

Unknown Prophecy

Chapter 36

Harry had been mostly ignoring Professor Quirrell and only occasionally messing with him. Chucking stuff at the back of his head from down the corridor was a favorite pastime of his. Of course, he had been trying to get past Fluffy's trapdoor for a while, but Harry had easily kept that from happening. Snape was a bit too loopy in the head to worry about Quirrell this time around. With the end of the year so close, Harry knew that Voldemort was running out of time, so it didn't surprise him when the secret alarm ward that he had placed on Fluffy's door mentally pinged him late one night.

Untangling himself from Hermione's nude body was more difficult than he realized. The harder he pulled away, the stronger her grip became. When he was finally able to get out of bed and stand up, he looked at Hermione and chuckled good-naturedly. She had replaced his warm body by cuddling one of his pillows. Shaking his head, he threw on some clothes and quickly went down to the trapdoor room. Harry used his Mage Sight to examine the door. He quickly deduced that Quirrell had dismantled Dumbledore's alarm without setting it off, but not Harry's hidden one. Seeing nothing else unseemly about it, Harry turned the knob and pulled the door open. He was immediately hit with the sound of an enchanted harp playing, just like the first go-round. The giant, three-headed dog was snoring peacefully right next to the open trapdoor. Closing the door behind him, Harry quietly walked to the trapdoor and examined it. It was safe to proceed. Jumping down, this time he was prepared for the soft landing. As soon as his feet touched down, a ball of fire was conjured in his hand. The Devil's Snare slithered away from him, afraid of the light and heat. It only took a few seconds before he could walk on the solid, stone floor and find the door to the next challenge.

The long corridor sloped downward, taking him further beneath the castle. It was very quiet, with only the sound of water trickling from the stone walls and ceiling to keep him company. Harry remembered being very nervous the first time he had done this. Now his heart was thumping slowly and steadily. It certainly helped to know what was coming next. Pushing the door open, Harry was met with a brilliantly lit room with high ceilings. Overhead, old-fashioned keys with wings were fluttering around like large dragonflies. Taking a second to look around, Harry spotted the key he needed. One of the wings was bent, making its flight path less than graceful. Instead of using the broom provided, Harry held up his hand and blasted the key with a high-pressured shockwave. His key and several more unlucky enough to be near it were slammed against the stone wall and clattered to the ground with metallic pings. Harry ran over and stepped on the downed key before it could fly away again. Its wings buzzed uselessly in his grip as Harry walked over to the door and jammed it in the keyhole. Turning the key, the door unlocked with a click. Harry removed the key and let it fly from his hand before entering into the next chamber.

The following room was so dark that normal human vision would struggle to see anything but the human-sized chess set in the middle of the chamber. With his Mage Sight, however, the

entire room was an explosion of colors. Harry levitated himself high into the air, drifted over to the black King piece, and hovered. From studying the colors, Harry could see that the entire physical body of the large piece had been transfigured and enlarged. There were magic strings connecting all of the pieces and the individual squares of the board. One thick magic tether connected the King to the door. Harry was certain that if he tried to open the door at that moment, all the pieces would turn and attack him with their weapons. Thankfully, there was a quick fix for that. It didn't take much effort for him to flood that tether with his own magic until it ruptured. As soon as he did, the door creaked open. Harry flew through the open door without touching the chamber's floor.

Harry didn't have to do anything in the next chamber. Quirrell's mountain troll was unconscious on the ground with a painful-looking knot on the top of its head. His nose wrinkled from the smell of stale piss emanating from the snoring troll. Entering Snape's chamber, a wall of purple flames erupted from the floor and blocked the exit. Another wall of black flames burst into life and blocked his way forward. Harry ignored the logic puzzle and the unlabeled bottles of liquid and went straight for the source. Studying the entire chamber, Harry could see that Snape was very good with his spellwork ... or at least he had been before his tragic accident had left his brain permanently muddled. The magical lines connecting the various charms and enchantments were thin as thread. Without Mage Sight, it would have been nearly impossible to track the tethers and see how they connected. There was hardly any magic leaking from them, making it very difficult for those like Dumbledore who relied on "feeling" the traces of magic. The walls of flames were both enchanted into the brickwork directly beneath the fires, protecting them from tampering. There was a trigger on the floor that activated the fire when crossed. Fortunately, Snape didn't think that there would be someone with Mage Sight trying to enter. Examining the trigger, Harry found it to be standard. There was nothing extraordinary about it. Tapping into it with his magic, Harry reset it which immediately hushed the flames. Harry walked through the doorway and found Quirrell muttering quietly while examining the Mirror of Erised. He was so engrossed that he didn't even notice Harry's arrival. Harry cleared his throat.

Quirrell's head snapped up so quickly that his turban slid down over his eyes. In a panic, he pushed it back into place and pointed his wand at Harry. Harry had to chuckle at his ineptitude. "Potter!" Quirrell snarled.

"Professor," Harry tipped his head in greeting.

"I should have known a do-gooder like you wouldn't be able to keep his nose out of my business," he stated with a sour look on his face.

"And just what business is that?" Harry asked him, angling to get a better look at the mirror.

"Never you mind!" Quirrell spat, blocking his reflection.

"Come on! Just give me a peek," Harry walked up and tried to shove him out of the way.

“ENOUGH!” Harry heard Voldemort’s high-pitched, wheezing voice from under the turban.

“Is your hat talking to me?” Harry asked in fake confusion.

“Kill the boy and get the stone!” Voldemort hissed. In response, Quirrell shoved Harry back and fired a twisted, black curse at him.

Harry angled his wrist and a metallic shield appeared on his arm. The curse slammed into it, producing a loud gong-like sound. Narrowing his eyes, Harry responded, “That wasn’t very nice.”

The metal shield suddenly rocketed from Harry’s arm, flying at a deadly speed toward his professor. Quirrell was barely able to produce a magical shield in time to keep himself from getting crushed. Even so, the force of the blow shattered his magical barrier in a shower of sparks and sent him stumbling back. Quirrell was fast with an answer. Even as he stumbled, a jet of acid sprayed from the tip of his wand. Harry waved his hand and the stream of green acid split in two, hitting the wall behind him with a menacing sizzle. With his other hand, Harry conjured a metal javelin that was hovering in the air. He launched it at Quirrell who broke his spell and jumped out of the way just before the spear imbedded itself in the wall. Quirrell growled angrily and blasted a stream of fire at Harry. Out of his palm shot a torrent of water which met Quirrell’s fire halfway. Steam billowed from the point of contact, sending a dense plume of superheated mist to the ceiling. Harry’s eyes danced with excitement. He loved dual-wielding magic. To prove his point, his other hand shot out and banished the cloud of steam right into Quirrell’s face. His fire spell cut off and his hands covered his face.

“Shit!” he screamed which was muffled by his hands. Harry then decided to have some fun and rapid-fire low-level cutting hexes at him. Quirrell was in a world of hurt. He danced around trying to avoid the bulk of the hexes, but many hit home. His robes were becoming shredded, and his body was littered with papercuts. Try as he might, he was unable to counter with any curses of his own. Harry then felt a large pulse of magic, and the hexes that were already flying fizzled out. It seemed that Voldemort had decided to add his own magic power to the mix. “Now you’re going to get it, Potter!” Quirrell cheered, the insanity clear on his face. A split second later, a wave of Fiendfyre was crashing toward him in the form of a massive, fiery serpent. Harry threw out his hand and conjured his own rolling wave of golden fire. In the time it took him to blink, the golden flames reshaped into a roaring lion. When the two fires connected, the concussion shook the walls of the chamber and rattled dust loose from the ceiling.

It was truly a sight to behold, Harry thought as his golden lion pounced and sank its jaws into the flaming basilisk. Behind the flames, Harry heard two distinct voices cry out in panic. ‘Things are getting toasty,’ Harry thought with a chuckle. Being in school for the year, he hadn’t had the chance to truly stretch his magical muscles. He was glad the school year was ending with a bang.

Harry was pumping more and more of his magic into his lion as it fought. Its long, wicked claws raked down the side of the serpent, tearing golden grooves into its side. The serpent's mouth swung open and let out an unearthly shriek. It then wrapped around the lion and attempted to constrict him, but that just allowed Harry's lion to bite down on its body. The heat in the room was getting intense as the two beasts rolled on the ground. Again, Quirrell shouted as he was nearly crushed by the animalistic flames. Finally, his lion was able to dig its claws into each side of the serpent's head and bite down ferociously on the neck. The basilisk squealed, and putrid, black smoke escaped from its mouth. The smell of brimstone filled the room. With a sickening crunch, the snake's neck snapped, and its head fell limp. The Fiendfyre collapsed on itself until it fully disappeared. Harry held out his hand, and the lion turned back into an inferno of golden flames. The flames spun through the air and turned into a thin stream while being sucked back into Harry's palm. With the room empty again, Harry got a good look at Quirrell. He didn't look too good. He was doubled over and coughing violently. When he looked back up at Harry, he discovered that his body was beginning to fall apart. From the intimate magical knowledge Harry had stolen from Voldemort's soul shard, he knew how taxing possession could be for the host. Unicorn blood wasn't cutting it anymore. There were spots on Quirrell's face and hands that looked like the flesh had died and rotted. Harry almost felt sorry for him ... almost being the key word.

He pointed his palm at his professor, and a thousand very pissed-off bees flew at Quirrell.

"AHH!" Quirrell shouted as the cloud of bees enveloped his head. He waved his wand wildly in every direction, producing a freezing mist that instantly killed many of the bees. Harry was forced to jump aside so that he wouldn't get sprayed as well. Sputtering in laughter, Harry watched on as Quirrell was forced to rip the charred turban from his head and free the bees that had crawled underneath. He was panting, and his face, which was already lobster red from the steam and sliced with dozens of papercuts, was pockmarked with angry, red welts from all the bee stings. "You incompetent fool!" Harry heard Voldemort hiss. "Show me the boy."

"Master!" Quirrell cried out, still swatting away some of the leftover bees. "You're not strong enough."

"I have enough strength left for this," Voldemort claimed as Quirrell shakily turned his back to Harry.

The back of Quirrell's head was grotesque. Most of the hair had fallen away, and Voldemort's misshapen face was jutting out of the back of his head. Quirrell's skin was stretched and raw, and a foul odor hit Harry's nose. Voldemort's beady eyes were trained on Harry. Then he opened his mouth.

"HHHHarry Potter," he hissed in a snake-like fashion. "You see what I have become ... What you've made me? I ..."

Harry's fist slammed into Voldemort's face with brutal force. Quirrell's head snapped forward, and he stumbled hard into the wall. Both Quirrell and his master screamed in pain. For Harry, it was quite cathartic. Voldemort was the cause of his shitty life. Sure, there were others who deserved their fair share of the blame, but Voldemort was the root cause. Everyone who betrayed him would pay ... starting with the Dark Lord. "KILL HIM! KILL HIM NOW!" Voldemort cried out through the pain. Just from that small skin-to-skin contact, Voldemort's face began to rot. He was rewarded with a face full of hot tar. Their screams of agony were music to Harry's ears.

Quirrell tried his best, shooting a few pathetic curses Harry's way which he easily sidestepped. Before he could fire another, however, his wand slipped from his hand. Quirrell dropped to his knees and looked at his hands. The rot had quickly spread throughout his body. "No ..." he gasped in horror as his fingers fell off his hands. "Master!" he quietly begged while the skin of his throat turned gray, then black. A few short seconds later, his body turned to dust, leaving behind his wand and empty clothes. Voldemort's wraith burst free with a rage-filled scream. The wraith shot directly toward Harry's chest, hoping to steal a bit of power from him before escaping the castle. Harry wasn't about to let that happen. From Voldemort's own memories, Harry used an old curse meant to cause pain to various types of specters. The brilliant, white light flashed, temporarily blinding Harry. Still, he heard Voldemort's terrified cry of pain before the voice faded in the distance. When he blinked his eyes a few times and regained his vision, Harry saw that he was alone in the chamber.

Quickly getting to work, he vanished Quirrell's remains and clothes while slipping his wand into his pocket. With that done, Harry walked over to the Mirror of Erised and examined it closely. It was a masterpiece of spellwork, Harry had to admit. The mirror's original enchantments were woven tightly, which made it easy to see the stuff that Dumbledore had added. Behind the mirror, placed right in the middle was a pocket dimension that held the Sorcerer's Stone. That pocket dimension was linked to one of the original enchantments. From his knowledge of his first childhood, Harry knew that that particular enchantment judged a person's desires. The way it was linked by Dumbledore, only someone who wanted the stone without the desire to use it could obtain it. With this being true, how would he go about getting it, Harry asked himself. He wanted the stone, and he definitely wanted to use it. Thinking about it for a few minutes, Harry came up with a simple solution. Pulling out his wand, Harry delicately added a second trigger right beside Dumbledore's. This was easier said than done, however. He spent close to twenty minutes adding his own without ruining the other enchantments. Once he was done, the stone could be retrieved by someone who wanted the stone with or without having the desire to use it. Testing his work, Harry walked around to the front and stood directly in front of the mirror. His reflection looked back at him. Then his reflection smirked and lifted his hand. In his hand was the Sorcerer's Stone. Reflection Harry slipped the stone into his pocket, and real Harry felt it drop into his. Pulling the stone out of his pocket, Harry examined it. He wouldn't put it past the old man to use a fake while squirreling away the real one. Judging from the immense power radiating from the blood-red stone, Harry rightly guessed that it was real.

“Flamel probably made him take a wizard’s oath,” Harry told himself as he rotated it between his fingers, marveling at the beauty of it. Coming back to his senses, Harry stuffed it in his pocket and removed the added trigger from the back of the mirror. He then made his way back through the chambers, cleaning up after himself along the way. After levitating himself through the trapdoor, Harry vanished the enchanted harp and slipped through the door before Fluffy could wake. Before going back to sleep, Harry escaped the castle using his Vanishing Cabinet and apparated directly into his mountain vault. As he did, the corpse of the dragon watched its master place the stone on a conjured pedestal. A shit-eating grin was stretched across Harry’s handsome face as he slipped back into bed a half hour later. Hermione instinctively rolled away from the pillow and draped herself across his chest.

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“Another year has passed us by ...” Dumbledore began his end-of-the-year rant as he stood at the head of the professors’ table in the Great Hall for the feast. Harry could tell he was putting on a happy facade. Quirrell was absent, and no mention of his whereabouts was given. Dumbledore looked more than a little stressed, which brought Harry much joy. “... and this year’s winner of the House Cup is ... Gryffindor!” he called out with exuberance.

The Gryffindors cheered and whooped while the Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws clapped politely. The Slytherins all looked sour and didn’t bother clapping. Slytherin House wasn’t even in the running to win for most of the year, likely due to Snape’s mental problems. Harry turned his attention to the greasy-haired Potions professor. He was staring up at the ceiling while scratching his cheek with his dinner fork. Strangely enough, he looked blissful in his ignorance. As Dumbledore clapped his hands, the decorations turned red and gold in honor of Gryffindor’s achievement. Harry received plenty of pats on the back and friendly slaps on the shoulder. He had by far earned the most points for his House. Harry thanked his fellow Gryffindors with humility, earning even more respect for his kind nature. Hermione was pressed tightly against his left side while Lavender Brown was thigh-to-thigh with him on his other side. At some point, she placed her hand on his thigh while talking to him and left it there for the rest of the feast. Up at the teachers’ table, Sinistra sent him a sexy smile and a wink. While Harry was eager to get his summer going, he had to admit, he would miss Hogwarts over the next few months.

The train ride back to King’s Cross was uneventful. The atmosphere on the train was lively as the students excitedly chatted about their summer plans. Harry shared his compartment with Hermione, Neville, and Ron Weasley. Ron wouldn’t shut up.

“This summer’s going to be epic,” he smiled happily knowing Harry would spend a portion of his summer at the Burrow. Harry wasn’t planning on being there as much as Ron believed. In Ron’s mind, the pair of best buds would be going out on daily adventures, getting their pictures in the Daily Prophet, and earning praises from the magical community. He was partially right, Harry thought. One of them would certainly be going out on adventures and getting his name in the papers. “You can sleep in my room, Harry. Mum’s going to set up an extra bed, and we can play Quidditch in the orchard and ...” he continued on while Harry tuned him out. Harry spent his

time going over his summer plans in his head. He looked at Hermione who smiled beautifully at him. Harry couldn't help but notice that Neville blushed deeply when Hermione smiled. He couldn't blame the boy. Hermione had become very beautiful since the ritual over the holiday break. Her skirt was riding up her legs and exposing the very soft and smooth skin of her thighs. It was hard not to look at her. Neville wasn't the only boy who spent a decent amount of time staring at Hermione. Sadly for them, Hermione only had eyes for him. Harry placed his hand on her thigh and stroked it. Neville looked up at him with wide, amazed eyes. Harry smiled at the timid boy, trying to show him he shouldn't be afraid of pretty girls, but he knew it was a losing cause. Neville was very shy and would probably remain so until he was older.

When the train came to a stop at the station, Harry pulled Hermione aside for a moment of private time. As soon as he did, she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him passionately. "I'll work on my mum ... I promise," she said with stars in her eyes. Harry kissed her on the forehead, making her mewl in happiness.

"I'm sure you will. I'll come see you in a few days," he promised. Hermione nodded before they went back to collect their stuff. Exiting the train, Hermione sent him one last look before she went to find her parents. Harry spotted Molly Weasley who waved at him and her sons. Ginny was by her side, blushing madly.

"Hey, Mum!" Ron happily chirped as he limped up to her. His back and legs would never be the same after his "accidents".

"Boys," she greeted her sons. "I have some good news for you. All of you boys are going to be spending the summer in Romania with Charlie," she excitedly told them. Percy pulled a face, clearly not liking the idea. The twins seemed relatively excited. Ron had a look of horror on his face.

"But mum ... Harry ..." he sputtered, jabbing his thumb in Harry's direction.

"Don't worry, Ronnie ... I'll make sure Harry is well taken care of," she assured him. "After your father's tragic accident, I need the extra time to keep looking for a job. Money is very tight at the moment, and your brother generously agreed to take you in until the next school year starts," Molly explained.

"But, but ..." Ron's dreams of exciting adventures with the Boy Who Lived were immediately flushed down the toilet. "What about Ginny?" he asked in anger. "Why doesn't she have to go?" he whined.

"A dragon reserve is no place for a young lady," Molly scowled at the angry boy. "Charlie will arrive tomorrow morning to take you back with him. Make sure you're all packed for the summer," she told them. Ron continued to mutter under his breath.

Harry immediately wondered what she was doing. He obviously couldn't trust the woman, but at least he wouldn't have to deal with Ron for the small portion of the summer he was planning on staying there. He'd have to stay vigilant.

"Now come along, dears. I promise you'll all have the best summer of your lives," Molly stated, looking at Harry in particular.