

Harry walked deep into the Forbidden Forest, crossing into Acromantula territory with Umbridge floating by his side. The Horus glasses allowed him to see the giant spiders, keeping their many eyes trained on him from all directions. There were many spiders quietly moving into position above him on the branches of the trees, readying themselves to jump on him from their webs.

A brave Acromantula, the size of a bulldog, jumped on Umbridge but was repelled away by the protective bubble flaring up at the last moment. The giant spider screeched in pain as it violently smashed into the ground, kicking up sand and dust. It thrashed on the ground indignantly at being denied its prey and snapped its pincers at him menacingly.

“Shush now, little spider. I’ve come here to speak with Aragog. Now, be a good lad and tell the fellow Harry Potter has come to see him.” Harry made a shooing motion at the spider, which only made it more mad.

Two Acromantulas tried to take him from his back, but Harry was already aware of the two. Swiftly turning on his heels, Harry let loose two consecutive blasting curses that made the two giant spiders smash into trees. They fell down with a few legs broken, whimpering and screeching in pain.

“Now, don’t be like that. This won’t be like the last time, you little buggers. I’ll have you all burned to ashes if you don’t behave.” Harry shouted, but many more screeches and menacing clicking of pincers filled the air.

“All right, you little buggers. You only understand one language. Power!” Harry scowled, raising his wand above his head as he gathered his magic for a spell.

*“Torrens Incendio.”*

Bright red flames blasted out of his wand, saturating the air with heat. Long tongues of fire snaked out and lashed against the hairy beasts, leaving searing gashes on its body. The smart ones in the lot fled as soon as heat bared down upon them, while the idiotic ones tried to kill him straight-up. Harry burned them without remorse, but he made sure not to kill them. He also had to cover himself and Umbridge under the bubble head charm as the heat made breathing harder.

“Stop!”

A loud voice shouted from the darkness, making the Acromantulas surrounding Harry suspend their activities. They screeched but fell back quickly, giving Harry space. After ensuring the spiders had withdrawn, Harry withdrew the fire into his wand, keeping the shield and bubble head charm intact. Slowly, Harry walked forward with an unconscious Umbridge floating behind him until he came across a steep slope leading to a large clearing. The sky could be seen clearly, with twilight slowly passing to welcome the night and the stars covering the sky's expanse.

“You...I should know you. Your smell is familiar.” Aragog spoke from the giant cocoon of webs that covered the gigantic Acromantula.

Harry stared at the elephant-sized Acromantula for a moment in stunned silence. The grey hairy legs, a giant dome for a head with many large milky-white eyes and the pincers the size of an elephant’s tusks made Harry uneasy. He tightened his hold on his wand as he walked a few steps forward.

“I’m Harry Potter. I’ve come to speak to you with a mutually beneficial proposition, Aragog.” said Harry.

“Harry Potter? Ah, yes. I remember now. You are Hagrid’s friend.” Aragog rumbled.

“Yes. We met two years back.” Harry said frostily.

“Ah, yes. My sons and daughter were disappointed indeed. Very disappointed. We rarely get fresh meat of a wizard.” Aragog said fiercely.

The spiders surrounding Aragog clicked their pincers menacingly, agreeing with Aragog.

“And that’s what I can offer you, Aragog. I can offer you a steady supply of delicious flesh from wizards and magical creatures. Your family can feast on fresh blood and flesh to their heart's content.” Harry said silkily, ensuring his voice reached the many spiders surrounding Aragog.

Harry could see the chatter among the Acromantula clan pick up. But any conversation was difficult to follow because of their constant snapping of pincers.

“Oh! You want to give my family flesh from your own kind. Why?” Aragog asked warily.

“There is going to be a war among the wizards. There’ll be many dead wizards, and I suppose there is also something that I want from your family.”

“What is that?” Aragog asked, intrigued by the wizard’s offer and information about a war among the wizards.

“Acromantula silk. I’ll give you fresh meat, and you’ll pay me ten times the weight in silk.” Harry offered.

“Ha!” Aragog chuckled. “Do you take me for a fool, Harry Potter? I know the worth of our silk amongst your kind.”

“And I know that your family likes to hunt. I’ll make sure to deliver them alive with their magic bound. That’s my final offer. Take it or leave it.”

The excited chatter from the Acromantula clan surrounding Aragog filled the clearing. Harry got the feeling that the offer of hunting wizards or magical creatures excited the giant spiders.

“I even have the first shipment for your children to enjoy.” said Harry, pointing his wand at the floating prone form of Umbridge.

The chatter only increased among the Acromantula as their eager eyes were suddenly trained on Umbridge.

“You drive a hard bargain, Harry Potter. But my family seems interested in what you offer.” Aragog rumbled.

Harry floated Umbridge away from the protective shield surrounding him. But he kept her at a sufficient height, making the Acromantula clamour beneath her, eager to get their pincers around Umbridge.

“You are the elder of your family. You make the decision, Aragog. Your family awaits your word.” said Harry, standing back and watching the pressure mounted on the old Acromantula.

“All right then, Harry Potter. We have an accord.” the giant spider rumbled after a moment of consideration.

“Good.” Harry smiled, reenergizing Umbridge from the suspended animation before dropping her on her ass.

Umbridge fell on the ground, wandless and without any means to fight back. The Undersecretary of Minister for Magic screamed as she was picked up by an Acromantula by her waist using its pincers, keeping her upside down.

“No! Release me. I’m the Undersecretaryeeeeeyyyyyy!”

“She’ll be a bit handful, but I believe your family will enjoy feasting on her flesh.” Harry turned away from the screaming Umbridge, who was carried away into the darkness of the forest by several eager Acromantula.

“I believe we shall, Harry Potter. Now then, as a sign of goodwill, you may take our silk as much as you need.” Aragog said, a tad upbeat.

“Kreacher.” Harry called, and the old elf teleported to his side immediately. “Take the silk, but make sure you only take ten times the weight of Umbridge.”

“Yes, master.” Kreacher popped away.

Harry was gearing up to ask Sirius to transfer Kreacher to his custody. The old elf of the Blacks enjoyed working on shady deals like this and was an expert in extracting useful parts from magical creatures. Dobby and Winky were his good pals, but they were a little squeamish after he employed their aid in gunning down the inner circle Death Eaters of Voldemort. They’d oblige any order he gave them, but he knew they didn’t enjoy work of shady nature, and therefore, he chose to leave them out of this deal. Kreacher, on the other hand, approved such business deals that harm others.

According to Kreacher, his ‘Black blood was showing’ by making these deals. Kreacher’s passion for being a Black elf might actually keep the little guy from agreeing to work for him on a more permanent basis. Harry kept those thoughts away and focused on the milky white eyes of Aragog.

“I needn’t tell you that our arrangement remains a secret even from Hagrid.” Harry reminded the giant spider.

“Of course, I know.” Aragog grumbled.

“Good. If someone were to know of our arrangement, your meat supply would end, and I’d be forced to act against you.” Harry threatened, only to receive an amused chuckle in return from Aragog.

“You...?” Aragog laughed. “You think you can threaten me, Harry Potter?”

“Threaten? No, not at all. It was a promise.” said Harry, unleashing bright torrents of fire that formed a cocoon around Harry and spread out into the Acromantula colony.

The heat and light created by the spell kept the smaller Acromantula away until Harry had Aragog surrounded in a ring of fire.

“You should know that the Harry Potter you knew three years back is not the same Harry Potter that stands before you. Keep that in mind, Aragog.” Harry warned before cancelling the fire and restoring the whole area with a simple flick of his wand.

Kreacher returned to his side carrying a large bundle of Acromantula silk.

“Kreacher has the silk, young master.” Kreacher muttered, shooting nasty looks at the spiders.

“Thank you, Kreacher. Keep it safe.” said Harry.

Kreacher nodded before popping away.

"I hope you heed my warning, Aragog. For your and your family's sake, I hope we remain on good terms." said Harry before assuming his spectral form and flying away.

Harry appeared near the edge of the Forbidden Forest before calling Dobby.

"Master Harry, What be Dobby do's for you, sir?" Dobby happily asked, bouncing on his feet in excitement.

"Hey, Dobby. I need you to do what we discussed in Umbridge's room. Pack everything, but only take the essential things with you. Take care not to leave a trace or someone from seeing you." Harry ordered.

The plan was to make it look like Umbridge ran away trying to escape the Ministry enquiry. A few features in the Prophet should neatly tie up any loose ends, and the Ministry would soon leave Umbridge alone as they'd have bigger fish to fry soon enough.

"Dobby be's doing that, sir." said Dobby before popping away.

With Dobby gone, Harry was about to check the Marauders' Map to sneak back into the castle, but he was suddenly bombarded by visions of Sirius and Andromeda Tonks getting tortured by Voldemort in the Ministry. He even saw the door leading to the Department of Mysteries clearly in the visions before it abruptly cut off.

"Winky." Harry called, and Winky popped into existence before him within the blink of his eyes.

"Master, what can Winky do for you?"

"Tell Sirius that the game is afoot for the prophecy orb. He'll understand what to do next."

"As you wish, Master Harry." Winky said before popping away.

Harry immediately took out the locket secured on a chain around his neck. Pressing the tip of his wand against the locket, Harry reached out to a select group of friends and sent a message. After that, Harry went to the Seventh floor and opened the Room of Requirement. The room connected itself to the secret spots inside the common rooms so his friends could walk in as usual during a Knights' meeting.

"It's happening. Voldemort has sent his Death Eaters into the Ministry." Harry said once all his friends arrived.

"You never explain why You-Know-Who would send his followers to the Ministry and wait for you, Harry." said Tracey.

"Because the Department of Mysteries holds a prophecy orb that foretold the fall of Voldemort. Voldemort never heard the full contents of the prophecy last time. He heard a portion of it and thought to eliminate me, and you know what happened next." Harry explained.

"So, he wants to know the full content of the prophecy because he is afraid of you. He fears you more than he fears Dumbledore." Daphne said, a strange gleam in her eyes as she stared at Harry like she saw him for the first time.

"Well... I call it Potterphobia." Harry shrugged.

"Wrackspurts. My father wrote a feature on what ails the Dark Lord after the war. Wrackspurts are turning his brain fuzzy." Luna said dreamily, her pale blue eyes gleaming with a subtle hint of mirth.

"It might as well be the case, Luna." Harry said fondly, trying his best not to laugh at the notion that some invisible magical creature was making Voldemort bad by buzzing through his ears.

Clearing his throat, Harry addressed the rest of his friends.

"Anyway, Voldemort is sitting back in his abode, waiting for the Death Eaters to capture me while I lift the prophecy orb from the shelf. Before you ask, all prophecies in the Department of Mysteries can only be safely taken by the people the prophecy mentions."

"So...what's our plan? Tell on the Death Eaters to Dumbledore and the aurors?" Ron asked eagerly.

"No. Capturing Death Eaters won't do the trick. I have two plans. The twins already helped me set up Plan A. That plan hopes to capture Voldemort alive and throw his physical body into the Veil of Death in the Department of Mysteries. No one has survived an execution through the Veil, and I'm hoping the Dark Lord won't be able to resurrect himself if his body and soul are trapped behind the Veil."

Harry took a deep breath and immediately continued before anyone could interrupt him.

"Plan B kicks in if our plan to incapacitate Voldemort fails. It means I'll have to fight him face to face in a straight magical duel on even terms."

"But Harry... Voldemort is too dangerous. You said it yourself; he has got a body now and had a year to get familiar with his new body. What if he..." Hermione trailed off, looking fearfully at him.

"He won't. He's not the only one who has grown over the last year, Hermione." said Harry, his eyes holding firm as he believed he had sufficient skill on his side and half the battle was always keeping the battlefield in his favour.

"However, a word of warning to everyone. If you want to be a part of this, you'll strictly follow my instructions and never try to make a go at the Dark Lord. Even if you see me getting overwhelmed or injured by the Dark Lord, you'll not come between us. Your sole focus will be on the Death Eaters. Am I understood?"

Harry looked at each of his friends assembled in the RoR. Katie, Luna, Hermione, Neville, Ron, Ginny, George, Fred, Tracey, Daphne, Cedric Diggory and Barbara Collins stood facing him, ready to embark on a perilous journey. Cedric and Barbara Collins were last-minute additions, and he wanted to keep them as a backup. Cedric, being Head Boy and a fellow Champion last year, made the guy one of the most skilled wizards in the group. Barbara's knowledge of the Dark Arts was impeccable, and Harry was quite satisfied with her performance in the Knights. Not to mention, Barbara was also the Head Girl, which gained her a lot of freedom to act within Hogwarts to cover for Daphne and Tracey.

"Okay. Now, explain your plan, Potter. Let's see whether you need the help of a Slytherin in your Gryffindorish plan." Tracey said, looking rather excited.

"Give me five minutes of your time. I'll be accepting your apologies after that." Harry said confidently, grinning at Tracey.

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"Are everyone clear on the plan?" Harry asked one last time after explaining everything in detail.

It was not a complicated plan per se. He had built-in safeguards for keeping everyone safe and sound with the help of the Weasley twins and Sirius. Besides, he had trained them all for their roles during the many training sessions. Of course, he hadn't explained the plan to any of them during those sessions, but they were pretty much ready.

Seeing that no one had anything to say, Harry decided to proceed.

"All right. Follow me." Harry led them to the corner of the RoR and yanked open a red door. "After you."

Harry was the last to step into the secret tunnel, and together, they slowly walked the length of the secret passage until they found themselves facing a ladder leading them to a small wooden hatch. One by one, they climbed the ladder and found themselves behind some trees in the Forbidden Forest. Dobby, Winky and Kreacher were waiting for them with all the essentials Harry's group needed for the mission that lay ahead.

"Everyone, you'll be using these cloaks for the mission ahead. They are made from Basilisk skin. If, for some reason, you cannot conjure a shield, use the cloak to protect yourself from enemy spells." said Harry, as Dobby and Winky handed everyone cloaks made of the gleaming green scales of a thousand-year-old Basilisk.

"Cloaks made of Basilisk skin! How in Merlin's name did you get this Potter?" Barbara asked, her dark eyes greedily looking at the cloak in her hands.

"Killed a thousand-year-old hungry Basilisk in my second year." Harry said with a shrug of his shoulders, making Barbara stare at him with a dropped jaw.

"What?" Harry raised an eyebrow. "That thing was giving me a bad rep in school."

"Of course. Only a Gryffindor would consider being called the Heir of Slytherin a bad rep." Tracey snarked.

"If it lands me in Azkaban, then yeah. I'll stick with Gryffindor, thank you." Harry shot back.

It took them a little over ten minutes to prepare before they teleported away, thanks to Dobby, Winky and Kreacher. For some asinine reason, the Ministry was vacant. Not a soul could be seen in the Ministry atrium. Despite that, the group remained invisible under the disillusion charm as they quietly walked through the atrium towards the lifts. Along the way, Harry saw the fountain of Magical Brethren. The security guard who was supposed to screen people was also not present on his post. He could even see the brass scale that was supposed to check the wands of visitors on the desk on his way towards the golden gates. The gates remained open, and they immediately found the lift that was supposed to take them to the Department of Mysteries.

"Gentlemen, ladies, if you have any second thoughts, now is the time." said Harry, pulling the golden grill of the lift to the side and simultaneously cancelling the disillusion charm as well.

"We're with you, Harry. Let's do this." Cedric said resolutely. "What we do today will make a difference. If we are lucky, we'll make sure the worst Death eaters are no longer free. If we're even more lucky, we'll put an end to the war before it starts. So, let's finish this tonight."

"Cedric is right. Let's finish this here." Neville said, nodding firmly while gripping his wand closely.

"Very well. Let's finish the war our elders couldn't finish." said Harry, welcoming everyone into the lift.

“Department of Mysteries.” Harry said to no one in the lift.

The grill slammed shut, and the lift started moving down until it stopped at a floor where no one was in sight.

“If this is the security of the Ministry, I wonder why the Dark Lord is even bothering to fight this war in the shadows. He could just waltz right in and win the war easily.” Barbara muttered darkly.

Harry agreed wholeheartedly with the Head Girl’s assessment. Only the sound of flickering torches along the walls of a lengthy corridor made a sound. Everyone in their group wore dragonhide boots, but they were charmed not to make a sound. They traversed the dimly lit corridor until they reached the plain black door that was the entrance of the Department of Mysteries.

“All right, everyone. Place your half-masks and glasses and cover your head with your hoods. Your masks will filter the air, and the glasses will allow you to see clearly in the dark. Place sticking charms on all of them as well.” Harry instructed.

Harry nodded at them when they complied with everything, and they turned invisible again. Harry remained visible, and he pushed open the door to the department. The tip of his wand lit up with bright white light, and Harry stepped inside, closely followed by his invisible friends. Harry closed the door once he was inside, and the walls around him immediately rotated. The door he walked through shifted away. But Harry didn’t care one whit as he moved forward.

There were many doors before him, but Harry chose a random door and stepped inside. Unfortunately, he took the wrong door. He ended up inside a large chamber with an archway in the middle. The Horus glasses allowed him to see in the dark so he could see the Veil fluttering in the archway.

“Nope. Not this one.” Harry muttered before stepping back from the chamber.

Harry trusted his friends had followed him back from the chamber when he heard the door shut behind him. Nonetheless, Harry marked the door with a colour-changing charm, changing the pitch-black door into bright yellow. Harry tried the next door, and luck was on his side as it revealed a long hallway filled with clocks – large and small on either side of the hall. But at the end of the hall, Harry saw the gleaming jewel on a door.

‘This is it.’ Harry thought, striding towards the jewel-encrusted door.

Harry took hold of the door with his magic and willed it to open. Trusting his friends to follow and do their part, Harry strode forward through the open door into a large chamber filled to the brim with glass orbs on the many selves.

Harry made a show of looking around while he subtly showed a thumbs-up to his invisible friends. He waited by the door for some time, giving ample time for his friends to get in position. While this was happening, Harry kept track of the hidden Death Eaters, staying still in the darkness. It was the height of arrogance for the Death eaters to so brazenly stand in the dark without a disillusion charm. He supposed they thought their dark robes were perfect to blend into the dark.

Harry slowly moved forward as he walked between familiar shelves until he reached the stand where the fake prophecy orb was left in place of the original. Instead of touching the fake orb, Harry looked around, subtly taking a packet from his pocket. The pendant tied around his neck shivered twelve times, letting him know his friends were in position.

"I find it interesting that you'd hide in the dark like common criminals. Come now, Death eaters. Are you so afraid of a fifth-year Hogwarts student? What would your noseless master think of you?" Harry snickered, hearing a shriek of rage coming from the darkness.

"Stop it, Bellatrix. Remember our orders." Lucius hissed.

Soon, the Death Eaters came into the light, surrounding Harry from all sides, making Harry whistle appreciatively.

"Well, I'm pleased. That's a lot of Death Eaters. Mr Noseless must be thinking highly of my abilities, or he thinks so low of your abilities to handle a fifth-year Hogwarts student." Harry chuckled.

"You have a loud mouth on you, Potter. But you are surrounded. Your fake bravado will not save you from the darkness cast by our lord." a masked Death eater growled.

"You sasses think your master knows darkness. Unfortunately for you, my masked friends, Darkness is my ally." Harry said coldly before throwing the packet in his hand straight up.

The eyes of the Death Eaters followed the packet, which expanded in size as Harry enlarged the packet while it flew straight up. He followed up the throw with a spell so that the contents of the packet get perfect delivery.

*"Reducto."*

The packet exploded high in the air, a few inches above the tallest shelves, hosting many glass orbs. The Peruvian Instant Darkness Powder Fred and George Weasley had imported from Peru courtesy of Sirius. This powder was slightly modified, however, by none other than Remus Lupin. Harry applied slight wind spells that spread the powder in all directions, ensuring it affected the entire room. The room went dark as he could see the Death Eaters panic while Harry slipped past them quickly. The Horus glasses he was using allowed him to see through the powder, thanks to Remus tweaking the powder slightly with charms.

Like Harry, his friends could also see clearly in the dark, and all their wands were now trained on the Death Eaters.

'You might be experienced wizards with decades of combat experience. But strategy is the cornerstone in winning battles.' Harry thought, raising his wand and taking aim like his friends while falling to his knees and keeping the Basilisk skin cloak as a shield.

*"Confringo."* Harry silently cast the spell, blasting Bellatrix off her feet, followed by his favourite dark cutting curse.

*"Sectumsempra."*

Harry watched in slow motion as the cutting curse severed the wand arm of Bellatrix at the wrist.

'Lucky shot.' Harry mused, watching coldly as Bellatrix thrashed around blindly on the ground in a pool of blood while her palm lay motionless by her side.

He was not the only one. Brightly lit spells smashed straight into the Death eaters from the wands of his friends from all sides.

'Now, the battle has begun.' Harry thought as more screams filled the air.



But he was not done, not by a long shot. Harry carefully withdrew as he observed his friends handling the Death Eaters expertly. It was now time for the next part of the plan. After all, he had a Dark Lord to kill.