

Dumbledore's Office

Setting

Harry looked around. One thing was certain: of all the teachers' offices Harry had visited so far this year, Dumbledore's office was the most interesting. If he hadn't been scared out of his wits that he was about to be thrown out of school, he would have been very please to have a chance to look around it.

It was a large and beautiful circular room, full of funny little noises. A number of curious silver instruments stood on spindle-legged tables, whirring and emitting little puffs of smoke. The walls were covered with portraits of old headmasters and mistresses, all of whom were snoozing gently in their frames. There was also enormous, claw-footed desk, and sitting on a shelf behind it, a shabby, tattered wizard's hat - the Sorting Hat.

Harry hesitated. He cast a wary eye around the sleeping witches and wizards on the walls. Sure it couldn't hurt him if he took the hat down and tried it on again? Just to see ... just to make sure it had put him in the right house.

DIAGON ALLEY

SETTING

Hagrid tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella. The brick he had touched quivered - it wriggled - in the middle, a small hole appeared - it grew wider and wider - a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight.

"Welcome," said Hagrid, "to Diagon Alley."

He grinned at Harry's amazement. They stepped through the archway. Harry looked over his shoulder and saw the archway shrink back into solid wall.

The sun shone brightly on a stack of cauldrons outside the nearest shop. Cauldrons - All Sizes - Copper, Brass, Pewter, Silver - Self-Stirring - Collapsible - said a sign hanging over them.

"Yeah, you'll be needin' one," said Hagrid, "but we gotta get yer money first."

Harry wished he had about eight more eyes. He turned his head in every direction as they walked up the street, trying to look at everything at once: the shops, the things outside them, the people doing their shopping. A plump woman outside an apothecary's was shaking her head as they passed, saying, "Dragon liver, seventeen Sickles an ounce, they're mad ..."

A low, soft hooting came from a dark shop with a sign saying Eeylops Owl Emporium - Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown and Snowy. Several boys of about Harry's age had their noses pressed against a sign, 'the new Nimbus Two Thousand - fastest ever - ' There were instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bats spleens and eels' eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon ...

"Gringotts," said Hagrid.

They had reached a snowy white building which towered over the other little shops. Standing beside its burnished bronze doors, wearing a uniform of scarlet and gold, was -

"Yeah, that's a goblin," said Hagrid quietly as they walked up the white stone steps towards him.

HOGWARTS

SETTING

There were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide sweeping ones; narrow, rickety ones; some that led somewhere different on a Friday; some with vanishing step halfway up that you had to remember to jump. Then there were doors that wouldn't open unless you asked politely, or tickled them in exactly the right place, and doors that weren't doors at all, but solid walls just pretending. It was also very hard to remember where everything was, because it all seemed to move around a lot. The people in the portraits kept going to visit each other and Harry was sure the coats of armour could walk.

Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$

"Not to worry," she said. "All you have to do is walk straight at the barrier between platforms nine and ten. Don't stop and don't be scared you'll crash into it, that's very important. Best do it at a bit of a run if you're nervous. Go on, go now before Ron."

"Er - OK," said Harry.

He pushed his trolley round and stared at the barrier. It looked very solid.

He started to walk towards it. People jostled him on their way to the platforms nine and ten. Harry walked more quickly. He was going to smash right into that ticket box and then he'd be in trouble - leaning forward on his trolley he broke into a heavy run—the barrier was coming nearer and nearer—he wouldn't be able to stop—the trolley was out of control—he was a foot away—he closed his eyes ready for the crash—It didn't come... he kept on running... he opened his eyes.

A scarlet steam engine was waiting next to a platform packed with people. A sign overhead said Hogwarts Express, 11 o'clock. Harry looked behind him and saw a wrought-iron archway where the ticket box had been, with the words Platform Nine and Three-Quarters on it. He had done it.

Smoke from the engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every colour wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and scraping of heavy trunks.

The first few carriages were already packed with students, some hanging out of the window to talk to their families, some fighting over seats. Harry pushed his trolley off down the platform in search of an empty seat. He passed a round-faced boy who was saying, "Gran, I've lost my toad again."

Forbidden forest

So Harry set off into the heart of the Forest with Malfoy and Fang. They walked for nearly half an hour, deeper and deeper into the Forest, until the path became almost impossible to follow because the trees were so thick. Harry thought the blood seemed to be getting thicker. There were splashes on the roots of a tree, as though the poor creature had been thrashing around in pain close by. Harry could see a clearing ahead, through the tangled branches of an ancient oak.

‘Look –’ he murmured, holding out his arm to stop Malfoy.

Something bright white was gleaming on the ground. They inched closer.

It was the unicorn all right, and it was dead. Harry had never seen anything so beautiful and sad. Its long slender legs were stuck out at odd angles where it had fallen and its mane was spread pearly white on the dark leaves.

Harry had taken one step towards it when a slithering sound made him freeze where he stood. A bush on the edge of the clearing quivered ... Then, out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast. Harry, Malfoy and Fang stood transfixed. The cloaked figure reached the unicorn, it lowered its head over the wound in the animal’s side, and began to drink its blood.