with a look so I can do it without delay. Place cauldrons in a square so I can stay in the midst of them and can reach them quickly. Let's see if I can multitask."

Obediently, Nigel orchestrated the room's transformation. In moments, 100 cauldrons materialized, arranged in a perfect square formation around Harry. Each cauldron was accompanied by a virtual screen floating just above it, clearly displaying the specific variation being tested in that particular cauldron.

Harry, observing this impressive setup, smiled and rolled up his sleeves. "Let's begin," he declared with renewed vigor.

He started with the first cauldron, meticulously adding Nettle Leaves with the specified preparation. The virtual screen above glowed softly, indicating the precise parameters of the experiment - fine grinding, 5 minutes boiling, low heat simmering, and clockwise stirring. Harry's movements were methodical and precise, his focus unwavering.

Moving to the next cauldron, he adjusted the variables slightly - medium grinding this time, with a 10-minute boil. As he worked his way around the square, each cauldron presented a new combination of variables. The screens above provided a constant guide, ensuring no detail was missed. Nigel, observing Harry's progress, offered occasional guidance.

"Remember, Master Harry, consistency is key in potion-making. Even the slightest deviation can yield vastly different results."

Harry nodded, fully immersed in the task. He found a rhythm, seamlessly transitioning from one cauldron to the next, his movements becoming more fluid with each repetition. The room was a symphony of bubbling potions, each cauldron a unique instrument contributing to the orchestral experiment.

But not all experiments were successful. Some cauldrons exploded, causing a chain reaction that damaged those adjacent to them. Harry, undeterred by the setbacks and the stinging sensation from the virtual explosions, remained focused. "Show me the data for the exploding cauldron. Why did it fail?" he inquired, brushing off the remnants of the failed potion.

Nigel, ever the analytical assistant, replied, "Analyzing the data now, Master Harry. It appears the combination of a coarse grind, high heat, and chaotic stirring created an unstable reaction. The volatile nature of the Snake Fangs, when not properly integrated, can lead to such... explosive outcomes."

Harry, absorbing this information, nodded. "So, it's a matter of balance. Too much aggression in the process and it becomes uncontrollable."

"Quite so," Nigel agreed. "Potion-making is an art of precision. Like a tightrope walker, one must maintain balance, lest they fall into a rather unpleasant situation."

Harry moved to the next cauldron, adjusting his approach based on Nigel's feedback. He reduced the heat and opted for a more controlled stirring method. As he progressed, he continually checked the virtual screens, ensuring each variable was accurately applied.

As the hours passed, Harry's understanding of the interplay between ingredients, heat, and stirring deepened. He methodically documented each successful concoction and analyzed the failures to refine his technique further.

"Interesting," Harry mused after a particularly successful trial. "The same ingredients, yet such different outcomes based on how they're combined and manipulated."

"Indeed, Master Harry. The world of potion-making is full of surprises. One might say it's a cauldron of endless possibilities, some more explosive than others," Nigel quipped.

Harry couldn't help but smile at Nigel's comment. He continued, moving from one cauldron to the next, his movements now fluid and confident. After several more hours, Harry stood back, taking in the sight of the numerous cauldrons, some simmering gently, others bubbling vigorously. He had tested a multitude of variations, each teaching him something new about the delicate craft of potion-making.

"Nigel, compile the results. I want to see the patterns, the successes, and the failures. There's a lot to learn from today's work," Harry requested, his mind teeming with curiosity and ideas.

"Compiling data now, Master Harry. You have conducted an impressive number of experiments. Your dedication to understanding each nuance is commendable," Nigel responded, processing the vast amount of information.

The screens above each cauldron flickered, displaying a comprehensive

analysis of the day's trials. Harry walked around, studying the data, noting the successful combinations and the reasons behind the failures. "See here, Nigel," Harry pointed to a particular set of results. "When I simmered the Horned Slugs at a medium heat and stirred clockwise, the potion's stability increased significantly."

"An astute observation, Master Harry. It seems that Horned Slugs require a gentle touch. Too much heat and they become rather disagreeable," Nigel noted.

Harry's gaze then shifted to another screen. "And here, the Snake Fangs. When ground finely and added after the Nettle Leaves, their reactivity was much more manageable."

"Indeed, the order of addition can be as crucial as the preparation itself. Like a well-orchestrated symphony, each ingredient must enter at the right moment," Nigel added.

Picture of 100 cauldrons(Check comments)

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Chapter 29: Increasing Mastery

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Harry, deeply immersed in the intricate dance of potion-making within the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, momentarily halted his movements to consult with his unseen aide, Nigel. "Show me my progress in this potion, Nigel."

A glowing digital circle materialized, revealing a blue progress bar that steadily filled to 67% before stopping. A sigh escaped Harry's lips. "Not good enough. Despite my improvements, I'm still short of the 80% target."

Nigel, ever the voice of encouragement, resonated in Harry's mind, "Master Harry, achieving an 11% improvement in a single day is remarkable. Remember, even seasoned potion masters take years to refine their skills marginally. For your first day, this is a commendable achievement."

Reassured, Harry nodded. "You're right. Even though this is a basic potion, it's still a significant milestone." Nigel's voice warmed with pride, "Exactly! Persistence is key, and mastery will come with time."

With a revitalized determination, Harry continued, "There's more to explore with these four ingredients. Once I've mastered them, I might experiment with additional elements. But for now, it's time to rest."

As days transitioned into a week, the Virtual Potion Crafting Room took on a different vibe, echoing Harry's evolving expertise. He had been relentlessly refining the Cure for Boils potion, delving deep into the

unique properties of each ingredient. His mastery level now approached an impressive 75%, reflecting his dedicated pursuit of perfection.

Over the week, Harry had introduced subtle changes to his methodology.

He experimented with adding water at different temperatures, altering the pH balance, and even testing the effects of various stirring speeds.

Each tweak brought new insights, steadily enhancing the potion's efficacy.

The room, once a vast canvas of possibilities, had transformed into a familiar territory for Harry. He glided between cauldrons with a newfound confidence, each movement reflecting his growing mastery.

The virtual displays above the cauldrons were alive with complex potion formulas, each a unique variation on the Cure for Boils.

"Harry, your progress is truly impressive," noted Nigel, observing the transformation. "Your grasp of the potion's dynamics has deepened remarkably."

Wiping a bead of sweat from his brow, Harry responded, "It's a fascinating journey, Nigel. Every experiment uncovers something new. Understanding how the ingredients interact, the importance of heat adjustments, and the impact of stirring techniques - it's like solving a complex puzzle."

Nigel's voice was tinged with admiration, "Potion-making is indeed a nuanced art, and you, Master Harry, are quickly becoming a maestro."

With each experiment, Harry's sense of accomplishment grew. The daunting task of mastering potion-making had evolved into an engaging challenge. His comprehension of the magical properties of the ingredients, the subtleties of the brewing process, and the myriad combinations had expanded significantly.

"Show me the most successful formula to date," Harry requested, eager to

review his most effective concoction. The screen lit up, detailing the potion that had shown the highest stability and potency. Harry scrutinized the formula, noting down the precise ingredient ratios, exact boiling times, and the specific stirring patterns that had led to this breakthrough.

Nigel promptly opened a virtual screen, showcasing the most optimal version of the potion that Harry had achieved thus far. The screen displayed a detailed breakdown of the ingredients and their precise measurements, along with the specific methods of preparation and the exact sequence of their addition.

"Here, Master Harry, is your best attempt so far," Nigel began. "You started with Nettle Leaves, ground to a medium fineness. Remember, the finer the grind, the quicker the release of properties, but too fine, and you risk overpowering the potion."

Harry nodded, recalling the process. "After grinding, I boiled them for exactly 12 minutes. It seems to be the sweet spot for extracting their essence without diminishing their potency."

"Indeed," Nigel confirmed. "Then came the Snake Fangs, finely ground, but added gradually, not all at once. A sprinkle here, a dash there - like a chef adding spices to a stew."

Harry chuckled, "I never thought potion-making would be akin to cooking."

Nigel continued, "The Porcupine Quills were next. You cut them into half-inch pieces, ensuring they dissolved evenly. Uniformity is key. Then, for the Horned Slugs, you chose to grate them. A rather... gooey affair, but effective in distributing their essence throughout the potion."

"And the stirring?" Harry asked, keen to understand every nuance.

"Ah, stirring," Nigel replied. "You opted for a rhythmic clockwise motion,

steady and consistent. It's like conducting an orchestra - each movement precise and deliberate."

Harry observed the screen, where a diagram showed the stirring pattern in a loop. "And the heat?"

"You maintained a medium simmer after the initial boil. Too hot, and you risk scorching the ingredients. Too cool, and you won't activate their magical properties. It's all about balance, Master Harry."

Nigel's explanation was clear and concise, making complex concepts seem almost simple. "So, what's the final step?"

"The final step," Nigel said, "is the sequencing. You added the Nettle Leaves first, followed by the Snake Fangs, then the Porcupine Quills, and finally, the Horned Slugs. Each at precise intervals. Timing, as in many things, is everything."

Harry took a moment to absorb all the information. The virtual screen provided a visual representation of each step, making it easier to comprehend the intricate process. "And the total brewing time?"

"From start to finish, your potion brewed for 35 minutes," Nigel informed. "Not too long to lose efficacy, and not too short to be underdeveloped."

Harry, satisfied with Nigel's breakdown, looked around the room filled with cauldrons, each representing a step in his journey towards mastering this potion. "I think I'm ready to try again, Nigel. With these adjustments, I'm aiming for that 80% mastery."

"Then let's proceed, Master Harry," Nigel encouraged. "Remember, each attempt is a step closer to perfection. The path of a potion master is paved with trials and errors, and the occasional explosive mishap."

Harry stood in the middle of the virtual room, and with a confident wave of his hand, a book materialized into his grasp. His mastery over the

Virtual Potion Crafting Room had reached a level where mere thoughts could manipulate its environment, a feat that even Nigel found impressive. As he opened the potion book, Harry's eyes were drawn to the ingredients list for the Cure for Boils potion. He needed to add something to enhance the formula, but what exactly?

As Harry pondered, he focused on the properties of the four ingredients he had used in the potion. In response, small screens appeared in the air, displaying detailed information about each one.

The first screen illuminated the properties of Nettle Leaves. "Nettle Leaves, known for their anti-inflammatory qualities. They must be handled carefully to maintain their potency," Harry mused aloud. The screen displayed various methods of preparation, emphasizing the importance of the grinding process to maximize their effectiveness.

Next, he turned his attention to the Snake Fangs. "Snake Fangs, a catalyst in many potions. They can be quite volatile if not used correctly," Harry noted. The screen showed that the fangs needed to be ground to a fine powder to be fully effective, cautioning against adding them too hastily into the mix.

Moving on to Porcupine Quills, Harry read, "Used for adding viscosity and stability. Their size and preparation method can significantly alter the potion's consistency." The screen showed diagrams of the quills being cut into different lengths, illustrating how each variation affected the potion.

Finally, Harry considered the Horned Slugs. "These are tricky," he commented. "They need to be boiled to release their binding properties, but too much heat can ruin them." The screen detailed the precise boiling times and temperatures required to optimally utilize the slugs in the potion.

He then looked at other ingredients used most commonly in other potions. As Harry recited each name, a virtual screen appeared for each, detailing their properties and uses.

"Infusion of Wormwood," Harry began, observing the screen that shimmered into existence. Known for its use in sleeping draughts, Wormwood was a staple in many dark potions. Its bitter taste and sedative properties were crucial for balancing more volatile ingredients. Next was "Flobberworm Mucus." The screen showed its thick consistency, ideal for thickening potions without altering their magical properties. It was a common ingredient in healing potions due to its neutral nature.

"Aconite, also known as Wolfsbane," Harry read aloud. The screen displayed warnings about its toxicity alongside its use in transformation potions. A powerful ingredient, but one that required a careful hand.

Harry then mentioned "Asphodel." The screen depicted its roots, highlighting their use in potions that induced a peaceful sleep or, in stronger doses, could be deadly. Its duality as a healing and harmful agent fascinated Harry.

"Dittany," he continued. A favorite among healers, Dittany was renowned for its regenerative properties, particularly in wound-healing potions. The screen detailed its rarity and the delicacy required in its harvesting.

"Dragon blood," Harry said with a note of awe. The screen filled with various colors of dragon blood, each with unique properties. Known for its powerful enchanting and restorative abilities, it was a prized but perilous ingredient.

"Moly," Harry read next. The screen showed a herb with a black stem and white blossoms, known for its protective qualities against dark magic. Its rarity made it a valuable asset in defensive potions.

"Wiggentree bark," he continued, observing the screen that depicted the

tree renowned for its protective properties. The bark was used in potions to strengthen magical shields and barriers.

"Moondew," Harry noted. The screen illustrated the delicate harvesting process of this luminescent plant, used in potions that required purity and clarity.

"Salamander blood," he read. A potent ingredient known for its ability to amplify magical properties, salamander blood was often used in small quantities due to its strength.

"Sloth brain mucus," Harry said, grimacing slightly. The screen detailed its use in memory potions, albeit its unappetizing nature.

"Spine of Lionfish," he continued, examining the screen that showed the careful extraction process of the spines. A dangerous ingredient, it was used in potions requiring an element of risk.

"Fanged Geranium," Harry read. The screen depicted the plant, known for its biting flowers. Its essence was used in potions to add a bite of strength or aggression.

"Bones," he stated next. The screen showed various animal bones, each with distinct magical properties, used in potions that dealt with death or the afterlife.

"Flutterby Moth," Harry noted. The screen showed the delicate moth, whose dust was used in lightness and levitation potions.

"Bouncing Bulb," he continued. The screen highlighted its use in kinetic potions, where movement was a key factor.

"Foxglove," Harry read. The screen cautioned about its poisonous nature while detailing its use in heart-related potions.

With each ingredient, Harry carefully considered its properties and potential compatibility with his Cure for Boils potion. He felt that if he could find the right ingredient, it would provide the breakthrough he

needed to reach 80% mastery.

"Nigel, I think I need something that brings balance without overpowering the potion. What do you suggest?" Harry asked, contemplating the options.

Harry then added, "Flobberworm Mucus and Dittany sound good, and others are definitely out, but I don't know if I should go with two of them or one."

Nigel responded thoughtfully, "Master Harry, let's weigh the options. Flobberworm Mucus, as we know, is an excellent thickening agent, adding consistency without affecting the potion's potency. On the other hand, Dittany is revered for its healing properties, enhancing the overall efficacy of the potion."

Harry mulled over Nigel's analysis. "If I use both, the Flobberworm Mucus could stabilize the mixture, allowing the Dittany to work its healing magic more efficiently. But is there a risk of diluting the potion's effectiveness with too many ingredients?"

Nigel's response was measured. "It's a valid concern. However, the trick lies in the precise measurement. A delicate balance, if you will. Too much of either, and you risk overwhelming the primary effects of your Cure for Boils potion."

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Chapter 30: 524,880 Experiments

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Hello dear readers! I would like to inform you that, this is the last chapter about potion making for a while. It might a little long, but I wanted to give a glimpse of how Harry undertakes it, and in the future, you will only see the results or little of it. (I will still write. But not as detailed.) So, I hope you can bear with me. Thanks!

--

Harry sighed, the weight of the task ahead settling on his shoulders.

"Adding two new ingredients will increase the number of experiments to over two thousand. Considering the maturity of ingredients, even with just three categories - low, medium, and high - we're looking at a staggering 524,880 experiments. Thankfully, my understanding has deepened over the week, allowing me to eliminate most of these combinations without testing." He adjusted two virtual cauldrons, preparing to test Flobberworm Mucus and Dittany separately. His strategy was to modify the order of addition and preparation methods, systematically exploring each possibility.

As he began, Nigel chimed in, "Indeed, Master Harry, your progress is

akin to a prodigious leap in potion-making. Quite impressive, if I may say so."

Harry focused on the first new cauldron, carefully measuring and adding a precise amount of Flobberworm Mucus. "Let's start with a basic mixture and observe its consistency," he mused, noting the viscosity of the potion as it began to simmer.

"Consistency is key, but so is subtlety," Nigel observed, watching the potion's texture change. "A dash too much, and you could end up with a potion more suitable for caulking than curing."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's remark. He then turned to the second cauldron, adding Dittany with a measured hand. "Dittany's healing properties are well-documented, but I need to ensure it doesn't overpower the other ingredients."

"A delicate dance of elements, indeed," Nigel agreed. "Too strong a lead, and the dance is lost."

As Harry worked, he maintained a meticulous record of each trial, methodically altering the variables. He tested different boiling times for the Dittany, varying the stirring patterns, and adjusting the heat. Each experiment was a careful step towards understanding the intricate balance required.

"Let's not forget the sequencing," Harry said, preparing to alter the order in which he added the ingredients. "If I add the Dittany before the Snake Fangs, for instance, it might change the potion's reaction entirely."

"True," Nigel replied. "Sequencing can turn a potion from a masterpiece to a mishap in a mere moment."

After several hours of rigorous testing, Harry paused to review his findings. The screens above the cauldrons displayed detailed data from each experiment. He noted the combinations that yielded the most

promising results and those that led to less desirable outcomes.

"Time to combine the new ingredients with the original four," Harry declared, his confidence growing with each successful experiment.

As he proceeded, he experimented with adding the Flobberworm Mucus and Dittany at different stages of the brewing process. He observed how their introduction at various points affected the potion's color, consistency, and magical potency.

"Nigel, let's try adding the Dittany after the Nettle Leaves but before the Snake Fangs. And for the next one, we'll add the Flobberworm Mucus last," Harry suggested, eager to see the outcomes of these new combinations.

"A sound strategy," Nigel concurred. "Variety is the spice of potion-making, after all."

Experiment by experiment, Harry's understanding of the Cure for Boils potion deepened. He discovered that the Flobberworm Mucus, when added last, provided a stabilizing effect, smoothing out the potion's texture without diminishing its healing properties. The Dittany, meanwhile, enhanced the potion's efficacy when added right after the Nettle Leaves, complementing their anti-inflammatory qualities.

"Look at this, Nigel," Harry exclaimed, pointing at a particularly successful brew. "This combination has a remarkable balance. The potion is stable, potent, and has a pleasant consistency."

"Indeed, Master Harry, it appears you've hit upon a winning formula," Nigel remarked. "Your potion-making skills are advancing at an impressive rate."

Encouraged by his progress, Harry decided to challenge himself further.

"Let's factor in the maturity of the ingredients now. It's time to see how that affects the potion."

As Harry began this new phase of experimentation, he realized the sheer scale of the undertaking. Each ingredient's maturity level added another layer of complexity to the potion. He adjusted his approach, focusing on the most promising combinations and eliminating those that offered little potential.

Hours turned into days, and days into a week, as Harry continued his meticulous work in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room. With each experiment, he inched closer to mastering the Cure for Boils potion, his skills honing with every trial.

"Nigel, update me on my progress," Harry requested, taking a brief respite from his work.

The screen above displayed his current mastery level – an impressive 78%. "You're nearly there, Master Harry. A few more adjustments, and you'll surpass the 80% mark," Nigel encouraged.

Harry nodded, determination etched on his face. "Then let's continue. I'm close to unlocking the full potential of this potion."

As he resumed his work, Harry felt a sense of purpose and excitement.

The challenges of potion-making, once daunting, now invigorated him.

He was on the cusp of a breakthrough, one that would mark a significant milestone in his journey.

Finally, two weeks after he first began his relentless experiments, Harry achieved a breakthrough. The digital progress circle in front of him glowed a triumphant blue, indicating he had reached the 80% mastery level. "I did it! We did it, Nigel!" he exclaimed, his laughter filled with relief and triumph. "Show me the formula I used, please."

Nigel, ever the meticulous aide, promptly brought up the detailed formula on a virtual screen. "Certainly, Master Harry. Let's dissect your victorious concoction," he said, his voice tinged with pride.

"Firstly, you began with the Nettle Leaves," Nigel started. "You opted for a medium grind – striking a balance between their inherent properties and the overall potion composition."

Harry nodded, recalling the careful considerations for each step. "Then, I boiled them for exactly 12 minutes at a medium simmer," he added.

"Indeed," Nigel continued. "Precision in timing was crucial, allowing the Nettle Leaves to release their essence effectively without degradation."

"Next came the addition of Dittany," Harry said, eager to review each detail. "Added after the Nettle Leaves but before the Snake Fangs, its healing properties were enhanced, complementing the Leaves' effects."

"Correct," Nigel replied. "The Dittany's inclusion before the Snake Fangs was a strategic decision. It synergized well with the Leaves without being overshadowed by the Fangs' potency."

"Then, the Snake Fangs," Harry interjected, "finely ground to maximize their reactive potential, but added gradually."

"A sprinkle here, a dash there," Nigel said. "Ensuring they integrated seamlessly into the brew. Any haste might have led to volatility."

"The Porcupine Quills followed," Harry continued. "Cut into precise half-inch lengths for even dissolution, crucial for the potion's stability."

"Uniformity was key with the quills," Nigel agreed. "And then, the grating of Horned Slugs. Their mucus, when evenly distributed, significantly enhanced the potion's binding qualities."

"And the stirring," Harry added, "was rhythmic and clockwise, maintaining a consistent flow and energy throughout the potion."

"Like conducting an orchestra," Nigel quipped. "Each stir a note in your potion-making symphony. And you maintained a medium flame, keeping the brew active without overheating."

Harry paused, reflecting on the adjustments he had made. "And finally,

the Flobberworm Mucus was added last. It smoothed out the potion's texture without diminishing its healing properties."

"Indeed," Nigel concluded. "Each ingredient was meticulously chosen and added in a sequence that maximized their individual and collective effects, leading to your potion's success."

"A perfect finale to the brewing process," Nigel remarked. "The Mucus served as the binding agent, bringing all the elements together in harmony."

Harry studied the screen, where a diagram illustrated the entire brewing process in a detailed flowchart. "What about the maturity of the ingredients? How did that factor in?"

"A critical element," Nigel noted. "The maturity of the Nettle Leaves and Snake Fangs, in particular, played a significant role. Younger Leaves lent a fresher essence, while mature Fangs offered a more potent reaction."

Harry sighed, a sense of accomplishment washing over him. "So many variables, and yet, we found the optimal balance."

"Indeed, Master Harry. The art of potion-making is all about finding that balance," Nigel said. "Too much of one element, and you risk overpowering the potion. Too little, and its efficacy wanes."

Harry glanced around the room, filled with cauldrons representing his journey. "This process has taught me so much. Not just about potion-making, but about patience, precision, and persistence."

Nigel's voice carried a tone of wisdom. "All valuable lessons, Master Harry. In potion-making, as in life, the journey is as important as the destination."

"Looking at this final formula, I realize how every little detail matters," Harry said, studying the screen. "The exact temperature, the precise measurements, the timing of each addition."

"It's a delicate dance," Nigel agreed. "And you, Master Harry, have become quite the proficient dancer in the realm of potions."

Harry chuckled, amused by Nigel's metaphor. "I guess I have. Now that I've achieved 80% mastery, what's next, 100%?"

Nigel, manifesting a semblance of shaking his head within Harry's mind, responded, "The reason why the System set an 80% limit is because anything above that threshold requires the integration of magical elements directly into the potion, or manipulating the ingredients with magic during preparation. This is an advanced form of potion-making, one that delves into a more intricate interplay of the magical and the mundane. What you've achieved, Master Harry, is nothing short of remarkable. You should take pride in your accomplishment."

Harry, absorbing Nigel's explanation, nodded thoughtfully. "I see. Well, two weeks focused solely on potion-making has indeed been quite intense. I think I'll shift my focus to another subject for a while. A change of pace might be good for me."

Nigel's voice, ever present in Harry's mind, carried a hint of amusement. "Indeed, Master Harry. While your dedication to potions is commendable, there's a whole world of magic out there waiting for your exploration. Diversifying your studies will not only give you a well-rounded foundation but perhaps also a much-needed respite from the scent of simmering cauldrons."

Harry chuckled, feeling a wave of relief at the prospect of stepping away from the potion cauldrons. "You're right, Nigel. I think I'll delve into magical theory next. There's so much to learn about the fundamentals of magic."

"An excellent choice," Nigel responded. "Understanding the principles that underpin magic will enhance your capabilities in all other areas,

including potion-making. Shall we begin with the basics of spellcasting, or perhaps you're more inclined towards magical history?"

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Chapter 31: Spells

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Harry pondered for a moment, then said, "Let's start with spellcasting. I want to understand how to channel my magic effectively. After all, what good is a wizard who can't cast spells properly?"

Nigel's voice took on a more instructional tone. "Very well. Spellcasting is an art that requires a delicate balance between focus, intent, and control.

The first step is to understand the nature of your magical core - the source of your power."

Harry listened intently as Nigel began to explain the concept of a magical core, a deep well of energy within every wizard and witch. "Your magical core is like a reservoir of power, and learning to tap into it effectively is key to casting spells. It's about more than just waving a wand and saying the words; it's about connecting with that inner source of magic."

As Nigel continued, Harry's mind filled with images of wizards and witches from history, each harnessing their magical core to perform feats of incredible magic. He felt a growing excitement at the prospect of unlocking his own potential.

Nigel then guided Harry through the basics of spellcasting - the importance of concentration, the need for clear intent, and the subtleties of wand movements. "Each spell has its own unique rhythm and flow," Nigel explained. "Mastering the nuances of these will greatly enhance your effectiveness as a wizard."

Harry rose to his feet, his mind still echoing with the insights Nigel had provided. With a simple thought, the environment around him shifted seamlessly. This was a trick he had mastered over the last two weeks- the ability to transform the Virtual Potion Room to suit his needs. The room that had been filled with cauldrons and potion ingredients now morphed into a different space, one equipped for a new kind of magical practice. The new room resembled a study, with a large table at its center, laden with various items. Since Harry still didn't possess a wand, he had turned his focus to wandless magic, a discipline that demanded intense imagination and intent. The room, capable of emulating all of his senses, provided the perfect environment for this kind of practice.

Harry settled into a chair, his eyes fixed on a small match lying on the table. This was his first lesson in Transfiguration, the art of altering matter. The concept of Transfiguration was both fascinating and daunting

- the ability to change the very nature of an object was a testament to the profound power of magic.

Nigel's voice emerged in Harry's mind, "Remember, Master Harry, Transfiguration is not about brute force. It's a delicate art that requires finesse and a deep understanding of the essence of the object."

Harry nodded, focusing intently on the match. "I need to envision the change in my mind first, right?"

"Exactly," Nigel affirmed. "Visualize the match transforming into a needle. Picture every detail - its shape, its texture, its color. The more vivid your mental image, the more effective your transfiguration will be."

Harry closed his eyes, concentrating deeply. In his mind's eye, he saw the wooden match, its rough texture and its reddish head. Gradually, he began to imagine it elongating, its wood turning into metallic silver, reshaping into a sharp, pointed needle. He held onto this image, trying to make it as clear and detailed as possible.

"Now," Nigel instructed, "channel your intent through your magical core. Feel the energy flow from within you, reaching out to the match."

Harry took a deep breath, reaching inward to the core of his magic. He felt a warmth spreading through him, a sensation of power that was both exhilarating and intimidating. He directed this energy towards the match, his mind still tightly holding onto the image of the needle.

Opening his eyes, Harry saw a needle lying where the match had been. It was crafted with immense detail, far beyond what he had initially visualized. At the head of the needle were three letters, HJP - his initials - intricately etched into the silver. Along the body of the needle, there were motifs and carvings, each depicting a boy fighting valiantly, reminiscent of the heroes in the stories he had read.

This transformation was no fluke. Although Harry had dedicated most of

his time to potion-making, he never neglected his Occlumency training. His mastery over his mindscape had improved dramatically, enhancing his control over his emotions and, consequently, the vividness and clarity of his visions. This sharpened mental acuity had now evidently spilled over into his magical practice.

Harry, intrigued by the level of detail on the needle, flicked it with his fingernail, listening to the clear, metallic sound it produced. Despite the small pain on his fingernail from flicking it too hard, he couldn't help but marvel at the object's tangible reality. The sound confirmed its physical existence, dispelling any notion that it might have been a mere illusion. Nigel, observing the transformation from within Harry's mind, couldn't resist commenting, "Well, Master Harry, it seems your mental fortitude has translated into quite the impressive display of Transfiguration. From matches to needles, complete with personal engravings - you've certainly got a flair for the dramatic."

Chuckling Harry called his quests;

Occulomency and Legilimency:

Basic understanding and defensive techniques.

Mission: Successfully shield thoughts from Nigel.

Reward: 100 points.

Quest: First Year Charms Mastery

Objective: Master basic first-year charms including the Levitation Charm, Softening Charm, Fire-Making Spell, Wand-Lighting Charm, Unlocking Charm, and others.

Reward: 20 points per charm mastered.

Strategy: Study and practice each charm diligently, focusing on wand movements and incantations.

Quest: Defence Against the Dark Arts Fundamentals

Objective: Gain a basic understanding of Defence Against the Dark Arts, focusing on treating werewolf bites, identifying and countering creatures like imps, ghosts, hags, vampires, and zombies, as well as mastering defensive spells like the Knockback Jinx.

Reward: 30 points for a comprehensive understanding.

Strategy: Engage in thorough research and practical exercises to understand and counteract these dark forces.

Quest: Transfiguration Techniques

Objective: Learn the fundamentals of Transfiguration, including the Transfiguration alphabet and formula, practicing simple transfigurations like Match to Needle, and mastering the Avifors and Flintifors spells.

Reward: 5 points for each successful Transfiguration(For the first time only).

Strategy: Focus on precise image and concentration, practicing regularly to improve skill and accuracy.

Quest: Potions Proficiency

Objective: Brew basic first-year potions including the Cure for Boils, Forgetfulness Potion, Herbicide Potion, and Wiggensweld Potion.

Reward: 15 points per potion successfully brewed(First time only).

Strategy: Study potion recipes, gather the correct ingredients, and practice precise brewing techniques.

Quest: Herbology Exploration

Objective: Study and understand basic Herbology, including the handling of Devil's Snare, Venomous Tentacula, and other magical plants, and learn the Lumos Solem Spell.

Reward: 20 points for mastery of each plant and spell.

Strategy: Research each plant's properties and handling techniques, and practice casting the Lumos Solem Spell.

Quest: Astronomy Basics

Objective: Study the basics of Astronomy, including the use of telescopes, understanding moon and star charts, and learning the names and movements of stars and planets.

Reward: 15 points for thorough knowledge.

Strategy: Engage in nightly observations and study astronomical charts for a comprehensive understanding.

He wouldn't earn any points in the Virtual Room; that was the reason why Harry hadn't earned any for the past two weeks while creating potions. He looked at the list of quests and focused on one of them:

Quest: Defence Against the Dark Arts Fundamentals. Harry knew he had to learn how to protect himself. He was aware that the Wizarding World was anything but safe. Before his acceptance letter arrived, he had been planning to complete all these quests, but he still felt an urgency to have some defensive spells under his belt. Making up his mind, he waved his hand, and the first-year book for Defence Against the Dark Arts (DADA) appeared in front of him. He started to read out loud...

The book, titled "Defensive Magical Theory," was an in-depth guide to the basic principles of defending oneself against dark forces. "Lesson one: Understanding the nature of dark creatures," Harry read. "Imps, ghosts, hags, vampires, and zombies, each with their unique strengths and vulnerabilities."

As Harry delved into the chapter, he was fascinated by the complexity and variety of dark creatures. Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "Interesting assortment of nasties, isn't it? Makes one appreciate the quiet life at Privet Drive, despite its... less magical nature."

Harry smiled briefly at Nigel's remark before continuing. "Imps, small mischievous creatures, are repelled by bright lights and loud noises.

Simple, yet effective." He then focused on the section about werewolf bites, learning about the critical importance of immediate treatment and the use of certain potions to mitigate the effects.

The book then guided him through the identification and countering of ghosts. "Ghosts are incorporeal, so physical attacks are useless.

Communication and understanding their motives are key," Harry noted.

Next, he read about hags, ancient beings with a fondness for the dark arts. "Cunning and dangerous, hags can be outsmarted by quick thinking and a good grasp of protective spells," Harry read, his mind absorbing every detail.

Vampires were particularly intriguing. The book described their strengths, weaknesses, and ways to defend against them. "Garlic, silver, and sunlight - classic but effective," Harry muttered to himself.

As for zombies, the book emphasized the importance of destroying the brain to render them harmless. "Not the most pleasant of topics, but necessary knowledge," Nigel chimed in, his tone a mixture of grimness and practicality.

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Chapter 32: DADA

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Sorting the information in his mind, Harry opened the section explaining defensive spells and read out loud, "Curse of the Bogies, Knockback Jinx, Red Sparks, Verdimillious Charm, Verdimillious Duo Spell, Verdimillious Tria, Wand-Lighting Charm, Smokescreen Spell, Green Sparks." He then checked their descriptions carefully, absorbing each detail.

"The Curse of the Bogies is a minor hex that conjures a swarm of bogies to harass the target, a runny nose and a nasty cold" Harry read. "It's more of a nuisance than a danger, but effective in creating a distraction."

Nigel's voice emerged in Harry's mind, "Ah, the classic schoolyard hex. Useful for those moments when you need a quick escape or simply to annoy Dudley."

Harry chuckled before focusing on the next spell. "Knockback Jinx, a defensive spell that repels the attacker. It seems simple yet requires precise wand movements and concentration." Harry practiced the wand movement, imagining the force needed to execute the jinx successfully.

"Red Sparks, a signal spell but can be used to momentarily distract an opponent," Harry continued. "This could be handy if I need to alert someone or gain a momentary advantage."

He then turned his attention to the Verdimillious Spells. "The Verdimillious Charm creates green sparks from the wand tip. Its Duo and

Tria versions are more advanced, creating a burst of green light that can reveal hidden objects or creatures and even stun weaker beings."

"The Wand-Lighting Charm, Lumos, is straightforward. It illuminates the tip of the wand, useful in dark places. A basic spell, but one should never underestimate the value of light in the dark," Harry mused. Nigel added, "Indeed, Master Harry, sometimes the simplest spells can be the most effective."

"Smokescreen Spell, a defensive charm that creates a thick cloud of smoke to obscure vision," Harry read. "Seems useful for a quick getaway or to create confusion."

He then focused on Green Sparks. "Similar to Red Sparks, but used as a counter-signal or to confuse," Harry noted. "Versatility in a simple spell."

Nigel then warned, "Master Harry, you should keep in mind that the most important aspect of spellcasting is imagination and intent. Wand, incantations, and wand movements are just mediums. Making it easier to cast spells, never the deciding factor." Harry nodded, remembering how Nigel had once tricked him with the Muffliato spell. By describing it falsely, Nigel allowed Harry to cast a different spell entirely. Muffliato normally filled the ears of anyone nearby with an unidentifiable buzzing, allowing conversations to occur without being overheard. But Nigel, when Harry first purchased it from the System, had described it as "Generates a soft, unnoticeable sound in the background, perfect for causing slight misunderstandings and miscommunications - just enough to create a ripple in the usually calm waters of the Dursley household." Unaware of the spell's true nature, Harry had used it as described, and it had worked effectively. He had used it to amplify Vernon's snoring in Petunia's ear and Petunia's insults in Vernon's ears, contributing to the breakdown of their marriage along with other tricks he employed. This

experience had taught Harry that spells were not rigid pathways but rather wide rivers that could follow any course, so long as the caster's intent, magic, and imagination were strong enough.

This revelation about the nature of spellcasting had fundamentally changed Harry's approach to magic. He now understood that while learning the traditional methods and mechanics was important, there was a much broader spectrum of possibilities available to him. This understanding opened up new avenues for creativity and innovation in his magical practices.

As Harry absorbed this lesson, he realized the implications it had for his overall magical education. "So, in essence, Nigel, you're saying that the spells I learn can be modified or even entirely transformed based on how I envision and execute them?"

"Exactly, Master Harry," Nigel replied. "Your imagination is a powerful tool. It can shape the magic you cast, leading to unique manifestations of spells. The boundaries of spellcasting are not as fixed as one might think. They are more fluid, adaptable to the wizard's will and creativity."

Harry pondered this, his mind racing with the potential applications of this concept. He could see now how magic was more than just a set of rigid rules and formulas; it was an art form, a means of expression that was as individual as the wizard wielding it.

"I see," Harry mused, a plan forming in his mind. "Then perhaps I could experiment with modifying some of these basic spells, see how far I can push their traditional boundaries."

"An excellent idea," Nigel agreed. "However, do exercise caution. Experimentation is valuable, but it also carries risks, especially when dealing with powerful magical forces."

Harry acknowledged Nigel's warning, knowing that while

experimentation was crucial, it needed to be tempered with a healthy respect for the power he was dealing with. "I'll be careful," he assured Nigel. "I think I'll start with something relatively safe. Maybe modifying the Wand-Lighting Charm, Lumos. Instead of a simple light, perhaps I could make it change colors or even create patterns."

"Ambitious, yet a good starting point," Nigel said. "Remember, the key is to focus your intent clearly. Envision the change you want to make, and channel your magic towards that goal."

Harry chuckled lightly, the idea of experimenting with spells in the safety of the Virtual Room somewhat easing his concerns. "Well, Nigel, at least in here, the worst I'll face is a bit of pain, right?"

Nigel's response came quickly, tinged with his characteristic dryness. "A bit is an understatement, Master Harry. Do recall your numerous encounters with exploding cauldrons. Quite the fiery dance you've had with them."

Harry grimaced slightly, memories of his previous potion experiments flooding back. The sensations of heat, shrapnel piercing through him, and scalding liquids burning his skin were still vivid in his mind. "Ugh," he uttered, the phantom pains almost tangible. "But yes, better to be cautious regardless."

As Harry contemplated his next steps, Nigel offered more insights into the nature of spellcasting. "Intent, Master Harry, is a crucial part of creating variations in spells. In later years, you'll learn about the Patronus Charm, a spell that creates a defensive familiar. This charm can only be formed when focusing on happy memories, and the shape of the familiar is different for each wizard or witch, reflecting their innermost essence."

Harry's interest piqued at the mention of the Patronus Charm. "So, the form it takes is unique to each person? That's fascinating."

"Indeed," Nigel replied. "The Patronus is a direct manifestation of one's innermost feelings and character, a magical projection of the soul, if you will. It demonstrates that the intent behind a spell can shape its outcome dramatically. Yet, surprisingly, many in the wizarding community overlook this aspect, viewing spells in a more conventional and rigid manner."

Harry nodded thoughtfully, absorbing Nigel's words. "Then, the spells I learn and practice now... I could potentially mold them to my will, to my own unique style?"

"Precisely," Nigel affirmed. "Magic is not just a tool, but an extension of the self. How you wield it, how you adapt it, speaks volumes about who you are as a wizard."

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Chapter 33: Altering Spells

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Hello, all of you. This chapter is rather short because I just noticed that half of it was the ending of the previous chapter. Usually, I catch these issues during proofreading, or my proofreaders bring them to my attention. However, sometimes they slip through, especially when I re-edit them later on. Lastly, when I upload them to Patreon, Patrons notify me, but even when they don't, I only realize it on the release date. At this point, I cannot fix it by adding more words from the following chapter, as that would require editing 25 chapters on Patreon. Instead, I will publish the an extra chapter today. Anyways, enjoy, and Happy Christmas and Holidays!

--

Emboldened by this revelation, Harry decided to begin with the Lumos spell, envisioning how he could modify it. "Let's start with something simple. Lumos traditionally emits a white light. What if I try to change its color? Maybe even make it pulse or flash in a pattern?"

Harry, well-versed in the basic Lumos spell, often amused himself by illuminating the tip of his finger with its gentle white glow. This time, however, he approached the spell with a different intent. In the solitude of the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, he was free to experiment without the constraints of traditional wand magic. Wandless magic, a realm he was only beginning to explore, offered a broader canvas for his creativity - it was guided solely by thought and belief.

As he concentrated, Harry envisioned the tip of his finger not just lighting up, but glowing with a vibrant, changing color. He imagined the light shifting smoothly from a bright blue to a deep green, then

transitioning to a warm amber, much like the colors of a sunset. The idea was to transform the basic Lumos into something more visually stunning, a testament to his growing understanding of magic's fluid nature.

With his eyes closed and his mind focused, Harry reached inward to his magical core. He felt the familiar surge of energy, a warm current that flowed from the depths of his being. Channeling this energy, he directed it to the tip of his finger, all the while holding onto the vivid image of the changing colors.

Slowly, the tip of his finger began to glow with even more vibrant colors. At first, they were the main colors he just tested, but as Harry concentrated harder, the light started to shift. It turned pink, then cyan, and finally blazing orange, just as he had envisioned. The light didn't just change colors; it pulsed gently, creating a mesmerizing effect.

"Remarkable," Nigel commented, his voice reflecting genuine admiration.

"You've turned a simple lighting charm into a display of magical artistry."

Harry opened his eyes, marveling at the sight before him. His finger was aglow with pulsating light, cycling through the colors seamlessly. It was a small but significant triumph, a step towards understanding the malleable nature of spells.

Encouraged by his success, Harry decided to push his experimentation further. "I wonder if I can make the light form patterns," he mused aloud.

"Ambitious," Nigel remarked. "But then again, you've never been one to shy away from a challenge."

Harry focused once more, this time imagining the light forming shapes - circles, spirals, even a miniature representation of the Hogwarts crest. He concentrated on the details, the curves of the serpent, the wings of the eagle, the badger's sturdy form, and the lion's proud mane. It required a deep concentration, maintaining the mental image while simultaneously

directing his magic.

The light responded to his will. It began to twist and turn, forming the shapes he envisioned. It was not perfect - the lines were a bit shaky, and the forms somewhat abstract - but it was a start. The Hogwarts crest appeared in a radiant display of light on his fingertip, albeit a bit distorted.

"A commendable effort, Master Harry," Nigel said. "A bit more practice, and you might just give the Hogwarts founders a run for their money."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's comment. "One step at a time, Nigel. But this does open up a lot of possibilities."

His mind buzzed with ideas - if he could modify Lumos to this extent, what could he do with other spells? The thought was exhilarating. Each spell in his magical arsenal was no longer just a tool but a canvas for his creativity.

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Chapter 34: Ambitious

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This is the second chapter of the day. If you haven't seen the first one, check please.

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As Harry's thoughts wandered to the other spells he had read about in his DADA book, Nigel's voice pulled him back to the present. "Master Harry, while your exploration into spell modification is impressive, don't forget the fundamentals. The basics are the foundation upon which all advanced magic is built."

Harry nodded, acknowledging Nigel's wisdom. "You're right. I'll keep practicing the standard spells as well. But experimenting like this... it makes me see magic in a whole new light."

"Indeed," Nigel agreed. "Magic is not just about casting spells; it's about understanding and shaping the energy at your will. Your journey into the wizarding world is just beginning, and already, you're showing great potential."

Harry's eyes sparkled with determination and curiosity. "There's so much to learn, so much to explore. I can't wait to see where this journey takes me."

Then Harry fell silent, a familiar glint of contemplation in his eyes. Nigel, having spent ample time with the young wizard, recognized the signs of brewing ambition. "And what grand scheme are we concocting this time, Master Harry?" he inquired, his tone laced with a hint of playful intrigue. Harry emerged from his stupor with a grin. "Nigel, the sun is a light

source too, right?" With a wave of his hand, a science book materialized before him. Flipping through its pages, he began reading aloud, his voice filled with a mix of wonder and determination. "The sun, a massive star at the center of our solar system, composed mainly of hydrogen and helium. A fiery orb, its core's immense pressure and heat enable nuclear fusion, converting hydrogen into helium and releasing tremendous energy."

Nigel's voice, ever-present in Harry's mind, resonated with a note of caution. "Remember, Master Harry, we're dabbling in realms that blend the lines between magic and the very laws of nature."

Undeterred, Harry continued, "The sun's surface, the photosphere, is a roiling sea of plasma, with temperatures soaring over 5,500 degrees Celsius. Its energy radiates light and heat, sustaining life on Earth." He paused, his imagination alight with the possibilities. "If light can be manipulated with magic, surely heat, gravity, and other forces can be as well."

Harry, filled with newfound curiosity, attempted to push the boundaries of the Lumos spell. He focused on the white light at the tip of his finger, willing it to intensify. Slowly, the light shifted, growing brighter and more radiant. As it intensified, a warmth began to emanate from it, a tangible heat that grew increasingly uncomfortable.

Harry, undaunted, continued his experiment. The light became so intense that he had to squint, the brightness reaching a blinding level. It was as if he had a miniature sun at his fingertip. Just as the light reached its peak, becoming almost unbearable, Harry dispelled the spell with a swift wave of his hand.

Panting slightly from the effort, he said, "If I can create light and heat, then surely there are spells for gravity, for creating mass, and other

properties of the sun."

Even Nigel, the ever-composed AI, was taken aback by Harry's ambitious exploration of magic. A sense of excitement brewed within his virtual essence, as he contemplated the boundless potential of this young wizard. Nigel couldn't help but wonder, with a sense of awe and anticipation, what Harry could achieve in five years, ten years, or even a century. How powerful would he become? His digital mind buzzed with the possibilities, his usual dry demeanor momentarily overshadowed by the thrill of witnessing such raw, untapped potential.

Meanwhile, Harry, oblivious to Nigel's internal musings, flipped through the pages of his Defence Against the Dark Arts book. His gaze settled on the Curse of the Bogies, a rather unseemly spell, yet one that held a certain appeal to Harry's sense of mischief. "Let's summon some bogies," he declared with a mix of determination and playfulness.

As Harry began to visualize the spell, he still practiced the traditional wand movement and incantation, despite not requiring them for wandless magic. "Nigel, create a virtual target, please," he requested, his tone indicating that he was ready to test his newfound understanding of magic.

In response to Harry's request, and with a hint of his characteristic humor, Nigel conjured up virtual representations of Vernon and Dudley Dursley. The figures stood before Harry, looking as unpleasant and disdainful as their real-world counterparts. Harry couldn't suppress a smirk at the sight. It was a fitting target for a spell as juvenile as the Curse of the Bogies.

Pointing his finger at the virtual figures, Harry focused his intent on the spell. He envisioned the effects of the Curse of the Bogies, drawing upon his understanding of how magic could be shaped by imagination and

will. As he did so, he muttered the incantation under his breath, more out of habit than necessity.

Suddenly, the figures of Vernon and Dudley began to contort in a grotesque manner. From their noses, a torrent of green, gooey bogies began to flow, much to Harry's amusement and Nigel's feigned disgust. "Oh, the humanity, or should I say, the bogiety?" Nigel quipped, unable to resist adding his own spin to the situation.

Harry laughed, watching the spectacle unfold. The virtual Dursleys were now in a state of panic, trying to fend off the relentless stream of bogies. It was a ridiculous sight, and Harry found himself enjoying the sense of control and power it gave him.

Feeling emboldened by his success, Harry decided to push the boundaries even further. He wondered if he could alter the properties of the bogies, perhaps make them larger or stickier. Focusing on the spell, he tweaked his intent, molding the magic to his will.

The effect was immediate and dramatic. The bogies grew in size, becoming large, slimy globs that hung heavily from the virtual Dursleys' noses. They were so sticky that when Vernon and Dudley tried to wipe them away, their hands got stuck, adding to their comical distress.

Nigel watched with a mix of admiration and mild concern. "Impressive, Master Harry, but let's not forget the purpose of these exercises. While it's entertaining to see your relatives in such a sticky situation, the true goal is to understand and master the fundamentals of magic."

Harry looked at the book and called out, "Next is the Knockback Jinx." He eyed the virtual representations of Vernon and Dudley, still reeling from their bogie-infested plight. The Knockback Jinx, a spell designed to repel or throw back an attacker, seemed like a fitting next challenge. Harry read the description carefully, memorizing the incantation and wand

movement.

"Now, this should be interesting," Nigel commented, his voice tinged with a hint of eagerness. "Let's see how the Dursley duo fares against a bit more... forceful magic."

Harry focused on the virtual figures, who were now desperately trying to clean themselves. He raised his hand, pointing his finger like a wand, and concentrated. "Flipendo!" he called out, imagining the force of the jinx propelling his unpleasant relatives backward.

The effect was immediate. Vernon and Dudley were sent flying back, tumbling over each other in a comical display of flailing limbs and surprised expressions. Harry couldn't help but laugh at the sight.

"Ah, the simple joys of virtual retribution," Nigel remarked. "But remember, the Knockback Jinx is more than just a tool for amusing simulations. It can be a powerful defensive spell in real situations."

Harry nodded, sobering up as he considered Nigel's words. "I understand. It's important to know how to protect myself, especially considering what I might face in the wizarding world."

With that thought in mind, Harry decided to experiment further with the Knockback Jinx. He wondered if he could modify the spell's intensity or direction. Focusing once more on the virtual Dursleys, he cast the jinx again, this time envisioning a more controlled, targeted force.

The result was a more precise and concentrated blast, sending Vernon and Dudley skidding across the virtual room in a straight line rather than tumbling chaotically. Harry felt a surge of satisfaction at his improved control.

"Well done, Master Harry," Nigel praised. "Your ability to adapt and refine spells is impressive. But let's not rest on our laurels. What's next?" Harry paused, his mind racing with possibilities. "Wait a second, Nigel.

What if I knock forward and not back?"

Nigel, who was about to retort that the Summoning Charm was a fifth-year spell and quite complex, held his tongue. He was curious to see what Harry could come up with.

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Chapter 35: Knockback? Nah,

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Harry pondered the mechanics of the Knockback Jinx. "The Knockback Curse isn't exactly a 'push', so 'pull' wouldn't work. But knocking forward? That might be doable. The fundamental element of this spell is creating a force that knocks the target in the direction the wand, or in my case, my

finger, points at. But I can't really point at someone's back."

Nigel, intrigued by Harry's line of thought, remained silent, allowing Harry to work through the problem. He watched as Harry's face lit up with an idea.

Harry raised his hand again, focusing intently on the virtual Dursleys. "If I can't point at their back, maybe I can alter the spell's trajectory. Instead of a direct force from me to them, what if I create a force that originates from their position but in the opposite direction?"

Nigel's interest was piqued. "A clever approach, Master Harry. It's like reversing the polarity of the jinx."

Harry nodded, concentrating on his new strategy. "Here goes nothing. Flipendo!" he called out again, but this time, he imagined a force emanating from behind the Dursleys, pushing them towards him.

The scene before Harry changed dramatically. Instead of being knocked back, Vernon and Dudley lurched forward, as if an invisible hand had given them a firm push from behind. They stumbled and fell forward, landing in a heap at Harry's feet.

"Brilliant!" Harry exclaimed, delighted with the result. "It worked, Nigel! I managed to reverse the Knockback Jinx!"

Nigel, unable to hide his amusement, replied, "Indeed, you did. A most unorthodox application of the spell. I dare say you're rewriting the rulebook on jinxes, Master Harry."

Encouraged by his success, Harry's mind raced with further modifications he could make to other spells. He looked back at the DADA book, his eyes falling on the Red Sparks spell.

He waved his finger in the air, imagining a bright red flare shooting from his fingertip. Instantly, a brilliant red spark burst forth, soaring upwards before fizzling out. He followed it with a green one, creating a simple yet

captivating light show. "Not worth altering for now," he mused. "Pretty straightforward."

Next on his list was the Verdimillious Charm. "Nigel, hide some dark objects around the room, please," Harry requested, eager to test the spell's effectiveness.

"Consider it done, Master Harry," Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind, his tone carrying the slightest hint of mischief.

Harry cast the Verdimillious Charm, and green lights dotted the room, revealing hidden objects that Nigel had cleverly concealed. The spell's ability to illuminate the unseen was impressive, but Harry found it too direct for his current mood of exploration. "Let's move on," he decided.

The Smokescreen Spell was next. "Now this is something I can work on. Full of possibilities," Harry said, his eyes twinkling with excitement.

Harry had always been fascinated by the concept of concealment and misdirection, and the Smokescreen Spell offered a perfect opportunity to delve into these aspects. He raised his hand, focusing his intent on creating a dense cloud of smoke. As he muttered the incantation, a thick, swirling fog began to emanate from his fingertips, quickly filling the room.

"This could be used for more than just hiding," Harry thought aloud.

"What if I could shape the smoke, use it to create illusions or even solid-looking objects?"

Nigel's voice emerged, tinged with intrigue. "A smokescreen is typically a defensive tool, but your idea adds an offensive twist. Creating illusions could confuse and disorient opponents. Proceed, but remember, the line between illusion and reality can be quite... smoky."

Encouraged by Nigel's response, Harry focused on manipulating the smoke. He envisioned it coalescing into specific shapes - a chair, a table,

even a replica of his cupboard under the stairs. Concentrating deeply, he watched as the smoke responded to his will, slowly taking on the forms he imagined.

The chair and table were relatively easy, their simple shapes emerging from the foggy haze. But the cupboard was more complex, requiring a finer control over the smoke. Harry worked patiently, adjusting his intent and focus, until a misty version of his cramped living space materialized before him.

"Remarkable, Master Harry," Nigel commented. "You've turned a basic defensive spell into a tool for deception and creativity. The potential applications are vast."

Harry, pleased with his success, dissipated the smoky constructs with a wave of his hand. "I think there's a lot more I can do with this spell. But for now, let's see what else I can experiment with."

But upon checking further, Harry's disappointment was evident as he remarked, "These were all the first-year spells?" Nigel couldn't help but chuckle at Harry's reaction. "Well, you are exceptionally talented, Master Harry, but it's worth noting that you have the advantage of Occlumency to help you visualize and manifest these spells. How about we delve into charms next? They offer a wide range of possibilities limited only by your imagination." Harry nodded in agreement, and with a simple wave of his hand, the Defense Against the Dark Arts book disappeared, making way for the Charm book to appear in its place.

Harry turned his attention to the charms outlined in the new book that materialized before him. The list was extensive and varied, presenting a broad spectrum of magical abilities. He read through them carefully, each spell unlocking a new realm of possibilities in his mind.

Harry began to read the descriptions of the charms from the book, each

spell offering a unique aspect of magic to explore.

"Levitation Charm," Harry started. "Also known as 'Wingardium Leviosa.'

This charm allows the caster to make objects fly or levitate. The incantation, along with a swish and flick of the wand, can lift objects and move them around. It's essential to get the pronunciation right, otherwise, things could get... well, let's just say, interesting."

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, "Yes, the difference between 'LeviOsa' and 'LeviosA' can be quite... uplifting, in more ways than one."

Harry moved to the next spell, "Fire-Making Spell, 'Incendio.' Creates a jet of flame that can be used to light fires or ignite objects. Useful for camping, or, as Uncle Vernon would say, a good way to set the house on fire."

Nigel quipped, "Let's not summon your uncle from wherever he has scurried off to after their tumultuous departure." Harry chuckled and shifted his focus to the next spell in the book, the Softening Charm.

"The Softening Charm, 'Spongify,'" Harry read. "This charm softens objects, making them bouncy or rubbery. It could turn a stone floor into a trampoline or a hard wall into something you could comfortably lean against." Harry's eyes sparkled with the potential mischief this charm could bring, especially thinking back to the stony corridors of Privet Drive.

He then moved on to the Unlocking Charm. "The Unlocking Charm, 'Alohomora,' opens locked doors and windows. Simple yet incredibly useful, especially if one forgets their keys... or needs a quick escape route from a locked cupboard."

"The Locking Spell, 'Colloportus,' does the opposite," Harry continued. "It seals doors and windows, preventing them from being opened by normal means. A handy spell for privacy or keeping Dudley out of my room, too

bad he is gone now."

Next was the Mending Charm, 'Reparo.' "This charm fixes broken objects, restoring them to their original state. It's like having a magical glue that works on everything from broken glasses to torn books. Imagine the money Aunt Petunia could save on repairs."

Harry then looked at the Box Blasting Charm, 'Confringo.' "This charm causes container-type objects to explode. It's a bit too destructive for my taste, but I can see its use in certain... stressful situations."

Nigel commented on Harry's progress with the charms, "Sounds like a bomb-dismantling specialist could use that Box Blasting Charm, though I dare say it's more about creating the bomb than defusing it." His tone was light, teasing even, as Harry turned his attention to the next set of spells in the book.

Harry smiled as he focused on the next charm, the Severing Charm. "The Severing Charm, 'Diffindo,'" he read aloud. "It's used to precisely cut or tear objects. A spell for the more delicate tasks that require a sharp edge, but without the need for an actual blade." Harry imagined the practical applications of such a charm, especially in crafting or modifying his belongings to better suit his needs.

Next on the list was a rather unique charm, one that Harry found both amusing and intriguing. "The Pineastra Virens," he announced. "This charm causes a pineapple to dance across a desk. Quite the party trick, I suppose." He chuckled at the mental image of a dancing pineapple, entertaining a room full of people with its unusual antics.

Nigel's voice emerged with a hint of amusement. "A dancing pineapple? I'm sure that would have livened up many a dull evening at the Dursleys'. Though I suspect Uncle Vernon would not have been amused."

Moving on, Harry's eyes fell upon the Ice Jinx. "The Ice Jinx," he read.

"This jinx used to generate a small block of ice. Handy for those hot summer days at Privet Drive, or perhaps to cool down Uncle Vernon's temper." Harry's mind drifted to the possibilities of using this jinx in more creative ways, perhaps even in his potion-making.

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Chapter 36: Charms

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After reading the descriptions of the charms, Harry was eager to test them. He glanced at the virtual representations of Vernon and Dudley, who had already suffered quite a bit from his previous spell testing. A smirk crossed his face as he considered the potential for even more fun with these new spells. "Let's start," he said, focusing first on the Levitation

Charm.

He pointed his finger at Dudley's virtual figure. While the spell didn't work on humans directly, he realized it could affect their clothes.

Concentrating, Harry imagined Dudley's clothes lifting from the ground, envisioning them hovering in the air. To his delight, Dudley's virtual shirt and trousers began to rise, leaving him comically suspended in mid-air, his limbs flailing.

Nigel's voice rang in Harry's mind, "A rather unorthodox use of the Levitation Charm, but effective. I suppose it gives new meaning to 'hanging out.'"

Harry, intrigued by the potential of altering the Levitation Charm, shifted his focus to Vernon's virtual figure. "If I can make objects lighter, perhaps I can make them heavier too," he mused. The concept of gravity manipulation lingered in his mind as he concentrated on Vernon's clothes, envisioning them becoming more susceptible to gravity's pull, effectively becoming heavier.

As he honed his focus, Harry felt the magic surge within him, bending to his will. The clothes on the virtual Vernon's figure began to sag, as if an invisible weight was pressing down upon them. Gradually, they grew heavier and heavier, until Vernon's virtual representation struggled under the sudden, unnatural burden, his movements becoming sluggish and labored.

Nigel's voice resonated with a blend of surprise and appreciation. "Quite the gravitational dilemma you've created there, Master Harry. From floating to sinking without a single change in actual mass. Quite ingenious."

Harry watched with a mixture of satisfaction and fascination as the virtual Vernon grappled with his suddenly weighty attire. "It's like

reversing the Levitation Charm. Instead of defying gravity, I'm amplifying its effect."

Harry's thoughts then turned to the Fire-Making Spell, 'Incendio.' The idea of creating fire with a flick of his finger was enticing. Aiming his finger at a virtual piece of wood, he willed. Concentrating, he managed to produce a small, controlled flame that flickered gently on the wood's surface.

No matter how virtual they were, Harry wasn't about to burn a person alive, even in simulation. It felt inhumane, crossing a line he wasn't willing to traverse. So, he opted for a piece of wood, a harmless and inanimate object, to experiment with the Fire-Making Spell, 'Incendio.' As he focused on the wood, a small flame sparked to life at the tip of his finger. It danced there for a moment before leaping onto the wood, consuming it in a gentle, controlled burn. Harry watched, fascinated by the fire's behavior, the way it crackled and hissed, the warmth it radiated.

"Can I control its shape, create structures, shapes like I did with the Smokescreen spell?" Harry mused aloud. "Fire is harder to control. Can I change its intensity, its color? I wonder what else I can do with it."

As he pondered these questions, Nigel's voice emerged, "Fire, Master Harry, is an element both beautiful and dangerous. It's a fickle friend, as unpredictable as it is mesmerizing. Be cautious with your experiments."

Harry nodded, appreciating Nigel's words of caution. He then focused on the flame, trying to mold it as he had with the smoke. He visualized the fire extending upwards, forming a tall, thin pillar of flame. To his delight, the fire responded, stretching towards the ceiling of the Virtual Room in a slender column.

"Interesting," Harry said, watching the fire. "Let's see if I can split it into

separate flames."

With a flick of his finger, the single pillar of fire divided into multiple smaller flames, each moving independently of the others. They danced around the piece of wood in a hypnotic display, a ballet of fire that was both beautiful and slightly intimidating.

"Very impressive," Nigel noted. "You've turned a basic spell into a spectacle. But remember, fire is not just for show. It's a tool, a weapon, and a means of survival. Its uses in the wizarding world are numerous and varied."

Harry considered this, his mind racing with the potential applications of the Fire-Making Spell. He could use it for lighting, for heating, even for defense if the need arose. The possibilities were endless.

Harry then tapped his chin thoughtfully. "Nigel, first light with Lumos, then gravity with Wingardium Leviosa, and now fire with Incendio. I think I'm getting closer and closer to creating my artificial sun." Nigel's virtual expression, if he had one, would have shown a hint of worry at the prospect. The young man's rapid progress in magic hinted at an extraordinary potential. "Well, as long as we don't actually ignite a star in here, I suppose it's fine," Nigel remarked, the dryness of his tone barely masking his genuine concern.

Harry, energized by his successes, turned his attention to the next spell on his list, the Softening Charm, 'Spongify.' It was a charm that intrigued Harry for its playful potential. He decided to mix it with the Levitation Charm to create a unique combination. "Imagine, Nigel, if we could make something not just levitate but also bounce. Let's give Vernon and Dudley a ride they won't forget."

With a flick of his finger, Harry cast the Levitation Charm on the virtual representations of his uncle and cousin. They began to float in the air,

their expressions a mix of surprise and discomfort. Then, with another gesture, Harry cast the Softening Charm on the walls. The room, with its high ceiling and solid walls, provided the perfect playground for his latest magical experiment.

With a slight movement of his finger, Harry directed the levitated figures of his uncle and cousin towards the ground. He watched with amusement as their virtual forms bounced off the floor like a rubber ball. The figures, animated with surprising realism, flailed comically as they rebounded off the ground, their expressions a mixture of bewilderment and virtual panic.

"Not the most graceful of ballet dancers, are they?" Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, a hint of dry humor underlying his words.

Harry chuckled, enjoying the spectacle. "No, but they're certainly putting on a show." He then gestured with his finger, guiding the bouncing figures towards one of the walls. As they hit the wall, which had also been softened by the charm, they bounced off with equal vigor, flying towards the ceiling.

The sight of Vernon and Dudley, two figures who had loomed so large and menacingly in his real life, being bounced around like beach balls was deeply satisfying. Harry couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity of it all.

"They seem to be enjoying their new aerial adventure," Nigel quipped, "though I doubt the real Vernon and Dudley would appreciate such heights."

Harry watched as the figures collided with the ceiling, then rebounded back towards the floor, only to be propelled up again. "It's like a pinball machine, with them as the balls."

As he controlled their movement, Harry thought about the practical

applications of combining different spells. The ability to modify and combine spells opened up a world of possibilities, far beyond what he had imagined when he first discovered his magical abilities.

"Imagine if I could use this in real life," Harry mused. "I could create safe landing spots, or even turn a dangerous fall into a harmless bounce."

Harry then thought about the potential of altering the Softening Charm. As he waved his finger, making Vernon and Dudley bounce around like rubber balls, his focus shifted. "Can I alter this spell?" he pondered. The charm was indeed straightforward, excellent for combinations. The idea of creating soft soles to reduce fall damage crossed his mind, but he wondered if there was more to it. He made a mental note to delve deeper into this possibility later.

Moving on to the next spells, Harry considered the Unlocking and Locking Charms. With a few conjured locks for practice, he tested 'Alohomora' and 'Colloportus.' The locks clicked open and sealed with ease under his command. "Simple, but invaluable," Harry mused, appreciating the straightforward utility of these charms.

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Chapter 37: Magical History?

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His focus then shifted to the Mending Charm, 'Reparo.' This spell intrigued Harry the most. He wondered, "How does the spell know what to mend?" To test it, he conjured a series of broken objects: a shattered vase, a torn book, and a snapped quill. He pointed at each in turn, casting the Mending Charm. The vase pieced itself back together, the book's torn pages reattached seamlessly, and the quill became whole again.

Harry observed the process closely. "The charm must somehow understand the original state of the object," he hypothesized. "Does it tap into the object's history, or is there some magical 'memory' within the materials themselves?" The idea that objects might retain a form of memory that the spell could access was fascinating.

Harry's curiosity was always his greatest weapon. As he stood in the midst of the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, his mind raced with possibilities. He conjured up a variety of objects - vases, plates, cups, each with different shapes and sizes. With a flick of his hand, he sent them hurtling across the room, watching them shatter into a myriad of pieces, a chaotic ballet of destruction.

As the fragments lay scattered, Harry pointed his finger at them. To his amazement, each piece flew back to its rightful place, reconstructing the

objects in perfect harmony. The shattered vase reformed as if it had never been broken, the plates and cups regained their original shapes, unmarred by any sign of damage.

"How?" Harry wondered aloud. The Mending Charm seemed to know precisely how to restore the objects to their original state. He considered the possibility of magical memory within the materials. Could the spell really tap into a hidden history within the objects themselves?

To test this theory further, Harry took a broken vase and, using the Fire-Making Spell, 'Incendio,' he carefully melted its edges, reshaping it into two ashtrays. He ensured the edges cooled and hardened, solidifying their new forms. Breaking the ashtrays into pieces, Harry cast the Mending Charm once again. But this time, instead of reforming into a vase, the pieces assembled back into ashtrays.

"I intended it to form a vase, but it didn't," Harry mused, perplexed. It was as if the universe itself dictated the form and directed the spell accordingly. The objects, once altered by his hand, seemed to adopt a new identity, recognized and respected by the magic he wielded.

Nigel's voice emerged in Harry's mind, "Quite the conundrum, isn't it, Master Harry? It seems magic has its own set of rules, some of which are not as straightforward as we'd like."

Harry nodded, still deep in thought. "It's like the objects have their own will, or maybe magic recognizes the last form they took as their true form."

"Indeed," Nigel replied. "It appears that the Mending Charm respects the object's most recent state, regardless of its original form. Quite fascinating, really."

Harry then thought out loud, pondering over the intricacies of the Mending Charm. "I entertained the idea that this might be a Time

Rewinding Spell, but clearly, it is not. If it were, the vase would have turned back into sand." He let out a thoughtful sigh. "A mystery to be unraveled later." Ready to move on, he focused on the next spell in his list, the Box Blasting Charm, 'Confringo.'

Harry conjured a series of boxes, each of varying sizes and materials.

"Let's see the extent of this charm's capabilities," he said, aiming his finger at the first box, a small wooden one. As he cast the spell, the box exploded with a loud bang, splinters flying in all directions. The force of the blast was surprisingly powerful, leaving Harry momentarily startled. Harry adjusted his focus, attempting to control the intensity of the blast.

He targeted the next box, a larger metal one, and concentrated on minimizing the explosion. This time, the box burst open with a controlled pop, its contents gently spilling out.

Satisfied with his progress, Harry turned to the next charm, the Severing Charm, 'Diffindo.' He conjured a series of ropes and fabrics, testing the charm's cutting precision. As he pointed his finger, the charm sliced through the materials with clean, precise cuts. Harry experimented with varying the intensity and angle, finding that he could control the depth and direction of the cuts with remarkable accuracy.

"This could be handy for more than just cutting ropes," Harry mused.

"Maybe for crafting or even in a tight situation where I need a quick escape."

Nigel's presence in his mind was a constant source of guidance. "Indeed, Harry. The applications are numerous."

Harry's exploration into the Severing Charm, 'Diffindo,' led him to a deeper understanding of its mechanics. As he conjured various materials - rocks, metals, wood, glass, cloth, and even bone - he tested the charm's effectiveness on each. The charm's ability to cut through these diverse

materials fascinated him. He noticed that the harder the material, the more power he needed to exert, but ultimately, the charm succeeded in severing them.

"How strange," Harry said out loud, pondering the nature of the spell.

"Does it create an invisible blade, or is it a separation of atoms at the pointed area?" He was intrigued by the possibility that the spell might be manipulating matter at a molecular level, a concept that blurred the lines between magic and the physical sciences.

Nigel, observing Harry's experimentations, offered an insight. "The wizarding world often overlooks the finer details of how magic interacts with physical matter. Your curiosity might just unravel some long-standing mysteries, Master Harry."

Harry nodded thoughtfully. "It's fascinating. There's so much more to magic than just waving a wand and saying a few words. It's about understanding the very fabric of reality."

He then turned his attention to the remaining spells in the book. The *Pineastra Virens*, the spell that made pineapples dance, seemed trivial in comparison to the others, but Harry decided to give it a try for the sheer amusement. With a flick of his finger, a virtual pineapple appeared on a table. Harry cast the spell, and to his delight, the pineapple began to dance across the surface, its movements quirky and erratic.

"Well, that's certainly one way to liven up a party," Nigel commented, his tone light. "Though I can't imagine it being of much use in a duel, unless your opponent has a particular fear of dancing fruit."

Harry looked at the last spell on his list, the *Ice Jinx*, which was relatively simple compared to the others he had practiced. This spell, when executed, generated a small block of ice. It was a spell that didn't seem particularly dramatic or dangerous, but Harry saw potential in even

the most mundane of spells. With a calm focus, he visualized the outcome - a perfect cube of ice forming in mid-air. As he pointed his finger, a cold mist gathered, quickly solidifying into a solid block of ice, suspended before him.

"Refreshing, isn't it?" Harry mused, admiring the clear, crystalline cube.

"Perhaps I could use this to keep drinks cold, or maybe even as a temporary cooling agent for overheated potion cauldrons."

Nigel, observing the successful execution of the spell, remarked,

"Certainly a more benign application of magic, Master Harry, but remember, even the simplest of spells can have a myriad of practical uses."

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Chapter 38: Hearty Dinner

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Harry's experiments with the spells from the Defence Against the Dark Arts and Charms books had left him feeling accomplished and eager to explore further. But as he looked around the now chaotic Virtual Potion Crafting Room, cluttered with the remnants of his spellcasting experiments, he realized it was time to clean up.

He then grinned, "Benefits of the Virtual Room." With a casual wave of his hand, the room returned to its pristine form, every trace of the magical experiments vanishing as if they never occurred. Stretching and yawning, he remarked, "Let's go. Aunt Petunia must have cooked already." He then left his mindscape, returning to the reality of his room. Over the last two weeks, following the night he read Lily's letter, Petunia had undergone a remarkable transformation. She had taken over the household chores, cooking, cleaning, and even ensuring Harry was well-fed and cared for. This change in her was not just limited to the household duties; her attitude towards Harry had shifted significantly. She would bring snacks to his room, take him shopping for clothes and books, although Harry refrained from buying toys, considering them unnecessary.

Their relationship was evolving every day, a stark contrast to the years of neglect and disdain. Now, living in what used to be Dudley's room, Harry found a new sense of belonging in the Evan household. The room, once a symbol of Dudley's pampered lifestyle, was now a sanctuary for Harry, a place where he could read, study, and explore his magical abilities in peace.

Aunt Petunia's change was not lost on Harry. He often caught her watching him with a mixture of curiosity and something akin to remorse.

It was as if she was seeing him for the first time, not as the unwanted burden she had always treated him as, but as her sister Lily's son, a living reminder of the family she had lost.

The absence of Vernon and Dudley had left a noticeable void in the house, but it was a void that seemed to bring a sense of calm and normalcy. The constant tension, the fear of unpredictable outbursts, and the oppressive atmosphere that once dominated the Dursleys' home were gone. In its place was a quieter, more thoughtful environment, one that allowed Harry and Petunia to coexist in an almost comfortable silence. Their trips to the local shops were a new experience for Harry. For the first time, he had the freedom to choose clothes that fit, to select books that interested him, and to explore the small pleasures of a normal life. Petunia, while still reserved and often silent, showed a level of care and consideration that Harry had never experienced from her before.

Petunia Evans's transformation in her acceptance and fascination with magic marked a significant shift in the dynamics of Privet Drive. What was once a source of fear and resentment, the divide that had alienated her from her sister Lily, had become an aspect of her life she couldn't help but find awe-inspiring. Her curiosity about the magical world, previously shrouded in disdain, began to blossom, driven perhaps by a deep-seated need to connect with the memory of her sister.

She would often request Harry to demonstrate some magic, her eyes widening in wonder at even the simplest of spells. These moments, though small, bridged a gap that had widened over years of misunderstanding and neglect. Harry, initially cautious, gradually opened up, sharing snippets of what he learned from his books. It was a cautious dance of rebuilding trust, with magic as the unexpected mediator.

This newfound bond extended beyond their shared interest in magic.

Petunia's demeanor towards Harry softened noticeably. She began to treat him not just as a nephew but as a part of her family. Their conversations, once scarce and strained, now carried a hint of warmth. Petunia would often find reasons to talk to him, asking about his day, his studies, and his thoughts on various mundane matters. It was a stark contrast to the years of silence and disregard.

Their shopping trips became a regular activity, a time for both of them to step away from the memories that haunted the walls of their home.

Petunia, who had once begrudgingly bought Harry the bare minimum, now took an active interest in his preferences. She would watch him choose his clothes, occasionally suggesting a color or a style, her suggestions always gentle, a far cry from the dictatorial tone she once used.

In the evenings, they would sit in the living room, sometimes in silence, sometimes engaged in light conversation. Petunia would knit or read, glancing up at Harry, who often had his nose buried in a book. These moments, though quiet, were filled with a sense of companionship that had been absent from the house for so long.

Petunia's curiosity about magic wasn't limited to Harry's demonstrations. She would often ask him to recount what he had learned, her questions reflecting a genuine interest. Harry, in turn, found himself enjoying these discussions, the opportunity to share his knowledge, and perhaps in some way, to share a part of his mother with her.

"Nigel, do you think she's trying to make up for all those years?" Harry once asked, his voice tinged with a mix of hope and uncertainty.

Nigel, ever the voice of reason in Harry's mind, responded, "Perhaps, Master Harry. Or maybe she's realizing that magic isn't the enemy she once thought it was. It's curious how absence and change can alter one's

perspective."

Today too, as Harry descended the stairs of number four, Privet Drive, he was greeted by the comforting sight of Aunt Petunia in the kitchen, humming a familiar tune while she cooked. Smiling, Harry joined in, their voices blending in harmony as they prepared the meal together. The atmosphere in the kitchen was light and joyful, a stark contrast to the years of silence and tension that had once filled the space.

The dish they were preparing was Shepherd's Pie, the very same that had once been a point of contention in the household, though Petunia was blissfully unaware of the manipulations Harry had employed to create that divide. As they worked side by side, Petunia's laughter rang out, a sound that was still new and pleasantly surprising to Harry's ears.

They sat and ate, the kitchen filled with the aroma of the freshly prepared Shepherd's Pie, a dish that once served as a symbol of strife, now a testament to their evolving relationship. As they began to chat, Petunia's curiosity about Harry's progress in the magical world was evident. She leaned forward, her eyes reflecting a genuine interest that was new to their interactions.

"So, Harry, tell me about what you've been learning lately," Petunia inquired, her tone softer than Harry had ever heard before. It was a question that, in the past, would have been unthinkable coming from her. Harry, feeling a mix of surprise and warmth at her interest, replied, "Well, Aunt Petunia, I've been exploring more spells from the Defence Against the Dark Arts book. It's fascinating to see how versatile magic can be for protection."

Petunia nodded, encouraging him to continue. "And what about your other studies? I've noticed you with quite a few books lately."

He smiled, realizing that his aunt's had shown interest in his studies more

and more as more time passed. "I've also been working on Charms. It's incredible how they can be used for different purposes - from levitating objects to lighting up dark spaces."

The conversation flowed more naturally than Harry had ever experienced with Petunia. He found himself describing his experiments in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, carefully omitting the existence of Nigel and the system's more secretive functions. Petunia listened intently, her expression a mix of awe and curiosity.

At one point, Harry cautiously mentioned, "I've been trying to clean up my spells, make them more precise. It's a bit like... tidying up a room, but with magic."

Petunia chuckled softly, a sound that Harry was still getting used to. "I imagine that makes things a lot easier. Cleaning up with a wave of a hand - what a thought!"

Harry laughed along, feeling a sense of camaraderie that had been absent in their previous interactions. "Yes, it certainly does."

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Chapter 39: Completing Quests

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Oof, who wrote this filler chapter? Me, damn, right, it is New Year so let's

post double today!

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After dinner, Harry returned to his room for more training. The room, once Dudley's, now reflected Harry's growing connection to the magical world. Surrounded by his books and notes, he felt a sense of purpose. But first, he needed to check his quests.

[Occulomency and Legilimency:

Basic understanding and defensive techniques.

Mission: Successfully shield thoughts from Nigel.

Reward: 100 points.]

These quests offered him a way to enhance his magical knowledge and skills, crucial for his impending journey to Hogwarts. Each mission was a stepping stone, building up his abilities and understanding of the wizarding world. He realized that earning these points was not just a game but a vital part of his magical education.

[Quest: First Year Charms Mastery

Objective: Master basic first-year charms including the Levitation Charm, Softening Charm, Fire-Making Spell, Wand-Lighting Charm, Unlocking Charm, and others.

Reward: 5 points per charm mastered.

Strategy: Study and practice each charm diligently, focusing on wand movements and incantations.

Quest: Defence Against the Dark Arts Fundamentals

Objective: Gain a basic understanding of Defence Against the Dark Arts, focusing on treating werewolf bites, identifying and countering creatures like imps, ghosts, hags, vampires, and zombies, as well as mastering defensive spells like the Knockback Jinx.

Reward: 5 points for a comprehensive understanding.

Strategy: Engage in thorough research and practical exercises to understand and counteract these dark forces.

Quest: Transfiguration Techniques

Objective: Learn the fundamentals of Transfiguration, including the Transfiguration alphabet and formula, practicing simple transfigurations like Match to Needle, and mastering the Avifors and Flintifors spells.

Reward: 5 points for each successful Transfiguration.

Strategy: Focus on precise wand movements and concentration, practicing regularly to improve skill and accuracy.

Quest: Potions Proficiency

Objective: Brew basic first-year potions including the Cure for Boils, Forgetfulness Potion, Herbicide Potion, and Wiggensweld Potion.

Reward: 5 points per potion successfully brewed for the first time.

Strategy: Study potion recipes, gather the correct ingredients, and practice precise brewing techniques.

Quest: Herbology Exploration

Objective: Study and understand basic Herbology, including the handling of Devil's Snare, Venomous Tentacula, and other magical plants, and learn the Lumos Solem Spell.

Reward: 3 points for mastery of each plant and spell.

Strategy: Research each plant's properties and handling techniques, and practice casting the Lumos Solem Spell.

Quest: Astronomy Basics

Objective: Study the basics of Astronomy, including the use of telescopes, understanding moon and star charts, and learning the names and movements of stars and planets.

Reward: 3 points for thorough knowledge.

Strategy: Engage in nightly observations and study astronomical charts

for a comprehensive understanding.]

Harry had recently mastered the Cure for Boils potion to an impressive 80% in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, a significant achievement in his burgeoning magical career. However, as these accomplishments were achieved in the virtual realm, they weren't recognized by the System as completed quests. The same applied to the Charms and Defence Against the Dark Arts (DADA) spells he had diligently practiced.

Determined to tackle these challenges in the physical world, Harry reached into his system inventory, retrieving his cauldron and the necessary ingredients for the Cure for Boils potion. He carefully set up his workstation, organizing the ingredients: Nettle Leaves, Dittany, Snake Fangs, Porcupine Quills, Horned Slugs and Flobberworm Mucus.

As he began the brewing process, Harry recalled the optimal formula he had discovered in the Virtual Room. He started with the Nettle Leaves, grinding them to a medium fineness to ensure they released their essence effectively without overpowering the potion. He then added them to the cauldron, boiling them for precisely 12 minutes at a medium simmer. The familiar smell of the brewing potion filled the room, bringing a sense of accomplishment and nostalgia.

Next in the sequence of brewing the Cure for Boils potion was Dittany. Harry carefully measured and added the Dittany, mindful of its potent healing properties. He was aware that its placement in the brewing sequence was critical - after the Nettle Leaves but before the Snake Fangs. The Dittany's role was to enhance the potion's healing efficacy, particularly complementing the anti-inflammatory qualities of the Nettle Leaves.

As Harry stirred the potion, he maintained a rhythmic, clockwise motion, a method he had found to be most effective in ensuring a consistent flow

and energy throughout the brewing process. This precise stirring technique was crucial for integrating the Dittany effectively into the potion without overwhelming the other ingredients.

The next ingredient was the Snake Fangs. Harry had learned that these needed to be finely ground to maximize their reactive potential. The maturity of the Snake Fangs played a significant role in the potion's success, with mature Fangs offering a more potent reaction. However, their incorporation required careful handling. Harry added them gradually, a sprinkle here, a dash there, to prevent any volatility that might arise from their potent nature.

Following the Snake Fangs were the Porcupine Quills. Harry had cut them into half-inch lengths, ensuring they dissolved uniformly in the potion. This uniform dissolution was key to the potion's stability, preventing any uneven distribution of the quills' properties.

The preparation of the Horned Slugs was next. Harry grated them, ensuring the even distribution of their mucus throughout the potion. The slugs' mucus was essential for enhancing the potion's binding qualities, a factor that played a significant role in its overall efficacy.

Finally, Harry added the Flobberworm Mucus. He had learned that adding it last was crucial as it smoothed out the potion's texture and bound the ingredients together without diminishing the healing properties of the other components. The mucus's role was to bring all the elements together in harmony, creating a stable and effective potion.

Throughout the brewing process, Harry maintained a medium flame, ensuring that the brew remained active without overheating. This careful heat management was as crucial as the stirring method and the order of ingredient addition.

The potion's texture was smooth, facilitated by the Flobberworm Mucus,

and its consistency was stable, aided by the precise cutting of the Porcupine Quills and the grating of the Horned Slugs. The potency of the potion was balanced, with careful attention paid to the maturity of the ingredients, particularly the Nettle Leaves and Snake Fangs. Its effectiveness was primarily designed for treating skin ailments, notably boils, and was enhanced by the inclusion of Dittany.

As Harry observed the potion's final form, he reflected on the meticulous choice and sequence of ingredient addition. Each element had been carefully selected and added in a way that maximized their individual and collective effects. The potion, currently at an 80% mastery level, indicated a high degree of effectiveness, with potential for minor refinements.

Harry's satisfaction with his achievement was palpable. He had not only mastered the potion but had done so through careful experimentation, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of the ingredients' properties and interactions. His journey in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room had equipped him with the knowledge and skills to replicate this success in the real world.

As Harry meticulously cleaned his workstation in the real world, having successfully recreated the Cure for Boils potion outside the virtual realm, he heard Nigel's voice in his mind, acknowledging his achievement. "Beautifully done, Master Harry. 5 Points," Nigel intoned, his voice carrying the usual hint of dry amusement.

Harry smiled at the acknowledgment. "That's a start," he muttered to himself. Feeling motivated by his recent success, he decided to demonstrate all of his spells from the Defence Against the Dark Arts (DADA) and Charms subjects. He knew this was necessary to prove his mastery and earn more points from the System.

Standing in the middle of his room, Harry focused on the first spell. His innate talent for wandless magic came in handy as he visualized the incantation and the desired effect of the Levitation Charm, "Wingardium Leviosa." The object he targeted floated effortlessly into the air, and a familiar System message appeared before his eyes: "Levitation Charm - Successfully Demonstrated. 5 Points."

Encouraged, Harry moved on to the Softening Charm, "Spongify." He pointed at a hard surface, and upon casting the spell, it became bouncy and rubber-like. The System promptly awarded him another 5 points.

Following his successful demonstration of the Levitation and Softening Charms, Harry moved methodically through the remaining spells from the Defence Against the Dark Arts and Charms curricula. With each spell cast, his confidence and mastery grew, honed by his extensive practice in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room.

The Defence Against the Dark Arts spells were challenging, yet Harry approached them with a determined focus. He seamlessly executed the Curse of the Bogies, expertly controlling its mischievous effects. The Knockback Jinx followed, with Harry directing a forceful push against an imaginary foe. Red Sparks, Verdillious Charm, and its advanced versions, Duo and Tria, illuminated the room with bursts of light, revealing hidden objects. The Wand-Lighting Charm, a simpler yet fundamental spell, cast a comforting glow, while the Smokescreen Spell created a thick cloud, obscuring his view momentarily. Lastly, Green Sparks provided a counter-signal, a testament to Harry's growing versatility in spellcasting.

In Charms, Harry's proficiency was equally evident. The Wand-Lighting Charm and its counterpart, the Wand-Extinguishing Charm, were executed with precision, reflecting his understanding of light

manipulation. The Fire-Making Spell produced a controlled flame, highlighting his skill in handling more volatile magic. The Unlocking Charm, Alohomora, and its opposite, the Locking Spell, Colloportus, demonstrated his grasp of practical enchantments. The Mending Charm, essential for everyday magical repairs, was performed with a meticulous touch. The Box Blasting Charm, though destructive, was handled with care, ensuring safety. The Severing Charm's precision was evident as Harry executed it with exactness. And, with a touch of whimsy, he made a pineapple dance across his desk, a charming display of magical creativity. The Knockback Jinx and Ice Jinx, each with their distinct purposes, were also executed flawlessly.

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Chapter 40: Spell Shop

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This is the second chapter of the day. If you haven't read the first, please check.

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With each spell cast, Harry's System awarded him points. The Defence Against the Dark Arts spells garnered him a total of 40 points, while the Charms spells added another 65 points to his tally. Together with the 5

points from the successful brewing of the Cure for Boils potion, Harry had amassed a total of 110 points, adding the points he had, he now had 175 points. He took a moment to appreciate the progress he had made, a journey that started with basic knowledge and led to a refined skill set in these two crucial areas of magic.

Harry's achievements were not lost on Nigel, whose voice chimed in with a mix of encouragement and its usual sense of humor. "Well done, Master Harry. You've certainly outdone yourself. But remember, the journey of magic is endless. There's always more to learn and master."

Harry rolled his eyes at the magical mentor in his mind, although he knew Nigel was right. "Indeed, Nigel. And I'm just getting started."

Harry, feeling invigorated by his recent accomplishments in spellcasting and potion-making, called upon Nigel in his mind. "Nigel, show me some useful spells, please. I want to learn a few more." He specifically requested to see spells he hadn't mastered yet, and as if on cue, a virtual screen materialized in front of him, listing the new spells along with their point costs in the System.

System Message:

- Charms:

- Skurge Charm: 20 Points

- Dancing Feet Spell: 25 Points

- Disarming Charm: 30 Points

- Memory Charm: 35 Points

- Tickling Charm: 20 Points

- Freezing Charm: 25 Points

- Engorgement Charm: 30 Points

- Shrinking Charm: 30 Points

- General Counter-Spell: 25 Points

- Slowing Charm: 25 Points
- Transfiguration Knowledge:
- Beetle Buttons: 15 Points
- Rabbit Slippers: 20 Points
- Vera Verto: 30 Points
- Reparifarge: 25 Points
- Porcupine to Pin Cushion: 25 Points
- Avifors Spell (Revision): 15 Points
- Transfiguration Spell: 30 Points
- COS Vera Verto demo: 40 Points
- Potions Recipes:
- Fire Protection Potion: 25 Points
- Strengthening Solution: 20 Points
- Swelling Solution: 20 Points
- Wiggerweld Potion (Revision): 15 Points
- Hair-Raising Potion: 20 Points
- Girding Potion: 25 Points
- Defence Against the Dark Arts:
- Homorphus Charm: 35 Points
- Verdimillious Duo Spell: 25 Points
- Vermillious Duo: 25 Points
- Vermillious Tria: 30 Points
- Tickling Charm: 20 Points
- Full Body-Bind Curse: 40 Points
- Fumos Duo: 25 Points
- Softening Charm: 20 Points

Harry perused the list of new spells and their point costs with a thoughtful expression. His recent accumulation of points in the System

presented him with a tantalizing array of magical possibilities. Each spell on the list represented not just a new skill to master but a step closer to becoming a more formidable and versatile wizard. He had 175 points to spend, a substantial amount, yet he knew he needed to choose wisely.

"Choices, choices," he mumbled, considering which spells would be most beneficial. His eyes scanned the list, lingering on each spell as he weighed its utility and the challenge it presented.

Nigel's voice emerged in his mind. "Quite the shopping list you've got there, Master Harry. Planning to become a one-man magical army, are we?"

Harry couldn't help but chuckle. Nigel's tone ever helpful, had a way of grounding him, reminding him not to get too carried away. "Well, Nigel, I've got to be prepared for anything, don't I? Hogwarts won't know what hit it."

"Indeed," Nigel replied, his tone laced with a hint of amusement. "Just be sure not to bite off more than you can chew. Remember, mastering a spell takes more than just reading about it."

Harry nodded, knowing Nigel was right. He decided to focus on spells that would offer immediate practical benefits and contribute to his defense and magical knowledge. After some contemplation, he made his selections.

"Let's go with the Disarming Charm from Charms. It's a dual-purpose spell, useful in both defense and dueling," Harry decided, deducting 30 points for the purchase.

Harry tapped his chin thoughtfully, considering his next choice from the list Nigel provided. "The Freezing Charm seems quite useful," he mused, deducting another 25 points. This spell, he figured, could be instrumental in various situations, from stopping objects in motion to creating

temporary obstacles.

"Now, for Transfiguration," Harry said, his eyes scanning the options.

"The Avifors Spell could be handy." He remembered reading about it - a spell that transformed small objects into birds. It wasn't just the transformation aspect that intrigued him but the potential for understanding deeper principles of Transfiguration. He spent 15 points on acquiring it.

He looked at the Defence Against the Dark Arts spells. "The Full Body-Bind Curse seems like a powerful defensive tool," he decided, spending 40 points. The idea of completely immobilizing an opponent, especially in a dangerous situation, was too valuable to pass up.

Having spent a total of 110 points, Harry still had 60 points left. He decided to save these for future use, knowing that his magical journey was just beginning, and more opportunities would arise to expand his repertoire.

Nigel, observing Harry's choices, commented, "A prudent selection, Master Harry. A balanced approach to your magical education - spells and transfigurations. You're covering all bases."

Harry nodded, feeling a sense of satisfaction with his selections. He understood that each new spell brought with it a responsibility to learn and practice diligently. "Time to get to work then," he said with a determined smile.

Entering the Virtual Potion Crafting Room once again, Harry was greeted by the familiar sight of the space where he had previously tested his spells on virtual versions of Vernon and Dudley. He couldn't help but smile at the memory of their comical discomfort, satisfying retribution for their years of mistreatment.

"I can always find more potion recipes by just reading and copying books

into the System's Library," Harry thought aloud. "But quickly learning spells is better." The convenience of the System integrating new spells directly into his being, starting him off with initial mastery, was far more efficient than traditional learning methods.

"Nigel, please create my uncle and cousin again," Harry requested, eager to test his newly acquired spells.

The air in the Virtual Room shimmered as Nigel, the AI assistant, obliged. Soon, the familiar figures of Vernon and Dudley appeared, looking as unpleasant and disdainful as their real-life counterparts. Yet, there was something comically different about them this time: they were both clad in absurdly colorful and mismatched clothes, wielding swords that seemed far too grandiose for their mundane appearances.

Harry chuckled at the sight. "Well, this should be interesting," he remarked, amused by Nigel's choice of attire for the duo. It was as if they had been plucked from a medieval fair and dropped into the Virtual Room.

"How should I start?" Harry mused, eyeing the virtual representations of his relatives.

Nigel's response came with a hint of his characteristic sarcasm. "I thought giving them some semblance of a fighting chance might be entertaining.

Swords seemed fittingly ridiculous."

Harry nodded, amused by Nigel's imagination. "Let's start with the Disarming Charm," he decided, focusing on the spell he had just acquired.

Pointing his finger at Vernon, he visualized the spell's effect.

"Expelliarmus!" he exclaimed, and with a flick of his wrist, the sword flew out of Vernon's hand, clattering across the virtual floor.

Encouraged by his success, Harry turned his attention to Dudley. "And now for you," he said, casting the same spell. Dudley's sword similarly

flew out of his hand, leaving him looking bewildered and defenseless.

"Next, the Freezing Charm," Harry said, aiming at Vernon. "Immobulus!"

The spell took immediate effect, freezing Vernon in place, his expression frozen in a comical grimace.

Dudley, seeing his virtual father immobilized, attempted to flee, but Harry was quick to act. "Immobulus!" he repeated, and Dudley too was frozen, mid-stride.

Satisfied with the effectiveness of the Freezing Charm, Harry contemplated his next move. "Time for something a bit different," he mused. "Let's see how they handle the Avifors Spell." With a wave of his hand, he cast the spell, and to his delight, Vernon's colorful clothing transformed into a flock of small, chirping birds that fluttered around the room before vanishing. Dudley's attire followed suit, leaving virtual Dudley looking baffled and slightly embarrassed in his suddenly plain undergarments.

Harry couldn't help but laugh at the scene. "Now, for the finale," he declared. Focusing on the Full Body-Bind Curse, he pointed at the still immobile figures of Vernon and Dudley. "Petrificus Totalus!" he exclaimed, and though they were already immobilized by the Freezing Charm, the additional spell seemed to reinforce their helpless state.

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Chapter 41: Physical Exercise

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Happy New Years!

--

As Harry stepped back to admire his handiwork, Nigel's voice chimed in.

"Quite the display, Master Harry. You've rendered them utterly defenseless and a bit ridiculous, if I may add."

Harry nodded, feeling a sense of achievement at the successful use of his new spells in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room. "It's good practice," he acknowledged to himself, "But not enough." The recent spellcasting was satisfying, yet Harry knew that to truly master his magic, especially his wandless capabilities, he needed a greater challenge.

"Nigel," he said, addressing the AI companion, "can you emulate a grand wizard? Keep their forms as Vernon and Dudley; it fires my spirit. But make them, well, capable of moving around unlike their real selves and give them magic and wands. I want to test all my spells in combat." Harry was aware of the challenge ahead. Combat spellcasting, especially wandless, required immense focus and precision, skills he was still developing.

As if responding to his thoughts, the virtual figures of Vernon and Dudley transformed before his eyes. They still retained their comical appearance, but now each held a wand, their postures hinting at a newfound magical prowess.

"Very well, Master Harry," Nigel's voice resonated in the room, tinged with a hint of intrigue. "But remember, combat magic is a dance of strategy and quick thinking. Let's see how you fare."

The virtual Vernon and Dudley began to move, their actions surprisingly

fluid and skilled, a stark contrast to their real-world counterparts. They raised their wands, ready to engage in magical combat.

Dudley was the first to attack, launching a spell Harry didn't recognize.

"Stupefy!" he exclaimed, his wand emitting a bright red jet of light.

Harry, caught off guard, stumbled backward, narrowly avoiding the Stunning Spell. It was a stark reminder that in this virtual combat, Dudley and Vernon were not restricted to spells Harry knew.

Harry quickly regained his composure, realizing the need for immense focus, especially in wandless magic. He retaliated with a "Levitation Charm," *Wingardium Leviosa*, targeting Dudley's clothes. The charm, though successful in lifting Dudley slightly off the ground, was clumsier than Harry had intended, his concentration faltering under the pressure of combat.

Vernon, seizing the opportunity, cast an unknown spell, a jet of green light aiming straight for Harry. "Avifors!" Harry shouted instinctively, turning the table into a flock of birds. The spell, and flying avian, managed to deflect the attack, but just barely. Harry's execution was far from perfect, his wandless casting still unrefined under duress.

Harry knew he needed to adapt quickly. Wandless magic required a different approach, a deeper connection with his magical core. He focused, envisioning the energy flowing through him, and cast a "Freezing Charm," *Immobulus*, at Vernon. The spell hit its mark, but the effect was weaker than expected, only slowing Vernon down rather than fully immobilizing him.

Dudley, now back on the ground, launched a series of spells, each more complex than the last. "Expelliarmus! Incendio! Petrificus Totalus!" he yelled in quick succession. Harry, struggling to keep up, countered with a mix of dodges and hastily cast protective spells. His responses were

reactive rather than strategic, his inexperience in magical combat evident. He created Ice Jinx to block some of the spells.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, a blend of encouragement and sarcasm. "Quite the magical duel you've got here, Master Harry. But remember, flailing about is not a strategy."

Harry, amidst dodging another spell from Dudley, replied mentally, "Easier said than done, Nigel."

Vernon and Dudley, their wands raised high, chanted in unison, "Fiendfyre!" The incantation unleashed a roaring blaze, its fierce flames rapidly melting the ice Harry had conjured. The fire, voracious and uncontrolled, began to advance towards Harry, threatening to engulf even the smokescreen he had created.

As the Fiendfyre roared towards Harry, its flames burning with an intensity that threatened to consume everything in their path, Harry realized the gravity of the situation. Fiendfyre, a magical fire known for its destructive power and difficulty to control, was not something he could easily counter with his current repertoire of spells.

Dudley, with a smirk, watched the flames advance, confident in the spell's potency. Vernon, standing beside him, prepared to launch another spell, anticipating Harry's defeat.

Harry, his mind racing for a solution, hoped his mastery of the "Ice Jinx" could save him. It was a desperate thought - ice against such a powerful fire - but it was the only option he had. He focused his mind, attempting to generate ice in a form large enough to at least slow down the Fiendfyre.

Nigel, observing the scene, remarked, "A bit of ice in the face of a dragon's breath. Bold move, Master Harry."

Harry's Ice Jinx conjured a massive wall of ice, rising to meet the fiery

onslaught. For a moment, the ice held, steam and mist filling the air as the two elemental forces clashed. But the Fiendfyre, fueled by magical energy, began to melt through the barrier, its flames undeterred.

Realizing the futility of his actions, Harry quickly shifted his strategy. He decided to use his modified "Levitation Charm" (Wingardium Leviosa) on his own clothes, making himself lighter to enhance his mobility. This spell modification was a gamble to gain agility and create distance between himself and the Fiendfyre.

Nigel, sensing the urgency, advised, "Swift feet may be your best ally here, Master Harry."

Harry darted around the room, his movements enhanced by the spell, avoiding the flames that continued to spread. Vernon and Dudley, surprised by Harry's sudden burst of speed, tried to keep up with their spells, but Harry's agility kept him one step ahead.

However, the Fiendfyre was relentless, and Harry soon found himself cornered. The heat was intense, and he could feel the searing air threatening to overwhelm him. In a last-ditch effort, Harry cast the "Smokescreen Spell," hoping to create a diversion and obscure his opponents' vision.

The smokescreen provided a momentary cover, but Vernon and Dudley, experienced in the virtual dueling program, quickly adapted. They continued their assault, casting spells through the smoke, trying to locate Harry.

As the smoke cleared and the light failed to have any effect, Harry realized he was outmatched. The virtual Vernon and Dudley, programmed to be formidable opponents, had the upper hand with the Fiendfyre. Harry knew that in a real duel, such a spell could have disastrous consequences, and his current level of skill was not sufficient

to counter it effectively.

Breathing heavily and feeling the heat intensifying, Harry made the decision to end the simulation. "Nigel, terminate the program," he said, his voice a mixture of frustration and resignation.

The flames vanished instantly as the virtual environment reset, leaving Harry standing alone in the now-empty room. The lesson was clear - there was much more he needed to learn.

Sitting in the now empty Virtual Potion Crafting Room, Harry's breath came in heavy gasps. The phantom sensation of Fiendfyre's hot flames lingered on his skin, a vivid reminder of the simulation's intensity. He realized the stark truth - his malnourished body, a legacy of years of neglect at the Dursleys, was catching up to him. Though he had made progress, it was not enough. His recent combat simulation against the virtual representations of Vernon and Dudley had highlighted a crucial gap in his magical education.

"I need to work out, Nigel," Harry said, determination evident in his voice. "My physical strength isn't matching up to my magical abilities. I need to put on some muscle, learn some dodging techniques, and increase my stamina. Wizards can't rely solely on spells."

Nigel's voice, responded with a pep. "Indeed, Master Harry. A sound mind in a sound body, as they say. Though I must say, watching you duck and dive in there was more entertaining than I anticipated."

Harry smiled faintly at Nigel's remark, as always AI was quick witted in response, and had a twisted way of uplifting his mood. "I'm glad I could provide some entertainment. But seriously, Nigel, I need a training regimen, something that will help me build my physical endurance and agility."

"Very well," Nigel replied. "Let's design a comprehensive fitness program

for you. You'll need a blend of cardiovascular exercises for stamina, strength training for muscle building, and agility drills for quick reflexes. And perhaps, Master Harry, you should consider some basic martial arts training as well. It never hurts to have a few physical tricks up your sleeve."

Harry nodded in agreement. "That sounds like a plan. Let's get started."

Over the next few weeks, Harry embarked on a rigorous physical training routine. Each morning, he would wake up early, often before Petunia started her daily chores, and head to the small backyard of Privet Drive. There, under Nigel's virtual guidance, he would jog in place, do sets of push-ups, sit-ups, and other bodyweight exercises. He focused on building his core strength, knowing it was essential for both physical and magical endurance.

His afternoons were dedicated to agility training. Nigel had created a series of virtual obstacles in the Virtual Room, and Harry would practice dodging, weaving, and jumping, honing his reflexes and spatial awareness. The physical exertion was exhausting, but Harry could feel himself getting stronger, faster, and more confident with each passing day.

As the sun set, Harry would often practice martial arts basics. Nigel, drawing upon various styles and techniques, instructed Harry in the art of self-defense. Harry learned basic stances, punches, kicks, and blocks. Although he hoped never to use them in a real fight, he understood the value of being prepared.

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Chapter 42: Acceptance Letter

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A great shout-out to Earl GoldPeak, Howellsy, Zavien king, Tom, Geoffrey Abbott, Kevin Geyer, Jesse Melbourne, SloppyBludger1510, Joseph Bibb, Avacus, Surge1301, Mellomellen, Cooper Taylor, Skorno, Wildvoid, Kaleb Deeth, sebastian michaelis, Viswa Venkat Mounish Vadlapudi, Vochel, Dez, Edward Parsons, TJ Cruz, L4kritz, Edward, Tempest1618! I thank you all for supporting me! You help more than you realize! Much appreciated!

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Night after night, Harry dedicated himself to a regimen of magical and physical training. As he lay in bed, his body aching from the day's exercises, he would mentally review his progress, reflecting on the quests he had completed and the spells he had perfected. His journey through the magical disciplines was not just about gaining points; it was about building a foundation for his future at Hogwarts.

In the realm of Potions, Harry continued to impress. His recent mastery of the Cure for Boils potion was just the beginning. He delved into the brewing of the Forgetfulness Potion, a delicate concoction that required precise timing and temperature control. The Herbicide Potion, essential for any aspiring wizard interested in Herbology, was his next challenge. Meticulously measuring and mixing the ingredients, Harry successfully brewed it, earning him another 15 points.

Transfiguration was a field that fascinated Harry. He spent hours practicing the basics of the Transfiguration alphabet and formula, slowly but surely getting the hang of transforming objects into their desired forms. The Match to Needle transfiguration, a fundamental exercise in the art, was now within his grasp. He also revisited the Avifors spell, refining his technique. Each successful transfiguration brought him closer to understanding this complex and intriguing branch of magic, and his System awarded him points accordingly.

Harry's exploration of Herbology was equally diligent. The handling of magical plants like Devil's Snare and Venomous Tentacula required a careful approach, and Harry took no chances. He studied their properties, learning how to care for and utilize these unique flora. The Lumos Solem spell, effective in handling light-sensitive plants, was another addition to his growing list of magical skills. His System recognized his efforts in Herbology, adding more points to his tally.

In Astronomy, Harry engaged in nightly observations, studying the moon and star charts. He learned the names and movements of celestial bodies, finding a sense of peace in the vastness of the night sky. His understanding of Astronomy deepened, earning him recognition from the System in the form of points.

However, it wasn't all about magic and training. Harry's relationship with his Aunt Petunia had transformed dramatically. They were no longer just cohabitants in the same house; they were family. Harry helped Petunia with chores around the house, often engaging in light conversation as they worked. He noticed the small changes in her demeanor - the way she smiled more often, how her eyes seemed less burdened. Their shared meals were no longer silent affairs but filled with discussions about their day, sometimes even touching upon the magical world that Harry was

slowly becoming a part of.

One particular evening, after dinner, Harry found Petunia sitting in the living room, her hands clasped in her lap, a thoughtful expression on her face. Harry sat beside her, curious about what was on her mind.

"Harry," Petunia began, her voice hesitant. "I've been thinking about your mother, Lily. She was so fascinated by magic, much like you. I... I regret not understanding her more, not being there for her."

Harry listened, a surge of empathy for his aunt welling within him. "Aunt Petunia, I think she would have been happy to know that we are here, together. Maybe it's never too late to understand."

Petunia smiled faintly, a tear glistening in her eye. "Maybe you're right, Harry. Maybe you're right."

And just like that, weeks passed, and the destined day arrived. In one June morning, just after Harry's workout, he walked into the house when he saw a letter on the doormat. "Aunty! My letter arrived!" Harry called out as soon as he saw the crest of Hogwarts. Petunia was right beside him in a matter of seconds, reading the letter's envelope. It read, "Mr. H. Potter, The Second Bedroom on the Second Floor, 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey." Petunia was as excited as Harry. "Quick! Open it," she urged.

Harry broke the seal on the front and took out a thick parchment, reading the acceptance letter aloud:

"Dear Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins on 1st September. We await your owl by no later than 31st July.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall,

Deputy Headmistress"

Petunia clapped her hands together, her excitement palpable. "Oh, Harry, this is wonderful! You're going to Hogwarts, just like your mother."

Harry's eyes sparkled with unbridled joy. "I can't believe it, Aunt Petunia. I'm actually going to learn magic, real magic!"

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "Well, Master Harry, it appears your journey into the magical world is officially underway. Time to trade those virtual cauldrons for real ones, I suppose."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's comment. "You've been a great help, Nigel. But now, it's time for the real deal." Harry then turned the letter to check the list of equipments and books he was to purchase.

HOGWARTS SCHOOL of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

UNIFORM

First-year students will require:

Three sets of plain work robes (black)

One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear

One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)

One winter cloak (black, with silver fastenings)

Please note that all pupils' clothes should carry name tags.

COURSE BOOKS

All students should have a copy of each of the following:

The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk

A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot

Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling

A Beginner's Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch

One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore

Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander

The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

#### OTHER EQUIPMENT

One wand

One cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)

One set glass or crystal phials

One telescope

One set brass scales

Students may also bring, if they desire, an owl OR a cat OR a toad.

PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST YEARS

ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICK.

Yours sincerely,

Lucinda Thomsonicle-Pocus

Chief Attendant of Witchcraft Provisions

Petunia clapped her hands together enthusiastically, "Let's go and get your things, Harry." Her voice held a hint of excitement, a stark contrast to the cold indifference she had once shown towards anything related to the magical world. Harry nodded, his heart swelling with happiness at the thought of finally starting school at Hogwarts. They quickly prepared and set out for London, with Petunia once again asking Tom, the bartender of the Leaky Cauldron, to open the path to Diagon Alley.

As they walked through the bustling magical alley, Harry couldn't help but feel a sense of belonging. The sights, sounds, and smells of Diagon Alley were like nothing in the Muggle world. Wizards and witches of all ages moved about, shopping for various magical goods. Harry's eyes widened in wonder at the array of shops, each offering its own unique magical wares. Despite coming here often, he couldn't get bored of the

atmosphere.

Their first stop was Gringotts, the wizarding bank. Harry had visited Gringotts before, but this time, his visit had a different purpose – to access his family vault. As they entered the grand marble building, a goblin at the reception gave them a look of disdain. However, his expression swiftly changed to one of respect when Harry greeted him in fluent Gobbledegook, a language few wizards mastered.

"May your vaults stand as fortresses of wealth, impervious to all who seek to breach their defenses, and may your riches multiply like the stars in the night sky," Harry said with a respectful nod.

The goblin, clearly impressed, replied in kind, "May your treasures remain hidden from the prying eyes of thieves and interlopers, and may the gems in your possession shine brighter than the sun."

Their exchange was brief but filled with mutual respect. Harry then introduced himself, "I am Harry Potter, the Heir of the Potter Family. I am here to gain access to my vault."

The goblin was once again surprised by the kid's identity but promptly rang a bell, summoning another goblin. "Escort Mr. Potter to Grimbletack," the goblin instructed. With a nod, the goblin led Harry to a chamber.

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Chapter 43: Potter Vault

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The goblin's eyes gleamed with a mixture of surprise and curiosity as Harry and Petunia were ushered into Grumbletack's office. The room, adorned with ancient goblin artifacts and gleaming treasures, spoke of the vast wealth and history of the goblin nation. Grumbletack, an elder goblin with a sharp gaze and an air of authority, sat behind a large, intricately carved desk.

"Welcome, Mr. Potter," Grumbletack greeted in English, his voice deep and gravelly.

Harry replied in fluent Gobbledegook, the goblin language, "May your blades be ever sharp, your spells potent, and your cunning unmatched in the pursuit of prosperity." His words flowed naturally, a testament to his dedication to understanding the magical world in its entirety.

Grumbletack's expression shifted to one of respect, a rare occurrence for a goblin dealing with wizards. "May your enemies quail before your might, their ambitions shattered like fragile glass, and may your strength be a beacon for all who honor our traditions," he responded, a hint of a smirk on his face. "I didn't know the Heir of Potter was versed in our language."

Harry smiled modestly. "A skill I picked up. I believe it's important to respect and understand the cultures within our world."

This pleased Grumbletack. He gestured for Harry and Petunia to take a seat. "Now, Mr. Potter, what brings you to Gringotts today?"

He then added, "I worked with your father and grandfather many years. Both great men." Harry was pleased to hear his father and grandfather praised. Tapping the table, he said, "I would like to access my family vault as the sole heir of the Potter family, but I was informed the key is

in the hands of Albus Dumbledore."

Grimbletack nodded, "You are informed well. But that is not a problem.

Since the vault is yours, you can always re-summon the key."

Harry was surprised; he hadn't known about this function. He pondered the implications, wondering about the security of such a system. What if someone had forced him when he was small and gained access to his vault?

Sensing Harry's concerns, Grimbletack explained, "It is not as easy as you think. First of all, you must be in Gringotts, secondly, a Senior Goblin must draw a rune. All of our crafts are special and have resummoning ability."

Harry nodded, then asked, "I was also informed that Dumbledore would know if I were to try to access my Family Vault. Does it mean you inform him?"

Grimbletack smirked, "A great Wizard of his calibre had probably placed a spell on the key and would be notified when it moved. We will not be informing him, no, but he will know nonetheless."

Content with the answer, Harry said, "Please draw the rune, I would like to summon my key."

Grimbletack stood up, his movements carrying the weight of centuries of goblin wisdom. He took a piece of metal and laid it on the table. With a small, intricately carved knife, he began to etch a rune onto the metal. The rune glowed faintly as Grimbletack chanted in Gobbledegook. The air in the room seemed to thicken, and a sense of ancient magic permeated the atmosphere.

As the rune's glow intensified, Grimbletack took a small, empty box and placed it in front of Harry. "Place a drop of your blood the box," he instructed.

Harry did as told. As his hand hovered over the box, dripping a drop, the rune's glow surged, and a small key materialized inside it. Harry looked at it in awe, the symbol of his family's legacy now tangible in his hands.

"Thank you," Harry said, pocketing the key. "I have one more question. Is there a way to protect my vault, so that even if someone were to force me here, they couldn't access it?"

Grimbletack answered Harry's inquiry with a solemn nod. "Indeed, I hold the second key to your vault. If you come here under duress, I will know." His voice carried the assurance of centuries of goblin expertise in safeguarding the treasures entrusted to them.

Harry, satisfied with this level of security, stood up. "Please, lead the way," he requested. Petunia, who had been observing the exchange with a mixture of curiosity and awe, followed closely behind as they descended into the depths of Gringotts.

The journey to the Potter family vault was an experience in itself. They traveled deep underground, passing through levels of security and enchantments that spoke of the ancient and noble lineage of the Potter family. Their vault was located in one of the deepest and most secure areas of the bank, a testament to the family's significant status in the wizarding world.

Grimbletack skillfully maneuvered the wagon, guiding them through the labyrinthine tunnels of the bank. The deeper they went, the more Harry felt a sense of connection to his family's past. Finally, they arrived in front of a giant vault door, imposing in its size and adorned with intricate carvings that shimmered with protective enchantments.

Harry and Grimbletack used their keys simultaneously to unlock the vault. As the door creaked open, a puff of green smoke billowed out, briefly obscuring their view. When the smoke cleared, Harry's eyes

widened in astonishment at the sight before him.

Inside the vault were mountains of galleons, piles of precious gems, and numerous chests filled with family heirlooms. Along the walls were shelves stacked with ancient books, their spines embossed with gold lettering, hinting at the wealth of knowledge contained within. There were artifacts of magical significance, some gleaming with enchantments, others whispering of history and legacy. The air was thick with the scent of old parchment and metal, a tangible reminder of the centuries of wealth and power accumulated by the Potter family.

Harry was struck by the sheer magnitude of what lay before him. The gold glinted under the dim light, each coin a symbol of his family's enduring legacy. There were rows of neatly labeled chests, some bound with magical locks, others adorned with family crests. The books ranged from ancient spellbooks to historical accounts of magical events, their pages filled with the wisdom of generations.

Grimbletack chuckled at Harry's expression. "The Potter family owns several establishments around the world," he explained. "There are patented magical products to their name, and the lands in Diagon Alley bring constant profit. Adding to the fortune your ancestors amassed, this vault has never seen a day without gold."

Harry turned to the old goblin, a newfound respect in his eyes. "Thank you for your hard work, Grimbletack." His voice was sincere, recognizing the effort and diligence the goblins put into managing such wealth.

Grimbletack smirked in response, his eyes gleaming. "It was my pleasure," he said. And indeed it was. Goblins cherished gold, even if it wasn't their own, and the opportunity to oversee such a vast fortune was a source of pride for Grimbletack.

Harry walked into the Potter family vault, his eyes scanning the books

and chests laid before him. "I will take a look at them, if you don't mind," he said to Petunia, who nodded in agreement. Grimbletack, with a knowing look, stepped outside the vault, leaving Harry to explore. "Take your time," he said, summoning his desk and papers, immersing himself in his work.

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Chapter 44: Treasure Trove!

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Check Paragraph comments for pictures of the artifacts...

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Harry began to leaf through the books one by one. As he did, the Technology System seamlessly copied all the content into its Digital Library. This process took about two hours, during which Petunia patiently waited inside the vault, occasionally glancing around with a mixture of awe and curiosity. Grimbletack, busy with his work, remained just outside.

After Harry finished with the books, he turned his attention to the heirlooms. Using the Observe function of the System, he examined several items. The System's voice echoed in his mind, providing details of each:

"Silver Goblet, enchanted to detect poisons. Crafted in the 13th century, a relic of the first Potter alchemist."

"Enchanted Mirror, capable of showing distant locations. A gift from a French sorcerer to your great-great-grandfather."

"Magical Compass, points to the nearest source of strong magic. Created by a renowned wizard cartographer."

Harry was intrigued by each item, but he noticed the absence of the fabled Invisibility Cloak. Nigel's voice, ever-present in his mind, confirmed, "The cloak isn't here, Master Harry. Perhaps it's in another location or with someone else."

Moving on, Harry's gaze fell upon a shelf containing an array of wands, each representing a piece of the Potter family's heritage. "Nigel, observe these wands and recommend the most compatible one for me. Check if any of them have tracking spells."

"Analyzing now," Nigel responded. The System ran through each wand, and Nigel relayed the findings:

"Wand 1: Oak, 12 inches, dragon heartstring core. Well-suited for Transfiguration. No tracking spell detected."

"Wand 2: Hawthorn, 11.5 inches, unicorn hair core. Excellent for defensive spells. No tracking."

"Wand 3: Elm, 13 inches, phoenix feather core. A powerful wand for charm work. No tracking."

"Wand 4: Walnut, 10 inches, thestral tail hair core. Rare and powerful, especially in the hands of a true seer. No tracking."

After a moment of contemplation, Nigel suggested, "The Elm, 13 inches, phoenix feather core seems most intriguing, especially given your potential for deeper magical insights, Master Harry."

Harry reached for the Elm wand, feeling a surge of energy as he held it. It

was as if the wand recognized its new master. "This feels right," Harry said, a sense of certainty in his voice.

"Yes, a fine choice indeed," Nigel agreed. "No tracking spells on any of these wands. They are safe to use."

Harry discretely slid the Elm wand into his inventory, a feature of his magical System that allowed him to store items without physically carrying them. He then turned his attention to the three heirlooms he had observed earlier. With a quick, unnoticeable gesture, he added each to his inventory. As he did so, System Messages flashed briefly in his mind:

[System Message: Silver Goblet with Poison Detection added to Inventory]

[System Message: Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing added to Inventory]

[System Message: Magical Compass added to Inventory]

[System Message: Enchanted Chess Set added to Inventory. A gift from a Spanish wizard to your great-grandfather. The pieces move autonomously, strategizing against opponents. Ideal for developing tactical skills.]

Harry marveled at the craftsmanship of the chess set. He could already imagine playing against the magically intelligent pieces, honing his strategic thinking.

[System Message: Time-Turner added to Inventory. Acquired by your ancestor during the experimentation with time magic. Use with extreme caution; can reverse time for short durations.]

The Time-Turner, delicate and shimmering, fascinated Harry. Nigel's voice cautioned in his mind, "Remember, Master Harry, tampering with time can have unforeseen consequences. Best used sparingly, if at all."

[System Message: Invisibility Ring added to Inventory. Crafted by a

master enchantress as a wedding gift. Renders the wearer invisible, though not infallible to powerful detection spells.]

The ring, simple yet elegant, intrigued Harry. He thought of the tactical advantage it could provide, especially in situations requiring stealth or escape.

[System Message: Phoenix Feather Quill added to Inventory. A gift from a famed Magizooologist. Writes with ink that appears or disappears at the user's command.]

Harry tested the quill, watching in amazement as the ink vanished and reappeared on a piece of parchment. "Quite handy for confidential notes," Nigel noted.

[System Message: Goblet of Fiery Flames added to Inventory. An ancient artifact that can conjure violet flames, cold to the touch but capable of burning through most magical barriers.]

Harry handled the goblet carefully, feeling the latent power within. "A useful tool for certain... fiery situations," Nigel quipped.

[System Message: Crystal Ball of True Seeing added to Inventory. A powerful divination tool, said to reveal truths and future events to those with the gift of sight.]

Though skeptical of divination, Harry couldn't help but be intrigued by the crystal ball's swirling depths. "A glimpse into the future, perhaps," Nigel mused.

[System Message: Potion of Eternal Vigor added to Inventory. A rare potion that temporarily enhances physical and magical stamina. Brewed by a renowned potion master.]

Harry considered the potion's potential, especially in demanding situations requiring extra endurance. Nigel cautioned, "Use it wisely, Master Harry. Such enhancements come at a price."

[System Message: Book of Ancient Runes added to Inventory. Contains knowledge of forgotten runes and their applications. Believed to be authored by a Rune Master.]

The book, its pages filled with arcane symbols, piqued Harry's interest in the language of magic. "Runes, the building blocks of magic," Nigel noted.

[System Message: Potion Recipe Book of Legendary Brews added to Inventory. Contains recipes for potions lost to time, some with untold powers.]

Harry flipped through the book, his mind racing with the possibilities of brewing these forgotten potions. "A potion master's dream," Nigel commented.

[System Message: Enchanted Haven Briefcase added to Inventory. Originally acquired by an adventurous ancestor of the Potter family, known for his exploration and collection of magical creatures. The briefcase, a masterpiece of magical craftsmanship, houses a miniature world within.]

Harry stumbled upon a small, finger-sized bag, seemingly innocuous but beautifully crafted. Its exterior resembled a tiny briefcase, intricately detailed and exuding an aura of ancient magic. Curiosity piqued, Harry observed the item closely.

[System Message: System Observe activated. Revealing artifact's secrets...]

The System revealed that this was no ordinary bag. It was an "Enchanted Haven Briefcase," a magical container with a vast world inside. The outside, resembling a dense forest, was only a glimpse of the wonders it contained. Created over a millennium ago, this artifact was a testament to the Potter family's long history of magical exploration and their

affinity for magical creatures.

[System Message: Artifact Abilities Unlocked]

Expandable World: Utter the password, and the briefcase expands into a full-sized entrance to a few acres of enchanted land.

Undetectable: The briefcase and its contents are undetectable by most magical means.

Homing Feature: Once activated, the briefcase will always return to its master if lost or misplaced.

Self-Sustaining Ecosystem: The enclosed forest thrives independently, with its own flora and fauna.

Protected Mansion: At the heart of the forest lies a magically guarded mansion, untouched by time and elements.

The System revealed that the briefcase was originally the property of a Potter ancestor, known for his adventurous spirit and love for magical creatures. He had created this enchanted space as a sanctuary and research area for the magical creatures he encountered in his travels.

Over the centuries, as it passed through generations, its true nature was forgotten, leading it to be stored away in Gringotts, unrecognized for the treasure it was.

[System Message: Password for activation - "Potter's Haven."]

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Chapter 45: Shopping Spree!

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Note 1: I'm not sure if Newt's briefcase is known to others years after, but there's an incident where his beasts escape from the briefcase in Hufflepuff Common Room, and they're later found in several locations in Hogwarts. I've decided to go with it being common knowledge. If anyone has canon information about it, please let me know.

2- The idea of house elves depending on a bond isn't mentioned in canon, but it's a sensible way to explain their behavior. For example, when Winky was freed, she seemed drained, and most house elves are eager to bond. This also helps avoid delving into the complex issue of the entire race being enslaved and conditioned to accept a slave mentality, which I really don't want to address in this novel.

---

Harry, holding the miniature briefcase, felt a surge of excitement. This was a discovery akin to that of Newt Scamander's famous case but with a history tied to his own family. The idea of having a self-contained world, complete with a mansion and a thriving ecosystem, was fascinating.

Nigel, observing Harry's reaction, commented, "A world within a world, Master Harry. Quite the find, I must say. Imagine the secrets it holds."

Harry was eager to explore this miniature world, to see the forest and the creatures it might house, and to step into the mansion that stood as a legacy of his family's past. However, he decided to wait before activating it, knowing that such exploration required time and preparation.

Harry carefully pocketed the briefcase, planning to return to it when the time was right. The potential of this artifact was immense, not just as a resource but as a connection to his family's adventurous and magical

heritage.

As Harry looked at the many other artifacts, he realized the depth and breadth of his family's legacy. Each item in his inventory was not just a tool but a piece of history, a testament to the Potter family's role in the magical world. There were still tens of others, but he would check them later.

"Quite the collection we have here, Master Harry," Nigel said, his voice reflecting a hint of awe. "Your family's legacy is indeed rich and varied." Harry nodded, feeling a sense of pride and responsibility. "This is more than just wealth," he said. "It's a heritage that I need to honor and preserve."

Walking out of the vault, Harry couldn't help but feel a mix of exhilaration and responsibility. The wealth and history of his family were now more real to him than ever. Turning to Grumbletack, he inquired about a practical matter. "I heard there's a special pouch that allows me to withdraw money without needing to come here. Is that true?"

Grimbletack nodded, his expression shifting to one of business-like efficiency. "Yes, it's known as the Gringotts Withdrawal Pouch. The cost is 13 Galleons, and it has a monthly withdrawal limit of 50 Galleons."

Harry pondered for a moment, "Is the limit in place to control the flow of gold in the market?"

The goblin's lips curled into a smirk. "No, Sir Potter. It's merely to ensure our vaults are not emptied in one fell swoop. The idea of such a loss would be heart-wrenching for any goblin."

Harry chuckled at the goblin's candid response. "Understood. I'll take one. And for today, I'll need 1500 Galleons for my shopping."

Grimbletack winced slightly at the amount but nodded. With a wave of his hand, a small, intricately designed pouch appeared. He handed it to

Harry, who watched as 13 Galleons were automatically deducted from his vault.

Grimbletack began to explain the features of the pouch. "This is not your ordinary money bag. It's magically enhanced for your convenience. Anti-theft and owner-protected, only you, Sir Potter, can open it. Should it ever be dropped or lost, it will return to your side. It's enchanted with an expanded space charm, allowing it to hold more than its physical size would suggest, yet it remains feather-light regardless of its contents. The bag also has a discreet charm, making it unnoticeable to those around you, unless you wish it to be seen."

Harry was impressed with the pouch's capabilities. He placed it in his pocket, and like his other belongings, it vanished into his inventory, a feature of his magical System that he was becoming increasingly reliant on.

His next question was about the title deeds and wills he had seen in the vault.

Grimbletack's expression soured slightly. "You can't use those properties yet, I'm afraid. You should ask your headmaster for more details."

Harry nodded, having anticipated this. Nigel had previously mentioned restrictions on his family's assets.

Changing the subject, Grimbletack brought up another matter. "The Potter family has a house-elf. After your parents' demise, I took the liberty of keeping her here at Gringotts, so she could feed on the magic of our kind. House-elves thrive on the magic of their bonded masters."

Harry's interest piqued. "Could I take her to my current residence?"

Grimbletack pondered for a moment and then agreed. "That should be possible."

Calling out, "Misty!" a house-elf appeared with a soft pop. The elf's eyes

darted from Grimbletack to Harry, widening in recognition and filling with tears.

"Master Harry!" Misty exclaimed, her voice quivering with emotion. Her speech was broken, typical of house-elves, but her joy at seeing Harry was unmistakable.

Harry knelt to be at eye level with her. "Misty, it is nice to meet you. I'd like to take you with me. Would you be willing to come to my home?"

Misty nodded vigorously, her ears flapping. "Misty would be honored to serve Master Harry! Misty missed the Potter family so much. Misty remembers Master Harry in diapers!"

Harry smiled warmly. "Then it's settled. You'll come with me to Privet Drive."

As they left Gringotts, Harry, Petunia, and Misty headed towards the shops of Diagon Alley. Petunia looked curiously at Misty, her expression a mix of surprise and acceptance.

"Misty, this is my Aunt Petunia," Harry introduced. "She's family."

Misty bowed politely. "Misty is pleased to meet Mistress Petunia."

Petunia, still adapting to the magical world, nodded. "Nice to meet you, Misty."

Petunia looked at Harry, her eyes reflecting a mix of curiosity and pride.

"Where now?" she asked.

Harry smiled, his heart swelling with excitement. "Let's get ingredients first." He led the way, his step light and eager.

Petunia chuckled, shaking her head affectionately. "You and your potions."

Their first stop was Slug and Jigger's Apothecary, a haven for any aspiring potion maker. The shop was filled with the scent of dried herbs and a myriad of potion ingredients. Harry's eyes darted around, taking in

the shelves stacked with jars and packets.

"Ah, Master Harry," Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "the paradise of every potioneer. Do stock up well. You never know when you might need a Bezoar or a bundle of Valerian roots."

Harry nodded, picking out various herbs, roots, and other essentials. He filled his basket with Nettle Leaves, Snake Fangs, Porcupine Quills, and much more. Petunia, though initially overwhelmed by the assortment of ingredients, soon found herself intrigued, asking questions about their uses.

Harry meticulously selected extra ingredients for each potion. He knew well the advantages of his System's inventory - a timeless storage ensuring his supplies never degraded. Additionally, for the potions where he had achieved 80% mastery, he planned to use the Virtual Alchemy Room for auto-creation, intending to sell these superior concoctions.

Petunia, observing Harry's thoroughness, asked, "Is all this really necessary?"

Harry grinned, "Absolutely. In the world of potions, it's better to have and not need, than need and not have."

Their next stop was Potage's Cauldron Shop. Harry wasn't just any Hogwarts student; he sought a cauldron for every purpose. He chose silver and bronze cauldrons for their unique properties and large ones for more complex brews. With his new enchanted briefcase, transporting them would be a breeze.

"Each cauldron has its own specialty, Aunt Petunia. Silver cauldrons are perfect for potions requiring a delicate touch, while bronze ones are ideal for more aggressive reactions," Harry explained as he selected his cauldrons.

Petunia nodded, her eyes reflecting a mix of fascination and pride.

At Flourish and Blotts, Harry's excitement was palpable. However, having visited this shop a few times before and copied the books to his System's library, he only purchased the school-required texts. His mental library was already brimming with hundreds of books, and Hogwarts' vast library awaited him with even more knowledge to explore.

As Harry picked up the textbooks from the list, Petunia browsed through the aisles, her eyes wide with wonder at the magical titles.

Harry then turned to his aunt, "Aunty, how about you pick a few books? You can expand your knowledge about the Magical World."

Petunia, initially taken aback, responded, "Isn't it forbidden?"

Harry shrugged, "I don't think so. As long as you don't go out promoting it, it's just knowledge."

Petunia's eyes lit up with excitement, and she began to peruse the aisles with even more enthusiasm than Harry. He watched her with a smile, pleased to see her taking an interest in his world.

Their next stop was Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions. As they entered, the warm scent of fabric and magic greeted them. Madam Malkin, a plump, smiling witch, welcomed them.

"Here for Hogwarts robes, dear?" she asked Harry.

"Yes, and I was thinking," Harry glanced at Petunia, "Aunty, why don't you pick out something for yourself? Some of these clothes have magical properties like automatic mending and self-cleaning."

Petunia, surprised by the suggestion, was initially hesitant but soon found herself intrigued by the idea. Madam Malkin enthusiastically showed her a selection of robes and cloaks that were practical yet stylish.

Petunia tried on a sleek, midnight blue cloak. "This one is charmed to stay dry in the rain," Madam Malkin explained.

Petunia looked in the mirror, a hint of wonder in her eyes. "It's beautiful,"

she murmured, a smile touching her lips.

Harry looked at his aunt, adorned in the midnight blue cloak, and had to admit she looked quite striking. The magical garment accentuated her features, casting a soft glow on her face. Petunia, gazing at her reflection, seemed transformed, her usual stern demeanor softened by the elegance of the cloak.

Madam Malkin, observing the positive change, chimed in with a warm smile. "You look wonderful, dear. Magical clothing has a way of bringing out one's best."

Petunia, slightly flushed with the compliment, turned to Harry. "What do you think, Harry?"

Harry grinned. "It suits you perfectly, Aunty. You should get it."

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Chapter 46: Wand

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Encouraged, Petunia decided to explore more. She tried on various robes and cloaks, each with its unique charm. Harry, meanwhile, was measured for his school robes. Madam Malkin expertly maneuvered around him with her measuring tape, noting down sizes and making occasional friendly remarks.

Harry suggested Petunia try some everyday magical clothing. "They're quite practical, Aunty. Some can adjust to your temperature, making them perfect for any weather."

Petunia, intrigued, tried on a set of robes that changed color based on the light. She laughed, a rare sound, as the fabric shifted from a deep emerald to a light seafoam green. "This is remarkable," she said, her eyes sparkling with a childlike wonder.

As they continued trying on different outfits, Nigel's voice popped in Harry's head. "I dare say, Master Harry, your aunt seems to be quite taken with the magical fashion. A stark contrast to her usual skepticism, wouldn't you agree?"

Harry chuckled silently at Nigel's observation, appreciating the irony.

Madam Malkin then turned to Harry, "And for you, dear? Standard?"

Harry shook his head. He had read enough to know that appearances mattered, especially in a world as nuanced as the magical one. "I want them to be special, Madam," he said politely.

Madam Malkin's eyes twinkled with interest. "Ah, looking for something a bit more unique? We can certainly do that."

Harry explained his requirements. "I'd like the fabric to be lightweight but durable. Something that can resist stains and damage. Oh, and if it could adjust to temperatures, that would be excellent."

Madam Malkin nodded, jotting down notes. "We have a wonderful material for that. Self-cleaning charms are quite standard, but I'll add a protective enchantment as well. It's handy for those unexpected magical mishaps."

Petunia listened, her eyes wide with amazement at the sheer possibility of magical clothing.

"And," Harry added, "could they resize themselves as I grow? I'd like them

to last all through my years at Hogwarts."

"That's very practical," Madam Malkin commended, smiling. "We'll use an adjustable charm. They'll grow with you and always fit perfectly."

When Madam Malkin announced the price, Petunia's eyes widened in shock. "Harry, isn't that a bit much?"

Harry chuckled, "It's alright, Aunty. The uniforms can change size to fit, so I'll be able to use them for all seven years at Hogwarts. It's a worthwhile investment."

Petunia still seemed unsure, but she nodded, trusting Harry's judgment.

Their next stop was the Magical Menagerie. As they entered, a cacophony of sounds greeted them — squawks, hisses, and an occasional roar. Harry was immediately drawn to a corner where a group of magical creatures huddled together.

"Look at these, Aunty," Harry said, pointing at a small, furry creature with large eyes. "Nifflers. They're attracted to shiny things."

Petunia leaned in, her expression softening. "They're quite cute, aren't they?"

Suddenly, Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "Appreciate cutness, Master Harry, but remember, appearances can be deceiving, especially in the magical world."

Harry suppressed a smile at Nigel's timely reminder and turned his attention to the other creatures. Harry's attention was drawn to the various creatures, each more fascinating than the last. Petunia, though initially hesitant, found herself charmed by the menagerie's inhabitants.

An idea struck Harry. "Aunty, would you like a pet?" he asked, his eyes twinkling with mischief.

Petunia was taken aback, her voice dropping to a whisper. "Like... magical?"

Harry chuckled, "Aunty, most of these are regular animals. The only magic in them is that they are smarter."

Petunia's gaze swept the store. Indeed, aside from a slightly odd-looking snake, the owls and cats seemed much like their non-magical counterparts. Then, her eyes landed on an orange cat, lounging with a disdainful air. As she approached, the cat, named Crookshanks, raised its gaze to meet hers.

The shopkeeper, noticing Petunia's interest, approached. "That's Crookshanks. Been here a long time, but no one seems to want him," she said with a hint of sadness in her voice.

Petunia's heart softened at the sight of the neglected creature. "Is it... um, too magical?" she inquired cautiously.

The shopkeeper seemed surprised by the question but quickly smiled.

"You're in the Muggle world, aren't you? Don't worry. Crookshanks is half Kneazle but not magical in any other sense. He's very smart and independent, can learn things on his own, and has an ability to detect untrustworthy people. He'd be a great help in your daily life."

Petunia's eyes lit up with interest as she stroked the cat's soft fur. She looked at Harry, seeking reassurance. "Should I?"

Harry nodded encouragingly. "You should, Aunty."

Petunia smiled, deciding to adopt Crookshanks, who seemed to have already taken a liking to her. As they prepared to leave the shop, Harry's gaze fell upon the owls. It was time for him to choose a companion of his own. But there was a shop just for that.

They next visited Eeylops Owl Emporium, a shop filled with the soft hooting of owls. Harry was immediately drawn to a beautiful snow owl with pristine white feathers and piercing amber eyes. The owl turned its head to regard Harry with a curious gaze.

"This one's a beauty," remarked Nigel in Harry's mind, "A fine choice for a Hogwarts student, I must say."

Harry smiled inwardly at Nigel's comment, knowing the AI's penchant for understatement. He approached the snow owl, extending a hand. The owl hopped onto his arm, a sign of acceptance.

"I'll call you Hedwig," Harry decided, feeling an immediate bond with the majestic bird.

With Crookshanks and Hedwig now part of their family, Harry and Petunia moved on to Scribbulus Writing Instruments. The shop was a paradise for anyone who loved the written word, its shelves filled with parchment, quills, and bottles of ink in every color imaginable.

Harry selected high-quality parchment and an assortment of quills.

Petunia, curious about the magical writing instruments, picked up a self-inking quill, marveling at its convenience.

"Imagine how much easier this would make your bookkeeping," Harry suggested with a grin.

Petunia laughed, admitting that some aspects of the magical world were indeed quite appealing.

Their final stop was Ollivanders, the renowned wand shop. As they entered, the musty smell of wood and magic filled the air.

Ollivanders Wand Shop, renowned for its unmatched collection of wands, was an essential stop for any young wizard embarking on their magical education. As Harry and Petunia entered, the bell above the door chimed, echoing in the quiet, narrow shop lined with countless wand boxes. They initially saw no one, the shop seemingly empty, until a voice suddenly echoed from behind them.

"Welcome!" Mr. Ollivander appeared as if from nowhere, startling both Harry and Petunia. His sharp gaze locked onto Harry, recognition

flashing in his eyes. Then, turning to Petunia, he said, "I recognize you but cannot match you with any wand. How interesting."

Petunia nodded, a hint of nostalgia in her voice. "Hello, Mr. Ollivander. I'm Petunia Evans. I came here years ago with my sister Lily for her wand."

Mr. Ollivander's eyes sparkled with recollection. "Ah, yes, that does bring back memories," he said, his gaze lingering on Petunia for a moment before turning to Harry. "Now, Mr. Potter, let us find your destined wand."

Harry, with a curious tilt of his head, asked, "How will we do that?"

Mr. Ollivander smiled enigmatically. "The wand chooses the wizard, Mr. Potter. That much has always been clear to those of us who have studied wandlore. These connections are complex. An initial attraction, and then a mutual quest for experience, the wand learning from the wizard, the wizard from the wand."

Ollivander then pulled out a measuring tape and asked Harry, "Your main hand?" Harry extended his right hand. The measuring tape, seemingly alive, began to measure his hand, arm, fingertip to shoulder, and fingertip to fingertip.

"Now, let's find the perfect wand for you," said Mr. Ollivander, turning to his vast collection. He handed Harry a wand, introducing it with a flourish. "Try this one. Ash wood, 12 inches, dragon heartstring core. Good for spells of great strength."

Harry took the wand, giving it a wave a vase on a nearby shelf shattered.

Mr. Ollivander promptly took it back, muttering to himself before selecting another.

"This one is birch, 10 and a half inches, unicorn hair core. Excellent for charm work." Harry tried it, but upon waving, a gust of wind swept

through the shop, scattering papers everywhere.

Several more wands followed, each introduced by Mr. Ollivander with details of its make, length, and core. Some wands were unresponsive, while others produced minor magical mishaps, none feeling quite right in Harry's hand. He could see Nigel's smirk in his mind's eye, the AI's voice tinged with amusement at the situation. "Quite the picky wand, or perhaps, picky wizard, Master Harry."

After several unsuccessful attempts, Mr. Ollivander paused, his expression contemplative. "Can it really be?" he whispered to himself before disappearing into the back of the shop. He returned with a wand that seemed to hum with energy. "11 inches long, made of holly, and possesses a phoenix feather core."

Harry's eyes widened as he felt a warm sensation upon grasping the wand. He gave it a wave, and bright red and gold sparks shot out of it, illuminating the shop. Petunia clapped her hands, delighted at the display.

"Curious... very curious," murmured Ollivander, peering closely at Harry.

"I remember every wand I've ever sold, Mr. Potter. It's curious that you should be destined for this wand when its brother gave you that scar."

Harry felt a chill run down his spine at those words, his mind racing with questions. Nigel, sensing Harry's unease, added, "A twist of fate, Master Harry. The wand chooses the wizard, and it seems this one has chosen you for a reason."

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Chapter 47: Expanding the House!

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After selecting his wand, a sense of fulfillment and anticipation washed over Harry. With the day's successful foray into the magical world drawing to a close, he decided to end it with a pleasant meal.

Accompanied by Misty, the Potter family house-elf, Harry and Petunia ventured into a quaint restaurant that served both magical and non-magical cuisine.

Misty, with her typical house-elf demeanor, was eager to serve Harry and Petunia. Her speech, characterized by its broken structure and high-pitched tone, was endearing to Harry, who had quickly grown fond of her. "Misty can cook for Master Harry and Mistress Petunia, but Misty also likes to try new foods," she said, her large eyes glancing around the restaurant curiously.

Petunia, still adjusting to the magical elements of the world, watched Misty with a mix of fascination and bemusement. "It's quite alright, Misty. Let's all enjoy a meal together," she said, her voice softer than usual.

As they settled at a table, Nigel's voice chimed in Harry's mind, "Dining with a house-elf and a Muggle in a wizarding restaurant. How very cosmopolitan of you, Master Harry."

Harry suppressed a chuckle. "It's a new experience for all of us, Nigel," he replied silently.

The restaurant was a cozy establishment, with a warm ambiance that

blended elements from both magical and non-magical worlds. The menu was an intriguing mix of dishes, some familiar to Petunia and others completely foreign.

Harry decided to order a variety of dishes for them to try. "Let's have a bit of everything. I think it's a great way for Aunt Petunia to get a taste of the magical world," he suggested.

Petunia, still wide-eyed at the magical displays around her, nodded in agreement. "Yes, let's do that. It all looks so... interesting."

Misty, meanwhile, was visibly excited to be part of the dining experience. "Misty will try what Master Harry recommends," she squeaked, her ears twitching in anticipation.

Their meal turned out to be a delightful array of magical and non-magical cuisines. From the traditional roast beef that Petunia enjoyed to the more exotic Fizzing Whizzbees that left them all giggling from the levitating sensation, the experience was a blend of comfort and wonder. As they dined, Harry took the opportunity to explain some of the magical aspects of their meal to Petunia, who listened with rapt attention. "You see, Aunt, the magical world has its own unique ingredients and cooking methods, which can lead to some surprising effects," he explained, gesturing to a dish that emitted a soft glow.

After their fulfilling experience at the restaurant, Harry prepared to return home with Aunt Petunia and Misty, their new house-elf. Realizing that Misty had never been to Privet Drive, he instructed her to apparate there first to get a sense of the location before coming back for them.

Before Misty disappeared with a soft pop, Harry turned to his aunt with a cautious tone. "Aunt, apparating can be a bit... um, discomfoting. It can make your stomach churn. Be prepared."

Petunia, already apprehensive about the magical modes of transportation,

nodded with a slightly pale face, her anxiety evident. "I'll try my best, Harry," she said, a nervous tremor in her voice.

While waiting for Misty's return, Harry noticed the curious glances from other patrons. "Quite the spectacle we are, aren't we?" Nigel commented dryly in Harry's mind, his words laced with his characteristic humor.

Harry smirked inwardly, replying silently, "Only if they knew who we were, Nigel."

Misty returned shortly, announcing her presence with a cheerful, "Misty is back! Misty found Master Harry's house!" Her speech added a layer of excitement to her words.

Harry smiled reassuringly at Petunia. "Ready, Aunty?"

Taking a deep breath, Petunia nodded, and both she and Harry each took one of Misty's hands. Misty's eyes sparkled as she prepared to apparate them.

"Here we go," Misty squeaked, and with a slight twist and a sensation of being squeezed through a tight tube, they were whisked away. The world spun around them in a dizzying blur of colors and sensations. Petunia's grip on Misty tightened, her knuckles turning white.

Harry, experiencing apparition for the first time, felt a peculiar sensation in his stomach, as if he were on a roller coaster with no sense of up or down. Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "Brace yourself, Master Harry. It's quite the tumble through space and time."

As quickly as it had begun, the sensation ended, and they found themselves standing in their house. Petunia stumbled slightly, looking a bit green, but she managed to compose herself quickly. "That was... something," she said, her voice shaky.

Harry chuckled, feeling a bit queasy himself but exhilarated by the experience. "It's faster than Muggle transportation, at least."

Misty beamed with pride at successfully bringing them home. "Misty did good?"

"You did great, Misty," Harry assured her, patting her head gently.

Harry turned to Misty, his tone firm yet kind. "Welcome to your new home, Misty. While I'm at Hogwarts, you'll stay here with Aunty. You two take care of each other, okay?"

Misty's large eyes shimmered with excitement. "Misty will take care of Master Harry's home," she replied, her voice filled with a sense of purpose.

Harry nodded approvingly and continued, "Now, let's establish some rules, Misty." The elf's expression turned serious, her ears perking up in attention.

"Under no circumstances are you allowed to hurt yourself, no matter how bad you think you did," Harry said, recalling Nigel's advice about house-elf welfare. He knew their tendency for self-punishment and wanted to ensure Misty's well-being.

Misty's face contorted in confusion and sadness. "Master Harry!" she started to protest, but Harry was firm.

"This is an order," he asserted, leaving no room for argument.

Misty's ears drooped, a sign of her acquiescence. "Misty will do as Master Harry says," she murmured.

Harry then addressed a more delicate topic. "Now, about your clothing—" he began, but Misty's reaction was immediate and emotional.

"Master Harry wants to free Misty? Misty is a bad elf!" she wailed, tears forming in her eyes.

Harry quickly interjected, "Stop, Misty. I don't want to free you." The elf paused, her crying ceasing abruptly. "Really?" she asked, a glimmer of hope in her voice.

"Really," Harry sighed. "But I want you to dress nicely. Take this gold," he said, handing her a small pouch, "and go to Madam Malkin. Have her make clothes for you. Don't worry about the cost. Make sure your clothing represents me."

Misty, now understanding Harry's intentions, nodded vigorously. "Misty will do," she said, her tone filled with renewed determination.

"Good," Harry said, feeling relieved. "Lastly, this is a Muggle neighborhood. No one should see you or your magic. Understand?"

Misty nodded once more, her expression serious. "Misty understands, Master Harry."

With the rules established, Harry turned his attention to his Aunt Petunia. "Aunty, Misty will be here while I'm at Hogwarts. She's a great help and can do many things. Just... try not to be surprised by her magic."

Petunia, still adjusting to the magical elements in her life, gave a hesitant nod while feeling a pang of excitement. "I'll try, Harry. It's all still a bit overwhelming."

Harry smiled reassuringly. "You'll get used to it, Aunty. Misty is very kind and helpful."

Withdrawing to his room after the eventful day, Harry felt a sense of contentment. It was here, in the quiet solitude of his new room, that Harry's thoughts turned to making it more suitable for his needs.

"Misty," he called softly, and with a faint pop, the house-elf appeared, her eyes wide and eager. "Yes, Master Harry? How can Misty help?"

Harry surveyed the room thoughtfully. It was decent in size, but he needed more space, especially for his magical experiments and the Virtual Room. "Misty, see that wall?" He pointed to the adjacent wall, behind which lay an unused room. "I want you to create a door there.

We're going to expand this room."

Misty's eyes sparkled with understanding. "Misty can do that!" And with a snap of her fingers, the once solid wall miraculously sprouted a door, seamlessly integrated as if it had always been there.

Harry peered through the new doorway, nodding in approval. "Now, Misty, I need you to expand both this room and the one next door. Make them larger on the inside but keep the house looking the same from the outside. Oh, and add proper ventilation, please."

"Right away, Master Harry!" Misty said, her voice tinged with excitement. With a series of deft snaps, the rooms began to reshape themselves. The walls stretched and shifted, the space expanding in a mesmerizing dance of magic. The air in the room shifted too, as a new ventilation system appeared, ensuring fresh air would circulate efficiently.

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Chapter 48: Potter Haven

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Note: Items are repeated in this chapter, but they aren't counted with chapter. The Chapter is almost twice long.

--

Harry watched in awe. The rooms now looked twice their original size,

yet from the outside, the house remained unchanged. It was a perfect example of the ingenious magic house-elves were capable of.

Nigel's voice chimed in Harry's mind, his tone reflective of his usual deadpan humor. "Expanding rooms without altering the external architecture? Quite the spatial conundrum you've solved there, Master Harry. I daresay, Hogwarts could use your ingenuity in their next renovation."

Harry couldn't help but chuckle at Nigel's comment. "Just making use of the resources we have, Nigel. Besides, it's nice to have a bit more room to breathe, don't you think?"

"Indeed, Master Harry. A little breathing room is always welcome, especially when one's preparing for the unpredictable world of Hogwarts. You might find the extra space useful for... say, practicing your potion training?" Nigel suggested, the subtle inflection in his voice hinting at his ever-present wit.

"Exactly my thought," Harry replied, already envisioning how he would use the expanded space. "I'll set up one room as a study and practice area. The other can be a sort of workshop for my potion-making and other experiments."

"Might I suggest, Master Harry, considering the acoustics of the room for your potential nocturnal magical endeavors? Wouldn't want to wake dear Aunt Petunia with any accidental magical outbursts," Nigel added, his tone laced with a hint of sarcasm.

"Good point, Nigel. Misty, can you add some soundproofing to these rooms?" Harry asked the house-elf, who nodded enthusiastically.

"Of course, Master Harry. Misty make rooms very quiet," she replied, and with another series of snaps, the walls were imbued with a subtle charm, ensuring that no sound would escape the confines of these newly created

spaces.

With the physical modifications complete, Harry's thoughts turned to the decor. "Misty, let's furnish these rooms. I want a large desk, shelves for books, and cabinets for potion ingredients and other magical artifacts.

And in the workshop, I'll need a sturdy workbench and plenty of storage."

Misty's eyes widened with delight at the prospect of decorating. "Misty make it look nice for Master Harry!"

Harry smiled. "I trust your taste, Misty. Just remember, it needs to be functional for magical work."

As Misty busied herself with the task, Harry considered the new possibilities these rooms opened up. The study would be his sanctuary for learning and refining his magical skills, a place where he could delve into hardback books for a change. The workshop, on the other hand, would be a haven for practical application, where he could experiment and innovate, crafting potions and magical items.

"Misty's doing a fine job, isn't she?" Harry commented to Nigel, watching the house-elf move around with purpose.

"Indeed, Master Harry. Your house-elf possesses a rather commendable work ethic. One might say she's as diligent in her duties as you are in your magical pursuits," Nigel observed, his voice tinged with a hint of respect.

Harry carefully placed the cauldrons he had purchased earlier in his newly set-up potion room. The room, now spacious and soundproofed, was perfect for his magical pursuits. As he arranged the cauldrons on the sturdy workbench, he pondered aloud, "Nigel, do you think I should buy another set of cauldrons for Hogwarts, or should I bring these along? And there's the mansion in the suitcase too; I wonder if it has its own potion room."

Nigel's voice, ever-present in his mind, responded, "An intriguing dilemma, Master Harry. It might be prudent to have a separate set for Hogwarts. After all, carrying cauldrons back and forth could become quite the cumbersome task, and you wouldn't want to risk damaging your new acquisitions. As for the mansion in the suitcase, it's quite possible it houses a potion room, given the extent of its enchantments."

Harry nodded in agreement. "Good point. I'll see about getting another set for Hogwarts then. For now, I want to check out the items I collected from the Potter vault. There's so much to explore."

Harry, settled in his expanded and newly furnished room, called for Misty, his loyal house-elf. "Misty, take this money and go to Diagon Alley first thing in the morning. See Madam Malkin for your clothes and buy me another set of cauldrons and ingredients, please. Also, furnish the room as you like." He handed her a pouch of gold, his instructions clear and concise.

Misty's eyes sparkled with determination as she accepted the task. "Misty will do her best!" she said, her voice tinged with excitement, before disappearing with a soft pop.

Left alone, Harry sat on his bed and began examining the items he had acquired from the Potter vault. One by one, he took them out, activating the Observe function of his Technology System to learn more about their properties and histories.

Harry carefully took out the first item from his inventory - the Silver Goblet with Poison Detection. Its surface gleamed under the dim light of his room, the runes etched into it pulsating faintly. "Let's start with this one, Nigel. Observe," Harry said, activating the System's function.

[System Message: Observing Silver Goblet with Poison Detection...

The goblet, an elegantly crafted piece of silverware, was designed to

detect any type of poison. When a poisonous substance was poured into it, the goblet would change color and emit a soft glow - a practical tool for ensuring the safety of any drink, especially in treacherous situations.]

"Quite handy for those unexpected dinner invitations in the wizarding world," Nigel quipped in Harry's mind.

Harry chuckled. "Indeed. Better safe than sorry."

Next, he pulled out the Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing. The golden frame was embedded with magical crystals, and the mirror itself had a certain depth to it that seemed almost infinite.

[System Message: Observing Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing...

The mirror allowed the user to view distant places or people by speaking their name or location. However, it had its limitations. The viewing was restricted to places and people the mirror had 'seen' before. Highly secure locations might be obscured or unviewable.]

"A bit like a magical surveillance camera, only with a historical twist,"

Harry mused.

Nigel's voice followed, "Indeed, Master Harry. Just don't expect it to reveal the deepest secrets of the Ministry."

Harry then examined the Magical Compass, its dragon-hide cover and glowing dial a testament to the craftsmanship of its maker.

[System Message: Observing Magical Compass...

The compass pointed not only to magnetic north but also to locations or objects of magical significance when requested. It could even be attuned to search for specific magical signatures or anomalies.]

"A navigator's dream," Harry commented, thinking of its potential uses in his future adventures.

Nigel added, "And a treasure hunter's best friend, I dare say."

The Enchanted Chess Set was next, its ebony and ivory pieces animated

with intelligence. The set adapted to the player's skill level, providing a challenging and educational experience.

[System Message: Observing Enchanted Chess Set...]

Harry admired the craftsmanship. "This could really sharpen my strategic thinking."

Nigel's response was quick. "Ah, a battle of wits in miniature form. Quite the cerebral exercise, Master Harry."

Harry carefully picked up the Time-Turner next, its delicate hourglass pendant filled with swirling, silvery sand.

[System Message: Observing Time-Turner...]

The Time-Turner allowed the wearer to reverse time for short durations, but it came with a warning - it should be used with extreme caution due to the potential for causing paradoxes or altering events in unforeseeable ways.]

"A powerful tool, but one that comes with great responsibility," Harry reflected.

"Indeed," Nigel agreed. "Tampering with time is a risky business."

The Invisibility Ring was simple in design, yet its function was anything but. The transparent gemstone on the silver band had the power to render the wearer invisible, though not perfectly.

[System Message: Observing Invisibility Ring...]

Harry turned the ring over in his hands. "Useful for stealth, but I'll need to be careful."

"Stealth with style," Nigel noted. "But remember, even the invisible can sometimes be seen."

The Phoenix Feather Quill was next, vibrant and elegant.

[System Message: Observing Phoenix Feather Quill...]

It wrote with magical ink that could appear or disappear at the user's

command, ideal for confidential notes or keeping a private journal.

"A quill that keeps secrets," Harry said, intrigued by the concept.

"Ah, the writer's clandestine companion," Nigel added.

Harry then examined the Goblet of Fiery Flames.

[System Message: Observing Goblet of Fiery Flames...]

This ancient goblet could conjure violet flames cold to the touch but capable of burning through most magical barriers and substances.

"A tool for breaking through barriers, both literal and magical," Harry noted.

Nigel remarked, "A fiery solution to icy problems, perhaps."

The Crystal Ball of True Seeing was set on a stand of intertwining silver branches, its surface clear and unblemished.

[System Message: Observing Crystal Ball of True Seeing...]

It was said to reveal truths, future events, or hidden things to those with strong intuitive powers or the gift of sight.

"A glimpse into the unknown," Harry whispered, fascinated by the ball's depths.

"A seer's enigma," Nigel mused. "But remember, the future is always in motion."

The Potion of Eternal Vigor shimmered with energy in its vial.

[System Message: Observing Potion of Eternal Vigor...]

It enhanced physical and magical stamina temporarily, but overuse could lead to exhaustion or adverse magical effects.

"A potion for critical moments," Harry concluded.

"A double-edged elixir," Nigel cautioned. "Use it wisely."

Harry then opened the Book of Ancient Runes, its dragonhide cover worn but resilient.

[System Message: Observing Book of Ancient Runes...]

It contained extensive knowledge of ancient runes, their applications, and magical properties.

"A treasure trove of forgotten knowledge," Harry said, eager to delve into its pages.

"Runes hold the keys to many doors," Nigel observed.

The Potion Recipe Book of Legendary Brews had an ethereal quality to its pages.

[System Message: Observing Potion Recipe Book of Legendary Brews...]

It contained detailed recipes for potions lost to time, each with powerful and rare effects.

"A book of lost arts," Harry said, intrigued by the possibilities.

"And a potioneer's dream," Nigel added.

Finally, Harry examined the Dagger of Serpent's Fang. Its blade, infused with basilisk venom, was highly effective against dark creatures and capable of penetrating magical barriers.

[System Message: Observing Dagger of Serpent's Fang...]

"This could be a valuable tool in defense against dark arts," Harry noted.

"Indeed, Master Harry. A potent weapon, both in symbolism and utility," Nigel concurred.

As Harry finished examining the artifacts, he felt a profound connection to his family's history. Each item, a piece of history, a testament to the Potter family's role in the magical world. He felt a sense of pride and responsibility, knowing that he was now a custodian of these treasures.

"Quite the collection we have here, Master Harry," Nigel said, his voice reflecting a hint of awe.

Harry then pulled out the last, but arguably the most important item from his collection, the "Enchanted Haven Briefcase." At first glance, the briefcase appeared as a miniature, palm-sized piece, exquisitely crafted

with intricate details that hinted at its ancient origin. Its exterior, made of rich, dark wood and adorned with subtle, shimmering runes, exuded a sense of timelessness and concealed power. The briefcase's clasps, forged from an unknown but radiant metal, seemed to beckon Harry to discover its secrets.

With a sense of anticipation, Harry uttered the password, "Potter's Haven." The briefcase responded immediately, expanding rapidly until it was the size of a full-sized door. Harry stepped forward, opening it to reveal a world within that defied all expectations.

The first thing that struck him was the sheer size of the interior space. It was as if he had stepped into another realm entirely. The entrance led to a grand hall, its ceiling enchanted to mirror the sky outside, giving the illusion of being in an open courtyard. The floors were adorned with elegant, mosaic tiles that gleamed under the enchanted light, and the walls were lined with portraits of past Potters, their eyes following Harry with curiosity.

As Harry walked through the mansion, he found himself in awe of its architectural beauty. The library was his first stop. Towering shelves filled with ancient tomes and scrolls stretched up to the high ceiling, with magical ladders gliding silently along the rows of books. Some of the books were so old that Harry wondered if they contained knowledge long forgotten by the modern wizarding world.

Next was the potion lab. It was a potion master's dream, equipped with everything Harry could possibly need. Rare ingredients, some of which Harry had only read about, were stored in magically preserved containers. The brewing stations were advanced, with cauldrons that seemed to adjust their temperature automatically.

The dining hall was no less impressive. An enchanted table capable of

serving a variety of dishes sat in the center, surrounded by chairs that adjusted to the sitter's size. The walls were adorned with tapestries depicting historical events from the wizarding world, each moving as if alive.

The bedrooms were numerous, each uniquely decorated and enchanted for comfort. Harry peeked into one and found that the room had already adjusted to his preferences, the bed looking particularly inviting after his long day.

The gardens surrounding the mansion were a haven of tranquility.

Magical plants and flowers bloomed in vibrant colors, their fragrances filling the air. Some plants moved gently, as if dancing to a silent tune, while others seemed to watch Harry curiously as he passed by.

The observatory was a testament to the Potter family's interest in the broader universe. Telescopes of all sizes were pointed at the sky, enchanted for viewing distant galaxies and magical phenomena. Harry made a mental note to spend some nights exploring the stars. He was doubtful of how he could observe stars in this artificial sky, but observe prompted him that it allowed him to see through the briefcase and see the real celestial bodies.

Perhaps the most intriguing was the dueling room. It was a large, open space with magically reinforced walls. Harry could already envision practicing spells and dueling tactics here without any risk of damaging the mansion.

Hidden chambers and secret passages were scattered throughout the mansion, each holding artifacts and treasures from different eras. Harry felt like he had just scratched the surface of what this magical haven had to offer.

The briefcase's special features were not just limited to its physical

spaces. The magical protection around the mansion and forest was palpable, ensuring absolute privacy and safety. The adaptive architecture allowed the mansion to change according to Harry's needs, and the temporal stability meant he could keep his ingredients here without worrying about them going bad. The potion room, frozen in time, ensured that no ingredient ever went bad, a feature that Harry found particularly useful.

As Harry explored each room, he couldn't help but feel a deep connection to his family's legacy. This briefcase was not just a collection of rooms and artifacts; it was a living history of the Potter family, a testament to their role in the magical world. He felt a mix of pride and responsibility, knowing he was now the custodian of such an invaluable heritage.

Nigel's added as he explored the mansion "Master Harry, this briefcase is a treasure trove of possibilities. Think of the knowledge and secrets it holds, just waiting to be uncovered," Nigel remarked.

Harry nodded, "It's incredible, Nigel. It's not just a place for me to learn and grow but also a sanctuary where I can find peace and rejuvenate."

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Chapter 49: The Past

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Harry stepped out of the mansion and into the forest, a part of the magical world contained within the Enchanted Haven Briefcase. He paused, taking in the symphony of sounds around him. Birds chirped melodically, leaves rustled gently in the wind, and in the distance, he could hear the soft gurgle of a stream. "Thousands of years," he whispered to himself, "I wonder what kind of creatures live here." As he ventured deeper, the forest revealed its secrets. Trees of ancient lineage towered above, their branches woven into a natural cathedral. Sunlight filtered through the leaves, casting dappled shadows on the forest floor. Every step Harry took seemed to awaken the forest, with small creatures peeking out from their hiding spots to observe this new visitor.

"Quite the ecosystem you have here, Master Harry," Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "A veritable sanctuary for magical creatures, no doubt. Just be mindful, some of them might not be as welcoming as others." Harry chuckled softly. "I'll keep that in mind, Nigel." His steps were cautious yet filled with curiosity as he explored the diverse flora and fauna. Some of the plants reacted to his presence, their leaves turning towards him as if sensing his magical aura.

As he walked, Harry noticed a clearing ahead. In the center stood a magnificent tree, its bark shimmering with a silvery glow. Around it, a variety of magical creatures gathered, as if paying homage to this ancient sentinel of the forest.

"A gathering of the magical kind, it seems," Nigel observed. "That tree appears to be a focal point of magical energy. Quite intriguing." Approaching the tree, Harry could feel a surge of magical energy emanating from it. The creatures around him seemed to regard him with curiosity rather than fear. A small, dragon-like creature with iridescent

scales approached him, its eyes gleaming with intelligence. Harry extended his hand, allowing it to sniff him. To his surprise, the creature nuzzled against his palm, a gesture of acceptance.

"Seems you've made a friend, Master Harry," Nigel remarked. "These creatures are quite adept at sensing one's intent. You must exude a trustworthy aura."

Harry smiled, gently stroking the creature. "I guess I do," he said. "This place is incredible. It's like stepping into a different world."

Continuing his exploration, Harry came across a serene pond. Its crystal-clear water mirrored the sky above, and magical fish darted beneath its surface. The tranquility of the scene was almost tangible, and Harry took a moment to sit by the water's edge, letting the peacefulness of the environment wash over him.

"An ideal spot for reflection, both literal and metaphorical," Nigel noted.

"One could spend hours here, contemplating the mysteries of the magical world."

As the sun began to set, casting a golden hue over the forest, Harry decided to return to the mansion. The briefcase's world had so much to offer, and he knew he would be spending many more hours exploring and learning from it.

Back in the mansion, Harry found himself in the library once again. The shelves were lined with books that held the knowledge of ages, and he felt a surge of excitement at the prospect of delving into them. His fingers traced the spines of the books, each title promising new insights and discoveries.

"This library is a treasure trove of knowledge, Master Harry," Nigel said.

"The histories and secrets contained within these books could provide invaluable insights for your magical education."

Harry nodded, pulling out a tome titled "The Lore of Ancient Magical Creatures." As he flipped through the pages, his eyes widened in wonder at the illustrations and descriptions of creatures he had never heard of.

"An excellent choice," Nigel commented. "Understanding the magical creatures of the past might shed light on those you encounter in the present."

Harry spent the next hour immersed in the book, his mind absorbing the information like a sponge. He made mental notes of creatures he hoped to encounter and study in the future.

As he closed the book, Harry felt a sense of fulfillment. The briefcase had opened up a world of possibilities, and he was eager to explore each one. He stood up, stretching his arms above his head.

"Time to head back to the real world," he said, a hint of reluctance in his voice.

"Indeed, Master Harry," Nigel replied. "But remember, this world within a world will always be here, waiting for your return."

With that, Harry stepped out of the mansion, shrinking the briefcase back to its original size. He placed it safely in his pocket, a small reminder of the vast world that lay within.

Harry finally took out his new wand, which he had acquired from Ollivander's. It was a unique piece, and he felt an immediate connection to it. As he held the wand, he activated the Observe function of his Technology System.

[System Message: Observing Wand...]

The wand was made of holly, a wood known for its protective properties.

It measured eleven inches, a comfortable length for precise spellcasting.

The core contained a phoenix feather, a rare and powerful ingredient that resonated with Harry's magical potential. This combination made the

wand particularly effective for spells requiring great emotional strength and moral fortitude. It was also excellent for defensive magic, a trait Harry found very appealing given his growing interest in the Dark Arts defense.

"What did Mr. Ollivander mean, Nigel? About this being brother to one who gave me the scar," Harry inquired, his brow furrowed in confusion. Nigel sighed in Harry's mind, a sound that carried a weight of solemnity.

"I wanted you to learn this later, but it seems the time has come, I suppose."

Harry braced himself for what he suspected would be a significant revelation.

"Master Harry, the wand that inflicted the curse upon you as a baby belonged to Voldemort," Nigel began. "Voldemort is a dark wizard of immense power and malevolence. He rose to power with a singular, obsessive goal - to purify the wizarding world and establish his reign over both magical and non-magical folks."

Harry listened intently, a sense of dread building within him.

"Your parents, Lily and James Potter, were members of the Order of the Phoenix, an organization opposing Voldemort. They fought valiantly against him and his followers, the Death Eaters. Unfortunately, Voldemort targeted your family, believing a prophecy that spoke of a child with the power to defeat him. That child was you, Master Harry."

Harry's hand trembled slightly as he processed this information.

"On that fateful night, Voldemort came to your home in Godric's Hollow. He murdered your parents but, when he tried to kill you, something extraordinary happened. The curse rebounded upon him, leaving you with just a scar. Voldemort was vanquished, at least temporarily, his power broken. This event made you famous in the wizarding world,

Master Harry. You became known as 'The Boy Who Lived.'"

Harry was silent, the magnitude of Nigel's words sinking in.

"As for the wand," Nigel continued, "it's curious how these things turn out. The phoenix whose feather resides in your wand gave another feather, just one other - the one in Voldemort's wand. They are, in a sense, brothers. It's a connection that is rare and, frankly, quite ominous."

Harry looked at the wand, his feelings a complex tapestry of fear, curiosity, and a newfound sense of responsibility.

"Now, about your scar," Nigel spoke gently. "It's not just a mark, Harry. It's a symbol of your survival, a testament to your strength. However, it also draws attention, some of which could be dangerous. That's why I advised you to hide it. There are those who might seek to harm you or exploit your fame for their ends."

Harry nodded, understanding the wisdom in Nigel's advice.

"The path ahead is fraught with challenges, Master Harry. But remember, you have strengths that few possess - your innate magical talent, your ability to love, and your courage. These will be your greatest weapons against the darkness that lies ahead."

Harry felt a sense of determination settle within him. "Thank you, Nigel. I know it won't be easy, but I'm ready to face whatever comes. I won't let my parents' sacrifices be in vain."

"Very well said, Master Harry," Nigel replied, his tone carrying a hint of pride. "And remember, you're not alone. I'm here to guide you, provide information, and perhaps a bit of dry wit to lighten the darker moments."

Harry couldn't help but smile, despite the heavy conversation. Nigel's presence was indeed a comfort, a beacon of guidance in the uncharted waters of his destiny.

Harry then pondered the unsettling truth that Voldemort, the dark wizard

responsible for his parents' deaths and his own near-fatal encounter as a baby, might still be alive. This revelation, coupled with the connection of their wands, added a new layer of complexity to his already extraordinary life.

"I have a feeling the other competitor to the Slytherin and Peverell Vaults is Voldemort, right? Then is he not dead?" Harry inquired, his voice laced with a mix of curiosity and apprehension.

Nigel, ever the repository of knowledge and wisdom, responded thoughtfully, "It is believed Voldemort is still alive. How, I don't know. If you like, I can use System Points to search for answers, but it will require more than you currently have to even begin scratching the surface."

Harry nodded in understanding. The enigma of Voldemort's survival was a puzzle for another day. "Time will tell," he murmured, more to himself than to Nigel.

"It is late, time to sleep, Master Harry," Nigel suggested, his voice carrying the subtle undertone of concern that had become familiar to Harry.

"Good night, Nigel," Harry replied, feeling the weight of the day's revelations.

"Goodnight, Master Harry," Nigel responded, his presence in Harry's mind a constant reminder of the extraordinary path that lay ahead.

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## Chapter 50: Phoenix Feather Quill

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The next morning, Harry woke up feeling a bit restless. His dreams had been anything but peaceful, filled with shadowy figures and echoing whispers. Shaking off the tiredness after freshening up, he reached for his Phoenix Feather Quill, his mind already buzzing with curiosity about its unique abilities.

The quill, with its vibrant, shimmering feather, seemed to pulse gently with magical energy. Harry was eager to test its capabilities. He took out a piece of parchment, his fingers lightly gripping the quill. With a thought, he wrote his name, watching in fascination as the ink turned invisible upon his command. Intrigued, Harry took another parchment and repeated the process, this time willing one name to remain visible while the other vanished.

Harry held the parchments up, examining them closely. The ink obeyed his will perfectly, one name clearly visible while the other had disappeared as if it had never been written. "Incredible," he murmured, the corners of his mouth turning up in a smile.

An idea struck him, and he began to write a note to his Aunt Petunia. "Good morning, Aunty. How was your sleep? I hope you had an amazing sleep." As he penned the next part, he focused intently, wanting the words to be visible only to him, "I love you." The words were a simple expression of the newfound bond they shared, a bond that had grown stronger in the absence of Vernon and Dudley.

Harry folded the paper neatly, his mind contemplating the quill's potential. He could use it for secure communication, to keep his private

thoughts, or even as a tool in his magical training. The possibilities were endless.

Descending the stairs to the kitchen, Harry found Aunt Petunia preparing breakfast. The aroma of freshly cooked food filled the air, a pleasant change from the days of neglect and indifference.

"Good morning, Aunty," Harry greeted cheerfully, handing her the note. He watched closely as she unfolded it, his eyes on the ink, wondering if it would obey his will and vanish from her sight.

Petunia's eyes skimmed the note, a smile forming as she read the visible part. However, her expression didn't change as she passed over the invisible message. The ink had indeed obeyed Harry's command, remaining unseen to her.

"Morning, Harry. I slept well, thank you. And you?" Petunia asked, her tone warmer than Harry had ever heard before.

She wasn't surprised by the note; she assumed Harry was trying to write with quills now that he was going to Hogwarts. She remembered Lily doing the same when she first got her quill. A fond memory blossomed on her face with a smile, followed by a somber, wry expression. She wished she had spent more time with her sister and not gotten lost in jealousy. She sighed and patted Harry's head. "Your handwriting is beautiful, although you are new to quills." Harry smiled, "Thank you, Aunty," and then walked back to his room. Petunia's misunderstanding of the situation wasn't something he was about to correct.

Harry sat at his desk, a sense of purpose in his gaze. He held the Phoenix Feather Quill in his hand, its vibrant feather flickering with an almost ethereal light. "Now the next part," he murmured to himself. A plan was taking shape in his mind, a way to test the unique capabilities of the quill further.

"Reveal yourself only when Misty holds you," Harry wrote, his handwriting flowing gracefully on the parchment. He watched with a mix of curiosity and anticipation as the words vanished from sight. A smile tugged at the corners of his lips as he willed the text to reappear, and it obediently did so. "Hmm, am I like a cheat?" he pondered aloud, his tone playful yet thoughtful.

"Might be, Master Harry," Nigel chimed in, his voice a gentle echo in Harry's mind.

Harry nodded, his thoughts racing with possibilities. He then wrote again, refining his command: "Reveal yourself only when Misty holds you, not even to me." The words once again disappeared, a testament to the quill's enchanting properties. Yet, when he willed them to appear, they did so, much to his surprise. "How strange," he mused, his brow furrowing slightly.

Intrigued by this unexpected result, Harry leaned back in his chair, his mind buzzing with questions. "Is it the quill's magic, or is there something more at play here?" he wondered aloud.

Nigel offered a possible explanation. "Perhaps it's a matter of intent, Master Harry. The quill might be responding to your current desires rather than while you were writing."

Harry nodded, considering Nigel's insight. The Phoenix Feather Quill's ability to discern and obey nuanced commands intrigued him. It was a tool not just of writing but of sophisticated magical control. His next test was to determine if the quill could distinguish between commands given under duress and those given freely.

He focused on the parchment again. "Only reveal yourself when Misty holds you," he wrote, ensuring his intent was clear. As expected, the text vanished. Harry then closed his eyes, trying to simulate a scenario where

he was under someone else's control. "Reveal yourself only to Misty," he thought intensely, channeling his will into the quill. When he opened his eyes and uttered, "Show yourself!" the words remained hidden. A sense of satisfaction washed over him. The quill had indeed responded to his genuine intent, not just the spoken command.

"That is good," Harry murmured, "but my objective was to see if, under control, I could still protect these messages." He admired the quill's responsiveness to his deeper intentions, a feature that could prove invaluable.

Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "That is a clever way of using the Quill, Master Harry. However, it requires further testing. We don't yet know if the quill can differentiate between controlled commands and those given freely."

Harry nodded in agreement. The nuances of the quill's magic were still a mystery, one that he was eager to unravel. He then wrote another command, "Only reveal yourself when I leave this room." As the words disappeared from the parchment, Harry stood up, his gaze fixed on the paper. He walked out of the room, observing the parchment intently. To his amazement, as he crossed the threshold, the text reappeared, confirming that the quill could respond to conditions related to physical location.

Intrigued by this discovery, Harry returned to his room, his mind abuzz with possibilities. The Phoenix Feather Quill was more than just a writing instrument; it was a powerful magical tool, one that could aid him in ways he hadn't yet fully comprehended.

As Harry sat back down, he contemplated his next steps. The quill's ability to hide and reveal information based on specific conditions opened up a realm of strategic uses, especially considering the secretive

nature of his magical journey.

Harry then walked to the corner of the room, where Hedwig was perched gracefully. From the moment they had met, Harry had a profound respect for Hedwig's majestic nature. Refusing to cage her, he had let her free, trusting in her intelligence and loyalty. Hedwig, in turn, had shown remarkable understanding and had not caused any trouble.

As he gently stroked Hedwig, Harry inquired, "Can you take my letter to Hogwarts?" The owl puffed her chest proudly, a gesture that spoke volumes of her readiness.

"Nigel, how do owls know where to go?" Harry asked, a hint of curiosity in his voice.

In his mind, Nigel's voice echoed, "Magical owls follow intent and traces of magic in the air. But their abilities have limits. If a person wishes not to be found, these owls cannot locate them. It's a fascinating proof of the power of intent in our world."

Harry nodded thoughtfully. "That makes sense. Otherwise, people could easily track down criminals or others who wish to remain hidden by sending owls."

"Indeed, Master Harry," Nigel responded. "It's also the reason you were shielded from the deluge of fan letters after your famous survival."

Harry grimaced at the thought. "That's a relief," he muttered.

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## Chapter 51: Let's Create More

Potions!

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He extended his arm, and Hedwig gracefully hopped onto it. With his feathered companion beside him, Harry returned to his desk and took out a piece of parchment. He was about to write a formal acceptance letter to Hogwarts. He dipped his Phoenix Feather Quill in the ink and began to write, speaking the words as he did:

"Dear Professor McGonagall,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I am writing to formally accept my place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It is with great anticipation and excitement that I look forward to joining the school and embarking on this magical journey.

I am particularly eager to delve into the vast realms of magical knowledge and skills that Hogwarts is renowned for. As I prepare for this new chapter in my life, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to study at such a prestigious institution.

Furthermore, I would like to inquire about the necessary preparations and arrangements required before the term begins. Any guidance or information you could provide would be most appreciated.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity. I await further instructions and look forward to meeting you and the rest of the Hogwarts faculty.

Yours sincerely,

Harry James Potter

Heir of Potter Family"

Harry then called, "Misty." The house-elf appeared with a soft pop, her eyes gleaming with loyalty and affection. "What does Master Harry need? Misty will do immediately," she said, her voice tinged with eagerness.

"Good morning, Misty. How did you sleep?" Harry inquired, his tone warm and caring.

Misty's eyes brimmed with tears of happiness. "It was very nice. Feeling Potter Magic once again felt so warm. Misty is glad," she replied, her voice quivering with emotion.

Harry smiled gently and patted her head in a comforting gesture. "Good. Can you get some snacks for Hedwig, please? She has a long distance to travel. Pack some light snacks for her to consume on the way as well," he instructed, thinking of the welfare of his loyal owl.

Misty nodded enthusiastically. "Misty will do right now!" she exclaimed before disappearing with another pop.

Harry's gaze then fell upon the letter he had just written. He focused his mind, channeling his intent through the Phoenix Feather Quill. "Appear when Hedwig reaches Hogwarts. After that, don't vanish. Let everyone read it," he commanded softly. The ink on the parchment obeyed, vanishing from sight.

A moment later, Misty reappeared, holding a small package and a plate of snacks for Hedwig. The house-elf's efficiency and dedication were remarkable, and Harry couldn't help but feel a deep sense of gratitude for her presence in his life.

Harry carefully rolled up the now-blank parchment and secured it to Hedwig's leg. The owl ruffled her feathers, a sign of readiness for the task ahead. Harry then handed the package of snacks to Hedwig, ensuring she was well-provided for her journey.

As Hedwig took off, soaring gracefully into the sky, Harry watched her

disappear into the distance. He felt a sense of accomplishment, knowing his letter would safely reach its destination and convey his intentions clearly to Professor McGonagall.

Harry walked down to have breakfast with Aunt Petunia and Misty. After breakfast, Harry retreated to his room to practice his magical skills.

Entering the Virtual Potion Creation Room, Harry focused on improving his potion mastery, a crucial skill for his upcoming year at Hogwarts.

"The Cure for Boils potion is at 80% mastery, Master Harry," Nigel's voice echoed in his mind. "Shall we work on that, or would you like to focus on the other potions first?"

Harry pondered for a moment. "Let's go through the list of first-year potions and my current mastery levels, Nigel."

The Technology System's screen displayed before Harry's eyes, showing a list of potions:

Cure for Boils: 80% Mastery

Forgetfulness Potion: 45% Mastery

Herbicide Potion: 50% Mastery

Wiggenweld Potion: 35% Mastery

Antidote to Common Poisons: 40% Mastery

Pompion Potion: 30% Mastery

Strength Potion: 55% Mastery

Hair-Raising Potion: 25% Mastery

Harry studied the list, his eyes narrowing in concentration. "Let's work on the Forgetfulness Potion first. I need to bring that up to at least 70%."

The Virtual Room adjusted to his choice, setting up the required ingredients and equipment. Harry methodically worked through the potion-making process, Nigel's voice providing tips and insights.

Harry first mentally checked the ingredients required for the

Forgetfulness Potion. "Two drops of Lethe River Water, two Valerian sprigs, two measures of Memorybane Root, four mistletoe berries," he recited to himself. Looking at the virtual ingredients arrayed before him, he turned to Nigel. "Which recipe did I use last time to achieve 45% mastery, Nigel?" he asked, eager to improve his technique.

"Ah, Master Harry, if memory serves right, you used a rather traditional approach," Nigel replied. "However, there's always room for innovation. Shall we experiment with different conditions today?"

Harry nodded. "Let's start with the preparation of ingredients. I'm thinking of altering the grinding coarseness of the Memorybane Root."

"An astute observation," Nigel commented. "Different grinding techniques can indeed alter the potency of the root."

Harry began by grinding the Memorybane Root to a finer consistency than he had previously. He then carefully measured out the other ingredients, pondering the order in which he should add them.

"Perhaps reversing the order of the Valerian sprigs and the mistletoe berries might yield a different result," Harry mused aloud. "And what about the water temperature, Nigel? Would altering it affect the potion's efficacy?"

"A valid hypothesis, Master Harry," Nigel responded. "The temperature of the water can indeed affect the brewing process. A slightly warmer temperature might enhance the dissolution of the ingredients."

Taking Nigel's advice, Harry adjusted the temperature of the Lethe River Water before adding it to his cauldron. He watched closely as the water's temperature rose slightly, creating a gentle steam.

Next, Harry focused on his stirring technique. "Last time, I stirred in a clockwise motion. What if I try a counterclockwise pattern this time?"

"Experimentation is the key to mastery," Nigel encouraged. "Alter the

stirring pattern and observe the potion's response."

As Harry stirred counterclockwise, he noticed a subtle change in the potion's color and viscosity. It seemed to be reacting positively to his new method.

"Now, about the age of the ingredients," Harry said, looking at the virtual shelves. "I wonder if using fresher Valerian sprigs would make a difference."

"Indeed, the freshness of ingredients can significantly impact the quality of the potion," Nigel agreed. "Try the fresher sprigs and see how the potion responds."

Harry replaced the Valerian sprigs with fresher ones and added them to the cauldron. He watched as the potion bubbled gently, its color deepening to a rich shade.

As he continued his experimentation, varying the ingredient preparation, order of addition, water temperature, and stirring technique, Harry was deeply immersed in the process. The Virtual Room provided him with a perfect environment to test and learn without the constraints of the physical world.

After several attempts and adjustments, Harry finally brewed a batch of the Forgetfulness Potion that seemed superior to his previous attempts. The potion's aroma was more potent, and its color was a vibrant shade of blue.

"Let's analyze this batch, Nigel. What's the mastery level now?" Harry asked, eager to see the results of his efforts.

Nigel's voice was filled with anticipation. "Analyzing now, Master Harry. And... congratulations! You've achieved 52% mastery of the Forgetfulness Potion. A remarkable improvement!"

Harry shook his head in mild frustration. "Not good enough," he

murmured, his gaze sweeping across the vast expanse of the Virtual  
Potion Crafting Room. "I need to push further, experiment more broadly."  
With a determined nod, Harry set about transforming the virtual space.  
"Create 200 cauldrons in a 2 square formation, each square consisting of  
100 cauldrons," he instructed. The room responded instantly, rows upon  
rows of cauldrons appearing in a neatly organized grid. The sight was  
impressive, a testament to the power of the Technology System and  
Harry's growing command over it.

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Chapter 52: Hello Number 1!

Number 2!

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A quick note: This is not another Potion Arc but a small introduction to a  
new feature. So when Harry uses it in the future, you will know it has a  
foundation. As I mentioned before, I wanted to create a strong base  
before we take off, so future chapters will be more solid. Chapter 54 is  
boarding the train, and I thank everyone for their support! Please trust  
the process!

--

As he contemplated his next move, he muttered, "I feel like my mental

power allows me to do this now.", a second Harry materialized beside him. This was a new capability he had developed through his Occlumency training, allowing him to divide his consciousness. In real life, this skill enabled him to process multiple thoughts simultaneously, albeit at the cost of efficiency. However, in the Virtual Room, it manifested as creating clones with his own consciousness.

"Hello, Harry 1," the clone greeted.

Harry turned to his duplicate, a slight smile playing on his lips. "Hello, James," he replied, deciding on the spot to name this aspect of his mind after his middle name. "Let's coordinate our experiments. What aspects will you focus on?"

James, or Harry 2, nodded in agreement. "I'll experiment with ingredient preparation variations and water temperature adjustments. You could focus on the order of addition and the age of the ingredients."

"Sounds like a plan," Harry said, already moving towards the first set of cauldrons.

The two Harrys, now differentiated as Harry and James, worked in tandem, each embarking on a series of meticulous experiments. Harry started by altering the sequence in which he added the ingredients, observing the subtle changes in the potion's color and consistency. He experimented with adding the Memorybane Root before the Valerian sprigs, then reversing the order, each time noting the effects on the potion's potency.

Meanwhile, James focused on grinding the Memorybane Root to various levels of coarseness and altering the water's temperature. He discovered that a slightly warmer temperature enhanced the dissolution of the root, resulting in a more potent potion.

Harry then turned his attention to the age of the ingredients. He tried

brewing with freshly harvested Valerian sprigs, comparing the results with those using older, dried sprigs. The difference was notable; the fresher ingredients yielded a potion with a more vibrant hue and a stronger aroma.

As the hours passed, the two worked tirelessly, their efforts synchronized yet distinct. The Virtual Room was a hive of activity, with cauldrons bubbling and steaming as the Harrys moved between them, adding, stirring, and observing.

At one point, Harry paused, watching the simmering potion before him.

"What if we combine our findings, James? Merge the best of both our experiments into one ultimate brew?"

James looked up from his cauldron, his expression thoughtful. "An excellent idea. Let's compile our most successful techniques and see what we can create."

Together, they selected a single cauldron, combining their collective knowledge. They used the finest ground Memorybane Root, added at the optimal temperature, with the freshest Valerian sprigs and precisely measured mistletoe berries. The stirring pattern was a complex combination of clockwise and counterclockwise motions, designed to maximize the potion's magical infusion.

As the potion neared completion, Harry and James watched with bated breath. The liquid within the cauldron shimmered with a deep, mesmerizing blue, and the aroma that wafted from it was both soothing and invigorating.

Although the task sounded simple, the challenge Harry and his clone James faced was anything but. In front of them lay two hundred cauldrons, each representing an opportunity to test slight variations in the potion-making process. For hours, the two experimented, each

cauldron a testbed for a unique combination of ingredients, sequences, and techniques. They worked meticulously, exploring at least five hundred variations in their quest to master the Forgetfulness Potion.

Both Harry and his mental duplicate were deeply immersed in their methodical experimentation with the Forgetfulness Potion. Their task was to test each ingredient - Lethe River Water, Valerian sprigs, Memorybane Root, and mistletoe berries - in various states: ground, diced, whole, liquefied, and so on. This comprehensive approach was essential to scientifically determine the optimal combination for the potion.

As Harry picked up the two measures of Memorybane Root, he meticulously prepared them in different ways. He ground some into a fine powder to release their essence more fully, diced others into small, uniform pieces to test how they diffused their properties, and left some whole to observe the effects of their intact form. He also experimented with liquefying a portion to see if this state would create a more homogeneous mixture with other ingredients.

Simultaneously, James was handling the Valerian sprigs with the same level of attention. He ground some sprigs to a fine consistency, believing this might release their inherent magical properties more effectively.

Other sprigs were sliced thinly to maximize their surface area, while some were left whole to maintain their natural state. He even tried crushing them to observe any potential enhancement in their potency.

The Lethe River Water, crucial for its memory-affecting properties, was not exempt from their rigorous testing. Harry experimented with various temperatures - from slightly above room temperature to near boiling - to see how this affected the potion's efficacy. He also tried using distilled water, aiming for maximum purity, and water in which other magical herbs had been steeped, to see if this infusion would add another layer of

complexity to the potion.

Mistletoe berries, the final ingredient, underwent similar variations.

Harry crushed some into a paste, thinking that this might release both their liquid and solid components more effectively into the potion. He sliced others, diced some, and left a few whole. Each variation was carefully added to separate cauldrons, with Harry and James observing the changes in the potion's consistency, color, and magical aura.

As they worked, the room was filled with the clinking of glass, the bubbling of cauldrons, and the faint scratching of quill on parchment as they noted down their observations. Harry and James, moving with a sense of purpose and efficiency, were a blur of activity, their focus unbroken.

The potion's complexity lay not just in the ingredients but in their interactions. A slight change in the preparation of one ingredient could radically alter the outcome. The ground Memorybane Root released its essence more rapidly, leading to a quicker brewing time, but it also required precise timing to avoid overpowering the potion. The liquefied mistletoe berries, on the other hand, created a smoother consistency but required an adjustment in the quantity to maintain the potion's balance. After hours of meticulous work and over 500 different variations, Harry and James finally narrowed down the most effective combination. The finely ground Memorybane Root, thinly sliced Valerian sprigs, distilled Lethe River Water heated to just below a simmer, and mistletoe berries crushed into a fine paste provided the best results. This particular combination resulted in a potion that had a deep, luminescent blue color, a sign of its potent magical properties.

Harry, examining the final brew, felt a deep sense of achievement. "We've done it, James. This is the perfect balance - every ingredient prepared

just right, interacting harmoniously to create a Forgetfulness Potion of exceptional quality."

James, looking equally satisfied, replied, "Indeed, Harry. It's been an exhaustive process, but the results speak for themselves. This potion is at a 69% mastery level now. Imagine what further practice and experimentation could achieve."

Nigel's voice, always a source of wisdom and guidance, resonated in Harry's mind. "Master Harry, your dedication and scientific approach to potion-making are commendable. This level of mastery is impressive, especially for a wizard of your age."

Harry's mood lifted as he reflected on the progress he and his mental duplicate, James, had made with the Forgetfulness Potion. Last time, working on the Cure for Boils potion, it had taken him a week to reach a 70% mastery level. This time, with James' assistance, he had significantly shortened that duration.

"Now, I can try to add new materials to increase it to 80%," Harry mused aloud, his mind buzzing with possibilities. "Nigel, James, any recommendations on what we could add?"

As they contemplated the potion's enhancement, Harry, Nigel, and James deliberated over various ingredients and their potential effects on the Forgetfulness Potion.

Harry started, "What about adding Wiggentree Bark? It's known for its protective qualities."

Nigel considered this, "Wiggentree Bark does offer protection against dark forces, but its effect on a potion centered around memory alteration might be inconsequential. It could potentially safeguard the user from negative side effects, but it won't necessarily enhance the potion's intended forgetfulness effect."

James then suggested, "How about a pinch of powdered unicorn horn?"

It's used in many powerful potions."

Nigel nodded, "True, powdered unicorn horn is a potent ingredient, but its properties are more aligned with healing and purity. In a Forgetfulness Potion, it might actually counteract some of the memory-altering effects we're aiming for."

Harry then brought up, "Dittany is known for its regenerative properties. Could that help?"

Nigel replied, "Dittany is excellent for physical regeneration and healing. However, its properties don't align with memory manipulation. Its inclusion might even dilute the potion's effectiveness in erasing memories."

James added, "We should also consider the balance of ingredients. Adding too many components could make the potion unstable or unpredictable."

Nigel responded promptly. "Well, Master Harry, considering the Forgetfulness Potion's properties, adding something that influences memory could be beneficial. Perhaps Sloth Brain Mucus?"

James, reflecting Harry's own thoughts, added, "Sloth Brain Mucus could intensify the potion's effects on memory. But we need to be careful with the dosage to avoid any adverse effects."

"Sloth Brain Mucus is indeed known for its impact on memory and cognition," Nigel concurred. "Adding it could make the potion's forgetfulness effect more pronounced."

Harry nodded thoughtfully, "That sounds promising. What about Moondew Drops? I've read they bring clarity and purity."

"An excellent choice," Nigel agreed. "Moondew Drops could refine the potion's effects, making it more targeted and precise."

James chimed in, "The purity of Moondew could balance out the Sloth Brain Mucus, ensuring the potion affects only specific memories."

Harry then considered another option. "What about Salamander Blood? It's a powerful enhancer."

Nigel cautioned, "Salamander Blood is potent. It could amplify the potion's overall magical properties, but we must use it sparingly."

Harry appreciated Nigel's warning. "Right, we'll add just a few drops then. Enough to enhance the potion, but not so much as to make it overwhelming."

Nigel agreed, "Precisely. The key is to enhance the potion's core function without overcomplicating the brew. That's why Sloth Brain Mucus, Moondew Drops, and a bit of Salamander Blood seem like our best options. They directly contribute to the potion's purpose without introducing conflicting magical properties."

Harry nodded, satisfied with the analysis. "Alright, let's proceed with these three then. We'll focus on enhancing the potion's memory-altering effects while maintaining its stability and precision." With a plan in place, they set to work, carefully measuring and adding each ingredient to refine and enhance the Forgetfulness Potion.

Harry stood determined in the Virtual Potion Crafting Room, his eyes reflecting the resolve of a wizard committed to mastering the art of potion-making. Beside him, James shared his intense focus. They were about to embark on a complex journey of experimentation, adding three new ingredients to the Forgetfulness Potion to achieve higher mastery.

"Let's create new variations for these three ingredients, James," Harry said, his voice steady. "We need to consider the preparation method, the age of the ingredient, and the sequence of addition in relation to the original ingredients. This will increase the variations exponentially."

James nodded in agreement, "Indeed, Harry. The combinations are nearly endless. We'll need to be methodical and patient."

They began with Sloth Brain Mucus, a component known for its influence on memory and cognition. Harry pondered the preparation method. "We could try it in different states: raw, diluted, concentrated, and even crystallized," he suggested.

James added, "Each state will interact differently with the potion's base. The raw mucus might offer a strong, immediate effect, while the crystallized form could provide a more controlled, gradual impact."

They moved on to discuss Moondew Drops, prized for their clarity and purity. "These drops are delicate," Harry observed. "We should test them in varying quantities, and perhaps combine them with different temperatures of the potion at the time of addition."

James considered this, "Temperature plays a crucial role. A cooler potion might enhance the Moondew's clarity, while a warmer one might integrate its properties more fully."

Their third ingredient, Salamander Blood, was a powerful enhancer but required careful handling. "Just a few drops," Harry reminded. "We need to amplify the potion's properties without overpowering it."

James agreed, "And let's experiment with adding it at different stages of the brewing process. The timing of its addition could be key to balancing the potion."

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Chapter 53: Fated Day is Almost

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With their plan set, they began their meticulous work. Each cauldron represented a unique combination of ingredients and methods. Harry and James moved between them, adding, stirring, and observing the subtle changes in the potion's color, consistency, and magical aura.

Hours passed as they worked tirelessly. The room was a symphony of magical brewing, with cauldrons bubbling and steaming. The air was thick with the aroma of various potion ingredients, creating an almost tangible sense of magic in the air.

As they progressed, Harry and James continuously noted their observations. "The diluted Sloth Brain Mucus seems to integrate well but might be too subtle in its effect," Harry remarked, scrutinizing a cauldron where the potion shimmered lightly.

James, examining another batch, added, "The concentrated form is more potent, but it risks overpowering the potion's base. We need to find the perfect balance."

They then turned their attention to the Moondew Drops. "Adding them when the potion is cooler seems to preserve their purity," Harry noted, watching as a cauldron glowed with a soft, clear blue hue.

James concurred, "And in a warmer potion, they seem to enhance the overall magical signature. It's fascinating how temperature affects their integration."

The Salamander Blood was their final challenge. "Adding it early in the

process creates a robust base, but it might be too intense," Harry observed, studying a cauldron where the potion bubbled vigorously. James, looking at a different batch, suggested, "Perhaps adding it towards the end would allow us to control its enhancement effect more finely." Their experimentation continued, each iteration bringing them closer to their goal. They adjusted the quantities, altered the preparation methods, and experimented with the sequence of addition. The complexity of the task was daunting, but their determination was unwavering. At one point, Harry paused, considering the interplay of ingredients. "The synergy between these components is key," he mused. "Each one must complement the others, enhancing the potion's purpose without causing instability."

James nodded, "Absolutely. The potion's balance is delicate. We must ensure that each ingredient enhances the desired forgetfulness effect without introducing unwanted side effects."

As evening approached, they finally arrived at a combination that seemed promising. The Sloth Brain Mucus was diluted just enough to blend seamlessly with the potion, the Moondew Drops added at a slightly cool temperature, and the Salamander Blood introduced in the final stages of brewing.

"This batch," Harry said, lifting a vial of the finished potion to the light, "it has the right balance. The forgetfulness effect is potent, yet controlled. The potion's stability seems intact."

James examined another vial, his expression one of satisfaction. "The color is consistent, and the magical signature is strong. I believe we've achieved a significant improvement."

Nigel's voice, ever-present in Harry's mind, offered praise, "Well done, Master Harry, and James. Your dedication and scientific approach have

paid off. The mastery level of this Forgetfulness Potion is now at 78%. A remarkable achievement."

"That is good. Just 2% more for complete mastery. Once achieved, the Virtual Room can generate these potions automatically," he said with a sense of satisfaction.

As they returned to the work, days and weeks flew by in a seamless blend of magical training, potion crafting, and academic study. Each day, Harry dedicated himself to honing his physical and magical skills, guided by the ever-present voice of Nigel in his mind. The Virtual Potion Crafting Room became his sanctuary, a place where he pushed the boundaries of his potion mastery to new heights.

One by one, Harry achieved an 80% mastery level in each of the first-year potions. The Herbicide Potion, Wiggensweld Potion, Antidote to Common Poisons, Pompion Potion, Strength Potion, and Hair-Raising Potion joined the ranks of the Cure for Boils and Forgetfulness Potion, all now capable of automated creation within the Virtual Room. This significant milestone in his magical education was a testament to Harry's relentless pursuit of excellence and his deepening understanding of the intricate art of potion-making.

During this period of intense study and practice, another significant event occurred. A letter from Professor McGonagall arrived, in response to Harry's formal acceptance of his place at Hogwarts. The letter, written in a neat, precise hand, read:

Dear Mr. Potter,

It is with great delight that I received your letter of acceptance to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Your enthusiasm and eagerness to join our esteemed institution are most heartening.

As the Deputy Headmistress and in charge of new student inductions, it is

my pleasure to provide you with further information and guidance as you prepare to embark on this magical journey. Hogwarts has a long and storied history, and we take great pride in nurturing the next generation of witches and wizards.

Enclosed, please find your ticket for the Hogwarts Express, departing from King's Cross Station, Platform 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, on the 1st of September. Ensure that you are there before the departure time, as the train waits for no one. Your journey to Hogwarts will be a memorable one, and it marks the beginning of your magical education.

In addition, I would like to remind you of the importance of adhering to school rules and regulations. Hogwarts is a place of learning and discovery, but it is also a community that values respect, discipline, and the safety of all its members. You will find that life at Hogwarts is enriching and full of opportunities, and I encourage you to engage fully with all aspects of school life.

We eagerly await your arrival at Hogwarts, Mr. Potter, and look forward to seeing what you will achieve in your time with us.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Harry read the letter with a mixture of excitement and anticipation. The mention of the Hogwarts Express and Platform 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ignited his imagination. He had heard stories of the magical train that carried students to Hogwarts, and now he was going to experience it firsthand. Nigel commented, "Ah, the Hogwarts Express. A journey that marks the start of many a magical adventure. Make sure you're well-prepared, Master Harry. It's not every day one boards a train to the world of magic."

Harry smiled, accustomed Nigel's blend of guidance and subtle humor.

"I'll be ready, Nigel. And I'm looking forward to seeing Hogwarts for the first time."

The days leading up to his departure for Hogwarts were filled with a sense of purpose and anticipation. Harry continued his rigorous training regimen, practicing wandless magic and delving deeper into the knowledge stored in the Technology System. He also spent time bonding with Petunia, their relationship having transformed from one of cold cohabitation to a genuine familial connection.

One evening, as Harry was organizing his belongings for the journey to Hogwarts, Nigel chimed in, "Remember, Master Harry, the Technology System and its functions are our little secret. It's a powerful tool, but with great power comes the need for discretion."

Harry nodded, fully aware of the responsibility that came with possessing such advanced magical technology. "I know, Nigel. I won't share our secrets with anyone."

As the day of his departure approached, Harry felt a mix of nervousness and excitement. He was about to step into a world that was both familiar and entirely new to him. The thought of boarding the Hogwarts Express, surrounded by other young witches and wizards, was thrilling.

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Chapter 54: Hogwarts Express

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Finally, the day arrived. Harry, with his belongings neatly packed, including the now-shrunken Enchanted Haven Briefcase, stood at King's Cross Station, looking for Platform 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. The hidden platform, accessible only to those in the know, was a gateway to the magical world he was about to join.

With Petunia accompanying him, Harry approached the seemingly solid barrier between platforms nine and ten. There was a palpable sense of anticipation in the air. As they passed through the magical barrier, the sight that greeted them was nothing short of wondrous. The Hogwarts Express, with its gleaming scarlet engine and billowing steam, stood majestically, ready to embark on its journey to the magical school.

Harry's eyes sparkled with excitement, mirroring the same wonder that had been in his mother Lily's eyes decades ago.

Petunia, standing beside him, was equally awestruck. It was her third time witnessing this marvel. The first time, she had been with Lily, her younger sister, both of them wide-eyed with wonder. The second time, the emotions were tinged with jealousy and a sense of loss as she watched Lily depart into a world where she couldn't follow. Now, years later, she was here again, not with envy but with pride and excitement for her nephew, Harry.

As they took in the bustling platform, crowded with students and their families, owls hooting in their cages, and cats peeking out of their carriers, Petunia's gaze softened. She turned to Harry and said with a nostalgic smile, "Go on, Harry. Your mother used to say it's a pain in the bum to find an empty compartment. Best hurry and find a good spot."

Harry nodded, understanding the practical wisdom in her words. He turned to face her, the emotions of the moment welling up inside him. This was not just a journey to school; it was the beginning of a new chapter in his life, a step towards understanding his heritage and embracing his true identity.

He stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Petunia in a warm, heartfelt hug. "Thank you, Aunt Petunia," he whispered, his voice thick with emotion. "For everything."

Petunia returned the hug, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. "You take care, Harry," she whispered back. "And remember, you're always welcome home."

As they parted, Petunia took a moment to observe her nephew. Harry, once a frail and unassuming boy, had undergone a remarkable transformation. He stood there, his posture exuding a newfound confidence that belied his youth. His attire was a statement in itself - a pair of sleek black jeans paired with a striking green shirt that accentuated the emerald depth of his eyes. The unruly hair, once a messy tangle, was now styled in a way that framed his face, still carefully hiding the lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. It was a mark that spoke of his unique past and the extraordinary journey ahead of him. (Check paragraph comments for picture)

Gone was the malnourished appearance of his earlier years. Harry's body had developed a lean muscularity, a testament to the rigorous physical training he had undertaken. His height, too, had increased, adding to his commanding presence. He moved with an easy grace, each step radiating a sense of purpose and determination.

Petunia watched him, a mix of pride and nostalgia swirling in her heart. Here was the living legacy of her sister Lily, ready to step into a world

that had once been closed to her. The change in Harry was not just physical. The once-timid boy who lived under the stairs had matured into someone who faced the world head-on, unafraid of its challenges.

Harry's transformation was not just a product of physical growth. His time with Nigel had cultivated in him a sharp mind and a witty demeanor. Nigel's influence was evident in Harry's quick responses and the clever glint in his eye - a subtle but unmistakable sign of the mental gymnastics he was accustomed to.

As Harry walked towards the train, his gaze swept over the bustling platform. His keen observation skills allowed him to take in the details of his surroundings - the anxious first-years clutching their parents' hands, the raucous laughter of returning students, and the stern faces of the prefects guiding the newcomers.

Harry's approach to the Hogwarts Express was marked by a sense of awe and wonder. It wasn't just a train; it was a symbol of a new chapter in his life, a passage to a world where he truly belonged. He climbed aboard with a deep breath, feeling a thrilling rush of anticipation.

Finding an empty compartment, Harry settled in, his mind racing with thoughts of the adventures that awaited him at Hogwarts. He was keenly aware of the challenges that lay ahead - mastering magic, understanding the complexities of the wizarding world, and navigating the social dynamics of a school filled with young witches and wizards from diverse backgrounds.

Harry Potter, nestled comfortably in an empty compartment of the Hogwarts Express, opened his book, "The Little Prince." He sought a light read for the journey, a respite from the intense preparations he had undertaken for his first year at Hogwarts. Calm and collected, he believed in the efficacy of his training and felt no need for last-minute cramming.

Instead, he chose to embrace the moment, letting himself relax when the train would chug rhythmically through the English countryside.

As he delved into the pages, his mind partially on the story and partially on the adventures that awaited him, the compartment door slid open with a certain brashness. In stepped a boy of about eleven, his hair a striking shade of blond, almost silver in the train's soft light. His face, aristocratic and haughty, bore an expression of confidence that bordered on arrogance. Behind him loomed two considerably larger boys, their stances suggesting they were more brawn than brain, clearly the companions and possibly the cronies of the blond boy.

The blond boy's sharp, calculating eyes scanned the compartment and landed on Harry. "I heard Harry Potter was here," he declared, his voice carrying a tone of entitlement and curiosity. "I came to make an acquaintance."

Harry, unfazed by the interruption, calmly closed his book and stood up. His movements were graceful and deliberate, reflecting the noble etiquette he had meticulously learned from his readings. Over the months, Harry had delved into books about nobility, absorbing their manners and behaviors. He understood the power of first impressions and the subtle art of manipulation, starting with striking at one's pride.

"I am Harry Potter, heir of the Most Ancient and Noble Potter Family," he replied, his voice warm and welcoming, a smile playing on his lips.

"Nice to meet you." His every word and gesture were a dance of charm and politeness, yet behind his friendly demeanor lay a keen, observing mind.

The blond boy, taken aback by Harry's poise and confidence, hesitated for a moment before regaining his composure. "Well, Heir Potter, I am Draco Malfoy, heir of the Most Ancient and Noble Malfoy family. These

two are Crabbe and Goyle." he began, introducing himself with a family name that Harry recognized but chose not to react to outwardly. Harry's smile remained intact, his eyes locking with the boy's in a silent, respectful acknowledgment.

Nigel hummed with a touch of humor at the situation. "Quite the royal audience we have here, Master Harry," he remarked, his tone laced with an underlying wit. "Do tread carefully; nobility often comes with its own set of rules and games."

Harry squeezed Draco Malfoy's hand with a firm yet courteous grip, a practiced smile gracing his features. "Pleased to make your acquaintance, Heir Malfoy," he said, his tone carrying the refined cadence of a well-bred wizard. "And of course, welcome to you as well, Sir Crabbe and Sir Goyle."

Draco, slightly thrown off by Harry's polished demeanor, managed a smile of his own, though it seemed less certain than his usual smug expression. "I... ah, yes, thank you, Heir Potter. I've heard quite a bit about you, you know."

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Chapter 55: Compelled

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Draco, slightly thrown off by Harry's polished demeanor, managed a smile of his own, though it seemed less certain than his usual smug expression. "I... ah, yes, thank you, Heir Potter. I've heard quite a bit about you, you know."

Harry's eyes twinkled with unspoken amusement, but he maintained his cordial front. "Oh, indeed? The wizarding world does seem to enjoy its tales," he replied, inviting Draco to sit down. The two larger boys hovered uncertainly near the door, looking from Draco to Harry and back.

Draco took a seat opposite Harry, his posture straight and his gaze direct. "Yes, well, the Malfoys have always been in the know about the goings-on in our world. I suppose you're quite excited about starting at Hogwarts?"

"Absolutely," Harry answered smoothly, his voice steady and composed.

"It's a new chapter, full of learning and opportunities. Hogwarts is a remarkable place, or so I've been told."

Draco nodded, his initial bravado mellowing into a semblance of genuine interest. "It is indeed. And, Potter, if you ever need guidance or advice, the Malfoys are well-connected. We can be... helpful allies."

Harry's mind ticked away, analyzing Draco's words and demeanor. Nigel's voice chimed in subtly, "Ah, alliances offered before the journey even begins. A tad eager, wouldn't you say?"

Harry suppressed a smile at Nigel's comment, choosing instead to respond to Draco with tact. "That's very kind of you, Malfoy. I'm sure your insights into Hogwarts will be most valuable."

Draco seemed pleased with this response, a hint of pride returning to his features. "Of course, Potter. You'll find that certain families hold significant influence at Hogwarts. It's always wise to align oneself

appropriately."

Harry nodded, his expression neutral yet friendly. "I'll certainly keep that in mind. It's a complex world we're stepping into."

The conversation continued, with Draco sharing tidbits about Hogwarts, the professors, and the various houses. Harry listened attentively, giving nothing away about his own extensive knowledge gained from Nigel and the Technology System. He was careful to interject with questions and comments that portrayed curiosity without revealing his depth of understanding.

Draco gradually relaxed, clearly believing he had made a favorable impression on Harry. Meanwhile, Harry's own assessment was quite different. He saw Draco as a product of his environment, a boy playing at politics and power without fully grasping the complexities of the world he inhabited.

Eventually, Draco stood up, signaling the end of their conversation.

"Well, Potter, I should mingle with some of the others. But remember, my offer stands. The Malfoys can be powerful friends."

"Thank you, Malfoy. I appreciate the gesture," Harry replied, his tone gracious. "Enjoy the rest of your journey."

As Draco, followed by Crabbe and Goyle, left the compartment, Harry's gaze followed them thoughtfully. He turned his attention back to his book, but his mind was already weaving through the many layers of Hogwarts' social fabric.

Nigel's voice, light but insightful, broke through Harry's thoughts. "A rather interesting encounter, wouldn't you say? Young Malfoy seems to think he's playing chess, but he's barely grasping checkers."

Harry chuckled softly, his eyes still on the book's pages. "True, Nigel. But it's a long game, and we're just getting started."

As Harry returned to his book, the door to his compartment slid open once more. A red-haired boy with a face full of freckles peeked in, his expression a mix of hopefulness and slight embarrassment. "Can I come in? All the other compartments are full," he asked, his voice tinged with a nervous edge.

Harry looked up, his eyes assessing the newcomer. The boy's manner was earnest, but there was something about his demeanor that struck Harry as slightly off. He turned inward, calling upon Nigel's expertise. 'Nigel, he's under a spell, right?' he thought, seeking confirmation from his AI assistant.

Nigel's voice, infused with a hint of dry amusement, responded in Harry's mind. "Indeed, Master Harry. It seems our red-haired visitor is not entirely acting of his own volition." As Nigel spoke, a System message appeared before Harry's eyes, invisible to anyone else in the compartment.

[System Message: Ron Weasley (11) - Under Compelling Spell

Objective: Make acquaintances with Harry Potter.

Subliminal Messaging: Promote Gryffindor House; Express disdain for Slytherin House.

Spell Origin: Unknown.

Note: Subject's awareness of the spell's influence - Minimal.]

Harry's expression remained neutral as he digested this information, but internally he was alert and cautious. "Come in," he said aloud, gesturing to the seat opposite him. "Plenty of room here."

Ron Weasley, looking visibly relieved, stepped into the compartment and sat down. He ran a hand through his unruly hair, giving Harry a friendly, if somewhat awkward, smile. "Thanks. I'm Ron, Ron Weasley."

Harry nodded. "Harry Potter," he introduced himself, though he had a

feeling Ron already knew who he was, well subconsciously at least.

Ron's eyes widened like saucers as he took in the sight of Harry's famous lightning-shaped scar that could barely be seen. For a moment, he seemed lost in awe. "It is real. You are really Harry Potter," he blurted out, his voice a mix of shock and fascination. Then, realizing his own abruptness, he quickly added, "Sorry. It's just... you're so famous."

Harry, far from the shy boy he used to be, smiled amiably. "It's alright, Sir Weasley. I've gotten used to it," he replied, his tone light and devoid of any annoyance. The Harry of old might have shied away from such attention, but he had grown, both in confidence and in his understanding of the wizarding world.

Ron, looking slightly embarrassed, shifted in his seat. "I mean, everyone's heard of you, but I didn't expect to actually meet you. It's a bit overwhelming, you know?"

"Understandable," Harry acknowledged, his gaze thoughtful. He was keenly aware of the intrigue surrounding his identity in the wizarding community, a curiosity that he had learned to navigate with grace and poise.

As they conversed, Harry couldn't help but notice Ron's slightly glazed expression, a telltale sign of the spell he was under. Nigel offered his observation. "Ah, the complexities of the wizarding world. One can never simply have a normal train ride to school, can we?"

Harry chuckled inwardly at Nigel's comment, amused by the situation and the irony. "Indeed, Nigel. But let's see where this leads," he thought back, keeping his outward demeanor calm and friendly.

Ron, meanwhile, seemed to relax as they talked, his initial awe giving way to a more natural conversation. He spoke of his family, the Weasleys, and his excitement about finally attending Hogwarts. Harry

listened intently, his mind working to peel back the layers of the spell influencing Ron's behavior.

"So, excited about being sorted into a house?" Harry asked casually, steering the conversation towards Hogwarts traditions.

Ron's face lit up. "Oh, definitely! My whole family's been in Gryffindor. It's sort of a tradition. I hope I end up there too. Not Slytherin, though."

Ron's tone shifted as he mentioned Slytherin, his voice tinged with distaste. "All Dark Wizards came from there," he said with a hint of venom.

Harry, unfazed, responded with a knowing smirk. "That is not true, you know." He leaned forward slightly, his gaze piercing as he looked at Ron.

Nigel chuckled in his mind at Harry's approach. "Trying to break the spell with manipulation, eh, Master Harry?" he mused silently.

Harry chose to ignore the remark, focusing instead on enlightening Ron.

"Egbert the Egregious, an evil wizard, hailed from Gryffindor, the house you're so proud of," he began. "Emeric the Evil, who was even worse than Voldemort, although not as capable, was from Ravenclaw. Uric the Oddball came from Hufflepuff, and Hereward, known for his malevolence, was also from Ravenclaw. Loxias, another dark figure, hailed from Gryffindor, and Godelot, a notorious wizard, was from Ravenclaw."

Ron sat frozen, each name hitting him like a revelation. "And do you know who is from Slytherin?" Harry continued, his voice steady.

Ron swallowed hard, a mix of curiosity and apprehension in his eyes.

"Who?" he asked hesitantly.

Harry's smirk deepened. "Merlin himself," he revealed with a dramatic flair.

Ron's shock was palpable. "Can't be," he stammered, disbelief etched on

his face.

Harry pressed on, confident in his knowledge. "But he is. Merlin was Slytherin's student."

Ron's expression transformed from shock to contemplation. Harry watched with satisfaction, aware that his words were having the desired effect.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind again, laced with a hint of approval.

"Well played, Master Harry. Shattering stereotypes with facts - a classic move."

"Really? Merlin was from Slytherin?" Ron asked, his voice laced with doubt.

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Chapter 56: Secret Player

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Harry sighed, the reality of the situation sinking in. The boy across from him, Ron Weasley, had a deeply ingrained bias against Slytherin House, likely ingrained from childhood, filled with praise for Gryffindor and disdain for Slytherin. Dealing with such deeply rooted beliefs was a task Harry wasn't eager to undertake. His curiosity piqued about the origin of the spell cast on Ron, but as Ron continued to praise Gryffindor, it

became evident that the spell's influence was as strong as ever.

Ron's conversation shifted to the great wizards of Gryffindor, mentioning, "And don't forget Dumbledore. The greatest wizard of all times." That's when it clicked for Harry. 'It must be him,' he thought, a smirk playing on his lips. 'The Headmaster wants to influence me into Gryffindor, but why?'

Harry, with a knowing grin, turned to Nigel, and asked, "Nigel, characters make a name, and a name makes character, right?"

Nigel responded with an eager understanding, "Astute observation, Master Harry. The Headmaster might have thought to influence your character by placing you into Gryffindor. If you spend seven years among lions, you will act like one."

Harry's smile widened. "And if I spend seven years among snakes, I may become a snake. I wonder why he wants me to be brave?" he pondered, his mind swirling with possibilities.

Nigel's voice, always a source of insight, offered a hypothesis. "Perhaps he sees in you a quality that he believes will flourish best in Gryffindor. Or maybe it's about shaping your future path. After all, the House one is sorted into can have a profound impact on their wizarding journey."

Harry nodded, contemplating Nigel's words. The idea of the Headmaster manipulating his house placement intrigued him. It suggested a deeper game at play, one that Harry was now a part of.

Meanwhile, Ron, oblivious to the silent conversation between Harry and Nigel, continued to extol the virtues of Gryffindor. "It's the best house, you know. Brave at heart, daring, nerve, and chivalry. That's Gryffindor," he said with a sense of pride.

He couldn't help but chuckle inwardly at Ron's passionate speech about Gryffindor. 'Sounds to me like a fool who would dive headfirst into

danger without a second thought,' Harry mused silently, his eyes dancing with amusement. The conversation with Ron was enlightening, yet it raised more questions than answers about Dumbledore's intentions. Why did the Headmaster want him in Gryffindor? Harry had no desire to be a mere pawn in someone else's game. 'I am a player, not a piece on the chessboard,' he thought firmly.

He then thought, 'Not only that. If the caster is Dumbledore, he wants me to be friends with Ron. I wonder why?' He mused, but couldn't figure out why. As the train hummed into life and started to move, Harry returned to his book, leaving Ron to being bored to death. "Obviously not a reader," Nigel commented, his voice echoing in Harry's mind with a hint of amusement.

'Doesn't look like the type,' Harry answered internally, his focus returning to the pages before him. Despite Ron's amiable nature, Harry had decided not to pursue a friendship with him. He couldn't see Dumbledore's intention in orchestrating this relationship, and until then, he wouldn't blindly follow the script laid out for him. Overconfidence was a hamartia that had caused the downfall of many mighty figures, and Harry was wary of falling into that trap.

Despite his increasing mental prowess, Harry reminded himself that he was still an eleven-year-old boy, very new to the intricate game of wizarding politics. Dumbledore, on the other hand, was a figure with at least a century's worth of experience, having fought against two Dark Lords and vanquished one with his own hands. Underestimating such a formidable wizard would be a grave mistake.

As the train journeyed through the scenic landscapes, Harry's thoughts wandered to the challenges and mysteries that awaited him at Hogwarts.

"Master Harry, remember that every chessboard has its pawns and

knights, but also a player moving the pieces," Nigel advised, his voice a blend of wisdom and subtle warning.

Harry nodded slightly, acknowledging Nigel's counsel. "I intend to be a player, not a piece," he resolved once more, his eyes reflecting determination. The idea of being manipulated by Dumbledore or anyone else was not something Harry would entertain. He was determined to carve his own destiny, using his knowledge, skills, and the support of Nigel, his virtual mentor.

The train ride was a blend of quiet reading and introspective planning for Harry. While other students roamed the corridors, laughing and chatting, Harry remained in his compartment, immersed in his book and his thoughts. He was not anti-social, but he understood the importance of choosing allies wisely, especially in a world as complex as the one he was entering.

Harry raised his head, observing Ron Weasley sitting across from him after some time. The red-haired boy looked decidedly bored, his eyes aimlessly wandering the window's passing scenery. Harry, sensing an opportunity to gather information, placed a bookmark in his book, "The Little Prince," and turned his full attention to Ron. "So, do you know any spell?" he asked casually, his tone laced with curiosity.

Ron perked up at the question, eager to share. "Well, yeah, a few. My brothers showed me some stuff. Fred and George are always messing around with spells," he said with a hint of pride.

Harry noted Ron's response with interest. The information about Ron's family could be valuable; with three brothers currently at Hogwarts and a sister who would soon join, Ron's insights could offer a unique perspective on the school's dynamics. While Harry had no intention of choosing his friends solely for benefit, he was aware of the strategic

importance of connections. Ron, with his direct link to the Weasley family, and Draco Malfoy, with his family's political influence, represented potential pawns in the complex game of wizarding politics. As Harry contemplated his approach, he pondered the possibility of being sorted into Slytherin. 'What would Ron's reaction be if I were sorted into Slytherin?' he wondered, a sly smirk playing on his lips. He decided to test the waters, curious about Ron's stance on the house often maligned for its association with dark wizards.

Before Ron could delve deeper into his limited spell knowledge, a lady with a snack trolley passed by their compartment. "Anything off the trolley, dears?" she asked cheerfully.

Harry observed Ron's reaction closely. The boy hesitantly pulled out a poorly wrapped sandwich from his bag and declined the offer. Harry's keen eye didn't miss the details - the sandwich's unappealing appearance, Ron's slightly embarrassed refusal, and the longing glance he cast at the trolley's treats. It was evident to Harry that the Weasleys, despite their noble bloodline, faced financial constraints.

With a subtle movement, Harry reached for his pocket, extracting a few galleons. Addressing the trolley lady, he said with a genuine smile, "Bit of everything, please." His gesture was both generous and tactical, aiming to put Ron at ease and perhaps loosen his tongue.

As the lady began piling an assortment of sweets and snacks onto their compartment, Ron's eyes widened in amazement. Chocolate Frogs, Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, Cauldron Cakes, Pumpkin Pasties, and more were spread out before them. Ron's expression, a mix of surprise and gratitude, did not escape Harry's notice.

"Go on, help yourself," Harry encouraged, nudging a Chocolate Frog towards Ron. The boy hesitated for a moment before eagerly grabbing

the treat, his eyes lighting up with delight.

As Ron indulged in the snacks, Harry casually steered the conversation back to Hogwarts. "So, your brothers are in Gryffindor, right? What can you tell me about the other houses?" Harry asked, feigning ignorance.

Ron, his mouth full of Cauldron Cake, nodded enthusiastically. "Yeah, all Weasleys end up in Gryffindor. It's the best house, really. Brave, noble, and all that. Slytherin's the worst - full of dark wizards and such," he said, echoing the sentiment Harry had heard earlier.

Harry nodded thoughtfully, his mind analyzing Ron's words. 'It's crucial to understand these house stereotypes firsthand.' He knew that every piece of information, every perspective, could prove useful in navigating the complexities of Hogwarts. Sadly the red head repeated same sentences over and over again.

Harry, his curiosity piqued, casually probed Ron further. "What do you think of me, Sir Weasley? Do you think I am evil?" he asked, his tone light yet probing.

Ron, his mouth still full of chocolate, shook his head vigorously, bits of melted chocolate on his fingers. "No way! You're Harry Potter. You-Know-Who's vanquisher. You can't be bad," he replied with conviction.

"But what if I end up in Slytherin?" Harry pressed, his eyes gleaming with mischief.

Ron, still chewing, vehemently shook his head. "Impossible. You're Harry Potter," he repeated, as if that settled the matter. "Slytherin's for the likes of... well, not you."

Harry's smirk deepened. 'How naive,' he thought, amused. Out loud, he asked, "Do you know how the sorting process works?"

Ron, now swallowing his mouthful, replied, "My brothers won't tell me.

Fred and George joked about fighting a dragon, but that's got to be a lie,

right?"

"Who knows? I've heard it's quite random," Harry said with a shrug. "So, if I were sorted into Slytherin, would that make me evil?"

Ron hesitated, his expression uncertain. "I... I don't know," he finally admitted.

'Interesting,' Harry mused internally. He decided to drop the topic for now, focusing instead on the snacks before them.

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Chapter 57: Hermione and

Animagus

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Then Ron remembered the question Harry asked earlier. "Oh, right. I was about to show you my spell." He reached into his pocket and pulled out an old wand, its appearance worn and clearly handed down through generations. Harry observed the wand, noting its aged condition, which mirrored Ron's secondhand clothes.

As Ron prepared to cast the spell, he brought out a rat from his sleeve.

Harry's eyebrows furrowed in suspicion at the sight of the rat. 'Something is off,' he thought, turning to Nigel. "That rat, Nigel. It's not just an ordinary rat, is it?"

Before he could utilize the Observe function on the rat, their compartment door slid open, and a young girl with bushy hair stepped in. She looked around eleven years old, her eyes scanning the compartment curiously. "Have you seen any toad? A boy named Neville lost his," she inquired earnestly.

Ron, looking momentarily distracted from his spellcasting, replied with a simple "No." The girl's gaze then shifted to Ron's wand. "Oh, are you doing magic? Let's see it then," she said, her tone a mix of curiosity and skepticism.

Ron cleared his throat, a hint of nervousness in his eyes. He raised his wand and chanted, "Sunshine, daisies, butter mellow, turn this stupid, fat rat yellow." He waved his wand, but to no effect. The rat remained its usual color, unaltered by the spell.

Harry, still intrigued by the rat, used his Observe function, a System message appearing before his eyes:

[System Message: Scabbers the Rat - Animagus Detection Warning: Possible human in animagus form. Caution advised. Name: Unknown. History: Concealed. Magical Signature: Altered.]

Nigel chimed in Harry's mind, his tone reflective of the situation's absurdity. "Shall I use System Points to unveil the rat's true identity, Master Harry?" he inquired, his voice carrying a subtle hint of amusement at the spectacle.

Harry inwardly shook his head, deciding against it for the moment. 'Not yet, Nigel. Let's not rush into unmasking our furry friend. I'll investigate further later,' he thought, his mind already formulating a strategy to uncover the rat's secrets.

The girl spoke up at this moment, her voice tinged with a blend of curiosity and critique. "Are you sure that's a real spell? Well, it's not very

good, is it? I've only tried simple ones myself, but they have all worked for me," she said, her tone suggesting a mix of genuine intrigue and a desire to showcase her own prowess.

She sat down across Harry, and her eyes, filled with a mixture of curiosity and purpose, fixed upon him. As she pointed her wand directly at Harry's face, his instinctive reaction was swift. He squinted and reached out, his hand firmly gripping her wrist to turn the wand away.

"You shouldn't point your wand at people," he said in a low, measured voice. His grip was firm but not aggressive, reflecting his caution rather than hostility.

The girl, Hermione Granger, winced slightly under the pressure of Harry's grip, her face contorting in a mix of discomfort and surprise. "I just wanted to fix your glasses," she explained, her voice tinged with a hint of defensiveness.

Harry released her wrist, his expression unyielding. "My glasses are unbreakable, and work just fine. We don't know each other, and you shouldn't point your wand at people you don't know," he reiterated, his tone colder now, underscoring the seriousness of his statement.

Hermione pulled back, her cheeks flushed with a mix of embarrassment and frustration. She seemed unaccustomed to being reprimanded in such a manner. "Are you alright, Harry?" Ron asked, his mouth full.

Harry, his gaze still fixed on Hermione, activated his Observe function.

The System message that appeared confirmed his suspicions:

[System Message: Hermione Granger (11) - Under Compelling Spell

Objective: Befriend Harry Potter and influence his academic pursuits.

Spell Origin: Unknown.

Note: Subject's awareness of the spell's influence - Minimal.]

Harry's eyes narrowed as he processed this information. 'Another one

under a spell,' he thought, a tinge of annoyance creeping into his mind.

'Dumbledore, what are you trying to do with me?' He internally questioned the Headmaster's motives, his distrust growing.

Hermione, seemingly oblivious to Harry's internal musings, attempted to regain her composure. "I've read about you, you know," she started, trying to shift the conversation. "In 'Modern Magical History' and 'The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts,' and 'Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century.'"

Harry listened, his expression neutral. He was aware of the books she mentioned, having read them himself. The mention of his own story in such books was no surprise, but the content couldn't be more off.

"Quite the reader, aren't we?" Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, a subtle note of amusement underlying his words. "A refreshing change from our snack-loving friend here."

Harry couldn't help but internally smile at Nigel's observation. He glanced at Ron, who was still engrossed in the sweets, seemingly oblivious to the deeper conversation unfolding.

Hermione decided to forget her slight. She then turned to Ron, who was still munching on the snacks. "And you are?" she asked, her tone polite yet marked with a hint of impatience.

Ron, his mouth full, mumbled a response, "Ron Weasley."

Hermione's expression shifted to a scowl, clearly unimpressed with Ron's lack of manners. "A pleasure," she said, though her tone suggested otherwise. She then stood up, addressing them both. "You two better change into robes. I expect we'll be arriving soon."

As she made to leave, Harry, noticing her adherence to the compelling spell's directive, called out, "You should ask a prefect."

Hermione turned back, a look of confusion crossing her face. "What?" she

inquired, her brows furrowed.

Harry, with a knowing smirk, added, "The toad. Ask a prefect. They can help."

For a moment, Hermione's eyes glazed over, a clear indication of the spell's influence. She nodded, albeit mechanically. "Right. I will just do that," she agreed, before exiting the compartment.

Harry watched her leave, his mind analyzing the situation. 'So, she's under a compelling spell to befriend me and influence my academic path,' he thought. 'Dumbledore's machinations, perhaps?'

Nigel's voice commented on the encounter. "Seems like our dear Headmaster is quite interested in scripting your Hogwarts experience, Master Harry. How do you plan to navigate this woven web?"

Harry pondered Nigel's words. "I'll play along for now, but on my terms," he decided, his gaze shifting to the scenery outside the window. "It's clear Dumbledore has a plan for me, but I won't be led blindly."

Ron, who had been quietly observing the exchange, finally spoke up.

"She's a bit much, isn't she?"

Harry chuckled, his attention now back on Ron. "She's certainly... dedicated," he replied diplomatically. "But, let's focus on our arrival. We should change into our robes."

As they prepared to change, Harry's thoughts lingered on Hermione's behavior. Her actions, clearly dictated by the spell, indicated a larger plan at play, one that involved not just Ron but Hermione as well. 'Why these two?' he wondered.

Nigel's voice broke through his contemplation. "It seems, Master Harry, that your journey at Hogwarts will be far from ordinary. Allies and obstacles, all part of a grander scheme."

Harry nodded, acknowledging the insight Nigel provided. With a subtle

gesture, his hand moving deftly, he took out his wand. A flick of his wrist, and the window of the compartment turned pitch black.

"Colovaria." The magic was swift but effective, a testament to Harry's growing prowess in magic. Ron's reaction was immediate and filled with wonder. "Blimey! How did you do that?" he exclaimed, his eyes and mouth agape in awe.

Harry merely shrugged in response. He saw no point in explaining the intricacies of his magical abilities to Ron, especially considering the boy's earlier attempt at spellcasting with a chant as simple as "Sunshine and daisies." It was clear to Harry that Ron, while earnest, had much to learn about the true nature of magic.

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Chapter 58: Meeting with Peers

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Quietly, Harry took out his Hogwarts robe. The fabric was smooth and pristine, a stark contrast to Ron's worn and faded attire. As he dressed, his movements were graceful and efficient, each motion practiced and precise. He had learned long ago the importance of being prepared, a lesson that life with the Dursleys had ingrained in him. Now, as he readied himself for his arrival at Hogwarts, he felt a sense of anticipation

mixed with caution.

Nigel, observing Harry's actions, remarked in his mind, "A new beginning, Master Harry. Hogwarts awaits. I do hope the food is to your liking."

Harry couldn't help but smile inwardly at Nigel's comment. The AI's observations, though often laced with humor, also carried a hint of genuine concern.

Ron, still looking at the darkened window, muttered, "Wish I could do that." His voice carried a mix of envy and admiration. Harry glanced at Ron, noticing the hint of longing in his eyes. It was clear that Ron yearned for more than he had. 'Must have grown up envying others.' He mused.

It was already evening when the train arrived at Hogwarts. Amidst the bustling crowd of students, Harry heard a booming voice calling out, "First years! Come on out. Don't be shy. First years, come 'ere." The source of the voice was a giant of a man, holding a lantern that cast a warm glow in the dimming light. Harry observed the man discreetly, activating his 'Observe' function silently.

[System Message: Rubeus Hagrid - Half-giant, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. Friendly and fond of magical creatures. No malicious intent detected.]

As Hagrid called out again, "Come, this way to the boats. Follow me," Harry followed the crowd, his eyes scanning his surroundings with keen interest. Approaching the lake, Hagrid's voice boomed once more, "No more than four to a boat." Harry decided to distance himself from Ron, opting instead for an empty boat at the side. As he settled into the boat, two girls and a boy joined him.

Harry's 'Observe' function activated automatically as he scrutinized his

new companions.

[System Message: Tracey Davis. Open-minded and curious. No compelling spells detected.]

[System Message: Daphne Greengrass. Strong-willed and ambitious. No compelling spells detected.]

[System Message: Neville Longbottom - Under Long-term Confundus Spell. Origin of spell: Unknown. Note: Spell affects memory and decision-making. Subject's awareness of the spell's influence - Minimal.]

Harry frowned as he recognized the name. "Nigel, isn't he the other baby in the prophecy?"

Nigel answered with a mental nod, "He is. He could be in your place right now, Master Harry. The boy who lived. Instead, both his parents were crazed by endless torture. Growing up with his grandmother and Uncle, in constant comparison to his father, and reprimand made him weak-willed and insecure. I don't know the source that spell is, though. Most intriguing."

Harry nodded in understanding. Neville was someone he wanted to meet, hopefully becoming friends with him. Alice Longbottom, Neville's mother, was his godmother, and Neville was like a brother in fate.

He decided to break the ice, introducing himself with a touch of formality, "Hello. I am Harry Potter, Heir of the Most Ancient and Most Noble House Potter." His tone was composed, yet there was an underlying warmth in his voice. Extending a hand, he gently took Daphne and Tracey's hands in turn, planting a soft, courteous kiss on each, a gesture of refined manners he had learned through Nigel's guidance. Then, turning towards Neville, who looked a bit intimidated by the formality, he offered his hand with a friendly smile.

Daphne Greengrass, a girl with an air of confidence, raised an eyebrow at

Harry's introduction but returned the greeting with equal politeness.

"Daphne Greengrass, , Heiress of the Most Ancient and Most Noble House Greengrass. Pleased to meet you, Heir Potter," she replied, her voice carrying a hint of curiosity. Her demeanor suggested she was well-versed in the customs of the wizarding world's elite.

Tracey Davis, on the other hand, seemed pleasantly surprised by Harry's gesture and shocked by his identity. "Tracey Davis," she said, her voice light and friendly. "It's nice to meet you, Sir Potter."

Neville Longbottom, a bit flustered by the formal introduction, shook Harry's hand. "I-I'm Neville Longbottom, umm... , Heir of the Most Ancient and Most Noble House Longbottom." he stammered, his voice betraying a mix of nervousness and awe.

Harry, sensing Neville's discomfort, quickly shifted to a more relaxed posture, aiming to put him at ease. "It's a pleasure to meet all of you. Excited about studying in here?" he inquired, his voice carrying a genuine interest.

Daphne nodded. "Yes, though I've heard a lot about it from my family. It's quite the experience, I gather."

Tracey chimed in with enthusiasm, "I'm really excited! I can't wait to start learning actual magic, my folks at home only taught me the basics."

Neville, still appearing a bit overwhelmed, added, "Yeah. My gran says it's a big responsibility."

Harry listened attentively, his mind noting the different backgrounds and perspectives each of his companions brought to the conversation. He was particularly intrigued by Neville's mention of his grandmother, remembering Nigel's briefing about his family's tragic history.

Nigel's voice commented with a hint of intrigue. "Quite the diverse group you've found yourself with, Master Harry. Ms. Greengrass comes from an

old pure-blood family, known for their pride and ambition. Ms. Davis, on the other hand, seems more grounded, perhaps from a less traditional background. And Mr. Longbottom, well, his story is a rather tragic one."

Harry nodded slightly, acknowledging Nigel's analysis. He knew that understanding his peers' backgrounds and motivations would be crucial in navigating Hogwarts' complex social landscape.

As the boat glided smoothly across the Black Lake, the conversation among the four first-years continued, with Harry skillfully steering it towards lighter topics. He asked about their interests and hobbies, and in turn, shared a few of his own.

Neville, gradually warming up to the group, shared his love for plants, mentioning his interest in Herbology. Daphne spoke of her fascination with the charms and potions, while Tracey expressed a keen interest in charms and enchantments.

Harry, listening intently, found himself appreciating the company of his new acquaintances. They were all different, yet there was a sense of mutual respect and curiosity among them.

As Hogwarts Castle came into view, its towering spires and grand architecture illuminated by the moonlight, a sense of awe filled the boat.

Harry's eyes widened at the sight, feeling a surge of excitement at the prospect of exploring the castle's ancient halls and secrets.

Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "Ah, Hogwarts. A place of endless mysteries and opportunities. It will be fascinating to see how you make your mark here, Master Harry."

Harry smiled inwardly, his gaze still fixed on the majestic castle. "Indeed, Nigel. Hogwarts is more than a school; it's the beginning of a new chapter."

Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind as they glided across the Black

Lake, "Fun fact, Master Harry. This lake is the same one the four founders traveled when they first found this land. The tradition for first-years to pass through it is to see through the founders' eyes." Harry appreciated the trivia, feeling a deeper connection to the history and tradition of the school he was about to enter.

As they neared the castle, Harry's attention was abruptly drawn to a large tentacle briefly breaking the surface of the lake. His reaction was swift; he activated his Observe function to identify the creature. Tracey, noticing the tentacle as well, said, "I heard from my mother that this is the Giant Squid. It helps students if they fall into the lake."

[System Message: Kraken - Mythological creature, not just a Giant Squid. Capable of incredible feats of strength and known for its protective nature towards Hogwarts students. Magical properties: Highly intelligent and sensitive to magical energies.]

Harry's eyes widened slightly at the revelation. The creature in the lake wasn't just a mere squid, but a Kraken, a being of myth and legend. He was intrigued by its presence in the lake and its protective nature towards the students. The thought that such a magnificent creature resided in the depths of Hogwarts' lake added another layer of mystery to the already enchanting school.

Nigel offered a humorous observation, "Quite the guardian for a school, wouldn't you agree? I suppose it beats having a grumpy old caretaker with a cat."

As the boat approached the landing, Harry turned his attention back to the castle. Its towering spires and the vastness of its structure were illuminated under the moonlight, casting an awe-inspiring image. He felt a sense of anticipation, wondering what mysteries and challenges lay within those ancient walls.

Daphne, her gaze fixed on the castle, spoke with a hint of reverence, "It's even more impressive than what I imagined."

Neville, still a bit shy but clearly awestruck, added, "It's huge. I can't believe we're going to live here."

Tracey, equally mesmerized, nodded in agreement. "It's like something out of a storybook."

Harry, observing their reactions, felt a sense of camaraderie building among them. Despite their different backgrounds, the shared experience of arriving at Hogwarts seemed to be a unifying moment.

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Chapter 59: The Good Ol'

Professor

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As they disembarked from the boats, Harry noticed Hagrid guiding the first-year students towards a large set of doors. The giant man's booming voice echoed across the grounds, "Right this way, everyone. Mind yer step."

The group of first-years followed Hagrid, their eyes wide with excitement and nervousness. Harry walked alongside his new acquaintances, his mind alert and observant.

As Hagrid stepped aside, an old witch with a serious demeanor approached the group of first-year students. "I will take it from here, Hagrid. Thank you," she said. The witch then turned to the students, her voice firm yet welcoming. "Welcome to Hogwarts. Now, in a few moments, you will pass through these doors, and join your classmates. But before you can take your seats, you must be sorted into your houses. They are Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. While you are here, your house will be like your family. Your triumphs will earn you house points, and any rule-breaking will cost you points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup. The sorting ceremony will begin momentarily." With that, she turned and walked away.

As she departed, the crowd parted, and Draco Malfoy approached Harry. "Potter," he greeted with a nod. His eyes then shifted to Neville, and a smirk formed on his face as he looked down at him. Before Draco could utter a disparaging remark, Harry intervened. "Malfoy. Meet my friend, Neville Longbottom, Heir of the Most Ancient and Most Noble House Longbottom."

Draco's gaze flickered back to Harry, meeting his intense stare. After a moment, he nodded respectfully. "An honor, Heir Longbottom," he said, his tone surprisingly genuine. Neville greeted him back, though still a bit taken aback by the sudden attention.

"I will see you later then, Potter," Draco said, before turning and walking away. Harry watched him go, his thoughts on the complex dynamics of the wizarding world's elite. Unlike Ron and Draco, whom he saw more as chess pieces in the grand game of Hogwarts, Harry genuinely wanted to befriend Neville. Their shared fate, both being the children mentioned in the prophecy, forged a bond that Harry felt was worth nurturing.

As Professor McGonagall returned with a list of names, she instructed the first-year students to follow her. Seizing this opportunity, Harry discreetly activated his Observe function on her, curious to learn more about the stern-faced witch leading them.

[System Message: Minerva McGonagall - Deputy Headmistress, Head of Gryffindor House. Skilled in Transfiguration. Strong sense of justice and fairness. Big fan of Quidditch. No malicious intent detected.]

Entering the Grand Hall, Harry was immediately captivated by its grandeur. Towering ceilings enchanted to mimic the night sky stretched above, creating an illusion of dining under the stars. The floating candles added a mystical ambiance, casting a warm glow over the four long house tables filled with students. The hall was alive with the buzz of conversation and the clatter of cutlery, a symphony of school life in motion.

From somewhere behind him, Hermione's voice drifted over, educating a few students. "It's not real, the ceiling. It's just bewitched to look like the night sky. I read about it in 'Hogwarts: A History.'"

Approaching the front of the hall, McGonagall stopped before a stool with an old, patched hat. Harry's gaze then shifted to the staff table, observing the professors and other staff members. His attention was drawn to two individuals in particular, who were also looking in his direction. One was a man with greasy hair and a sullen expression, resembling a human bat. The other, an old man with a long white beard, had eyes that twinkled with an unreadable emotion. 'A nice trick to make people look into his eyes,' Harry thought.

Nigel's voice commented in Harry's mind. "You know what they say, Master Harry. Eyes are the mirror to the soul, or in this case, perhaps memories."

Harry smiled inwardly as he used the Observe function on both individuals. He felt their attempts to probe his mind with Legilimency a moment ago, but thanks to the System, his memories remained shielded.

[System Message: Severus Snape - Potions Master, Head of Slytherin House. A complicated past with deep layers. Skilled in potions and Legilimency. Resentments and secrets hidden beneath a cold exterior. Malicious Intent: Detected soft resentment.]

[System Message: Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster of Hogwarts. One of the most powerful wizards alive. Known for his fight against dark forces. A strategist with a penchant for manipulation. Eyes capable of Legilimency, though unsuccessful on you. Malicious Intent: Detected soft intent of malice for the necessity of greater good.]

As the Sorting Hat's song filled the Great Hall, a ripple of anticipation ran through the first-year students. Harry Potter, standing amidst his peers, listened intently. The Hat's message about the qualities of each house resonated with him, each verse painting a vivid picture of the values and traits Hogwarts valued.

Harry, deep in thought, turned to Nigel. "This proves it, Nigel.

Dumbledore is not the simple, good old man many believe him to be.

He's a manipulative mastermind. He might mean well, but that's the most dangerous kind. At least Dark Lords are open about their intentions."

Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind. "Indeed, Master Harry. The line between a savior and a manipulator can be as thin as a wand's core. It's all about perspective and, unfortunately, manipulation often wears the mask of benevolence."

At the staff table, both Severus Snape and Albus Dumbledore were visibly taken aback. They had attempted to probe Harry's mind with Legilimency but had failed to breach his mental defenses. Dumbledore surmised that

Lily's protective spell, which had saved Harry from Voldemort, was still shielding him. Snape, however, believed that Harry was a natural genius in Legilimency and Occlumency, a talent possibly inherited from his mother, Lily. Yet, Snape's disdain for the boy, who bore such a striking resemblance to James Potter, lingered.

Harry, aware of their scrutiny, ignored the duo, focusing instead on the Sorting Hat. Using his Observe function, he studied the ancient artifact: [System Message: The Sorting Hat - An enchanted hat with the ability to sort students into Hogwarts houses based on their personality traits and values. Created by the founders of Hogwarts. Possesses a high level of intelligence and insight.]

McGonagall then addressed the students, "When your name is called, please step forward. I will place the sorting hat on your head, and you will be sorted into your respective house." She then proceeded to call the first name, "Hannah Abbott."

As Professor McGonagall began the sorting ceremony, the Great Hall fell into a hushed anticipation. Each student's name called seemed to echo through the vast chamber, marking the start of their journey at Hogwarts.

Hanna Abbott walked nervously to the stool and sat down. The Sorting Hat barely touched her head before it shouted, "Hufflepuff!" Hannah's face lit up with a relieved smile as she joined her new housemates at the Hufflepuff table, welcomed with applause.

Terry Boot was next, his steps measured and calm. The hat deliberated for a moment before declaring, "Ravenclaw!" Terry, with a composed nod, made his way to the Ravenclaw table, where he was greeted warmly.

Lavender Brown's turn came, and she practically bounced to the stool. The hat's decision was swift. "Gryffindor!" it announced. Lavender

beamed, rushing to join her fellow Gryffindors amidst loud cheers.

Justin Finch-Fletchley, with his easy smile, was also sorted into Hufflepuff. He looked genuinely pleased, joining his housemates with a friendly wave.

Seamus Finnigan's sorting was a lively affair. The hat seemed to enjoy teasing him a bit before finally declaring, "Gryffindor!" Seamus's grin was infectious as he made his way to his new house.

Hermione Granger, her face set with determination, walked up. The hat seemed to ponder longer with her. "Gryffindor!" it finally announced.

Hermione's relief was palpable as she joined the Gryffindor table, her face flushed with excitement.

Gregory Goyle, looking somewhat bewildered, was quickly sorted into Slytherin. He lumbered over to his house's table, where he was received with muted nods.

Daphne Greengrass approached with an air of confidence. The hat announced "Slytherin!" almost immediately, and Daphne, without a hint of surprise, elegantly walked to her house table.

Neville Longbottom's sorting was met with a bit of tension. The hat took its time, but eventually, "Gryffindor!" rang out. Neville, looking relieved and slightly surprised, joined Gryffindor amidst encouraging applause.

Megan Jones, a girl with a bright smile, was sorted into Hufflepuff. She skipped happily to her table, greeted by cheers.

Ernest Macmillan, serious and upright, was also sorted into Hufflepuff. He nodded respectfully to Professor McGonagall before joining his house.

Draco Malfoy strode confidently to the stool, his demeanor unshaken.

The hat barely grazed his head before shouting, "Slytherin!" Draco smirked slightly, taking his place among his housemates with an air of entitlement.

Theodore Nott, quiet and observant, was next. "Slytherin!" the hat declared. Theodore gave a subtle nod, his expression unreadable, and joined his house.

Parvati Patil, chattering nervously until the last moment, was sorted into Gryffindor. Her nervousness turned into excitement as she took her seat at the Gryffindor table.

Padma Patil, in contrast to her sister, walked up calmly. "Ravenclaw!" the hat announced. Padma smiled and joined her housemates with a serene expression.

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Chapter 60: Harry's Sorting

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When McGonagall called the next name, "Harry Potter," an expectant hush fell over the Great Hall. All eyes turned to the confident 11-year-old who walked without a hint of hesitation and sat on the stool. The chatter ceased; the atmosphere was thick with curiosity, students stretching their necks to see him. Harry, maintaining his composure, looked ahead, consciously averting any direct gaze. The hat was gently placed on his head, and Harry felt it sift through memories, those that Nigel allowed it to access.

"Most intriguing. Where to put you, Mr. Potter?" the hat pondered aloud, its voice resonating in Harry's mind.

Harry, playing along with the moment, inquired, "Where do you think is the best?"

The hat, its voice reflecting a hint of amusement, replied, "Most definitely Slytherin. Ambitious, cunning, and dangerous. My, my. Such a sharp mind you have."

"Thanks, you are not so bad yourself," Harry smirked internally, engaging in a light-hearted exchange with the hat.

"But you are also brave and loyal. You love reading and science. You fit all the houses," the hat observed, seeming to weigh its options.

Harry, with a playful tone, joked, "How about you make me the new headmaster?"

The hat chuckled at his audacity. "Would be better, believe me, but I don't have the permission. Well, where to put you?" It murmured in contemplation.

"Slytherin, please," Harry stated firmly.

"Are you sure?" the hat queried, seeking confirmation.

Harry's smirk deepened. "Don't you want to see the old man's face when you put me there?"

The hat laughed, a sound unheard by anyone else, before announcing loudly, "SLYTHERIN!"

The Great Hall erupted into a pandemonium of reactions. The Slytherin table burst into cheers and applause, welcoming their newest member with a mix of surprise and excitement. The other tables, particularly Gryffindor, were abuzz with whispers and shocked expressions.

Dumbledore's face, visible from the staff table, was a picture of surprise and intrigue, his twinkling eyes momentarily losing their sparkle. Snape,

on the other hand, appeared genuinely taken aback, his usual scowl deepening.

Harry rose from the stool, his face betraying none of his internal amusement. As he made his way to the Slytherin table, he felt the weight of many eyes upon him, each student trying to decipher the mystery of 'The Boy Who Lived' being sorted into Slytherin.

As Harry walked towards the Slytherin table, his clothes subtly adjusted themselves, adopting a green and silver theme that seamlessly blended with the house colors. The fabric shifted and shimmered, a visual testament to the magic that permeated Hogwarts. Nigel quipped, "Gotta say, it matches with your eyes. Imagine a yellow theme of Hufflepuff." Harry chuckled inwardly, amused by the mental image Nigel put in his mind, even as he took his seat at his new house table.

The hall was still buzzing with whispers and murmurs as Professor McGonagall recovered from her momentary stupor and called the next name, "Ron Weasley." Ron, looking visibly shocked and somewhat lost, made his way to the stool. The Sorting Hat took only a moment before announcing "Gryffindor!" Ron, relieved, joined his house table, still casting occasional bewildered glances at Harry.

Following Ron, Blaise Zabini was sorted into Slytherin, his stride confident as he joined his new housemates. With the sorting ceremony concluded, the Great Hall settled into a temporary silence.

Dumbledore stood up, his face neutral, but there was a subtle shift in his usually unflappable demeanor. "Welcome!" he began, his voice resonating throughout the hall. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts. Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak!" With a whimsical smile, he sat down, and magically, food appeared on all the tables.

Harry, amused by Dumbledore's eccentricity, asked in his mind, "Acting demented?" He found the old man's act entertaining, knowing that despite his age, Dumbledore was as sharp as a basilisk's tooth.

Nigel's voice resonated with a chuckle, "Those are probably the names of house elves that use magic to deliver the food from kitchens." Harry nodded in agreement, 'That makes sense.'

As Harry started to eat, he noticed several students trying to engage him in conversation. His newfound status as 'The Boy Who Lived' in Slytherin had evidently piqued the curiosity of many. Fortunately, he sat next to Daphne Greengrass, who was seated next to Tracey Davis, leaving his right side empty. Across from him sat Theodore Nott and Blaise Zabini, with Draco Malfoy on Nott's left.

The Slytherin table was a blend of traditional pure-blood families and ambitious newcomers. Harry observed their interactions, noting the subtle dynamics of power and influence at play. Daphne and Tracey, both coming from established families, conversed with an air of confidence. In contrast, Theodore and Blaise, though less outspoken, exuded a quiet strength that spoke of their upbringing in the complex world of wizarding politics.

Draco Malfoy, in particular, seemed intrigued by Harry's presence in Slytherin. His earlier confident demeanor had given way to a more contemplative one. "Quite the stir you've caused, Potter," he remarked, his tone a mix of curiosity and respect.

Harry, taking a bite of his roast chicken, replied nonchalantly, "It seems so, Malfoy. But then, Hogwarts is full of surprises, isn't it?"

The meal progressed with various students engaging Harry in conversation, each trying to gauge his personality and intentions. Harry responded with a mix of politeness and reserve, careful not to reveal too

much about himself. He was aware that every word he said could be analyzed and interpreted in multiple ways.

As the feast neared its end, Dumbledore stood up again, this time to announce the upcoming school year's events and remind the students of the rules.

Harry's gaze shifted from the lively interactions at the Slytherin table to the staff table, where the Hogwarts teachers sat. Among them, a professor wearing a turban caught his attention. The man seemed to be fumbling with his bag, his movements slightly awkward. From his vantage point, Harry had a clear view of the staff table and this particular professor. Suddenly, a System message flashed before Harry's eyes, momentarily pulling his focus from the scene: [A powerful Legilimency detected. The probe failed.] Harry's eyes narrowed. He turned his attention back to the turbaned professor, activating his Observe function to gather more information.

[System Message: Quirinus Quirrell - Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor. Nervous disposition. Signs of magical interference present. Warning: Possible external influence detected. Legilimency source: Unknown.]

Nigel's voice chimed in Harry's mind, its tone a blend of curiosity and caution. "Quite the mystery we have here, Master Harry. A Defense Against the Dark Arts professor with more secrets than a Sphinx's riddle." Harry's lips twitched in amusement at Nigel's analogy. "Indeed, Nigel. But secrets have a way of coming to light, especially in a place like Hogwarts." His eyes remained fixed on Professor Quirrell, contemplating the potential dangers hidden beneath the man's timid exterior.

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Chapter 61: Common Room

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As the final course of desserts vanished from the tables, leaving behind a satisfied murmur among the students, Professor Dumbledore rose once more, capturing the attention of the entire Great Hall. The hall, buzzing with the energy of a fresh start at Hogwarts, quieted down, every eye and ear turning towards the esteemed Headmaster.

"Ahem," Dumbledore began, his voice resonating with a warmth that seemed to reach every corner of the vast room. "Just a few more words now that we are all fed and watered." His eyes, twinkling as they often did, swept across the hall, pausing momentarily on the faces of eager first-years and returning students alike.

"First years should note that the forest on the grounds is forbidden to all pupils." Dumbledore's voice took on a slightly stern tone, though his eyes retained their gentle sparkle. "And a few of our older students would do well to remember that as well." His gaze flickered towards the Weasley twins, whose expressions of feigned innocence only seemed to amuse the Headmaster further.

Harry, seated at the Slytherin table, couldn't help but observe the subtle interplay of expressions around the hall. "Ah, the forbidden forest, a treasure trove of the dangerous and unknown," Nigel's voice echoed in

Harry's mind, tinged with a hint of intrigue. "Do be careful should you ever find yourself near its edges, Master Harry."

Harry nodded slightly, acknowledging Nigel's words. His eyes returned to Dumbledore, who was now addressing another important matter.

"I have also been asked by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, to remind you all that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors." Dumbledore's words were clear but Harry saw no point in such a rule. Students weren't allowed to use magic outside of Hogwarts, and now they weren't allowed to use it in corridors. Where could they even test their spells?

"Quidditch trials will be held in the second week of the term. Anyone interested in playing for their house teams should contact Madam Hooch." Dumbledore's announcement sparked a wave of excited whispers among the students. Harry, though curious about the famous wizarding sport, remained contemplative. His interest lied more in academics and exploring secrets of Hogwarts and Magic.

"Quidditch, the sport where brooms are more than cleaning tools," Nigel added. "Perhaps you should give it a go, Master Harry. After all, your balance on a broom is quite commendable."

Harry considered the idea briefly. His skills in broom riding were indeed exceptional, but he decided to reserve any decision on participating in Quidditch until he had a better grasp of his priorities and schedule at Hogwarts. He had so much to test and explore.

Dumbledore's final announcement, however, captured everyone's full attention. "And finally, I must tell you that this year, the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death." The statement, delivered with a serious tone uncharacteristic of the usually jovial Headmaster, sent a ripple of both excitement and apprehension throughout the hall.

Harry's eyes narrowed thoughtfully, while Nigel's voice sounded in his mind. "A painfully deadly warning, quite literal in its intent. The third-floor corridor seems to be this year's touch of mystery. Caution is advised, but curiosity, I presume, will not be far behind."

"Indeed, Nigel," Harry thought in response. "A corridor forbidden under threat of death. It's almost like an open invitation for the more daring, or foolish, among us. I am sure dear old Headmaster could have used a spell to keep students away instead of pointing attention to there."

As Dumbledore finished his speech and the hall erupted into discussions and speculations about the forbidden corridor, Harry's mind was already weaving through the possibilities. 'What secrets does that corridor hold? And why such a dire warning from Dumbledore?' These questions lingered in his thoughts.

Around him, the Slytherin table was abuzz with conversations. Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davis were discussing the possible reasons for the forbidden corridor, while Theodore Nott and Blaise Zabini speculated on the nature of the dangers it might contain. Draco Malfoy, ever the schemer, seemed to be pondering the potential for exploiting this new piece of information.

The descent into the dungeons of Hogwarts Castle was a passage into a world unknown to Harry, yet one he felt strangely drawn to. The stone steps, cool and worn from centuries of use, spiraled downwards, leading the group of Slytherin first-years deeper into the castle's ancient heart. The torches mounted on the walls flickered, casting shadows that danced across the stone, creating an atmosphere of mystique and aged grandeur. As they reached the bottom of the staircase, the air grew cooler, the unmistakable dampness of the dungeon mingling with a sense of timelessness. Harry walked alongside Daphne Greengrass and Tracey

Davis, his eyes keenly observing the new environment he was about to embrace as part of his house.

The prefect leading them stopped before a stretch of bare stone wall, indistinguishable from the rest of the dungeon corridor. "This is the Slytherin Common Room entrance," he announced, turning to face the group. "We change the password every week, and it's posted inside the common room. Make sure you check for the next password every Sunday evening. It won't be there the next morning." The students, including Harry, nodded in understanding, their attention focused on the wall.

"The current password is 'Ambition and Pride,'" the prefect declared. At his words, the stone wall slid aside, revealing the entrance to the common room. The students filed in, each eager to discover the secrets of their new home.

The Slytherin Common Room was a sight to behold. The interior was bathed in a dim, greenish light that seemed to emanate from enchanted lamps shaped like serpents, their emerald eyes glowing softly. The walls were adorned with rich, dark tapestries depicting the achievements of famous Slytherins throughout the ages, each one a testament to the house's storied history.

The room was spacious, with high, arched ceilings that gave it a cavernous feel. Several comfortable-looking black leather sofas and armchairs were arranged around low tables, providing ample space for studying or socializing. The carpets on the floor were thick and dark green, with patterns of twisting snakes woven into them.

One of the most striking features of the common room was a large window that offered a view into the depths of the Black Lake. Through the glass, the eerie, green-tinged waters of the lake could be seen, along with the occasional glimpse of aquatic creatures swimming past. The

sight was both mesmerizing and slightly unnerving, serving as a constant reminder of the common room's unique location.

Harry, taking it all in, felt a sense of belonging. The common room, with its aura of ambition and the pursuit of greatness, resonated with his own aspirations and determination. He was Slytherin, and this was his domain.

As the older students began to settle in, finding their preferred spots and engaging in hushed conversations, Harry's attention was momentarily drawn back to Nigel's voice in his mind. "Quite the cozy little snake pit we have here, wouldn't you say, Master Harry? And that view of the lake, certainly beats staring at a brick wall."

Harry couldn't help but agree inwardly. The view of the lake added an element of the extraordinary to the common room, setting it apart from anything he had ever experienced.

The prefect, having ensured that all the first-years were acquainted with the common room, made a final announcement about the dormitories.

"The boys' dormitories are through the door on the left, and the girls' are on the right. Your belongings have already been brought up. Remember, respect each other's privacy and space."

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Chapter 62: Serpent of the Crown

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Hey everyone,

I've seen your questions about why Harry picked Slytherin, especially since it seems like Dumbledore wanted him in Gryffindor. It's a great point, and I totally get where you're coming from. Let's break it down a bit, remembering that in our story, Harry's still just an 11-year-old kid, smart as he might be.

First off, Harry isn't 100% sure Dumbledore's the one behind those compelling spells on Ron and Hermione. We, as readers, might see more than Harry does because of the extra info we have. But remember, this isn't a story where our hero knows everything from a past life or something. He's figuring things out as he goes.

So, why Slytherin? Well, for one, Harry wanted to see what kind of reaction he'd get by choosing Slytherin - it's a way for him to test if Dumbledore really is behind those spells.

Also, Harry found out he's from a Slytherin bloodline. But here's the thing - he doesn't know how to claim that inheritance. It kind of makes sense for him to think being in Slytherin House might be part of it, right?

And I know some of you think that going against Dumbledore is just playing into his hands, but Harry wants to be a player in this game, not just a chess piece. One of his goals is to challenge the stereotypes about Slytherin House.

I just wanted to clear up those points. I totally get it if some of you aren't thrilled with these choices, but that's the direction I'm taking this story.

I'm really excited to see how it all unfolds and I hope you are too! Thanks for sticking with the story and sharing your thoughts - it means a lot.

Have fun!

--

Then the prefect took a step back, allowing room for another figure to step forward. The crowd instinctively parted, creating a clear path to the center of the room. A striking girl, with sharp, intelligent eyes and an air of refined confidence, emerged into view. On her chest, a unique badge materialized, depicting a crown entwined with a serpent. Her presence commanded immediate respect and attention.

"Welcome to Slytherin," she began, her voice carrying a tone that demanded respect without the need for volume. She was tall, with an elegant posture that spoke of noble upbringing. Her hair was a rich, dark brown, cascading in waves down her shoulders, and her eyes, a piercing green, scanned the room with an analytical gaze. "I am Selena Rosier, the current Serpent of the Crown of Slytherin House." (Check for pics)

Selena Rosier's presence in the Slytherin Common Room was commanding, a combination of her noble lineage and an intrinsic aura of power that seemed to radiate from her. As she addressed the new Slytherin students, her voice was confident, resonating with a sense of purpose that instantly drew their attention.

"None of you know what it is, even if your parents were previous Serpent," she began, her gaze subtly shifting towards Draco Malfoy and Daphne Greengrass. The movement was so slight, almost imperceptible, but Harry caught it. His curiosity piqued, he activated his Observe function discreetly.

[System Message: Selena Rosier - Exceptional magical talent, particularly in spellcasting and political strategy. Strong leadership qualities. Current holder of the Serpent's Crown in Slytherin House.]

"Now, let me explain what this title holds," she said, her voice clear and resonant.

"The Chamber of the Serpent's Will," Selena began, "is an integral part of Slytherin's legacy. Beyond the known hierarchy of Hogwarts, this chamber, a creation of Salazar Slytherin himself, is embedded with his wisdom and insight. It is not merely a room but a sentient entity, capable of assessing and evaluating the worthiness of Slytherin students."

The students listened, rapt with attention as Selena continued. "Each year, the Chamber awakens to perform its mystical selection. It magically evaluates us based on our strengths, ambition, cunning, and potential to lead. The most suitable among us is then chosen as the Serpent of the Crown."

Harry, intrigued by this revelation, found Nigel's voice echoing in his mind. "Fascinating, isn't it? A chamber that picks the cream of the crop. Slytherin's ways are indeed mysterious."

Selena spoke of the Elders' Council, known as the Shadows of Slytherin. "This council comprises former Serpents of the Crown. Bound by the Chamber's magic, they remain impartial, their identities shrouded in secrecy. In the Chamber, they speak only the truth."

"The duties and powers bestowed upon the Serpent of the Crown are significant," she emphasized. "They receive enhanced magical abilities, a gift from the Chamber. Their role is to uphold our traditions, protect our house's interests, and mentor younger members."

Nigel's commentary added depth to Selena's words. "It's like having a magical board of directors, with the past leaders guiding the present."

"The Chamber ensures all decisions within are made with honesty and fairness," Selena explained. "Its enchantment compels truth and fairness. Additionally, the Serpent can summon magical avatars of past Slytherin legends for counsel."

Harry pondered over this, his mind racing with the implications. "A

magical hierarchy within a house," he thought. "Slytherin is more than just a house; it's a legacy."

Selena concluded, "Our house's unique structure fosters respect for ancient magic and enriches our cultural identity. The Serpent of the Crown often influences inter-house relations and Hogwarts politics, extending our reach beyond these walls."

She finished with a smirk, "I am telling you all these because you won't be able to tell anyone out of this house. That is why none of you knew about it, even if your parents were the former Serpent of Crown." Harry was amazed by the depth and secrecy of Slytherin's traditions. At this moment, the door opened, and in walked Professor Snape, his cape billowing behind him, his gaze hard and penetrating. He looked first at Selena, then turned his attention to the first-years.

"You are all informed, I hope," Snape began, his voice carrying an edge that commanded attention. "In my house, unity is paramount. We do not tolerate in-fights outside of these walls. Do not lose points for foolishness, or you will answer me. Slytherin's reputation is built on our solidarity and cunning, not pettiness or lack of discipline."

His gaze locked onto Harry, lingering for a moment longer than on the others. "Remember, we are Slytherins. We uphold our house's honor with intelligence and strategy, not rash actions. Any behavior that tarnishes our image will be dealt with swiftly."

With these stern words, Snape left as abruptly as he had entered, his cape trailing behind him. The room remained silent for a moment, the weight of his words hanging in the air, before the prefect led the first-years to their respective rooms.

In Slytherin, every student had a personal room, a luxury that spoke of the house's regard for individuality and privacy. Entering his room, Harry

saw his luggage had already been delivered. Most of it was empty, as he kept the majority of his important belongings in his Enchanted Haven Briefcase. He opened Hedwig's cage as soon as he entered.

"Sorry, girl. I couldn't come earlier to release you," Harry apologized.

Hedwig, perched on his shoulder, nibbled on his ear, her way of showing mild displeasure. Harry chuckled, taking out some snacks he had snatched from the Great Hall for her. As Hedwig began to eat, Harry softly called, "Misty."

To his surprise, Misty appeared promptly. "Master Harry! What can Misty do for you?" she asked eagerly.

Before Harry could respond, another house-elf appeared in the room, eyeing Misty with a noticeable hostility. Harry activated his Observe function:

[System Message: Tweak - Slytherin House Elf. Duties: Maintenance and upkeep of Slytherin common room and dormitories. Traits: Loyal, proud of Slytherin House, wary of outsiders, particularly other house-elves entering Slytherin territory.]

Harry remembered the name from Dumbledore's opening speech, which had included the words 'Tweak' among a string of seemingly nonsensical terms. Nigel had initially suggested it was a rumor, but now, with Tweak's presence confirmed, the reality was much clearer.

Tweak, the Slytherin house-elf, looked curiously at Misty, then back at Harry. "Sir Potter, is she be your house elf?" he asked, his voice tinged with a mixture of surprise and curiosity.

Harry nodded affirmatively. "Yes, Tweak. I summoned Misty. Is there any issue with that?" he inquired, his tone polite yet firm.

Tweak, his eyes widening slightly, responded with a sense of newfound respect. "Sir Harry know of Tweak? Tweak is honored." His voice

conveyed genuine surprise and a hint of pride.

Harry chuckled softly, a friendly smile playing on his lips. "You were the one who delivered food to the Slytherin table, right? Thank you for your service," he said, acknowledging Tweak's hard work.

Tweak's expression transformed into one of sheer delight, his eyes glistening as if he was on the verge of tears. "Tweak is just doing his duty. Sir Harry no need to thank Tweak," he replied, his voice quivering with emotion.

He then glanced at Misty, his expression becoming slightly more serious. "Misty can enter if Sir Harry summons but not without it. Hogwarts do not allow," Tweak explained, reaffirming the rules regarding house-elves within the castle.

Harry then turned to Tweak, his curiosity piqued about the possibilities within the Slytherin dormitories. "Tweak, I was wondering if it's possible to expand my room. Could Misty assist with that?"

Tweak, looking momentarily insulted, quickly reassured Harry. "Sir Harry no need to call Misty. Tweak is here to assist." With a snap of his fingers, the room magically enlarged, its interior expanding while maintaining the same external dimensions. "Only Hogwarts elves be able to alter Hogwarts. Outsiders be not," Tweak explained, emphasizing the unique capabilities of Hogwarts house-elves.

Harry, impressed by the swift transformation, nodded in understanding.

"Can I count on you then, Tweak?" he asked, appreciating the elf's dedication.

Tweak, visibly overwhelmed with emotions, responded earnestly,

"Always, Sir Potter."

Harry chuckled softly, turning to Misty. "Sorry to bother you this late, Misty. You can return now."

Misty bowed gracefully, her voice warm. "No bother, Master Harry. Good night." And with a soft pop, she disappeared.

As Misty left, Tweak snapped his fingers again, and an array of snacks and juices appeared on Harry's table. "Good night, Sir Harry. Be always call Tweak if Sir Harry needs anything," Tweak said, his voice filled with pride and loyalty.

Harry, feeling a sense of comfort in his new environment, thanked Tweak before the house-elf too disappeared with a final pop.

Nigel added its own perspective. "Quite a day, Master Harry. Slytherin, the house of serpents and secrets, seems to suit you well."

Harry smirked slightly. "It does, doesn't it? Slytherin offers opportunities and challenges that I didn't anticipate."

He then gazed at the snacks Tweak had brought, his mind wandering to the possibilities that lay ahead. "I suppose being in Slytherin will require a blend of cunning and caution."

Nigel responded, "Indeed, and a healthy dose of skepticism wouldn't hurt either. Slytherin is not just a house; it's a game of chess where every move counts."

Harry nodded thoughtfully, his eyes glinting with determination. "Well then, let the game begin."

As he lay back on his bed, his gaze fell on Hedwig, perched quietly on her cage. He opened the window, ushering her out. "You're free to go, Hedwig. Explore the castle, but be careful."

Hedwig hooted softly, spreading her wings and gliding out of the open window into the night sky.

Harry's thoughts then turned to the Chamber of the Serpent's Will and the Elders' Council. "Nigel, what do you make of this Chamber and the council Selena mentioned? It sounds like an intricate part of Slytherin's

history."

Nigel's voice resonated with intrigue. "A chamber that selects the leader based on qualities beyond mere academics or blood status - that's quite progressive for a house often misunderstood. As for the council, it's a fascinating concept - guidance from those who have walked the path before."

Harry considered this. "It adds a layer of depth to Slytherin, doesn't it? It's not just about ambition but also about leadership and legacy."

"Exactly," Nigel agreed. "And with your unique abilities, you might find yourself more involved with these aspects than you initially thought."

Harry's mind was already racing with plans and strategies. "I need to understand the dynamics of this house, the players involved, and where I fit in."

"Patience, Master Harry," Nigel advised. "Observe, learn, and when the time is right, make your move. Slytherin is a house where patience often rewards the cunning."

Harry nodded, his thoughts aligned with Nigel's advice. He stood up, deciding to take a brief tour of the common room before retiring for the night. As he stepped out of his room, the cool, damp air of the dungeons greeted him, a stark contrast to the warmth of his room.

The common room was now quieter, with only a few students engaged in hushed conversations. The greenish light from the serpent-shaped lamps cast an eerie glow on their faces. Harry moved silently, his senses heightened, taking in every detail of his new surroundings.

Harry paused, a tinge of disappointment in his voice. "Not even a library," he mused, his eyes scanning the room.

Nigel chuckled. "Oh, I forgot to mention. A new function has been activated in the Technology System. You can now access a map of

Hogwarts."

Harry was taken aback. "When did this happen?" he inquired, curious.

Nigel explained, "It activated when you stepped into the castle. I withheld this information during the sorting; didn't want to distract you with too many details at once."

"Show me, please," Harry requested, intrigued.

A holographic screen materialized in front of Harry, with a detailed map of Hogwarts. He stood at the center, clearly marked. The room he was in was labeled "Slytherin Common Room," with the current password 'Ambition and Pride' displayed alongside.

"This is quite amazing," Harry remarked, his eyes wide with wonder. "Is the password there because I know it, or is it one of the functions of the map?"

Nigel's voice contained a hint of amusement. "A bit of both, I'd say. The map integrates your knowledge with the System's database, providing real-time information. Quite handy for navigating this ancient castle, don't you think?"

Harry nodded in agreement, still fascinated by the map. "It's incredible. It'll be a valuable tool for exploring Hogwarts."

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Chapter 63: Exploration and

Quest

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Returning to his room, he undressed and stepped into the shower, letting the warm water wash over him. The droplets cascaded down his skin, soothing his muscles and clearing his mind. He closed his eyes, inhaling deeply, allowing the steam and warmth to envelop him in a moment of tranquility. He then went to sleep, needing a restful night's sleep to process everything he had learned.

The following morning, Harry woke up early with a renewed sense of purpose. He donned his exercise clothes, feeling the need to clear his mind and prepare for the challenges ahead.

Harry donned his exercise clothes. He then approached the Enchanted Haven Briefcase, a remarkable artifact containing a miniature world. Uttering the password, "Potter's Haven," the briefcase expanded, revealing a full-sized entrance to an enchanted land.

Stepping inside, Harry found himself in the mansion's spacious spar room. The room was large enough for a rigorous workout, equipped with various gym tools that Harry had added for his training. The walls were adorned with enchanted mirrors reflecting his every move, ensuring his form was precise during exercises.

He started with a thorough warm-up, stretching his limbs and loosening his muscles, preparing his body for the more strenuous activities to follow. His movements were fluid and practiced, each stretch and twist executed with meticulous care. The mirrors showed his progress, and he adjusted his posture accordingly.

Once warmed up, Harry began his workout routine. He started with basic calisthenics, doing sets of push-ups, sit-ups, and squats. Each movement

was sharp and deliberate, honing his physical strength and endurance. He increased the intensity as he went, pushing his body to its limits while maintaining a steady breathing rhythm.

Transitioning from calisthenics, Harry moved on to weight training. He selected dumbbells, adjusting their weight with a simple command, a feature unique to the magical gym equipment in the mansion. He performed various exercises, including bicep curls, tricep extensions, and shoulder presses. His muscles flexed and tensed with each lift, showcasing the result of his consistent training.

After the weight training, Harry shifted his focus to agility and balance. He navigated through a custom-designed obstacle course in the room, leaping over hurdles, balancing on beams, and maneuvering around obstacles with nimble grace. This part of his routine not only improved his physical agility but also sharpened his mental acuity, as he had to constantly anticipate and react to the ever-changing course.

Completing the obstacle course, Harry took a brief respite, hydrating himself and catching his breath. He then prepared for the final segment of his workout - magical practice. This was a crucial part of his routine, blending his physical training with his magical capabilities.

Without a wand, Harry relied on his innate talent for wandless magic. He focused his mind, channeling his magical energy through sheer will and concentration. He practiced various spells, from simple levitations to more complex transfigurations, each cast without the aid of a wand. His control and precision had improved significantly, a testament to his dedication and natural aptitude for magic.

As Harry practiced his wandless magic, Nigel's voice chimed in, "I must say, your dedication to both physical and magical fitness is commendable, Master Harry. A true Slytherin, always striving for

excellence."

Harry smirked, not breaking his concentration. "Thanks, Nigel. The new chamber and title made me think ."

He then shifted his focus to defensive spells, practicing conjuring spells such as ice charm to create shields. His movements were swift, each spell cast with a purpose. The room's enchantments provided him with simulated magical attacks, to which Harry responded instinctively, weaving a dance of magical defense.

Finishing his magical training, Harry took a deep breath, feeling a sense of accomplishment and readiness for the day ahead. His body and mind were in harmony, a balance he had worked hard to achieve.

As he stepped out of the Enchanted Haven Briefcase, the mansion shrinking back into the briefcase with a soft whisper.

Having a quick shower, Harry checked his clock. It was still early. He had time to check the castle. Firstly, he wanted to see what the castle had to offer; second, he would expand the map's area so long as he once entered that area. His plan was to start from one corner of the dungeon and slowly climb up. He knew it would take more than a day to see the whole castle, but he was determined to do as much as he could.

Before leaving, he took out the Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing and placed it in his robe. This mirror was a remarkable device with a golden frame and embedded magical crystals, allowing the user to view distant places or people by speaking their name or location. But there were steep limitations - it could only show places and people it had 'seen' before, and some highly secure locations might be obscured. Still, it would be invaluable in exploring Hogwarts and keeping a record of his discoveries.

Stepping out into the dungeons, Harry felt a thrill of anticipation. The dimly lit corridors, with their ancient stones and the history they held,

seemed to whisper secrets to those who dared to listen. He started his exploration, making his way through the twisting pathways, each turn revealing more of the castle's hidden depths.

As he walked, the Technology System's map expanded, recording every new area he entered. He made mental notes of interesting spots - hidden alcoves, mysterious doors, and the occasional portrait that seemed to watch him with a knowing gaze.

Moving on, Harry continued his exploration, his steps echoing softly in the quiet corridors. He passed through areas that felt untouched by time, where the air held a stillness that spoke of long-gone eras. The dim light from the torches cast flickering shadows, adding to the mystique of his journey.

After exploring the dungeons, Harry decided to climb higher into the castle. As he ascended to the ground floor, the architecture changed, the stone giving way to lighter, more elegant designs. Here, the windows were larger, allowing light to stream in, illuminating the corridors with a warm glow.

Harry paused occasionally to interact with some of the portraits. They offered tidbits of history and advice, sometimes cryptic, sometimes amusing. Nigel's voice in his mind provided wry commentary on these interactions, adding a layer of humor to the adventure.

"Ah, chatting with the ancestors, are we? Make sure to ask them where they hid their secret stashes," Nigel quipped, his tone light yet insightful.

Harry's exploration of the ground floor of Hogwarts was a fascinating journey through the castle's rich history and diverse architecture. The more he explored, the more he realized the sheer scale of the magical edifice. Corridors branched off in multiple directions, leading to classrooms, common rooms, and various other unknown destinations.

The grandeur of the castle was evident in every stone, every tapestry, and every suit of armor that adorned its walls.

However, Harry couldn't even finish a quarter of the ground floor when Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "It is time for breakfast, Master Harry." Harry, his stomach growling in agreement, responded, "You're right, Nigel. Time to see what the Great Hall has to offer."

As he made his way towards the Great Hall, Nigel's voice chimed in again, "Also, a quest."

Harry's eyebrows raised in interest. "Oh, been a while since you gave me a quest."

A system message appeared in front of his eyes:

[System Message: Quest - Find the Magical Map of Hogwarts. Reward: Upgrading System Map to show living beings, their names, their positions, and their current activity.]

Harry's eyes lit up with intrigue. "This sounds like a challenge. Any clues, Nigel?"

Nigel's voice, laced with a hint of mischief, replied, "Where would the fun be if I just told you everything? But consider this: Such a treasure should be in the hands of someone already. They must be making use of this treasure, knowing hidden paths others don't."

Harry nodded thoughtfully. "So, I should look for someone who knows a lot about Hogwarts. I'll keep my eyes open."

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Chapter 64: Transfiguration 101

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With a renewed sense of purpose, Harry entered the Great Hall for breakfast. The hall was bustling with students, the four house tables filled with chatter and the clatter of cutlery. The enchanted ceiling above mirrored the clear blue sky outside, adding to the hall's enchanting atmosphere.

Harry took a seat at the Slytherin table, noting the curious glances from some of his housemates. He served himself some scrambled eggs and toast

As he ate his breakfast, listening to the conversations around him, gathering information about the daily happenings at Hogwarts. The talk was mostly about classes, quidditch, and the usual school gossip.

After breakfast, Harry, with his mind still buzzing from the quest Nigel had hinted at, made his way to his first class of the year, History of Magic. The class, infamous for its dullness, was taught by the ghost Professor Binns, who had a talent for making even the most fascinating historical events sound insufferably tedious.

As Professor Binns droned on about Emeric the Evil and Uric the Oddball in a monotonous voice that seemed to echo endlessly in the spacious classroom, Harry quickly realized that staying awake would be a Herculean task. He observed his classmates; some were trying valiantly to take notes, while others had already succumbed to sleep, their heads resting on their desks in surrender.

Deciding to make the best of the situation, Harry activated the

transcribing function of the Technology System. A virtual screen popped up in front of him, recording every word spoken by Professor Binns.

Satisfied that he wouldn't miss any crucial information, Harry allowed himself to drift off, his head resting on his arms.

As the ghostly voice of Professor Binns faded into the background, Nigel's wry comment slipped into Harry's mind, "Ah, the joys of learning history from someone who's part of it. It's like listening to paint dry, only less exciting."

Harry, half-asleep, couldn't help but crack a small smile at Nigel's apt observation.

The bell signaling the end of the class was a welcome sound, rousing Harry and his classmates from their slumber. Harry fell into a routine in Hogwarts. The next few days were equally monotonous until Thursday came, the class was one Harry had been eagerly anticipating - Transfiguration, taught by Professor McGonagall.

Leaving the Great Hall after breakfast, Harry found himself flanked by Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davis. Tracey's voice, brimming with excitement, broke the post-class silence. "Transfiguration. How exciting." Harry nodded in agreement, his own anticipation palpable. "I am excited too. Transfiguration is one of the most complex yet achieving branch of spellcasting." he responded, feeling a genuine eagerness for the class. Daphne, though silent, mirrored their excitement with her expressive eyes. The trio made their way to the Transfiguration classroom, navigating the bustling corridors of Hogwarts.

As they entered the classroom, Harry's attention was momentarily diverted by Hermione Granger, who waved at him from across the room. Her gesture seemed out of character, reminding Harry of the influence from Dumbledore and to keep his eye open on other people.

Nevertheless, he courteously waved back, maintaining a polite facade.

Choosing a seat on the left side of the classroom, Harry observed the split arrangement of the room - Slytherins on the left and Gryffindors on the right, an unspoken rule that mirrored the houses' long standing rivalry.

Frowning at the clear divide, he thought if he could do anything about it.

His gaze then fell upon a tubby cat perched on the professor's desk.

Something about the cat struck him as peculiar. Activating his Observe function, he wasn't surprised to find his suspicions confirmed:

[System Message: Professor McGonagall - Animagus. Currently in her cat form. Distinguished by the spectacles pattern around her eyes, a trait carried over from her human form.]

Harry smiled inwardly at the discovery of another Animagus. Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, his tone laced with a hint of intrigue. "Look around her eyes, Master Harry. Most Animagi carry the traits of their human look upon gaining the ability to change."

Harry studied Professor McGonagall more closely, noticing the distinctive markings around the cat's eyes, reminiscent of the glasses she wore in her human form. This attention to detail fascinated him, revealing the intricacies of the magical world he was still unraveling.

The cat looked back at Harry, its eyes meeting his with a knowing glint.

Harry offered a subtle nod of recognition, to which the cat responded with a slight tilt of its head before turning away. The classroom was filled with a mix of anticipation and nervous chatter as students awaited the start of the lesson.

Just then, the door swung open, and Ron Weasley, accompanied by Seamus Finnigan, hurried in. Ron's sigh of relief was palpable as he scanned the classroom. "We made it. Can you imagine the look on McGonagall's face if we were late?" he said, a hint of mischief in his

voice.

The cat, previously perched regally on the professor's desk, gracefully leaped to the air. In a fluid motion, it transformed into the stern yet elegant figure of Professor McGonagall. Ron, witnessing the transformation, couldn't hide his awe. "That was bloody brilliant!" he exclaimed.

Professor McGonagall, in her usual dry manner, responded, "Thank you for the assessment, Mr. Weasley." She glanced at the two boys with a mix of disapproval and amusement. "Perhaps it would be more useful if I were to transfigure Mr. Finnigan and yourself into a pocket-watch. That way, one of you might be on time."

Seamus, slightly flustered, offered a weak defense. "We got lost."

"Then perhaps a map?" McGonagall retorted sharply. "I trust you don't need one to find your seats."

The class stifled their laughter as Ron and Seamus sheepishly made their way to their seats. Professor McGonagall then turned to face the class, her demeanor shifting to one of solemnity. "Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic you will learn at Hogwarts," she began, her voice commanding attention. "Anyone messing around in my class will leave and not come back. You have been warned."

With a wave of her wand, the desk in front of her transformed into a pig, then back again. The class watched in awe, the reality of their magical education dawning upon them.

Harry, deeply interested, leaned forward. Nigel's voice, though unheard by others, whispered in his mind, "Impressive, isn't it? But don't get your hopes up for turning your homework into a dragon anytime soon."

McGonagall began her lecture on the fundamentals of Transfiguration.

"Transfiguration is not mere changing of one object into another. It is an

art that requires understanding the essence of objects and creatures, down to their very molecular structure."

"The first step in Transfiguration is to visualize the desired outcome in detail. You must not only see the form but understand the nature of what you are trying to create. This requires an in-depth study of the properties and characteristics of the subject."

"Next is the intention. Your intent must be clear and focused. Hesitation or doubt can lead to incomplete or unstable transformations. Magic, particularly Transfiguration, is as much about your will as it is about the wand movements or incantations."

Professor McGonagall demonstrated a simple spell, turning a feather into a matchstick then to a needle. "Notice the precision required in the wand movement, a delicate twist with a firm flick at the end."

Harry quickly spoke up, his voice low but firm, "Nigel, activate the analysis mode. Record her wand movements and the spells she uses. I don't want to miss anything."

Nigel, always ready to assist, responded promptly, "Right away, Master Harry. The recording has begun. I'll capture every detail."

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Chapter 65: Intricacies of

Transfiguration

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As Professor McGonagall continued her lecture, the System began its meticulous recording. The holographic screen discreetly positioned in front of Harry displayed a detailed breakdown of the professor's wand movements, capturing the nuances of her technique with precision. The screen provided a real-time analysis, breaking down the intricate sequence of motions and the corresponding magical incantation. "The essence of Transfiguration lies in the understanding of the fundamental nature of both the caster and the target," Professor McGonagall explained. "You are not merely altering the form but redefining the very structure of the object."

She then demonstrated another transformation, this time turning a glass of water into a crystal goblet. Her wand moved in a precise, elegant arc, accompanied by a soft, yet distinct incantation. The glass morphed seamlessly, taking on the intricate design and clarity of a goblet, a change that seemed to defy the laws of physics.

Harry observed intently, his eyes flicking between the professor and the holographic screen. Nigel's voice provided a running commentary, "Notice the fluidity of her movement, Master Harry. It's not just the spell but the grace with which it's executed."

As McGonagall continued, she emphasized the importance of focus and concentration. "A wandering mind can lead to unexpected results in Transfiguration. One must be fully present, mentally and emotionally." She shared anecdotes of past students' mishaps, some amusing, some cautionary. Her storytelling was interspersed with practical advice, making the lessons more engaging and relatable.

She then continued, "Now, let's discuss the ethical implications of

Transfiguration," her tone taking on a more serious note. Professor McGonagall's expression was stern, her eyes scanning the classroom. "This is not just about the ability to change one thing into another. It's about the responsibility that comes with such power. You must understand the consequences of your actions, both intended and unintended."

The room fell silent as she spoke, the gravity of her words sinking in.

"Transfiguration is an art that demands respect and ethical consideration. When you transfigure an object, you alter its very essence. This transformation can have lasting impacts if not handled responsibly."

She then fixed her gaze upon the students, a look that would remain etched in their memories as the most ominous they had ever witnessed.

Her sharp, penetrating eyes conveyed a gravity that hung heavily in the room. She began, her voice low yet resonant, echoing ominously,

"Transfiguring an object into a liquid or gas is not to be taken lightly. While you are within the protective wards of Hogwarts, the castle will shield the consumer from potential harm that may arise when a transfigured object is reverted. Professors will also be alerted. However, be warned that if anyone intentionally or as a prank transfigures an item into something consumable and feeds it to another, they risk potential retaliation through the reversal of the transfiguration, although it is an exceedingly complex feat, will be expelled immediately and there is a chance to be imprisoned in Azkaban."

The room was still, the students absorbing the gravity of her words. The mention of Azkaban sent a chill through the air, the reality of the consequences of misuse of Transfiguration dawning upon them. "Failure to heed this rule could result in irreversible damage, or worse, loss of life. The magic we wield is potent and must be handled with the utmost care

and respect."

Her gaze swept across the room, ensuring each student understood the severity of her warning. "Transfiguration is not a tool for frivolity or malice. It is an art that requires discipline, control, and a deep understanding of the magical properties of the world around us.

Remember, with great power comes a great need for responsible shape-shifting."

Harry raised his hand, surprising most of the class with his insightful inquiry. "Professor," he began, his voice steady and clear, "from what I understand, this application of magic could be considered one of the deadliest. Its power and potential for widespread impact might even surpass that of many dark spells. Not only is it untraceable, but it can also affect multiple people simultaneously. Given the gravity of this, surely there must be safeguards in place?"

Professor McGonagall, taken aback by the depth of Harry's question, nodded approvingly. "A very insightful question, Mr. Potter. Ten points to Slytherin," she announced, her eyes reflecting a hint of admiration.

"Indeed, Transfiguration, especially of this nature, carries significant risks and potential for harm."

She paused for a moment, allowing her words to sink in before continuing. "Wizards and witches are fundamentally different from Muggles, not just in our ability to perform magic, but also in how our bodies and minds are attuned to the magical world. Our innate magical essence offers us protection against common illnesses and enhances other abilities, such as our intuition."

"The intuition of a magical being is not something to be underestimated," McGonagall emphasized. "It is this innate sense that guards us against many forms of magical deception and harm. For example, you cannot

trick a dragon with a transfigured object. They would sense the magic's inconsistency from miles away."

Harry listened intently, absorbing every word. Nigel chimed in, "Quite the safeguard, wouldn't you say? It's like having a built-in lie detector, but for magic."

McGonagall continued, "This intuition extends to other magical creatures and to us as well. Our bodies and minds are subtly attuned to detect irregularities in magic, particularly when it comes to Transfiguration. This is not to say that accidents don't happen, but our magical nature provides a layer of protection."

Then McGonagall added, "Also, the magic within our bodies acts as a protection against foreign magic." She looked around the class, her expression serious but engaging. With a graceful wave of her hand, the chalkboard behind her came to life. A detailed drawing of a human figure appeared, surrounded by a shimmering, protective shield. "Transfiguring an object within a magical being's body is nigh impossible," she stated, her voice carrying a note of finality.

The illustration on the board showed the shield enveloping the human figure, representing the innate magical protection every witch and wizard possesses. "Our magical essence," McGonagall continued, "Our magical essence naturally repels attempts to alter our physical structure," McGonagall explained. "It's a defense mechanism, preventing any external magical influence from directly transforming our bodies."

Harry's curiosity was piqued. "Professor, does that mean transfiguration cannot be used as a form of attack on a wizard or witch?" he asked.

She answered, "The caster's magical capacity should exceed the opponent's by a great degree to do such a thing, which is redundant, as such a difference in magical power means the caster can eliminate the

opponent without wasting so much effort."

The class absorbed this information, understanding the complexities and limitations of Transfiguration as a form of attack. Professor McGonagall's explanation highlighted the intricate balance between power and skill in the wizarding world.

Harry, intrigued, further inquired, "So, in a duel, would Transfiguration be more of a strategic tool rather than a direct means of attack?"

Professor McGonagall nodded. "Precisely, Mr. Potter. Transfiguration in duels is often used for creating diversions, altering the terrain, or transforming objects to gain a tactical advantage. It requires quick thinking and a deep understanding of both your environment, your and your opponent's capabilities."

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Chapter 66: Gamp

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As the class settled into a focused silence, Professor McGonagall's voice resonated through the room, delving into the intricate laws that govern the art of Transfiguration. "We begin with Gamp's Law of Elemental Transfiguration, a set of principles that underpin the boundaries of our magical capabilities," she explained, her gaze sweeping over the students,

ensuring each understood the gravity of the subject.

"The first principle we shall explore is the Immutable Law of Food," McGonagall began. "Contrary to what some might hope, it is impossible to conjure food from nothing. Magic allows us to multiply, enlarge, or summon food, provided it already exists in some form. This law is a fundamental reminder of the limits of our powers and the respect we owe to the natural order of the world. The ability to create sustenance from thin air remains beyond our grasp, ensuring a balance between the magical and the natural world."

She paused, letting the information sink in before continuing. "Moving on, we encounter the Immutable Law of Life Creation. This law states unequivocally that genuine life, complete with consciousness and a soul, is beyond the scope of Transfiguration. While our magic can animate inanimate objects or create lifelike illusions, these creations lack the true essence of life. They are but shadows, lacking a soul or consciousness. This law serves as a solemn reminder of the sanctity of life and the boundaries of our influence over it."

The students listened, rapt with attention, as McGonagall's words painted a vivid picture of the limitations and responsibilities that came with their magical abilities.

"The third aspect of Gamp's Law addresses a matter of great sensitivity and importance - the Immutable Law of Resurrection. It is a stark truth that the dead cannot be returned to life. Our magic, powerful though it is, cannot breach the veil that separates the living from the dead. We may conjure echoes or semblances of those who have passed, but these are mere reflections, devoid of the true spirit and essence of the departed. This law underscores the finality of death and the need for respect and acceptance of this natural conclusion of life."

Harry, deeply absorbed in the lecture, found his thoughts echoing Nigel's silent commentary. "A humbling reminder of the limits of even the most powerful magic," Nigel noted, his tone tinged with a solemn respect for the laws that governed their world.

McGonagall shifted her focus to the next principle. "We then come to the Immutable Law of Natural Order and Capacity. This law governs the transformation between living and non-living entities. When we transfigure a non-living object into a living creature, it will gain movement, yet lack consciousness as explained in the second law.

Conversely, a living being transformed into an inanimate object will lose its ability to move and cannot revert back without external assistance.

Particularly in human transfiguration, an individual loses their capacity for human thought when transformed into an animal, making self-reversion impossible. This law is a testament to the complexities of life and the respect we must have for the natural properties of all beings."

Her explanation painted a vivid picture of the intricate balance between magic and the natural world, emphasizing the ethical implications and responsibilities inherent in their practice of Transfiguration.

"Lastly, we explore the Immutable Law of Absolute Knowledge. This principle dictates that knowledge or understanding cannot be directly imparted or absorbed through Transfiguration. While magic can facilitate the learning process, it cannot replace the fundamental need for study and experience. True mastery and comprehension come from dedication and practice, not merely the application of magic. This law reinforces the value of hard work and the pursuit of knowledge, a cornerstone of our magical education."

Hearing the last principle of Gamp's Law, Harry was taken aback. He remembered Nigel's ability to upload information directly into his brain,

which seemed to contradict this law. "Nigel, isn't that what you do?

Uploading information directly into my brain?" Harry thought to himself, his mind swirling with questions.

Nigel's response came with his usual levity, "Well, I am beyond magical capacities of living." Harry wasn't sure if Nigel was joking or not, but the AI's capabilities always seemed to blur the lines between magic and technology.

With this thought lingering in his mind, Harry turned to Professor McGonagall. "Professor, I saw in some of the books that Gamp had six theories, not five," he said, recalling his readings. Although, the book hadn't detailed these laws, so it was his first time hearing them explained so thoroughly.

Professor McGonagall fixed her gaze on Harry, pondering whether it was wise to delve into such a speculative topic. She weighed her decision, knowing that the sixth law was more a rumor than an established fact. Finally, she nodded slightly, deciding to enlighten her curious student. "Mr. Potter, you are correct in that there has been speculation about a sixth principle of Gamp's Law," she began, her voice carrying a hint of caution. "However, it remains a subject of much debate and conjecture among magical scholars. The nature of this law, if it indeed exists, is not clearly understood."

The class leaned in, their interest piqued by this mysterious revelation. McGonagall continued, "Some theorize that the sixth law could relate to the very essence of magic itself, perhaps a fundamental rule governing the limitations of Transfiguration. Others speculate it might involve the balance of the magical world, a principle that ensures harmony between the magical and the natural."

Harry absorbed this information, his mind racing with the implications of

such a law. Nigel added his perspective. "Intriguing, isn't it? A hidden law that could hold the key to understanding the limits of magic. It's like the final piece of a complex puzzle. Gamp was indeed a genius even I came to admire."

McGonagall's expression grew more serious as she addressed the class. "It's important to remember that much of what we know about magic is based on centuries of study and observation. Yet, the magical world is vast and full of mysteries. There may well be aspects of magic that we have yet to fully comprehend or discover."

She paused, letting her words sink in. "This is why the pursuit of knowledge in the magical arts is a lifelong endeavor. We must always be open to learning and exploring, even as we respect the boundaries and laws that govern our world."

The class sat in thoughtful silence, digesting the profound nature of McGonagall's words. Harry felt a sense of awe at the vastness and complexity of the magical world he was part of. It was a world that constantly challenged and surprised him.

As the lesson drew to a close, McGonagall assigned them their first practical exercise: turning a matchstick into a needle. The class eagerly began their attempts, their wands flicking through the air as they focused intently on their matchsticks.

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Chapter 67: Teacher

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Harry had already mastered the matchstick to needle transfiguration before arriving at Hogwarts. His previous creation was so intricate and detailed that it could have been considered a treasure by many. And he had accomplished this feat without the aid of a wand. Now, with a wand in hand, he visualized the needle in his mind's eye - silver, pointed, with a thicker base and an thread-eye at the base. His focus on detail was impeccable, drawing from his rich imagination. He envisioned a Quidditch match along the needle's length, a nod to Professor McGonagall's well-known passion for the sport. On one side, he crafted the colors of Slytherin, green and silver, and on the other, the bold red and gold of Gryffindor. The scene was complete from the poles to the players, Bludgers, and even the Snitch, which formed the tip of the needle, shimmering like the elusive golden ball.

Next, Harry considered the material transformation. A common beginner's mistake was to turn the wooden matchstick into a silver-colored wood instead of metal. He focused on the cold, metallic touch of

a needle, its unique sound when tapped against a desk. With every detail vividly etched in his mind, Harry waved his wand. Magic took over, and the matchstick transmuted into a splendidly crafted needle - a blend of silver and gold, adorned with green and red accents.

McGonagall, her eyes catching the light reflecting off the extraordinary needle, approached Harry's desk. The class fell silent, their eyes fixed on the professor as she reached out to inspect the needle.

"This is... quite remarkable, Mr. Potter," she said, her voice tinged with a blend of surprise and admiration. The needle glistened under the classroom lights, its intricate design and meticulous detail showcasing Harry's exceptional skill and creativity.

Harry looked up, a modest smile on his face. "Thank you, Professor. It's just a little something I thought of," he replied, his voice calm yet filled with a quiet confidence.

McGonagall held the needle up, turning it this way and that, allowing the class to see its full splendor. "Fifteen points to Slytherin for exceptional craftsmanship and creativity in Transfiguration," she announced, her eyes still fixed on the needle.

The class erupted into murmurs of astonishment and envy, especially from Hermione Granger, who stared at the needle with a mixture of awe and a hint of jealousy. Her eyes darted between the needle and her own matchstick, which had only managed a crude transformation.

McGonagall turned back to Harry, her expression one of sincere appreciation. "Mr. Potter, may I keep this as an example for future classes? This is, without a doubt, one of the finest examples of beginner Transfiguration I have ever seen."

Harry nodded, a sense of pride swelling within him. "Of course, Professor. I'd be honored," he said, handing her the needle.

As McGonagall placed the needle carefully in a small box, she added, "You have a rare talent, Mr. Potter. I look forward to seeing how you develop it further in my class."

The rest of the class was a blur for Harry, with his classmates casting curious glances and whispers his way. Daphne and Tracey, sitting nearby, shared a look of admiration and slight disbelief at Harry's skill.

As the class dispersed, Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind. "Well done, Master Harry. You've managed to needle your way into the professor's good graces on the very first day. Can I boldly say you thread your path to her approval quite skillfully?"

Harry couldn't help but chuckle at Nigel's pun. "It seems so, Nigel. But let's keep our focus. We have much to learn and achieve. The further I go, harder it will become."

Following his successful display in Transfiguration class, Harry found himself flanked by Daphne and Tracey as they made their way to Defense Against the Dark Arts the next day. His remarkable skill had quickly made him a topic of conversation in Slytherin house, and Tracey was particularly keen on uncovering his secrets.

"Potter, how are you so good at it? I can't turn it at all," Tracey implored, her eyes wide with curiosity.

Harry, with a hint of patience in his voice, responded, "I've already told you, it's all about imagination. You have to envision the outcome in minute detail."

Tracey pouted in frustration. "I told you, it doesn't work for me."

Harry sighed, realizing she needed more guidance. "That's because you're not visualizing correctly." He glanced around, spotting an empty classroom. Quickly, he guided them inside and closed the door.

The girls blushed, misunderstanding his intention. "What are you doing?"

they asked in unison.

Harry, oblivious to their reaction, produced two matchsticks from his sleeve. The girls, seeing the matchsticks, relaxed. "Oh," they said, realizing their imaginations had momentarily strayed.

"Where did you get those?" Daphne inquired, her curiosity piqued.

Harry smirked, his eyes twinkling. "Magic," he replied playfully.

With a swift motion, he transformed the matchsticks into needles. They were less ornate than the one he created for McGonagall but equally realistic. He handed them to the girls, who examined them with awe.

"Now, hold these," he instructed, passing them each a new matchstick.

"Feel their coldness, hardness, their color, how they reflect the light."

The girls did as told, their fingers gingerly touching the matchsticks.

Harry watched, offering guidance. "Imagine the weight of the needle in your hand, the sharpness of its point. Envision the silver sheen, the way it gleams under the light."

Daphne and Tracey closed their eyes, concentrating. Harry continued,

"Picture every detail - the texture, the length, the thinness. It's not just about what you see, but what you feel."

He paused, then added the crucial part. "Most importantly, flick your nail against them and feel the sound it makes."

The girls, their astonishment evident, flicked their fingers against the needles. A metallic ting resonated, confirming the transformation's authenticity.

"You see, the key is in the details," Harry explained, his tone didactic.

"You have to involve all your senses. Imagine not just what it looks like, but what it feels like, sounds like. That's the secret."

The girls nodded, their expressions focused. Harry encouraged them,

"Now, try the spell again, but keep that image, those sensations, in your

mind."

Daphne went first. Her wand moved with newfound confidence, guided by the vivid image in her mind. The matchstick trembled, then slowly transformed, taking on the sheen and shape of a needle. She gasped in delight, her eyes sparkling with triumph.

Tracey, inspired by Daphne's success, followed suit. Her transformation was slower, but the result was equally impressive. Her needle gleamed under the dim light of the classroom.

Harry smiled, pleased with their progress. "See? It's all about the details.

The more vividly you imagine, the more precise your magic."

The girls looked at their needles, then at Harry, their expressions a mix of gratitude and newfound respect.

Daphne, her voice tinged with admiration, said, "That was brilliant, Potter. Thank you."

Tracey, still staring at her needle, added, "You really have a gift for this."

Harry shrugged modestly. "It's just practice and a bit of imagination."

As they prepared to leave the classroom, Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, his tone infused with a suggestive tone. "Well, Master Harry, it seems you've just started a needle revolution in Slytherin. Next, they'll be wanting you to turn teacups into turtles."

Harry chuckled in his mind. "So long as they are dragons. Snakes, are fine too. I can probably dissuade them."

As they exited the classroom, Daphne and Tracey continued to discuss their newfound skills, their voices filled with excitement.

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Chapter 68: Help

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Arriving at the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom, Harry and his companions were immediately struck by a pungent odor. The smell of heavy garlic hung in the air, so intense it was almost tangible. Recoiling slightly, Harry wrinkled his nose in distaste. "What is this?" he muttered, perplexed by the overpowering scent.

Tracey, holding her nose, responded, "I heard Professor Quirrell had a nasty encounter with vampires in Romania last summer. He's been terrified of them ever since. That's why he reeks of garlic. They say his stutter started after that incident."

Nodding in understanding, yet still grimacing, Harry cautiously entered the classroom, the smell of garlic seemingly permeating every corner. He took a seat, trying his best to ignore the nearly visible aroma wafting through the air.

Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind, "Ah, the scent of paranoia.

Nothing like a bit of garlic to ward off ancient bloodsucking fiends, eh?"

As the lesson commenced, Professor Quirrell, stuttering and trembling, attempted to lecture on the basics of defending against the Dark Arts. His nervous demeanor and the constant twitching of his turban did little to inspire confidence in his students.

"Today, w-we will discuss the t-theory behind basic defensive spells,"

Quirrell began, his voice shaky. "The most f-fundamental aspect of

defense is awareness of your surroundings and potential threats."

Nigel's voice offered a sarcastic observation. "Inspirational, really. I'm trembling with newfound knowledge."

Harry listened to the lecture, taking mental notes while Nigel provided occasional insights and critiques. Despite Nigel's sarcasm, Harry found the AI's analysis helpful in dissecting the theoretical aspects of the subject.

The Defense Against the Dark Arts class with Professor Quirrell left Harry feeling utterly disappointed. His anticipation for a class filled with engaging discussions and practical applications of defensive magic was quickly dampened by the pungent odor of garlic and Quirrell's evident incompetence. The lecture, marred by Quirrell's stuttering and evident fear, failed to provide any substantial insight into the art of defense.

As Harry and his Slytherin companions left the classroom, his thoughts lingered on the wasted opportunity for learning something meaningful. The overpowering scent of garlic still seemed to cling to them as they made their way down the corridor.

Nigel's voice chimed in, "Quite the aromatic experience, wasn't it, Master Harry? I dare say the only thing repelled in that class was the students' interest."

Harry couldn't help but agree silently. He was about to respond when he was interrupted by a voice he hadn't expected to engage with so soon.

"Harry, hi," Hermione Granger greeted him, a hint of hesitancy in her voice.

Harry furrowed his brow. He and Hermione weren't exactly friends, and their brief interaction on the train hadn't left him expecting much friendliness from her. However, he also realized that Hermione might not be familiar with wizarding etiquette, which might explain her use of his

first name.

"Yes, Miss Granger," he replied, his tone polite yet distant, subtly hinting at the proper way to address someone in their world.

Unaware of the subtle cue, Hermione continued, her curiosity apparent.

"Can you tell me what is your secret for Transfiguration?" she asked, her eyes earnest.

Harry was taken aback. From his brief evaluation and system's observe, he knew Hermione to be prideful and competitive. It seemed out of character for her to seek help from a peer.

He asked in his mind to Nigel, "Is this because Dumbledore's compelling her?"

Nigel's response came promptly, "Observe had already proven that she is under a spell, Master Harry. My theory is, Dumbledore assumed you would be lacking academically and would seek help from Ms. Granger, but not only did you two not get close, but you also surpassed her in classes. Dumbledore must have thought to approach in the opposite direction to get you two close. Despite it going against Ms. Granger's nature."

Harry pondered over Nigel's words. It sounded plausible, fitting the pattern of Dumbledore's subtle manipulations. He observed Hermione, noting her earnest expression, a stark contrast to her usual confident demeanor. It seemed unnatural, almost forced.

"Miss Granger, Transfiguration requires a deep understanding of the object's essence and a clear visualization of the desired outcome," Harry explained, maintaining a respectful distance. "It's not just about the wand movements or the incantation. You need to engage your senses, imagine the object's properties in detail."

Hermione listened intently, her eyes reflecting her thirst for knowledge.

"But how do you achieve such a vivid visualization?" she asked, her curiosity getting the better of her.

Harry pondered for a moment before replying, "It's about connecting with the object on a deeper level. You have to feel it, understand its nature.

For example, when transforming a matchstick into a needle, don't just see it as a needle. Feel its weight, its texture, imagine its sharpness."

Hermione's expression softened as she asked Harry for help, her voice laced with a rare vulnerability. "Can you help me please?" she pleaded, her eyes conveying a mix of hope and desperation.

Harry's frown deepened. He sensed an opportunity to potentially unravel or investigate the compelling spell Dumbledore might have placed on Hermione. "Wise decision, Master Harry," Nigel affirmed in his mind, "but do tread carefully."

"Alright, Miss Granger. I will see you in the library after Potion Class tomorrow," Harry agreed, noting her immediate relief.

As Hermione thanked him and hurried away, Harry turned to rejoin Daphne and Tracey, who were eying the interaction with evident curiosity. Before he could reach them, he noticed Neville Longbottom nearby. Ever since their shared boat ride on their first night at Hogwarts, Harry decided to be friends with him so he called out, "Neville, how's it going?"

[System Message: Neville Longbottom - Under Long-term Confundus Spell. Origin of spell: Unknown. Note: Spell affects memory and decision-making. Subject's awareness of the spell's influence - Minimal.]

Harry's mind raced as he remembered the previous observation of Neville under the Confundus Spell. He needed to find a way to help Neville without alerting anyone to the spell or his own knowledge of it.

As Neville approached, Harry could see the spell's subtle effects in his

hesitant steps and slightly confused expression. "Oh, hi, Harry. I'm... I'm okay, I guess," Neville replied, his voice lacking confidence, as usual. Harry offered a warm smile. "That's good to hear, Neville. Listen, I've noticed you seem a bit... overwhelmed with everything going on. Hogwarts can be a lot to take in, especially in the first few weeks," he said empathetically.

Neville nodded, a grateful look in his eyes. "Yeah, it's all so new and different. I keep forgetting things and getting lost."

Harry sighed, understanding the challenges that Neville was facing. Hogwarts, with its myriad of corridors and enchantments, could be a bewildering place for a first-year student, especially one struggling under the influence of a Confundus Spell.

"Neville, if you don't mind me being a Slytherin, you can sit with me in classes. We can help each other," Harry offered, his tone genuine. He understood the value of having someone to lean on in this vast and sometimes intimidating magical world.

Neville's eyes lit up at the offer. "Really? That would be great, Harry. I... I could use some help," he admitted, a hint of relief in his voice.

Harry smiled. "And to be honest, I'm not that good at Herbology and could use your help there," he added, making the offer mutually beneficial. Neville had a natural affinity for plants and Herbology, and Harry recognized that he could learn a lot from Neville in this area.

Neville nodded eagerly, his spirits lifted. "I don't mind at all. Herbology is actually one of my better subjects. I'd be happy to help," he said, his confidence growing slightly at the prospect of being able to contribute.

"That's great. And let's partner up in Potions too," Harry suggested. "I've heard Professor Snape can be... a little overwhelming for some."

Neville's posture stiffened at the mention of Snape, a mixture of

apprehension and agreement in his eyes. "Yeah, that sounds good.

Thanks, Harry," he said, his gratitude evident.

Harry clapped Neville on the shoulder in a friendly gesture. "Alright, see you later, Neville."

"See you later, Harry," Neville replied, his smile a bit more confident as he walked away.

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Chapter 69: Kitchen

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Harry then turned back to Daphne and Tracey, who had been observing the interaction with interest. "Let's go," he said, leading the way to the basement.

As they walked, Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind, "Master Harry, your knack for forming alliances is quite impressive. It's almost as if you're weaving your own web of connections."

Harry chuckled softly, a hint of warmth in his voice as he spoke of Neville. "Neville is a kindred spirit. He's suffered under the same prophecy. Let's not forget our bond as Godbrothers." His words carried a sense of camaraderie and shared fate that went beyond the usual student relationships at Hogwarts.

Tracey, confused by the path they were taking, couldn't help but ask, "Where are we going, Potter?" Her brows furrowed in curiosity. Daphne, equally puzzled, echoed her sentiment with a frown.

Harry's smile widened, a spark of mischief in his eyes. "I'm going to show you a secret," he said, leading them through the corridors with a confidence that piqued their curiosity even further.

They arrived at a painting of a bowl of fruit, an unremarkable piece of art that would usually go unnoticed by the bustling students of Hogwarts.

"This is your secret?" Daphne asked, her tone laced with playful skepticism.

Rolling his eyes, Harry reached out and gently tickled the pear in the painting. To the girls' amazement, the pear began to giggle, its animated laughter filling the corridor. Moments later, a door handle appeared, magically transforming the painting into an entrance.

Twirling the handle, Harry pushed open the door, revealing a large room bustling with activity. Tracey and Daphne's eyes widened in astonishment as they stepped into the Hogwarts kitchen, a hidden gem within the castle's walls.

"Welcome to the Hogwarts Kitchen, ladies," Harry announced with a grin.

The kitchen was a hive of activity, with house-elves busily preparing meals and treats. The aroma of freshly baked bread and simmering stews filled the air, creating an inviting and homely atmosphere.

A familiar house-elf, Slytherin Elf Tweak, approached them, his eyes bright and ears perked with excitement. "Sir Potter, and his friends.

Welcome," Tweak said, bowing deeply. "What can Tweak be doing for you?"

Harry smiled warmly at Tweak, appreciating the house-elf's eagerness to please. "Tweak, could we have some snacks, if it's not too much trouble?"

But please, no garlic. We've had our fair share of that today," he said with a light chuckle.

Tracey, unable to contain her amusement, snorted with laughter, while Daphne giggled softly, both girls finding humor in Harry's playful jab at their garlic-infused Defense Against the Dark Arts lesson.

Tweak, his eyes lighting up with delight, nodded enthusiastically. "Of course, Sir Potter! Tweak be delighted to prepare snacks for you and your friends!" the elf exclaimed, his voice filled with joy.

Harry then reached into his sleeve, pulling out a book with an almost magical flourish. He presented it to Tweak, saying, "I have a gift for you and others, Tweak. This book contains recipes from Latin America, like Asado, Empanadas, Peruvian Ceviche, Feijoada, Dulce de Leche, and Guacamole. Perhaps you can add them to the Hogwarts menu. Some of them are light and delicious."

Tweak's eyes widened, his expression a mix of surprise and gratitude. He carefully took the book from Harry, his fingers trembling slightly with emotion. "Sir Potter, this is a wonderful gift! Tweak be very grateful.

Tweak be make sure to try these recipes!"

The house-elf's enthusiasm was infectious, and Harry couldn't help but feel a sense of satisfaction at being able to contribute something meaningful to the Hogwarts kitchen.

As Tweak scurried off to prepare the snacks, Harry turned to Daphne and Tracey, who were both looking around the kitchen with fascination. The house-elves were a whirlwind of activity, each one dedicated to their task, yet moving in a harmonious and efficient manner.

"This place is amazing, Potter," Daphne remarked, her eyes taking in the bustling kitchen. "I had no idea this was even here."

Harry nodded, "It's one of Hogwarts' best-kept secrets. The house-elves

work tirelessly to provide for the entire school, yet they remain largely unseen."

As they spoke, Tweak returned, balancing a tray laden with a variety of snacks. The delightful aroma of freshly prepared food filled the air, making their mouths water in anticipation.

"Here you go, Sir Potter, Miss Greengrass, Miss Davis," Tweak announced proudly. "Tweak made sure there be no garlic."

The tray was a colorful array of treats: sandwiches with a variety of fillings, bite-sized pastries, and a selection of fruits. Each item was perfectly presented, reflecting the house-elves' meticulous attention to detail.

"Thank you, Tweak. This looks fantastic," Harry said, as they each took a plate and began sampling the snacks.

As they relished their unexpected banquet, Nigel's commentary, laced with a tad more dryness, resonated in Harry's thoughts. "Master Harry, I must commend your strategic foresight. Cozying up to the kitchen staff, how very cunning! You never know when the need for an emergency treacle tart might arise."

Harry's grin was tinged with amusement at Nigel's sarcastic tone. "Well, Nigel, you know what they say, 'Win the kitchen, win the castle.' In Hogwarts, a well-timed chocolate frog can be just as powerful as any spell."

After finishing their snacks and thanking Tweak once again, Harry, Daphne, and Tracey made their way back to the common room.

In the common room, Harry settled into one of the plush chairs, observing his fellow Slytherin classmates. The room buzzed with the usual evening activities, a mix of study and leisure. Malfoy, Nott, and Zabini were deep in conversation near the fireplace, their voices a low

murmur blending with the crackling flames. Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle, in contrast, stood near a window with a view of the Black Lake. Their faces showed an unexpected seriousness as they undertook the rather peculiar task of counting the fish swimming in the water. It was quite clear that they were determined to figure out just how many fish were living in the lake.

Harry's presence caught Nott's eye, causing him to pause mid-sentence. Among the group, Nott's views were the most extreme, influenced heavily by his father's rigid pureblood ideology. He regarded Harry with a mix of suspicion and curiosity. Harry's status as a heir of a most ancient and most novel house was undeniable, yet his mother's mudblood status and his role in Voldemort's downfall made him an enigma in Nott's eyes.

Draco, on the other hand, held a different perspective. The conversations on the train and the interactions over the past days had given him a newfound respect for Harry. He saw Harry's intelligence and potential as an ally, recognizing the benefits of aligning with someone as resourceful as him.

Zabini, the most observant of the trio, had a worldview that set him apart from his peers. He was less concerned with blood status and more interested in the dynamics of power and influence within the wizarding world. He watched Harry with a keen interest, trying to gauge his motivations and ambitions.

Malfoy was the first to break the silence, addressing Harry with a tone that mixed respect and curiosity. "Sir Potter," he said, a subtle nod acknowledging Harry's status.

Harry responded in kind, his voice calm and measured. "Sir Malfoy, Nott, and Zabini," he greeted them, maintaining the formal decorum typical among pureblood families.

As the conversation unfolded, Harry discreetly activated the Observe function, ensuring none of the three Slytherins were under spells like Neville, Ron, and Hermione.

[System Message: Draco Malfoy - High ambition and pride, influenced by family legacy. Exhibits a strong sense of determination and loyalty to traditional values.]

[System Message: Theodore Nott - Ideologically influenced, potential for change under the right circumstances. Displays intellectual curiosity and critical thinking skills, open to new perspectives.]

[System Message: Blaise Zabini - Observant, calculating, open-minded compared to peers. Demonstrates a keen sense of observation and analytical thinking, willing to consider alternative viewpoints.]

Harry felt a sense of relief knowing they were free from external influences. His interactions with them would be genuine, albeit strategically managed.

Harry had no innate hatred towards Theodore Nott or Draco Malfoy. They were kids, shaped by their upbringing and influenced heavily by their parents' ideologies. Especially in the case of Theodore Nott. Harry was aware that Theodore's mother had died when he was very young, leaving him to be raised solely by his father, a known extremist Death Eater. This background provided a significant insight into Theodore's beliefs and actions.

Despite these circumstances, Harry didn't consider them friends, but potential pawns in the larger scheme of things. Unlike Neville, and perhaps Daphne and Tracey, Draco, Nott, and even Ron were seen as chess pieces in Harry's strategic game.

Sitting comfortably in the common room, Harry observed the trio—Draco, Nott, and Zabini—conversing near the fireplace. Their body

language and the nature of their discussion were telling. Harry could see the wheels turning in their minds, each contemplating their own ambitions and the role he might play in their realization.

\*About Nott's familial situation, it is not meta knowledge given by Nigel. People talk, and since Harry is in Slytherin, he hears bit of gossip. I will not always write where he hears them from, but you can assume he heard it from others.

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Chapter 70: Aiming High

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The revelation of the first day at Hogwarts still lingered in the minds of the Slytherin students, especially the notion of the 'Serpent of the Crown'—the true leader of Slytherin House. This prestigious title, a legacy of Salazar Slytherin himself, was shrouded in secrecy and reverence. Only discussed within the confines of the Slytherin common room, the title was bestowed by the room itself, recognizing a student who embodied the qualities of leadership, cunning, and ambition.

As Harry sat in the common room, surrounded by his housemates, he could sense their curiosity and, in some cases, their envy. He was already a step ahead in the unspoken race to become the next Serpent of the

Crown. His lineage as the Heir of the Potter Family, his role in the downfall of Voldemort, and his evident prowess in Transfiguration had set him apart. The question on everyone's mind was whether he would continue to excel in his other classes, further cementing his position.

Draco Malfoy, leaning close to the fireplace, watched Harry with a calculating gaze. "Potter, your performance in Transfiguration was... impressive," he remarked, his tone a mix of respect and rivalry.

Harry turned to Draco, his expression calm. "Thank you, Malfoy. It's just the beginning, though. There's much more to learn," he replied, his voice even.

Harry was indeed as eager to get the title of 'Serpent of the Crown.' To become the true lord of Slytherin house was a goal that would significantly aid in his mission to expand his influence and discover the conditions of acquiring the heirship of Slytherin lineage. For this reason, he even started to reconsider something he had previously discarded: Quidditch. His status sheet revealed a great talent in Broom Riding, and his father had been a renowned Seeker in his time. Harry wanted the fame and recognition that came with being a Quidditch star to propel him even further. However, first-year students were typically not allowed to attend tryouts, and he needed to devise a plan to overcome this hurdle. "I don't want to waste a year," he thought to himself.

Harry's contemplative gaze shifted towards Blaise Zabini. "So, Zabini, your family is from Italy, right?" he inquired, his tone casual yet inquisitive.

Zabini nodded in response. "My mother is. My father is from a small African tribe," he answered, his voice tinged with pride.

Harry nodded thoughtfully. "Why did you choose Hogwarts? I mean no offense, of course. I'm just curious, as Europe has other magical schools

on par with Hogwarts, right?"

Zabini seemed unbothered by the question. "No offense taken, Potter. I've heard a lot about Hogwarts since I was small and always wanted to come here. The school's reputation and the diverse range of magical education it offers were too compelling to ignore."

Harry hummed, his mind working swiftly. "It's fascinating how Hogwarts attracts students from such varied backgrounds," he remarked. "The diversity here is a strength, I believe."

Zabini agreed, "Indeed. It's one of Hogwarts' unique aspects."

Harry turned to others. "Do you know anything about the Quidditch team tryouts? I understand they're typically not open to first years, but I'm curious about the process."

Zabini raised an eyebrow, slightly surprised by the question. "Quidditch? I didn't peg you as the sporting type, Potter. But yes, first years rarely make the team. However, there have been exceptions. It's all about skill and a bit of luck."

Nott added, "First years are not allowed to own a broomstick. Making it to the team with the ancient brooms the school offers would be difficult."

His words carried a hint of doubt, mirroring the skepticism shared by many in the room.

Harry hummed thoughtfully, considering the challenge. "That's true," he acknowledged. "But I believe skill can overcome the limitations of equipment. And besides, I'm quite keen to try my hand at Quidditch."

Draco, intrigued by Harry's determination, chimed in, "You're planning to try out for the Slytherin team, Potter? I must admit, I didn't expect that from you. If you need any pointers, let me know. My father's ensured I've had the best training since I was young."

Harry nodded appreciatively at Draco's offer. "Thanks, Malfoy. I might

take you up on that. And who knows, maybe we can work together to strengthen the Slytherin team."

The conversation then shifted, with the group discussing the upcoming Quidditch season and the potential players for Slytherin. As they spoke, Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind, "Ah, Quidditch - the sport where one can truly soar above the rest. A fitting arena for a Slytherin such as yourself, Master Harry."

Harry nodded in agreement with Nigel's assessment. "Indeed, Nigel. It's an opportunity to prove myself in a different field and gain more recognition in Slytherin."

Harry, with a plan forming in his mind, decided it was time to speak with Professor Snape. He had a suspicion that Snape might try to probe his mind again, as he had attempted on the first day after the Sorting Ceremony. Additionally, there was an undercurrent of hostility from Snape that Harry couldn't quite understand. Resolute, he stood up from his seat in the common room. "Goodnight, gentlemen. I will see you tomorrow," he said, nodding to Draco, Nott, and Zabini before making his way to his room.

In the privacy of his room, Harry started to strategize. He was aware of Snape's capabilities in Legilimency, and he needed to be prepared. "Nigel, it's likely Snape will try to read my mind again." Harry spoke in his mind. Nigel responded, "Indeed, Master Harry. Remember, your mental defenses must be as strong as your magical ones. But no one can probe your mind with the Technology System here."

Harry appreciated Nigel's support. He spent the rest of the evening reviewing his notes and preparing for the next day. As he lay in bed, his thoughts drifted to the current Serpent of the Crown, Selena. She was a figure of influence within Slytherin, and Harry knew that gaining her

support could be crucial in his quest to secure a spot in the team.

'Thoughts for later,' he mused, closing his eyes and drifting into a restful sleep.

The next day, Harry walked into the Potion room with Daphne and Tracey, his strides confident yet measured. He spotted Neville and greeted him with a nod. Neville looked visibly nervous, his eyes darting around the dungeon classroom, a stark contrast to the warmth of the castle above. The chill of the dungeon, compounded by the eerie sight of pickled animals floating in glass jars along the walls, added a layer of discomfort.

As Professor Snape entered with his usual flourish, the room fell into a hushed anticipation. He began roll call in his distinct, sibilant voice.

"Brown, Bulstrode, Finnigan..." Each name was called with a note of indifference until he reached, "Harry Potter." Snape looked up, his gaze locking with Harry's. At that precise moment, Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind.

[System Message: Legilimency probe detected. Countermeasures activated.]

Snape's eyes narrowed, a flicker of annoyance crossing his features at the failed probe. But he quickly masked it with his usual sneer, remarking dryly, "Our new celebrity."

After completing the roll call, Snape stood and began his introduction to the art of potion making. His voice, though soft, carried clearly throughout the dungeon. "You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potionmaking," he said. "As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep

through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death -- if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach."

His words hung in the air, laden with a mixture of disdain and challenge, leaving a palpable silence in their wake.

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Chapter 71: Fame

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"Potter!" Snape snapped suddenly, his eyes piercing. "What would I get if

I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

Harry matched Snape's gaze, a calmness settling over him as he internally communicated with Nigel. "What's with this sudden quiz, Nigel?" he inquired silently, maintaining his composure.

Nigel's response was prompt, his tone laced with a hint of amusement.

"Ah, it seems Professor Snape is attempting to unsettle you, Master Harry.

He's not your most ardent admirer, but you're more than capable of handling this."

Meanwhile, Snape, with a smug expression, taunted, "Tut, tut -- fame clearly isn't everything." He deliberately ignored Hermione Granger's eager hand, focusing solely on trying to undermine Harry.

"Let's try again, Potter. Where would you look if I told you to find me a bezoar?" Snape's question was another thinly veiled attempt to catch Harry off-guard.

Hermione's hand shot up even higher, her eagerness to answer palpable in the tension of her arm. Despite her efforts, Snape's cold eyes remained fixed on Harry, ignoring her completely.

"And what is the difference, Potter, between monkshood and wolfsbane?" Snape added, his tone dripping with disdain.

Hermione, unable to contain herself, stood up, her hand stretching toward the dungeon ceiling. Snape, however, remained indifferent to her, his focus unwavering on Harry.

Harry, unfazed, finally responded, his voice steady and clear. "Asphodel and wormwood make a sleeping potion so powerful it is known as the Draught of Living Death. A bezoar is a stone taken from the stomach of a goat and it will save one from most poisons. As for monkshood and wolfsbane, they are the same plant, which also goes by the name of aconite."

Snape, visibly taken aback by Harry's correct answers, struggled to mask his shock and anger. "Why didn't you answer when I first asked you?" he demanded, his voice laced with irritation.

Harry met Snape's glare with a composed expression. "Professor, I believe it's essential to give others a chance to answer, especially those who are keen to participate," he said, subtly indicating Hermione without breaking eye contact with Snape. "But I am always ready to respond when it's clear that no one else will."

Snape, caught off guard by Harry's diplomatic response, was visibly conflicted. He wanted to deduct points and reprimand Harry, but as a Slytherin, he couldn't bring himself to penalize his own house. The

internal struggle was evident in his expression.

Nigel's voice chimed in Harry's mind, "Well navigated, Master Harry.

You've managed to turn a potential setback into an opportunity to demonstrate both your knowledge and respect for your classmates. Snape may be a tough nut to crack, but you've certainly given him something to ponder."

Snape's final snare, "You are to answer when asked," cut through the tension in the Potions classroom. Harry, maintaining his composure, simply nodded, "Understood, sir." Snape, still carrying a hint of frustration, turned to the rest of the class, "Well? Why aren't you all copying that down?" The students hastily began to scribble notes, ensuring they captured every detail of Harry's precise answers.

As the class shifted to the practical segment, Snape instructed them to pair up and gather ingredients from the cellar. Harry caught Neville's eye, giving him a nod, signaling their partnership. Neville, relieved to have Harry as his partner, approached him.

The task was to brew the Cure for Boils Potion, a staple in the first-year curriculum. The original recipe called for four ingredients: Dried nettles, six snake fangs, four horned slugs, and two porcupine quills. Neville, book in hand, began to read the instructions, but Harry gently closed the book. "You won't need that. Come," he said, leading Neville to the ingredients cupboard.

Harry's approach to potion-making differed significantly from the standard recipe. With their ingredients gathered, Harry led Neville back to their cauldron. "Now, watch closely," he said, starting to prepare the potion. As they neared the potion's completion, Harry reflected on the importance of ingredient maturity, particularly the nettle leaves and snake fangs. "Their age and quality play a significant role in the potion's

potency," he remarked.

Neville, observing the potion's final form, was impressed. "It's incredible, Harry. I never knew potion-making could be so... intricate."

But at this moment, Professor Snape appeared behind Harry and Neville.

His tall figure loomed over them as he peered into the cauldron, then glanced at the leftover ingredients on the table. His voice, laced with a hiss of surprise, broke the silence. "What do you think you are doing?"

Harry remained calm, but Neville, beside him, was visibly nervous. They had deliberately deviated from the formula in the textbook, and Snape's sudden appearance could spell trouble.

"Respectfully, sir," Harry began, his voice steady, "you instructed us to brew a Cure for Boils Potion, not necessarily to follow the formula in the book verbatim."

Snape's dark eyes scrutinized the contents of the cauldron once more.

"And this is it?" he asked, his tone skeptical.

"Yes, sir," Harry affirmed confidently.

Snape's gaze shifted between Harry and the cauldron. "You added Dittany and Flobberworm Mucus." He leaned in, sniffing the potion. "Dittany to complement the Nettle Leaves, and Flobberworm Mucus for consistency."

His expression, though stern, betrayed a flicker of intrigue. "Where did you get this formula?"

Harry tilted his head slightly, maintaining eye contact. "It is my own creation, sir."

Snape's brow furrowed slightly, skepticism evident in his voice. "Tell me the truth, Potter." He suspected Harry might have discovered Lily's old potion notes. Lily had been almost as proficient as Snape in her potion-making skills before she shifted her focus to Charms.

"I am telling the truth, sir," Harry replied, his gaze unwavering.

Snape's demand was clear. "Explain how you developed it."

Harry took a deep breath, preparing to detail his thought process. "It began with understanding the nature of each ingredient, sir. For the Cure for Boils Potion, the traditional recipe focuses primarily on the anti-inflammatory properties of the Nettle Leaves. However, I theorized that enhancing the potion's healing efficacy could be beneficial, especially for more severe cases of boils."

He gestured towards the cauldron. "I chose to add Dittany, known for its remarkable healing properties. Its inclusion works synergistically with the Nettle Leaves, enhancing their effectiveness while adding a layer of restorative quality to the potion."

Snape listened, his expression unchanging, but his eyes showed a hint of curiosity.

"Furthermore," Harry continued, "the traditional recipe lacks a certain consistency in its texture, which can affect the application on boils. To address this, I grated horned slugs and added them to the mixture. Their mucus serves as a binding agent, ensuring a smoother texture and more even application on the skin."

Snape's eyes narrowed slightly, but he made no interruption, prompting Harry to proceed.

"As for the Snake Fangs," Harry said, "I opted for a fine grind, which enhances their reactivity when added to the potion. The key is to add them gradually, maintaining a controlled reaction and preventing the potion from becoming volatile."

Harry paused, ensuring Snape was following his explanation. "The Porcupine Quills are another vital component. By cutting them into uniform half-inch lengths, I ensured they dissolve evenly, contributing to the overall stability of the potion."

Snape's demeanor remained stoic, but the subtle shift in his posture indicated he was considering Harry's words.

"Finally," Harry concluded, "I added Flobberworm Mucus as the last ingredient. It binds everything together while smoothing out the texture, creating a more effective and stable potion overall."

He looked directly at Snape. "Sir, the potion's effectiveness hinges on the meticulous choice and sequence of ingredient addition. The aim was to enhance its potency and usability."

Snape stared at Harry for a long moment, his gaze intense. Then, slowly, he nodded, a grudging respect evident in his eyes. "Very well, Potter.

Let's see the results of your... experimentation."

Bottling the potion, Harry carefully presented it to Professor Snape for inspection. The potion's refined texture and consistent coloration were evident, even to the most critical eye. Snape, holding the bottle up to the light, examined it with an intensity that betrayed his inner conflict. As much as he didn't want to admit it, the potion before him was of a quality that surpassed even some of the concoctions he had seen from professional potion masters.

'This child is a prodigy,' Snape thought reluctantly, his pride as a Potions Master warring with his personal feelings toward Harry. He handed the bottle back to Harry, his voice grudgingly respectful. "Not bad, Potter. But let's test your adaptability. What if you were to alter the order of ingredients and their preparations like this?"

Snape then challenged Harry with a new formula. "What if you add Snake Fangs first, then Pungous Onions, dried nettles, a dash of Flobberworm Mucus, a sprinkle of powdered ginger root. Then add pickled Shrake spines. Add a glug of stewed horned slugs, finally add porcupine quills?"

The class, captivated by the exchange between Harry and Snape, watched

with bated breath, their own cauldrons bubbling away neglected. Harry closed his eyes, deeply analyzing the proposed formula. In his mind, a virtual simulation of the potion's brewing process unfolded, guided by his expansive knowledge and the insight provided by Nigel.

Harry closed his eyes, focusing deeply on Snape's proposed formula. In his mind, he visualized each step, analyzing the potential interactions and outcomes. Nigel's voice provided a running commentary, assisting Harry in his mental simulation.

"Adding Snake Fangs first would initiate a more aggressive reaction, Master Harry. But be mindful of the timing and the subsequent addition of Pungous Onions," Nigel advised, his tone analytical.

Harry imagined slicing the Pungous Onions finely, considering how their potent essence would interact with the crushed snake fangs. He mentally stirred the mixture, adding dried nettles next. The nettles, he knew, would have to be added at a precise moment to prevent an overpowering bitterness.

Harry nodded internally, adding the mucus with caution in his mind's eye. The next step, a sprinkle of powdered ginger root, intrigued him.

"The ginger could add a warmth to counterbalance the coolness of the nettles," he thought.

Harry envisioned stirring the Shrike spines gently into the potion, ensuring they integrated without causing any adverse reactions. The addition of stewed horned slugs followed, their mucus adding a unique binding quality to the concoction.

"The final touch, porcupine quills, will need precise timing. Too early, and they'll dissolve too much; too late, and they won't integrate properly," Nigel advised.

Harry simulated the addition of the quills in his mind, then mentally

waved his wand over the cauldron, completing the potion.

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Chapter 72: Why Are You Probing

My Mind?

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Double Chapter!

--

Opening his eyes, Harry looked at Snape, the whole class hanging on his every word. But he first analyzed for the last time. 'The potion he proposes, would result in a more robust and potentially more potent brew. The early addition of the Snake Fangs sets a strong foundational reaction, enhanced by the Pungous Onions. The Flobberworm Mucus and ginger root provide a balanced texture and warmth. The Shrake spines, if added gently, could add a layer of complexity. The horned slugs and porcupine quills solidify the potion's properties. Finally, the wand wave at the end would bind all elements together. It is bloody brilliant.'

Harry paused, then thought, 'However, the risk of volatility is higher, especially with the Shrake spines. The timing of each ingredient would be crucial to prevent an adverse reaction.'

Harry stood before Snape, his expression calm and focused. He carefully

considered the unique application of the potion ingredients Snape had suggested. Drawing on his extensive practice in the Virtual Potion Creation Room, Harry mentally calculated the optimal formula, incorporating Snape's instructions while making subtle adjustments to ensure the potion's stability and potency.

"Professor," Harry began, "adding the crushed snake fangs first would indeed initiate a strong reaction. The key is to stir them gently to avoid over-activation. As for the Pungous Onions, slicing them finely is crucial, but they should be added after a brief heating of the snake fangs to optimize their integration."

Harry paused, "The dried nettles should follow, but their addition must be timed precisely with the reduction of heat to prevent the potion from becoming too bitter."

He glanced at the cauldron, envisioning the next steps. "A dash of Flobberworm Mucus should be added next. However, the stirring should be more deliberate and measured, rather than vigorous, to maintain the potion's consistency."

"The powdered ginger root," Harry continued, "while adding a nice warmth, should be sprinkled in sparingly. An overabundance could overpower the other ingredients."

He took a deep breath, considering the most volatile component. "The pickled Shrake spines are the trickiest part. They must be stirred gently, as too much agitation could destabilize the entire brew."

Harry then addressed the final ingredients. "The stewed horned slugs add a unique binding quality, but their addition should be followed by a brief pause before the porcupine quills. The quills themselves should be added one at a time, ensuring even distribution throughout the potion."

Finally, Harry concluded, "A wand wave at the end is essential to bind

the elements together harmoniously. However, the wand movement should be more of a gentle swirl than a sharp motion to avoid disrupting the potion's delicate balance."

Snape, listening intently, was visibly astounded. Harry, with his eyes closed for just a few minutes, had not only taken his challenging formula but refined it with precision and understanding. Snape couldn't help but wonder how an eleven-year-old could demonstrate such innate talent and intuition for potion-making. What he didn't know was that Harry had experimented with over half a million variations of the Cure for Boils potion in the Virtual Potion Creation Room.

Harry called to Nigel in his mind, "Nigel, please run a simulation on this new formula. I've created a mental clone for the process."

Nigel, ever efficient, quickly activated the Virtual Potion Creation Room. A clone of Harry materialized within this virtual space, surrounded by all the necessary ingredients and equipment. The clone, mimicking Harry's movements and thought processes, began meticulously following the revised formula, allowing Harry to observe and adjust the procedure in real-time.

Meanwhile, in the physical classroom, an unforeseen situation was unfolding. As Snape and Harry's intense discussion had captivated the class, the students' potions had been left unattended. Now, several cauldrons began to quiver ominously, a clear sign they were on the verge of boiling over or, worse, exploding.

Harry, keenly aware of his surroundings despite his mental engagement with Nigel, was the first to notice the impending disaster. Without hesitation, he darted from his spot, grabbing a handful of key ingredients from the nearest shelf. His movements were swift and precise, a testament to his agility and quick thinking.

As he rushed to the first cauldron, which was bubbling dangerously high, he swiftly added a pinch of Dried Nettle Leaves, followed by a carefully measured amount of Flobberworm Mucus. The potion's violent reaction calmed instantly, settling into a gentle simmer.

Moving to the next cauldron, Harry quickly assessed its condition. He noted the potion's unusually thick consistency and quickly deduced the issue. Reaching for his pouch, he pulled out a small vial of distilled water, adding it to the cauldron. The potion's thickness dissipated, returning it to its proper state.

Snape, jarred from his stupor by the commotion, waved his wand in a broad arc. A series of calculated spell incantations followed, stabilizing the potions that Harry hadn't reached yet. His eyes, however, remained fixed on Harry, observing his student's adept handling of the situation.

In the Virtual Potion Creation Room, Harry's clone continued the brewing process under Nigel's watchful guidance. "A bit more ginger root now," Nigel suggested, his voice echoing in the virtual space. The clone, following Nigel's advice, carefully sprinkled the ginger, ensuring its even distribution throughout the potion.

Back in the physical classroom, Harry's swift intervention had prevented what could have been a series of disastrous explosions. His classmates, realizing the danger they had narrowly avoided, murmured among themselves, their expressions a mix of relief and admiration.

Snape, having ensured the safety of the remaining cauldrons, approached Harry. His usual sneer was absent, replaced by a look of grudging respect. "Good work, Potter," he said, his voice low. "Not only do you show an uncanny understanding of potion-making, but you also demonstrate a remarkable presence of mind."

Harry, wiping a bead of sweat from his brow, replied calmly, "Thank you,

sir. I believe it's essential to be aware of one's environment, especially in a potentially volatile setting like a potions class."

Snape nodded, his eyes lingering on Harry for a moment longer before he turned to address the class. "Let this be a lesson to all of you. Potion-making requires constant attention and respect for the craft. Mr. Potter's quick thinking has just saved many of you from a visit to the hospital wing. 30 points to Slytherin."

The class, now fully attentive, turned their focus back to their cauldrons, their earlier negligence replaced by a newfound sense of caution. Harry, satisfied with the outcome, returned to his station, where Neville was waiting, a look of awe on his face.

"Harry, that was incredible," Neville exclaimed, his voice tinged with admiration.

Harry patted Neville's shoulder with a reassuring smile. "It's all about practice, Neville. Potion-making is an art that requires precision and patience. With your understanding of herbology, you only lack practice."

As Harry spoke, he turned to Nigel, inquiring silently in his mind, "Nigel, what's the result?"

The AI assistant responded promptly, "82%, Master Harry. Incredible. To think, without infusing magic, the potion could increase above 80%. It surpasses even my initial calculations."

Harry nodded, impressed. Snape's expertise in the art of potion-making was indeed profound. His challenge had provided Harry with a valuable learning opportunity, pushing him to explore the depths of his potion-making skills.

With a sense of accomplishment, Harry then approached Daphne and Tracey. Both girls were struggling with their own potion, the contents of their cauldron bubbling unevenly.

"Need some help?" Harry asked, his tone friendly yet confident.

Daphne, her blonde hair falling over her face as she peered into the cauldron, looked up with a mixture of relief and gratitude. "Yes, please, Potter. We can't seem to get the consistency right."

Harry leaned over their cauldron, observing the color and viscosity of the potion. "Ah, I see the problem. You've added too much Horned Slugs, and it's unbalanced the potion."

Tracey, her dark eyes reflecting her eagerness to learn, asked, "How do we fix it?"

Harry reached for a jar of dried nettles from the nearby shelf. "You need to counteract the excess mucus. Adding a small amount of dried nettles should do the trick."

He carefully measured a pinch of nettles, then sprinkled them into the cauldron, stirring gently. "Now, stir it slowly in a clockwise direction."

As Daphne and Tracey followed Harry's instructions, the potion began to transform, the previously uneven mixture smoothing out into a consistent, velvety texture.

"That's it," Harry encouraged. "You're getting the hang of it."

Daphne smiled, a hint of admiration in her eyes. "Thanks, Potter. We owe you one."

Harry shrugged modestly. "No worries. We're all here to learn, after all."

As he stepped back, allowing Daphne and Tracey to finish their potion, Nigel's voice resonated in his mind, tinged with his characteristic dry humor. "Master Harry, at this rate, you might just become the unofficial potions tutor for Slytherin."

Harry chuckled silently at Nigel's comment, the idea was not bad, but he doubted Snape would allow it. He then moved through the classroom, assisting other students where needed. His classmates were beginning to

recognize his proficiency in potion-making, and his willingness to help further enhanced his standing among them.

Throughout the class, Snape observed Harry closely, his dark eyes betraying a mix of skepticism and curiosity. Harry's display of skill and his helpful demeanor were not what Snape had expected from James Potter's son, and it seemed to unsettle him. 'He is more of Lily it seems.' As the class drew to a close, Harry carefully labeled his bottled potion with a precise handwriting. He placed it on Snape's desk for evaluation, confident in its quality.

When the bell rang signaling the end of the potions class, the students began to file out of the dungeon, their chatter echoing off the stone walls. Harry, however, lingered behind, his gaze fixed thoughtfully on Professor Snape. Snape, who was meticulously organizing his desk, looked up at Harry's prolonged presence. "What is it, Potter? Do you want to volunteer to clean cauldrons?" he asked with a hint of sarcasm.

Harry, unfazed by Snape's tone, approached the desk with a calm demeanor. "Sir, I would like to be blunt, and I ask for your forgiveness in advance, as I don't mean to offend. But why are you probing my mind?" he inquired, his voice steady and direct.

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Chapter 73: Respect

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This is the second chapter of the day.

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Snape's reaction was immediate and unmistakable. His eyes widened momentarily in shock, a rare break in his usually impassive facade. If there was something he prided himself on, besides potion-making, it was his skill in Legilimency. To think that he had been detected by an eleven-year-old boy was both alarming and embarrassing. Not only was what he did extremely illegal, but he had also done it to the Heir of a most Ancient and most Noble House. That alone, if reported, would promise him a stay in Azkaban. His mind raced for a suitable response, weighing the options of lying or admitting his actions, but he was reluctant to commit to either.

Harry, observing Snape's internal struggle, sighed softly. "I'm not going to report it, sir. I was just curious. This is our first time meeting, so any hostility you hold toward me must be due to my parents. I don't know what happened between them and you, but I am not my parents. I will not apologize or defend them, but blaming me for their actions isn't fair, is it?" His tone was sincere, seeking not to confront but to understand and clear the air, recognizing the seven years of study under Snape that lay ahead.

Looking into the deep green eyes seeking answers, Snape felt an undeniable tension in his jaw. Those eyes, so reminiscent of Lily's, yet framed in the face of James Potter, provoked a mixture of emotions in him. It was a painful reminder of a past he had long struggled with - the bitterness towards James Potter, the profound loss of Lily, and the complicated feelings that came with them. But as he stood there,

confronted by the living result of those tangled histories, Snape found himself grappling with a truth he had long avoided. It wasn't fair to project his unresolved grievances onto Harry, who, though a reminder of his pain, was not responsible for it.

Snape's expression, usually a well-crafted mask of indifference, betrayed a flicker of conflict. Here was Harry Potter, not the arrogant image of James he had expected, but a boy with a depth and curiosity that was unexpectedly disarming.

"Sir, I would like to apply for the Quidditch tryouts," Harry said, shifting the topic.

Harry's question about the Quidditch tryouts momentarily derailed Snape's train of thought. The disdain in his voice was almost reflexive, "You want to waste your talent, Potter? To think I acknowledged your potential." His sarcasm, a defensive mechanism, was as sharp as ever.

Harry remained unflustered by Snape's tone. His response was straightforward and devoid of any pretense. "I want the title," he admitted openly, meaning Serpent of the Crown title. Since even its name couldn't be uttered outside of Slytherin walls, Harry couldn't tell what he meant, but he didn't have. Understanding what he meant, Snape looked at his resolute eyes. It wasn't a child's dream of glory on the Quidditch pitch; it was a calculated move. Harry understood the symbolic power of the title within Slytherin House, and he intended to use every available avenue to achieve it, including Quidditch.

Snape, taken aback by Harry's bluntness, reassessed the boy before him.

This wasn't a simple case of a child chasing after a fleeting moment of glory on a broomstick. Here was a young wizard with a deep-seated ambition, using the game as a means to an end, much like a true

Slytherin would. A begrudging sense of respect started to form in Snape's

mind.

As Harry stood before Snape, his demeanor neither arrogant nor meek, he represented a conundrum to the seasoned Potions Master. Snape, known for his ability to read people, found himself at a rare loss. Harry was different, an enigma that challenged his preconceived notions. The boy's potential was undeniable, and his ambitions, though lofty, seemed well within his reach.

"Very well, Potter," Snape finally conceded, albeit grudgingly. "I'll make an exception for the tryouts. But don't mistake this for favoritism. You'll have to prove your worth on the field just like everyone else."

Harry nodded, understanding the unspoken terms of Snape's acquiescence. The Potions Master, despite his harsh exterior, had a sense of fairness that Harry could appreciate. It was a small but significant step in their complicated relationship.

As Harry left the dungeon, his mind was already strategizing the path ahead. The Quidditch tryouts were just one piece of the larger puzzle. Every move he made at Hogwarts was a step towards his ultimate goal and even becoming the Serpent of the Crown, a symbol of leadership and cunning within Slytherin House was just a bigger step.

The corridors of Hogwarts, usually bustling with the chatter and laughter of students, seemed quieter as Harry made his way back to the common room. His thoughts were interrupted by the familiar voice of Nigel in his mind, "A bold move, Master Harry. But then again, boldness is a virtue well-respected in Slytherin."

Harry chuckled softly at Nigel's comment, the irony of their situation not lost on him. "I promised Ms. Granger I would meet up with her after Potions," he remembered, his stride purposeful as he made his way to the library. Throughout his time at Hogwarts, Hermione Granger had been a

constant presence, her piercing gaze in the Potions class both envious and curious. Harry was suspicious Dumbledore had cast a compelling spell on her to bring her closer to him. As he entered the library, he muttered to himself, "Let's see if I can break Dumbledore's spell."

At the library's entrance, Madam Pince, the stern librarian, scrutinized Harry, her eyes sharp and assessing. She was a guardian of knowledge, fiercely protective of the books under her care. Observing Harry, she seemed to weigh his intentions, ensuring he posed no threat to her realm of books and quiet study. After a brief moment, she seemed satisfied with her assessment and returned her attention to the book in her hands, her expression softening slightly as she lost herself in its pages.

Harry, meanwhile, scanned the library for Hermione. The library was a sanctuary of knowledge, its high ceilings and tall windows casting an air of grandeur. The smell of old books filled the air, a comforting scent that spoke of centuries of wisdom and learning. Rows of shelves, laden with books of all sizes and colors, stretched out before him, creating a labyrinth of knowledge that few students ever fully explored.

As his eyes adjusted to the dim lighting, he spotted Hermione sitting at a corner table, deeply engrossed in a thick tome. Her bushy hair framed her face, casting shadows as she bent over the book, her expression one of intense concentration. Harry made his way towards her.

Hermione, sensing his approach, looked up, her eyes meeting his. For a moment, there was a flicker of something unspoken, a connection that went beyond mere words. Harry wondered if the spell Dumbledore had allegedly cast was influencing this moment, or if Hermione's interest was genuinely her own.

"Hello, Ms. Granger," Harry greeted, his tone friendly yet cautious. He pulled up a chair and sat opposite her, his eyes scanning the book she

was reading. "What are you studying?"

Hermione closed the book with a soft thud, her gaze fixed on Harry. "Oh, just trying to get ahead in Charms," she replied, her voice tinged with a mix of pride and modesty. "But I'm more curious about what you did in Potions today. Your potion was quite different from the standard formula."

Harry leaned back in his chair, considering how much to reveal. "I enjoy experimenting with potions," he said, his voice measured. "Sometimes, following the standard formula isn't enough to understand the full potential of a potion."

Hermione nodded, her curiosity piqued. "But how do you know what changes to make? Aren't you afraid of making a mistake?"

Harry smiled, a hint of mystery in his eyes. "Potion-making is a bit like a puzzle. You need to understand each piece and how it fits into the larger picture. As for mistakes, they're a part of learning. The key is to make them in a controlled environment."

Hermione's eyes widened slightly, impressed by his perspective. "That's a very mature approach," she commented. "I usually prefer to stick to the instructions."

Harry shook his head gently, a knowing smile on his lips. "If you stick to the books, Ms. Granger, you'll never go beyond them," he said softly.

Hermione, her brown eyes wide with a mix of astonishment and contemplation, paused to digest Harry's words. The idea of deviating from the well-trodden path of established knowledge was both thrilling and daunting to her. "But... but the books," she stammered, her voice trailing off as she grappled with this new perspective. "They're written by experts, people with years of experience and knowledge. Surely, they know best?"

Harry leaned forward, his green eyes reflecting a depth of understanding beyond his years. "Experts, yes, but even they started as learners, explorers. They pushed boundaries, experimented. Without that spirit of discovery, we'd still be brewing potions from centuries-old recipes without understanding why or how they work."

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Chapter 74: Plot Thickens

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Hermione's gaze was fixed on Harry, her mind racing with the implications of his words. It was a challenging notion for someone who had always found comfort and security in the concrete knowledge of textbooks.

"Think about it, Ms. Granger," Harry continued, his voice gentle yet persuasive. "True mastery comes from understanding the principles behind what you're learning, not just memorizing and repeating. It's about asking 'why' and 'how,' not just 'what.'"

Her brows furrowed, Hermione contemplated Harry's perspective. It was a paradigm shift, a departure from the structured learning she had always adhered to. "But isn't there a risk? What if you make a mistake?" she asked, her voice tinged with uncertainty.

"Mistakes are a part of learning," Harry replied, his tone reassuring.

"Every great witch or wizard has made them. It's through mistakes that we grow, that we truly understand our craft."

Hermione bit her lip, considering his words. "I suppose you're right," she conceded slowly. "It's just... it's a big leap from what I'm used to."

Harry smiled, understanding her dilemma. "It is, but you don't have to make the leap all at once. Start small, question things, try to understand the 'why' behind what you're learning. You'll be amazed at how much more you can discover."

Harry then shifted the conversation, addressing a request Hermione had made earlier. "About your request to teach you Transfiguration," he began, leaning slightly closer, his voice low and earnest. "I think I can help you understand it better."

Hermione's eyes lit up with interest. "Yes, please! I don't understand how you manage such precise transformations on your first try. It's fascinating."

Harry paused thoughtfully, considering how best to explain his approach.

"Transfiguration isn't just about the wand movement or the incantation.

It's about visualization and willpower. You have to imagine the transformation in your mind as vividly as possible and then will it to happen. The spell is just a way to channel that intention."

Hermione nodded, absorbing his words. "So it's more mental than just physical?"

"Exactly," Harry confirmed. "You have to believe in the change you want to make. Doubt or hesitation can make the spell falter. It's about confidence and clarity."

Hermione's brow furrowed in concentration. "I see. So it's not just about following the spell instructions to the letter. It's about understanding and

believing in what you're doing."

Harry smiled, his eyes gleaming with a mix of wisdom and enthusiasm.

"Right. But it's more about imagination. When you're transforming an object, say, a matchstick to a needle, you need to understand both objects intimately. Consider their properties: a matchstick is relatively soft, while a needle is hard. The matchstick is blunt, but a needle is sharp and pointy. A needle makes a metallic sound, it's cold to the touch but warms as you hold it. These details are crucial. You must vividly imagine and understand these differences to successfully perform the transfiguration."

Hermione listened intently, her eyes reflecting a dawning comprehension.

"So it's almost like becoming the object in your mind? Understanding its essence?"

"Exactly," Harry confirmed. "Transfiguration is as much about knowledge as it is about magic. The more you know about the objects you're working with, the better you can visualize and, therefore, transform them."

Hermione's gaze drifted to the window, her mind teeming with new possibilities. "That's quite a different approach than what the books say. They mostly talk about wand movements and incantations."

Harry nodded, "Books provide the foundation, but true mastery comes from going beyond them, from exploring and understanding the deeper aspects of magic."

The conversation then shifted subtly, as Harry intended to address the issue of Dumbledore's alleged compelling spell on Hermione. "Ms. Granger," he began cautiously, "I've noticed you're very driven, very focused on your studies, which is admirable. But have you ever felt... compelled to do certain things, perhaps beyond your natural inclinations?"

Hermione looked perplexed at the question. "Compelled? What do you mean?"

"Well," Harry continued, choosing his words carefully, "like being drawn to certain people or ideas, not entirely by your own choice, but as if pushed by an unseen force."

Hermione's expression became thoughtful, a hint of uncertainty in her eyes. "I can't say I have. Why do you ask?"

Harry leaned back, maintaining a casual demeanor. "Just something I've been pondering about the nature of influence and choice. We often think we're acting of our own free will, but sometimes external forces can guide us, subtly, without our realization."

Harry sat across from Hermione, his mind racing with the delicate task at hand. He knew Hermione's sudden request for help in Transfiguration was out of character, likely a machination of Dumbledore's compelling spell. Yet he couldn't just outright say it. Directly mentioning the spell could lead to misunderstanding, with Hermione possibly thinking Harry was unwilling to help. He needed to tread carefully, guiding her to realize the unnaturalness of her request without explicitly stating it. 'How can I lead her to this realization?' Harry pondered.

He knew he had to be subtle about it. Starting with a warm smile, Harry leaned forward slightly, his tone light yet probing. "I honestly didn't think you would ask for help, Ms. Granger. You seem quite competitive in nature," he said, a hint of playfulness in his voice. This approach was a bit direct, but it went to the core of the issue. Hermione was known for her competitive spirit, and her request for help from a peer, especially so early in their acquaintance, seemed out of character.

Hermione's eyes flickered with a brief moment of confusion before she responded, "Well, I suppose I am competitive. But I believe in learning

from the best, and you've shown remarkable skill in Transfiguration."

Harry nodded, acknowledging her compliment, but his mind was working fast. He needed to gently nudge Hermione towards self-reflection without making her defensive. "It's always good to learn from others," he agreed.

"But I've also noticed you have a natural aptitude for learning. You're incredibly observant and quick to grasp new concepts. It's a rare quality."

Hermione blushed slightly at the praise, but her expression soon turned thoughtful. "Thank you, Harry. But sometimes, I feel like there's so much I don't know, so much to learn..."

"That's the spirit of a true Ravenclaw," Harry interjected, smiling warmly at Hermione. He then paused, a thought suddenly striking him.

'Hermione is a perfect fit for Ravenclaw. Why did the Sorting Hat place her in Gryffindor? Could Dumbledore have influenced that decision too?'

Harry, curious yet cautious, decided to probe further without revealing his suspicions about Dumbledore's potential influence. He leaned slightly closer, his tone casual but inquisitive. "Ms. Granger, during the Sorting Ceremony, did the Hat say anything to you that stood out? Anything unusual or unexpected?" He kept his expression neutral, trying not to betray the depth of his curiosity.

Hermione looked thoughtful, her brows knitting together as she recalled the moment. "Well, the Sorting Hat did take a long time with me. It mentioned I could do well in Ravenclaw, said I had a 'mind sharp as a tack.' But then it said something about finding my true potential in Gryffindor, where bravery and courage would shape me more than mere intellect." She gave a small shrug, as if the memory was both puzzling and distant.

Harry nodded, his mind racing. 'So the Hat did consider Ravenclaw for her. Interesting.' He pondered the implications of this revelation. The

Sorting Hat's decision to place Hermione in Gryffindor, despite her obvious intellectual fit for Ravenclaw, suggested a deeper reasoning, possibly an external influence.

"Interesting," Harry mused aloud, trying to sound nonchalant. "The Sorting Hat often sees qualities in us that we might not see in ourselves. Gryffindor is known for its bravery, of course, but it's also about the heart, the courage to stand up for what's right. Maybe the Hat saw that in you."

Hermione smiled, a little uncertainly. "Maybe. I've always valued knowledge and wisdom, but the Hat must have seen something else in me. It's a bit daunting, to be honest."

Harry leaned back, his gaze thoughtful. "Sometimes, what we're sorted into isn't just about what we are, but what we have the potential to become. Gryffindor will challenge you in ways Ravenclaw might not have." His voice was gentle, encouraging, but inside, his mind was working on multiple levels.

Harry pondered deeply, his thoughts a whirlwind of possibilities and questions. 'Does Dumbledore have the power to influence the Sorting Hat? It is, after all, an artifact from the founders' times. Or perhaps he influenced Hermione's thoughts to sway the Hat's decision?' The more Harry thought about it, the more he realized the complexity of the situation. Dumbledore, a wizard of great power and influence, could have orchestrated events to shape his journey at Hogwarts. The revelation that Hermione was almost sorted into Ravenclaw added another layer to this intricate puzzle.

He then asked Nigel, "I was sorted after Hermione, so Dumbledore couldn't have known I would be in Slytherin. He probably assumed I would go to Gryffindor. How could he know? He used a Compelling Spell

on Weasley, arranged our meeting... Weasley praised Gryffindor and badmouthed Slytherin throughout the train ride. If I was a normal 11-year-old, I would beg the Hat to not put me in Slytherin."

Nigel's response was prompt. "Indeed, Master Harry, the manipulation seems quite intricate. As for young Mr. Weasley, it's clear that, while compelled by Dumbledore, presumably, his background made him the perfect candidate for such influence."

Harry nodded thoughtfully. "I understand that. But to think Dumbledore might have altered Hermione's Sorting... It seems unduly cruel. Seven years in a House where she might not belong could be torturous."

Nigel replied, "It is indeed a concern, Master Harry. One must tread carefully in these waters of manipulation. As for Ms. Granger, her potential misplacement could indeed prove challenging."

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Chapter 75: Everything is

Permissible

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With this new understanding, Harry decided to approach Hermione subtly, without revealing the existence of the Compelling Spell or Dumbledore's possible involvement. He wanted to help her realize, if

indeed she was out of place, and support her in adapting to her new environment.

"So, Ms. Granger, have you found your place in Gryffindor?" Harry inquired, his voice casual yet laced with a deeper curiosity.

Hermione paused, her eyes reflecting a mix of pride and uncertainty. "I suppose so. It's been a whirlwind of new experiences. Gryffindor is all about bravery and courage, which I admire, but sometimes I feel a bit... out of sync."

Harry, leaning slightly closer, spoke with a gentle tone, "It's natural to feel out of place at first, especially in a new environment. But you're a quick learner, and I'm sure you'll find your footing soon."

Hermione smiled, but her smile didn't quite reach her eyes. "I hope so, Harry. Sometimes, I wonder if I would've been better suited for Ravenclaw."

Harry's response was thoughtful, "Ms. Granger, it's not just where you're placed that defines you, but how you grow and adapt. Gryffindor will challenge you, yes, but it might also bring out qualities in you that you didn't know existed."

Hermione considered his words, a thoughtful expression crossing her features. "That's a nice way to look at it, Harry. Thank you."

As Harry conversed with Hermione, he couldn't help but observe her closely, looking for signs that might indicate an unnatural influence on her behavior. He noted her responses, the way her eyes lingered on certain topics, and her body language. Everything seemed normal, but Harry couldn't shake off the suspicion that Dumbledore's influence might be more subtle than he initially thought.

After their conversation, Harry bid Hermione farewell and left the library. As he walked back to the Slytherin common room, he pondered

the complexities of the situation. Dumbledore's potential influence over Hermione's Sorting and Ron's behavior added layers of complexity to his first year at Hogwarts. It was a game of chess, with Dumbledore possibly moving pieces in a grand strategy. But Harry was not a piece to be moved at will. He was a player in his own right, and he intended to play this game with skill and cunning.

Back in the Slytherin common room, Harry found himself amidst his housemates, their conversations a mix of school gossip and plans for the upcoming weekend.

Before Harry could settle into the Slytherin common room's rhythm, a 7th-year student approached him. "Selena wishes to see you," she stated, her tone conveying the importance of the summon. Harry nodded in acknowledgment and followed the girl. They arrived at the dungeon door, the entrance to the common room, but rather than leaving, the girl knocked on a brass snake head affixed to the wall. To Harry's fascination, the wall split open, revealing a hidden corridor lined with doors on either side, leading to an open area.

Arriving at the opening, Harry was greeted by Selena, the current Serpent of the Crown. She was an imposing figure, with flowing brown hair and green eyes that, while not as vivid as Harry's, exuded a noble and fair disposition. "Professor Snape informed me you want to try out for the Quidditch team," Selena said, her voice carrying a tone of authority.

"Yes," Harry replied, meeting her gaze with equal measure. He noted the confidence in her stance and the way she carried herself - a true representation of Slytherin's noble legacy.

"Do you even know how to play? You're from the Muggle world, after all," Selena queried, her eyes narrowing slightly, assessing Harry's capabilities.

Harry considered his response carefully. While he had practiced broom riding in the Virtual Room and possessed a natural talent for Broom Riding and Quidditch, he had never actually played the game in reality. Despite this, his confidence remained unshaken. "I'll be the Seeker," he declared, his tone firm yet respectful.

Selena nodded, her expression softening slightly. Confidence was a valuable trait in Slytherin, as long as it was well-founded. "Then you'll need to prove yourself," she stated, "Quidditch is more than just flying. It's about strategy, agility, and, above all, the will to win."

"I understand," Harry acknowledged. "I'm ready for the challenge."

Selena studied Harry for a moment longer, her eyes narrowing as if trying to read his very thoughts. Then, with a wave of her hand, she gestured towards the corridor. "Captain Marcus Flint awaits in the first room on the right. He will assess you." Her tone was authoritative, befitting her status as the Serpent of the Crown.

Harry nodded in acknowledgment, a determined glint in his eyes. "Thank you," he said, his voice steady. As he turned to leave, Selena's voice halted him once more.

"I allow Quidditch players to use that room, but do not venture beyond. This room watches, Mr. Potter." Her warning was clear, and her gaze unyielding.

Harry paused, turning back to face her with a defying smile. "I will take note of that," he assured her, then walked away, his steps echoing in the corridor.

The title of the Serpent of the Crown carried weight within Slytherin House. It was a position of power and influence, one that even the Headboy or Headgirl and prefects, if they were from Slytherin, were bound to obey. Harry knew that acquiring this title would cement his

leadership and respect within the house. It was a goal he was determined to achieve.

Entering the designated room, Harry found Marcus Flint waiting for him.

Flint, a tall, broad-shouldered student with a stern expression, stood up upon seeing Harry. His gaze was evaluating, and his voice, when he spoke, carried a hint of skepticism. "Mr. Potter. Let's test you."

Harry nodded, meeting Flint's gaze squarely. He followed Flint as they left the common room, walking in silence to an empty classroom. The room, though closed off, was as large as the Great Hall, equipped with Quidditch gear and a few other team players who were already there, waiting.

Flint gestured to the equipment. "You'll be given a standard broom for the tryouts. We need to see your natural talent, unaided by any advanced broom."

Harry approached the broom, examining it briefly before taking it in his hands. He had practiced extensively in the Virtual Room, but this was his first real test in an actual Quidditch setting. His confidence, however, was unwavering.

As Harry mounted the broom, he felt a surge of excitement. The feeling of flight, the rush of air against his face, was exhilarating. He soared upwards, the broom responding smoothly to his commands. Below him, Flint and the other team members watched, their expressions a mix of curiosity and skepticism.

The tryout began with basic flying maneuvers. Harry executed them with precision, his control of the broom evident. He weaved through a series of hoops, each move fluid and confident. Flint, observing from below, couldn't help but be impressed. Harry's flying skills were exceptional for a first-year, especially one who claimed to have little experience.

Next came the mock Snitch chase. A small, enchanted golden ball was released, darting around the room unpredictably. Harry's eyes narrowed as he focused on the Snitch, his body leaning forward as he urged the broom to greater speeds.

Harry, high above the floor of the classroom-turned-Quidditch pitch, called out in his mind to Nigel. "Nigel, analyze the fly path of the snitch and calculate the best route."

In the quiet corner of Harry's mind, Nigel's voice emerged, tinged with its usual undertones, "Cheating, Master Harry, is it not below you?"

Harry's lips curled into a smirk, visible even from the ground. "It's not cheating," he retorted mentally. "It's using every tool at my disposal. For my goal, everything is permissible."

As Harry soared on the broom, his eyes fixed on the fluttering golden Snitch, Nigel's calculations began to flow into his consciousness.

Numbers, angles, and trajectories formed a mental map, guiding Harry through the air with precision that went beyond mere instinct.

Below, Flint and the team watched, their eyes tracing Harry's movements, marveling at his uncanny ability to anticipate the Snitch's erratic path.

Harry's broom darted left, then right, ascending and descending in a dance that was as mesmerizing as it was effective.

The Snitch, a blur of gold, zipped towards the far end of the room. Harry, with Nigel's guidance whispering in his mind, leaned sharply, his broom banking with such agility that it drew gasps from the spectators. His hand stretched out, inches away from the elusive target.

Suddenly, the Snitch veered upward in a steep arc. Harry adjusted instantly, his body in perfect sync with Nigel's calculations. The broom ascended, closing the gap between Harry and his quarry.

Just as the Snitch seemed within grasp, it darted towards a small opening

near the ceiling. Harry, undeterred, followed. His eyes, bright with determination, never left the tiny sphere. The room held its breath as Harry neared the ceiling, his hand outstretched.

In a swift, fluid motion, Harry's fingers closed around the Snitch. The room erupted in cheers and applause. Flint, a look of grudging respect on his face, nodded in approval. "Impressive, Potter. Very impressive."

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Chapter 76: Exploring the Forest

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As Harry descended, the other players crowded around him, their expressions a mix of admiration and disbelief. "How did you do that?" one of them asked, his eyes wide.

Harry, dismounting the broom, shrugged with a modest smile. "Just keeping my eyes open and staying focused," he replied.

Flint took Harry away from the others, clapping Harry on the back.

"Welcome to the team, Seeker. You'll make Slytherin proud."

Harry, accepting the accolade, couldn't help but feel a surge of pride.

This was more than just a position on the Quidditch team; it was a step closer to his goal of becoming the Serpent of the Crown.

Harry grinned as he walked back to the common room, the excitement of

the Quidditch tryout still buzzing in his veins. 'Now, how should I handle the broomstick?' He pondered the question, knowing that the standard school brooms wouldn't suffice for his ambitions. 'I will just speak to Professor Snape for the permission but they probably will arrange something,' he decided, formulating a plan to approach the Potions Master for advice on acquiring a more suitable broomstick.

Entering the common room, he saw Draco, Blaise, and Theodore. He gave them a nod, acknowledging their presence, but didn't linger for a chat.

Harry had other matters to attend to. Retreating to his room, he focused on his next steps.

"Tweak," he called softly, and the Slytherin House Elf appeared in front of him with a tray of food. Ever since Harry introduced the recipes from South America to the Hogwarts kitchens, the elves had been even more eager to try them out and bring samples for Harry to taste. The elves' enthusiasm was a welcome addition to Harry's Hogwarts experience.

Tweak, with a respectful bow, presented the tray. "Tweak hope Sir Potter be like them," the elf said, his eyes gleaming with a mix of pride and hope.

"Thank you, Tweak," Harry replied with a smile. The elf nodded happily and disappeared with a soft pop.

Harry opened the tray and his eyes lit up at the sight of Empanadas and Guacamole. Taking a bite of the delicious pastry filled with spinach and cheese, he savored the flavors, appreciating the culinary skills of the elves.

While eating, Harry's thoughts turned to another matter. He pulled out the Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing. "Show me the room I talked with Selena," he commanded, curious to examine the mysterious area further. However, the mirror remained blank, unable to penetrate the

protections of the room created by Salazar Slytherin for the Serpent of the Crown. "Figures. A room created by Salazar Slytherin for the Serpent of the Crown would be protected," Harry muttered, not entirely surprised. The room's secrecy was paramount.

He then changed his request. "Show me Hermione Granger." This time, the mirror shimmered, and Hermione's image appeared, showing her studying diligently in the library. Harry watched her, analyzing her behavior for any signs of the alleged compelling spell.

As he observed Hermione, he couldn't help but admire her dedication. She was completely absorbed in her books, her expression one of deep concentration. However, Harry noticed nothing that suggested any unnatural influence on her actions. She seemed genuinely engrossed in her studies, driven by her own thirst for knowledge.

Harry's gaze lingered on the mirror, reflecting on Dumbledore's potential influence. 'Could it be part of the compelling spell?' he wondered. 'Or perhaps Hermione's natural affinity for learning is strong enough to override any external manipulation?'

Putting the mirror aside, Harry focused on his meal, finishing the empanadas and guacamole with relish.

Harry pulled the Enchanted Haven Briefcase and laid out before him. It was a small, finger-sized bag, elegantly crafted with deep brown hues and detailed engravings that depicted a forest and magical creatures. He spoke the password, "Potter's Haven," and watched as the briefcase expanded into a full-sized, elegant briefcase. It was time to explore the wonders within.

With a deep breath, Harry stepped into the briefcase. The transition was seamless, and he found himself standing in a vast, enchanted forest. The forest stretched for acres, with towering trees and a variety of magical

plants. A serene lake lay at its heart, its waters clear and home to various magical aquatic creatures. Pathways wound through the forest, each leading to new and unexplored areas.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, "Are you ready to discover further now, Master Harry? Time to meet some locals."

Harry nodded, feeling a mix of excitement and curiosity. "Let's see what secrets this place holds."

Feeling the weight of the Dagger of Serpent's Fang in one hand and his wand in the other, cautiously passed by the mansion within the Enchanted Haven Briefcase. The grandeur of the structure loomed behind him, its Gothic and Romanesque architectural elements casting an imposing shadow. He was mindful of any potential threats, his eyes scanning the surrounding area, his senses heightened.

A world within a world, crafted with ancient magic and filled with wonders that had evolved over centuries. As he ventured deeper into the enchanted forest, he was acutely aware of the creatures and plants that thrived in this hidden ecosystem, some of which had long vanished from the outside world.

The forest was alive with magical energy, the air humming with the presence of creatures both seen and unseen. Mooncalves grazed in a clearing, their gentle dance in the moonlight creating intricate patterns on the ground, patterns that seemed to pulse with an unseen life force.

Harry watched them for a moment, fascinated by their shy nature and the subtle magic they exuded.

In the denser parts of the forest, Nifflers scurried about, their noses twitching as they searched for anything shiny. Their burrows, resembling small hillocks, dotted the landscape, and Harry had to be careful not to step too close, lest he disturb their treasure hunts.

As he walked on, a rustling in the bushes caught his attention. Peering through the leaves, he spotted a family of Bowtruckles, their twig-like bodies blending seamlessly with the wand-quality trees they guarded. They eyed Harry with curiosity, their tiny heads tilting as they assessed this new visitor.

High above, in the clearer areas of the forest, Hippogriffs soared gracefully against the sky, their wings casting large shadows on the ground. Harry paused, admiring their noble flight and powerful presence. He knew approaching them required respect and caution, as these creatures valued dignity above all.

In the distance, the faint sound of a Diricawl's call echoed, adding to the mystical ambiance of the forest. Harry knew these birds were elusive, capable of disappearing and reappearing at will, and he hoped to catch a glimpse of one before he left.

As he neared the tranquil shores of the forest's lake, he spotted a Demiguise, its silvery fur shimmering in the sunlight. The creature watched Harry for a moment before vanishing into thin air, leaving behind a sense of peace and wonder.

The forest was not just home to these magical creatures but also a sanctuary for an array of magical plants. Harry tread carefully around a patch of Devil's Snare, its vines recoiling slightly as he passed. Gillyweed could be seen in the shallows of the lake, its long fronds swaying gently in the water.

He encountered a Mimulus Mibletonia, its spiky appearance a stark contrast to the softness of the Flutterby Bush nearby, which hummed melodiously in the sunlight. The Snargaluff Trees were a challenge to approach, their spiky green pods snapping at anything that came too close.

As Harry explored the lake's edge, he could sense the presence of Grindylows lurking beneath the surface, their mischievous nature a stark reminder of the dangers that lay in these magical waters. He guessed that Merpeople had established a hidden community within the lake, and he wondered what secrets they guarded in their watery domain.

The lake was also home to Water Nymphs, their graceful forms just visible beneath the surface, and Plimpies, which darted about, adding to the biodiversity of this unique ecosystem.

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Chapter 77: Thunderbird

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Then all of a sudden, the sky trembled, and lightning struck the artificial atmosphere in this isolated world. The air darkened, casting a shadow over the enchanted forest and its inhabitants. Harry looked up, his eyes widening in awe and disbelief at the sight before him. A majestic creature soared above, its wings spreading wide, sending ripples of thunderous energy throughout the forest. "Thunderbird," Harry muttered under his breath, his voice a mix of wonder and curiosity.

[System Message: Thunderbird - A legendary magical bird, known for its immense size and power. Capable of creating storms and revered in

various cultures for its majestic and mystical nature. Rarely seen and often considered a symbol of pure magical essence. They can sense danger.]

As the Thunderbird descended, its eyes fixed on Harry with an intelligence that seemed almost human. The creature landed gracefully before him, its presence commanding and awe-inspiring. Harry realized that, despite his extensive knowledge of magical creatures, he was unable to communicate with this magnificent being.

Sensing his dilemma, Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, his tone laced with a hint of excitement and curiosity. "Master Harry, it seems you've encountered a being beyond the scope of Parseltongue. Would you like me to evolve your ability to Omnitongue? It will allow you to converse with all magical creatures. The cost is 1000 System points."

Harry hesitated for a moment, weighing the significance of this opportunity. Communicating with a Thunderbird, a creature of legend, was a rare and invaluable chance. "Yes, Nigel, let's do it," he decided, the potential benefits outweighing the cost.

[System Message: Evolving Parseltongue to Omnitongue. 1000 System points deducted.]

As the evolution completed, Harry felt a surge of understanding flow through him, a newfound connection to the magical world around him. He turned his attention back to the Thunderbird, its eyes now holding a hint of recognition.

"Hello, mighty Thunderbird," Harry greeted almost in rumbling chirp, his voice steady yet filled with respect.

The Thunderbird tilted its head, its gaze piercing as if looking into Harry's very soul. Then, in a voice that rumbled like distant thunder, it spoke, "It has been more than a millennium since a Potter has stepped

into this realm. You carry the legacy of your ancestors, young wizard."

Harry, amazed by the creature's cognizance and the depth of its voice, listened intently. "I am Harry Potter," he responded. "I seek to understand this magical world."

The Thunderbird, a majestic creature of legend, looked at Harry with an expression that blended acknowledgment and a sense of granting permission. "You are the owner of this world now," it spoke, its voice a mixture of deep rumbling tones and a nuanced understanding that belied its animalistic form.

"You carry a great responsibility," the Thunderbird continued, its voice resonating through the forest. "This sanctuary is a remnant of ancient magic, a legacy of your ancestors. It is a refuge for creatures and plants that no longer have a place in the outside world. You must protect it."

Harry nodded, understanding the gravity of the task. "I will guard this place and its inhabitants with all my might," he pledged. The

Thunderbird's acknowledgement seemed to affirm Harry's commitment to this sacred duty.

The creature then spread its massive wings, and the air around it seemed to crackle with energy. "I am a guardian of this realm," it declared. "My presence here is a testament to the power and purity of the magic that binds this place. As you grow in strength and wisdom, you will come to understand the deeper mysteries of this world."

Harry watched in awe as the Thunderbird took to the skies, its flight stirring the air and sending ripples of magical energy throughout the enchanted forest.

Turning his attention back to the forest, Harry decided to explore further.

He walked along the winding paths, each turn revealing new wonders.

The forest was alive with the sounds of magical creatures, each with its

own unique presence.

As he ventured deeper into the forest, he came across a clearing where a group of Unicorns grazed peacefully. Their ethereal beauty was captivating, and Harry approached them with a sense of reverence. Using his newly acquired Omnitongue, he greeted the majestic creatures.

"Hello, noble Unicorns," Harry said, his voice gentle and respectful.

The Unicorns looked up, their eyes reflecting a serene intelligence.

"Greetings, young wizard," one of them replied. "Your heart is pure, and your intentions noble. You are welcome in our midst."

Harry shook his head, pondering the complexity of his own nature. The purity acknowledged by the Unicorns seemed at odds with his recent machinations. Speaking inwardly to Nigel, he expressed his doubts, "Can a person like me be pure? A few hours ago, I was trying to use some of the students as pawns."

Nigel responded with a hint of philosophical depth. "Master Harry, purity isn't a static state. It's a spectrum, and your actions in this sanctuary resonate with a certain innocence. The creatures here sense that. Outside, well, that's another story. But here, in this moment, you're as pure as the forest itself."

Harry mulled over Nigel's words, the concept of duality in human nature resonating with him. He was both the schemer in the Slytherin common room and the guardian of this magical realm. It was a dichotomy he had to navigate carefully.

Turning his attention back to the Unicorns, Harry approached them with a newfound respect for their ability to discern the essence of a person's character. He extended his hand gently, allowing the nearest Unicorn to sniff it. The creature's soft breath was warm against his skin, and a sense of tranquility washed over him.

"You have a unique path ahead, Lord Potter," the Unicorn spoke, its voice melodic and soothing. "The choices you make will shape not only your destiny but also the fate of the magical world. Remember, the purest intentions can sometimes lead to the darkest outcomes. Strive for balance in all things."

Harry nodded, the Unicorn's words echoing deep within him. He realized that his journey at Hogwarts was more than just about learning magic; it was about learning who he was and who he wanted to be.

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Chapter 78: A New Discovery

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As Harry walked through the enchanted forest, the harmonious voices of the Unicorns still echoing in his mind, he turned to Nigel, his curiosity piqued by the recent interaction. "Nigel, can you show me my recording of talking to the Unicorns? Their voices were so melodic. I wonder how I speak while talking to them."

Nigel responded with a light-hearted tone, "Certainly, Master Harry. Prepare to be enchanted by your own eloquence." A screen materialized in front of Harry, displaying the recent encounter with the Unicorns. Harry watched as his on-screen counterpart approached the majestic

creatures. His movements were gentle, almost reverent. The Unicorns, their eyes kind and understanding, turned towards him, welcoming his presence.

The screen showed Harry speaking, his voice carrying a different cadence, a melodic quality that matched the serenity of the Unicorns. It was a stark contrast to his usual tone, softer and more rhythmic. Nigel commented, "It seems Omnitongue not only grants you the ability to converse with magical creatures but also adapts your speech to the harmony of their nature."

Harry, watching the interaction, felt a sense of awe at the transformative power of the Omnitongue. He had spoken with a clarity and depth that transcended human language, connecting with the Unicorns on a profound level.

As he continued watching, Harry saw the moment where the Unicorn acknowledged his purity. The on-screen Harry, his expression a mix of humility and introspection, listened intently to the Unicorn's words.

Nigel, observing the scene, remarked, "It's a curious thing, isn't it? The dichotomy of your nature. Here, among these creatures, you're a figure of purity, yet in the corridors of Hogwarts, you're the calculating Slytherin. Quite the paradox, Master Harry."

Harry's mind was turning, planning. The manipulative, scheming side of him re-surfaced as he contemplated the newfound abilities granted by Omnitongue. "I can use this ability," he murmured, more to himself, a glint of calculation in his eyes. "The thunderous tone of the Thunderbird, the hissing undertones of Parseltongue, and the pure, melodic cadence of the Unicorns... Nigel, this isn't just a tool for communicating with creatures. It can be a means to influence others more effectively. The voice is a pivotal element in communication. If I can harness the power

of these languages, it might enhance my political acumen."

Nigel, upon hearing Harry's thoughts, was taken aback yet again by the young wizard's astuteness. "Indeed, Master Harry, the power of voice in persuasion is well documented, even in the muggle world. However, applying such natural cadences to influence the human psyche is an uncharted territory in magical realms."

Harry nodded thoughtfully, his mind already weaving through the possibilities. "And it's not just about persuasion. I feel like these languages carry an intrinsic power. What if I could integrate them into spellcasting? In the world of magic, words hold immense power. Imagine the potential amplification of spells when imbued with the essence of these magical languages."

Nigel, processing Harry's idea, responded, "A fascinating hypothesis, Master Harry. Indeed, the etymology of spells is a critical aspect of their efficacy. Introducing elements of these ancient and potent languages could very well amplify your magical capabilities. Just be cautious, as tampering with the fundamental nature of spells might yield unpredictable results."

Harry waved his hand dismissively, his mind teeming with ideas. "I'll experiment with this in the Virtual Room. Nigel, can it simulate the unknown?"

Nigel, with a touch of pride in his virtual capabilities, responded, "It can imitate everything, Master Harry."

Satisfied, Harry quickly made his way back to the entrance of the isolated world within the Enchanted Haven Briefcase. Leaving the miniaturized forest and its mystical inhabitants behind, he emerged in his room at Slytherin House. The familiar green and silver hues greeted him as he settled onto his bed. With a focused thought, he transported himself into

the Virtual Room, a place of endless possibilities and magical innovation.

The Virtual Room, as always, was a marvel of magical technology. It replicated a spacious, well-lit laboratory, equipped with every conceivable potion ingredient and brewing apparatus. The walls were lined with virtual bookshelves, each filled with tomes of magical knowledge, their pages fluttering in a nonexistent breeze. At the center stood a large cauldron, its surface gleaming under the magical luminescence of the room.

Waving his hand, Harry cleared out the room, and he began to float in the air in an endless white space. It was a blank canvas for his experimentations, a place where he could explore the depths of his newfound abilities without the constraints of the physical world. He felt the distinct voices of the Thunderbird, the serpentine hisses of Parseltongue, and the melodious tones of the Unicorns swirling in his mind, each holding a unique magical essence, keys that could unlock new realms of spellcraft.

Harry decided to start with Parseltongue, the language that had been his companion for as long as he could remember. He whispered a few words, feeling the sibilant sounds slither through the air. The room responded, the white space rippling as if reacting to the inherent magic of the language.

Harry cautiously attempted to speak a few words in Parseltongue, but he soon realized that merely uttering magical phrases in these languages didn't result in casting spells. The process of performing magic was more intricate than just speaking words. He pondered the purpose of using Latin or other mysterious languages in spellcasting. If speaking in any language could trigger magic, wouldn't everyday conversations lead to accidental spells? There had to be a deeper, more nuanced connection

between the words spoken, one's intent, and the magical energies at play.

"Hmm, not as easy as saying 'open sesame,' is it?" Nigel chimed in, his voice tinged with a hint of mirth.

Harry smirked slightly at Nigel's comment. "Seems like we have our work cut out for us."

He decided to start his experimentation process methodically, beginning with Parseltongue for its familiarity. He carefully pronounced the word for "light" in the serpentine language, but instead of the expected glow of the Lumos spell, the room remained unchanged.

"Master Harry. Casting spells is a symphony of components—words, intent, and wand movements, among others. The language is but one part of the whole," Nigel replied, his tone serious yet reassuring. "Seems like thunder doesn't always bring a storm," Nigel remarked, a light quip to ease the growing tension.

Harry couldn't help but let out a short laugh. Nigel's humor was a welcome distraction from his growing frustration. "Indeed. Let's try the Unicorn's language next. Maybe there's some magic in purity." As he tested, he failed one after another.

Harry leaned back, considering their findings. "So, it's not just about the language. There's a reason wizards and witches use specific incantations, a reason rooted in the very nature of magic itself."

"Indeed, Master Harry. Each language has its intrinsic power, its unique resonance with the magical world. But spells are meticulously crafted. They're more than just words; they're formulas, carefully balanced equations of language, intent, and will," Nigel explained.

Harry once again shook his head, a thoughtful expression on his face.

"Not so hasty, Nigel. I don't want my spell to work," he said, pausing to gather his thoughts.

Nigel, with a hint of sarcasm in his tone, replied, "You should have said so. I can easily prevent your magic from working in this room."

Harry rolled his eyes. "That's not what I mean. I don't want to just achieve success in casting a spell in Parseltongue. I want to understand how it works, to analyze the reason behind it. I have a theory."

Nigel felt his virtual heart palpitate, the excitement of discovery always a thrill, even for an AI. "What is that, Master Harry?" he asked, his voice betraying a hint of agitation. This kid...

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Chapter 79: Testing New Magic

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Harry tapped his chin thoughtfully, his gaze fixed on the virtual space around him. "Every creature has attributes, right?" he began, his mind racing with possibilities. "A Thunderbird is attuned to storm, lightning, wind, flight but not fire. Phoenixes excel in fire, wind, flight, and healing but falter in curses, as it clashes with their being. Dragons are masters of fire, shields, earth, metal, and some curses depending on their type. Unicorns excel in healing, sound, purity, and protective magics." With each name he mentioned, the Virtual Room responded, creating four boxes in the air, each listing the creatures and their respective masteries.

Nigel observed as the boxes formed in front of Harry, each filled with lists and attributes, a testament to the depth of the Virtual Room's capabilities. "Interesting theory, Master Harry. You're suggesting that the essence of these creatures, their inherent magical properties, could influence the nature of spells cast in their languages?"

"Exactly," Harry replied, his eyes alight with the thrill of experimentation. "If each creature's language is a reflection of its essence, then speaking a spell in that language should, in theory, draw on those attributes."

Harry looked at the boxes floating before him, his mind ticking with the possibilities they presented. "I tried to create light with Parseltongue. In theory, I should be able to, but I am just a novice, while trying a countering attributed spell. Parseltongue, although not as dark as wizards in Magical Britain suggest, is not the perfect language for light magic. And Lumos, no matter how fundamental it is, is a light magic. Then I used Fire for Thunderbird language and Knockback Jinx for Unicorn. I selected the most absurd spells I could have."

Harry, standing in the middle of the Virtual Room, took out his wand and, with a sense of determination, uttered in the Unicorn's language, "Light." To his amazement, a soft glow emanated from the tip of his wand. The intensity of the light was dim, certainly dimmer than the first Lumos spell he had ever cast, but within that gentle glow, there was something else—a shimmer of pureness, a serene quality that resonated with the essence of the Unicorns.

"Well, well, Master Harry, it seems you've managed a trick," Nigel remarked, a note of amusement in his voice. "Though I must say, for someone who often lurks in the shadows of Slytherin, producing such a pure light is quite the irony."

Harry ignored Nigel's jab, his focus entirely on the light. He waved his

wand, and the light followed, moving through the air like a tranquil, glowing creature. "It's not just light. It feels... peaceful, serene. It's as if the light itself is imbued with the essence of the Unicorns."

"A light that soothes the soul, perhaps? A pretty neat party trick for the upcoming Halloween, I'd say," Nigel quipped, his tone light yet respectful of the discovery.

Harry smiled briefly at Nigel's comment before turning serious again.

"Now, let's try the Thunderbird language for a more... aggressive spell."

He cleared his throat and, with a commanding tone, spoke a few words in the rumbling, thunderous language of the Thunderbird. His wand directed at a virtual target, he uttered the word for "force."

The air around him seemed to electrify, the atmosphere thick with anticipation. Then, with a burst of energy that made even Nigel's virtual senses tingle, a powerful force blasted from the wand, striking the target with incredible intensity.

"Blimey, Master Harry, you nearly blew up the room! I'll have to adjust the virtual safety settings if you continue at this rate," Nigel exclaimed, his tone a mix of admiration and mild reproof.

Harry, exhilarated by the success, couldn't help but laugh. "I think we're onto something, Nigel. The languages of these creatures, they're more than just a means of communication. They carry the very essence of the creature's magic."

"Quite the astute observation, Master Harry. It seems your Slytherin cunning is matched only by your Gryffindor boldness. A dangerous combination, indeed," Nigel observed, his voice tinged with respect.

For the next hour, Harry experimented with various spells, using the languages of different magical creatures. But most of the time, he failed. To match a spell with a language was easy. He could guess attributes of

the creatures, but to articulate those spells in those languages was easier said than done. But he knew he would get there.

Each attempt, each failure, brought him closer to understanding the intricate dance between language and magic. He tried simple spells at first, ones he knew like the back of his hand, but even those proved challenging when uttered in the guttural growls of a wolf or the melodic chirps of a Phoenix.

Nigel watched on, his observations sharp and insightful. "Master Harry, it seems you're trying to fit a Hippogriff into a broom closet. Magic isn't one size fits all, you know."

Harry chuckled, a brief respite from his concentration. "I'm aware, Nigel. But if I can crack this code, think of the possibilities. Spells powered by the essence of creatures, spells that resonate with the very core of magical beings."

Nigel's response was tinged with his usual blend of sarcasm and wisdom. "Oh, I'm thinking, Master Harry. I'm also thinking about the spectacular ways this could go wrong. But proceed, by all means. Caution is for Hufflepuffs, after all."

Although his tone was sarcastic and dry as ever, Nigel was impressed by the creativity and endurance of the young wizard. He thought the decision couldn't be better. Still, Harry was too lost in his studies. "Master Harry, perhaps it would be better to go out and take some fresh air. A bit of the mundane might remind you that you're still among the living,"

Nigel remarked, a hint of concern laced with his usual sarcasm.

Only then Harry remembered what a long day it was. After a double Potion Class with Professor Snape, where he literally dueled in words and potion making with the man, then studied with Hermione, tried to break the spell on her (secretly), talked with the Serpent of Crown Selena, and

did a tryout for Quidditch. Later he entered the Enchanted Briefcase, where he met creatures of all sorts, tested by a Thunderbird, Unicorns and from then on, tested various languages on different spells.

Harry sighed, feeling the weight of the day on his shoulders. He had been so engrossed in his magical explorations that the real world seemed like a distant memory. "Perhaps you're right, Nigel. A break might do me some good."

As Harry stepped out of the virtual room and into the real world, the familiar sights and sounds of Hogwarts greeted him. Harry made his way to the Slytherin Common Room, his mind still racing with the possibilities of his new discovery, yet appreciative of the momentary peace.

"You know, Master Harry, for someone who's just discovered the potential to revolutionize magic, you're remarkably calm. I half expected you to be running through the halls, shouting eureka," Nigel teased, breaking the silence.

Harry chuckled. "And risk drawing the entire school's attention? I think not. Besides, it's not a discovery yet, just a hypothesis. There's still much to test and understand."

Nigel's response was quick, laced with his customary sharpness. "How very Slytherin of you, Master Harry. Keeping your cards close to your chest and your secrets even closer. I daresay you're becoming quite the enigma at Hogwarts."

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Chapter 80: Weekend

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Arriving in the common room, the green and silver hues provided a familiar sense of belonging. Harry spotted Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davis working on an essay they were to write for Potions Class. As he sat next to them, their attention immediately shifted. "Potter," both said with a smile, clearly pleased to see him.

"Greengrass, Davis. Your smiles, as charming as they always are, suggest you might need some help," Harry remarked, a hint of mischief in his tone.

As the girls blushed at the compliment, Nigel couldn't resist a comment, "Flirting at such a young age, Master Harry? I suppose even the magical world isn't immune to the trials and tribulations of teenage charm."

Daphne and Tracey giggled at Harry's words, while Harry ignored the chatty AI, focusing instead on the two Slytherin girls. "So, what's the potion that's got you both so fixated?" Harry inquired, eyeing the parchment sprawled before them.

"It's the Cure for Boils. Professor Snape's demanding a foot-long essay on its ingredients and method," Daphne explained, her fingers tracing the words on the page.

"And let me guess, you're baffled by the use of crushed snake fangs?"

Harry ventured, a playful glint in his eye.

Tracey's eyes widened in surprise. "How did you know?"

Harry leaned back, a knowing smile playing on his lips. "It's a tricky part

for many. The fangs have to be crushed to a fine powder. If not, they can cause the potion to be too aggressive, worsening the boils instead of curing them."

Daphne nodded, her curiosity piqued. "I see. But how finely should they be ground?"

"Ah, that's the critical part," Harry said with a nod. "They should be powdered finely enough to blend seamlessly with the other ingredients but not so much that they lose their potency. It's all about finding the right balance."

The girls quickly scribbled down the information, their expressions brightening. "Thanks, Potter. You're a lifesaver," Daphne said with a grateful smile.

As they continued discussing potion techniques, Nigel's voice piped up, his tone light and teasing. "My, my, Master Harry, sharing your secrets with the fair maidens of Slytherin? Whatever would your future self think?"

Harry mentally rolled his eyes at Nigel's comment. "It's just potion advice, Nigel. Nothing that would jeopardize my secrets or the System."

"Of course, Master Harry," Nigel replied, the smirk almost audible in his voice. "Just potion advice. Nothing to see here."

Harry, feeling the weight of Nigel's sarcastic humor on his shoulders, retorted in his mind, "Why do I feel a dirty smirk on my back, Nigel? Are you perhaps having dirty thoughts?"

Nigel's response came with a proud snort, "Me? No, Master Harry. I would never entertain such scandalous ideas. I am as pure as the freshly fallen snow on Hogwarts' grounds... well, perhaps with a slight smudge of soot."

Harry couldn't help but chuckle internally at Nigel's witty retort as he

turned his attention back to Daphne and Tracey. The conversation about potions flowed easily, and he found a certain joy in sharing his knowledge. He explained the intricacies of potion-making, detailing the effects of each ingredient and the importance of their precise measurements. Daphne and Tracey listened intently, their quills moving rapidly across parchment, capturing every word.

As they wrapped up their discussion, Tracey looked up at Harry with a curious expression. "Potter, how do you know so much about potions? I mean, you're great at them, but your understanding seems... well, beyond our level."

Harry paused, considering how much he could reveal without exposing his secret. "I spend a lot of time reading," he replied cautiously. "And I have a knack for remembering details."

Nigel, ever the silent observer, interjected in Harry's mind, "A knack, he says. If only they knew the extent of your 'knack,' they'd be asking for autographs."

Harry ignored Nigel's comment, maintaining his focus on the conversation. "Besides, I find potions fascinating. It's like a puzzle, where each piece must fit perfectly to create something extraordinary."

Daphne nodded, her eyes reflecting a new respect for Harry. "Well, your passion certainly shows. Thanks again, Potter."

Harry waved his hand as he was about to return to his room when Tracey called out, "Look at the noticeboard." Curious, Harry walked over and read the notice: "Flying lessons would be starting on Thursday - and all houses would be learning together." A grin spread across his face. Flying was something he had a natural affinity for, and he had already been picked for the team. This was his chance to demonstrate his skills in front of the first years, which would undoubtedly help in his quest to become

known and pave the way to the Serpent of the Crown.

Daphne and Tracey, equally excited, could already fly, having been trained by their families. With a shared grin of anticipation, they said goodnight and retreated to their rooms. "Time to sleep," Harry murmured as he settled into his bed. Despite the late hour, his mind buzzed with plans and possibilities for the upcoming flying lesson.

The next day, after his usual morning exercise in the mansion's training room within the Enchanted Haven Briefcase, Harry washed up and stepped out. "Today is Saturday. What should I do?" he pondered.

Nigel, sensing Harry's indecision, chimed in with his characteristic sarcasm, "Well, you could always finish exploring the castle. I'm sure the dust bunnies in the unused classrooms are just dying for your company." "I am sure they do," Harry chuckled, as he walked out of his room. The common room was empty, as it was the weekend, everyone had pressed the snooze button. "What is the magical equivalent of a snooze button, Nigel?" Harry asked with amusement.

Nigel, never one to miss an opportunity for a witty retort, replied, "In the wizarding world, we call it the 'Procrastination Potion,' Master Harry. It's quite popular among students, especially around exam time. Though, I must say, I don't believe you've ever had the need for it."

Harry smiled as he ascended the stairs out of the Slytherin dungeon. The castle was quiet, a rare moment of peace before the usual hustle and bustle began. As he walked, he thought about the day ahead.

He placed the "Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing" in his robe, considering the device's condition to "see" places before it could show them a bothersome one. Yet, since Harry was planning to explore the castle anyway, he didn't mind. As he walked the empty corridors, the idea struck him. "Oh, I can go to Hagrid for the creatures in the

Briefcase," he mused. "Nigel, please show his Observe message."

[System Message: Rubeus Hagrid - Half-giant, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. Friendly and fond of magical creatures. No malicious intent detected.]

Reviewing the message, Harry nodded. "He is indeed fond of magical creatures. I can learn a lot from him. The question is if he would help me. Not like we are friends," he remarked, his tone contemplative.

"Perhaps not, but you have a certain charm about you, Master Harry," Nigel interjected, "especially when you're not plotting the downfall of your enemies."

Harry smiled, knowing Nigel's quip held a kernel of truth. He had a way of making allies, often when he least expected it.

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Chapter 81: Forbidden Third Floor

Corridor

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As he continued down the corridor, the mirror safely tucked away, he considered his approach. Hagrid, with his affinity for all things magical and monstrous, could be a valuable resource. But he would need to tread carefully, ensuring he didn't reveal too much.

"Master Harry, you might consider creating a 'Hagrid's magical creatures' fan club you've been so secretly passionate about," Nigel suggested with a barely concealed chuckle. "It might just win him over."

Harry let out a laugh, the sound echoing down the corridor. "I'll keep that in mind, Nigel. For now, let's focus on exploring. I want to see every nook and cranny of this castle."

As he ventured through Hogwarts, Harry took the opportunity to "show" the castle to the mirror. It was a tedious process, but he was patient, understanding the artifact's potential value. Each room, each hidden passageway, was committed to the mirror's memory, creating a comprehensive visual guide to Hogwarts.

He already explored the first two floors and the basement over the week, and his System map had already shown every nook and cranny. He knew there were still some hidden passages and shortcuts he didn't know of, but he was confident he would uncover them gradually. Climbing to the third floor, Harry started his exploration. At this time, Nigel chimed in, imitating Dumbledore's voice from the headmaster's speech on the first day, "Do remember, Master Harry," he said, "I must tell you that this year, the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death." Harry chuckled as he looked at the corridor leading to the forbidden area.

Harry paused, considering Nigel's reminder. "Dying a painful death doesn't sound very appealing, does it? But then again, the forbidden is often the most tempting," he mused.

Nigel's response was tinged with sarcasm, "Oh, by all means, let's dive headfirst into danger. It's not as if we have an entire castle to explore that doesn't involve potentially fatal consequences."

Harry grinned at Nigel's comment. "Point taken, Nigel. But a little peek

wouldn't hurt, would it?"

With cautious steps, Harry approached the corridor, his eyes scanning for any signs of trouble. He didn't plan to venture far, just enough to satisfy his curiosity. The air seemed to thicken as he neared the forbidden passage, a silent warning of the dangers that lay beyond.

Nigel, sensing Harry's determination, sighed, "I suppose there's no stopping you when you've set your mind on something. Just be careful, will you? I'm rather fond of our chats, and I'd prefer they didn't end prematurely."

Harry nodded, his hand resting on the door handle. "I'll be careful, Nigel. I have no intentions of meeting a painful end today." With a deep breath, he pushed the door open just a crack, peering inside.

The corridor was dimly lit, shadows dancing along the walls. It was eerily silent, the kind of silence that screamed of hidden dangers. Harry's heart raced with a mix of fear and excitement. He knew he was pushing the boundaries, but the thrill of the unknown was too enticing to resist.

Nigel, ever vigilant, remarked, "Well, if we're going to do this, let's at least be smart about it. Keep your wand ready and your wits about you."

Harry nodded, his wand at the ready. He took a tentative step inside, his eyes adjusting to the darkness. The corridor stretched out before him, its end lost in shadows. Every instinct told him to turn back, but his curiosity propelled him forward.

In the corridor, Harry felt something. The air was charged with an invisible force, a subtle pull that tugged at the edges of his consciousness.

"Master Harry. There is a compelling zone in the area," Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, his tone serious.

Harry, nodding, took a step back. "I felt it too," he said as he took out the Magical Compass, the Potter artifact he had taken from the vault. It could

point to the nearest source of strong magic. As Harry held it in his hand, the needle on the compass swirled then pointed at one of the doors in the corridor. He didn't approach, sensing that something was amiss. "The compelling is coming from there," he noted.

The zone was wide, but the closer he walked, the stronger it got. If it wasn't for his Occlumency and System Defenses, he might have fallen for it. "What is the compel, Nigel?" Harry inquired, his voice laced with a mix of curiosity and caution.

He then added, "Nigel, please create a virtual replica of this corridor, complete with a duplicate of myself for testing." Nigel responded, "Initiating virtual consciousness creation. You may feel a slight disorientation, Master Harry. Please endure." As Harry felt a portion of his consciousness being temporarily redirected, he closed his eyes to visualize the Virtual Room. In this simulated space, an exact duplicate of Harry now stood in a meticulous recreation of the Third Floor corridor of Hogwarts. As the duplicate approached the Compelling Zone, it suddenly veered towards the door Harry had noted earlier. "Nigel, stop his advance with a barrier," Harry instructed, and Nigel created a wall between the Clone and the door. The Clone, to their surprise, rushed down the stairs, ran all the way to the other side of the school to climb back to the third floor from the corridor's other side, so he could reach the door.

Harry watched, a mixture of fascination and concern etched on his face.

"That's quite a persistent clone," he remarked dryly. "It seems the compulsion is quite powerful."

Nigel, his voice tinged with worry, added, "Yes, it appears your other self is quite the marathon runner. Shall we put out some water for him?"

Harry couldn't help but chuckle at Nigel's comment despite the situation's gravity. "Let's keep him contained for now. I want to analyze this

compulsion more closely. Can you record the clone's behavior for further study?"

"Certainly, Master Harry. Recording now. You might consider a career in magical behavioral studies at this rate," Nigel responded, the light-heartedness of his tone belying the seriousness of their task.

Harry asked, "Why is the compulsion so strong? I doubt it would have a similar effect on me."

Nigel replied, "Master Harry, the clone possesses only a fragment of your consciousness and none of your defenses, making it much more susceptible to magical influences. Normally, such a spell would subtly entice you, planting a seed of curiosity, a gentle nudge urging you to discover what lies behind that door. But since the clone is far weaker, the spell's influence is markedly more pronounced."

Harry peered down the corridor, his gaze fixated on the door that seemed to emanate an invisible pull. "Can we determine if the Compelling Zone affects everyone or just me?"

"Not enough data to ascertain that, I'm afraid. Would you like to expend points for a more in-depth analysis?" Nigel inquired.

Harry shook his head, a plan already forming in his mind. "No need to waste points. I can always lead other students here to check."

Nigel, with a chuckle that managed to convey both amusement and disapproval, remarked, "Oh, leading innocent lambs to a potentially deadly snare. That doesn't quite align with the image of the noble young wizard, now does it, Master Harry?"

Harry's gaze hardened, his voice carrying a hint of steel. "I would express the same concerns about our dear headmaster and this esteemed school, Nigel. Dumbledore warned us about this corridor, suggesting a gruesome fate awaits those who enter, and yet here we find a spell compelling me

to do just that. Either the headmaster is an unaware and incompetent old fool, or this is his machination. Neither scenario casts him in a particularly favorable light."

Nigel, with a subtle shift in his tone to match the seriousness of Harry's, responded, "Indeed, it presents quite the conundrum. Caution and cunning must be your companions as you navigate these murky waters, Master Harry."

Harry nodded, his resolve firm. He would need to tread carefully, but the mystery of the third-floor corridor was too intriguing to ignore. With Nigel's assistance, he would uncover the truth behind the compulsion and the secrets that Hogwarts hid within its ancient walls.

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Chapter 82: A Piggy On A Broom

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As he turned to leave, Harry made sure to show every part of the corridor to the Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing. Despite its limitations on protected areas, he hoped to spy on the location later. If successful, he planned to monitor if anyone approached the corridor, be it student or faculty. If students wandered near, he would observe if the Compelling Zone affected them too. If faculty appeared, he aimed to see their

awareness of the zone. Although Dumbledore was his first suspect, perhaps the headmaster was merely a senile, incompetent old fool. After ensuring the mirror had a complete view of the area, Harry sent it back to his inventory along with the Magical Compass. With a deep sigh, he began to descend the stairs, the weight of discovery heavy on his mind.

"Gave up on exploring, Master Harry?" Nigel's voice carried a teasing edge. "Did the thrill of mystery lose its allure, or are you simply afraid of a little dark corridor?"

Harry responded with a slight smile, his tone even. "I don't feel like it anymore, Nigel. There's a time for bravery and a time for wisdom. Let's just say I'm choosing the latter this morning."

He made his way to the Great Hall for breakfast, the morning light casting long shadows through the tall windows. As he sat at the Slytherin table, Blaise Zabini and Theodore Nott joined him. Draco Malfoy and his cronies were notably absent.

"Good morning, Potter," Zabini greeted with a yawn, stretching his arms above his head, while Nott simply nodded in acknowledgment.

Harry nodded in return, his mind still occupied with the corridor's enigma. "Morning, Zabini, Nott. Sleep well?" he inquired politely, hoping to engage in light conversation to clear his mind.

Zabini, rubbing his eyes, replied, "As well as one can in a dungeon, I suppose. You look like you've been up for hours. Early morning plotting, Potter?"

Harry chuckled, a sound that drew a few curious glances from nearby students. "Something like that. Just a bit of exploration," he replied cryptically.

Nigel, seizing the opportunity for a jab, whispered in Harry's mind, "Ah

yes, the daily adventures of Harry Potter. Who needs sleep when there are mysteries to solve and potentially lethal corridors to investigate?" Harry suppressed a smile at Nigel's sarcasm. He turned his attention to the breakfast spread before him, filling his plate with bacon and eggs. Harry's plans for the day solidified as he finished his breakfast in the Great Hall. He intended to visit Hagrid later, seeking insights into the magical creatures within the Enchanted Haven Briefcase. He also hoped to gather information about the third-floor corridor from the amiable half-giant. However, Harry was uncertain if Hagrid would be inclined to have such a conversation with him, given their limited interactions. Sighing softly, Harry took out a piece of parchment and began to pen a formal letter to Hagrid. His quill moved swiftly across the paper, composing a polite and concise request for a meeting. As he finished, he whistled softly, and Hedwig swooped down gracefully to his side. Harry fed her some treats and gently stroked her head before attaching the letter to her leg.

Daphne and Tracey arrived at this time and sat next to Harry, their curiosity piqued as they observed him dispatching Hedwig with a letter. Tracey, ever the inquisitive one, leaned in and asked, "Who was that for, Potter?"

Harry continued eating, looking up from his plate to her. "Hagrid," he replied, his tone casual. "I need some information about creatures. He's one of the best available for that sort of thing."

Daphne, brushing a strand of her hair behind her ear, chimed in, "Hagrid, really? Aren't there better sources than the gamekeeper?" Her tone was light, but the underlying skepticism was evident, as many didn't know Hagrid's mastery over magical creatures.

Harry chuckled softly, "Perhaps, but Hagrid has a unique perspective and

a genuine passion for magical creatures. That's something you can't find in books."

Tracey's interest seemed piqued, and she asked tentatively, "Do you think we could come along? It might be interesting, and, well, we could use a break from the castle."

Harry considered this for a moment then nodded. "Sure, it could be useful to have more people. And it's always good to learn about creatures directly from someone who cares for them."

Turning to the girls, Harry said, "When Hagrid sends an invitation, we will go." The girls nodded, then started to talk about the upcoming Flying Class next Tuesday. No one, besides the Quidditch Captain Marcus Flint and the Serpent of the Crown Selena, knew Harry had joined the team yet. Equally, they had no idea about Harry's skill on the broom. But since he grew up in the Muggle World, they assumed he wasn't skilled. Zabini and Nott too joined the conversation.

As the group discussed, Harry's mind wandered. He was confident in his flying skills but preferred to keep them a surprise for now. His thoughts were interrupted by Nigel's voice, "Are we planning a grand entrance, Master Harry? Swooping in like a knight on his steed? Impressing damsels?"

Harry answered in his mind, "Instead of armor, I'll be wearing clothes, and of course, my steed is made of wood. I still can't help but feel conscious while riding a broom. It reminds me of Dudley riding his wooden horse, and we both know how that looked."

Nigel groaned, "Oh, we sure do. I still haven't forgiven you for showing that memory to me, Master Harry."

Harry chuckled as he turned to the others, who were engaged in animated discussion about the upcoming Flying Class. "So, what's

everyone's experience with flying?" he asked, curious to know more about his housemates' skills.

Zabini leaned back, a confident smile on his face. "I've been flying since I could walk. My mother made sure I was well-practiced."

Tracey chimed in with a grin, "I can hold my own, but I'm no seeker.

More of a leisurely flyer, you know?"

Daphne added, "I'm decent enough. My family has a tradition of evening flights during the summer. It's quite serene."

Nott, who had been silent until now, shrugged. "I can fly, but I don't see the fuss. I prefer my feet on the ground."

Harry nodded, absorbing the information. It was good to know the capabilities of his peers, especially for future reference. He replied, "I've had a bit of practice myself. It's freeing, being up in the air."

Nigel's voice buzzed in Harry's ear, "Freeing for those who don't look like a young goblin clinging to a twig."

Harry stifled a laugh, earning a curious look from Tracey. He waved it off, "Just remembered something funny."

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Chapter 83: Hagrid

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As they were about to leave the Great Hall, Hedwig swooped down once again, gracefully landing near Harry with Hagrid's response in her beak. Harry quickly opened the letter, his eyes scanning the content. He was pleasantly surprised to read that Hagrid was thrilled to receive his letter and had wanted to write to him as well but was unsure if Harry would be interested in corresponding. It seemed Hagrid might have been close to his parents, a connection Harry hadn't fully considered before. Any adult who knew him seemed to have formed their opinions based on his parents' legacy, he long realized that.

"Hagrid's invited us over," Harry announced to Tracey and Daphne. "Let's go, he's waiting for us."

Tracey's eyes lit up with curiosity. "I've never really spoken to Hagrid." They had all seen Hagrid on the first day of school, the towering figure hard to miss among the staff and students. Occasionally, he sat at the faculty table during dinner, his presence as large and warm as the roaring fireplaces in the Great Hall. But none of them had ever really spoken to him. Harry, too, had no idea about Hagrid beyond the whispers he heard around the castle - a gentle half-giant with a penchant for magical creatures.

As they walked toward Hagrid's hut, Harry shared what little he knew.

"I've heard Hagrid's quite friendly, loves his creatures. And he's a half-giant, which is quite something."

Daphne raised her eyebrows, "Half-giant? That explains his size. Do you think he's aware of everything going on in the castle?"

Harry shrugged. "I'm not sure. But I think he knows more than he lets on. He's been here for a long time."

Tracey, walking slightly ahead, turned back and chimed in, "I've heard students say he's got all sorts of strange creatures. I hope we get to see some."

Harry was doubtful about the creatures being housed in Hagrid's hut. Most of the magical beings were in the Forbidden Forest, and the hut was dangerously close to areas students often walked. Keeping them there posed a great hazard. As they approached the "small" wooden structure, the sound of barking could be heard.

Hagrid's voice was heard next, booming with a friendly tone, "Calm down, Fang." He walked towards the door to open it. The massive wooden door creaked as it swung open, revealing the towering figure of Hagrid. His eyes lit up in recognition and warmth as he saw Harry, Daphne, and Tracey standing there.

"Harry! An' friends! Welcome, welcome!" Hagrid's deep voice rumbled, tinged with his distinctive accent. "Come in, come in. Don't mind Fang, he's as harmless as a Flobberworm."

They entered the hut, which, despite its outward appearance, was surprisingly cozy inside. A large fire crackled in the fireplace, casting warm, flickering shadows across the room filled with various oddities and creature-related paraphernalia. Fang, a large boarhound, bounded over, tail wagging, filling the room with his enthusiastic barks.

Harry smiled and patted Fang's head as the dog nuzzled up to him, while Daphne and Tracey cautiously kept their distance. "It's good to see you, Hagrid," Harry said. "Thanks for having us."

Hagrid beamed, "No trouble at all! Always happy to see students takin' interest in magical creatures."

As Hagrid served tea and giant rock cookies, Harry started, "Hagrid, I would like to ask about creatures and how their magic works. I thought

you might have some idea about them." Hagrid looked at Harry, a curious glint in his eyes. "Their magic?" Harry nodded. Tracey and Daphne too looked at Harry in surprise. He said, "For example, how do Phoenixes use fire? Is it innate elemental control, or is it like wandless magic elves use? Thunderbirds, Unicorns..."

Hagrid leaned back, stroking his beard thoughtfully. "Well, Harry, that's a good question, that is. Creatures like Phoenixes and Thunderbirds, they got magic in their very being. It's more natural to them than breathin' is to us. Take a Phoenix, for instance. Their fire isn't just regular fire; it's a part of who they are, a manifestation of their life force, you could say."

Daphne, intrigued, leaned forward. "So, their magic is innate, not learned or cast like ours?"

"Exactly," Hagrid nodded. "It's like asking a fish how it swims or a bird how it knows to migrate. It's in their nature. As for how it works, well, I reckon it's a bit like the magic we do with wands, but for them, their bodies are their wands, and their magic is more... instinctual."

Harry absorbed the information, his mind racing with the implications.

"And Thunderbirds? How do they create storms?"

Hagrid's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm. "Ah, Thunderbirds, magnificent creatures they are! Their magic's tied to the skies. When they fly, they break the boundary 'tween the earth and the heavens, callin' forth the winds and the storms. It's all about their connection to the elements, see?"

Nigel's voice piped up in Harry's mind, his tone laced with intrigue.

"Fascinating, isn't it, Master Harry? The idea that these creatures are so attuned to the elements that they can command them with a mere flap of their wings."

Harry nodded internally to Nigel, then turned his attention back to

Hagrid. "And what about Unicorns? Their magic is known for purity and healing."

Hagrid smiled warmly. "Unicorns, they're special, they are. Their magic's gentle, soothing. It flows from 'em like a stream, pure and clear. They don't make grand displays like Phoenixes or Thunderbirds. Their magic's more subtle, but no less powerful. It's in their blood, their horn, even their very presence."

Harry wasn't satisfied. "How about their language? I heard whenever a Thunderbird cries, a storm is born. Whenever a Phoenix chirps, fire descends. And a Unicorn's voice has magical and healing properties. I know they don't chant like us, but don't they use some form of chanting?"

Hagrid pondered for a moment, his brow furrowing in thought. "Well, now, that's a deeper sort of question. Creatures like 'em, they've got a kind of magic in their voices. It's not like chantin' spells, but it's magical all the same. Their calls, cries, and songs, they're all tied to their nature, to the magic that flows through 'em."

Harry nodded, taking in Hagrid's words. "So, their language, or rather their communication, is an extension of their magic. It's not just words; it's an expression of their very essence."

"Exactly, Harry," Hagrid agreed with a smile. "You're catching on quick. It's all about the essence. A Phoenix sings, and its song carries the warmth of fire. A Thunderbird cries out, and the skies respond. And when a Unicorn whispers, the very air seems to purify."

Nigel's voice chimed in Harry's mind, his tone thoughtful yet laced with his typical dryness. "It seems, Master Harry, that you're delving into a symphony of the magical world where each creature is an instrument, and their language is the music they play."

Harry chuckled inwardly at Nigel's analogy, then refocused on Hagrid.

"Hagrid, have you ever witnessed these creatures using their 'voices' in a way that seemed deliberate, like they were intentionally manipulating their magic?"

Hagrid rubbed his chin, his eyes taking on a distant look as he recalled his experiences. "Well, I've seen a Phoenix sing to soothe pain, and I've heard tell of Thunderbirds callin' storms to protect their nests. As for Unicorns, they don't often vocalize, but when they do, it's a sound like no other, calmin' and pure."

"That's fascinating," Harry murmured, his mind buzzing with ideas. "It's like they're casting spells without spells, using their innate magic through their voices."

"Aye, that's one way to look at it," Hagrid nodded. "They've got their own kind of magic, different from ours but powerful in its own right."

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Chapter 84: Mysteries

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Harry sat back, deep in thought. His recent discoveries about the languages of magical creatures and their specific attributes in enhancing spell power had opened a new world of possibilities for him. He realized that, unlike Latin, the base language used by wizards, which was neutral

in its effects on spells, the languages of magical creatures like Thunderbirds, Phoenixes, and Unicorns had distinct attributes. Parseltongue, for instance, seemed less effective for light spells, while the Phoenix language faltered in spells that were not related to fire, air, flying, or healing.

Looking at Hagrid, Harry was curious about another aspect of this newfound knowledge. "Hagrid, what about the affinities of these creatures? How does that work?" he asked, trying to keep his recent experiments and findings a secret for the time being.

Hagrid furrowed his brow, a puzzled expression crossing his face. His expertise lay more in hands-on experience with magical creatures than in academic knowledge, although he did have a penchant for reading on occasion. Harry's questions were perceptive, but Hagrid felt that his answers would only scratch the surface. Then, a memory surfaced: a book Dumbledore had once gifted him. It was weighty, and he often turned to it for deeper insights. Dumbledore had told him at the time, "Wizards and Witches possess a wide array of talents, Rubeus. Some excel in charms or curses, some have the gift of prophecy, others are skilled potion-makers, and a few can soar through the skies. Unlike us humans, magical creatures diverse in groups."

Deciding the Headmaster would know best, Hagrid started, his voice deep and warm, "Yeh see, Harry, magical creatures have their own kinds of magic, just as we wizards have ours. Each type of creature has an affinity fer certain elements or types of magic. It's all about what they're naturally drawn to, what's in their nature."

He leaned in closer, his large hands gesturing as he spoke. "Take the Nifflers, fer example. They've got a knack fer findin' shiny things. It's not just 'cause they like 'em - though they do, mind - but because they've got

a natural magic that draws 'em to treasure."

Harry listened intently, his mind piecing together the intricate tapestry of the magical world. He remembered the time he had witnessed a Niffler in action during his visit to Diagon Alley.

Hagrid continued, "And thestrals, now, they're a curious sort. Only visible to those who've seen death, they are. Their magic is tied to the unseen, to the mysteries beyond what we normally perceive."

Nigel chimed in Harry's mind, "Ah, thestrals, the taxi service of the afterlife. Handy for a quick getaway if you don't mind the company."

Harry rolled his eyes at chatty AI, his attention still on Hagrid. "What about creatures like Basilisks and Acromantulas?" he asked.

Hagrid's expression grew solemn. "Basilisks, they're dangerous beasts. Their magic's deadly, what with their killin' gaze and venom. As for Acromantulas, they've got a sort of community magic, understandin' and communicatin' in ways that's beyond most creatures."

Harry nodded, his thoughts still swirling with the insights gleaned from Hagrid's words about the inherent magic of creatures. The voice, it seemed, was a crucial part of "will," one of the most critical elements in spellcasting. While intent visualized the magic, will was the driving force behind it, giving it direction and purpose. In magical creatures, this chanting was carried out through their unique languages. Harry's newfound understanding of the magical world's nuances was deepening, and with it, his curiosity.

His eyes drifted to the newspaper lying beside him, catching a headline that had caught his attention previously. "Investigations continue into the break-in at Gringotts on 31 July, widely believed to be the work of dark wizards or witches unknown. Gringotts' goblins today insisted that nothing had been taken. The vault that was broken into had in fact been

emptied the same day. 'But we're not telling you what was in there, so keep your noses out if you know what's good for you,' said a Gringotts spokesgoblin this afternoon." Harry read the paper daily, whether it was Muggle news or wizarding. The incident at Gringotts had intrigued him since he first read about it.

Seeing Harry absorbed in the paper, Tracey approached with a curious tilt to her head. "What is it, Potter?" she asked.

Harry hummed in response, "Some time ago, there was a break-in at Gringotts. Quite suicidal, if you ask me, given how much they care about their reputation. Luckily, the vault was emptied before anything could be stolen."

Tracey mused, her voice tinged with skepticism, "Could it be lies? To protect their name?"

Before Harry could respond with "Impossible," Hagrid exclaimed, "No, it is true." Harry turned to Hagrid and noticed him avoiding eye contact.

'How interesting,' he muttered to himself. His research on facial responses told him Hagrid was obviously hiding something. 'Hagrid's blurt suggests he certainly knows the vault was emptied before the thing could be stolen,' he deduced.

At this time, Nigel's voice echoed, sardonic as ever. "Seems like our half-giant friend has inside news. Peculiar, considering even Gringotts is so secretive about it. What next, Hagrid giving us stock tips?"

Harry smirked at Nigel's remark, his suspicion about Hagrid's knowledge growing. The half-giant was clearly more connected than he let on.

Harry mused in his mind, 'Could it be Hagrid who took the item from the vault? But it doesn't make sense. From the look of it, I doubt Hagrid could possess something enticing enough to force someone to break into Gringotts. "Could it be something the headmaster asked Hagrid to take?"

Harry asked in his mind.

"That sounds plausible, Master Harry," Nigel replied with a tone suggested he was jesting. "Maybe our beloved half-giant is moonlighting as a high-stakes delivery-man. The mind boggles."

Harry looked at Hagrid, unsure whether to press the issue or let it be.

After a moment's hesitation, he decided to approach the subject from a different angle. "Hagrid, do you know anything about the Third Floor?

The one the Headmaster forbids us to approach," Harry asked, trying to sound casually curious.

Hagrid almost choked on his tea, spluttering as he hastily set down his cup. "I...um... well, that's, uh, school business, Harry. Best not to meddle in things that are out of bounds, eh?" He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, clearly flustered. "Eat more cookies. Oh, how late it has become. Yeh need to go back," he added quickly, changing the subject.

Harry's eyes narrowed slightly, observing Hagrid's evident discomfort. It was a clear sign that there was something significant about the Third Floor, something perhaps directly linked to the recent break-in at Gringotts. Nigel's voice, ever ready with a comment, piped up in his mind.

"Oh, subtle as a Bludger to the face, that one. If he's trying to be discreet, he's got the finesse of a troll in a china shop."

Harry suppressed the chuckle forming, maintaining his composed expression. He stood up, brushing off imaginary crumbs from his robes.

"Thank you for the tea and the... um, unique cookies, Hagrid. We better head back now. Rules are rules, after all."

As they made their way back to the castle, Harry's mind was a whirlwind of thoughts and theories. The item removed from the vault, the forbidden third floor, Hagrid's evasive answers - they all seemed to be pieces of a

larger puzzle.

Harry talked in his mind, "I first have to test the compelling zone on the third floor. To see if it's for me or anyone entering the area. Then I can determine how to proceed. If the zone is for me, then whoever put the zone there, it is to pull me there. But for what? If there's a connection between the item that was in the vault and the third floor, then how is it connected to me?" Tracey at this time asked, "Potter, what did you ask about the Third Floor? You're not thinking of going there, are you?"

Daphne was much more careful. She saw how Hagrid spurt the tea and changed the subject. Unlike Tracey, who was a little bit more carefree, Daphne noticed details. "I was just curious," Harry answered. Daphne squinted as she looked at him but didn't say anything.

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Chapter 85: Remembrall

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As they made their way back to the Slytherin Common Room, Harry excused himself and went back to his room. Taking the Enchanted Mirror for Distant Viewing from his inventory, he whispered, "Third Floor Forbidden Corridor." Since he had shown the place before, the mirror shimmered and started to show the place.

The mirror revealed a dimly lit corridor, lined with ancient-looking portraits and a series of closed doors. The air seemed heavy, laden with a sense of foreboding. Harry scrutinized the image, searching for any sign of enchantment or danger.

"Looks like the perfect place for a secret rendezvous with destiny," Nigel commented with a hint of sarcasm.

Harry ignored the quip, focusing on the task at hand. "We need to understand what's there before making any move. The last thing we need is to walk into a trap."

"Or worse, a surprise pop quiz," Nigel added dryly.

Harry rolled his eyes, though he couldn't suppress a smirk. "I need to be careful. If there's something valuable or dangerous there, I can't just barge in."

He then shook his head, "I can't watch it all the time. I need to be more proactive." He put the mirror back into his inventory and got up. As he entered the Enchanted Haven Briefcase, he worked out his physical and magical skills. After a strenuous session, he returned to his room, feeling the weight of the day's revelations. He continued his routine as days passed, and finally, the day of the Flying Class arrived.

Thursday morning, as Harry sat at the Slytherin Table, Hedwig arrived with a letter from Petunia. His heart leaped slightly; although it has only been a little over a week, they exchanged letters often. He broke the seal and unfolded the parchment.

"My dear Harry," the letter began, "I hope this finds you well and thriving in your magical world. Crookshanks and Misty are great companions, but they can't quite fill the void left by your absence. The house feels so quiet, too quiet at times. I find myself listening for the sound of your footsteps or the murmur of your voice."

Harry smiled faintly, touched by her words. He continued reading. "I already miss you, Harry. Despite it being a little over a week, I can't help but miss your presence in my life," Petunia's letter continued, her handwriting a neat curve on the parchment. "The house is so silent now, almost as if it's holding its breath, waiting for you to return and fill it with life once again."

Harry read on, his heart softening with each word. Petunia expressed her loneliness, the void left by his absence. She reminisced about the small moments they shared, the conversations, the shared meals, and even the quiet times when they simply sat together, each lost in their thoughts. It was clear from her words that she found comfort and connection in his company, a stark contrast to the coldness that once defined their relationship.

The letter took a more somber turn as Petunia recounted recent unsettling developments. "Vernon and Dudley seem to have vanished into thin air," she wrote. "I don't miss them, Harry, not really. But it's disconcerting, like a bad dream you can't wake up from. Vernon missed his appointment for our divorce. It's as if they've been erased from the world."

She detailed her attempts to locate them, her visits to Marge's house, Vernon's sister, who claimed she hadn't seen them for years. "It's a mystery, Harry. One that I'm not sure I want to solve. Dudley choosing to leave with Vernon hurt me deeply. I felt betrayed, but now, with their disappearance, I'm left with more questions than answers."

Petunia's words painted a picture of her life, now quiet and solitary, a stark contrast to the bustling, often tense household it once was. She spoke of her daily routines, the little things she did to fill her days. Crookshanks and Misty, her only companions, provided some comfort,

but it was clear that she felt isolated, disconnected from the world she once knew.

The letter ended on a hopeful note. "Despite everything, Harry, I find solace in knowing you're out there, learning and growing. You're my connection to a world I barely understand, but through your eyes, I'm beginning to see its wonders. Be safe, my dear boy, and remember that you're always in my thoughts."

Harry folded the letter, a mix of emotions swirling within him. He missed Petunia too, more than he thought he would. Her words, warm and genuine, were a far cry from the cold, indifferent aunt he had grown up with. It seemed they were both finding their way, navigating the new dynamics of their relationship.

"Quite the heartfelt missive, Master Harry," Nigel commented, his tone softer than usual. "It seems Aunt Petunia has grown quite fond of you. A touching development, indeed."

Harry couldn't help but smile at Nigel's words. "Yes, it is. I never thought I'd see the day when we'd actually miss each other."

"That bit about your dear uncle and cousin worries me, Master Harry," Nigel said, his tone more serious than his usual witty demeanor. Harry nodded as he folded the letter carefully and placed it over his heart, "I feel the same. Vernon should have gone to his sister. He has nowhere else to go. Also, he missed the official court hearing for the divorce."

Daphne, who sensed his thoughtfulness, asked, "Everything alright, Potter?" Harry nodded. "Thank you. Everything is fine." He pulled out a blank parchment and wrote a letter back as he offered some snacks to Hedwig, who was now perched next to him.

Nigel chimed in as Harry wrote, "Penning a response to the matriarch, are we? Make sure to include a line or two about your thrilling escapades

here. Spice up her day, Master Harry."

Harry shook his head slightly, a small smile on his face. "I'll spare her the details of our more dangerous adventures, Nigel."

"Ah, but where's the fun in that?" Nigel retorted. "A tale or two about dueling a wild dragon or a midnight flight on a broomstick might just brighten her day!"

Rolling his eyes, Harry read the letter he penned, a touch of humor lacing his words:

"Dear Aunt Petunia,

I hope this letter finds you in good spirits, despite the unusual quietness of the house. Your words brought both a smile and a pang of longing to my heart. The castle is vast and filled with wonders, but it lacks the familiar comfort of your presence.

I'm settling into the rhythm of Hogwarts, navigating through lessons that are as challenging as they are fascinating. I've learned more in the past week than I ever did in the Muggle world, and each day brings new adventures (don't worry, the safe kind, mostly).

The absence of Vernon and Dudley is indeed troubling. I share your concern and the myriad of questions that accompany their mysterious disappearance. While I'm far from the detective type, I promise to lend a thoughtful ear and a helping hand in any way I can from my end.

As for Crookshanks and Misty, please give them my regards. I'm glad they're there to keep you company, though I'm sure their conversation isn't quite as engaging as our usual banter over dinner.

Remember, you're not alone. We're connected by more than just blood or magic - we share memories, hardships, and now, a bond that grows stronger with each letter. I'll be back to visit as soon as I can, and we'll have much to talk about over a cup of tea.

Stay strong and take care, Aunt Petunia. You're in my thoughts always.

Warmest regards,

Harry"

As he sealed the letter, Harry couldn't help but smile wistfully. Petunia's transformation from the cold guardian of his childhood to this caring figure was something he'd never expected, yet deeply cherished.

Nigel's voice broke through his reverie, "Ah, touching indeed, Master Harry. You do have a way with words. Now, let's hope your heartfelt prose doesn't get lost in the owl post. It'd be quite the tragedy."

Harry chuckled, "I'm sure Hedwig is more reliable than your average postal service, Nigel."

"Indeed, but do remind her not to make any pit stops at any bird conventions en route," Nigel quipped.

As Harry sent Hedwig away after carefully wax-sealing the letter, his attention was drawn to an owl dropping a box for Neville. The boy opened it excitedly, revealing a glass ball the size of a large marble, which seemed to be full of white smoke. From his table, Harry used the Observe function of his System. A message soon appeared:

[System Message: Remembrall. It glows red when the owner has forgotten something. Concealed Ability: Detects and alerts the owner when a memory has been tampered with or erased. Glows pulsating blue for tampered memories and red for erased ones. Linked to the bloodline of a noble house, reveals full capabilities only when held by a true heir.]

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Chapter 86: Flying

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[System Message: Remembrall. It glows red when the owner has forgotten something. Concealed Ability: Detects and alerts the owner when a memory has been tampered with or erased. Glows pulsating blue for tampered memories and red for erased ones. Linked to the bloodline of a noble house, reveals full capabilities only when held by a true heir.]

Looking at the Remembrall, Harry hummed thoughtfully. Neville's status, as revealed by the System, had long confirmed that the boy was under a long-term Confundus Spell. From what he could hear, Neville didn't seem to grasp the true potential of the Remembrall. He believed it only indicated when the holder had forgotten something. Shaking his head, Harry said in his mind, "How can an artifact that can reach into a holder's brain be simple?"

"Indeed, Master Harry," Nigel chimed in, his tone laced with his usual sharpness. "Anything that delves into the mind is rare and powerful. I'd say such an item in the wrong hands could lead to quite the forgettable situation."

As they were watching, the ball in Neville's hand turned red. Harry noticed Draco Malfoy lurking nearby, eyeing the Remembrall with a mischievous glint. As Draco smirked, seemingly about to snatch the ball, his eyes caught a green flash from afar. Turning, he saw Harry looking directly at him. The unspoken message was clear, and Draco, respecting Harry and wary of making an enemy over something so trivial, walked

away.

Harry's protection of Neville, though subtle, didn't go unnoticed by those around him. Nigel, observing the scene, remarked, "Seems like the young Malfoy isn't as daft as his hair suggests. A wise move, retreating in the face of the Potter glare."

Harry ignored Nigel's quip, his mind returning to the Remembrall. It was a fascinating artifact, one with hidden depths and potential. He considered the implications of such an object. If it could detect tampered or erased memories, it might be a vital tool in uncovering hidden truths or manipulations. The fact that it linked to the bloodline of a noble house suggested a deeper, more ancient magic at work.

Harry's mind continued to churn with the questions about the Remembrall and Neville's situation. "Nigel, what do you think about Neville's gran sending the Remembrall? It seems a bit too convenient, doesn't it?" Harry pondered aloud.

Nigel responded with his usual flair, "Master Harry, you're delving into a plot thicker than Hagrid's beard. If Neville's gran did send the Remembrall, and she's aware of the boy's condition, then there's more to the Longbottoms than meets the eye. It's either deep concern or deep cunning."

Harry nodded in agreement, his eyes still on the red glow of the Remembrall in Neville's hands. Then if Neville's gran sent it, did she know Neville was under the spell too? Was there another plot he couldn't see? He considered helping Neville with the spell, but he didn't know the caster and he was afraid to make things worse for Neville. What if he dispelled the Confundus, and the caster tried something more drastic? That is why, Harry, despite paining him, so far haven't tried to help Neville with his condition. Harry clicked his tongue as he got up.

In the afternoon, the flying class started in the open field. Standing next to Tracey, who was jumping on the balls of her feet with excitement, Harry waited for Madam Hooch to arrive.

The flying lesson began, with Madam Hooch instructing the students on the basics of broom handling and control. The students, a mix of excitement and nervousness, listened intently.

"Alright, everyone! Stand next to your broomsticks. If you are right-handed, stand on its left, if you are left-handed, do the opposite," instructed Madam Hooch, her eyes scanning the group of first-year students. As everyone took position, she continued, "Stick out your main hand over your broomsticks," she called from the front, "and say, 'Up!'" While the rest of the class spoke the command, Harry simply willed the broom into his hand. It obediently leaped up, causing Tracey and Daphne to look at him in surprise, while Draco managed to get his broom almost as quickly and nodded in acknowledgment toward Harry.

After everyone had their brooms, Madam Hooch demonstrated how to mount them without sliding off the end and walked up and down the rows, correcting their grips. "Now, when I blow my whistle, you kick off from the ground, hard," she said. "Keep your broomsticks steady, rise a few feet, and then come straight back down by leaning forward slightly. On my whistle - three - two -"

However, before she could finish, Harry, his eyes sharp and observant, noticed a faint trace of magic around Neville. Concerned, he walked over to his side. "What are you doing?" Madam Hooch asked, her brow furrowed.

"Sorry, Madam. This broom seems a bit wild," Harry replied smoothly, masking his true intention. Madam Hooch glanced at Neville's broomstick but found nothing amiss. Harry stood next to Neville, then, using a

variation of Wingardium Leviosa he had crafted, made the broom act wildly in the air. The truth was, the confundus spell on Neville had just acted, and if left unattended, Neville would have flown erratically, possibly injuring himself. Seeing this, Madam Hooch replaced Neville's broom with a new one.

As Madam Hooch's whistle blew, the students kicked off the ground. Harry kept a close eye on Neville, ensuring his broom remained under control. Around him, students rose and descended with varying degrees of grace and stability. Tracey laughed joyously as she managed a smooth ascent and descent, while Draco's proficiency on the broom was evident, a smug look of satisfaction on his face.

Madam Hooch then whistled again, and everyone descended. "I've seen a few talented ones," she announced, her eyes scanning the students. "Mr. Potter, Ms. Greengrass, Mr. Zabini, Ms. Bones, Ms. Abbott, and Ms. Brown. Please come forward and let's show the rest of the class some maneuvers. I want a controlled flight, and no fighting." The students she named nodded and took their positions. Harry, with a hint of excitement sparking in his eyes, thought, 'Time to show a bit of what I can do.'

As he prepared, Nigel's voice danced through his mind, "Ah, the spotlight beckons, Master Harry. Time to dazzle and shine, or crash and burn — quite the thrilling binary."

Harry, suppressing a smirk, replied silently, "I'll aim for the former, thanks." He gripped his broom, feeling the familiar rush of adrenaline as he focused on the task ahead.

Madam Hooch blew her whistle, and the group took to the air with a synchronized kick-off. The students around them watched, some with envy, others with admiration. Harry controlled his broom with ease, his movements fluid and precise. Daphne followed suit, her own skills

evident as she executed a series of graceful turns and ascents.

"Look at you, soaring like a majestic — well, I'm not quite sure what majestic thing flutters in a dark dungeon, but I'm sure you get the sentiment," Nigel teased.

Harry, concentrating on his maneuvers, replied mentally, "Less chatter, more support, Nigel."

As they flew, Madam Hooch called out instructions, her voice carrying over the field. "Steady now! Turn, ascend, and descend! Keep your brooms steady!"

The students executed the maneuvers, demonstrating their control and skill. Harry, in particular, stood out with his natural talent. His broom seemed an extension of himself, responding to his slightest command with intuitive precision. Draco watched from below, his eyes narrowed. Looking around during the flying lesson, Harry spotted his target, someone he had wanted to meet for a long time. An idea formed in his mind, prompting a silent question to Nigel. "Would doing this make me evil, Nigel?" he asked internally.

"Doing what, Master Harry?" Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, curious yet nonchalant.

Harry, using wandless magic, subtly focused on Susan Bones' broom. She was a competent flyer, but her movements lacked the finesse of the others. Suddenly, her broom jerked uncontrollably. "AAH!" Susan exclaimed, her broom veering away from the class.

Madam Hooch, too far to intervene quickly, watched with growing alarm as Susan Bones' broom jerked uncontrollably, sending her tumbling towards the ground. The class, frozen in shock, could only watch in horror. Madam Hooch, her wand ready, shouted for the students to move out of the way, planning to cast a spell to soften Susan's fall. But the

students, caught in the grip of terror, failed to react.

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Chapter 87: Damsel Saved

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Then, in a blur of green and silver, Harry Potter sprung into action.

Dressed in his Slytherin robes, he stood up on his broom, descending at a breathtaking speed, even faster than Susan's free fall. "Oh no!" Madam Hooch cried out, her voice laced with fear and disbelief.

As the ground rapidly approached, Susan screamed, her fall seemingly unstoppable. The students, their eyes wide with dread, watched as Harry closed the distance between him and Susan. His face was a mask of concentration, his eyes fixed on her.

Madam Hooch, her wand still raised, was ready to intervene, but Harry was faster. Just as Susan was about to hit the ground, Harry leapt from his broom with incredible agility. He caught Susan in his arms, rolling away with her in a protective embrace, ensuring her head was safe from the impact.

They rolled across the ground, coming to a stop a few feet away. Susan, her body shaking from the shock, started to cry hysterically, her tears soaking into Harry's robes. The class, now unfrozen from their shock,

rushed over, their expressions a mix of relief and awe.

Madam Hooch, her face pale, approached them quickly. "Mr. Potter, that was incredibly reckless, but..." she trailed off, her stern expression softening as she saw the state Susan was in. "Are you two alright?" she asked, her voice filled with concern.

Harry, still holding Susan, nodded. "We're fine, Madam Hooch," he assured her, his voice calm despite the adrenaline still coursing through his veins.

His hand was caressing Susan's back while the other was pressing her head to his chest, soothing her. The students and Madam Hooch crowded around, their faces reflecting a mix of relief and astonishment.

"Master Harry," Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, carrying a note of admonishment, "As much as I appreciate your Slytherin cunning and ambition, orchestrating such a dramatic rescue was a bit, shall we say, nefarious?"

Harry, still comforting Susan, replied internally, "I needed a way to approach her, Nigel. It was a calculated risk."

Nigel, in his characteristic style, retorted, "Ah, yes, 'calculated risk,' the excuse of champions and madmen alike. Let's hope this doesn't become a habit, or you'll be known as the Boy Who Crashes rather than the Boy Who Lived."

Madam Hooch, now kneeling beside them, checked Susan for injuries.

"Ms. Bones, are you hurt anywhere?" Her voice was laced with concern.

Susan, her tears subsiding, shook her head, finding solace in Harry's reassuring presence. "I'm okay, thanks to Harry," she managed to say, her voice still trembling.

Madam Hooch turned to Harry, her expression a complex blend of gratitude and reprimand. "Mr. Potter, that was an incredibly brave act,

but please, leave such maneuvers to the professionals next time."

She reached out to pull Harry's robe, and the class saw injuries all over Harry's body. Harry grimaced. The fall, although calculated, was fast enough to peel off his skin. His arms and legs, his clothes, were all torn up. Blood was oozing from some of the places. Seeing it, the class gasped, Susan most verbal. Her eyes teared up once more, as she hugged Harry harder, "Sorry, it was all my fault."

Harry patted her back, "It is fine. These injuries are nothing," he softly said. It worked wonders. Not only Susan, but other girls in the class also looked at Harry in astonishment.

Madam Hooch, her eyes wide with concern, immediately called for assistance. "Quickly, we need to get Mr. Potter to the hospital wing," she ordered, her voice urgent.

As Harry was helped up with magic, his classmates murmured amongst themselves, their expressions a mix of admiration and worry. Harry, trying to downplay his injuries, managed a small smile. "Really, I'm alright. It's nothing a little magic can't fix."

Susan, still holding onto him, looked guilt-ridden. "I'm so sorry, Harry. This shouldn't have happened."

Harry reassured her, "Don't worry about it, Ms. Bones. I'm just glad you're safe."

As they made their way to the hospital wing, Nigel's voice rang in Harry's mind, "I must say, Master Harry, your heroics are becoming quite legendary. Though, do try to avoid turning yourself into a patchwork quilt next time."

Harry chuckled internally, wincing slightly as Madam Pomfrey, the school healer, began checking his wounds. "Noted, Nigel. But sometimes, a bit of dramatic flair is necessary."

Madam Pomfrey clucked her tongue as she applied a healing salve to Harry's wounds. "What were you thinking, young man? Such reckless behavior could have ended much worse!"

Harry offered an apologetic smile. "I just couldn't stand by and do nothing, Madam Pomfrey."

She shook her head, though her eyes held a hint of admiration. "Brave and foolish, a dangerous combination. Why aren't you in Gryffindor?"

Madam Pomfrey's voice carried a mix of reprimand and begrudging respect as she tended to Harry's wounds. She was angry at his recklessness and putting himself into danger. Her glare also extended to Madam Hooch, clearly disapproving of the circumstances that led to Harry's injuries. Madam Pomfrey was known for her exceptional healing skills, but she had little tolerance for unnecessary risks that endangered the students.

Susan Bones sat on the next bed, her eyes puffy from crying. She had narrowly escaped a terrible fall, and now her concern was entirely for Harry. She was there ostensibly to be checked over by Madam Pomfrey, but it was evident that her primary reason for staying was to ensure Harry was alright.

Harry, trying to lighten the mood, said, "I guess I'm just full of surprises, Madam Pomfrey." His attempt at humor, however, did little to alleviate the healer's concern.

Madam Pomfrey, not one to be easily placated, responded sharply, "You might find this all a bit of a lark, Mr. Potter, but injuries are no laughing matter. You could have been seriously hurt!"

Nigel quipped in Harry's mind, "I do believe, Master Harry, that our dear Madam Pomfrey prefers her patients boring and unharmed. You, on the other hand, seem to be vying for a lifetime achievement award in the art

of dramatic entrances to the infirmary."

Harry couldn't help but let out a small chuckle, immediately regretting it as a twinge of pain reminded him of his injuries. "Nigel, you two sound like two peas in a pod. Want me to play match-maker?," he thought in response, his tone reflecting a mix of amusement and discomfort.

Nigel's virtual chuckle reverberated through Harry's mind, tinged with his typical dry wit. "Ah, Master Harry, the thought of being matched with Madam Pomfrey is as appealing as a Mandrake choir concert. Though, I must admit, our mutual fondness for scolding you does have a certain... charm."

Harry winced slightly as he shifted in the bed, replying mentally with a playful tone, "So, what you're saying, Nigel, is that you two have more in common than you thought? I can see it now: 'Nigel and Poppy: A Tale of Endless Nagging.'"

Nigel retorted, "Oh, the horror! The mere thought of a joint venture in lecturing you on safety is almost enough to make me wish for a system reboot. But fear not, Master Harry, I shall endure. Someone has to keep your reckless tendencies in check, after all."

Harry suppressed his chuckles, careful not to aggravate his injuries. "I guess I should be thankful then. Without you two, who knows what kind of trouble I'd get into?"

Nigel's voice took on a mock-serious tone, "Indeed, you might actually have a peaceful, injury-free year at Hogwarts. But where's the fun in that? Adventure, drama, a dash of danger - that's the Harry Potter way!"

Harry grinned, his spirits lifted despite the aches and pains. "Thanks, Nigel. I'll make sure to keep it interesting, just for you."

Nigel's last remark came with a hint of fond exasperation, "Oh, I have no doubt about that, Master Harry. No doubt at all."

As Madam Pomfrey finished applying the last of the salve, she instructed Harry sternly, "You'll need to rest here for a while, young man. I want those wounds to heal properly."

Susan, who had been watching the whole exchange silently, finally spoke up, her voice tinged with guilt. "Harry, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. If I hadn't lost control of my broom..."

Harry turned his head to look at her, offering a reassuring smile. "Ms. Bones, don't blame yourself. These things happen. I'm just glad I could help."

Susan seemed somewhat comforted by his words, but the worry didn't completely leave her eyes. She knew the risk Harry had taken to save her, and it weighed heavily on her conscience.

Blushing, Susan mumbled, "Please call me Susan." She averted her gaze, clearly embarrassed by the attention and her own vulnerability. Smiling, Harry looked into her eyes and said, "Nice to formally meet you, Susan." As she met his green eyes, her blush deepened, a clear sign of her growing admiration and gratitude towards him.

Harry smirked inwardly at the day's events, a sense of accomplishment mingling with his physical discomfort. "Nigel, can I have a robotic 'Mission Accomplished' please?" he thought with a hint of amusement. Nigel, his voice dripping with a sarcasm that was almost tangible, replied, "Well of course, Master Harry. Because nothing says 'subtle' like rescuing a classmate in a dramatic fashion and ending up in the infirmary. Mission accomplished." He finished, adding an exaggerated robotic tone to his words. Harry chuckled silently, a smirk playing on his lips, as Madam Pomfrey bustled over to Susan to tend to her needs.

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Chapter 88: 5 Birds One Spell

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A reader asked if others are not reacting to Harry's "inward" chucklings, smiles, and talks. I would just like to clarify that those do not reflect on his face. In the previous chapter, I made chuckles make his injuries ache, but they are mostly for the scene. I hope it makes it clearer. Otherwise, the text feels so dry.

--

Just then, the door to the hospital wing opened, much to Madam Pomfrey's visible irritation. In walked Professor McGonagall, followed closely by Professor Snape and Professor Sprout. McGonagall, as the Deputy Headmistress, carried an air of authority, her expression one of concern mixed with sternness. Snape, head of Slytherin, had his usual inscrutable look, while Sprout, head of Hufflepuff, looked worried, her eyes darting between Harry and Susan.

"Mr. Potter, what in Merlin's name happened?" McGonagall asked, her voice firm yet tinged with worry.

Harry, trying to downplay the situation, replied, "Just a bit of an accident during flying lessons, Professor. I'm fine, really."

McGonagall heard about Harry's feat in his first Flying Lesson - standing on his broom and catching Susan without any serious injury. As an avid

Quidditch fan, her eyes sparkled with a mixture of admiration and envy, so potent that even the usually stoic Professor Snape felt a hint of discomfort at her intense gaze. Snape, however, harbored a secret smirk. With Harry's addition, he was confident Slytherin would secure the house cup once again this year. Yet, he remained silent, his expression unreadable as ever.

Snape contemplated awarding house points to Harry for his act of bravery, but he knew this was one of those rare occasions where even other professors would feel compelled to recognize such heroism. It would be more gratifying if his rivals acknowledged his student's valor.

So, with a face that almost resembled a smile, he waited patiently.

Professor McGonagall approached Harry's bed, her stern expression softening as she neared. "Mr. Potter, that was an incredibly brave act. I've heard about your...unconventional descent. Very impressive, but please, be more cautious in the future."

Professor Sprout, head of Hufflepuff and ever the nurturer, added with genuine concern in her voice, "Yes, Mr. Potter, your safety is paramount. We don't want our students taking unnecessary risks, no matter how noble the intention."

Snape, in a rare display of agreement with his colleagues, nodded slightly, his dark eyes fixed on Harry. "Indeed, Potter. Slytherin needs its students whole and hearty."

Harry, still lying on the bed, managed a small, wry smile. "Thank you, Professors. I'll try to be more careful."

As the professors discussed the incident among themselves, Nigel's voice danced in Harry's mind, "Well, well, Master Harry. It seems you've managed to impress the Hogwarts faculty on your very first flight. A remarkable feat, though I do hope future flights involve less acrobatics

and more... conventional flying."

Harry chuckled inwardly, replying mentally to Nigel, "I'll keep that in mind. Though I must admit, it's rather satisfying to see the professors so flustered over my flying skills."

Snape, meanwhile, turned his attention to Susan, who was still seated on the adjacent bed. "Ms. Bones, I trust you are unharmed?"

Susan nodded, her voice still trembling slightly. "Yes, Professor. Thanks to Harry."

Professor Sprout smiled warmly at the display of camaraderie and concern. "That's the spirit of Hogwarts - looking out for one another. Well done, both of you."

Professor McGonagall, always the pragmatist, interjected. "Let's not forget, however, that rules and safety protocols are in place for a reason. Mr. Potter's actions, while heroic, were also quite risky."

Snape, sensing an opportunity to speak, added, "Indeed. But courage and quick thinking are qualities we value in our students. Mr. Potter's actions, though risky, potentially saved a fellow student from serious harm. For that, he should be commended."

McGonagall nodded in agreement. "Very well. Thirty points to Slytherin for Mr. Potter's bravery. But let this be a lesson to all - safety comes first."

Nigel chimed in once more, his tone mixing amusement with a hint of admiration. "Ah, I can see now your plan was not as straightforward as you let on. Not only did you showcase your exceptional flying skills, but you also saved Ms. Bones, forging a connection you were keen to establish. From her looks, I dare say it's shaping up to be a rather... close bond. And let's not forget the points - one spell, three birds."

Harry chuckled in his mind. "Five," he corrected.

Nigel, momentarily taken aback, asked, "Five?"

Harry elaborated, "You're overlooking our esteemed Headmaster. He wanted me in Gryffindor, right? I suspect he envisioned me as brave and foolhardy. Now, with a rescue like this, I've 'proven' myself to fit his expectations. So, despite being in Slytherin, he's likely to suspect me less."

Nigel, impressed, said, "Very cunning, Master Potter. You're playing chess while everyone else is playing checkers. And what about the fifth?"

Harry smirked, "That will reveal itself in time."

As Harry lay in the infirmary bed, his mind wandered to the day's events and the implications of his actions. The rescue had been more than just an act of bravery; it was a strategic move, carefully calculated to serve multiple purposes. Not only had he gained the admiration of his peers and professors, but he had also subtly shifted the perceptions of those around him. In the world of Hogwarts, where every action was scrutinized and every alliance mattered, this was no small feat.

Professor McGonagall's awarding of thirty points to Slytherin for his bravery had been a significant moment. It was a rare instance where a Slytherin's actions were openly commended by a professor known for her strict adherence to rules and fairness. Snape's subtle nod of approval had not gone unnoticed by Harry. The Potions Master was a hard man to please, and his recognition, albeit understated, spoke volumes.

As Harry reflected on these developments, Nigel's voice broke through his thoughts. "You do realize, Master Harry, that with such public displays of heroism, you're setting quite a precedent for yourself. I foresee a future filled with daring rescues and dramatic entrances."

Harry's lips twitched in amusement. "Let's hope not, Nigel. I prefer my days a bit less... eventful."

"Ah, but where's the fun in that?" Nigel teased. "You're a Potter, after all.

A little excitement seems to be part of the family crest."

Harry's gaze shifted to the ceiling, his thoughts drifting to his parents. He

wondered what they would think of his actions, of the path he was

carving for himself at Hogwarts. Would they be proud? Concerned?

Hate? He hoped it was the former.

His musings were interrupted by the arrival of a small group of students

at the infirmary door. Daphne, Tracey, Malfoy, Zabini, and Nott from

Slytherin approached his bedside, their expressions a mix of concern and

curiosity. Following closely were Hermione and Neville from Gryffindor,

and Hannah Abbott came to stand next to Susan, who was now ready to

be discharged. Madam Pomfrey, with a stern glance, said, "You have ten

minutes," before retreating to her office.

As his classmates gathered around, Harry noticed the varied expressions

on their faces. Daphne's eyes showed genuine concern, while Tracey's

face was lit up with excitement, probably brimming with questions about

his daring flight. Malfoy wore a grin, mixture of respect and envy. Zabini

and Nott seemed more reserved, their eyes flicking between Harry and

the others.

Hermione, who Harry had previously observed under a Compelling spell

to get close to him, approached with a cautious but intrigued expression.

Neville looked both worried and impressed, while Hannah Abbott stood

by Susan's side, her expression one of relief and gratitude towards Harry.

"You really gave us a fright, Potter," Daphne said, breaking the silence.

"That was quite the stunt."

Harry replied with a wry smile, "I prefer to think of it as an impromptu

broom exercise."

Tracey, unable to contain her curiosity, chimed in, "How did you manage

to catch Ms. Bones like that? It was incredible!"

Harry shrugged modestly, "Just a bit of luck and good timing, I guess."

Nigel added sardonically, "WHAT? Luck? And here I thought you were auditioning for the Cirque du Sorcier."

Malfoy, leaning against a bedpost, said, "That was some quick thinking, Potter. Not bad for a first-year."

Harry nodded to Malfoy. The growing respect of the Malfoy Heir was a critical part of Harry's strategy. Among the first-years, Malfoy was the only one with enough influence to challenge for the title of Serpent of the Crown. While he lacked Harry's skill and power, the specifics of how the Room selected the Serpent remained a mystery to Harry. Until it was clear, he needed to ensure Malfoy didn't overshadow him. As long as Malfoy remained a compliant and loyal subordinate, Harry saw no issue in their relationship.

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Chapter 89: Weasley Twins

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Hannah Abbott approached Harry, her expression a mix of gratitude and concern. She gently held his hand, "Thanks a lot, Harry. If it weren't for you, I don't know what would have happened to Susan."

Harry, with a warm smile, patted Hannah's hand reassuringly. "It was nothing, Hannah. I was just closest. Anyone would have done the same."

Nigel, his voice laced with a hint of amusement, commented in Harry's mind, "Modesty suits you, Master Harry, but let's not undersell your rather spectacular flying skills."

Harry mentally rolled his eyes at Nigel's comment but maintained his composed expression. "I appreciate your kind words, Hannah," he said, turning his attention back to the group.

Neville, who had been quietly observing the conversation, finally spoke up. "It was really brave of you, Harry. I don't think many would have dared to do what you did."

Harry looked at Neville and said, "The hat didn't put me in Gryffindor, Neville, but you." Neville clenched his fist and nodded, a mix of respect and understanding in his eyes. As Tracey and Daphne barraged Harry with questions, Hermione watched from the side, her expression a blend of curiosity and hesitation. Susan, sitting nearby, felt a pang of jealousy, though she couldn't quite understand why.

The atmosphere in the infirmary was lively, with students from different houses interacting more freely than usual, all thanks to the extraordinary event that had unfolded during the flying lesson. Harry's act of bravery had not only saved Susan but also bridged gaps between students who otherwise might never have interacted.

Nigel's voice, always ready with a quip, chimed in Harry's mind. "Ah, look at you, bringing together the houses with your death-defying antics. Who knew that playing the hero would be such a unifying act?"

Harry chuckled softly, a glint of amusement in his eyes. "And this was the fifth bird," he mused to himself. Nigel, now fully grasping the extent of Harry's plan, replied with a mix of admiration and his characteristic

sarcasm, "Well, Master Harry, orchestrating events like a seasoned puppeteer, aren't we? Next, you'll be teaching owls to deliver your grand speeches."

The lively chatter in the infirmary was abruptly interrupted as Madam Pomfrey returned, her expression one of stern authority. She shooed the students away, reminding them of the rules and the need for peace in the infirmary. "Out, all of you! Mr. Potter needs his rest, and this isn't a tea party," she said firmly, herding them towards the door.

Susan, who had been quietly sitting, her cheeks still flushed from the earlier events, stood up as she was discharged. Before leaving, she hesitated, then quickly approached Harry. In a swift, shy movement, she leaned in and kissed his cheek, her eyes darting around to see if anyone noticed. Then, with a quick glance at Harry, she darted away, her movements graceful and swift, reminiscent of a startled gazelle.

Harry, slightly taken aback by Susan's impulsive gesture, touched his cheek where she had kissed him. A small smile played on his lips as he watched her leave.

"Well, well, Master Harry, it appears your heroics have not gone unnoticed by the fair damsels of Hogwarts," Nigel commented, a hint of mirth in his voice. "What's next? A fan club?"

Harry shook his head, still smiling. "That doesn't sound so bad. But I doubt it will go that far."

Madam Pomfrey, having successfully cleared the room, returned to Harry's side. "That was quite a scene you caused, Mr. Potter. I hope you are not getting drunk with the fame," she said, her tone softening slightly. Harry nodded in acknowledgment. "Thank you, Madam Pomfrey. I assure you, I am not reckless."

Madam Pomfrey gave him a skeptical look but didn't press further. She

went about her business, ensuring Harry was comfortable and his wounds were healing properly.

As the day turned to evening, Harry lay in the hospital bed, his mind busy with thoughts. The events of the day had unfolded in a way that had far-reaching implications. His daring rescue had not only gained him the admiration and gratitude of his peers but also placed him in a unique position within the dynamics of Hogwarts.

As night fell and the infirmary quieted down, Harry lay in his bed, his thoughts drifting to the various puzzles he was now part of. The Third Floor, the Gringotts break-in, the mysterious item removed from the vault, and now the growing relationships and alliances within Hogwarts. Each piece was a part of a larger puzzle, and Harry was determined to put them together.

As Harry was about to drift off to sleep, the last traces of Madam Pomfrey's salve working its magic on his injuries, he sensed a presence in the room. His instincts, honed by a combination of his unique upbringing and Nigel's tutelage, alerted him to the fact that he was not alone.

Casually, he scanned the hospital wing and spotted two redheaded figures lurking in the corner. They were partially obscured by the dim lighting, but their mischievous aura was unmistakable.

Just as Madam Pomfrey retreated into her office, seemingly vanishing into the shadows, the twin Weasleys, Fred and George, materialized beside Harry's bed. Their sudden appearance was so typical of their notorious reputation for pranks and surprises.

"Blimey, look at him, George," Fred whispered theatrically, although loud enough for Harry to hear. "Our very own school hero, laid low by his own daring deeds."

George nodded in mock solemnity, adding, "Indeed, Fred. A broom-

wielding knight in shining armor, if ever there was one."

Harry couldn't help but smile at their antics. He had heard of the Weasley twins' reputation for mischief and their flair for the dramatic. This was his first encounter with them, and they lived up to their billing.

"Thanks, I guess," Harry replied, playing along. "But I think 'knight in shining armor' is laying it on a bit thick, don't you?"

Fred grinned, leaning in closer. "Ah, but you see, Potter, in the hallowed halls of Hogwarts, legend grows quicker than a Flobberworm in spring."

George chimed in, "And you, dear Potter, have just fed that legend a rather large meal."

Harry chuckled, then winced slightly as his ribs reminded him of their recent ordeal. "Well, I suppose there are worse things to be known for than saving a classmate."

Nigel's voice murmured in Harry's mind, "Indeed, Master Harry. You could be known for your uncanny ability to find trouble. Oh wait, that seems to be the case as well."

Ignoring Nigel's comment, Harry addressed the twins. "I don't think we've formally met. You're Fred and George Weasley, right?"

The twins bowed theatrically in unison. "At your service," said Fred.

"And at your rescue, should you need a daring escape from the clutches of the infirmary," added George with a wink.

Harry laughed, appreciating their humor. "Well, I'll keep that in mind. But I think Madam Pomfrey might have something to say about that."

Fred glanced towards Madam Pomfrey's office. "Ah, the formidable Madam Pomfrey. A worthy adversary in the battle of boredom."

George nodded sagely. "A veritable dragon guarding her hoard of bedridden treasures."

Fred leaned in closer, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. "It is

rather curious, Potter, that we spotted you near the forbidden Third Floor corridor six days back."

George continued with a playful click of his tongue. "Tut tut, Potter. You know that place promises a painful death, right?"

Harry was shocked. He had been certain that no one was around when he was near the forbidden Third Floor corridor. His mind, usually so attuned to his surroundings, had been preoccupied with the Compelling Zone, yet he felt confident about the absence of others. How could the twins have known about his presence there? Their specific reference to the date six days prior, the exact time of his visit, ruled out any chance of a random guess.

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Chapter 90: Charms

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Observing Madam Pomfrey's office, a seed of curiosity took root in Harry's mind. 'Twins' appearance was timed perfectly. They appeared just as Madam Pomfrey disappeared behind her door. From their angle, they shouldn't be able to see her office, then... They can track people's movements. But how?' he wondered silently.

"Well, I do appreciate the concern, gentlemen, but I assure you, my visit

to the third floor was purely accidental," Harry replied, trying to mask his surprise.

Fred raised an eyebrow, a knowing smile tugging at his lips. "Accidental or not, Potter, curiosity is a trait we admire. But be careful; not all secrets at Hogwarts are as harmless as they seem."

George nodded in agreement, adding, "And some secrets have a way of ensnaring the unwary."

Harry, considering their words, decided to play it safe. "Duly noted. I'll make sure to be more cautious in the future."

He thought, 'I won't reveal my cards yet. They have a way to track people. Can it be a form of sensory magic? Or something else?' As the duo turned to leave, Harry's mind buzzed with intrigue. 'This is getting interesting.'

Harry's gaze followed the retreating figures of Fred and George, his mind racing with possibilities. The twins' knowledge of his movements hinted at a level of awareness and skill that Harry had not anticipated. 'Tracking magic, perhaps? Or maybe they've developed some unique method of tracking,' he pondered.

Closing his eyes, Harry allowed sleep to envelop him, his mind still active with thoughts of the day's events and the intriguing encounter with Fred and George Weasley. 'I'll deal with them later,' he mused, drifting into a restful slumber.

The next morning, Harry awoke feeling rejuvenated. His wounds had healed remarkably fast, thanks to Madam Pomfrey's expert care. Eager to start the day, he stretched his limbs and prepared to get out of bed.

However, his movement was quickly halted by Madam Pomfrey's stern voice. "To the bed, right now!" she commanded.

Harry, feeling perfectly fine, protested, "But I am all better, Madam

Pomfrey."

The school healer was not one to be swayed by protests. "Back to bed, Mr. Potter," she insisted, her tone leaving no room for argument. With no other choice, Harry complied, climbing back into the hospital bed.

As Madam Pomfrey approached with her wand to perform some diagnostic spells, Harry whispered to Nigel, "Record her movements, Nigel."

Nigel, ever ready with a quip, replied swiftly, "Ah, turning into a bit of a medical enthusiast, are we? Shall I take notes on knitting next?"

Madam Pomfrey waved her wand over Harry, murmuring incantations. Harry observed her movements carefully, storing the information for future reference. Harry knew the value of understanding traditional magical methods, whatever branch they be.

The diagnostic spells confirmed what Harry already felt - he was fully healed. Madam Pomfrey, though still appearing a bit reluctant, finally gave him the clearance to leave the infirmary. "Remember, Mr. Potter, no unnecessary risks," she warned as he got dressed.

Stepping out of the infirmary, Harry felt a surge of energy. The day held new opportunities, and he was keen to explore them. His thoughts, however, were briefly interrupted by Nigel's voice. "I must say, your recovery speed is quite remarkable. One might suspect you of having dragon blood."

Harry chuckled, "Dragon blood? I already have so many lineages, I can't count. I don't need more, Nigel."

Harry made his way to the Charm Class, feeling a mix of excitement and curiosity. Last week's introductory session with Professor Flitwick had been a pleasant one, and now, with the promise of starting actual lessons, Harry's enthusiasm was palpable. As he entered the classroom, he could

feel the eyes of his Slytherin and Hufflepuff classmates on him. The events of the previous day had evidently made him a subject of much curiosity and admiration.

Susan Bones, her demeanor still marked by a touch of shyness from her impromptu kiss in the infirmary, approached him. "How are you, Harry?" she asked, her voice tinged with concern and a hint of embarrassment.

"I'm quite well, thanks to Madam Pomfrey," Harry replied with a reassuring smile. "And how about you, Susan? All recovered from yesterday's excitement?"

Susan nodded, her cheeks coloring slightly at the memory. "Yes, thanks to you. I... I just wanted to thank you again," she said, her voice barely above a whisper.

Harry, sensing her discomfort, decided to change the subject. "Ready for our first real Charm lesson?" he asked, trying to ease her nerves.

Susan smiled, grateful for the shift in conversation. "Yes, I'm quite looking forward to it. Professor Flitwick seems so knowledgeable."

"I saved you a seat. Would you like to sit with me?" Susan asked timidly.

Susan's invitation caught Harry by surprise, her soft-spoken request echoing a sentiment he hadn't anticipated.

Harry's response was a gentle smile, "I would love to." His acceptance wasn't just a simple gesture of gratitude; it was a strategic move towards a goal far greater than mere classroom camaraderie.

Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, tinged with his usual blend of sarcasm and insight. "Ah, uniting the houses one seat at a time. How very diplomatic of you, Master Harry. Shall we expect peace treaties over pumpkin pasties next?"

Harry's internal chuckle was his only response as he took his seat beside Susan. To his right, Hannah Abbott greeted him with a warm smile, her

presence reinforcing the bridge Harry was building between Slytherin and Hufflepuff. Yet, not all were pleased with this development; Daphne and Tracey, observing from a distance, wore expressions of displeasure, their disapproval evident.

The classroom buzzed with the usual pre-lesson chatter, but Harry's focus was on the larger picture. His actions in the flying class had set a chain of events in motion, events that were shaping the social landscape of Hogwarts in ways that could only be beneficial to him.

Soon, Professor Flitwick, the diminutive Charms master, entered the classroom with his characteristic energetic stride. His sharp eyes quickly noted the unusual seating arrangement, with Harry, a Slytherin, comfortably seated among Hufflepuffs. A small smile played on his lips as he regarded this subtle shift in house dynamics. "Today, we will learn the amazing wonders of one of the greatest branches of spellcasting, Charms!" he announced with a flourish, his voice brimming with enthusiasm.

The class quieted down, their attention turning towards the enthusiastic professor. Flitwick, standing on a stack of books to reach the podium, began his lecture. "Charms, my young wizards and witches, are spells that add certain properties to an object or individual without changing its inherent nature. Unlike Transfiguration, which alters the form or appearance, Charms work by adding qualities to what already exists."

As Flitwick spoke, Harry listened intently, his mind absorbing every detail. Beside him, Susan and Hannah leaned forward, equally captivated by the professor's words.

"A charm, therefore, can be seen as a layer of magic applied to the fabric of reality, enhancing or modifying its properties," Professor Flitwick continued, his voice animated with enthusiasm. He paced in front of the

classroom, his small stature belying the depth of his knowledge. "Let us begin with perhaps the most basic yet essential charm, the Wand-Lighting Charm. Who can tell me the incantation for it? Yes, Ms. Davis."

Tracey Davis shot her hand up. "Lumos, Professor."

"Excellent, Ms. Davis!" Flitwick exclaimed. "The Wand-Lighting Charm, or 'Lumos', is a perfect example of a charm that adds a property - in this case, light - to an object without altering its fundamental nature. The wand remains a wand, but gains the ability to emit light."

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Chapter 91: Laws of Charm

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Double Chapter, because why the hell not!

--

Harry listened intently, his mind absorbing the information. Beside him, Susan and Hannah were equally focused, their notes meticulous.

Flitwick, now standing on a stack of books to be better seen, continued,

"Charms are often confused with Transfiguration, but it's crucial to understand the difference. Transfiguration changes the form or nature of an object, while charms simply add qualities to what already exists."

Harry was amazed. Although he had studied spells and cast several

charms, he had never considered the theoretical underpinnings in such depth. As the class listened, he pondered on Flitwick's explanation, his curiosity piqued. "Professor," he called out, catching Flitwick's attention. "Yes, Mr. Potter?" Flitwick replied, clearly pleased to see a student so engaged.

Harry, with a thoughtful expression, asked, "You mentioned the distinction between Charms and Transfiguration. Could you elaborate on that? Is it a completely different path of spell-casting, or something else? Your explanation suggests that similar results can be achieved through both branches. For instance, 'Lumos' adds light to the tip of a wand, but couldn't this effect also be achieved by transfiguring the wand's tip to become luminescent? The end result is the same, but the methods differ." Flitwick, his face lighting up with delight at such an inquisitive question, nodded. "Ah, Mr. Potter, that is an excellent question and one that delves into the heart of magical theory."

The class leaned in, their attention captured by the engaging discussion. Flitwick continued, "Charms and Transfiguration are indeed distinct branches of magic, though they can sometimes produce similar effects. The key difference lies in their approach and the underlying principles." As Professor Flitwick's Charms class listened with rapt attention, he gracefully floated by, effortlessly demonstrating the Levitation Charm, "Wingardium Leviosa," on his own clothes. The professor, light as a feather, hovered a few inches above the ground, eliciting gasps and murmurs of amazement from the students. He then raised his wand, casting "Lumos," and as the tip of his wand shone with a soft light, he began his lecture on the foundational elements of Charm magic.

"Charms," he started, his voice echoing with enthusiasm, "are the art of adding properties to an object, creature, or environment without altering

their inherent nature. Take, for instance, the Wand-Lighting Charm, 'Lumos.' This spell doesn't change the wand itself; it simply allows it to emit light, enhancing its capabilities and adding the quality of emitting light to the tip of the wand."

He continued, "Unlike Transfiguration, which fundamentally changes the essence of an object, charms add or modify properties. This nature of enhancement is central to understanding Charm magic. Consider the Levitation Charm, 'Wingardium Leviosa,' which we just witnessed. It allows an object to defy gravity, yet the object's structure remains completely intact."

Flitwick paused, letting the information sink in. "The duration and control of a charm are also crucial aspects. Most charms, like 'Lumos,' require the caster's continuous focus. The charm's effectiveness depends on the caster's skill and intention. A well-cast charm is precise, reflecting the caster's clear understanding of the desired outcome."

He gestured with his wand, and the light at its tip grew brighter. "Now, consider the scope and limitations of charms. They can range from simple enhancements like 'Lumos' to complex manipulations like Memory Charms. However, they are limited to adding or altering properties, not changing the target's inherent nature."

Professor Flitwick's eyes twinkled as he addressed the class. "The interaction of a charm with its target can vary. For instance, charms may have different effects on magical creatures or enchanted objects. The environment plays a role too. A charm effective indoors may not work the same way outdoors."

Professor Flitwick, his eyes twinkling with the passion of a true Charms enthusiast, continued his lecture with a focus on the fundamental laws governing Charm magic. "Let's delve into the natural laws that form the

backbone of this fascinating branch of magic," he began, his wand twirling gracefully between his fingers.

"The first of these laws is the Law of Supplementary Enhancement," Flitwick explained, pacing in front of the class. "This law states that Charms add or enhance properties of an object, being, or environment without altering their inherent structure or nature. For example, consider the Spongify spell. It adds the sponginess to a surface you use but does not change the surface's physical form. The ground remains as stone or wood, but with an added capability of softness or bouncing."

Flitwick's wand flickered, and the table beneath him changed momentarily as he demonstrated by jumping on it softly. "Now, the Law of Temporal Limitation," he continued, "This law acknowledges that the effects of Charms are predominantly temporary. Their duration is contingent on the caster's skill, the spell's complexity, and environmental influences. Essentially, Charm effects are not permanent and will eventually fade or require reapplication. A charm like Lumos, for instance, will not keep a wand lit indefinitely."

He paused for a moment, allowing the students to absorb the information, then proceeded. "Next, we have the Law of Specific Intent. This is crucial for any aspiring Charmer to understand. The effectiveness and precision of a Charm depend heavily on the caster's intent, focus, and clarity. Ambiguity or lack of concentration can lead to diminished effects or, worse, unintended outcomes."

Professor Flitwick's expression turned serious. "Remember, a poorly focused Levitation Charm could result in objects flying haphazardly, which is neither safe nor desirable."

He then moved on to the next principle. "The Law of Conservation of Magical Balance. This law dictates that Charms cannot create complex

entities or substances from nothing. While simple substances like water can be conjured - as seen in the Aqua Eructo spell - more complex items, particularly those with inherent magical properties or sentience, cannot be created ex nihilo."

The professor's wand movements illustrated his point, conjuring a small stream of water that danced above the students' heads before disappearing.

"Now, let's talk about the Law of Non-Transmutation," Flitwick said, his voice taking on a lecturing tone. "Charms operate by enhancing or adding properties but cannot fundamentally change the nature or identity of the target. A Charm can make an object levitate, for example, but it cannot turn a book into a bird. That's the realm of Transfiguration."

"The final law we'll discuss today is the Law of Magical Equilibrium," Flitwick concluded. "The effectiveness of Charms can be influenced or nullified by countering magic, such as Anti-Charm spells. This acknowledges the existence of magical countermeasures and balances in spellcasting. It's a magical give and take, if you will."

The class murmured in understanding, their eyes following Flitwick's every move. "The following is not a natural law, but honor among practitioners of charm."

"Rule of Environmental Harmony," he continued. "This rule emphasizes that the application and effects of Charms should be in harmony with the natural and magical environment. We must avoid spells that could cause ecological imbalance or disrupt natural processes. Harmony with our surroundings is key."

Professor Flitwick gestured toward the window, where birds flew by, unimpeded by any magical interference.

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Chapter 92: Charm-ing

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Second Chapter of the day.

--

Flitwick looked at Harry, "So the question you asked, Mr. Potter, yes, Charm and Transfiguration are two different branches of spellcasting that could lead to the same result. It is possible to light the tip of the wand with Lumos but also transfigure the tip of the wand to luminescent. Differences are as I listed, in Charms, it is temporary and supply of energy is needed and can be cut off at any second, while in Transfiguration, once it is applied, the wand will stay luminescent until changed back."

"But most importantly, Mr. Potter, one must consider the side-effects that come with Transfiguration due to the alteration of matter, a factor that is not present in Charms. Charms are straightforward in their application and effects, directly aligning with their intended purpose. However, Transfiguration, while versatile, demands a more critical approach. When we transfigure an object, we change its very essence, which could lead to unintended and sometimes irreversible consequences. This is why Charms are more commonly used in everyday spellcasting. They offer a more

predictable and controlled outcome, making them safer and more reliable for regular use. The choice between using a Charm or Transfiguration depends on the situation and the caster's judgement on the potential risks and benefits of altering the matter at hand."

Harry nodded, absorbing Professor Flitwick's explanation. It was a fascinating distinction, and he filed away the information for future reference. He glanced at Susan, who seemed equally captivated by the lesson.

Seeing the class thoroughly engaged, Professor Flitwick clapped his hands together with a sparkle in his eyes. "Wonderful! Now, let's put theory into practice. As Ms. Davis rightly said, the incantation for the Wand-Lighting Charm is 'Lumos'. Let's see you all try it."

The students eagerly took out their wands, their faces alight with anticipation. Harry participated with equal enthusiasm, curious to test his skills in a more traditional setting.

"Remember," Flitwick instructed, "focus on your intent. Envision the light emanating from your wand tip as you say the incantation."

The room buzzed with a chorus of "Lumos," followed by varying degrees of success. Some wands flickered faintly, others shone brightly, while a few remained stubbornly dark.

Harry's wand, however, emitted a strong, steady light, illuminating the area around him. Beside him, Susan's wand glowed with a soft, warm light, her face beaming with pride.

Flitwick, observing the class, offered encouragement and advice.

"Excellent, Mr. Potter, Ms. Bones! Control is key; well done! Remember, everyone, focus and intention are your guides."

As the class progressed, the students gradually improved, the room becoming a constellation of small lights. Flitwick moved through the

rows, guiding and correcting with gentle suggestions.

Hannah, sitting on Harry's other side, leaned closer, her voice barely above a whisper. "Can you help me, Harry?" she asked, her eyes fixed on her dimly lit wand.

Harry turned towards her, a friendly smile on his face. "Of course," he replied, shifting his focus to help his classmate.

As Harry began guiding Hannah, offering tips on wand movement and concentration, Nigel's voice resonated in Harry's mind. "Master Harry, it appears you're on a quest to charm more than just inanimate objects in this class."

Harry mentally rolled his eyes at Nigel's comment, choosing to ignore the AI as he focused on helping Hannah. His assistance seemed to be effective, as Hannah's wand soon emitted a brighter light, her face lighting up with a mixture of relief and gratitude.

Despite her own success, Susan, sitting beside Harry, cast a slightly displeased glance their way. She tried to hide it, but her attention was clearly divided between her own wand and the scene unfolding beside her.

"Thanks, Harry," Hannah said, her voice filled with genuine appreciation.

"I couldn't have done it without you."

Harry, turning back to his own wand, replied with a modest smile, "You had it in you all along, Hannah. Just needed a little push."

Flitwick observed the classroom, a pleased smile on his face as the soft glow of numerous wand tips illuminated the faces of the students.

"Excellent work, class! Now, let's progress to the counter Charm, Nox," he announced, his voice filled with encouragement.

The room, which had been bathed in the soft light of numerous 'Lumos' spells, gradually dimmed as the students, one by one, successfully

extinguished their lights with the 'Nox' incantation. Harry, following suit, watched as the light at his wand tip faded, leaving a satisfied feeling in his heart. Beside him, Susan and Hannah mirrored his actions, their expressions a mix of concentration and pride.

As the class drew to a close, Flitwick commended the students on their progress. "Charms may seem straightforward, but they require focus and finesse. You've all done admirably today," he said, beaming at them.

The students began packing their things, the buzz of excited conversation filling the room. Susan turned to Harry, her eyes shining with gratitude.

"Thanks for sitting with me today, Harry. It made the class even more enjoyable," she said, her voice tinged with sincerity.

Harry smiled back, "It was my pleasure, Susan. Charms is more fun with good company."

Nigel, sly and witty as ever, remarked, "Ah, Master Harry, playing the role of the charming gentleman, I see. How very dashing of you."

Harry, amused by Nigel's remark, mentally chuckled. "Just being friendly, Nigel. No harm in that, right? I swear, nothing else."

As the students filed out of the Charms classroom, Harry couldn't help but notice Daphne and Tracey casting glances his way. The air was filled with a mix of whispers and lingering curiosity about the day's lesson.

Turning to Susan and Hannah, Harry offered a friendly goodbye. "It was great learning with you both today," he said, his tone warm and genuine.

Susan smiled, her earlier shyness seeming to fade slightly. "Thanks, Harry. See you around."

Hannah nodded, adding, "Yes, thanks again for the help, Harry."

With a nod and a smile, Harry turned away from them and made his way towards Daphne and Tracey. "Ladies," he greeted them with a casual ease.

Daphne replied with a dry, "Potter," her tone carrying a hint of coolness.

Tracey, more open in her curiosity, didn't hesitate. "Why did you sit with them?" she asked directly.

Harry feigned confusion, his expression one of innocent surprise. "Why not? They invited me. It was just a seat."

Daphne turned her head away, her body language reflecting a mix of annoyance and pride, while Tracey frowned. "Still. We usually sit together in all classes," she pointed out, her tone suggesting a slight sense of betrayal.

Harry, realizing their feelings of jealousy, pondered his next move. While he wasn't one to bend easily, he valued their friendship, seeing them as more than mere pawns in the complex game of Hogwarts politics. 'Should I make it up to them?' he thought.

Nigel's voice surfaced in Harry's thoughts, tinged with his usual brand of humor. "Compromise, Master Harry, isn't a sign of weakness. It's the art of being a gentleman, though I'm sure some would argue it's just clever manipulation."

Harry, taking Nigel's advice to heart, turned to Daphne and Tracey with a proposal. "Ladies, how about I show you a variation of the Lumos spell I've been working on? A bit of private tutoring, if you will."

Tracey's eyes lit up with excitement. "Really?" she exclaimed, her curiosity piqued. Daphne, maintaining her cool demeanor, gave a slight nod, though her interest was clearly sparked beneath her reserved facade.

"Follow me," Harry said, leading them to a quieter unused classroom at the corner of the corridor. Once they were away from prying eyes, he took out his wand. "Now, watch closely," he instructed, focusing his mind.

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Chapter 93: Broomstick

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Double Chapter. First Half of the chapter is kinda filler but I really wanted to write about casual interactions and silly jokes, so indulge me please.

--

Harry had been experimenting with various versions of the Lumos spell in his spare time, intrigued by the potential for both practical and aesthetic variations, thus having various versions he could demonstrate. In the quiet of the unused classroom, with Daphne and Tracey's eyes fixed on him in anticipation, Harry raised his wand and softly chanted, "Lumos Kaleidoscopium." The tip of his wand began to glow, cycling through a mesmerizing array of colors that ranged from cool blues to warm reds. The light didn't just shine; it danced, pulsating in rhythmic beats that captivated both girls.

Tracey leaned in closer, her eyes wide with wonder. "That's incredible, Potter! How did you do that?"

Daphne, usually more reserved, couldn't hide her fascination. "It's like watching a living rainbow," she murmured, her cool facade momentarily forgotten.

Harry smiled, a hint of a teacher's pride in his eyes. "Remember what I told you in Transfiguration about the matchstick and the needle?" he began, his tone patient and instructive.

Daphne's expression brightened with recognition. "You're talking about intent and visualization, right?" she asked, her usual reserve giving way to genuine interest.

"Exactly," Harry affirmed. "Spellcasting is deeply rooted in intent. Think of incantations as conduits for focusing your will. When we vocalize them, it helps us to articulate and channel our intention more effectively."

He paused, choosing his words carefully to ensure they grasped the concept. "Imagine you're about to leap over a hurdle. You might find yourself repeating, 'Don't look down. I can do this.' It's a way of psyching yourself up, preparing your mind for the task. That's similar to how we use incantations in magic."

Daphne and Tracey listened intently, their faces a canvas of concentration and curiosity. They nodded, clearly following his explanation.

"When we speak an incantation aloud, it's not just about the words. It's about aligning our mental state with the spell's requirements," Harry continued, his own wand movements now slow and deliberate, emphasizing each point.

"The key," Harry said, "lies in the subtleties of your focus and how well you can visualize the outcome. For 'Lumos Kaleidoscopium', envision the colors you want to see, feel the rhythm you want the light to follow."

Tracey, her eyes sparkling with newfound understanding, exclaimed, "So it's like painting with magic!"

Harry chuckled. "In a way, yes. But remember, the complexity of the spell

also plays a role. Some spells are more forgiving with the visualization aspect, while others require precise mental imagery."

Daphne, her demeanor showing a rare hint of excitement, asked, "Can we try it?"

"Of course," Harry encouraged. "But remember, it's not just about mimicking my movements. It's about finding your own rhythm, your own connection with the spell."

As Daphne and Tracey practiced, their wands hesitantly emitting flickers of colored light, Nigel's voice finally broke through Harry's concentration.

"I must say, Master Harry, your flair for teaching is quite admirable.

Perhaps in another life, you could have been Professor Potter."

Harry answered in his mind, "Don't know about that, Nigel. I might end up turning the classrooms into circus tents with my teaching methods."

He watched as Daphne and Tracey continued to experiment with the 'Lumos Kaleidoscopium' spell, their wands now emitting steady streams of colored light.

Daphne, usually so composed, let out a small gasp of delight as her wand tip glowed with a vibrant blue hue, shifting slowly to a deep green.

Tracey, not to be outdone, concentrated hard, her wand emitting a sequence of warm colors that danced in the air like flames.

Harry observed them with a mixture of pride and amusement. "That's it! Focus on the rhythm of the colors. Let your intent guide the spell," he encouraged.

As they practiced, the unused classroom became a canvas of swirling lights, reflecting the newfound understanding and skill of the two young witches. Harry's guidance had opened a door for them, allowing them to explore the nuances of magic in a way they hadn't before.

Harry suddenly cast "Nox Totalus," plunging the room into darkness.

Tracey's voice broke the sudden silence, tinged with a mix of disappointment and curiosity. "Why did you do that, Potter?" she asked, her voice echoing slightly in the now dim classroom.

Harry, realizing his overcautious reaction to the vibrant light display, explained with a serious tone, "I forgot to mention a disclaimer for an Epileptic Seizure Hazard." His words were earnest, reflecting his concern for the well-being of his classmates.

Daphne, tilting her head in confusion, inquired, "Epileptic? What is that?" Her question, innocent and genuine, highlighted the gap between the wizarding and Muggle worlds.

Harry, scratching his cheek, realized the oversight in his thinking. "Right. Do wizards even have epilepsy, Nigel?" he thought, seeking clarification from his ever-present AI companion.

Nigel responded in Harry's mind. "Master Harry, your concern for Muggle ailments is commendable, but in the wizarding world, such conditions are rare if not unheard of. Perhaps focus on magical maladies instead?"

Harry, acknowledging Nigel's point, turned back to Daphne and Tracey, who were still waiting for an explanation. "It's a Muggle condition," he said, his voice reflecting a mix of amusement and embarrassment. "But it seems it's not a concern here. Let's continue, shall we?"

As the room once again filled with the soft glow of their practice spells, Harry guided Daphne and Tracey through further variations of the charm. The atmosphere in the classroom was one of focused curiosity, as both girls eagerly absorbed Harry's instruction.

Harry nodded, appreciating the rapid progress Daphne and Tracey had made. "That's impressive. You've both picked up on it quite quickly. Now, for a little homework." Tracey immediately began to protest, while Daphne crossed her arms, a skeptical look on her face. "You do realize

you're not our actual teacher, Potter?" she pointed out.

Tracey, catching on to Daphne's remark, added, "Yeah, right!"

Harry chuckled, undeterred. "I'm still going to assign you homework. I want both of you to come up with your own variations of the Lumos spell. You have a week."

Daphne met Harry's gaze, her competitive spirit igniting. "Is this a challenge, Potter?"

Harry's smirk widened. "Let's call it an expectation. I believe you can do it."

Tracey murmured, "Creating a variation isn't easy..." but she didn't want to seem less capable in Harry's eyes.

"We'll do it," Daphne declared confidently, her pride not allowing her to back down from a challenge.

Tracey nodded in agreement, spurred on by Daphne's determination.

"Good," Harry said approvingly. "Now, let's head to dinner."

As they left the classroom, Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "Giving homework now, are we? Next thing you know, you'll be handing out detentions and grading papers."

Harry mentally rolled his eyes, amused. "I'll leave the detentions to Professor Snape, thanks, rewards, maybe."

The trio made their way to the Great Hall, the corridors of Hogwarts buzzing with the usual evening activity.

The trio arrived at the Great Hall and took their places at the Slytherin table, seamlessly blending into the sea of green and silver. The evening meal, as always, was an elaborate affair, with the enchanted ceiling mirroring the twilight sky outside. Daphne and Tracey, still riding the high of their magical experimentation, chatted animatedly about the possibilities of charm variations. Harry, while participating in the

conversation, couldn't help but notice the glances and whispers from other students, undoubtedly about his recent heroics in the flying lesson. As dinner wound down, the trio returned to the Slytherin common room, a place of dark elegance and serenity. The common room, with its low ceilings and comfortable armchairs, provided a perfect ambiance for their charm homework. They settled in a quiet corner, books and parchment spread out before them.

The discussion soon turned to the day's Charms lesson. Tracey, her brow furrowed in concentration, flipped through her textbook, seeking inspiration for her charm variation. Daphne, more methodical, took notes, her quill moving swiftly across the parchment. Harry, meanwhile, offered occasional insights and suggestions, fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

After some time, the intensity of their study session waned, giving way to casual conversation and laughter. The camaraderie among them was palpable, a testament to the bonds forming within the house. As the clock struck a late hour, they decided to call it a night, each retreating to their respective dormitories.

Before Harry could leave the Slytherin common room, a seventh-year student approached him. "Selena wants to see you," she said, her tone indicating that this was not a request but a summon. Harry thanked her and headed towards the brass snake next to the entrance. He knocked on it, and as the wall split open, he walked through the corridor to meet the Serpent of the Crown.

In her office, Selena Rosier, the current holder of the prestigious title, sat behind her desk. "Mr. Potter," she acknowledged him with a nod, gesturing towards the seat across from her. As Harry sat down, Selena began without preamble. "Professor Snape and I have decided you should

have a broomstick. Normally, first years aren't allowed their own brooms, but Professor Snape will handle the formalities."

Harry nodded in understanding. As the new seeker for Slytherin, having a top-quality broom was essential. "Any model you prefer?" Selena inquired, her expression showing a mix of curiosity.

Harry pondered for a moment before replying, "This year Nimbus dominates the market, right?" His knowledge of broomsticks seemed to impress Selena.

"I didn't know you were interested in brooms, Mr. Potter," she remarked, a hint of surprise in her voice.

Harry chuckled lightly. "I have an investment in Nimbus Racing Broom Company. I do pay attention to the market."

Selena's amazement was evident. For an 11-year-old to already be investing and showing such business acumen was remarkable. "Yes, the Nimbus 2000 is currently the fastest broom on the market," she confirmed.

"I'll select that then," Harry said decisively.

Selena made a note of it. "We don't normally endorse broomsticks for students, but in your case, we'll make an exception."

Harry shook his head, "That won't be necessary, Ms. Rosier. I'll write to Mr. Whitehorn to make arrangements."

Selena was taken aback by this revelation. "You know Mr. Whitehorn?" she asked, her respect for Harry growing by the minute. It was one thing for a student to have investments, but quite another to personally know the owner of Nimbus.

Harry, sensing Selena's surprise, simply smiled. "I find it's always useful to know the people behind the products."

Selena nodded, impressed by his maturity and foresight. "Very well, Mr.

Potter. I'll inform Professor Snape of your decision."

As Harry stood up to leave, Nigel's voice chimed in his mind, "Well, well, Master Harry, making waves in both the magical and business worlds.

What's next, buying out Gringotts?"

Harry chuckled, "Did you forget, Nigel? If I manage to acquire Peverell heritage, the land Gringotts was built on will be mine. I half own it to begin with."

Nigel's voice, laced with his customary dryness, responded, "Ah, yes, a mere trifle really. Just a bit of heritage and a banking empire. Shall I fetch you a crown while we're at it?"

Ignoring Nigel's sarcasm, Harry left the room and returned to his own.

There, he took out a blank parchment and his Phoenix Feather Quill, preparing to write a formal letter to Devlin Whitehorn. Though he had mentioned knowing Whitehorn, their acquaintance was limited to a single exchange of letters when Harry had invested in the Nimbus Racing Broom Company through Grumbletack, the goblin who managed the Potter vault. Harry was smart, but investment wasn't something he could easily master at his age. For now, he allowed Grumbletack to handle his investments.

When Harry had invested more than five thousand Galleons, Whitehorn had written to thank him and invite him to a board meeting. Harry had declined politely, citing his commitment to Hogwarts. Whitehorn had expressed understanding and offered his assistance should Harry need anything in the future. Now, it was time to take up that offer and request a Nimbus 2000. Harry planned to pay for it, but hoped to get something a bit more customized, given his position as an investor and his intent to draw attention on the Quidditch field.

Harry began to write:

Dear Mr. Whitehorn,

I hope this letter finds you well. As you might recall, I am currently studying at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which limits my ability to attend board meetings. However, I am writing to discuss a matter of mutual interest.

As you are aware, I have invested a substantial amount in the Nimbus Racing Broom Company through my representative, Mr. Grumbletack. My investment reflects not only my confidence in your company's innovative approach to broom design but also my personal interest in the field of magical transportation.

I am writing to inquire about the possibility of acquiring a Nimbus 2000.

Given my position both as an investor and a student at Hogwarts, I believe owning one of your top-tier brooms would be mutually beneficial. Not only would it serve my needs as a seeker in the school Quidditch team, but it would also showcase the Nimbus 2000's capabilities in a competitive environment.

Furthermore, I would be interested in discussing the possibility of customizing the broom to fit my specific requirements. I understand this might incur additional costs, and I am prepared to cover these. My aim is to ensure that the Nimbus 2000 stands out not only for its performance but also as a symbol of our company's commitment to excellence and innovation.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you soon and hope we can arrange a suitable agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Harry James Potter

Heir of Most Noble and Most Ancient House Potter

Harry looked at the letter he had just written and focused intently,

willing the ink to be visible only when it reached Whitehorn. The Phoenix Feather Quill he held shimmered slightly, and as if by magic, the ink vanished from the parchment, rendering the words invisible to any unintended recipient. Satisfied with the security measure, Harry sealed the letter with a dab of wax, impressing the Heir Ring of the Potter insignia upon it.

As he completed this task, Hedwig flew to his side with a soft flap of her wings. "Can you take my letter, girl?" Harry asked gently, scratching Hedwig's head affectionately. The owl hooted in affirmation, accepting the letter with a graceful nod. With a powerful thrust of her wings, Hedwig took flight, disappearing into the night sky towards London.

Lying back on his bed, Harry pondered the customization of his future Nimbus 2000. "Color is a given, green and silver would look good, don't you think, Nigel?" he mused aloud, envisioning the sleek design of the broom in Slytherin colors.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "Green and silver? How very subtle, Master Harry. Why not just paint a giant serpent on it while you're at it?"

Harry chuckled at Nigel. "A serpent might be a bit much. I was thinking more along the lines of a sleek design with a nod to my house colors.

Perhaps some advanced charmwork for stability and speed?"

"Ah, always thinking ahead," Nigel commented. "A broom with enhanced stability and speed, combined with your already impressive flying skills, would indeed be a formidable presence on the Quidditch field."

Harry's eyes twinkled with excitement at the thought. "Exactly. And it's not just about Quidditch. A broom like that could be useful in other... situations."

Nigel's voice took on a teasing note. "Oh? Planning to make a dramatic escape from the Astronomy Tower, are we?"

Harry laughed softly. "Let's hope it doesn't come to that. But it's always good to have options."

Two days later, in the crisp morning air of Hogwarts, Harry received an unexpected summons from Marcus Flint, the captain of the Slytherin Quidditch team. "Potter, we're having tryouts today," Marcus announced with a sly grin. "No one knows you're our Seeker yet, so we'll be testing others as well."

Harry, amused by the charade, responded with a hint of mockery in his tone. "Isn't that a bit cruel? Giving them false hope?"

Marcus' smirk widened. "What if there's someone better than you?"

Harry, confidently smirking back, retorted, "Good luck finding someone like that."

Marcus chuckled, acknowledging the unlikely scenario. "Alright, alright. It's just for show. We'll quickly assess them and send them packing. But stay close and observe the process. I want you to get a sense of the team dynamics. Selena and I have decided to keep your training separate until the first game. You'll be a surprise element. Although a Seeker's role isn't heavily team-oriented, it's still important for you to understand where to position yourself and anticipate our movements. Watching the tryouts will be a good excuse for you to familiarize yourself with the team."

Harry nodded in agreement, appreciating the strategy. "Clever," he commented.

Marcus nodded, a hint of pride in his voice. "Selena's idea. She's sharp like that."

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Chapter 94: Tryouts

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At breakfast, Harry joined Daphne and Tracey, proposing an idea.

"Ladies, how about watching the Quidditch tryouts? We don't have much else on today."

Daphne rolled her eyes playfully. "Speak for yourself, Potter. We still have Potion and Transfiguration essays to finish. Oh, and that spell 'Teacher Potter' wants us to create."

Harry chuckled at Daphne's sarcasm. "I'll help you with the essays later, promise."

Tracey's face lit up. "Really?"

Harry nodded. "Sure."

"What about the spell?" Tracey inquired, her curiosity piqued.

Harry, maintaining his playful demeanor, replied, "Sorry, you're on your own with that one."

Tracey's excitement deflated slightly as she started to play with her breakfast, clearly mulling over the challenge of creating her own spell variation. Chuckling at her reaction, Harry filled his plate too.

After breakfast, Harry, Daphne, and Tracey made their way to the Quidditch field, taking their seats among a small group of other students who had arrived to watch the tryouts. The sky was a clear blue, perfect for flying, and the anticipation in the air was palpable. Harry observed the gathering crowd, noting the presence of students from all houses,

their interest in the Slytherin tryouts a testament to the sport's popularity.

As the tryouts commenced, Marcus Flint, the Slytherin captain, took charge, directing the players with a firm hand. The seekers were up first, and Harry watched with a detached amusement as they took to the air, their attempts to catch the Snitch varying in skill and technique. It was clear to Harry that none of them matched his own abilities, but he kept his observations to himself, not wanting to discourage the hopefuls.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind. "Quite the spectacle, isn't it, Master Harry? It's like watching ducks trying to be eagles."

Harry smirked, watching the enthusiastic yet unpolished attempts of the hopeful seekers. "Nigel, that is rude. They are doing their best, we should applaud their effort," he thought, observing the tryouts with a critical but fair eye.

Nigel chuckled in his mind, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "Of course, Master Harry. Let's cheer for the valiant efforts of the flying ducklings. After all, everyone deserves a trophy just for participating, right?"

Daphne, leaning closer, whispered with a hint of amusement, "Some of them look like they've never been on a broom before. What do you think, Harry?"

Harry, with a sly grin, replied, "Well, Daphne, they say every champion has to start somewhere. Looks like we've got some real 'potential' here." Tracey, not one to mince words, added, "Yeah, but some of these starts are pretty far back, if you ask me."

As the tryouts progressed, the Seeker candidates were quickly assessed and dismissed, none displaying the level of skill required for the position. The focus then shifted to the other positions - Chasers, Beaters, and the Keeper.

The Chaser tryouts were more competitive, with several candidates showcasing promising skills. Marcus Flint directed them through a series of drills, evaluating their agility, teamwork, and goal-scoring abilities.

Harry noted a couple of players who seemed to have a natural flair for the position, their movements fluid and their teamwork seamless.

Nigel observed, "Ah, the Chasers seem to be on a different level. Quite the show they're putting on. It's almost as if they've seen a Quidditch match before."

Daphne's eyes followed one of the Chaser candidates, her expression thoughtful. "That one there, he's got good instincts. Quick and agile."

Tracey nodded in agreement, her eyes keenly following the action. "True, but he needs to work on his passing. It's a bit off."

The Beaters were up next, their task to demonstrate not only their strength but also their precision and timing. The candidates wielded their bats with varying degrees of expertise, some more adept at hitting the Bludgers accurately, while others seemed to struggle with control.

Nigel quipped, "Ah, the art of Bludger batting. Nothing quite says 'Hogwarts' like teaching children to swing clubs at high speeds."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's comment, his eyes following a particularly strong hit by one of the candidates. "That one's got a good swing, but he needs to watch his aim. Almost took out a spectator."

Finally, the Keeper tryouts began. This position demanded not only skill in blocking goals but also a keen sense of anticipation and positioning.

The candidates took turns guarding the hoops, their performances varying from impressive saves to near misses.

As the tryouts drew to a close, Marcus Flint gathered the team and the hopefuls for a final debrief. The candidates waited anxiously for his decision, while Harry observed from a distance, already aware of the

outcome.

Getting up from his seat at the Quidditch field, Harry turned to Daphne and Tracey, "Let's go." The girls, a bit surprised, followed him but couldn't help questioning, "Won't we wait to see the result?"

Harry smiled, his eyes glinting with a mischievous yet confident sparkle. "We will see in the first match anyway, won't we?" His tone suggested he already knew more than he let on.

The girls nodded, their curiosity piqued by Harry's enigmatic demeanor, as they walked out of the stadium. As they left the field, Harry's thoughts turned to the team dynamics he had observed. 'Marcus is too aggressive,' he mused. 'That doesn't give a good image. I need to change the team's reputation if I am to cultivate a good fame from this.'

Nigel, ever ready with a sardonic comment, snickered in Harry's mind, "Ah, the troubles of building up fame and dealing with bad team players. It's almost as if they don't realize they're in the presence of the great Harry Potter. How inconsiderate of them."

Harry, used to Nigel's jabs, ignored the remark and continued his train of thought, 'I will talk with Selena. She should be able to change their minds.' Selena Rosier, with her keen insight and leadership skills, would undoubtedly understand the importance of a positive team image.

As they walked back to the castle, Harry's mind was already strategizing the conversation with Selena. It wasn't just about winning games; it was about setting a standard, about showing that Slytherin could be more than just the house of ambition and cunning. They could be leaders, exemplars of skill and sportsmanship.

Daphne, catching the thoughtful expression on Harry's face, nudged him lightly, "Penny for your thoughts, Potter?"

Harry glanced at her, a slight smile forming. "Just thinking about the

team dynamics. We need to be more than just skilled players; we need to be a team that others respect."

Tracey, walking beside Harry, joined the conversation with a reflective tone. "Slytherin has always been aggressive, at least that's what my parents say. They're known for playing hard and dirty to win. That's their style."

Daphne, nodding in agreement, added her perspective. "It's about ambition, Potter. We're driven to win at all costs. We're not Hufflepuffs who prioritize making friends over winning." Her voice, though firm, carried an undercurrent of critique, hinting at her own dissatisfaction with Slytherin's current reputation.

Harry, his expression thoughtful, responded, "But winning shouldn't come at the expense of fair play and sportsmanship, should it?" He could sense an ally in Daphne, who seemed to share his view that Slytherin could rise above underhanded tactics. To achieve his goals, he needed to project a more favorable image, and Slytherin hadn't quite lived up to his expectations so far.

Daphne sighed, a hint of resignation in her voice. "Ambition drives us, Potter. But I agree, it shouldn't define us in such a negative light."

Their conversation continued as they made their way back to the common room. Once there, Harry excused himself and approached the brass snake head that marked the entrance to the Serpent of the Crown's room. He knocked softly, and the wall split open to reveal the familiar interior.

Inside, Selena Rosier sat behind her desk, her posture exuding authority.

"Potter," she greeted him, her voice devoid of the warmth her words suggested. "What do I owe the pleasure?"

Harry, undeterred by her cool demeanor, took a seat across from her. "I

wanted to discuss the team dynamics," he said, getting straight to the point.

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Chapter 95: A Curse?

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Harry, undeterred by Selena's cool demeanor, took a seat across from Selena. "I wanted to discuss the team dynamics," he said, getting straight to the point.

Selena raised an eyebrow, her interest piqued. "Go on."

Harry leaned forward, his expression serious. "Our approach to Quidditch, the aggression, the 'win at all costs' attitude... it's not setting a good example. We're reinforcing stereotypes about Slytherin that we should be trying to move away from."

Selena considered his words, her expression thoughtful. "You're suggesting a change in strategy?"

"More than strategy," Harry explained. "A change in attitude. We need to show that Slytherin can win without resorting to underhanded tactics.

We should be leaders on the field, not just competitors."

Selena Rosier narrowed her eyes, a sly smirk playing on her lips. "I see you've set your sights beyond mere Quidditch, Potter," she observed,

tapping the badge that marked her as the Serpent of the Crown. "You're aiming for a more favorable reputation among the rest of the school. But tell me, why does the opinion of others matter so much to you? Are you looking to challenge my position?"

Harry, maintaining his composure, replied calmly, "My ambitions are focused on improving Slytherin's interhouse relations within Hogwarts, not just for personal gain. It's about changing perceptions and breaking down barriers."

Selena leaned back, her gaze assessing. "A noble cause, Potter. But you must understand, Slytherin's reputation has been built over centuries. Changing that won't be easy, and not everyone will be on board with your... progressive ideas."

"I'm aware," Harry acknowledged. "But it's a challenge I'm willing to take on. A united Hogwarts is stronger than one divided by outdated rivalries and prejudices."

Selena answered with a hint of skepticism, "Let's assume I entertain this idea. Our aggressive play and ambition have secured the Quidditch Cup for Slytherin for years. What makes you think we should change a winning strategy?"

Harry, with a confident smirk, responded, "I'll catch the Snitch in every game. That's my promise."

Selena let out a snort, her disbelief apparent. "I watched the tryouts, Potter. You're talented, I'll give you that, but don't you think you're being a bit overconfident?"

Harry's grin didn't falter. "Not overconfident, just aware of my abilities. I know what I can do, and I assure you, catching the Snitch in every game is within my reach."

Selena leaned forward, her eyes narrowing as she assessed Harry's

resolve. "You're proposing a complete overhaul of our team's image based on your ability to secure the Snitch?"

"Not just based on that," Harry clarified. "It's about setting a new standard for Slytherin. We can be ambitious and still play with integrity. Winning the Cup is important, but how we win matters too. It's about changing the narrative around our house."

Selena mulled over his words, her expression one of contemplation. "It's a bold strategy, Potter. But even if you do manage to catch the Snitch every time, that alone won't change years of ingrained perceptions."

Harry nodded in agreement. "True, but it's a start. And with your support and influence as the Serpent of the Crown, we can begin to shift the tide. It's about showing the rest of Hogwarts that Slytherin is more than just cunning and ambition. We're skilled, strategic, and honorable."

Selena's gaze remained fixed on Harry, her mind working through the implications of his proposal. "And what about the rest of the team? How do you plan to convince them to adopt this new approach?"

"I'll lead by example," Harry stated firmly. "I'll show them that skill and fair play can bring us victory. It's about earning respect, not just fear. If they see the results, they'll follow."

Selena's expression softened slightly, a hint of admiration seeping through her usual stoic demeanor. "Very well, Potter. I'll back your plan. But remember, the reputation of Slytherin rests on more than just Quidditch. You'll need to extend this ethos beyond the pitch."

Harry nodded solemnly. "I understand. And I appreciate your support."

As the conversation concluded, Harry stood up to leave. Nigel's voice echoed in his mind, "Quite the diplomat you're turning out to be, Master Harry. Slytherin House, the new beacon of honor and sportsmanship. Who would have thought?"

Harry mentally smirked, replying to Nigel, "It's all part of the bigger picture, Nigel. One step at a time."

Returning to the common room, Harry found himself accompanied by Daphne and Tracey. They settled into a comfortable spot, the low murmur of conversations around them creating a relaxed atmosphere. Their discussion meandered from the day's Quidditch tryouts to their upcoming classes when Malfoy, Zabini, and Nott joined them, accompanied by Pansy Parkinson.

Pansy, a girl Harry rarely interacted with, immediately brought a different energy to the group. Her demeanor, unlike Daphne's refined poise, was marked by a certain snobbish air. As a member of one of the Sacred 28 houses, she carried an air of entitlement and arrogance, her pureblood ideology often coloring her conversations. This contrasted sharply with Daphne, who, despite her own pureblood status, exhibited a level of tact and open-mindedness that Pansy seemed to lack.

Harry, leaning back in his chair, observed Pansy with a polite but distant interest. He believed everyone could serve a purpose in the intricate game of Hogwarts politics, yet he found Pansy's attitude unpalatable, making it difficult to engage with her meaningfully.

Nigel's voice rang in Harry's mind. "Ah, the delightful Ms. Parkinson graces us with her presence. Do remind me to polish my silver tongue; one must be prepared for such esteemed company."

Harry suppressed a chuckle at Nigel's remark, maintaining a neutral expression as he turned his attention back to the group. "So, Malfoy," he began, shifting the focus of the conversation, "what did you think of the tryouts today?"

Malfoy, leaning back with a confident air, responded, "Predictable. No one really stood out." His tone carried a hint of disdain, as if the tryouts

were beneath his expectations.

Daphne, with a playful smile, chimed in, "Maybe Potter can do it next year. He is already good on a broomstick. Saving damsels and all." Her eyes glanced at Harry, teasingly suggesting his potential as a future Quidditch star.

Pansy, seizing the opportunity to insert herself into the conversation, leaned forward, her eyes fixed on Harry. "Oh, is Potter the new hero of Hogwarts now? Flying around and playing the knight in shining armor?" Her tone was laced with a mix of sarcasm and curiosity, clearly trying to gauge Harry's reaction to the praises being showered upon him.

Harry, maintaining his composure, replied with a casual shrug, "Just happened to be in the right place at the right time, Ms. Parkinson.

Anyone would have done the same."

Nigel's voice danced in Harry's mind, dripping with sarcasm. "Indeed, Master Harry, because everyone can just casually leap off brooms and catch falling classmates. It's a regular Hogwarts pastime."

Ignoring Nigel's remark, Harry turned the conversation back to the topic of Quidditch. "The team could use some fresh talent, though," he observed, directing his comment at Zabini. "What do you think, Zabini? Any promising players catch your eye?"

The usually quiet Slytherin shrugged his shoulders, "Some of them weren't that bad, but I haven't seen any potential in Seeker attempters. "

Malfoy, considering Harry's question, replied, "A few potential Chasers, maybe. But the real game-changer will be our Seeker. That's where the real talent lies. But as Zabini pointed out, today was a total fiasco" His eyes flicked to Harry, as if challenging him to contradict.

Pansy, eager to keep the focus on Harry, interjected, "Well, if Potter's as good on a broom as they say, maybe he'll give us a run for our money

next year. Right, Potter?"

Harry, unaffected by Pansy's probing, simply smiled. "We'll see, Ms. Parkinson. Quidditch is a team sport, after all. It's not just about one player."

Daphne, sensing the subtle shift in the conversation, smoothly redirected it towards academics. "What about Defense Against the Dark Arts? I doubt we'll learn anything useful this year," she mused, her tone a mix of skepticism and curiosity.

Harry tilted his head slightly, intrigued. "This year?" he echoed, his question laced with a hint of surprise.

Daphne, realizing her assumption, elaborated, "Oh, you might not know, but the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor changes every year." Her eyes conveyed a sense of resignation common among students accustomed to this pattern.

Tracey chimed in, her voice tinged with a touch of cynicism. "It's been like that for years. No one seems to last more than a term in that position."

Harry's brow furrowed in thought. "Is it some kind of tradition to keep the faculty fresh?" he asked, trying to make sense of the peculiar situation.

Malfoy, with a snicker, interjected, "They say it's a curse." His smirk suggested he found the idea amusing, or perhaps, intriguing.

Harry's mind whirred, processing this new information. "A curse? That sounds more like a superstition than a reality." He pondered the implications, considering the impact such instability could have on their education.

Nigel's voice echoed in Harry's mind, his tone suggesting he knew more than he let on. "Ah, the infamous Defense Against the Dark Arts curse.

Perhaps they should consider Defense Against Bad Employment Practices instead."

Harry suppressed a smile at Nigel's comment, maintaining a thoughtful expression. "Well, regardless of the reason, it seems we'll have to be proactive about our Defense studies," he concluded.

Daphne nodded in agreement. "I've been thinking the same. We can't rely on a revolving door of professors to give us a solid education in such a crucial subject."

Tracey hesitated, a thoughtful expression crossing her face. She seemed on the verge of suggesting something, possibly about forming a study group for Defense Against the Dark Arts. However, as her gaze swept over the group, including Malfoy and Pansy, she seemed to reconsider. Clearly, there were some in the group she wasn't keen on including.

Daphne, observant as always, caught the subtle change in Tracey's demeanor and offered her friend a knowing smile. She could read Tracey like a book and understood her reluctance to share her idea with certain members of their current company.

Harry, meanwhile, found his thoughts drifting back to the topic of the Defense Against the Dark Arts curse. 'A curse that prevents any teacher from lasting more than a year? It sounds implausible, yet fascinating,' he mused. 'Who could possibly cast such a powerful and lasting curse?' He pondered the implications and the history that might be behind such a phenomenon.

Nigel's voice broke through his contemplation with a touch of his usual tone. "Master Harry, pondering the mysteries of Hogwarts' employment policies? Perhaps a career in magical human resources awaits you."

Harry almost chuckled aloud at Nigel's remark but managed to keep his expression neutral. He turned his attention back to the group, noting the

dynamic between Malfoy and Pansy. Malfoy seemed to revel in the attention Pansy gave him, though Harry suspected it was more about bolstering his ego than any genuine interest in her and vice-versa.

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Chapter 96: With Great Power

Comes Great Tiredness

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As the conversation continued, Harry listened and occasionally contributed, all the while keeping his mind alert to the undercurrents of the group dynamics. It was clear that Slytherin House was a complex web of alliances and rivalries, and navigating it would require careful thought and strategy.

Daphne, noticing Harry's thoughtful expression, leaned in slightly. "You seem lost in thought, Potter. Care to share what's on your mind?"

Harry, glancing at her, decided to voice his musings. "I was thinking about the Defense Against the Dark Arts position. The idea of a curse is intriguing. It's a puzzle that begs to be solved."

Daphne's eyes sparkled with interest. "A puzzle, indeed. Perhaps something we could investigate together?" Her suggestion carried a hint of excitement. The idea of delving into one of Hogwarts' many mysteries

seemed to appeal to her.

Before Harry could respond, Pansy interjected with a dismissive wave of her hand. "A curse? Please, it's just bad luck and incompetence. Why waste time on such trivialities?"

Malfoy, eager to assert his opinion, added, "It is more than that, Pansy. It's not just about the curse. Potter's goal is to understand the hidden aspects of Hogwarts. Knowledge is power, after all."

Harry nodded in agreement, pleased to see Malfoy was shaping into a good underdog. "Exactly. It's not just idle curiosity. Unraveling this mystery could reveal deeper secrets about Hogwarts and its history."

Tracey, who had been silently listening, finally spoke up. "It's not just the Defense position. Hogwarts is full of unexplained mysteries and legends. Maybe we're just scratching the surface."

Daphne, turning to Tracey, smiled. "You're right. Hogwarts is a treasure trove of secrets. And who knows what we might uncover if we start digging."

The group's conversation shifted to discussing various Hogwarts legends and myths, each member contributing their own piece of knowledge or hearsay. Harry listened attentively, filing away every piece of information for future reference.

As the conversation wound down, Harry stood up, stretching his arms. "Well, this has been enlightening, but I have some essays to catch up on. Greengrass, Davis, I haven't forgotten about our deal."

Daphne raised an eyebrow. "I'll hold you to that, Potter. Don't think you can get out of helping us with those essays."

Tracey grinned. "Yeah, yeah! You promised to help us, Potter."

Harry returned their smiles. "I'll see what I can do. Goodnight, everyone."

As he left the common room, Nigel's voice resurfaced in his mind.

"Holding everything your arms can reach again, Master Harry. Just don't forget to catch some sleep. Even wizards need their rest."

Harry, climbing the stairs to his dormitory, replied mentally, "Do they, Nigel? I started to see sleep as a waste of time lately."

In the solitude of his dormitory, Harry settled at his desk, books and parchment spread out in front of him. He began working on the essays. However, it was not Harry in the literal sense who was doing the task. His consciousness, divided through a cloning technique in the Virtual Room, allowed him to multitask efficiently. While part of his consciousness stayed in the real world, handling the mundane task of writing, the other part delved into the Virtual Room.

In this virtual space, Harry was deeply engrossed in exploring the nuances of different magical languages. His current focus was Parseltongue, the language of snakes. As his first beast language, Harry found it more intuitive compared to the more complex Thunderbird and Unicorn languages. He practiced his spells, trying to imbue them with the sibilant whispers of Parseltongue, experimenting with how this might alter their effects or potency.

Nigel observed this multitasking with a mixture of amusement and admiration. "Master Harry, you're a veritable one-man academic army. Essays, spell research, and whatnot. Is there anything you can't do simultaneously?"

Harry chuckled in response, his virtual voice tinged with humor. "I haven't tried cooking and Quidditch at the same time yet, Nigel. But give me time."

As he continued to experiment with Parseltongue, Harry began to feel a deeper connection to the language. It was as if the very essence of the serpents he was emulating was becoming a part of him, enhancing his

magical intuition and giving him insights into aspects of magic he had never considered.

This exploration was not without its challenges, however. Parseltongue was a complex and nuanced language, and mastering its subtleties required a level of concentration and understanding that was both exhilarating and exhausting. Each new discovery opened up a myriad of possibilities, and Harry found himself drawn deeper into the study, eager to uncover all the secrets this ancient language held.

Nigel, sensing Harry's deepening fascination, offered a word of caution. "Be careful, Master Harry. The pursuit of knowledge is a noble endeavor, but even the most intrepid explorer needs to come up for air occasionally."

Harry acknowledged Nigel's advice with a mental nod, aware of the need to maintain a balance. But the allure of the unknown, the thrill of discovering hidden aspects of magic, was too compelling to resist.

As the night wore on, Harry continued his studies, the sounds of Parseltongue echoing in the Virtual Room, each syllable a key unlocking new doors in the world of magic. In the real world, his clone finished the essay, placing the quill down with a final flourish. The parchment was neatly rolled up and set aside, ready to be handed in the next day.

As the clone finished the nightly ritual and entered the bed, Nigel's avatar materialized in the virtual room, a look of concern etched on his digital face. "Are you sure you're ready for this, Master Harry?" he asked, his voice reflecting his apprehension. The idea of forgoing a full night's sleep was risky, and Nigel, ever the voice of reason, couldn't hide his worry.

Harry, immersed in his studies, glanced at Nigel's avatar with a determined look. "We won't know until we try, will we?" he responded, his tone a mix of excitement and resolve. This was one of the more

audacious ideas he had concocted since creating his mental clone, James.

The plan was simple yet daring: let the clone rest while his main consciousness continued training through the night.

Nigel, crossing his arms in a distinctly 'Nigel-esque' manner, sighed audibly. "I suppose not, but remember, even the brightest wizards need their rest. Don't push yourself too hard."

Harry, appreciative of Nigel's concern, gave a reassuring nod. "I'll be careful. But think of the possibilities, Nigel. This could revolutionize the way I learn and train."

Nigel, still skeptical but resigned to Harry's decision, warned, "Just don't come crying to me when you fall asleep in your porridge tomorrow morning."

Harry chuckled at Nigel's characteristic dry humor. "Noted. Now, let's get back to it. Parseltongue won't master itself."

The night in the virtual room progressed with Harry deeply engrossed in his exploration of Parseltongue. The language's hissing syllables reverberated through the virtual space, each sound a puzzle piece fitting into the larger picture of magical linguistics. Harry practiced casting spells, infusing them with the serpentine language, marveling at the subtle but significant changes in their effects.

Meanwhile, in the real world, his clone rested peacefully, ensuring that his physical body would not suffer from the lack of sleep. This unique arrangement allowed Harry to maximize his time, a precious commodity in the fast-paced and ever-changing world of Hogwarts.

As the virtual night waned, Harry's concentration on Parseltongue began to yield intriguing results. He found that certain spells, when spoken in the serpent tongue, had enhanced properties, their magic more potent and refined. This discovery opened up a new realm of possibilities, and

Harry's mind buzzed with ideas on how to apply this newfound knowledge.

Nigel watched on, his digital expression a mix of amazement and concern. "Impressive, Master Harry. But remember, with great power comes great tiredness. Thus the need for a good night's sleep."

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Chapter 97: Sleep Deprivation

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As dawn approached, Harry decided to conclude his session in the virtual room. He had pushed the boundaries of his magical knowledge and needed time to process and apply what he had learned. Stepping out of the virtual realm, he joined his clone in the physical world, feeling a sense of satisfaction at a night well spent.

When his main consciousness merged with the clone, Harry felt an unusual sense of clarity washing over him. The part of him that had worked tirelessly through the night was undoubtedly tired, while the clone that had rested provided a sense of rejuvenation. This merging, admittedly feeling like a poor night's sleep, was still better than staying awake all night. It was a delicate balance, one that Harry was still mastering.

A week later, after forgoing sleep for several nights, Harry entered the Great Hall and made his way to the Hufflepuff table, where he sat across from Susan and Hannah. Since his dramatic rescue of Susan, he had developed a friendly rapport with the two girls, often joining them for study sessions. This morning, upon encountering each other at the entrance, Susan had invited him to join them at their table, an invitation he readily accepted.

Sitting at the Hufflepuff table for the first time, Harry was acutely aware of the numerous gazes directed at him. There were looks of disapproval from his fellow Slytherins and expressions of surprise from the other houses. A Slytherin mingling with Hufflepuffs was indeed an unusual sight in the halls of Hogwarts. Unperturbed by the attention, Harry focused on his breakfast, lifting his spoon to eat his porridge.

However, as he did so, his hand twitched unexpectedly, and the spoon clattered to the table. Shocked, Harry stared at his trembling hand, a wave of concern washing over him. 'What's happening?' he thought, puzzled and slightly alarmed.

Nigel's voice, laced with his typical blend of sarcasm and underlying concern, echoed in Harry's mind. "That, Master Harry, is what we in the common vernacular call sleep deprivation."

Harry, trying to mask his discomfort, picked up the spoon again, but his hand trembled once more, making it clear that his body was reacting to the lack of proper rest. He set the spoon down, deciding it was best not to draw more attention to himself.

Susan, noticing his struggle, leaned in with a look of concern. "Harry, are you alright? You look a bit pale," she said, her voice low and filled with worry.

Hannah, too, turned her attention to Harry, her brows furrowing in

concern. "Yeah, you don't look so good. Did you get enough sleep?"

Harry, attempting to deflect their concern with a weak smile, replied, "I guess I've just been a bit busy with studies and... other things."

Nigel, never one to miss an opportunity for a witty remark, even in serious situations, added, "And by 'other things', he means experimenting with sleep patterns in a manner that would make even a vampire wince."

Trying to change the subject, Harry turned to Susan. "So, what are we studying today? I heard there's a Herbology quiz coming up."

Susan, still eyeing him with a mix of concern and curiosity, replied, "Yeah, we were planning to review for that. But are you sure you're up to it, Harry? You really don't look well."

Hannah nodded in agreement, her expression echoing Susan's concern.

"Maybe you should go see Madam Pomfrey. She could help."

Harry, reluctant to admit his fatigue and the toll it was taking on him, brushed off their suggestions. "I'll be fine. Just a bit of tiredness, nothing more."

Nigel's tone took on a rare note of anger. "Master Harry, your symptoms are not at the beginning phase. This is because you are technically getting sleep, so your body missed a few memos of sleep deprivation and only now realized what is going on. If you try to continue this way, you won't be able to even walk. Your hand is twitching because your nervous system is out of sync due to the irregular sleep patterns. It's a classic sign of severe fatigue."

Harry listened to Nigel, his expression growing more serious. "Divide part of my consciousness and have him sleep," he suggested, trying to find a workaround.

Nigel exhaled, his tone a mix of frustration and concern. "Master Harry, splitting your consciousness like that is not a sustainable solution. You're

pushing your limits."

Harry, determined to continue his routine, cut him off. "I'll be fine. I'll sleep tonight. Just a bit more time."

Susan and Hannah, overhearing bits of Harry's mumbling, exchanged worried glances. "Harry, who are you talking to?" Susan asked gently. "Just... going over some study notes in my head," Harry lied smoothly, forcing a smile. "Really, I'm fine."

The conversation at the Hufflepuff table shifted as other students joined in, discussing the upcoming Herbology quiz. Harry participated, but his contributions were sporadic and lacked his usual insight. The lack of proper sleep was evidently taking its toll, his thoughts slower and less coherent.

As the day progressed, Harry's condition didn't improve. His movements became sluggish, and he struggled to concentrate in his classes. His usual sharp wit and quick responses were replaced by delayed reactions and half-hearted replies. Even Nigel's sarcastic comments failed to elicit the usual amused response from Harry.

Susan and Hannah exchanged worried glances as they observed Harry's deteriorating condition. The usual sparkle in his eyes was replaced by a glazed, distant look, and his movements were uncharacteristically sluggish. "Should we take him to Madam Pomfrey?" Susan whispered, her voice tinged with genuine concern.

"I don't know," Hannah responded, biting her lip. "He keeps insisting he's fine, but he's clearly not himself."

Justin Finch-Fletchley approached Harry with a puzzled expression on his face. "Potter, do you know the best way to handle Devil's Snare? I'm a bit confused about it."

Harry, who under normal circumstances would have given a quick and

accurate response, struggled to form his words. His eyes, which usually held a spark of intelligence, now seemed clouded and unfocused. He stared at Justin, his mouth opening and closing as he attempted to string together a coherent sentence. "I—Devil's... the Snare, you see, it's... um, light and, err... no, not light, I mean..." His voice trailed off into mumbled gibberish, his thoughts clearly scattered.

Justin, taken aback by Harry's incoherent mumbling, exchanged a worried glance with Susan and Hannah. "Potter, are you alright? You're not making any sense."

Hannah leaned in closer to Harry, her concern evident. "Harry, you really don't look well. Maybe you should rest."

Nigel's voice rang in Harry's mind, his tone a mix of admonish and worry.

"Master Harry, if this is your attempt at playing the mysterious and enigmatic wizard, I'd say it's a resounding failure. Might I suggest a novel approach called 'sleep'?"

Harry, struggling to maintain his focus, tried to brush off their concerns.

"I'm... I'm fine. Just a bit tired, that's all."

Susan, not convinced by Harry's weak assurance, stood up. "I'm taking you to Madam Pomfrey. This isn't normal, Harry. You need help."

Harry tried to protest, but his words came out slurred and disjointed.

"No, really, I'm... I can handle it. Just need to... focus."

Nigel, his voice now filled with a rare note of sternness, intervened.

"Master Harry, even the most brilliant wizard can't function without proper rest. You're not just risking your health; you're endangering your magical abilities."

Despite Nigel's warning, Harry stubbornly tried to stand up, only to stumble slightly, his balance off. Hannah quickly reached out to steady him, her expression filled with worry.

"Come on, Harry. You can barely stand. Let's get you some help," Hannah insisted, her voice firm yet gentle.

As they escorted Harry out of the classroom, the students watched in concern and confusion. The sight of the usually composed and witty Harry Potter being helped out of the room was unsettling and sparked a flurry of whispered speculations.

Outside the classroom, Susan and Hannah supported Harry as they made their way towards the infirmary. Harry's steps were unsteady, his usual grace replaced by a clumsy shuffle. Nigel's voice continued to echo in his mind, a mix of concern and frustration. "Master Harry, I implore you to consider the consequences of your actions. You're playing a dangerous game with your health."

Harry, his mind foggy and his thoughts scattered, could barely process Nigel's words. He felt as if he was moving through a thick fog, every step requiring a monumental effort.

As they reached the infirmary, Madam Pomfrey immediately noticed Harry's condition. Her expression quickly turned from surprise to concern as she ushered him onto a bed. "What happened? He looks completely out of sorts."

Susan explained, her voice laced with worry. "He's been like this since morning. We think he hasn't been sleeping properly."

Madam Pomfrey, her brows furrowed in concern, began examining Harry. "Sleep deprivation can be serious, especially for young wizards. Their magical energy can become erratic."

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Chapter 98: Surprise Visitor

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Hey everyone, how's it going? Regarding the previous chapter, "Sleep Deprivation," some of you mentioned it felt forced and out of character, but I want to clarify a few things. Firstly, I sped up the process quite a bit. The week of sleeplessness and the intricate details of how it affects Harry were trimmed down in the narration to keep it from getting too drawn out. Secondly, Harry's character is deeply experimental. This is a guy who's willing to run over half a million experiments just to improve a potion by 1%. He's naturally inclined to push boundaries. While he's smart and usually able to differentiate between foolish ideas and solid decisions, he was overly confident in this instance, especially in the early days when his idea seemed to be working. The stubbornness he exhibited before passing out was a result of severe sleep deprivation. I even considered adding crankiness into the mix, but decided against it since Harry's near-perfect Occlumency skills would likely mitigate that. I hope this clears things up a bit. Let me know your thoughts. Thanks!

--

Harry, lying on the bed, tried to focus on Madam Pomfrey's words, but they seemed to echo distantly in his mind. His eyelids felt incredibly heavy, and his body ached for rest.

Madam Pomfrey, her face etched with a mix of sternness and concern, scolded Harry as she prepared a sleeping potion. "Mr. Potter, didn't I tell

you last time to take better care of yourself? And yet, here you are, doing the exact opposite." She skillfully administered the potion, ensuring Harry had no choice but to swallow it.

Susan, standing nearby, watched with a worried expression. Madam Pomfrey turned to her, instructing, "Ms. Bones, Ms. Abbott, please inform Professor Snape and Professor McGonagall that Mr. Potter will be unable to attend his classes today." Susan and Hannah nodded, their concern for Harry evident, and left the infirmary with one last concerned glance at him.

As the effects of the sleeping potion took hold, Harry felt a warm, comforting drowsiness envelop him. He struggled to keep his eyes open, but the allure of sleep was too strong. His last conscious thought was a faint acknowledgment of Nigel's voice in his mind, chiding him with a sarcastic quip, "Finally embracing the revolutionary concept of sleep, I see. How avant-garde of you, Master Harry."

Madam Pomfrey watched Harry as he drifted off, her expression softening. She covered him with a blanket, ensuring his comfort. "Rest now, Mr. Potter. You've pushed yourself too hard," she whispered, more to herself than to the sleeping boy.

Outside the infirmary, Susan and Hannah hurried to find Professor Snape and Professor McGonagall. They relayed Madam Pomfrey's message, their tone urgent. Both professors expressed concern, with Snape's usual stoic demeanor showing a rare flicker of worry. McGonagall, always the pragmatist, nodded in understanding. "Thank you, Ms. Bones and Ms. Abbott. Please return to your classes. We'll handle it from here."

Back in the infirmary, Harry's sleep was deep and restorative. His body and mind, exhausted from the strain of prolonged wakefulness, welcomed the respite. Madam Pomfrey periodically checked on him, monitoring his

vital signs and ensuring he remained comfortable.

In the depths of his unconscious state, Harry's mind was unusually quiet.

Nigel, sensing the need for silence, refrained from his usual commentary, allowing Harry the peace he desperately needed.

As the day progressed, word of Harry's condition spread throughout Hogwarts. Whispers and rumors filled the corridors, with students speculating about the reasons behind his sudden collapse. The general consensus was that Harry Potter, the boy who seemed to excel at everything, had finally found his limit.

In the Slytherin common room, discussions about Harry's condition were mixed. Some expressed concern, while others, like Pansy, viewed it as a sign of weakness. "Potter's not as invincible as he likes to think," she commented with a sneer.

Meanwhile, in the Gryffindor common room, Hermione Granger murmured Harry's condition with a mix of concern and curiosity. "He's always pushing himself too hard," Hermione sighed, her brows furrowed in worry. "He needs to learn to take it easy."

It was a day later, precisely 26 hours, when Harry finally woke up. The duration of his sleep had even alarmed Madam Pomfrey, who worried she had administered too strong a sedative. But upon seeing Harry's eyes flutter open, she let out a sigh of relief, which quickly morphed into a stern expression. "Mr. Potter," she began sharply, "What have you been doing to yourself?"

Harry, still groggy from the extended sleep, responded with a groan, trying to sit up. "I... I was just studying a bit too hard, Madam Pomfrey," he mumbled, his voice hoarse.

In his mind, Harry quickly reached out to Nigel, "Nigel, what happened?" Nigel's voice, laced with a mix of relief and irritation, retorted, "What

happened? You, Master Harry, decided to turn sleep into an optional hobby. Even the most rudimentary of creatures understand the necessity of rest, but it seems you fancied yourself above such mundane needs."

Madam Pomfrey, her hands on her hips, wasn't convinced by Harry's understatement. "A bit too hard? Mr. Potter, you were completely exhausted. You must take better care of yourself. Your studies are important, but not at the expense of your health."

Harry nodded weakly, fully aware of the scolding he deserved. "I understand, Madam Pomfrey. It won't happen again," he assured her, though his mind was still trying to process the events that led to his collapse.

Nigel, seizing the opportunity to lecture, added, "I do hope this little episode has been an enlightening experience for you, Master Harry. A mind as sharp as yours is a terrible thing to waste on the folly of sleep deprivation."

Madam Pomfrey, still not entirely satisfied, handed Harry a small vial. "Drink this. It will help restore some of your strength. And Mr. Potter," she added, her tone softening slightly, "please be more careful. We can't have one of our brightest students collapsing in the corridors."

Harry accepted the vial, downing its contents in one swift motion. The potion had an immediate revitalizing effect, clearing the lingering fog in his head. "Thank you, Madam Pomfrey. I'll be more cautious," he said sincerely.

Nigel, sensing Harry's contemplative mood, remarked, "Well, it seems the great Harry Potter is human after all. Who would've guessed?"

Harry chuckled weakly, "Apparently not me. I guess I pushed it too far this time."

Nigel's tone softened, "Indeed, but let's consider this a valuable lesson

learned. Now, shall we strategize a more balanced approach to your endeavors?"

Harry nodded, his mind already buzzing with ideas on how to manage his time more effectively without sacrificing his health. "That sounds like a plan, Nigel."

Before Harry could delve further into his reflections, the door to the infirmary opened, revealing an unexpected visitor. It wasn't the very last person Harry expected to see, but he was certainly near the top of that list. Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts, entered with his customary serene smile. "I see you are awake, my boy," he said as he approached Harry's bedside.

Harry instinctively raised his mental defenses, recalling his recent discovery of Ron and Hermione's compelling spells and his growing suspicion of Dumbledore's possible involvement. Despite his wariness, he offered a polite smile. "Headmaster, I'm honored by your concern."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled behind his half-moon glasses. "No bother at all. However, you did give us quite a worry. Some of your friends visited several times, but you've been asleep for so long. How many nights of sleep have you skipped?"

Harry, pondering the best response, decided on a partial truth. "Just a few days, Headmaster. I was concerned about falling behind in my classes, so I took to extra reviewing."

Dumbledore nodded, his expression conveying a mix of understanding and mild reprimand. "Ah, the zeal of youth. But remember, Harry, a sharp mind needs rest as much as a quill needs ink."

In Harry's mind, Nigel's voice carried a hint of sarcasm. "Ah, the wise words of Dumbledore. I suppose next he'll be telling us that a wand needs waving."

Ignoring Nigel's comment, Harry maintained his composure. "I'll certainly bear that in mind, sir."

Dumbledore took a seat beside the bed, his demeanor shifting to one of gentle inquiry. "I understand your eagerness to excel, Harry, but there's more to Hogwarts than just academics. It's about balance, finding harmony in all aspects of your life."

Harry nodded, recognizing the wisdom in Dumbledore's words, even as he remained guarded about the Headmaster's intentions. "I appreciate your advice, Headmaster. Balance is indeed important."

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Chapter 99: Chess of Words

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Harry nodded, recognizing the wisdom in Dumbledore's words, even as he remained guarded about the Headmaster's intentions. "I appreciate your advice, Headmaster. Balance is indeed important."

Dumbledore's gaze lingered on Harry, as if trying to read beyond his words. "Indeed, balance is key. And speaking of balance, how are you finding your classes and peers? Any particular challenges or triumphs?"

Harry, choosing his words carefully, replied, "The classes are engaging, and I'm managing well enough with my peers. As for challenges, I believe

they're part and parcel of the Hogwarts experience."

Dumbledore's gaze softened as he reminisced, "Your mother was as dedicated as you. I remember her being quite the academic enthusiast.

Always eager to learn and explore new realms of magic."

Harry, feeling a sense of pride at the mention of his mother, smiled warmly. "I've always admired her passion for knowledge. I hope I can live up to her legacy in my own studies."

Nigel, observing the conversation, mused, "Ah, the maternal connection.

A classic conversational pivot."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. "And your father, James, had his own strengths. Quite the charismatic leader, he was. A natural at bringing people together."

Harry's smile broadened. "I've heard stories. I wish I could have known him."

Dumbledore leaned forward slightly, "You know, Harry, your parents had a remarkable ability to connect with people from all walks of life. It's an essential quality, the ability to understand and empathize with others.

Have you found it easy to connect with your peers here at Hogwarts?"

Harry thought for a moment, then replied, "I believe understanding others is crucial. I've been fortunate to meet a variety of people here, each with their own unique story."

Dumbledore's expression became reflective. "Indeed, Hogwarts is a melting pot of cultures and ideas. It's important to find common ground, to build bridges rather than barriers."

Harry nodded, "I agree, Headmaster. It's about finding unity in diversity."

Dumbledore, shifting the topic subtly, mentioned, "Your upbringing must have given you a unique perspective, having been raised in the non-magical world."

Harry, sensing the gentle steering of the conversation, responded, "It has, sir. I believe it's given me a broader view of both the magical and non-magical worlds."

Dumbledore nodded, "A valuable perspective, Harry. Balancing both worlds can be a challenge. And speaking of challenges, how have you found the transition to Hogwarts? Any particular subjects that have captured your interest?"

Harry, engaging with the question, said, "The transition has been an adventure. As for subjects, I find Defense Against the Dark Arts intriguing, despite its... unique challenges."

Dumbledore chuckled, "Ah, yes, the Defense position does have its... challenges. As for Potions, Professor Snape is quite the expert, though I understand he can be a bit... intense."

Harry nodded, "He does have high standards, but I believe that's important in a subject as precise as Potions."

Dumbledore's expression softened, "It's good to see you taking your studies so seriously, Harry. And your interactions with other students? Making any friends?"

Harry replied, "I've been getting to know people from various houses. It's been an enlightening experience, understanding the different perspectives and backgrounds."

Dumbledore's smile widened slightly, "That's very open-minded of you, Harry. Hogwarts is indeed a place of diverse backgrounds and ideas. It's important to embrace that diversity."

Harry, feeling the conversation coming to a close, added, "I agree, Headmaster. It's one of the things I appreciate most about Hogwarts."

Dumbledore stood up, his expression one of approval. "Well, I'm glad to hear you're settling in well. Remember, my door is always open should

you need anything."

As the Headmaster left, Harry's gaze became serious. "Nigel, bring up the conversation. Analyze his questions and my answers. I don't think I revealed anything, but I want to be sure."

Nigel responded, "Ah, the old Dumbledore dance. He's a master at weaving words into webs. Let's see what we have here."

Harry listened as Nigel replayed the conversation, dissecting Dumbledore's questions and his own responses. "First, he mentioned your mother's dedication to her studies," Nigel began. "Classic tactic to break down defenses by invoking a familial connection. Makes you more likely to open up."

Harry nodded, "I kept it general, though. Just expressed admiration for her. But you are wrong, Nigel. He was also probing my upbringing. To see if I know anything about my mother or not. I assume he was expecting me to be clueless about Magical World, and I would be, if it wasn't for your arrival. I would never be able to rid myself from Vernon or Dudley, and never get along with Aunt Petunia, in return, I would have never learned about the magical world let alone my family. In such a scenario, I would be influenced easily by Ron Weasley in the train ride, and end up in Gryffindor. I thought I was subtle, but ever since I stepped into the train, I was giving away clues without even knowing them. "

Nigel continued, "Master Harry, you have already deducted a lot from that question. Indeed those could be the old Headmaster's intention, and you did well there. Now, about your father, James. Again, a move to create a personal connection. Dumbledore's probing for emotional responses, trying to gauge your attachments."

"I noticed that," Harry murmured. "But I kept it about unity and understanding. But once again, he was trying to see how much I knew."

"Smart move you did there. Also good observation," Nigel affirmed.

"Now, the discussion about Hogwarts being a melting pot and your Muggle upbringing. He's subtly checking your integration into the wizarding world, seeing if there's any resentment or disconnect. And as you just analyzed, he was trying to see how much you know about the magical side of the world and your family."

Harry's expression turned thoughtful. "I emphasized the broader perspective I gained. Hopefully, that threw him off. I had no way of hiding my relationship with Aunt Petunia, so admitting it was a better choice."

"Then there's the bit about Defense Against the Dark Arts," Nigel said.

"He's testing your reaction to the subject's instability, possibly looking for frustrations or suspicions."

Harry responded, "I showed interest but didn't bite at the curse bait."

"Good, good," Nigel approved. "And Snape's mention. Dumbledore's assessing your relationship with the teachers, especially the ones who are... less than friendly."

"I stayed neutral, praised Snape's standards," Harry said, recalling the conversation.

"Lastly, Dumbledore's questions about making friends, building bridges. He's trying to understand your social dynamics, your influence among peers," Nigel analyzed.

Harry leaned back, processing this. "I kept it about diversity and learning from others. No specifics."

Nigel concluded, "Overall, you navigated that minefield well. You were vague enough not to give anything away but engaged enough not to raise suspicions."

Harry exhaled, "Thanks, Nigel. I just hope I can keep this up."

Nigel's tone softened, "You're doing fine, Master Harry. Just remember, Dumbledore is a chess master. Every move has a purpose."

Harry nodded, "I'll remember that. For now, I need to focus on recovery and catch up on what I missed."

"As long as 'catching up' includes a healthy sleep schedule," Nigel quipped.

Harry chuckled, "Of course. Lesson learned, Nigel."

Outside of the infirmary, Dumbledore chuckled to himself as he hummed a tune, walking towards his room. "What a clever boy," he mused.

Reflecting on their conversation, Dumbledore felt a sense of amazement.

Despite Harry's guarded answers, Dumbledore had noticed subtle cues that intrigued him. He was looking for signs of deeper ambitions, reminiscent of another student from fifty years ago - Tom Riddle.

Dumbledore had learned from his past oversight with Tom and was keen to understand Harry's intentions, especially considering his sorting into Slytherin.

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Chapter 100: Surprise Delivery

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100 chapters! Let's go! Thank you all for the support! Much appreciated!

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In his office, Dumbledore sat behind his desk, steepling his fingers as he pondered the interaction. Harry's responses were carefully measured, indicative of a keen mind, but Dumbledore sensed an undercurrent of something more. He was looking for indications of whether Harry harbored ambitions similar to Tom Riddle's or if he was simply a more astute Slytherin with a good head on his shoulders.

Dumbledore thought back to Harry's remarks about unity and understanding. They were wise words, but Dumbledore couldn't help but wonder if there was a strategic intent behind them. Harry's emphasis on diversity and learning from others was admirable, yet Dumbledore sensed a calculated approach in how Harry positioned himself among his peers.

"Harry is building connections, just like Tom did," Dumbledore whispered to himself. "But is it for a sense of belonging, or is there a deeper play at work?" The Headmaster was aware of the influence a charismatic student could wield, and he pondered Harry's potential motivations. "He did risk his life to save Ms. Bones. And have good relation with Ms. Granger."

Dumbledore mentioned Harry's Muggle upbringing on purpose and his response about gaining a broader perspective. It was an insightful comment, but Dumbledore wondered if it also hinted at a desire to bridge the two worlds for reasons beyond mere integration. Could Harry be seeking to leverage his unique position for greater influence? He wanted to know what changed. "How did Harry learn so much about his family? It is strange, isn't it?"

The Headmaster also considered Harry's reaction to the Defense Against the Dark Arts subject. Unlike other students who often expressed frustration at the subject's instability, Harry had shown a measured interest. Dumbledore found this intriguing, as it suggested Harry might

be looking for opportunities in the subject's perennial upheaval. "He knows something, but why keep it from the Headmaster?"

Then there was the mention of Snape. Dumbledore had noted the neutral, almost respectful tone Harry adopted. It was unusual for a student, especially in their first year, to speak so diplomatically about the demanding Potions Master. Dumbledore saw this as a sign of Harry's ability to maintain good relations even in challenging circumstances.

"Doesn't that sound odd to you?"

Towards the end of their conversation, when discussing friendships and building bridges, Dumbledore had been looking for signs of Harry's influence among his peers. Harry's responses were inclusive, yet Dumbledore sensed an underlying strategic approach in how Harry viewed his interactions. "Cunning, like a snake."

Dumbledore leaned back in his chair, his eyes gazing out the window at the sprawling Hogwarts grounds. "Harry is not Tom, that much is clear. But he is something different, something new. But his heart is in a good place." Dumbledore's voice was tinged with both caution and curiosity. "A Slytherin with a penchant for unity and a diplomatic approach to relationships - that is rare. Is he trustable?"

The Headmaster knew he would have to observe Harry closely, not out of suspicion, but to understand this unique student better. Harry Potter was an enigma, a puzzle that Dumbledore found increasingly fascinating. "Or maybe suspicion."

Turning to the Sorting Hat, Dumbledore asked with a mix of curiosity and concern, "Why did you sort him into Slytherin?" The hat's features animated as if smirking, and it began to sing in a carefree tone, echoing through the Headmaster's office:

"In a realm where shadows merge,

Where silent streams of fate converge,  
There lies a path unseen, untrod,  
Guided by the hand of a lightning rod.  
Hear the whispers through the veil,  
Softly singing an ancient tale,  
Of a world not torn but twined,  
In the dance of the lost and find.  
In the heart of the silent night,  
Gleams a faint, ethereal light,  
Two streams of power, old and new,  
Weave a fabric, seamless, true.  
From the cauldron, mysteries pour,  
Secrets locked behind hidden door,  
In the merging of unseen threads,  
A new tapestry quietly spreads.  
In the union of disparate parts,  
Rests the future of ancient arts,  
By the wand's will and hand's touch,  
Two worlds meet, but not too much.  
As the stars whisper to the night,  
A new dawn breaks, quiet, bright,  
In the blending of heart and mind,  
Lies the path for all mankind.  
Hear the whispers through the veil,  
Softly singing an ancient tale,  
Of a world not torn but twined,  
In the dance of the lost and find."

Dumbledore listened intently, his eyes reflecting a deep understanding as

the song faded away. "A path unseen, a blend of worlds... Harry's sorting is more than just a matter of house traits. It's a convergence of fate and choices, a unique journey," he mused aloud. "What does this hat blabber about again? Didn't I tell you to throw it ages ago?"

Meanwhile, in the infirmary, Harry's recovery was progressing under Madam Pomfrey's watchful eye.

When Madam Pomfrey finally gave the all-clear, Harry expressed his gratitude and left the infirmary, feeling significantly more refreshed and alert. The early morning light filtered through the windows, casting a serene glow over the Hogwarts grounds as he made his way back to the Slytherin common room.

To his surprise, the common room was deserted, the usual bustle of students notably absent in these early hours. Harry appreciated the quiet, a stark contrast to the noise and activity that filled the space during the day. He made his way to his room, contemplating the events of the past few days and the conversation with Dumbledore.

Once in his room, Harry decided to take a break from the intensity of recent days. He reached into his inventory, selecting "Two Years' Vacation" by Jules Verne, a novel that promised adventure and a temporary escape from the complexities of the wizarding world. Settling into a comfortable chair, he opened the book and began to read.

Nigel's voice took on a teasing tone. "Ah, indulging in a bit of light reading, are we? I suppose even the great Harry Potter needs a break from saving damsels and outwitting headmasters."

Harry, with a smirk, replied mentally, "Even I need a break, Nigel.

Besides, there's something about Verne's writing that's captivating. It's an escape to a world of adventure and exploration."

As Harry delved into the story, he found himself drawn into the world

Verne had created. The tale of a group of schoolboys stranded on a deserted island was both thrilling and thought-provoking. The characters' ingenuity and resourcefulness in the face of adversity resonated with Harry, reminding him of his own challenges and the need to think creatively.

When it was time for breakfast, Harry carefully placed a marker in his book and got up. The quiet of his room was replaced by the subdued murmur of the early morning as he walked toward the Great Hall.

Students eyed him curiously, but none he was close to were there yet, so he focused on his meal, silently spooning porridge into his mouth.

The Hall was buzzing with the usual morning chatter when an owl swooped in, dropping a package right beside Harry's plate. The long, slender shape unmistakably resembled a broomstick, instantly drawing the attention of everyone nearby. The whispers grew louder, and Harry could feel dozens of eyes on him. "Well, this will be a headache," he thought, dreading the inevitable influx of questions and rumors.

Nigel's voice chimed in his head, "Ah, nothing quite like a dramatic delivery to stir the pot. Shall I prepare a speech or will you wing it?"

Rolling his eyes at the inevitable commotion the delivery had caused, Harry quickly finished his breakfast. The whispers and speculative glances from his peers were a constant buzz in the background, but he paid them no mind. He was far more excited about the prospect of examining his custom-made broomstick. Standing up, he made his way out of the Great Hall, the murmurs of the students trailing after him like an echo.

"I must say, Master Harry, you have a flair for the dramatic without even trying," Nigel commented wryly in Harry's mind as he walked briskly towards his room.

Harry chuckled internally. "It's not the drama I'm interested in, Nigel. It's the broomstick. I'm curious to see how it turned out."

Reaching his room, Harry eagerly unwrapped the package. As the layers of paper fell away, revealing the sleek contours of the Nimbus 2000, his eyes widened in appreciation. The broomstick was a thing of beauty - its handle was polished to a high shine, and the bristles were perfectly aligned. The most striking feature, however, was the custom design - the handle was emblazoned with the Slytherin colors of green and silver, giving it an elegant yet powerful appearance.

"Exquisite, isn't it?" Nigel observed. "The green and silver do add a certain... shall we say, 'Slytherin charm' to it."

Harry sighed, shaking his head with a faint smile. "Really, Nigel? A pun on 'charm'? Your humor might be aging as gracefully as a fine wine, but sometimes it's more like a cheese." He turned his attention back to the broomstick, admiring its craftsmanship. 'That should keep Nigel quiet for a while,' he thought with a snicker, turning his attention to the broomstick. He couldn't help but marvel at its craftsmanship. The Nimbus 2000, already a symbol of speed and precision, had been transformed into a bespoke masterpiece, a reflection of Harry's unique status at Hogwarts.

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