Summary

Eleven-year-old Harry Potter is a little confused. Raised to believe she was nought but a freak and her parents were drunken, unemployed burdens to society, it's safe to say she's more than a little suspicious when a secret world hidden from ordinary people owes her for ending a vicious war.

The problem is, the Harry that arrives at Hogwarts is a little different than most would expect, she's not about to lie down and let the illustrious Headmaster dictate her life. He left
Notes

The newly revised version of "The Girl Who Lived A Lie" - this book will mainly cover the events of the Philosopher's Stone and maybe the beginning of Chamber of Secrets. As the tags suggest, this work will contain somewhat darker themes as Harry isn't exactly a happy bunny.

Thanks for sticking with me,

Harri x

(title of story comes from "Burned At Both Ends" by Motionless in White)
Waving Through A Window

Harry could feel dozens of curious gazes burning in the back of her head as she followed Hagrid’s giant stature through the musty-smelling pub, crammed with people come to view the spectacle of the Girl-Who-Lived. Their quiet murmurs seemed more like roars to Harry's sensitive ears, and she could feel her heart beating frantically like a hummingbird, ready to burst free from her chest. She kept her gaze down at the floor, choosing instead to focus on the dirty floor of the Leaky Cauldron. Harry only dared to glance up to check they were making their way towards the exit, and she did so through the thick veil of her red hair, the messy curls acting as the perfect shield, hiding the marred left side of her face.

For Harry, it took far too long for Hagrid to reach the exit, but she was relieved to finally be able to breathe in deep lungfuls of oxygen without smelling the poisonous stench of alcohol or tasting the musty, stale air of the half-rotting pub on her tongue. There was a lot to be said about magic from the little Harry had seen Hagrid perform, most notably giving Dudley a curly pig-tail, which Harry knew she would pay for later, but apparently whoever owned the pub had yet to grasp the basic rules of hygiene. Harry was sure that should Aunt Petunia ever step even an inch into the Leaky Cauldron, she'd be so overwhelmed with its disgusting state that she wouldn't be able to do anything but swoon and hopefully fall into one of the puddles of mysterious sticky liquid that appeared every few feet.

Her thoughts of Aunt Petunia soured however when Harry remembered that once the day ended, she'd have to return to Number Four, Privet Drive and would have to face the consequences of both her invitation to a school of magic and the 'damage' done to Dudley by Hagrid's well-meaning, but ill-advised intervention.

Too absorbed in her melancholy, Harry almost the brickwork of the alley shifting. She glanced up in surprise, just in time to see a busy, bustling street revealed as the cracked bricks split apart and spun round in dizzying circles, making a hole in the wall large enough for a behemoth like Hagrid to fit through. Though Harry was not quite sure of the exact definition of 'behemoth', she was sure it adequately described the gentle giant and his lumbering walk as he stepped out into the street, the crowds parting for his large frame.

"Welcome 'arry, to Diagon Alley," Hagrid turned around, shooting a beaming smile at the direction of the tiny eleven-year-old cowering behind him. Gingerly, Harry stepped forwards, peering around Hagrid's hip which her head barely reached on her tip-toes. Instantly her eyes were assaulted by brightly lit shopfronts and the cries of shopkeeps trying to sell their wares, all the vivid colours and abstract shapes merging together, in part thanks to Harry's subpar vision. Her disbelief must have been evident on her face as when Harry glanced up at Hagrid, he was beaming widely at her, his beetle-black eyes crinkled rather adorably at the corners.

As they made their way down the alley, Harry's green eyes eagerly drank in the vibrant scenery and the equally as colourful people milling around the street, dressed in strange, brightly coloured robes and complete with odd accessories like jaunty pointed hats decorated with what appeared to be moving stars. One gentleman was dressed entirely in lime green robes with a beard dyed sherbert pink, so long it brushed the cobbled street floor.

Harry's keen hearing couldn't help but pick up on tidbits of conversation including a plump woman outside 'Slug and Jiggers Apocothery', bemoaning the price of diced frog's liver to a bored looking teenager dressed in what was likely the shop's uniform. Soft hooting, cooing and the occasional caw spilt from the dirty entryway into Eelyops Owl Emporium and Harry couldn't help but fixate
on a large white owl in the window, currently shooting a baleful glare at the assistant trying to feed it.

The mid-afternoon sun shone brightly, and Harry squinted her eyes behind the useless lenses of her glasses against the glare of the shiny cauldrons stacked outside of Potage's Cauldron Shop, the sign beside them declaring them to be 'pewter collapsible cauldrons'. "Yeah, you'll be needin' one o' those," Hagrid said, gesturing at the cauldron pile, "But first, we need to get yer money." And with a thick finger almost the width of Harry's thin wrist, Hagrid pointed at a grand marble building climbing above the higgledy-piggledy shops, stacked precariously on top of one another, and seemingly scraped the clear blue sky.

"Gringotts Wizardin' Bank," Hagrid announced as they reached the stairs up to the bank that gleamed impossibly white in the sunlight. Harry and Hagrid began to climb the stairs, Hagrid's gait easily pushing him ahead as he was able to take two of the giant marble steps at a time, Harry had to jog slightly to keep up but a lifetime of doing arduous chores and running from Dudley and his little gang of followers in blistering summer heat had done wonders for Harry's stamina, even in her malnourished state.

With Hagrid's strides and Harry's quick pace, they swiftly reached the dais at the top of the stairs and stood in front of the somewhat intimidating burnished bronze doors of the bank. The doors were engraved with runes, and in the topmost corner, there was an intricate drawing of what appeared a giant dragon breathing fire onto something, Harry assumed it was a village but her awful eyesight and the ineffective glasses she wore prevented her from being certain.

Harry's eyes lingered on an inscription beside the door, the cursive writing big enough that Harry didn't have to squint to read the words.

'Enter stranger but take heed

Of what awaits the sin of greed,

For those who take, but do not earn,

Must pay dearly in their turn,

So if you seek beneath our floors

A treasure that was never yours,

Thief, you have been warned, beware

Of finding more than treasure there.'

Standing beside this inscription, which to Harry sounded rather like a challenge than a warning, was a squat man with a pointed face, bushy arched eyebrows and a mischievous upturned nose. He wore a pressed uniform of scarlet with gold trim around the waist of the smart blazer and pressed trousers. "A goblin," Hagrid clarified, "They're sneaky things, can be very vicious so stay on their good side, s'why yeh'd have to be mad to try an' rob this place." The goblin bowed as they passed, ushering them through the slowly opening doors and into a vast marble atrium, with pillars as wide as Hagrid was tall stretching up to support the ornately painted ceiling. Harry was reminded of pictures of the Vatican ceilings that one of her teachers had shown to her class after he'd returned from a trip to Italy.

Over a hundred goblins sat at a long line of desks that spanned most of the hall, the teller nearest to Harry was currently weighing out gleaming stones onto a set of golden scales, peering at them...
through small spectacles perched on his hooked nose. There were too many doors to even fathom counting, leading off into the unknown with people being ushered through them by more goblins. One family of three, all of them with light, almost white, blonde hair were being guided through one of the more decorated doors, with some kind of animal carved into the stone above the archway.

Hagrid led the way towards a free desk, the goblin in question using a brilliant red quill to scribble something down on the scroll in front of him. Hagrid cleared his throat to gain the goblin's attention. Griphook, as the gold plate in front declared him to be, leered down at Harry and Hagrid, pointed teeth jutting over his cracked bottom lip. Like Hagrid, Griphook had dark brown, nearly black eyes, but Griphook's were colder and gleamed with something sinister.

"Goodmornin', we've come ter take some money out of Miss 'arriet Potter's account," Hagrid said, lowering his booming voice in an effort to not attract any attention from the Witches and Wizards milling around the bank. Not that Harry wasn't noticeable anyway with her flaming red hair and her visible eye a bright bottle-green that was particularly distinct. The lighting bolt scar striking across the hidden left side of her face, through her concealed left eye was also rather eye-catching though Harry did her best to ensure that it was rarely ever seen - her wild curls were an efficient screen from prying eyes.

"I trust you have her key," The goblin replied in a high, reedy voice; holding out a clawed hand expectantly. Hagrid promptly handed over a small silver key which was comically dwarfed by his great hands. Griphook peered at the key through the gold-rimmed eyeglasses he held up to his face. "Everything appears to be in order," Griphook said with a contemptuous curl of his upper lip.

"Ah, an' I've also got a letter 'ere from Professor Dumbledore," Hagrid said, handing over a wrinkled, stained brown envelope that smelled suspiciously like a wet dog. "It's 'bout the You-Know-Wha' in vault seven hundred and thirteen." Griphook took the letter gingerly, holding it between the points of his long, claw-like nails.

"Very well," He said almost reluctantly, pushing his chair away from the desk "Follow me," Griphook snapped sharply as he hopped down from his seat, disappearing behind the oak desk before reappearing next to Hagrid so suddenly Harry couldn't help but flinch.

Griphook immediately set a swift pace towards the elaborately carved door that Harry had seen the family of blondes be ushered through by bowing goblins and she and Hagrid hurried to catch up, for someone with such small legs Griphook was incredibly speedy.

"What's the You-Know-What in vault seven hundred and thirteen?" Harry whispered conspiritually at Hagrid, trying not to be overheard by the snappy goblin in front of them.

"Oh, I can't tell yer that 'arry, Dumbledore would have my 'ead," Hagrid replied, attempting to match the volume of Harry's whisper and failing quite spectacularly as his loud voice echoed around the cave that they had just entered. Harry just shrugged, dropping the subject, years with the Dursleys and Uncle Vernon's belt had instilled a general rule to never push for an answer, it had taken a lot of effort to even get the words to her original question out of her mouth.

Instead, Harry focused her attention on cave she was now in, having passed through the ornate doors as she was querying Hagrid. Like most of Gringotts, the cavern was vast and dimly lit by orange lanterns, the ceiling of the cave was nowhere in sight, obscured by mist and darkness. It was cool but not cold, and the air was dry, not damp and dingy like one might expect.

Glancing around, Harry could see carts positioned in front of various smaller caves, obviously leading further underground as the tracks suddenly dropped off into nothing. Harry felt her stomach
rise into her throat as Griphook led them all over to a small cart that Harry was somewhat dubious about, how on earth would they all fit in with Hagrid's bulk?

Miraculously though, they all did, the inside of the cart feeling a lot bigger than its appearance would suggest. The wagon creaked ominously as it began rolling forwards. Harry felt herself relax slightly and before she knew it the cart tipped suddenly forwards and they dropped like a stone.
All That Glitters Is Gold

Chapter Summary

Harry visits her vaults, a parcel is collected, and she maybe makes a friend.

Chapter Notes

i did not plan to leave it for this long but a levels swamped me but hey, i only have 2 exams left and then i'll have an entire year to focus on fic.

comments and kudos sustain me and are very welcome :)

as always i have no beta, we die like men

The cart plunged and curved, and twisted and dived, rolling back and forth on the track rather worryingly. Harry's eyes stung at the harsh wind whipping past them, and she squeezed her eyes shut, not daring to reach up and wipe away the tears streaming down her wind-bitten cheeks; she was too busy clinging to the side of the cart for dear life. Harry's stomach was somewhere around her knees, and her heart was beating frantically in her throat. An insidious voice in the back of her head was muttering something about crashing and dying, but it was hard to focus on with the roaring of wind in her ears.

Beside Harry, Hagrid groaned with each jerky movement of the cart, looking vaguely green in the face, his large hands were white at the knuckles where he clung to the side of the cart - honestly, Harry was surprised he hadn't splintered the wood.

At last, the cart jolted to a halt, on the one side of the wagon was a sheer drop into nothing, Harry could only see about twenty feet down before the little lanterns were ineffective and swallowed by darkness. On the other side of the wagon was a rather large ledge leading to a great iron door set into the rockface. The trio stumbled out of the cart, and Hagrid staggered over to a stone pillar where he rested most of his weight against its structure, it creaked ominously but thankfully held. Hagrid was incredibly green and made the occasional "hrrk" before gulping quickly and covering his mouth with a great hand. Harry was somewhat pleased to see that Griphook, the snappy goblin, was also pallid and wavered slightly as he trotted towards the iron door, Harry's little silver key in his hand.

Harry followed the goblin, trying to steady herself and was very carefully, placing one foot in front of the other in an attempt to stop herself from stumbling. She watched Griphook from a few paces away as he inserted the little key into an equally tiny keyhole. As he stepped away, something whirred and clicked into place, and the door swung open with a rusty screech. Clearly, no one had been down here for quite a while.

There was a great billow of bright green smoke and a faint smell of sulphur, as the smoke cleared, Harry was rendered speechless.
Inside the vault was piles and piles of silver, gold, bronze and what was likely platinum. There were cabinets full of jewellery, bookcases that reached the high ceiling, carved with intricate designs and edged with gold, in one corner there was a pile of trunks and as Harry stepped into the vault, across the back wall was an enormous tapestry with gold lines connecting cursive names stitched into the fabric with silver thread. Her trainer knocked a pile of coins, and they tumbled to the ground, making an awful racket.

"Is this all mine?" Harry asked, still quite gobsmacked at the riches before her. It was evident that the Dursleys had no knowledge of this vault or it would be drained completely dry; Uncle Vernon would have probably used the likely priceless books as kindling for the fire.

"It is Miss Potter, this and several other vaults are in your name, two will remain locked until your seventeenth birthday, and one is for when you get married, a dowry vault if you will," Griphook confirmed, stepping forward to present Harry with a thick gold band ring, a sizable ruby set into the metal. "This is the Potter Heirship ring, it should have been presented to you on your tenth birthday, but despite our summons, this did not happen. I have been instructed by Bank Manager Ragnor to give it to you today."

The goblin presented her with a solid gold ring with a silver crest of a large bird with its wings spread, stamped onto the flat surface of the ruby. The ring itself was huge in comparison to her spindly fingers and looked as though it might have fitted over Hagrid's pinkie. As she slipped it over her left index finger, she was startled to see the gold band shrink to fit perfectly around her finger as if it had been that size all along.

"Wait just a minute," Hagrid said hastily, "Dumbledore didn't say nothin' 'bout gettin' an heirship ring today, 'fact he said 'arry was too young." Griphook's upper lip curled into a snarl.

"Dumbledore has no say in Gringotts business, I was instructed to issue Miss Potter with her rightful heirship ring, and so I have. If Dumbledore has an issue, he can raise it with Gringotts bank, not the young Heir." Harry was slightly confused, she was an Heir, and it was her right to have the ring, so why would Dumbledore not want her to have it, it's not as if she had any power with the title of mere Heir to the fortune. The little voice in the back of her head hissed angrily, spitting curses that Harry had no recollection of learning. Hagrid seemed to fumble for words before he begrudgingly nodded.

"I s'pose it's none o' my business." The giant huffed. Griphook smirked derisively, tilting his nose up, despite his smaller stature, Griphook seemed to look down on Hagrid.

"You're correct, it isn't anyone's business, Wizard or otherwise," He levelled a glare at Hagrid, "It only concerns Gringotts and the Heir of a family, not your illustrious Headmaster." Harry very quickly got the feeling that the goblins didn't exactly hold Headmaster Dumbledore in high regard. They obviously didn't care about the masses of titles and honours that had been awarded to him - and honestly neither did Harry, she didn't see any way they were related to running a school, he sounded more suited to the political world than the scholarly.

Successfully chastised, Hagrid dropped the subject and instead informed Harry of the currency laid in neat piles around the vault. "The gold ones are Galleons, the silver ones are Sickles, and the bronze ones are Knuts. Seventeen sickles to a Galleon, twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle, it's easy enough," Hagrid explained as he produced a small moleskin pouch from his many pockets and helped Harry gather sixty-five of the large golden Galleons. "Now, tha' should be enough for yer shoppin' today and some for food on the train to 'ogwarts," The gentle giant chuckled.

Surprisingly, the small pouch hadn't visibly gotten any bigger or become any heavier despite the many coins inside, and when she shook it, Harry could hear the coins clinking together - magic
Harry shoved the coin pouch in the deep pockets of the baggy hand-me-down jeans, not exactly trusting Hagrid's deep pockets to hold her money securely, and the occasional squeaking coming from his great overcoat only added to her suspicions. "Right, vault seven hundred an' thirteen please," Hagrid said, clapping his gargantuan hands together, "Er, can we go a bit slower?" The giant asked nervously, his beetle-black eyes flicking between the rickety cart and the sheer drop as they left Harry's vault behind.

"One speed only," Griphook replied, hopping into the wagon and beckoning for Harry and Hagrid to join him. Hagrid groaned in protest but heaved his large frame into the cart, Harry squishing in beside him, not wanting to be behind in case Hagrid fell back at any point in the journey. Harry was not exactly in the mood to be squashed by anyone, let alone the man who must have been well over seven foot.

The cart shot off once again, nose-diving into the misty darkness of the caves. They were going deeper now, Harry's ears popped with pressure and she shivered violently, her threadbare t-shirt doing nothing to protect her from the freezing temperature so far beneath the surface. As they passed over a vast ravine, so dark it made Harry's eyes cross, she could have sworn she heard something roaring, and a spurt of orange deep below disappeared as quickly as it had appeared.

They screeched to a halt outside a platform leading to a smallish door carved into the surface of a sheer cliff-face. They stumbled out of the cart one more, and Harry made her way shakily over to the door, her stomach not quite ready to move from her throat back to its original place in her belly.

The first thing Harry noticed about vault seven hundred and thirteen, was that it had no keyhole. In fact, Harry was unsure if it could even be called a door because it just seemed to be a thick sheet of metal attached to the side of a cave. "Stand clear of the door," Griphook said imperiously, as he strode over to the door and ran a bony finger down the metal. Harry watched, her visible eye widening in surprise as the thick metal door melted away into nothing. The display of magic was quite spectacular which was why Harry was so disappointed when the object inside of vault seven hundred and thirteen was just a grubby package of brown paper tied with a string, about the size of Harry's fist. As Hagrid reached into the vault and picked up the package almost reverently, Harry scuffed her worn out pumps on the rough flooring and shuffled back to the cart, hopping in without another word. The cart rocked dangerously as Hagrid lurched in and they were off once more, shooting up the track and going up at such an incline they were nearly vertical. Harry dimly wondered if her insides would ever unscramble from the jumbled mess they surely were after three journeys in the infernal hell-contraption that was the Gringotts' cart.

* 

One mildly horrendous cart ride later, Harry and Hagrid squinted their way out of Gringotts, glad to leave the dark caves and sly Goblins behind them. "Alrigh' then," Hagrid said gruffly, "Might as well go get yer uniform first, then it's probably best to get yer wand, and then we'll see 'bout the rest." He nodded towards the shop just to the left of Gringotts, close enough that Harry could just about read the golden cursive declaring the pleasant blue shop to be 'Madam Malkin's Robes For All Occasions'.

"Er, listen 'arry," Hagrid started awkwardly, wringing his hands together, "Would yeh mind if I went fer a quick pick me up at the Leakey, I 'ate them Gringotts carts." Hagrid still looked like he
was about to be sick and was alarmingly sweaty and pale beneath his bushy beard.

"Yeah, that's, that's fine." Harry stuttered, her stomach twisting itself in knots at the thought of entering a strange shop without the giant who had acted as a shield from unwanted attention. But Hagrid had already turned and began lumbering down the alley, and Harry didn't want to draw any more attention to herself by shouting at him to come back. So Harry put on her best brave face - the one she used at the dentist and doctor when Aunt Petunia dropped Harry off and sped away as fast as she could - and walked into Madam Malkin's.

As it turns out, Harry had nothing to worry about, Madam Malkin was a short, plump older Witch, with neat black curls, and dressed in mauve robes. When Harry walked in, she hurried over to her, stopping only to run her eyes over the long piece of hair hiding the left side of Harry's face, and the small bit of the pink scar running down her neck and tugging at the corner of her mouth, before breaking into a kindly smile.

"Hello dearie, Hogwarts too," In her hand was a small tape measure, slowly curling itself around Madam Malkin's fingers like a small snake.

"Er yes," Harry replied hesitantly, unsure of how to proceed without Hagrid's assistance.

"Right then," Madam Malkin said promptly, "This way dearie, there's a young man up there being fitted too."

True to Malkin's word, upon a small podium was a boy with blond hair, so light it was nearly white. He had a pale heart-shaped face with sharp features and wide silver-blue eyes, complete with a fan of long, dark eyelashes. Harry instantly recognised him as the boy with the two blonde adults in Gringotts who had been taken through the same entrance as she and Hagrid had later been led through by Griphook. The boy was currently being fitted by a younger Witch, with gold-toned skin, berry-red lips, and whisky coloured eyes. Her dark hair was cut into an angular bob, just brushing her shoulders, she like Madam Malkin was dressed in rich mauve robes and Harry assumed that this was the shops uniform, a rather lovely uniform if you asked her, and much more flattering than most ones from Muggle shops.

As Harry was led to the pedestal to the boy's right, she could feel his silver-blue eyes watching her calculatingly. She was startled out of her thoughts when Madam Malkin pulled a black robe over her head and began to pin it to her size.

"Hello," The boy started, "Are you a first year too?"

For a short moment, Harry scrambled to remember how to reply to questions, her brain experiencing technical difficulties as she attempted to recall what words meant what. "Um yes,"

Harry replied, hoping she sounded somewhat confident with her answer. The boy's eyes seemed to sharpen when she turned to face him under Madam Malkin's guidance, the plump Witch fussing about Harry's short stature and skinny frame.

"I'm Draco Malfoy, I'd shake your hand but, " The boy trailed off with a fox-like grin, his eyes darting to where the seamstress was altering his sleeves. Harry felt her lips twitch up involuntarily, the boy's arched eyebrows and slightly upturned nose gave him a cherubic but mischievous expression.

"Harriet Potter, it's nice to meet you," Harry said softly, settling into a strange but natural rapport with Draco. For a brief moment, Draco's silver-blue eyes widened before he schooled his
Draco's face broke into a toothy grin, "Mother, just in time," The boy laughed as the seamstress working on his robes tied off her thread and removed the uniform from the young Heir. Draco stepped off the platform, moving over to the statuesque lady, flushing light pink as she smoothed down his slightly ruffled hair.

"Are you all done, Draco?" She asked in a deep, pleasant voice, her cool grey eyes passed over Harry in a clear assessment before settling on the package of robes being handed to her by the other seamstress.

"The robes will be charged to your account, Lady Malfoy," The seamstress said, "Is there anything else I can do for you today?" Lady Malfoy and Draco appeared to communicate wordlessly; Draco shook his head minutely.

"No, thank you, I believe we have everything we need. Thank you for your services." Lady Malfoy smiled politely and turned to leave the shop. Draco followed her for a step or two before he turned around and quickly paced back to where Harry stood. He held out his hand expectantly, and Harry apprehensively took it, smiling at Draco when he shook her hand firmly.

"It was nice to meet you, Harry, I'll see you on the train, right?" The young Heir seemed to falter, a crease appearing between his brows.

"Definitely," Harry replied, squeezing the hand that she still held, "I might be late, but better late than never." Draco grinned back, squeezing Harry's hand before he let them drop and walked back to his mother who stood beside the door, a curious expression on her regal face.

Contrary to popular belief, most likely associated with the colour of his hair and constant expression of vague boredom; Draco Malfoy wasn't oblivious. His mother was a daughter of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black, trained in the art of deception and wiles from the day she could talk. His father was a similar story; it had been a long-standing tradition for the men of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Malfoy to be drilled in the art of politics and law rigorously till they could recite the most obscure Wizarding Laws at a moment's notice. Though his parents had recognised when he was rather young that there wasn't a prevailing desire within Draco to instantly be able to analyse a person and pry their secrets from them or recite legislation verbatim, they did still think it prudent to teach him how to spot things that others wouldn't. As a young heir should, Draco was prepared by the finest tutors his parents could find until his sharp eyes, and calculating mind rivalled that of his mother and father.
So when Harriet Potter stumbled into 'Madam Malkin's Robes For All Occasions' at twenty-five past twelve that afternoon, the hairs on the back of Draco's neck raised, his silver-blue eyes zeroing in on the petite girl practically swallowed by ill-fitting clothes. The left half of her face carefully obscured by a thick curtain of rich auburn hair, but the heavy fringe failed to hide the slightest pucker of scar tissue at the corner of her mouth. One green eye, too large for her heart-shaped face flitted around the shop, suspicion and the kind of wariness one might see in a dog that's been kicked too many times shadowed the vibrant jade. Under her tanned skin, she seemed sickly and yellowed as if quite malnourished, a slight sheen a sweat on her high forehead.

To the untrained eye, it would have appeared that Harriet - Harry- Potter was just a timid girl whose metabolism was too fast resulting in her rake-ish figure, all skin and bones with oddly knobbly knees noticeable through the rips from overuse in her worn jeans. Draco however instantly knew differently. The slouch of Harry's shoulders, the way she unknowingly shied away from Madam Malkin's fussing.

Before she stepped on the podium, her sleeve had slipped halfway up her forearm; it was only for a split second before Harry tugged it down again. But that fleeting moment was all it took for Draco's trained gaze to fall upon a ring of black and blue bruises around her delicate wrist, in what appeared to be the shape of a large handprint. Grimly, Draco began to scheme as he conversed with the other young Heir, he could tell she was new to this with the way Harry was unwittingly playing with the solid gold band around her right ring finger as they chatted.

By the time his mother collect him, Draco's plan was firmly cemented, now all that was required was getting his parents on board. The reason for the death of the Dark Lord or no, Draco knew his parents would be disinclined to leave Harriet Potter alone once they knew his suspicions. His father had stressed the importance of making a potential connection with Harriet Potter in an attempt to negate the bad press associated with their familiar name, but Draco had no expected the ease into which he would want to make her acquaintance, it was now merely a matter of persuading his childhood friends and soon-to-be year-mates to follow his lead; a task which may prove rather difficult especially for Crabbe and Goyle with their unfortunately low intelligence.
Two Feathers

Chapter Summary

Getting her wand seemed like a nice idea and something to look forward to, that is until Harry learns a harrowing truth.

Chapter Notes

and im back, im hoping now that i no longer have those pesky things known as a level exams im gonna be able to update quicker and since im actually planning, this work will likely be my priority :)))
if you spot any errors please let me know this was written on little sleep and lots of caffiene and it is currently midnight in the uk ;)

Outside Madam Malkin's, Harry met up with Hagrid who presented the girl with a leather satchel and a sheepish expression. Harry supposed it was his way of apologising for leaving her to deal with Madam Malkin on her own or the way he had protested against Harry getting her heirship ring. Still, either way, Harry was glad to have something to deposit her newly tailored robes into and took the satchel with a grateful smile up at the giant whose beetle-black eyes softened as a smile twitched his great, bushy beard.

The first stop was Wiseacre's Wizarding Equipment to purchase an assortment of quills, a trunk that was able to shrink by tapping it with a wand, a massive stack of parchment and several quite large bottles of ink that the salesman had promised Harry were charmed to be unbreakable. The final purchase from the shop was a large brass telescope that Harry would need for astronomy lessons which Hagrid had assured her were quite exciting and involved studying the stars at night in one of the highest towers of Hogwarts. From the sound of it, Harry would greatly enjoy Astronomy although she wasn't sure about having lessons at midnight and hoped that a full school day wouldn't immediately follow the late-night lesson.

As they strolled the alley, heading towards Flourish and Blotts, with a nervous flutter of butterflies in her stomach, Harry realised she didn't know anything about Hogwarts itself. "Hey, Hagrid," She started, "How many are going to be in my year, do I have to know everyone?" Hagrid startled, his eyes widening in alarm.

"Blimey Harry, I keep forgettin' 'ow much yeh know about the Wizardin' world." The giant swore softly under his breath, "Given the troubles our world was havin' the year yer were born; I'd say there's a chance that yer year will 'ave less students than usual. I think there's 'bout fifty students each year, maybe a little more." He paused to reach into the depths of his beard and scratch what Harry assumed to be his chin. "Ogwarts has four houses, Ravenclaw, Slytherin, Hufflepuff and Gryffindor, that's where yer parents were, and at the start o' the year, everyone is Sorted into a House. Now everyone says that Hufflepuffs are a lot o' duffers but better a Puff than a Slytherin
any day.” Hagrid muttered grimly, shaking his head.

"What's so wrong with Slytherin?” Harry asked, watching in bemusement as Hagrid's thick, slug-like eyebrows twitched and pulled towards each other in a heavy frown.

"There's not a single Witch o' Wizard who went bad that weren't in Slytherin; You-Know-Who was one.” Harry had managed to prise out details of the Dark Wizard who had killed her parents and nearly herself from Hagrid while they were taking the bus into London from the tiny shack in the run-down village that Uncle Vernon had attempted to flee to in order to avoid the letters. Voldemort was the real name of the Wizard, and Harry found herself bemused that even ten years later, the entirety of the Wizarding world still was afraid to say his name.

"Voldemort attended Hogwarts?” Harry asked, wondering if perhaps he had been a peer of her parents during their time at the school. She watched the giant flinch away from Harry as if the name she had uttered had suddenly become a tangible weapon.

"Yes," Hagrid replied gruffly, pulling at his overcoat, "Years an' years ago, over fifty if I remember right."

The conversation ended as they reached the periwinkle door of Flourish and Blotts. Harry couldn't help but grin as she was greeted with the woodsy scent of so many books in one place.

The vast array of shelves and bookcases touched the navy-blue ceiling, stacked to the heavens with books as big as paving slabs but some as small as a thimble; Harry rather liked the idea of those tiny books being meant for the fairies. Some of the books she pulled slightly out to look at the covers were decorated with strange runic symbols sewn in jewel-bright silk. The books in a shadowy corner of the shop caught her eye with titles like Horrible Hexes for Harried House-Witches and Macarbe Magyk Most Monstrous, but Hagrid quickly steered her away before she could get a closer look, mumbling "Magic like that ain't no good, no good at all, yer hear me 'arry?" It was as if he could read her thoughts regarding what she could do with spells from those books when the Dursleys tried to hurt her.

Next was Potage's Cauldron Shop, where Harry couldn't help but shake her head at the solid gold and silver cauldrons. She purchased the standard pewter cauldron and scales and, on her way out, she rolled her eyes at several children around her age fawning over the ostentatious cauldrons.

Just across the street was Slug and Jiggers Apocethery, where Harry was persuaded by the foul odours not to linger in the shop and gaze at the displays but rather to collect the essential ingredients as laid out in her letter and make a hasty retreat, followed by Hagrid who had held a stained hankie over his nose the entire time.

As they walked back up Diagon Alley towards the last stop to get Harry's wand, Hagrid kept looking furtively back towards Eeylop's Owl Emporium with an odd look on his face.

"Say, er 'arry," He began awkwardly, wiping his huge palms on his muddy brown trousers, "Seein' as its yer birthday an all, did yer want somethin', an owl'd be pretty useful?" Harry stumbled over the cobbles but quickly righted herself, glancing up at Hagrid with one bright green eye, the other concealed behind her heavy fringe, she could see the fondness in his dark eyes but the surprise at
being offered a birthday present sank quickly into her stomach like a lead balloon.

"That's really kind Hagrid, thank you, but um," She hesitated, not wanting to truly hurt the giant's feelings, "I don't think that would be a good idea, not with my relatives." A sudden image of Uncle Vernon using his belt on a screeching owl flashed in front of Harry's eyes, and she shuddered involuntarily, a cold chill settling at the base of her spine.

"No, I s'pose not," Hagrid replied, looking somewhat deflated, "It was only a thought, nothin' serious."

"It's okay," Harry said quickly, "I'm grateful really, but unless my aunt and uncle get cool about a lot of things really quickly, it's not especially wise to bring proof of magic into their house."

Hagrid nodded his understanding, his frown back again. "I wish Dumbledore had put yer with some other family," He sighed heavily, pushing open the door to Ollivanders, the shop was apparently, at least according to the dusty sign 'Makers of Fine Wands since 382 BC'.

"Yeah, me too Hagrid," Harry murmured, brushing past the giant who held to door open for her, just enough space between his bulk and the fragile-looking door for the skinny girl to slip through. The bell above the door chimed softly, a pleasant, clear tinkle that rang through the empty and slightly grubby looking shop.

"Good afternoon," A voice just as soft as the bell sounded from behind Harry and Hagrid, who both jumped and the rickety chair next to Hagrid whined as the giant fell onto it. The man, whom Harry assumed to be the owner of the shop, was quite spindly looking, vaguely fragile in the way he trembled as he walked. Oddly enough, he reminded Harry of the thin house-spiders she often had to get rid of while Petunia shrieked about getting rid of, or in her shrill words killing the poor things.

His hair was lily-white and fuzzy, sticking up at odd angles almost as if he'd been shocked with electricity, and behind his thick, gold-rimmed spectacles, his eyes were a cloudy, pale blue which shone like small moons in the flickering candlelight from the chandelier hanging from the ceiling, coated with a thick layer of dripping white wax.

"Hello," Harry greeted, keeping her voice low and steady, trying to push away the tremble in her body as she felt what could only be the man's magic brushing against her skin as if trying to connect with her.

"I thought I'd be seeing you soon Miss Potter, or should I say, Heir Potter," He said, gesturing at the suddenly heavy gold ring that Harry was fidgeting with, "Garrick Ollivander," He introduced, sinking into a remarkably low bow for one of his advanced age, "A pleasure to see you at last." Harry didn't quite know how to respond, but the queer old man did it for her, carrying the conversation by himself.

Ollivander chuckled softly to himself, shaking his powder-white head, "It seems like only yesterday your mother was here, buying her first wand, with hair as red as anything; you have her eyes you know, big and green. The hair is different, darker and more like your father's, completely untameable." Harry eagerly drank up the words Ollivander spouted about her parents, this was the
first information she’d heard that didn’t either paint her parents to be saints or as the pinnacle of sin and freakishness.

"If memory serves, your mother's wand was ten and quarter inches, slightly swishy, made of willow and Unicorn hair core, good for Charm work and able to produce some quite nasty jinxes."

As Ollivander moved closer to Harry, and a distant voice in the back of her head hissed a warning at the old wandmaker; Harry attempted to block out the strange whispers, although she couldn't help but wish that Ollivander would blink, his odd white-blue eyes were becoming a tad creepy.

"Your father, on the other hand, had a mahogany wand. Eleven inches, slightly pliable but stubborn, nonetheless. Dragon heartstring core which made it excellent for channelling power and a good wand for transfiguration, as demonstrated by what he reportedly got up to at Hogwarts, eh," Ollivander chuckled. He had now come so close to Harry that they were now nose-to-nose, the man having to stoop slightly to get down to her level. Harry could see her face reflected in Ollivander's pale eyes.

"And that is where," The old man reached out as if to move Harry's heavy fringe aside. Used to this move, however, Harry quickly jerked herself back, nearly stumbling over the uneven floorboards. Ollivander's face clouded over with regret. "I am sorry to say that I sold the wand that did it," He gestured towards the concealed lightning-bolt that ran down the left side of Harry's face, "It was a powerful wand, very powerful, and unfortunately, it chose the wrong hands. If I'd have known what that wand would go on to do," Ollivander said softly before his voice hardened, "I'd have never let it leave my shop that day." He shook his head suddenly as if to rid himself of horrid thoughts before his moon-like eyes landed on an awkward Hagrid who appeared to be avoiding eye-contact.

"Do my eyes deceive me, Rubeus Hagrid, how long has it been?" Ollivander exclaimed, his dark mood vanishing as quickly as his exuberant one reappeared. "Sixteen inches, oak, unicorn hair and rather bendy, wasn't it?"

"Er it was sir, yes," Replied Hagrid, who was gripping his pink umbrella in a white-knuckled grip.

"Good wand that one, but I suppose they snapped it in half after you were expelled?" Said Ollivander, frowning as if mourning the loss of one of his creations.

"Er yes, they did, but I still got the pieces," Hagrid added tightly, wincing as Ollivander's eyes become quite stern.

"But you don't use them?" Ollivander said sharply.

"Oh no, not at all, sir," Hagrid assured him, though by his raised eyebrow and glance at the offensively pink umbrella that Hagrid clutched, Ollivander did not believe Hagrid, and to be honest neither did Harry.

"Hm," The wandmaker replied before turning to face Harry, "Now Miss Potter, let me see," He pulled out a silver tape measure from his pocket, and Harry was startled to see it begin to move and suddenly start to flit around her body taking measurements. "Which is your wand arm," When Harry just looked at him uncertainly, he clarified for her, "Your most dominant hand, Miss Potter."
"Oh um, I'm left-handed," Harry replied, holding out her left arm as Ollivander then indicated and she watched in amusement as the silver tape measured the length of her arm from armpit to fingertip and then the individual lengths of her fingers as well as the circumference of her skinny wrist. Ollivander ambled towards the colossal display case, full of long, thin boxes stacked higgledy-piggledy and spilling out onto the floor and even up the twisting stairs which Harry presumed led to storage space above the shop, leaving the tape measure to continue merrily measuring whatever it wanted which was apparently the distance between Harry's nostrils.

"That will be enough," Ollivander called from where he had climbed up a rickety looking ladder and was pulling boxes off the self and suspending them in mid-air beside him. The silver tape measure abruptly dropped to the dusty floor and disappeared with a flick of Ollivander's own dark brown wand.

The old man climbed down from the creaking ladder, the pile of wand boxes following him and falling onto the worn counter with a soft thud. "Now, every Ollivander wand has a core, a magical substance capable of channelling a person's inner magic. Here we use three materials, unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers, and dragon heartstring." Harry nodded, her mind already absorbing the information Ollivander was spouting, she supposed he was glad somebody was actually paying attention to his informative spiel. "No two Ollivander wands are the same, as no two unicorns, phoenixes and dragons are the same, it is also true of the woods because no tree regardless of species are identical." Ollivander turned to face Harry suddenly, his eyes bright and sparkling in the candlelight. "It is of utmost importance that you remember, Miss Potter, that it is the wand that chooses you, not the other way around. If your innate magic is not compatible with a tiny particle of the wand, it will reject you. Of course, it is possible to gain the obedience of a wand that isn't yours, usually through duelling, but the results are never the same and often unsatisfactory. No wand will ever fit you as well as your first." Just as quickly as he had turned to face her, Ollivander spun on his heel with surprising grace to grab a box, seemingly at random, and present it to Harry.

"Try this one. Beechwood and dragon heartstring, nine inches, good for one of your stature." Ignoring the jab at her height, Harry reached out to take the wand but promptly dropped it back into its box with a yelp as the wand shocked her, it felt like receiving an electric shock from a balloon and was just as unpleasant. Ollivander retracted the box with a chuckle, "Hm not beechwood then," He muttered, rummaging around in the pile of boxes before snatching another with a triumphant sound. "Try this one, Maple and unicorn hair, slightly spring, eleven inches."

The time the wand didn't zap her, but when Harry waved it slightly, the small unlit lamp in the shop window exploded in a shower of sparks and glass fragments.

"Perhaps not," Ollivander muttered, gently taking the wand back as Harry stared in wonder at the shattered remains of the lamp.

The process went on and on. Harry tried and tested wand after wand after wand. The pile of discarded wands on the shop counter grew bigger and bigger, but with each rejected attempt, Ollivander grew more and more energised, flitting between the shelves with a manic grin on his wrinkled face.

"You're a little tricky to identify Miss Potter but never fear, your parents took a little while too." Seeing that Hagrid had been asleep in a small chair since the fourth wand, Harry knew they'd been
trying for more than a little while; no matter was Ollivander said.

"Ahah," He exclaimed from somewhere in the bowels of his shop. He emerged from the back, his overcoat covered in a thick layer of dusty and in his hand, he held an equally dusty box, so obscured that Harry was unsure of the colour of it.

"Holly and phoenix feather, eleven and a quarter inches, nice and supple." Harry gingerly took the box, wincing at the thick coating of grey matter that transferred to her fingers and placing its casing on the floor, she gripped the wand tightly, noting the small runes carved into the smooth handle. A rush of warmth flooded from her hand and settled in her chest, almost purring in contentment. She brought down as she had so many wands before and gave a delighted laugh at the shower of green sparks that erupted from the wand.

Hagrid snorted in his sleep and then went back to snoring. Ollivander was silent. As Harry turned to face the wandmaker, his face was once again darkened with regret. "It is almost poetic, Miss Potter, but tragically so I'm afraid." Harry swallowed nervously, her grip spasming on the wand handle. "I remember every wand I have ever made, every single wand since I took over this business from my father." Harry did not like where this was going at all, "It just so happens that the phoenix from which I procured the feather for a wand, gave me another. One feather is in the core of the wand you hold now, and the other Miss Potter," Ollivander paused to take a shuddering breath, "The other feather is in the core of the wand that gave you your scar." Harry froze, unsure whether she wanted to keep her wand or throw it into the nearest ocean when it was so intrinsically linked with the wand of a madman who had murdered her parents, leaving her with only the Dursleys, and a scar that marred half her face. Ollivander smiled wryly as if sensing her dilemma. "Thirteen and a half inches, yew," Ollivander stood from where he had leant against the counter; his wand pressed to his lips. "I think we can expect great things from you, Miss Potter, heir to the House of Potter. After all, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named did great things, terrible things yes, but great feats nonetheless."

Hagrid broke the grim atmosphere that Ollivander had created with a loud snort that woke him up with a start and grunted, "Was'appanin," He blinked blearily, rubbing his eyes but his expression broke into a bright grin under his bushy beard as he saw the wand in Harry's hand and Ollivander busy himself with getting a new, dust-free box in which Harry could place her wand, as well as a small leather holster meant for her wrist. "Finally, 'arry, I thought we'd be here forever!" The giant exclaimed, lumbering over to look at Harry's wand.

"It's the same as his," She said softly.

"Same as who's?" Hagrid asked, his bright grin fading.

"The core, its phoenix feather, from the same phoenix that gave a feather for Voldemort's wand," Harry replied bluntly, uncaring that Hagrid violently flinched at her utterance of the Dark Wizard's name.

"Oh well, I'm that don't mean nothin', right Mr Ollivander?" Hagrid said earnestly, but Ollivander didn't answer him.

"That will be eleven Galleons, Miss Potter." Harry handed over the money, all too eager to get out
It was late afternoon, nearing half past three when Harry and Hagrid finally finished their shopping and sat in a greasy-looking coffee shop next door to the Leakey Cauldron. Harry was quite glad to be out of Diagon Alley, glad to get away from the stares that followed her and Hagrid.

Once they'd finished their dry sandwiches and drank the sickly-sweet squash, Hagrid handed Harry a thick white envelope containing her ticket to the Hogwarts Express.

"Remember, first o' September, King's Cross Station. The train leaves at eleven o' clock, so be there early." Glancing at the cream coloured ticket, Harry frowned at the platform number.

"Hagrid, there is no platform nine and three-quarters." Harry pointed out.

"Ah well yeh see, between platform nine and platform ten there's a barrier, a brick wall. Yeh run towards that and Wizardfolk can go straight through to the platform, but Muggles need tah be holdin' onto someone, but somethin' tells me yer won't be taking the Dursleys through with yeh." The giant chuckled. Harry forced a smile, forgiving the giant for not knowing what awaited Harry when she got back to Number 4 Privet Drive.

"Right, I reckon our bus might be on its way," And with that Hagrid heaved himself up and began to lead the way back to the bus stop where he ushered Harry on and paid for her ticket. She didn't need help carrying her belongings as they were safely stored in the trunk that she had shrunk before leaving Diagon and was now inside her pocket. Harry had left her wand in its holster strapped to her right arm, and although Hagrid had said she wasn't allowed to use her wand outside of Hogwarts, Harry figured it would still be useful for threatening if needs be. Regardless of what Uncle Vernon had promised himself when he took Harry in, she had only just been gifted with proper access to her magic, and she wasn't about to give it up, not for anyone.

As the bus pulled away from the curb, she twisted in her seat to watch Hagrid as the bus began to pick up speed. Harry blinked. Hagrid had vanished.
As she stepped into the hallway of number four, Harry glanced up for a split second, her eyes meeting the stormy face of Uncle Vernon, ruddy with rage. Faster than she thought one of his size could move, Vernon launched his body forward and struck Harry across the face with a meaty fist. Harry's head snapped to the right, pain bloomed on the left half of her face and raced up to her throbbing temple. Sparks dancing in front of her eyes as she toppled down onto the bottom step, clinging to the carpet to try and ground herself, her head spinning. She worked her jaw silently, reaching up a hand to rub away the ache from clenching her teeth tightly together to ensure no sound would come out. Distantly, Harry was aware of Uncle Vernon's heavy breathing behind her. All Harry could focus on was blinking the black spots out of her vision and forcing away the tears that threatened to spill over her lashline.

"Well," Vernon snapped, "Where is everything, I'll not have that rot in my house." His multiple chins wobbled with every word; his walrus-like moustache twitched wriggled like a caterpillar had taken up residence on his puce face.

"Not here," Harry lied. She was glad that Dudley's clothes were so huge that the outline of her wand holster was unable to be seen and the deep pockets hid her shrunken trunk. "Hagrid took my things with him; I'll get them once I'm there." Uncle Vernon snorted, much like the pig that he was.

"If you think for one-second, girl, that you'll be allowed to go to that infernal school you are very much mistaken." Uncle Vernon's puce face reddened. "When we took you in, we swore to stamp out that rot in you once and for all!" He clenched a fat fist and shook it threateningly at Harry. She stared back at him impassively watching his wrist fat wobbling like jelly with cold apathy. Absently, she wondered if he was going to hit her again and if she should try and steal some ice cubes from the freezer before going to bed.

"But if you let me go, you'll only have to see me for two months out of the year," Harry said quietly. She avoided eye contact as she made the suggestion, not wanting to anger the man further and risk being struck again. Uncle Vernon frowned as if he hadn't thought of it, knowing his limited brain capacity, Harry suspected he hadn't considered any other alternative. "You don't even have to pay for anything. I've already got everything I need and my train ticket, all I need is a way to Kings Cross Station on the first of September, and then I'm gone for the year; you won't see me until the summer." Vernon and Petunia retreated into the kitchen; Harry could hear their hissed argument over the fuzzy sound of the radio.

Movement at the top of the stairs caught Harry's attention, and she glanced up just in time to see Dudley gasp and run back up to his bedroom. She supposed that this could be one good thing that came out of staying here for a few more weeks. Harry suspected Dudley was too scared to stay in
the same room as her. The little pigtail on the base of his spine was likely serving as a reminder to leave Harry alone.

Uncle Vernon cleared his throat as he lumbered out of the kitchen, almost puce with anger. Aunt Petunia's lips were pursed so tightly Harry wondered if the inside of Petunia's cheeks would be permanently moulded to her horse-like teeth. "We've decided to let you go, provided you do not contact us while you're at that school and we are not expected to have any contact with you or any more of your kind." Uncle Vernon sneered, his words conveying the feeling that the entire magical world was a plague on his existence.

As far as Harry was concerned, it was a done deal, ten months without hearing hide or hair from the Dursleys seemed like a paradise, a fantastical dream come true. She took in a shuddering breath, meeting Vernon's piggy eyes and nodding her agreement. Uncle Vernon huffed, straightening his bulging-at-the-buttons shirt and nodding decisively as if he'd managed to secure a million-pound deal rather than merely letting Harry go to school.

Harry's last month at the Dursleys was odd. Dudley was unable to stay in the same room as her for more than a few seconds before he scurried out and barricaded himself in his bedroom. Harry had been shunted into Dudley's second bedroom where he kept his broken and discarded toys when the letters had first begun arriving. It was this bedroom where she now spent most of her time in enforced exile from the rest of the family. Vernon and Petunia had made no move to force her back into her cupboard. In fact, the Dursleys seemed to be making every possible effort to ignore her. Uncle Vernon had installed a cat flap in the door, and it was through this that Harry was fed. Aunt Petunia would push through limp lettuce leaves, slightly stale bread, and occasionally a tin of cold, congealed soup.

Late at night when the Dursleys were sleeping, Harry would prise the loose floorboard up, take out her shrunken trunk and read her schoolbooks till the sun came up. She was still expected to make every meal but otherwise remained locked in her room. Vernon and Petunia acted as though any space that Harry occupied was empty. It was a vast improvement from being the family's whipping girl, an object that existed solely for the Dursleys to vent their frustrations on. Sometimes, Harry would catch herself wondering if the Dursleys would suddenly snap out of their blatant attempts to pretend Harry didn't exist. Harry was terrified that one morning, she'd wake up and would be thrown back into her cupboard for daring to even breathe the same air as them. But to her surprise, it never happened.

On the morning of the first of September, Harry woke with the sun. She could hear Aunt Petunia shuffling around downstairs, likely putting together some sandwiches to take with them to London. Uncle Vernon had only agreed to take her with them because the Dursleys were also going into London. They had managed to find a discreet surgeon - for a price of course - to remove Dudley's pigtail before he started at Smeltings.

Two hours later, Harry found herself trapped in the car with the Dursleys, her trunk shrunk and in her pocket, and her wand strapped to her wrist. Somehow Aunt Petunia had managed to bribe Dudley into sitting beside Harry for the journey. He resolutely refused to make eye contact and instead stared out his window and only grunted in reply to his mother's questions.
Vernon drove like a man possessed as if he couldn't wait to get Harry out of his car. All along the motorway, he overtook cars and swerved sharply into different lanes leaving behind a trail of honking horns and angry yelling from other drivers. The speed at which Vernon went over roundabouts threw Harry against her side of the car door. Dudley leaned dangerously close to Harry, and once he was able to right himself, Dudley plastered his body to his side of the car.

The car squealed to a halt inside a short-stay parking bay outside of Kings Cross, and Uncle Vernon barked at Harry to get out which she did without any encouragement. As soon as her feet were on the tarmac, Uncle Vernon shot off, the tires leaving behind the unpleasant stench of burnt rubber.

Swallowing nervously, Harry instinctively hunched in on herself as people brushed past her in swarms. She watched, wide-eyed and apprehensive as people crowded at the doors, rushing to make their trains and get to work. Given Vernon's speed throughout the journey, they had reached Kings Cross a little after half-past nine in the morning; Harry now had around an hour and a half to kill before her train departed. Now all that was left was the find the barrier Hagrid had told her about.

Harry marched forwards, a determined set in her brow despite her curled shoulders.

When it came to dealing with crowds, it was safe to say Harry was not the most confident. The hustle of bustle of Diagon Alley last month had very nearly almost been too much for her. Now she faced the practically herculean task of trying to navigate the ever-changing direction of a crowd of adults trying to get where the needed to be without the aid of Hagrid who had parted the herds of people in Diagon Alley like Moses did the Red Sea.

Luckily, Harry's small stature worked in her favour, and she was able to duck under the arm of a lady in a khaki fur coat clutching an enormous glossy red handbag, finally escaping from the hoard.

Harry stumbled out just in front of a tiny kiosk, directly beside platform nine. Glancing at the little shop, Harry's stomach rumbled at the sight of the buttery pastries behind the glass, the warm aromas so inviting. But Harry had enough basic knowledge about food to know that delicacies like that would only upset her stomach after so long having cold soup and bread as her only meals. She sighed to herself as she walked over to the kiosk, nerves beginning to bubble in her stomach.

Over the years, Harry had taken any spare change that had been left around Number Four and put it in a pair of Uncle Vernon's old socks, kept safe beneath her camp bed in her cupboard. She only ever took what she knew wouldn't be missed, usually ten and twenty pence coins. Gradually the small change she collected had grown to a substantial amount and the week after being taken to Diagon Alley, Harry had taken herself to the bank and exchanged her jar of pocket shrapnel for a crisp twenty-pound note.

The lad working the kiosk was tall and gangly with smatterings of acne across his tan skin. He looked as tired as Harry felt and she tried to be polite as she ordered a small cup of tea and a packet of digestives biscuits to go. She sat at one of the wobbly metal tables, the large black carriage
With every tick of the cast-iron second hand, Harry felt the biscuit in her mouth take on the taste of cardboard and the consistency of sawdust, drying out her mouth and clogging in the back of her throat. Butterflies squirmed in her stomach, and Harry had to force back the urge to throw up the meagre amount she had eaten. Taking a shaky sip from the scolding hot tea, Harry welcomed the burn that travelled down her throat, washing away the stuck digestive.

Time seemed to fade around Harry as she watched the minutes tick by obsessively until she was startled out of her haze by the clock striking half-past ten. Wiping her clammy palms on her baggy jeans, Harry stumbled to her feet, steadying herself on the wobbly table. Her throat clicked dryly as she swallowed nervously, and her heartbeat pounded in her ears as she walked towards the barrier between platforms nine and ten. Squeezing her eyes shut, Harry took the rest of the distance at a quick pace and breathed in a shocked gasp as a cold sensation settled on her spine...Harry tripped as the surface underneath her changed, and she opened her eyes to avoid falling.

Almost instantly Harry’s eyes landed on the giant scarlet engine, the brilliant colour gleaming so brightly it almost hurt to look at; the cursive gold lettering across the side of the engine declared it to be the Hogwarts Express. Platform Nine and Three Quarters, Hogwarts Express - Departing at: 11:00 flashed on a large signpost which was rapidly changing between displaying the departure time and advertising Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans.

The steam from the engine drifted over the crowded platform, Harry huffed a quiet laugh at the small student with blond hair chasing after a toad which was hopping away from him at quite a speed. From their cages, owls hooted indignantly at their owners, likely wanting to be out of the metal cages. Just beside the barrier, a boy with braided hair was showing the crowd around him a red box, Harry shivered as a hairy leg poked out, and the people around the boy shrieked, recoiling back from what was likely a giant spider.

Not wanting to be on the busy platform for much longer, Harry hopped onto the first carriage after the scarlet engine, shutting the door behind her. The first few compartments were full, so Harry walked further into the train, searching for an empty area.

She noticed footsteps coming up behind her and automatically tensed, anticipating a hit that never came, instead she heard a warm voice, a smile evident in the tone.

"Harry, you're early," Draco exclaimed, pulling behind him a large trunk almost as big as him. Tied to the trunk was a silver cage with a huge, intimidating owl, with baleful amber eyes that glared suspiciously at Harry. "Where's your stuff?" Draco asked, checking behind her. The nerves that had been cramping in Harry's stomach lessened; she'd been scared that Draco would have forgotten all about the conversation they'd had in Madam Malkins.

Realising that Draco had asked her a question, Harry shook herself out of her daze, patting her pocket. "Shrunk and in my pocket," She smiled, her tense shoulders dropping.

The next compartment she glanced into was mercifully empty, and she watched confused as Draco
pulled the trunk that was easily over half his size into the section.

"Isn't that heavy?" Harry asked, gesturing at the dark grey trunk. Draco shook his head and flashed Harry a crooked grin.

"Oh, not at all. Father applied a Featherlight Charm before we left," Draco explained as he pushed the trunk into the corner of the compartment. "Do you mind if I let Archimedes out?" Draco asked, gesturing at the enormous eagle owl who currently trying his best to scowl at Draco between the bars of his cage, "He's not too fond of being locked up." While Harry was reasonably wary of the giant bird of prey, whose black talons gleamed under the oil lamplight as he flexed them menacingly, Harry also understood what it was like to be confined to a space too small for your body.

"No, that's fine, I don't mind," Harry replied, sitting down on the opposite seat to Draco. She watched, transfixed as Draco opened the cage and the enormous owl hopped out, stretching his vast wings to their full span. Archimedes hooted grumpily, ruffling his feathers as he settled in beside Draco, digging his talons into the scarlet upholstery. Draco just tutted and scratched under the owl's chin, chuckling as Archimedes clucked and gently nipped at Draco's tickling fingers.

Just as they had in Madam Malkins, Harry and Draco fell into an easy rapport. While Harry was never really one for talking, Draco seemed to enjoy the sound of his own voice, which she had no problem with if it meant laughing till her ribs ached as Draco recounted the time he'd taken his broomstick for a quick spin and ended up going for a dip headfirst into the lake on his family's estate.

"You really must come and see the manor one day," Draco enthused, a pink tinge on his cheeks leftover from the laughter they'd shared.

"I'd like that," Harry admitted, rubbing her ribs to try and ease the aching and frowning slightly as her fingers rubbed over the jutting bones.

"Great, it's settled," Draco's eyes sparkled with the remnants of his tears of laughter.

"Just like that," Harry grinned.

"Just like that," Draco replied, nodding his head sagely, a wicked grin creeping across his sharp face.

Harry and Draco both jumped as the loud chiming of a clock echoed around the station, the crowds that had filled the platform had thinned considerably and Harry watched as adults disappeared suddenly on the spot.

With a jolt and a shrill whistle, the Hogwarts Express began to pull out of the station. Harry caught sight of someone jumping onto the train at the last minute and she watched as a small girl with flaming red hair, a few shades lighter than her own, chased after the train, laughing despite the tear tracks on her face.
Harry turned to flash a nervous smile at Draco who reached out and patted her arm, "Don't worry, it's not going to be as scary as you think it is. And besides, you've got me now." Nodding, Harry silently agreed with the blond boy, and she hoped to God he was right.

Chapter End Notes

in regards to harry and draco's friendship i wanted to portray them as close as i could to how most kids make friends because while harry obviously has deeply rooted trust issues and cynacism and ive tried to explore draco's intelligence, at the end of the day they are still children, they have both literally just turned 11!

also sorry for the wait because i kinda dropped off the face of the earth for a bit, whoops

also i have a twitter now so if you wanna see me rant and maybe see some cool art and what i sometimes look like gimme a follow @pretty_loki - my profile picture is a heavily edited pic of edward cullen with vv big eyes ;)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!