

Chapter 33

Even though Harry was almost certain there wasn't a Horcrux in the room, they searched it anyway. Daphne, unsurprisingly, examined the bookshelves. Tonks searched the potions area, and Harry took the area with the bed. With a flap of his wings, Fawkes perched on top of the partition and gazed around the room curiously.

Harry didn't find a Horcrux, but he did find another entrance hidden in the corner of the room. There was a single stone with a worn serpent carved into the surface. When he hissed at it, it opened to reveal a moving spiral staircase in a tall, narrow room.

"Looks like I found another way out," Harry announced. "I have no idea where it leads, though."

"We'll find out when we leave," Tonks shrugged.

Nodding, Harry left the door and sidestepped between the partition and a wardrobe. Opening the doors, he looked through the robes and clothes hung up inside. His brow creased the more he looked at them. After a moment, he turned around and looked at the robe hanging on the partition. Although it was moth-eaten and covered in dust, they were in surprisingly good condition for being a thousand years old.

"Should these clothes be in this good condition?" he asked curiously.

"The Founders would have had clothes woven from Demiguise hair," Daphne said without turning her head away from the books she was examining. "It was a sign of status before they were hunted to near extinction. The magic in the hair would make it last longer than cotton or wool."

"I wish these potion ingredients were that well preserved," Tonks said, wrinkling her nose as she held up a sealed jar containing a black, gelatinous blob. "I don't even know what this is supposed to be."

“Whatever you do, don’t drop it,” Harry joked.

Tonks stuck out her tongue and put the jar back.

“Ew, these mushrooms have mushrooms growing on top of them,” she grimaced.

Making a disgusted noise, she closed the cabinet with a sigh.

“There’s nothing here,” Tonks declared.

She walked over to Harry and plopped down on the end of the bed. Her sudden landing disturbed the layer of dust covering the sheets and sent up a cloud that made her and Harry cough as they waved their hands to clear the air.

“Anything?” she asked him once they could safely breathe again.

“No,” Harry sighed, closing the wardrobe. “You find anything, Daphne?”

“These books are really interesting,” she replied. “Some of them are extremely rare, and a few I’ve never even heard of. There’s even an unedited copy of Slytherin’s book on Charms. There are only three known copies in the world. Do you have any idea what this is worth?”

“Nope,” Harry smiled before turning serious. “Do you see anything else? Any... artifacts or anything strange?”

“No,” Daphne said, turning to look at him curiously. “What are you looking for?”

Harry shared a look with Tonks before turning back to her, “It’s better if you don’t know.”

It was evident from the look in her eyes that Daphne wanted to know more, but her desire to stay out of the war ultimately won out.

“Well, I don’t see anything,” she said. “Just a bunch of rare, priceless books.”

Harry smiled, “Toss them in my bag, and we’ll take them with us.”

Daphne turned her head to stare at him so fast that her hair whipped across her face.

“What!?” she asked incredulously. “We can’t just take them.”

Harry shrugged, “Why not? They’re just going to sit down here and rot if we don’t.”

“And technically,” Tonks added, “Since no one has officially set foot in this room for over five hundred years, Harry has Curse Breaker rights to anything we find.”

Daphne blinked, her mouth snapping shut as Harry walked over to her and handed her his bag.

“Well, we probably should show them to Professor Dumbledore first,” Harry said.

Tonks grinned, “And I’m betting that one of those three copies of Slytherin’s books is sitting in the Hogwarts library.”

Her brow furrowed curiously, Daphne nodded.

“Then they don’t really need two, do they?” Tonks asked with a smirk. “I’m sure they’ll let you keep it and maybe a couple of the others.”

Daphne glanced at the book in her hands and then looked back up at Harry.

“And you don’t want them?” she asked.

“I’m not really the studious type,” Harry admitted with a shrug and a smile.

“You might have to fight Hermione for them, though,” Tonks teased.

Daphne turned to Tonks, her eyes narrowed in a glare and pursed her lips. After a moment of thought, she snatched the bag from Harry’s hand.

“Tonks, can you cast an Expansion Charm on this?” she asked.

“Sure,” Tonks shrugged.

Standing up and making her way over, she took the bag and book Daphne handed to her. The moment her hands were free, Daphne grabbed the front of Harry’s jumper and forcefully dragged him over to the chair near the fireplace.

“What-”

His question was cut off when she shoved him down into the chair and dropped to her knees between his legs.

“I want that book,” Daphne said determinedly.

Harry’s eyes widened when he realized what she intended.

“Daphne, you don’t-”

“Potter,” she interrupted firmly, “Shut up and tell me what to do.”

Harry swallowed heavily as he stared down at her bright blue eyes. Daphne wasn’t trying to bride him like he’d thought. She was excited.

Reaching out to run his fingers through her hair, he schooled his expression and decided to play along. His hand suddenly tightened, gripping the hair at the back of her head and pulling her closer. Daphne gasped, her eyes gleaming as she stared up at him and rested her hands on his thighs.

“You already know what I want,” Harry growled.

Her hands scrambled for the waistband of his trousers. Opening his belt, she quickly undid the button and pulled down the zipper. She reached inside, wrapped her fingers around his rapidly swelling shaft, and pulled his member free of his boxers. The moment he was exposed, her movements slowed to an uncertain crawl, and she stared in fascination at his growing length. Slowly, nervously, she stroked him softly until he was rock hard and pulsating in her hand. Glancing up at him through her eyelashes and licking her lips, her pale blue eyes sparkled, urging him to push her further.

Harry didn’t use words this time. He just used his grip on her hair to tug her head closer until her pouty, glistening lips touched his red, angry tip. Her warm, damp breath washed over his sensitive glans as she slowly parted her lips. He waited in anticipation for her to take him inside of her mouth, but she didn’t. Instead, she looked up at him through her lashes again, a challenging glint in her eyes.

A growl left Harry’s lips as he tugged her head down and bucked his hips up. Daphne’s eyes widened when he rapidly hit the back of her throat and caused her to gag. Her hands moved higher up on his thighs, but despite the shock, she didn’t try to fight him. On the contrary, she quickly settled when he pulled back and obediently wrapped her lips around his shaft, her

tongue gently exploring his flesh. Harry hissed and bucked his hips again, careful not to hit the back of her throat.

Daphne gradually relaxed her hands as she grew accustomed to his guided pace. Her arms relaxed, and she eventually dropped one hand from his thigh to slip it under her skirt. As Harry tilted his head back, closing his eyes as he groaned, he bucked his hips and drove himself into her throat, though he went slower this time. Daphne gagged around him, her eyes reddening slightly as she looked up at him. Holding her in place for a few seconds, he relaxed his arms and allowed her to catch her breath before pulling her back down.

With a strangled moan, Daphne shivered pleurably while she choked on his length. Harry smirked down at her knowingly. Tightening his grip on her hair, he used her mouth roughly and selfishly, seeking his own end. She gagged around him willingly while tears leaked from the corner of her eyes and thick strands of saliva fell from her lips.

All too soon, Harry groaned and erupted against her tongue. Daphne coughed in surprise, causing some of his seed to leak from her lips before she sealed them tightly around him and sucked hard. Harry groaned, a shudder running through his body as he emptied himself into her voracious mouth. Eventually, his body relaxed, and she pulled off of him with a smug little grin on her swollen lips. His softening shaft pulsed, and he had to fight the urge to bend her over the desk.

“If you’re done blowing my boyfriend, your bag is ready,” Tonks smirked.

Blushing as if she’d forgotten Tonks was even there, Daphne stood, smoothed out her clothes, and magicked her face clean with a wave of her wand.

“Thank you,” she said.

Taking the bag from Tonks, she walked back over to the bookcase and started loading it two or three books at a time. With a shake of his head, Harry tucked himself away and got to his feet. Tonks grinned, kissed him on the lips, and then joined the blonde to help her pack away the rest

of the books. Looking around the room, Harry spotted the only thing they had yet to search, the desk.

At first glance, it didn't look like there would be much to find. The top of the desk only held an inkpot and quill. And while it was large, it only had two drawers. Taking a seat at the desk, Harry opened the drawer on the left. Inside, he found more quills and inkpots and a few rolls of parchment with handwritten notes scrawled on the surface. Grabbing the parchment, he tossed it on top of the desk and turned to the drawer on the right. A single book with a plain black leather cover sat inside.

Harry picked up the book and turned it over in his hands. The title was embossed on the spine.

Secrets of the Darkest Arts

His heart started to race. This was the book Dumbledore had said Voldemort learned the ritual for Horcruxes from. Glancing over his shoulder to make sure Daphne wasn't watching, he slipped the book in his pocket. Maybe Hermione could use it to help with the search, he thought.

Looking back down into the drawer, it was completely empty. Just as he was sliding it closed, he stopped and pulled it back open. Leaning closer and squinting his eyes, he noticed a serpent carved into the bottom of the drawer. Tentatively, he ran his finger over it.

"Open," he hissed.

A hidden lock released with an audible *click* somewhere in the desk and the false bottom slid back on its own accord. Hidden in the bottom was a single vial containing the silver whisp of a memory. Harry gingerly picked up the vial and held it up to the light.

"I found a memory," he said, turning to the girls.

“Really?” Daphne asked excitedly. “A memory from Salazar Slytherin?”

Harry shrugged, “Could be. It doesn’t look like anyone else has been in here. We’ll have to watch it to know for sure.”

Taking out his wand, he cast an Unbreakable Charm on the vial just to be safe and then put it in his pocket. As the girls finished packing up the last of the books, he double-checked the desk to make sure he wasn’t missing anything. He even looked at the bottom of the left drawer and crouched under the desk, but there was nothing.

Closing the drawers, he turned back to the girls and smiled bemusedly. They’d practically picked the bookshelves clean, and only a handful of books were left on them.

“Are you sure you don’t want to just take the shelves, too?” Harry asked.

Daphne rolled her eyes and slung his bag over her shoulder as Tonks snickered.

“Are we ready to go?” she asked.

“It looks like it,” Harry nodded. “Let’s see where that staircase leads.”

Fawkes chirped and glided onto his shoulder when he passed the partition on his way to the hidden entrance. The three of them climbed onto the staircase and rode it up several floors, vanishing cobwebs on the way up, until they finally reached the top where there was a small platform with a single door. Harry turned the handle and pushed the door open into a dark, empty hallway. While the door was wood on the inside, the outside was made of stone blocks that matched the rest of the hallway.

“This is the Dungeons,” Daphne said as she stepped out of the doorway. “The Slytherin entrance is down there and to the right.”

Harry turned when he heard the door closed behind him, the gap between the doorway and door vanishing like it never existed. Lighting his wand, Harry took a closer look at the stone and eventually found a serpent carved into a block near the floor.

“Well, if we ever have to go down there again, at least we don’t have to go through the pipes,” he said.

“Thank Merlin,” Daphne muttered.

Harry smiled, wrapped an arm around Tonks, and led them out of the dungeons to the second floor. They rode the staircase to the headmaster’s office, and he knocked on the door.

“Enter!” Dumbledore yelled.

As they walked inside, Fawkes took off from his shoulder and landed on his perch.

“Ah, I wondered where Fawkes ran off to in such a hurry,” Dumbledore smiled as they stepped inside and closed the door. “I take it you’ve finished your search. Good evening, Ms. Greengrass.”

“Good evening, Headmaster,” Daphne said, nodding politely.

“There was nothing there. Well, not what we were looking for. We did find another room—a small office—Daphne found a few books we brought back, and I found this,” Harry said, holding up the memory-filled vial. “It was hidden in a desk. I have no idea what it’s about, though. Oh, and it didn’t look like anyone else had been in there.”

“Interesting,” Dumbledore muttered, taking the memory and examining it for a moment before looking at Daphne. “May I see those books?”

With a nod, Daphne set the bag on the desk and opened it.

“That’s more than a few,” he noted, raising an eyebrow.

Harry smirked, and Daphne blushed while the headmaster continued through all of the books, stacking a dozen or so off to the side.

“The others we have copies of in the library,” Dumbledore said. “Is there a reason you brought so many others?”

“Daphne wanted them,” Tonks grinned.

“Some of them are for Hermione,” Daphne said, her cheeks going pink.

“I see,” Dumbledore smiled. “Well, you’re free to keep them. Now, this memory. I take it you’re all as curious as I am as to what it’s about?”

“Yes, sir,” Tonks replied, nodding eagerly.

Dumbledore chuckled and picked up the vial, “Then let’s take a look, shall we?”

Standing, the headmaster walked over to the cabinet next to his desk and pulled out his Pensieve. Tonks and Daphne, who Harry realized had probably never seen one before, watched in fascination as Dumbledore uncorked the vial and tipped the memory into the silvery pool. He stirred the memory with his wand a few times until an image appeared on the surface. A man, Salazar Slytherin, sat at a desk, his quill dancing across the parchment.

“Gather ‘round,” Dumbledore said, waving them over. “Dip your finger into the Pensieve on the count of three. One... two... three.”

They all dipped their fingers into the memory, and Harry heard Tonks give a surprised shriek as they were sucked inside. As they fell into the memory, he reached out, grabbing both Tonks and Daphne by the arm to slow their falls. A moment later, they landed on their feet in Slytherin's quarters. At a glance, Harry knew they had to be somewhere in the Dungeons of Hogwarts.

"Whoa," Tonks said, circling around Slytherin and eyeing him in awe. "It looks so real."

Raising her hand, she swiped down, causing it to pass right through his head, body, and the chair he was sitting on. Tonks jumped suddenly when set down his quill and stretched. With a sigh, he dropped his arm, pushed his chair back, and stood. Slytherin grabbed a cloak from the back of the chair, slung it over his shoulders, and walked towards the door. Dumbledore followed after him with Harry, Tonks, and Daphne trailing behind. They walked out into the hallway, where Slytherin was greeted politely by every student he passed. Most of them were Slytherins, but a few were from other houses.

"Guess there isn't a house rivalry yet," Harry said.

"For all historical accounts, the house rivalry didn't exist as we know it now until the seventeenth century, after the last of the Goblin Rebellions," Dumbledore said. "Many believe that the lack of a common enemy caused witches and wizards to turn on each other."

Harry nodded thoughtfully as they reached the first floor and turned to follow Slytherin through the main entrance. The sun was just dipping below the mountains to the West as they made their way across the lawn. Every student they passed, regardless of what house they were in, stood and greeted the Founder respectfully as he passed.

Glancing over his shoulder, Harry was surprised—though in hindsight, he shouldn't have been—to see that the castle didn't look the same as it would in the future. There were no Gryffindor or Ravenclaw towers jutting into the air. The highest point was the Astronomy tower, although it was only about half the size. There were no Greenhouses either, and Hagrid's hut was nowhere to be seen.

Following Slytherin down the path, a ward warped around him as he stepped past the Front Gate.

“Bloody hell,” Tonks gasped.

Harry turned back to look at her and then followed her gaze up to the castle, but it was gone. The castle wards completely hid it from view.

“Impressive,” Dumbledore muttered.

“Eda!” Slytherin shouted suddenly.

Harry and the others turned back around and watched as a young girl, perhaps seven or eight years old, rushed up to Slytherin with a young boy in her arms. As she got closer, he could see the terrified look in her dark brown eyes.

“Eda! What are you doing here?” Slytherin asked, crouching in front of the little girl.

“They saw me doing magic and thought it was mother,” Eda said frightenedly. “She told me to take Elric before they came.”

“Who?” Slytherin asked urgently.

“The villagers,” Eda said, looking back at Hogsmeade over her shoulder.

“Take Elric up to the castle and wait in my room,” Slytherin said, his jaw tightening and grey eyes hardening. “Stop for no one. Go!”

Hugging the Elric tightly, Eda sprinted towards the castle as fast as her legs could carry her. Slytherin stood and took off running towards the Hogsmeade, his wand gripped tightly in his hand. Harry and the others ran after him.

“Professor,” Daphne panted. “Shouldn’t they be speaking in old English?”

“I cast a Translation Charm on the memory before we entered,” Dumbledore replied.

As they crested the hill below which the village sat, Slytherin skidded to a sudden halt. Harry stopped next to him and his stomach dropped at what he saw. The villagers stood around a large pyre, singing and celebrating. Through the bright flames, he could just make out a dark, humanoid figure in the center.

The ground shook under their feet, and it took Harry a moment to realize Slytherin was the cause. His face etched in rage; he raised his wand, the tip shaking slightly.

“Fiendfyre,” Slytherin growled.

Daphne gasped and gripped his hand as the flames from the pyre grew and writhed high into the air. In seconds, they formed into a Basilisk even bigger than the one from the Chamber of Secrets. The villagers screamed fearfully and turned to run just as the great snake lowered its head and descended. The Basilisk enveloped them and set them alight in moments. Screams of fear and pain rapidly died out with just a few quick, powerful strikes.

When it was finished with the villagers, the Basilisk turned on the village itself. Every building, every home, every fence, and even the well were burned to ash under the onslaught of the unholy inferno.

Suddenly, Slytherin screamed and jerked his wand back. The Basilisk silently writhed, as if in pain, before it vanished, leaving just a few glowing fires burning in the ruined village. The Founder’s heavy, panting breaths filled the silence as Harry and the others stared in at the ruins

in horror. The Fiendfyre had been so intense that not even the ashes of the villagers remained. Only black stains on the dirt streets were a reminder that they had existed at all.

Harry didn't know how long they all stood there before they heard running footsteps behind them. They turned quickly to see who it was, but Slytherin continued glaring down at the village as if he hadn't heard anything. Three figures ran over the crest of the hill, and just from looking at them, Harry knew they were the other Founders. The man on the left, Godric Gryffindor, was tall and broad-shouldered, his wild mane of bright red hair bouncing around him. A ruby-encrusted hilt glittered about his waist, the rest of the sword tucked away in its sheath.

The woman next to him, Helga Hufflepuff, was short, with fair hair, green eyes, and a soft, round face. To her right was another woman, Rowena Ravenclaw, who was tall and thin, with a sharp nose and high prominent cheekbones. A silver, diamond studded tiara sat atop her head as she gazed around the shape, bright blue eyes. They all came to a stop just behind Slytherin and paused for a long moment.

"Salazar," Helga said softly. "What have you done?"

"They killed her," Salazar said, his voice hoarse. "They saw the children doing magic and killed Isabel."

The other Founders all looked taken aback, sharing a sympathetic glance. Suddenly, Salazar spun around, his dark eyes glittering with fury.

"I warned you!" he shouted. "I warned all of you that the Muggles couldn't be trusted!"

"Sal," Godric said softly.

"How many more of our kind, how many more innocent students do they need to burn at the stake before we take action?" Salazar barked angrily. "Our worlds need to remain separate."

“Salazar,” Rowena said, her voice firm. “You know our stance on this.”

Salazar glared at her for a long time. So long, that Harry feared he would raise his wand.

“Then you leave me no other choice,” he said eventually. “I’m leaving.”

Pushing his way between Helga and Rowena, Salazar marched back toward the castle.

“Salazar, you can’t!” Helga yelled. “The students need you!”

“Let him go, Helga,” Godric said, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. “Give him time.”

“He’ll come back,” Rowena assured her, certainty in her tone. “He just needs time to mourn.”

As Salazar Slytherin continued towards the castle, the memory began to fade. Dumbledore grabbed a hold of Tonks’ arm and began to ascend out of the Pensieve. Grabbing Daphne’s arm, Harry did the same. A moment later, they were back in the office.

“Did he come back?” Tonks asked as they all took seats around the headmaster’s desk.

“No,” Dumbledore said, folding his arms on the desk. “Until now, no one knew the reason Salazar left Hogwarts.”

“But why didn’t his wife fight back against the villagers?” Daphne asked.

“Perhaps she was a squib,” Dumbledore shrugged. “Perhaps she was untrained. Perhaps she merely didn’t have a wand. We may never know.”

Daphne opened her mouth to ask another question but was interrupted by a knock at the door.

“Come in,” Dumbledore called.

The door opened, and Professor McGonagall stuck her head inside. She looked at them curiously before addressing the headmaster.

“I just came to remind you it’s time for dinner,” she said.

“Ah, is it that late already?” Dumbledore asked, checking his watch. “It is. Thank you, Minerva. We’ll be down in just a moment.”

Nodding, Professor McGonagall backed out of the office and closed the door.

“Shall we?” Dumbledore asked as he stood.

Harry, Daphne, and Tonks followed suit and trailed after him out of the office.

“You know Hermione’s going to kill you when she finds out what she missed, don’t you?” Tonks asked with a smirk.

Harry sighed, “I know. At least we have something for her to research while she isn’t talking to me.”

Tonks snorted as they stepped off of the moving staircase and into the second floor hallway.

“Oh yeah, what’s that?” she asked.

Harry grabbed her arm and pulled her back until he was sure Daphne was out of earshot. She looked back over her shoulder at them curiously, but thankfully, she didn't say anything.

"Did you see that tiara Ravenclaw was wearing?" he whispered.

"Now that you mention it, yeah," Tonks nodded. "You might still want to get her flowers, though."

Harry sighed. She was probably right.