

Harry Potter 621

Chapter 621: The Amazing Hermione Granger

But no one was as frustrated as Ron, and when he came out of the dormitory, he had an appalled look on his face.

There was just no getting around the fact that his robes looked more like a dress than anything else. In a desperate attempt to make them look more manly, he used a Severing Charm on the ruff and cuffs. It worked fairly well; at least he was now lace-free, although he hadn't done a very neat job, and the edges still looked depressingly frayed.

“Well, Ron, don't think about your robes, they don't look that bad!” Harry comforted him.

“Yes, it's the same for everybody. These dresses and robes are very retro style, not in line with the modern aesthetic,” Evan followed, “These are ancient traditions from hundreds of years ago. Look at them...”

Indeed, the common room looked strange, full of people wearing different colors instead of the usual mass of black.

Ron looked around and saw that everyone looked awkward and somewhat regained some confidence. But when he looked back at Evan, he felt a little self-conscious...

It had to be said that Mrs. Weasley made a lot of effort in choosing the dress robes.

The color of Evan's robes was very conspicuous and distinctive. It was the most eye-catching among the crowd.

Now, anyone who entered the Common Room would unconsciously turn his eyes on Evan.

The sky-blue dress robes matched Evan's unparalleled self-confidence temperament very well. While showing the noble aristocratic taste, they could hide the unease in his heart, making people's eyes shine. Ron had to admit Evan looked very decent.

If someone else wore these dress robes, it wouldn't have the same effect, though it would look very fancy.

He looked up at the exit of the girls' dormitory and tried not to compare himself with Evan.

After all, there were only a very few like Evan, most of the boys looked very bad now.

After a while, Lavender and several girls walked out of the girls' dormitory. She looked much prettier than usual, in robes of shocking pink, with gold bracelets glimmering under the candlelight at her wrists.

She waved to Ron a little too enthusiastically and giggled. Although the boys below looked at her in astonishment, Lavender didn't care at all.

She quickly walked down the stairs and looked up and down at Ron as she approached. She seemed very satisfied.

“Hello!” said Ron, looking rudely at Lavender with a strange expression.

“Do I look beautiful?” Lavender asked nonchalantly, with a bright smile on her face.

“Not bad ... well ... very beautiful!” Ron winked at her, and he smiled hesitantly.

“Let’s go down, the ball is about to begin!”

“Okay!” said Ron dryly, waving at Evan and Harry, “See you later!”

Lavender smiled and came up actively, and they both swaggered out of the common room.

“They look perfect for each other!” Evan commented.

Harry nodded at first, but looked at Lavender’s back and quickly shook his head. He felt that Lavender looked a little scary and very embarrassing. He really hoped Ron could hold on.

Harry was wondering what Cho would look like, and then thought of Ginny, wishing she wouldn’t dress up like Lavender...

Besides a little nervous personality and her exaggerated dress, Evan was very satisfied with Lavender’s active attitude.

In school, it was not easy to find a girl who was really interested in Ron himself. Thinking that way, Lavender didn’t look so bad.

If it were another girl, she would have probably turned around and left at the sight of Ron’s terrible robes.

The girls continued to descend from the upper floor and left the Common Room with their partners.

Those who had chosen partners from other Houses, Durmstrang or Beauxbatons also left the Common Room in groups.

After a while, Angelina came down too. She smiled and handed Fred her hand. They left hand in hand, and Fred winked at them naughtily.

Behind Angelina was Ginny, wearing a relatively conservative pale red dress with long pink stripes, and a rosy face. She was too embarrassed to see Harry and Evan.

Ginny was clearly well dressed and looked extraordinarily beautiful. She was even prettier than all the girls Evan had seen so far tonight.

The cute bubble sleeves on the robes made her extraordinarily cute and intoxicating, with a pink belt with a small bow around her waist, wrapped around her petite body, with an unspeakable feminine charm.

All the boys who hadn’t yet left saw Ginny and felt an inexplicable impulse from the bottom of their hearts.

Unsurprisingly, Harry looked at Ginny in disbelief and was speechless in surprise. Looking at him, he seemed to have just noticed that Ginny was also a beautiful girl.

The look, which was originally of no nature, changed rapidly; and there was a hint of nervousness and consternation.

“Hermione is still up there, she’s coming out right away!” Ginny said, her little face still red.

“Well, let’s wait for her and go down together,” said Harry, seemingly a little embarrassed to go with Ginny.

“No, I’ll stay here and wait for her. You two just go and enj...”

Evan naturally didn’t want to go with them, but he stopped before he had finished speaking.

The noisy voices in the Common Room suddenly stopped, and everyone looked up at the girl who had just come out.

Many people opened their mouths wide in surprise, speechless.

It was Hermione!!!

But she didn’t look like Hermione at all. She looked like a fairy that had landed to the mortal world.

She had done something with her hair; it was no longer bushy but sleek and shiny, and twisted up into an elegant knot at the back of her head.

She was wearing robes made of a floaty, periwinkle-blue material, and she was holding herself differently, somehow... or maybe it was merely the absence of the twenty or so books she usually had slung over her back.

She was also smiling, of course, a little nervously. In a word, she was really stunning.

When she saw Evan, her eyes went bright and her mouth was full of smiles.

She walked down the stairs, her light pace like a butterfly, her well-chosen pink dress extraordinarily elegant and flexible, and the silk skirt wrapped around her slender, soft body, flowing to the ground like a wave of water.

Evan just spotted that Hermione’s body, usually hidden under her uniform robes, was really beautiful.

Chapter 622: The Beginning of the Ball

Everyone stared at Hermione with unflattering disbelief, dismayed and did not know what to say.

Hermione was definitely the most changed and beautiful of all the girls, subverting everyone’s understanding of her.

“Good evening, Evan!” Hermione came over and whispered, “How do I look?”

“Beautiful ... incredible!” Evan replied, looking at Hermione carefully.

His heart was beating fast and uncontrollably, and his eyes could not be removed from Hermione’s body.

Hermione was now so fascinating, her body exuding a strong charm.

Hearing Evan's comment, Hermione's mouth smiled upwards. She handed him her hand and they went downstairs to the entrance hall.

Along the way, everyone they met was looking at them in surprise.

Evan and Hermione's outfits were too conspicuous, especially Hermione, who attracted a lot of attention.

Many girls were throwing her looks of deepest loathing and jealousy, while the boys were admiring and amazed.

Though neither Evan nor Hermione were champions, they were the brightest couple tonight.

When the two of them went down, the entrance hall was packed with students, all milling around waiting for eight o'clock, when the doors to the Great Hall would be thrown open.

Those people who were meeting partners from different Houses were edging through the crowd trying to find one another.

Ron and Lavender stood by the door, and he saw Hermione who had just stepped down and opened his mouth wide in surprise.

He stared at Hermione for a while, then turned his head, and looked thoughtful.

After a while, a group of Slytherins came up the steps from their dungeon Common Room. Malfoy was in the front; he was wearing dress robes of black velvet with a high collar, which made him look like a vicar.

Pansy Parkinson in very frilly robes of pale pink was clutching Malfoy's arm.

Crabbe and Goyle were both wearing green, they resembled moss-colored boulders, and neither of them had managed to find a partner.

After seeing Evan and Hermione standing on the edge of the main staircase, Malfoy was slightly stunned.

Like other boys, his gaze fell on Hermione, but he didn't seem to be able to find an insult to throw at her.

Five minutes later, the oak front doors opened, and everyone turned to look as the Durmstrang students entered with Professor Karkaroff.

Krum was at the front of the party, accompanied by a Slytherin sixth-year girl.

Over their heads, they could see that an area of lawn right in front of the castle had been transformed into a sort of grotto full of fairy lights ... meaning hundreds of actual living fairies were sitting in the rosebushes and fluttering over the statues of what seemed to be Father Christmas and his reindeer

Evan suddenly found that he and Hermione were too noticeable, standing there.

The eyes of everyone who walked into the entrance hall had to fall on both of them and stare at them impolitely.

Hermione was a little embarrassed and asked Evan to move to the side and block her body.

She snuggled up in his arms, and all of a sudden, the boys looked at Evan enviously, as though they wanted to eat him alive.

The feeling of joy was very good, but the pressure was equally as great...

Fortunately, at this time, the students from Beauxbatons began to enter the castle, shifting the attention of everyone.

At the front was Fleur with her partner Roger Davies. Fleur was extremely gorgeous and didn't lose to Hermione at all.

They belonged to two different styles, but they were both extremely beautiful.

Fleur fully showed her charm, like a flower in full bloom.

The addition of Veela's blood made all the boys unable to calm down and immerse themselves in her.

Hermione was not as mature and gorgeous as Fleur, nor did she have "that kind" of beauty, but compared with Fleur and other girls, she was particularly pure, and her unique qualities of intelligence, quiet, and compassion were enough to make every boy moved.

If it were for Evan to choose, he would think no girl could match Hermione tonight.

But no doubt, Fleur was also extremely eye-catching.

Beside her, Davies looked so stunned by his good fortune in having Fleur for a partner that he could hardly take his eyes off her.

Gabrielle and Colin walked at the back of the Beauxbatons team and they looked around for Evan and Hermione as soon as they entered the entrance hall.

Unlike Hermione, Fleur and other girls, Gabrielle was a different style that made loveliness to its fullest.

That was the cuteness of the lovely girl of her age. She was wearing a white dress, like a porcelain doll, with a naughty smile on her lips, and moving her eyes in a smart way. Soon, she saw Evan and Hermione standing at the edge of the stairs and dragged Colin quickly towards them.

"Hello, Evan! Hello, Hermione!" said Gabrielle with a smile. She turned around Hermione a few times and appreciated her dress.

Colin told Evan that he had just gone to the Beauxbatons carriage to pick up Gabrielle. The whole castle and the grounds outside had changed. They were decorated with magic and Christmas costumes were everywhere. There were also fairies and elves scattered around, as if they had suddenly entered a dreamy fairy tale world.

Just then, Professor McGonagall's voice called, "Champions over here, please!"

She was wearing dress robes of red tartan and had arranged a rather ugly wreath of thistles around the brim of her hat.

Professor McGonagall told the champions and their partners to wait on one side of the doors while everyone else went inside. They were to enter the Great Hall in procession when the rest of the students had sat down.

When passing through the doors, Evan noticed that Fleur and Cho were looking at him, and their eyes were following his steps.

Krum and Ron's eyes were all focused on Hermione, staring at her.

Looking at them, one couldn't help but wonder if he and Hermione were the protagonists of this evening.

Five minutes later, once everyone was settled in the Hall, Professor McGonagall told the champions and their partners to get in line in pairs and to follow her.

They filed in and started walking toward a large round table at the top of the Hall, where the judges were sitting. Everyone applauded warmly.

The walls of the Hall had all been covered in sparkling silver frost, with hundreds of garlands of mistletoe and ivy crossing the starry black ceiling. The House tables had vanished; instead, there were about a hundred smaller, lantern-lit ones, each seating about a dozen people.

Dumbledore smiled happily as the champions approached straight the top table.

Karkaroff's face was gloomy, his eyes wandered back and forth on the champions, and then he glanced quickly at Evan, who was sitting below.

Ludo Bagman, tonight in robes of bright purple with large yellow stars, was clapping as enthusiastically as any of the students.

Beside him, Madame Maxime had changed her usual uniform of black satin for a flowing gown of lavender silk. But Mr. Crouch was not there. The fifth seat at the table was occupied by Percy Weasley.

Chapter 623: The Dance

Percy was wearing brand-new, navy-blue dress robes and a smug expression on his face.

Evan stared at him for a while, wondering why Barty Crouch hadn't come!

Ron was also surprised. Seeing Percy draw out an empty chair beside him, he sat down hesitantly.

"What are you doing here?" Ron asked in a low voice.

"I've been promoted!" Percy said arrogantly, and from his tone, he might have been announcing his election as supreme ruler of the universe. "I'm now Mr. Crouch's personal assistant, and I'm here representing him."

"Oh, why didn't he come?" Ron continued to ask.

In fact, he wanted to leave, and he wasn't looking forward to being lectured by Percy on cauldron bottoms all through dinner.

"I'm afraid to say Mr. Crouch isn't well, not well at all. He hasn't been right since the World Cup. It's hardly surprising because of overwork. He's not as young as

he used to be... though still quite brilliant, of course; the mind remains as great as it ever was. But the World Cup was a terrible fiasco for the whole Ministry of Magic, and then, Mr. Crouch suffered a huge personal shock with the misbehavior of that house-elf of his, Blinky, or whatever she was called. Naturally he dismissed her immediately afterward, but... well, as I say, he's getting on, he needs looking after, and I think he's found a definite drop in his home comforts since the house-elf left. And then we had the tournament to arrange, and the aftermath of the Cup to deal with... that revolting Skeeter woman buzzing around ... no, poor man, he's having a well earned, quiet Christmas. I'm just glad he knew he had someone he could rely upon to take his place."

Percy said a lot in one breath, and Ron did not listen to a word, but was annoyed.

He looked up at Hermione again, as if he had just met her, and he realized that she was so beautiful!

Ron was a bit off the mark and couldn't help wondering if Hermione or Fleur were his partner.

"So, Mr. Crouch's stopped calling you Weatherby?!" he asked subconsciously.

"Listen, Ron, you've done a good job this time, becoming a champion and earning glory for yourself and your family," said Percy, not answering Ron's question. "You have to be prepared. There's been an accident in the first task, and Mr. Crouch and the Ministry will definitely take special measures for the second task to ensure that nothing goes wrong."

"What is it?!" Ron turned to look at Percy, wondering what special measures were in place.

"I can't say, it's top secret. You'll know it in time!" said Percy proudly. "By the way, have you figured out the meaning of the golden egg?"

"It's still early. If you don't want to tell me anything, then don't say it!" Ron retorted.

Because of the Triwizard Tournament, Percy had been keeping his appetite for the whole summer vacation.

Now he was no longer interested in continuing to listen to him, and his attention had returned to the beautiful girls.

At the same time, Evan and Hermione were also discussing the reason for Percy's presence.

There was no food yet on the glittering golden plates, but small menus were lying in front of each of them.

"Strange, I don't see the waiters!" said Harry, picking up his menu uncertainly and looking around.

“Very simple, just say what you want to eat!” Evan leafed through the menu and said.

Just then, everyone saw Dumbledore carefully looking down at his own menu. Then he looked at his plate and said very clearly, “Pork chops!”

And pork chops appeared. Getting the idea, the rest of the table placed their orders with their plates too.

The atmosphere in the Great Hall immediately warmed up and everyone began chatting happily.

On the table opposite them, Hagrid was waving to everyone. He looked terrible back in his horrible hairy brown suit.

Then they saw him quickly gazing up at the top table. There, Madame Maxime waved to Hagrid, her opals glittering in the candlelight.

The conversation naturally shifted to Hagrid and Madame Maxime, as well as Beauxbatons.

Gabrielle told them about Christmas in Beauxbatons. “At this time of the year, we have ice sculptures of different shapes all around the dining chamber. They do not melt; of course ... They are like huge statues of diamond, glittering around the place. And we have choirs of wood nymphs, who serenade us as we eat.”

More than half an hour later, when all the food had been consumed, Dumbledore stood up and asked the students to do the same.

With a wave of his wand, all the tables zoomed back along the walls leaving the floor clear, and then he conjured a raised platform into existence along the right wall. A set of drums, several guitars, a lute, a cello, and some bagpipes were set upon it.

The Weird Sisters now trooped up onto the stage to wildly enthusiastic applause; they were all extremely hairy and dressed in black robes that had been artfully ripped and torn.

They picked up their instruments, and everyone had been so interested in watching them that they had almost forgotten what was coming.

Just then, the lanterns on all the other tables had gone out, and the four champions and their partners stood up.

“It’s time to dance!” Everyone was looking forward to it. It was the highlight of the ball.

Ron looked very nervous. When he stood up, he stepped on Lavender’s robes and almost tripped.

At this time, the Weird Sisters struck up a slow, mournful tune. The champions walked onto the brightly lit dance floor and began to dance softly.

The four champions had different dance levels, the best being that of Fleur and Roger Davies.

The two of them looked very experienced, and Davies was staring at Fleur with a very dazed look on his face.

He was really, again, a foolish guy confused by Veela’s blood.

Beside them, Cedric and Cho did well too. They must have practiced secretly.

Cho was amazing in a set of cheongsam with oriental characteristics.

She and Cedric danced very gracefully on the rhythm, on the dance floor.

Compared with these two pairs, Krum and his partner were slightly worse, mainly because Krum's movements were not coordinated. And he seemed a little absent-minded and always looked out of the court.

As for Ron and Lavender, their performance was even worse, but it was not as bad as expected.

Under Lavender's control, they slowly circled in place. It was to say that they had managed with effort not to look like fools.

Chapter 624: The Stage Belongs to Evan and Hermione!

Colin took out the camera and took this rare picture.

Soon, many people began to come onto the dance floor, and the champions were no longer the center of attention.

"Ready, Hermione?" Evan asked, reaching out and inviting her to dance.

"Yes!" Hermione nodded; her cheeks slightly red.

Her right hand was gently held by Evan, and she acquiescently followed him onto the center of the dance floor.

They danced slowly in a soothing rhythm, looking slightly astringent.

Every night during the previous period, Evan and Hermione had been practicing in an empty classroom. It was the first time they were dancing in front of so many people.

In fact, Evan was a little nervous. He held Hermione's soft, small hand in one hand and placed his other hand around her thin waist, and his brain was blank.

All he felt was a moment of softness in front of him, and his heart was beating fast and uncontrollably.

The world in front of him was gradually disappearing, with only Hermione being left in his eyes.

The same was true for Hermione. There was only Evan in her eyes.

Under the influence of music, their bodies danced subconsciously.

Like most of the students around them, they started with basic footwork and occasionally took one or two moves.

But the effect of the practice quickly became apparent, and Evan felt more and more adept at his movements.

He was getting better and better with Hermione in his arms, from his heels to his fingertips, twisting and moving like a fish in water.

Sometimes, they looked like a stream flowing down through the waterfall, and sometimes like floating, swaying clouds.

With the progress of the dance, Evan and Hermione's movements were becoming more and more natural, and their coordination was getting better and better.

Often, with just a move or a look from one of them, the other knew what he or she meant to do. Without even gesturing, they could feel each other's new ideas and connect with one another.

Evan looked at the smiling Hermione and gradually melted into that smile, as though to merge with Hermione...

Hermione in his arms was so beautiful, with an irresistible charm.

Evan's heart was moved, and at this moment, they were the center of the dance floor, the focus of the Yule Ball.

Under his traction, they danced from the edge to the center of the dance floor.

A strange sensation rose and spread in Hermione's body, spreading with warmth to the tips of her fingers and toes. She gave her body to Evan and relaxed completely.

She looked into Evan's eyes as he looked back to hers. Her heels were gently positioned, the tips of her shoes propped up the ground, and she drew arcs right and left.

The people who passed by Evan and Hermione stopped one after another to look at both of them, with complicated eyes.

Whether they were willing to admit it or not, the two of them danced so well that they could only admire them.

That was not to say that the two of them were very skilled; they were just extremely harmonious, to a charming point.

Unlike the free, fast-paced dancing, which is more freestyle, the most important thing in a ballroom dance is tacit understanding and cooperation.

If technique is good, but you don't have a tacit understanding with your partner, you can't really end up performing a wonderful dance.

This tacit understanding can't be practiced overnight, to trust each other completely unreservedly, and to be telepathic. Evan and Hermione were entering this wonderful state, and at Hogwarts it was almost impossible to find another couple like them.

Everyone stopped, even the champions, standing aside and watching enviously Evan and Hermione. Most of the girls were watching Evan, and the boys were staring at Hermione.

They only saw Hermione's skirt whirling and dancing in the air, bringing out a pair of mysterious and suffocating blue shadows in the dim light.

Fleur and Cho looked at Evan with a complicated look, while Krum and Ron stared at Hermione in a daze.

Beside Evan and Hermione, only Dumbledore was waltzing with Madame Maxime. He was so dwarfed by her that the top of his pointed hat barely tickled her chin; however, she moved very gracefully for a woman so large.

The two of them also saw Evan and Hermione. They stopped, smiling to one another and left the dance floor to the young couple.

By this time, no one was dancing on the dance floor. Everyone stood back and watched the performance of the two of them.

The stage was theirs; the others at this moment had become the backdrop.

When the bagpipe played the final, quavering note, the Weird Sisters stopped playing.

Evan and Hermione also stopped, and there was a burst of applause in the Great Hall. Everyone was cheering for them.

They all talked about the dance moves of Evan and Hermione, impressed by their performances.

Colin also quickly pressed the shutter with excitement. He just did not dance, but kept taking pictures.

At first, they were pictures of the champions, and then they were all Evan and Hermione's.

Intuition told him that the effect of publishing these photos in the newspaper was definitely much better than that of the four champions'.

"That's great. I didn't expect Evan and Hermione to dance so well!" said Harry enviously.

When he was dancing with Ginny, he accidentally stepped on her feet. Then they stopped to watch Evan and Hermione dancing.

They were sitting at the table drinking butterbeer, and Ron and Lavender were beside them.

Ron also stared at Evan and Hermione in the center of the dance floor, never expecting this to happen.

The two of them were really dazzling, and if light was used for comparison, Evan and Hermione had just completely shone so that people couldn't open their eyes.

"Evan and Hermione are so good. They're a perfect couple!" Lavender sighed. "Are we dancing again, Ron?"

"Take a break first!" Ron replied, not in the mood to dance, and Lavender's words made him a little uncomfortable.

At this time, the Weird Sisters struck up a new song, which was much faster.

Harry and Ginny went dancing, and Evan and Hermione followed. The opening dance was just a little overwhelming.

The music this time was totally different from the one just played. Perhaps the performances of Evan and Hermione set off the whole audience, making everyone let go. Everyone enjoyed the dance, especially Fred and Angelina.

In fact, they were dancing so exuberantly that people around them were backing away in fear of injury.

For this style of dance, Fred and Angelina were the center of focus.

Correspondingly, Evan and Hermione were a little inseparable, not as conspicuous as before, but they were still very happy to be mixed in the crowd.

Evan saw that the teachers also began to enter onto the floor dance. Caresius disguised in Mad-Eye Moody was doing an extremely ungainly two-step with Professor Sinistra, who was nervously avoiding his wooden leg. Not far away, Ludo Bagman and Professor McGonagall were also dancing.

Chapter 625: New Measures of the Ministry of Magic

After the song ended, Evan and Hermione did not continue dancing and decided to return to their seats and rest for a while.

“It’s really hot, isn’t it?” Hermione said with a smile, fanning herself with her palms. Because of the dance, her cheeks were slightly reddish.

“You just danced too much,” said Evan, “By the way, what would you like to drink?”

“Fruit juice, butterbeer will be good, too!”

“Oh, I’ll get it. Wait for me.” Evan responded.

“Wait a minute!” said Hermione, who saw the sweat on Evan’s forehead and subconsciously reached out and wiped it.

Hermione’s hand was soft, smooth and tender, and the feeling of her touch was very comforting.

She had just rubbed Evan’s forehead twice before she realized what she was doing. She blushed and hurriedly lowered her head.

Evan held her sweating hand and looked at her stupefied.

Looking at Hermione’s shy look, Evan couldn’t help wondering if it was time to lead her to the woods.

The third dance had just been played, and some couples had already left the dance floor hand in hand and went out into the garden.

“Evan...” Hermione whispered.

Evan was sure that nothing he could do to Hermione now would be rejected.

Now that they had finished dancing, they should need some private space for them to get along.

Evan had not had time to act, and Harry and Ginny came over, and Colin and Gabrielle also went to their side.

Eventually, Evan, Harry, and Colin went to get drinks, while Hermione, Ginny, and Gabrielle went back to wait.

They went to Ron and Lavender’s table and said hello.

Ron ignored them and did not even turn his head to look at the three of them. Instead, he whispered something to Lavender.

Hermione, Ginny, and Gabrielle looked at them strangely and couldn't understand what was going on.

Lavender suddenly laughed, stood up and followed Ron to the floor dance, ready to dance.

Ron didn't look at them in the end, as though they were invisible.

"Have you noticed that Ron is a bit strange tonight?"

"Maybe he's finally found a girlfriend. I think Lavender is a perfect match for him..." Ginny said.

Evan and the others came back with a drink, just in time to see Ron and Lavender leaving.

He didn't have time to think of Ron. Evan was thinking about how to ask Hermione out alone.

As soon as Evan sat down, Gabrielle badgered him to take her to dance, as he had promised her before.

The girl did not even dance with Colin and had been waiting for Evan.

In this case, Evan was naturally embarrassed to refuse. After getting Hermione's consent, he led Gabrielle to the dance floor.

Harry sat down for a while and left, wanting to invite Cho.

Colin went to dance with Ginny, leaving Hermione alone at the table.

"Herm-My-oh-nee, can I ask you to dance?" Just then, a voice suddenly said.

Unexpectedly, Krum came up and invited Hermione to dance.

"I want to take a break... you know... I just finished dancing. I'm a little tired!" Hermione hesitated for a moment and refused.

She also recalled the scene when she had just taken the initiative to wipe Evan's sweat, and the sweat on the palm of her hand...

"Vell, I vill come back later!" He said listlessly, glanced at Hermione again and turned to leave.

Behind him were a lot of girls who followed him to the other side of the stage.

As they passed Hermione, they all threw her looks of deepest loathing.

They were members of Krum's fan club and were jealous because of Krum's initiative to invite Hermione.

"So you've made friends with Viktor Krum and that little girl from Beauxbatons, Hermione?!" Percy had bustled over, rubbing his hands together and looking

extremely pompous. “Excellent! That’s the whole point to hold the Triwizard Tournament, you know... international magical cooperation!”

Percy sat next to Hermione, endlessly talking about things inside the Ministry.

Anyone else might have been bored, but Hermione was very interested in the work experience of the Ministry of Magic.

She asked Percy about many things, and even planned to ask him to join S.P.E.W. The top table was now empty; Professor Dumbledore was dancing with Professor Sprout, Ludo Bagman with Professor McGonagall; Madame Maxime and Hagrid were cutting a wide path around the dance floor as they waltzed through the students, and Karkaroff and Snape were nowhere to be seen.

Harry did not succeed in inviting Cho, but instead was with Luna.

Harry and Luna, Evan and Gabrielle, Colin and Ginny, Ron and Lavender were all dancing slowly to the music on the edge of the floor dance, and Evan was quietly guiding Gabrielle.

When the next song ended, everybody applauded once more, and Evan saw Ludo Bagman kiss Professor McGonagall’s hand and make his way back through the crowds, at which point Fred and George accosted him.

“What are these two guys doing, annoying senior Ministry members?” Percy hissed, watching Fred and George suspiciously. “No respect ... no, I have to stop them...” said Percy. He got up and walked towards them.

Ludo Bagman shook off Fred and George fairly quickly, however, and, spotting Evan and Harry, waved to them.

Percy took the initiative to walk towards the main table with them to meet him.

“I hope my brothers weren’t bothering you, Mr. Bagman?” said Percy at once.

“No, no!” said Bagman. “They were just telling me a bit more about those fake wands of theirs, wondering if I could advise them on the marketing. I’ve promised to put them in touch with a couple of contacts of mine at Zonko’s Joke Shop...”

Percy didn’t look happy about this at all. He definitely planned to tell Mrs. Weasley about this the moment he got home.

Evan looked at him disdainfully. In order to avoid talking about his debts, this fellow Ludo Bagman could really talk nonsense.

The prank products made by Fred and George were all sold in his and professor Lupin’s store. Their popularity was far beyond everyone’s imagination. Often, they were ordered out as soon as they reached the stores. Fred and George did not need Ludo Bagman’s help at all.

“By the way, Mr. Bagman, how do you feel the tournament is going? As you know, due to the hitch with the Goblet of Fire and the accident in the first task, our department has proposed corresponding solutions and new measures, which will be used in the second task...”

“Oh, yes!” Bagman said cheerfully. He didn’t care about the new measures Percy told about. “Old Barty is too careful. I think a small accident is more fun, isn’t it? Today is Christmas. Is old Barty still working in the Department? It’s really regrettable he couldn’t come.”

Chapter 626: Shadows in the Bushes

“Mr. Crouch’s health is just a minor problem. He will be up and about in no time,” said Percy importantly. “He’ll definitely get better before the start of the second task. But in the meantime, I’m more than willing to take up the slack. Of course, it’s not all attending balls.”

He laughed airily and continued, “I’ve had to deal with all sorts of things that have cropped up in his absence ... you heard Ali Bashir was caught smuggling a consignment of flying carpets into the country? And then we’ve been trying to persuade the Transylvanians to sign the International Ban on Dueling. I’ve got a meeting with their Head of Magical Cooperation in the new year...”

Percy kept on talking about his recent work, and the others were not in the mood to listen.

Evan was more concerned about what had happened to Mr. Crouch. Did Barty Crouch Jr., who probably pretended to be him, get tired of the work of the Ministry of Magic, so he gave all these messy things to Percy?!

What Barty Crouch Jr., who had disappeared from the crowd, was doing made Evan a little worried.

He certainly would not be lying in bed as Barty Crouch, but had more important things to do.

Also, what did Percy just mean about the new measures in the Triwizard Tournament?!

If he asked Percy directly, he certainly wouldn’t say anything; but since it was the Ministry’s decision, the school should already know about it.

Maybe he could ask Caresius, by the way, if there were any new information.

They sat there for a while, and from time to time someone came to invite Evan or Hermione to dance.

Evan was annoyed. He didn’t want to dance with the other girls, and neither did Hermione.

She once again turned Krum down, who left with a dreadful look on his face, not showing what he was thinking about.

Harry was still thinking about Cho, while Colin, Neville, Ginny, Luna and Gabrielle continued to dance.

As for Ron, he never came back after the end of the third song. It was unknown where he and Lavender had gone.

“Let’s go for a walk,” Evan whispered, and Hermione nodded.

They left the table, edged around the dance floor, and slipped out into the entrance hall.

The front doors stood open, and the fluttering fairy lights in the rose garden winked and twinkled as they went down the front steps.

Now, the rose garden in front of the castle was filled with low bushes; winding, ornamental paths; and large stone statues.

There were festive Christmas decorations hanging on the statues and trees, and the stars were shining with golden magic.

Evan could even hear splashing water, which sounded like a fountain. Here and there, people were sitting on carved benches.

The fairies were dancing in the flowers, fluttering their wings and dropping some stars.

Evan and Hermione set off along one of the winding paths through the rosebushes. They were not walking fast, enjoying this rare time alone.

As the light grew darker and darker, Evan could hear the sound from many rosebushes, and in the obscurity he could see someone kissing.

As for the more daring, they had already run to the edge of the Forbidden Forest or the huge shadow of the castle.

The two were a bit embarrassed, but they seemed to be affected by the surrounding environment, and had a further impulse and temptation.

With this kind of opportunity, it was too useless to just take a walk!

Evan made up his mind to hold Hermione's little hand and walked into an empty dark corner.

Hermione also understood Evan's purpose, a little scared and a little expectant, allowing him to drag her forward.

She felt her face blushing, but fortunately it was so dark, and no one could see it.

When she recovered, she raised her head subconsciously and looked inside the dark corner on the left side.

"Evan, look over there," Hermione said suddenly, in a low voice.

Evan looked into the corner she was indicating and vaguely saw Ron and Lavender.

They were in the corner, hugging each other so closely that it was hard to tell whose hands were whose.

Well... that didn't persist for long. Ron seemed to be very... hands on, and in the face of Ron's various moves, Lavender did not refuse.

Both Evan and Hermione looked at the corner with surprise and did not react for a while. Then they left the place quickly as though they had seen nothing.

Ron and Lavender were progressing too fast. Thinking about what they were doing, anyway, it was not very suitable to do it around here. Evan didn't want himself interrupting Ron, or Ron interrupting him.

He led Hermione in a different direction, but they had gone only a short way when they heard an unpleasantly familiar voice.

“I don’t see what there is to fuss about, Igor.”

“Severus, you cannot pretend this isn’t happening!” Karkaroff’s voice sounded anxious and hushed, as though keen not to be overheard. “It’s been getting clearer and clearer for months. His strength is increasing, and at an unimaginable speed. He is coming back soon. I am becoming seriously concerned, I can’t deny it.”

“Then flee, coward!” said Snape’s voice curtly. “Flee, run to a place where that man can no longer find you. I will make your excuses. I, however, am remaining at Hogwarts”

Snape had his wand out and was blasting rosebushes apart, his expression most ill-natured. Squeals issued from many of the bushes, and dark shapes merged from them.

“Ten points from Ravenclaw, Fawcett!” Snape snarled as a girl ran past him. “And ten points from Hufflepuff too, Stebbins!” as a boy went rushing after her.

“And what are you doing?” he added, catching sight of Evan and Hermione on the path.

Karkaroff looked slightly discomposd to see them standing there. His hand went nervously to his goatee, and he began winding it around his finger.

“We’re walking, professor!” Hermione said they did nothing.

To be exact, they hadn’t had time to do it yet.

“Keep walking then, Miss Know-it-all. Twenty points from Gryffindor!” Snape snarled, and he brushed past them, his long black cloak billowing out behind him.

Karkaroff also hurried away after Snape, leaving Evan and Hermione standing on the dark path.

There was nobody around now, but neither of them was in the mood for what they had intended on doing.

They were thinking about the conversation between Snape and Karkaroff, and the twenty points deducted really spoiled the mood.

“What on earth is going on? What’s got Karkaroff all worried?” said Hermione. “And since when have he and Snape been on first name terms? They look familiar and have a good relationship.”

Of course, after all, there were not many people, still alive, who had betrayed the terrorist organization of the Death Eaters.

At this critical moment on the eve of Voldemort’s return, it was also inevitable that they would exchange views.

Listening to Karkaroff, besides the Dark Mark becoming clearer, Voldemort's power was increasing. How did he do it? Would it be related to the movements of the vampires and the disappearance of Barty Crouch Jr.?

Chapter 627: Hiding in the Bushes

"Evan, do you remember what Sirius said?" Hermione analyzed, combined with the news she had so far, "Karkaroff is a Death Eater, he may be plotting something, and he seems to have a good relationship with Snape..."

"Don't fantasize, Hermione!" said Evan. He knew what Hermione was talking about, but that was not the case at all.

Hermione had too little information to analyze the incident in its entirety, and her conclusion was wrong. She only saw part of the story, there was a lot of information that she didn't know, and Evan couldn't say it directly.

He thought for a moment and continued, "Snape and Karkaroff were just talking about Voldemort. You know ... Voldemort's power is getting stronger. Karkaroff has Voldemort's mark on him. I'm sure he can feel it. That's why he's afraid and wants to abandon and run away."

"Why is Karkaroff afraid of Voldemort's growing strength?" said Hermione, "Isn't he a Death Eater?!"

"To be precise, he was a Death Eater who had betrayed many of his companions in order not to be imprisoned in Azkaban." Evan replied, "If I were Voldemort, I would definitely not let him go."

"But Snape..."

"Snape is trustworthy, Dumbledore believes in him, and we should trust him too!" said Evan quickly. "All right, Hermione, don't think about it! What we need to do now is to enhance our strength and find the remaining secret treasure keys as soon as possible. You and Harry will also have to accumulate combat experience and master a few more powerful spells to prevent accidents."

Hermione nodded nervously, and Evan then thought of something else.

Judging from the current situation, it was impossible to crack all the demon languages, ancient magic texts and silent magic research in a short time.

Evan estimated that it would take a year at the earliest, so he did not intend to delay, ready to speed up the search for the key to the secret treasure left by Ravenclaw with the Merpeople, and get the second Philosopher's Stone as soon as possible.

The Philosopher's Stone was a magic prop that could help wizards to enhance their magic powers quickly and practically. It was of great significance.

Since the return of Voldemort couldn't be stopped, it was urgent and crucial to enhance one's own strength. In particular, to enhance Hermione's strength, so that she had a certain self-protection ability in the face of the Death Eaters.

Evan didn't have to worry too much about himself. He had done a lot of preparation.

Not long ago, he had also received a letter from Sirius: Sirius had already completed the registration procedures for Apparition in the Ministry of Magic. If he used this spell himself, he needed not to worry about being detected by wizards of the Ministry of Magic because he was not old enough.

Of course, this was only the first step. To fully master Apparition, Evan still needed to practice. He only understood the theoretical part now.

Sirius told him that he would come to help him practice on the next Hogsmeade Day.

After Evan completely mastered this method, he would also have an extra guarantee against Voldemort. He could run away if he couldn't fight him.

Voldemort and the Death Eaters would certainly not think that Evan would master Apparition and would not be prepared.

In fact, for Voldemort's strength, Evan had an assessment in mind. He was probably a little better than Dumbledore, but not too much, not too extraordinary. But for that terrible evil spirit, there was nothing in his heart!

In short, improving strength was the most critical and urgent thing at present.

After Snape and Karkaroff left, Evan and Hermione were in no mood to date and were planning to return to the castle.

Because they didn't want to meet Ron and Lavender, they didn't walk along the road from where they came, but made a detour.

A few minutes later, Evan and Hermione came to a large stone reindeer, over which they could see the sparkling jets of a tall fountain.

The shadowy outlines of two enormous people were visible on a stone bench, watching the water in the moonlight. And then Evan heard Hagrid speak.

"The moment I saw you, I knew," he was saying, in an oddly husky voice.

Evan and Hermione froze and looked at each other. This didn't sound like the sort of scene they ought to walk in on, somehow...

They were ready to slip away and didn't want to eavesdrop on the conversation between Hagrid and Madame Maxime.

Hagrid would definitely hate to have someone eavesdropping, especially when he plucked up the courage to express his love to Madame Maxime.

It would be even worse if this matter was messed up by Evan and Hermione.

They had just taken two steps forward when they saw Fleur and Roger Davies approaching head-on along the path.

Hermione looked at Evan in panic. Fleur would surely see her if she went on like this, and Hagrid and Madame Maxime would be alarmed.

What to do? They must hide!

This was Evan's first reaction. He didn't have time to think about it. He pulled Hermione into the bushes beside the path.

It was not before they went in that they realized something. Why were they hiding? Wouldn't it be more difficult to explain if they were discovered?

He and Hermione did nothing, but if they were seen in the bushes...

Then, Evan found out that the space inside was really small. How would they both fit in?

The space inside the low bushes was very small, and it was impossible to stand or crouch. They could only kneel on the ground or lay supine...

Evan and Hermione were now in an awkward position. Evan just turned around and was pushed back and fell to the ground before he could adjust or exit.

Hermione had just entered the bushes in panic when she stumbled and fell forward because of the uneven ground... Then she lay straight on Evan's body!

Intentions aside, in one twisted way or another, Hermione had indeed pushed Evan on the ground before laying on him.

Their bodies were close together, very close, and their posture was suspicious.

Evan saw Hermione's flustered little face in front of him and could even feel her breath.

He held out his hand to cover Hermione's mouth, not to let her cry out, winked, and motioned that someone was outside.

Hermione nodded slightly to show that she knew, and Evan put his hand away from her mouth.

They had no intention of paying attention to the situation outside. The mood in the bushes had changed, and the temperature gradually increased. Their bodies reacted on their own.

Hermione, who turned red, did not know where to put her head, and she was very tired. The feeling of being so close to Evan was too embarrassing and tense! But if she put her head down, where could she put it?!

There were two options: one was to turn in one direction, put her head on Evan's shoulder, give up resistance, and put all her weight on Evan. The second was to put it down vertically and continue to support the ground with her hands, but now Evan's face would be directly under her head. If she put it down vertically, wouldn't it be a kiss?!

Well.... She could just think about none of that, and just kiss him...

Chapter 628: Half-Giant

In the bushes, Hermione pressed Evan under her body, and the two kept this position motionless.

She just pressed on Evan and felt the ups and downs of his breath.

They looked at one another in the eyes inadvertently; and though it was for a brief moment, Hermione was deeply immersed in it.

She only felt dizzy inside her head, and the burning blush became deeper, not only on her cheeks, but also on the ears and neck.

Her body was so fragile and soft, as though she was drunk and had no strength at all.

She was so embarrassed lying on Evan, allowing inexplicable feelings to spread in her body.

The next second, Evan reached around and hugged Hermione.

Hermione trembled for a moment, trying to break away from Evan, but she dared not push. She felt the warmth of his arms and looked at the familiar smile on his lips. Her chaotic heart gradually calmed down, but was still beating fiercely.

She put her face on Evan's shoulder, her eyes closed tightly, and her long eyelashes moving slightly.

In Evan's arms, Hermione felt both comfort and shyness. If she could, she hoped time would stop at this moment.

She thought of what she had seen Ron and Lavender doing along the way, and the couples hiding in the dark bushes. If Evan was going to do those things next, she didn't know what to do, if she was found out.

Fortunately, Evan did not take any further action besides holding Hermione.

He would have liked to kiss her, but the space in the bushes was too small and the place was too inappropriate.

He heard the footsteps of Fleur and Roger Davies from far to near, and they quietly left after seeing Hagrid and Madame Maxime.

The two of them did not dare to act rashly, and on the other side of the bushes were Hagrid and Madame Maxime.

Evan hugged Hermione tightly, feeling that it was actually quite good.

The conversation outside continued, and after Evan and Hermione calmed down, they gradually heard what they were saying.

"What did you know, Hagrid?" said Madame Maxime, a purr in her low voice.

"I just knew ... knew you were like me. ... Was it your mother or your father?" said Hagrid.

"I ... I don't know what you mean, Hagrid"

"It was my mother," said Hagrid quietly. "She was one of the last ones in Britain. Of course, I can't remember her too well. She left, you see ... when I was about three. At the time, to be honest, she wasn't really the maternal sort. Well ... it's not in their natures, is it? I don't know what happened to her ... she might be dead for all I know!"

Madame Maxime didn't say anything, and Evan and Hermione held their breath and listened to Hagrid's childhood experience.

“My dad was broken-hearted when my mother went. My dad was a tiny little bloke. By the time I was six I could lift him up and put him on top of the dresser if he annoyed me. I used to make him laugh. ...”

Hagrid’s deep voice broke when he mentioned his father.

Madame Maxime was listening, motionless, apparently staring at the silvery fountain.

“Dad raised me ... but he died, of course, just after I started school. I had to make my own way after that. Dumbledore was a real help, really. He was very kind to me.”

Hagrid pulled out a large spotted silk handkerchief and blew his nose heavily.

“So ... anyway ... enough about me. What about you? Which side you got it on?”

Unexpectedly, Madame Maxime suddenly got to her feet and did not even look at Hagrid.

“It is chilly,” she said, but whatever the weather was doing, it was nowhere near as cold as her voice. “I think I will go in now!”

“Eh?!” said Hagrid blankly. “No, don’t go! I’ve ... I’ve never met another one before!”

“Another what? I don’t understand. Make it clear!” said Madame Maxime, her tone icy.

Hearing this, Evan already understood what was going on. It was foolish of Hagrid to put such an important thing in public.

He was going to get into big trouble, and they hadn’t even noticed the unprofessional concealment of him and Hermione.

Who could guarantee how many people around here were listening to Hagrid?

Perhaps, Fleur and Roger Davies had not left, and perhaps others were hiding in the surrounding bushes. Before the following day, what Hagrid said would spread throughout the school.

Especially the pervasive Rita Skeeter, she might have become a beetle lurking around.

Evan really wanted to go out and stop Hagrid from saying stupid things, but to no avail.

“Another half-giant, of course!” said Hagrid.

“How dare you!” shrieked Madame Maxime, her voice a little hysterical. “I have never been more insulted in my life! Half-giant? Me? I have ... I just have big bones!”

Her voice exploded through the peaceful night air like a foghorn. Evan heard many people in the surrounding bushes and rosebushes rushing out to the direction of the castle. Well, that matter was bound to spread.

Inside the bush, Hermione raised her head and looked at Evan in panic.

She had no idea that Hagrid was actually a half-giant, and the news was so big!

Outside, Madame Maxime stormed away; great multicolored swarms of fairies rose into the air as she passed, angrily pushing aside bushes.

Hagrid was still sitting on the bench, staring after her. Evan and Hermione could even hear him sobbing in a low voice.

Then, after a long time, he stood up and strode away, not back to the castle, but off out into the dark grounds in the direction of his cabin.

A few more minutes later, after the silence around them, Evan and Hermione climbed out of the bushes.

Hermione looked at Evan uneasily with a very serious expression, and she was not at all shy about what had just happened.

“I can’t believe it, Hagrid is half-giant,” she said. “How could he tell Madame Maxime about this? This is really stupid. There were a lot of people around here just now. Hagrid is completely finished!”

“Let’s go back and talk about it, Hermione!” said Evan, looking around.

In the dim light, surrounded by mess, he did not see where Rita Skeeter, transformed into a beetle, was hiding.

Perhaps, she had already left, after getting this shocking news.

Perhaps she hadn’t been here just now, but that didn’t help, and certainly someone else had heard what Hagrid said.

Chapter 629: End of the Ball

Evan and Hermione returned to the Great Hall. Ron and Lavender were still missing. Ginny and Gabrielle were sitting with a whole crowd of Beauxbatons girls. Neville and Luna were dancing together. Harry and Colin sat down at a table far removed from the dance floor.

“Have you seen Ron?” Harry asked, looking at Evan and Hermione who had just returned.

“He’s busy outside!” Hermione said grumpily. She looked around and made sure that no one was eavesdropping to their conversation. Then she lowered her voice and said, “I just heard with Evan...”

She repeated what Hagrid had said, and Harry and Colin were equally stunned.

“So, Hagrid is half-giant?!” Colin said in surprise.

“Yeah, this thing is very bad!” Evan and Hermione nodded.

“I don’t understand. What’s the problem with Hagrid being a giant?” Harry said, watching Madame Maxime sitting alone at the judge’s table, looking very

somber. “If Hagrid is half-giant, she definitely is. Big boned... the only thing that has got bigger bones than her is a dinosaur.”

“You don’t understand, Harry!” Hermione explained. “The fact that Hagrid is half-giant is terrible. It’s said in the books that giants are very dangerous magical creatures and are not recognized by the wizarding world.”

“Who cares?” said Harry stubbornly. “There’s nothing wrong with Hagrid. We all like him!”

“I know he isn’t, but ... generally speaking, giants are considered to be very ferocious humanoid magical creatures,” seeing that Harry and Colin were still confused and didn’t realize the seriousness of the matter, Evan had to explain, “Like trolls, they just like killing, but they’re much more dangerous than trolls. The average height of giants is 22 feet, almost twice that of trolls. Their strong physique enables them to resist most kinds of magic. They are simply humanoid killing machines. In the dark years of the past, they had brought a lot of fear to the wizarding world, but there aren’t any left in Britain now!”

“Why, where did they go?”

“Probably extinct ... many got themselves killed by Aurors. There are supposed to be giants abroad, though. They hide out in mountains mostly. After all, the present era is different from the past, when giants could wreak havoc.” Evan continued, “It’s not how they disappeared that matters. The key is that during Voldemort’s reign, a lot of giants joined him and killed many people.”

“Even so, what does this have to do with Hagrid? He’s not dangerous!”

“People who know him don’t care, because they know he’s not dangerous, but those who don’t know him, or are not familiar with him...” Evan shook his head and he saw a lot of people whispering together like them.

Obviously, this matter had already leaked out. There were many people around the fountain then. It was impossible to keep concealing it, and it was not a long-term solution. It was not good for Hagrid.

The question of blood status and identity had always been Hagrid’s problem. Covering it up was only delaying the outbreak of conflicts.

The only right thing to do was to expose it completely and make Hagrid realize that people were still willing to accept him.

In this matter, Evan decided to make some preparations and could not allow public opinion to ferment and develop in the wrong direction.

Besides, he was also a little curious. Hagrid's father was just an ordinary wizard, listening to Hagrid's description, a relatively small one, then how did he make Hagrid's mother, a pure giant woman, pregnant?!

Although mixed-race descendants of wizards and all kinds of magical creatures were common, half-giants had always been a minority.

Thinking about it carefully, the image was actually quite terrible!

When they saw that Evan and Hermione were back, Ginny and Gabrielle came over.

The six of them spent the rest of the ball discussing giants in their corner, neither of them having any inclination to dance. No matter who came to invite them, they refused!

Harry tried not to watch Cho and Cedric too much; it gave him a strong desire to kick something.

Evan advised him to invite Cho. Harry hesitated for a long time, but finally shook his head and did not act.

As for Fleur and Roger Davies, Ron and Lavender, and other couples, they didn't come back until the end.

When the Weird Sisters finished playing at midnight, everyone gave them a last, loud round of applause and started to wend their way into the entrance hall. Evan, Hermione, and Harry accompanied Gabrielle back to the carriage.

On the way back, at the door of the Common Room, they saw Ron standing there happily, holding Lavender's hand.

"Oh!" He saw Evan, Harry, and Hermione, and stopped abruptly.

Lavender giggled and ran in embarrassment.

There was an awkward silence, and Ron seemed to be trying to explain something, but he didn't say a word. He just looked at them in a rather strange way, as if expecting an explosion.

But there was nothing to say to Ron, and although he and Lavender were progressing too fast, it was up to him to determine what's fit.

So, silent and deadlocked for a while, they went back to the Common Room to sleep, each with many thoughts in mind.

Harry would tell Ron about Hagrid.

Everybody got up late the next Day. The Gryffindor Common Room was much quieter than it had been lately, many yawns punctuating the lazy conversations.

Hermione's hair was bushy again. She confessed to Evan that she had used liberal amounts of Sleekeazy's Hair Potion on it for the ball, "but it's way too much bother to do every day," she said matter-of-factly, scratching a purring Crookshanks behind the ears.

Although Hermione was amazing last night, she was also very likable this way. At least that was what Evan thought. That was the real, natural Hermione.

As for Ron and Lavender, everyone tacitly pretended that they had not seen them.

The two of them also were less physical today, not so blatantly sticking together.

Harry also told Ron about Hagrid. Ron was even more surprised than imagined and told them many horror stories about giants proving how terrible this news was.

But Hermione calmed down after flipping through a few books.

“I have long suspected that Hagrid is a half-giant,” she told everyone, raising a magic book in her hand. “I just read about the history of the giants. I think we can’t be so hysterical about giants. They can’t all be as horrible as rumors say. It’s the same sort of prejudice that people have toward werewolves. It’s just bigotry, isn’t it?!”

Chapter 630: Rita Skeeter's New Report

Hermione believed that the unfair treatment of the half-giants and the werewolves was a prejudice and should be stopped!

Just like the attitude of the wizards towards the house-elves, this concept was fundamentally wrong.

Ron shook his head disbelievingly at Hermione’s idea, and Evan thought she was right. If every wizard had Hermione’s consciousness, there would be no need to worry about many things.

But in fact it was not the case at all, and things were far worse than expected.

The day after the Ball, there was panic in the castle.

Various gossip and rumors about Hagrid were spreading fast in the old castle, and many people knew that he was a half-giant.

There were many students in the bushes near the fountain that day, and Hagrid’s voice was loud.

This could not be concealed at all, especially Madame Maxime’s last excited shouts, which could be clearly heard even far away.

She said aloud that she only had big bones. While claiming innocence for herself, she also spread the news that Hagrid was a half-giant.

As Evan predicted, many people knew about it and rumors were flying.

Some people believed and some others expressed doubts!

But when the special Christmas issue of the Daily Prophet was brought in by Owl mail, all the rumors were proven to be true.

The return of Rita Skeeter and the Daily Prophet was simply amazing. The front page that was supposed to be about the Christmas event was replaced by a huge picture of Hagrid, with a furtive look on his face.

Below, a row of big characters clearly read: “DUMBLEDORE’S GIANT MISTAKE!”

Albus Dumbledore, eccentric Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, has never been afraid to make controversial staff appointments, writes Rita Skeeter, Special Correspondent. In September of this year, he hired Alastor

“Mad-eye” Moody, the notoriously jinx-happy ex-Auror, to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts, a decision that raised many eyebrows at the Ministry of Magic, given Moody’s well-known habit of attacking anybody who makes a sudden movement in his presence.

Mad-eye Moody, however, looks responsible and kindly when set beside the part-human and part-demon Dumbledore employs. It’s well-known that he has hired infamous werewolves, vampires and even leprechauns to become professors and caused a great disturbance.

But these are not as shocking as the true face hidden in the shadows of the current Professor of Care of Magical Creatures.

Rubeus Hagrid, who admits to being expelled from Hogwarts in his third year, has enjoyed the position of gamekeeper at the school ever since, a job secured for him by Dumbledore.

Last year, however, Hagrid used his mysterious influence over the headmaster to secure the additional post of Care of Magical Creatures teacher, over the heads of many better-qualified candidates.

An alarmingly large and ferocious-looking man, Hagrid has been using his newfound authority to terrify the students in his care with a succession of horrific creatures. While Dumbledore turns a blind eye, Hagrid has maimed several pupils during a series of lessons that many admit to being “very frightening”.

“I was attacked by a hippogriff, and my friend Vincent Crabbe got a bad bite off a Flobberworm,” says Draco Malfoy, a fourth-year student. “We all hate Hagrid, but we’re just too scared to say anything.”

Hagrid has no intention of ceasing his campaign of intimidation, however, but rather enjoys it. In conversation with a Daily Prophet reporter last month, he admitted breeding creatures he has dubbed “Blast-Ended Skrewts,” highly dangerous crosses between Manticores and fire-crabs. The creation of new breeds of magical creature is, of course, an activity usually closely observed by the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. Hagrid, however, considers himself to be above such petty restrictions.

“I was just having some fun,” he says, before hastily changing the subject.

The Daily Prophet has now unearthed evidence that Hagrid is not, as he has always pretended, a pure-blood wizard. He is not, in fact, even pure human. His mother, we can exclusively reveal, is none other than the giantess Fridwulfa, whose whereabouts are currently unknown.

Bloodthirsty and brutal, the giants brought themselves to the point of extinction by warring amongst themselves during the last century.

The handful that remained joined the ranks of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, and were responsible for some of the worst mass Muggle killings of his reign of terror.

While many of the giants who served He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named were killed by Aurors working against the Dark Side, Fridwulfa was not among them.

As the most ferocious female giant in history, it is possible she escaped to one of the giant communities still existing in foreign mountain ranges.

If his antics during Care of Magical Creatures lessons are any guide, however, Fridwulfa's son appears to have inherited her brutal nature.

In a bizarre twist, Hagrid is reputed to have developed a close friendship with the boy who brought around You-Know-Who's fall from power, thereby driving Hagrid's own mother, like the rest of You-Know-Who's supporters, into hiding.

Perhaps Harry Potter is unaware of the unpleasant truth about his large friend; but Albus Dumbledore surely has a duty to ensure that Harry Potter, along with his fellow students, is warned about the dangers of associating with part-giants.

Our reporter will continue to follow up on the matter and on behalf of all parents, appeal to Hogwarts to take action as soon as possible."

.....

"I can't believe it!" After reading the newspaper, Harry looked up at everyone and said angrily. "I have to teach Malfoy a lesson. What does he mean 'we all hate Hagrid'? What does he mean 'I was attacked by a hippogriff'? Buckbeak saved his life last year. How can he say that?"

Over the past year, Malfoy had an unexpectedly good attitude towards Buckbeak, bringing him food from time to time.

But it was clear that his attitude towards Hagrid was still bad, and he was no longer aiming his anger at the hippogriff.

"What's this rubbish 'Crabbe got a bad bite off a Flobberworm'? They haven't even got teeth!"

Hermione didn't care about it. She cared about how Rita Skeeter knew this.

"How did that horrible Skeeter woman find out?"

"What's so strange about this? She was so mad Hagrid wouldn't give her loads of horrible stuff about us, and searched everywhere for his situation and retaliated against him," said Harry, "and then she got the news and made it up!"

"After last night, almost half of the people in the castle knew about it!" said Evan.

"Yeah, it's not surprising Skeeter knew about it. Even you heard it when you were hiding in the bushes!" Ron said disapprovingly. "Hagrid is good enough. That stupid prat talked so much about his giantess mother where anyone could have heard him!"

