

Chapter III

Visiting Hogwarts

"Ah, I am happy to see you and yours," Mister Ollivander said. "Eleven inch beech wood and dragon heartstring, and nine inch ebony and phoenix feather. And I always enjoy matching twins, although I'm sure you two know yourselves to be different enough not to be surprised if your wands are completely different."

"I would hope so," James said.

Ollivander smiled. "My old friend Albus Dumbledore wagered me that one of you could guess at what wands might match. Which of you would like to guess?"

"I'd guess . . . oak and dragon for me and rose wood and unicorn for Harry," James said, half teasingly.

"Eleven inch mahogany and either dragon heartstring or a griffin feather for James, and an eleven inch holly and phoenix feather for me," Harry said convincingly. He knew that Dumbledore had likely set this up as a test, one which Harry was reluctantly going along with.

"I don't use griffin feather," Ollivander said, stunned. "However, I do sometimes trade with a wand maker in North America, and one just came in last week." He went into the back, and when he came back he set six wands in front of James and two in front of Harry.

Harry quickly picked up his holly and phoenix feather wand, and the shop was filled with bright light and phoenix song for several seconds. "Should I try the other?" Harry asked blandly.

Ollivander recovered first. "I have NEVER seen that powerful of a reaction from ANY wand, not even a custom designed one."

Harry merely asked, "Father, may I have a wrist holster for this?" as James tried his wands out.

Needless to say, Harry and James both got wrist holsters, and James matched the mahogany and griffin feather wand.

That night, Harold was telling his father about the trip. "So," Henry asked his son, "what bothered you the most? His confronting the Black girl with the truth, his being able to predict the wands, or the reaction he had with his wand?"

"All three," Harold admitted. "Ignoring the predictions, it was bad enough that James set himself up as he did by knocking out that thug last May. Now Harry has set himself against everything this Voldemort and his hangers-on value." Harold frowned. "Was Voldemort really this Riddle?" Harold had left Hogwarts a few years before Riddle had been a First year Slytherin, and therefore had had no reason to notice the scruffy orphan.

"According to Dumbledore, yes," Henry said. "Young Harry has changed a great deal after his encounter with the Killing Curse. Part of that has to do with something which we will likely never understand, and which I doubt could ever be replicated."

"And what's that?" Harold asked.

"Harry's magical core has somehow changed," Henry answered. "He has become a natural magic user."

"A what?"

"That's what I call it, anyway," Henry said. "That boy already has more control over his magic than I ever had, and more power, too."

Harold's jaw went slack. His father's power was nearly on the order of Dumbledore's.

"Add to that a noble streak as wide as any Potter's, and at least I know this boy will never be tempted to be really Dark," Henry went on. "Now, son, I don't think I have much time left on this old Earth." Henry sighed. "I have some ideas I need to talk to you about, and then we can come back to the two remarkable boys you have."

It was almost a week before Harold caught up with his younger (by nearly 15 minutes) son. James was outside, riding his Shooting Star. "Not up for broom riding?" Harold asked.

"Not today," Harry answered.

"Why not?"

Harry looked torn.

"Just spit it out, son," Harold said. "I really want to know."

"I don't know what I used to be like, but I think James must have overshadowed me," Harry said. "Now, it's like he lost his brother and is competing with a stranger. It doesn't help him, although it does me, that Grandfather seems to favor me over James, just like it helps him but not me that you and to a lesser degree Mum feel the same way about me that James does."

"Oh, Harry," Harold said, realizing that it was true and feeling very guilty about it, "I'm so sorry. . . ."

"I understand," Harry said. "You probably feel at times like I'm a cuckoo in the Potter nest, except that you do love me. And I don't think James hates me or anything, let alone you or Mum feeling that way. I think he resents me, but I think he might actually like or at least respect me a bit more than he used to."

"I suppose," Harold said, still feeling his way. "I know this has been difficult for you, son. I hope you can forgive all of us."

"I do, Dad," Harry said, his eleven year-old emotions overtaking him. Harold pulled Harry into an embrace, and Harry luxuriated in feeling paternal love.

Harry blossomed emotionally over June and July, under the love his new father, mother, and grandfather showered on him. Harry was also working out a decent relationship with his brother. The main cloud on the horizon was the deteriorating health of Henry. He was only in his late 80s, solid middle age for a wizard of his power, when he died in early August.

The funeral was large, as Henry Potter had been a popular, powerful, and well-respected member of the Ministry for almost seventy years. Harry didn't know most of the people who came to pay their respects to the family after the services, and only recognized Alastor Moody because he had appeared slightly less damaged than the Moody he knew from the Penseive memories he had seen during his Fourth year -- Harry never would have seen this man in the Moody he had known personally. This Moody was actually in pretty good shape, and cautious rather than paranoid. He had obviously had a very hard war the first time around.

The only people invited to the will reading in mid-August were Harold and Mary, James, Harry, and the childless widow of Harold's younger brother, Charlus, who had died from a German 'buzz-bomb' hitting his house during the closing months of World War II.

Mrs. Potter left after being assured that her pension would continue and that the lease on her house was still a life-lease. Harry and James had been surprised to learn that their grandfather had also left them each a vault ('and contents'). All else, other than some personal mementos, went to Harold.

After they were finished, Harold took his two sons to Gringotts, while Mary went back home. The three Potters took the ride down into the vaults, stopping first at vault 696. "This is your personal vault, James. You and Harry were each left the same amount of Galleons, 90,000 at the moment." James and Harry's eyes went wide. "You get 60,000 more when you turn 17, and the final 60,000 when you turn 20. He also left each of you an invisibility cloak. Well, he bought a new one for you, James, and I'm giving you, Harry, the one he used at work. He may have left each of you other things as well. Now, neither of you are to spend that money without your mother or I knowing about it," Harold warned. "Anything else is yours to do with as you think best. Do you both understand?" James and Harry nodded.

"Now, as I said, this is your vault, James. Ragnok will take you to see yours, Harry."

"Yes, Father." Harry got back into the cart, and was not really surprised to end up walking to vault 687. "Thank you for taking the time to take us yourself, Honored Ragnok," Harry said in Gobbledegook.

Ragnok blinked in surprise.

"I see from your uniform that you are the Head of the Vault Servers," Harry said. Harry knew Ragnok would become the Head of this Branch in his own time line.

"You know a surprising amount about us, Master Potter," Ragnok observed in the same language.

"Unlike most, I honor you as my magical cousins, as truly my family, not my servants," Harry replied as Ragnok opened the door.

"You may be a wizard worth knowing for more than mere personalities," Ragnok agreed. "Remember. . . ."

"I am not to TAKE any money," Harry said. "Could you invest, say, 50,000 for me in Muggle businesses and use 10,000 in your commodities exchange with the Muggles, or is that only for goblins?"

"It is for goblins, and friends of goblins."

"I shall owl you a list of businesses I wish to invest in," Harry said. "Should you ever find me worthy, I shall send along my permission for the other investments."

Harry glanced around and collected the invisibility cloak. He frowned at the only other thing in the vault, other than the pile of Galleons. Harry lifted the end off the barrel and his eyebrows went up. The small barrel was filled with jewels -- emeralds, rubies, diamonds.

"Your Grandfather had great faith in you, Master Potter," Ragnok said. "We shall watch your investments and let you know if we will allow you in on our most profitable investment."

Harry bowed. Hermione had done some quick research for him, and he had a list of businesses to invest in if he had the chances, which would grow some six times faster in its worst year than the stock market indices and would need only one major adjustment in 1980, when Harry would have to move some money into tech stocks. He might have done a bit better, but wanted to invest 1000 Galleons into Grunnings, just to keep some options open should he ever have to deal with Vernon Dursley.

These investments would earn him entree to automatic investments with the goblins in late 1972, although they had considered him a 'friend' before then.

Once the three Potters were back in the cart, Harold said, "We have three other vaults. One is a security vault, number Seven- eleven. We will visit it sometime after you two turn seventeen. We have a larger treasure vault, number One hundred-and-two. We also have what is called a Trust Vault, number Twenty-one." Harold smiled. "The first ten vaults are special vaults. The next ten belong to the bank itself. Numbers Twenty-one through One hundred are the family trust vaults. Should a family truly die out or fully merge with another with a similar vault, or even go totally bankrupt, the Trust Vault will disappear. The remaining Trust Vaults expand to take up the room, they are not re-let." He turned to Ragnok. "Excuse me. How many Trust Vaults are there now?"

"We have forty-two still active, Mister Potter," Ragnok said as he started the cart. "Twelve others are somewhat inactive, as the families still exist but really live overseas."

"The Potters are one of the oldest families as we are now organized," Harold said. "We have also been more interested in commerce than most, magical and Muggle."

"What about families like the Blacks and the Malfoys?" James asked.

"We came out of the so-called Dark Ages early," Harold said. "The Potters start with Harold the Potterer back in the late-Tenth century. We ran the major magical pottery business in Britain for the next three hundred years, and still have investments in the pottery and porcelain industries, magical and Muggle. The Blacks are about two generations later, and the Malfoys a generation after that."

"Who do the first ten vaults belong to?" Harry asked, although he already knew.

"That's where we are going," Harold said.

James was thrilled to see several security dragons as they made their way into the depths of the system. The cart line ended at a small plain door with six

goblin warriors standing guard. Ragnok talked with them and then gestured to the three Potters.

They walked through the door and into a long natural cavern, a fair sized semi-circle with ten large bronze doors, each with a nine inch clear quartz circle at the center of each door.

"Here we have the Founding Vaults," Ragnok said. "The first is the vault of Merlin himself. Well, it has relics of his, at any rate, according to legend. No one has been allowed access since Godric Gryffindor. The next three belonged to the other great wizards who actually created the start of this system, but which now seem to be unaccessible. The next vault was Salazar Slytherin's, then Roweena Ravenclaw, Helga Hufflepuff, and Godric Gryffindor, the Founders of Hogwarts, in other words. Any blood descendent may ask for access to their vaults as may the Heads of the individual Houses, but none may remove anything original from one of the Four Founders' vaults. The next vault is accessible by the Headmaster of Hogwarts alone. The final vault stores the magical treasures of the British royal family."

"Now, anyone who has the right of access to any of these vaults may ask for access to the others. If you are willing to take 'no' for an answer, there is no penalty. If you ever try to force entry, you will die. Merlin himself guaranteed that, as he came up with the spells, which his successors used here. There are no known actual treasures in any of the vaults, other than Hogwarts' and the Royal Vault. What the Founders' Vaults do have are records from the Founders and other such items."

"We are the senior branch descended from Godric Gryffindor still resident in Britain," Harold said. "We are also descended from Helga Hufflepuff. Your mother is descended from Roweena Ravenclaw, although there are more senior Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw families. You should touch at least those three quartz panels. The guardian will talk with your mind. Do NOT argue it." Harold glared at them, and the sight of their usually mild-mannered father doing so impressed the two boys. "It will likely say either you may be permitted someday or are not currently allowed entry."

James of course wanted to try all ten. He was pleased that he someday would likely have entree to the Gryffindor and Ravenclaw vaults, but would have to behave better if he ever wanted to access to Hufflepuff's. Harry said that he had been granted access to all three of those Founders' Vaults.

In reality, however, Harry had been told he could access any of the vaults other than the royal one. He had the longest conversation with Slytherin's vault, trying ascertain that the diary was not hidden there and to convince it not to allow Tom Riddle access ever again. The vault had replied that Riddle had stored nothing, and that it would have to verify the evil Voldemort was now engaged with, but acknowledged that seemed to be only a formality. It recognized Harry as being a magical heir to Slytherin. As an acknowledged heir to all four Founders, Harry would have access to the Hogwarts vault as well,

although he would not be able to touch any of the monies in the first chamber of that vault system.

Neither Harold nor James noticed the shocked look on Ragnok's face, for he had some idea of what the vaults had told Harry. The boy was an Heir to the Founders, to the Vault Makers (as they were known to the Goblins), and even to Merlin.

He was indeed a young wizard to watch.

Two days later, Harold approached Harry with an offer from Dumbledore to stay for a while at Hogwarts, from the next day (Thursday, August 19) through the following Monday at Hogwarts. The excuse Dumbledore had made was that since the castle would be empty except for Dumbledore and Hagrid (and the elves), Dumbledore would try Legilimency to see if he could recover any of Harry's memories.

Instead, they had other things to do.

That very first night, they went down into the Chamber of Secrets -- Harry surprising Dumbledore by his knowledge of Parseltongue. Despite many gentle inquiries over the rest of Harry's time in the castle, he refused to reveal any of his other powers. Harry's possession of mage sight and his Animagus ability, among others, would be useful, he knew, in part depending on how secret he kept them.

They killed the basilisk with crowing roosters, as that sound was lethal to any basilisk. Dumbledore would spend many weeks reducing its corpse to potion ingredients, placing a 1/3 share of the profits into Harry's Gringotts' investment fund (Dumbledore also took a third, and they donated the rest to Hogwarts itself).

After the great snake was dead, Harry led Dumbledore through the exit of the Chamber deep into the mountains beyond Hogwarts. In a Chamber mirroring the Chamber of Secrets near the final exit, they seized Hufflepuff's Cup. Dumbledore warded the exit and various spots along the way back to the school, so that Voldemort would not have easy access, and no access without giving ample warnings.

The next night, they recovered Slytherin's locket from the tidal lake filled with Inferi. Harry had managed to give Dumbledore a good idea of what the potion in the basin might be and so Harry was able feed Dumbledore an antidote after they had left with locket. Dumbledore would still be weak for the next week, despite the antidote.

Sunday morning, they destroyed those two Horcruxes and the ring Dumbledore had recovered from the Gaunts'. Harry kept the broken ring, while Dumbledore would place the other two founders' relics in the vault at Gringotts. Only the diary stood in the way between Voldemort and true death, but they had no idea where Voldemort might be hiding it.

Lucius Malfoy would be a Fifth year student and his father had been a few years ahead of Tom Riddle, but had become an unMarked supporter, Harry knew, in the early 1950s. However, just because the diary had ended up at Malfoy Manor at some point before November, 1981, was no reason to be certain that it was there 10 years earlier. Voldemort was currently suspected of being behind the Death Eaters, but the public had not yet made the connections. That hadn't happened the last time until 1973, which was when Voldemort had been outlawed. Even then, the Ministry had taken little action against suspected supporters.

Most of their free time during the days were spent with Harry recounting as much as he knew about Voldemort's first and second rise to power. Dumbledore was surprised at how manipulatively he had treated Harry Potter in the original time stream. He also had to reevaluate how passive he had been in dealing with Tom Riddle, as a student and afterwards.

For over twenty years before Riddle had been a student, Dumbledore had been active in the struggle against Grindelwald, who was using magic to try and destroy Muggle civilization. Grindelwald had triggered several minor wars and what became World War I, and had helped push the Russian Revolution into its more blood thirsty massacres, although he had in turn been surprised at how ruthlessly the Bolsheviks had turned on his wizarding stooges in 1920. From there, Grindelwald had turned towards manipulating the extreme right in Germany, and ended up helping Hitler rise to power.

Several groups around Europe had tried combating these actions, and Dumbledore had been one of the instrumental founders of one such group in Britain in the 1910s, and in coordinating several groups across Europe in the 1930s and 40s. He had had little time for seeking out one illegitimate Half-blood orphaned baby in January, 1927. He had noticed how powerful and even Dark young Riddle was becoming, but had no free time to follow up on it through the 1940s.

Dumbledore had been spending time collecting information about Riddle since the early 1950s, but now knew he had never effectively battled 'Voldemort'. He had reacted, but never actively enough. That pattern had obviously continued even after he had reactivated his 'Order of the Phoenix', the group he had co-founded back in 1913 to challenge Grindelwald -- something he had just been starting to consider at the time of the Massacre.

Dumbledore knew he would have to make adjustments to his strategy, lest Harry do it for him.

This came home to him Monday morning as he awaited Harry to join him for breakfast. Harry had gotten up early and had run two miles and done twenty minutes of work outs. In his previous life, he had been crippled so long that part of this was training and part of his activities were just for the pure physical joy of being young and healthy again.

Dumbledore therefore awaited Harry to come from getting cleaned up by reading his collection of Muggle and magical newspapers. He hoped Harry would hurry along, as his appetite was back for the first time since he had drunk that awful potion Friday night.

By the time Harry showed up twenty minutes later, Dumbledore had skimmed through nine newspapers and lost most of his appetite. "Something interesting in the papers, Headmaster?" Harry asked.

"Several things of note," Dumbledore said, his eyes on Harry, who looked merely curious. "For one thing, the Riddle House in Hangleton burnt down just after midnight Saturday morning."

"Strange," Harry said. "That didn't happen last time until the early autumn of 1997."

"I presume that Malfoy Manor was not gutted by fire last time either, was it?" Dumbledore asked severely.

"Not until 1997, a few weeks after the Riddle house," Harry answered. "Too bad that all the Dark Artifacts stored in a hidden cache were destroyed, but that the diary wasn't anywhere in the Manor. I am also willing to bet that the six Death Eaters who died last night didn't die until much later in the 1970s last time, either."

"May I see your wand, Harry?"

"Of course," Harry said. "I still have not cast anything with it, other than sparks."

Dumbledore could not read Harry's mind, but he could still tell truth from falsehood, and Harry had just told the truth. Harry Potter was obviously more powerful than he had even suspected. "Are you certain that this is the correct path?"

"No," Harry answered, which slightly reassured the elderly wizard. "Still, it should send a shockwave through the people who support Voldemort. They slacked off their major attacks twice in the 1970s. In 1971, I mean this year, after the twelve Death Eaters were killed and one captured and Kissed after the May Massacre, and again in 1978, when an attack on Hogsmeade went wrong and nine were killed. Usually, they attacked and killed without real opposition. They are bullies and cowards. When they have a bloody nose, they run away and hide until they figure it's safe. Now instead of two bloody noses in seven

years, they have two in four months. I have a list of six others I intend on executing if I can locate them. Five Marked Death Eaters who continued to kill up until their own deaths, and Fenrir Greyback, who was unMarked but if anything more evil than almost any other of Voldemort's supporters."

Dumbledore sighed. "I don't know how you did it, but I would not be able to protect you if you were caught."

"I know that, sir," Harry answered.

"How will you prevent the Ministry from searching for you, not to mention Voldemort and his people?"

"I can raise the Dark Mark on any who were Marked," Harry answered. "Those six will be found in public places, and the Ministry officials who support Voldemort won't be able to hide all of them." Harry frowned. "What can you tell me about Colin McFadden?"

This was who had taken over the MLES from Henry Potter.

"He is honest, bright, but not very ruthless," Dumbledore said. "I would expect he will help the aurors and hit-wizards grow to meet the threat, but will be unable to actually lead them well against the Death Eaters. If you know the reference, he would be a General McClellan."

Harry had had little to do for over ten years, other than read. "Meaning someone who can build a great army but can't lead it?" Dumbledore nodded his head. "At some point, Barty Crouch will take over, or did take over, and may have gone to the other extreme, being too ruthless."

"Colin comes out the aurors, while Barty works on the judicial side," Dumbledore mused. The two ate silently for a while. Finally, Dumbledore said, "I have accomplished all I had hoped with this visit. Have you?"

"I wouldn't mind having a chat with the Sorting Hat before I leave," Harry said, his eyes twinkling even more than Dumbledore's.

Dumbledore wasn't certain how to reply to that, other than to agree.