

## Harry Potter 941

### Chapter 941: Conflict

The atmosphere in the room was terribly weird, it seemed that the angrier Evan and Harry were, the happier Umbridge was.

“Mr. Mason, I have always wanted to chat with you. To be frank and honest, we are all smart people, and you should recognize the current situation...”

“Are you referring to Hogwarts or the Wizarding World?” Evan interjected, not expecting Umbridge to be so direct.

“Actually, they are one and the same. You should understand that the era of Dumbledore and You-Know-Who battling against each other is over. People no longer need great wizards. Mr. Minister is concerned about the long-standing teaching situation at Hogwarts,” Umbridge explained. “I, on my own, have come here to help the Ministry of Magic change this situation and ensure that the educational standards at the school are met. As the Head Boy and one of the most outstanding students, I hope to have your assistance.”

“I’m sorry, Professor, but my understanding of the current situation in the wizarding world differs from yours. I believe that the war and the conflict have only just begun. Besides You-Know-Who, there is an even greater evil on the horizon, and we should be prepared,” Evan paused and continued, “Furthermore, I don’t believe you can change anything. Hogwarts won’t be influenced by you.”

“Is that what you think, dear?” said Umbridge, smiling widely, seemingly unfazed. “I am not surprised by your refusal. You all have been greatly influenced by Dumbledore for a long time, even exceptional young wizards, filled with fantasies, like yourself. However, you will soon find out and witness the changes. I hope you’ll seriously consider my advice when the time comes and make choices that may affect your entire life.”

“I will consider it carefully!” Evan said, and then he noticed Harry starting to write again.

Red words appeared on the parchment, and cut into his skin on the back of his right hand, and then disappeared quickly.

Harry’s face contorted in pain, but he held back from screaming.

He looked at Evan and Umbridge sitting at the tea table, seemed a little aggrieved, and wrote again *I must not tell lies*.

His emotions were extremely complex at the moment. His best friend Evan and that toad-like woman were sitting aside enjoying their tea and chatting happily, watching him tear the back of his hand over and over again. Thinking of that, Harry felt incredibly uncomfortable.

Along with this discomfort, there was an increasing anger building up in his chest.

He felt betrayed and knew he wouldn't give up. He wouldn't let them see his weakness...

“Professor, that black quill in Harry's hand...”

“Oh, I'm glad you noticed that quill. It's a punishment for disobedient students. Mr. Potter spread evil, nasty, attention-seeking stories in front of many students in class today. He must learn to recognize reality.”

“Isn't this punishment too severe?” Evan said coldly, frowning at Umbridge.

He had initially told himself to stay calm and not confront her directly, but now he couldn't control his anger.

Regardless of who it was, anyone would want to give Umbridge a good beating in this situation.

From any perspective, Evan couldn't just stand by and watch Harry being subjected to this punishment without being moved.

All thoughts of staying calm and sticking to the plan were thrown aside after seeing this scene.

“Hogwarts professors have the authority to decide how to discipline students, and it doesn't violate any school rules,” Umbridge said, splitting her lips with a smug smile. “I believe a little pain will be beneficial for Mr. Potter.”

“But.....”

“That quill won't leave any lasting harm on his body. I know what you're about to say. It's not a Dark Magic item; it's made from African magical craftsmanship and doesn't violate any existing regulations,” said Umbridge with a smile. “Well then, let's not worry about Mr. Potter. He will take care of himself. I didn't invite you here tonight to voice your objections to my disciplinary methods. Let's go back to the previous topic, your Head Boy's...”

“I'm sorry, Professor, I'm not used to watching my friends suffer such abuse,” said Evan, walking directly in front of Harry and snatching the quill from his hand. “Stop writing, Harry!”

“Evan!” Harry exclaimed in surprise, his excited voice mixed with relief.

In that instant, with Evan's actions, all the anger and discomfort from before vanished.

“No, this won't do, Mr. Mason. I hope you understand what you are doing!” Umbridge said, standing up from her chair, maintaining her fake smile. “You're

obstructing me from punishing Mr. Potter. I can understand your impulse, but I cannot agree with it. I thought you would show more rationality, especially considering that you're an intelligent person..."

"I thought I would be more rational as well," Evan said. "But I overestimated myself. We will inform Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall about your methods of punishment regarding Harry. If possible, I will also publish this matter in *Hogwarts Magic News*, so the outside world knows what you have done at Hogwarts."

"I will inform Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall about this matter, and you can publish it in that fabricated newspaper of yours. But first, you must understand that you are openly defying a professor's command," Umbridge said, her smile gradually fading. "Perhaps you have done such things in the past, but I must remind you that if you don't want to be expelled from the school, let Mr. Potter sit down and continue his punishment."

"Hmph, we'll see about that!" Evan said, taking out his wand. "Now please step aside, we're going back!"

Maybe Ron was right and the woman should be given the Imperius Curse or something.

If the professors wouldn't agree, Evan really wanted to do it.

He had to admit that taking Harry away directly was too impulsive.

Under the current circumstances, there was no chance of winning a direct confrontation with Umbridge. As she herself said, what she was doing didn't violate school rules or any existing laws. It was obviously a loophole in the law, but Umbridge had the authority to do so, and even if it were revealed, it wouldn't have much impact.

People might think her punishment of students was somewhat excessive, but it wasn't something worth making a fuss over. Umbridge had her justifications, while the cost of Evan and Harry defying her orders would be direct expulsion from the school...

Chapter 942: Percy's Letter

In the dim and narrow corridor, there were only Evan and Harry, their footsteps echoing through the hallway.

"Evan, did we act too impulsively?" Harry expressed his concern.

He had just been thinking about ignoring everything and having a showdown with Umbridge, but now that Evan had actually done it, and after he calmed down, he had to admit that their actions were reckless. What if they got expelled from school?

Evan was almost as rule-abiding as Hermione most of the time.

But whenever it came to crucial moments, it was always the two of them who broke the rules first, seemingly without any concerns.

Anyway, his mind was a mess right now. Just thinking about how that woman would deal with them was unsettling.

“Don’t be silly, Harry. As a friend, I can’t just watch you being abused and remain indifferent,” said Evan. “If I were truly impulsive, I would have cursed her directly instead of simply leaving her office.”

Anyone who saw that scene would be angry, but Evan managed to restrain himself from using magic.

Hogwarts had its own rules that everyone had to follow. They had the right to question the professor’s disciplinary methods, but they couldn’t directly attack Umbridge. Of course, if Umbridge herself broke the rules...

Upon hearing Evan’s words, Harry felt moved. Despite the burning pain on the back of his hand, his heart gradually calmed down.

The worries and insecurities from before vanished into thin air. Compared to everything else, having a friend who was willing to stand up and fight against the professor mattered most. It didn’t matter how that woman punished them.

“So what should we do now?” Harry asked.

“Well, go to Professor McGonagall!” said Evan. “Tell her about this.”

As expected, when Professor McGonagall found out what happened between them, she was furious. She told Evan and Harry to stay in her office while she stormed out to confront Umbridge.

No one knew what she had said to Umbridge, but when she returned, her face was incredibly grim, and her lips were tightly pursed.

“Potter, you will continue your detention by Dolores Umbridge tomorrow, she has the right to do so. But if she uses that quill or anything similar again, inform me immediately. That woman is simply unreasonable,” she said sharply. “As for you, Mason, if you don’t want to lose your Head Boy badge, you must control yourself and avoid conflicts with her. Otherwise, you’ll run into serious trouble.”

She adjusted her glasses in anger and looked at Evan and Harry, then let out a soft sigh.

“The current situation at Hogwarts is different from the past, you need to be careful.” Her tone voice was completely different from before, no longer brisk, crisp and stern, but low and anxious, and somehow much more human than usual, “That woman is backed by the Ministry of Magic, even the Headmaster... Well, anyway, keep your heads down and try not to cause trouble. Especially you, Potter, keep your temper under control!”

It seemed like the matter had come to an end with Professor McGonagall’s intervention. Umbridge didn’t use the quill again, nor did she hold Evan accountable. But would she really let it go?

Evan was well aware that Umbridge wouldn’t just leave it at that.

If she couldn't even handle two students, how could she dare to represent the Ministry of Magic at Hogwarts? And what was the point of her coming here?

She was temporarily backing down now simply because she was just the professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts, without that authority.

However, she would soon have it, and the Ministry of Magic was surprisingly efficient this time.

Immediately after Evan and Harry left, Umbridge wrote a letter to Fudge...

The content and impact of this letter would soon be known to everyone!

Along the way, Evan was thinking about this matter, considering how to deal with Umbridge.

Relying solely on this incident wouldn't be enough to affect Umbridge and the Ministry of Magic, but if there were more evidence against her...

When the two of them returned to the common room, Hermione and Ron were working on the assignment given by Snape.

Now that the matter had passed, at Harry's request, they didn't tell what happened tonight, so as not to worry Hermione and Ron. They thought Harry was simply writing sentences, which didn't sound too scary punishment.

As the night got darker and there were fewer and fewer people in the common room, Evan knew what Umbridge was planning.

"Look outside!" Hermione suddenly pointed to the nearest window.

They all looked over, and a handsome screech owl was standing on the windowsill, gazing into the room at Ron.

"Isn't that Hermes?" said Hermione, sounding amazed.

"Blimey, it is!" said Ron quietly, throwing down his quill and getting to his feet.

"What's Percy writing to me for?"

He crossed to the window and opened it; Hermes flew inside, landed upon Ron's essay, and held out a leg to which a letter was attached.

Ron took it off and the owl departed at once, leaving inky footprints across Ron's Potion essay.

"That's definitely Percy's handwriting," said Ron, sinking back into his chair and staring at the words on the outside of the scroll: To Ronald Weasley, Gryffindor House, Hogwarts. He looked up at Evan, Harry and Hermione. "What do you reckon?"

"Open it!" said Hermione eagerly.

Ron unrolled the scroll and began to read. The farther down the parchment his eyes traveled, the more pronounced became his scowl.

When he had finished reading, he looked disgusted.

He thrust the letter at Evan, Harry and Hermione, who leaned toward each other to read it together:

Dear Ron,

I have only just heard (from no less a person than the Minister of Magic himself, who has it from your new teacher, Professor Umbridge) that you have become a Hogwarts prefect.

I was most pleasantly surprised when I heard this news and must firstly offer my congratulations.

I must admit that I have always been afraid that you would take what we might call the “Fred and George” route, rather than following in my footsteps, so you can imagine my feelings on hearing you have stopped flouting authority and have decided to shoulder some real responsibility.

But I want to give you more than congratulations, Ron, I want to give you some advice, which is why I am sending this at night rather than by the usual morning post.

Hopefully you will be able to read this away from prying eyes and avoid awkward questions.

From something the Minister let slip when telling me you are now a prefect, I gather that you are still seeing a lot of Evan Mason and Harry Potter. I must tell you, Ron, that nothing could put you in danger of losing your badge more than continued fraternization with those two boys.

Yes, I am sure you are surprised to hear this — no doubt you will say that they have always been Dumbledore’s favorites.

But I feel bound to tell you that Dumbledore may not be in charge at Hogwarts much longer and the people who count have a very different — and probably more accurate — view of Mason and Potter’s behavior and the everyday practices at Hogwarts, and whether Dumbledore has any necessary reason to stay at Hogwarts.

I shall say no more here, but if you look at the Daily Prophet tomorrow you will get a good idea of the way the wind is blowing — and see if you can spot yours truly!

Chapter 943: Fallen Percy and the Plan

The content of Percy’s letter went on, inexplicably exasperating.

As your older brother, I am bound to give you some advice. Seriously, Ron, you do not want to be tarred with the same brush as Mason and Potter, it could be very damaging to your future prospects, and I am talking here about life after school too.

As you must be aware, given that our father escorted them to court, it has become a disgrace to the entire Ministry of Magic.

Potter had a disciplinary hearing this summer in front of the whole Wizengamot and he did not come out of it looking too good.

He got off on a mere technicality if you ask me and many of the people I’ve spoken to remain convinced of his guilt.

As for Mason, his fabricated newspaper has also faced resistance from the entire wizarding community. If he continues like this, he’ll end up in Azkaban sooner or later, and his reckless magical experiments are causing concern.

Professor Umbridge’s recent letter confirms this point, and the Minister believes it’s necessary to take immediate action.

It may be that you are afraid to sever ties with them—I know that they can be unbalanced, behaving extremely abnormally; and, for all I know, they have tendencies towards violence and spellcasting beyond their age...

If you have any worries about this, or have spotted anything else in their behavior that is troubling you, I urge you to speak to Dolores Umbridge, a really delightful woman, who I know will be only too happy to advise you.

This leads me to my other bit of advice.

As I have hinted above, Dumbledore's regime at Hogwarts may soon be over.

For the sake of your own future, Ron, your loyalty should be not to him, but to the school and the Ministry.

I am very sorry to hear that so far Professor Umbridge is encountering very little cooperation from staff as she strives to make those necessary changes within Hogwarts that the Ministry so ardently desires. Her authority, even in disciplining students, has been questioned.

Trust me though, she should find this easier soon because the Minister has made up his mind. The entire Ministry is working overtime to ensure that this matter is carried out (again, see the Daily Prophet tomorrow!)

I shall say only this — a student who shows himself willing to help Professor Umbridge now may be very well placed for Head Boyship in a couple of years, which is the highest honor a student can get!

Don't worry about the current Head Boy; he won't keep it much longer.

Lastly, I am sorry that I was unable to see more of you over the summer.

It pains me to criticize our parents, but I am afraid I can no longer live under their roof while they remain mixed up with the dangerous crowd around Dumbledore.

I count myself very lucky to have escaped the stigma of association with such people; and the Minister really could not be more gracious to me.

And I do hope, Ron, that you will not allow family ties to blind you to the misguided nature of our parents' beliefs and actions and to the true nature of those around you either.

I sincerely hope that, in time, they will realize how mistaken they were and I shall, of course, be ready to accept a full apology when that day comes.

Please think over what I have said most carefully, and congratulations again on becoming prefect.

Your brother,

Percy

After reading the letter, everyone looked up at Ron.

“Well,” said Harry, trying to sound as though he found the whole thing a joke, “if you want to — er — what is it? ‘Sever ties’ with us; I swear I won't get violent. “

“”And I absolutely won’t stop you from becoming the Head Boy,” added Evan.

“That’s enough. Give it back,” said Ron, holding out his hand and he snatched the letter. “He is the world’s biggest git,” said Ron, tearing Percy’s letter in half, then into quarters, then into eighths, and finally into shreds.

“A hopeless git,” he said impulsively, throwing the pieces into the fire.

There was a moment of silence. Ron’s actions were undoubtedly gratifying, and Percy’s level of degradation was shocking.

It was hard to imagine that he now wanted to drive Dumbledore out of the school and lock Evan and Harry in Azkaban.

Just a few months ago, he was one of the most trustworthy people on their side.

“Oh, by the way, what happened to you two this evening?” said Hermione in a light tone, trying to change the subject. “That line in the letter, what does it mean when it says ‘Her authority, even in disciplining students, has been questioned?’”

“Oh!” That was something Harry didn’t want to talk about, but Evan thought there was no need to hide it.

“When I got to Umbridge, she was torturing Harry, and then Harry and I left her office directly to find Professor McGonagall!” said Evan. “Professor McGonagall had an argument with her, but it seems to be futile, and Harry still has to go to detention.”

“I thought you said she was giving Harry lines?”

Harry hesitated for a moment before telling the truth about what had happened to him in Umbridge’s office.

Hermione and Ron also saw the red mark on the back of his hand. If he continued to write, the lines would have been carved into his skin.

“Goodness!” Hermione put her hand over her mouth, even more shocked than when she read Percy’s letter.

“The old hag!” Ron murmured in disgust. “I knew it, she wasn’t normal!”

“Scary woman!” said Hermione. “Will what Professor McGonagall said have any effect?”

“You hit the nail on the head. I think it should be useful in the short term, but once that woman gains greater rights, Professor McGonagall’s words will have no effect,” said Evan. “So, we must do something.”

“What? Tell Dumbledore?”

“He’s got enough on his mind, and I don’t want to bother him with such a trivial matter,” said Harry hurriedly. He was still dissatisfied with Dumbledore’s actions,



and besides, what use would it be to go to Dumbledore? He couldn't just drive Umbridge out of school, as though he had lost this ulterior battle.

If it weren't for Evan, he wouldn't even have mentioned this to anyone.

“Well, how about putting this in the newspaper?”

“It would have a very limited impact. If you look back at past newspapers, you'll see that the woman's reputation isn't exactly good, but she doesn't seem to care. And that black quill isn't considered a Dark Magic item, and professors have the authority to punish students, although this form of punishment is sickening,” said Evan. “There won't be many people paying attention to this, and it will only highlight the chaos in Hogwarts, pushing the Ministry to accelerate its reforms.”

“So, what should we do? Just do nothing?” Ron asked.

“Well, I have a plan, but we need to take it slow. Let's start by rendering that quill ineffective...”

Chapter 944: High Inquisitor

They had expected to have to comb *The Daily Prophet* carefully next morning to find the article Percy had mentioned last night in his letter.

However, the departing delivery owl had barely cleared the top of the milk jug when Hermione let out a huge gasp.

She flattened the newspaper to reveal a large photograph of Dolores Umbridge, smiling widely and blinking slowly at them from beneath the headline:

MINISTRY SEEKS EDUCATIONAL REFORM

DOLORES UMBRIDGE APPOINTED FIRST-EVER

“HIGH INQUISITOR”

“‘High Inquisitor’?” Everyone looked at the photo in shock.

They had never heard of such a title and didn't know what a High Inquisitor was supposed to do.

But the unfamiliarity alone sounded terrifying...

Hermione picked up the newspaper and read aloud:

*“In a surprise move last night the Ministry of Magic passed new legislation giving itself an unprecedented level of control at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.*

*“‘The Minister has been growing uneasy about goings-on at Hogwarts for some time,’ said Junior Assistant to the Minister, Percy Weasley. ‘He is now responding to concerns voiced by anxious parents, who feel the school may be moving in a direction they do not approve.’*

*“This is not the first time in recent months Minister Cornelius Fudge has used new laws to effect improvements at the Wizarding school. As recently as August 30th Educational Decree Twenty-two was passed, to ensure that, in the event of the current headmaster being unable to provide a candidate for a teaching post, the Ministry should select an appropriate person.*

*“‘That’s how Dolores Umbridge came to be appointed to the teaching staff at Hogwarts,’ said Weasley last night. ‘Dumbledore couldn’t find anyone, so the Minister put in Umbridge and of course, she’s been an immediate success —’”*

*“She’s been a WHAT?” said Harry loudly, looking at her incredulously.*

*“Wait, there’s more,” said Hermione grimly.*

*“— an immediate success, totally revolutionizing the teaching of Defense Against the Dark Arts and providing the Minister with on-the-ground feedback about what’s really happening at Hogwarts, giving the Ministry an objective and fair understanding of the actual situation at Hogwarts.”*

*‘But we have to admit that there is currently significant resistance within the school.*

*“From the headmaster down to the professors, none of them supported the Ministry’s reforms. They even attempted to obstruct them. When Umbridge disciplined a student for breaking school rules, the student’s Head of House even stormed into her office and made a scene.*

*“Furthermore, the “Educational Decree Twenty-One” that was passed three months ago aimed to limit the headmaster’s increasingly inflated and unchecked powers and enhance the role of the school board, but it did not achieve satisfactory results.*

*“The current headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore, seems to believe that he can bypass the Ministry and the school board in managing the school. He breaks conventions and directly appoints a fourteen-year-old student as the Head Boy.*

*“In this situation, the Ministry had to take special action. It is this last function that the Ministry has now formalized with the passing of Educational Decree Twenty-three, which creates the new position of ‘Hogwarts High Inquisitor.’*

*“‘This is an exciting new phase in the Minister’s plan to get to grips with what some are calling the “falling standards” at Hogwarts,’ said Weasley. ‘The Inquisitor will have powers to inspect her fellow educators and make sure that they are coming up to scratch. Professor Umbridge has been offered this*

*position in addition to her own teaching post, and we are delighted to say that she has accepted.'*

*"It is worth mentioning that the Ministry's new moves have received enthusiastic support from parents of students at Hogwarts.*

*"'I feel much easier in my mind now that I know that Dumbledore is being subjected to fair and objective evaluation,' said Mr. Lucius Malfoy, 41, speaking from his Wiltshire mansion last night. 'Many of us with our children's best interests at heart have been concerned about some of Dumbledore's eccentric decisions in the last few years and will be glad to know that the Ministry is keeping an eye on the situation.'*

*"Among those 'eccentric decisions' are undoubtedly the controversial staff appointments previously described in this newspaper, which have included the hiring of werewolf Remus Lupin, half giant Rubeus Hagrid, and delusional ex-Auror 'Mad-Eye' Moody.*

*"Rumors abound, of course, that Albus Dumbledore, once Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards and Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, is no longer up to the task of managing the prestigious school of Hogwarts.*

*"'I think the appointment of the Inquisitor is a first step toward ensuring that Hogwarts has a headmaster in whom we can all repose confidence,' said a Ministry insider last night. "This is a responsibility to the Ministry and all the parents of the students."*

*"Of course, there are some voices of opposition to this move. Wizengamot elders Griselda Marchbanks and Tiberius Ogden, both close friends of Dumbledore, have resigned in protest at the introduction of the post of Inquisitor to Hogwarts.*

*"'Hogwarts is a school, not an outpost of Cornelius Fudge's office,' said Madam Marchbanks. 'This is a further disgusting attempt to discredit Albus Dumbledore.' (For a full account of Madam Marchbanks' alleged links to subversive goblin groups, turn to page 17).*

Hermione finished reading and looked across the table at the other three.

"So now we know how we ended up with Umbridge! Fudge passed this 'Educational Decree' and forced her on us! And now he's given her the power to inspect other teachers and interfere with the school's management!" Hermione was breathing fast and her eyes were very bright. "I can't believe this. It's outrageous!"

“It truly is outrageous, and that’s why that woman is so confident,” said Evan. “Clearly, her power has increased, and she can disregard the opinions of Professor McGonagall and even Dumbledore, freely punishing students.”

“Oh, honestly, I can’t wait to see McGonagall inspected,” said Ron happily, as if thinking of something amusing, “Trust me, Umbridge won’t know what’s hit her.”

“Well, come on,” said Hermione, jumping up, “we’d better get going, if she’s inspecting Professor McGonagall’s class we don’t want to be late.”

Evan waved his hand, reminding them that he had no classes for the first two periods of the morning as a fourth-year. Divination was scheduled for the third and fourth periods.

After giving instructions to Colin, he walked towards Umbridge’s office.

He thought about this last night. Since there was no immediate way to get rid of Umbridge, the least they could do was render her quill useless.

#### Chapter 945: Breaking into Umbridge's Office

Evan didn’t have a deep understanding of witchcraft, but he had done some related research before.

Regarding that quill, the function of witchcraft above was to transform somebody’s blood and use it as ink, torturing him to the extreme. Although he was unfamiliar with witchcraft, he knew a few similar Dark magic. As long as he studied carefully, he should be able to decipher the witchcraft within this quill...

That was what he believed, and if he really couldn’t, he could seek help from Rawya, the girl they encountered at the Egyptian Gringotts Bank. She was highly skilled in witchcraft, and her family had a long history with it.

Of course, that was only the first step. Resolving the magic on a quill would not prove much, and it would not help drive Umbridge away. However, it could at least prevent others from being tortured, suffering similar injuries in the future. If it could be countered, it could also completely put an end to Umbridge’s idea of carrying out such cruel punishments.

Against such a witch, being too decent and having a bottom line was actually the biggest obstacle and also the biggest weakness.

It must be acknowledged that the Imperius Curse, poisoning, cursing, imprisoning and the like might be simpler and more effective.

But Evan definitely could not do those things. He didn’t want to lower himself to the level of an evil Dark wizard.

Dumbledore and the professors at school would definitely not agree, and he would end up in Azkaban in no time.

Furthermore, Evan was certain that such extreme methods would definitely be discovered.

However, he was considering whether he should abandon his previous ideas and take some slightly more radical approaches.

Now that the confrontation had begun, he might as well go all the way...

For example, his current attempt to break into Umbridge's office was a good start. In addition to finding the cursed black quill, he could also check Umbridge's personal letters and various documents to see if there was anything of value that might prove her guilt.

She had done so many bad things, it was impossible that there was no evidence left.

If he really found something, then everything would become much simpler!

Evan arrived at Umbridge's office and gently waved his wand, and the door opened with a sound.

He made sure beforehand that Umbridge was not in her office. She was probably inspecting Professor McGonagall's Transfiguration class, and in the second period, she would be teaching third-year students the Defense Against the Dark Arts. She wouldn't be back for a while.

Evan walked in, and apart from the ugly cats frolicking inside the plates on the walls, the office was quiet.

He closed the door gently and immediately frowned.

"Oh, no!" Evan pointed his wand directly at those plates, and all the cats on them stopped moving.

It was a surveillance magic, and if someone broke into the office, Umbridge would be immediately alerted by the cats.

In addition, there seemed to be many defensive spells hidden in this room. That woman was very cautious.

Evan yielded to the fact that he had never seen anyone so cautious. However, these were relatively basic magic spells that could be easily countered without much difficulty. He waved his wand and inspected Umbridge's desk, opening the drawers one by one.

Everything flew out, forming a circle in the air, swiftly passing in front of him.

Parchment after parchment flew into Evan's hands. He quickly glanced at them and let them fly back into the air.

Among them, he saw the letter Umbridge had written to Fudge last night, Fudge's reply, and the part that hadn't gone out. In it, she roughly categorized Hogwarts students into several groups.

Fudge had only one goal, which was to remove Dumbledore from the school by any means necessary.

His advice to Umbridge was to use her authority as High Inquisitor to quickly get rid of a professor, challenge Dumbledore's authority, make him lose credibility within the school, and prevent students from practicing any magic related to dueling.

Furthermore, he emphasized the need for close attention to Evan and Harry and monitoring their actions closely.

In response to Umbridge's request, the latest "Educational Decree Twenty-four" was being finalized as quickly as possible and was expected to be passed next week. *(Translator's Note: in the original book, Cornelius Fudge created the Decree Twenty-five to give supreme authority over all*

*punishments to the Hogwarts High Inquisitor, while the Decree Twenty-four, created by Dolores Umbridge, forbade the playing of music during study hours.)*

The core of this Educational Decree was that the High Inquisitor would henceforth have supreme authority over all punishments, sanctions and removal of privileges pertaining to the students of Hogwarts, and the power to alter such punishments, sanctions and removals of privileges as might have been placed by other staff members.

Then Umbridge would be able to bring out her quill again, with no one being able to oppose her.

In addition, Evan saw a suggestion from Filch to Umbridge. The castle's caretaker seemed to have sided with Umbridge immediately and provided a keenly worded management suggestion that included various forms of punishment for students, including the restoration of corporal punishment and wand penalties.

What caught Evan's attention the most, though, was a letter from Lucius Malfoy to Umbridge.

In the letter, he asked her to take care of Draco at school and promised to provide necessary support and assistance for her reform efforts.

Umbridge was already making contact with Lucius, but she was certainly not a Death Eater.

However, this didn't make a difference. It was not because she wasn't evil enough, but because she didn't have the opportunity....

Finally, Evan found the black quill and replaced it.

While Evan was rummaging through Umbridge's office, she herself was sitting in Professor McGonagall's Transfiguration class.

Because of what happened last night, she listed Professor McGonagall's class as the first to be inspected.

The atmosphere in the classroom was tense, and the students glanced back from time to time, but Professor McGonagall didn't give the slightest indication that she knew Professor Umbridge was there.

"This is your first Transfiguration class of the semester. After entering fifth year, you will be facing your O.W.L. exams. The importance of this exam doesn't need to be emphasized again. What I want to tell you is that you cannot pass an O.W.L. without serious study, practice, and application," said Professor McGonagall grimly, "I see..."

"*Hem, hem,*" said Professor Umbridge, employing the same silly little cough she had used to interrupt Dumbledore on the first night of term. Professor McGonagall ignored her.

"I see no reason why everybody in this class should not achieve an O.W.L. in Transfiguration as long as they put in the work."

"*Hem, hem,*" said Professor Umbridge.

Professor McGonagall didn't even look at her, but stared at Neville, who didn't have much confidence.

"Yes, you too, Longbottom," she said. "There's nothing wrong with your work except lack of confidence, so..."

"*Hem, hem.*" Umbridge stood up.

"Yes?" said Professor McGonagall, turning round, her eyebrows so close together they seemed to form one long, severe line.

Chapter 946: Umbridge's Assessment

"I was just wondering, Professor, whether you received my note telling you of the date and time of your inspection..."

"Obviously I received it, or I would have asked you what you are doing in my classroom," said Professor McGonagall curtly.

Many of the students exchanged looks of glee. This was Professor McGonagall.

Umbridge wouldn't get any benefits from her, but it would be even better if she could turn her into a toad!

"Alright, today we are starting Vanishing Spells. These are easier than Conjuring Spells, which you would not usually attempt until N.E.W.T. level, but they are still among the most difficult magic you will be tested on in your O.W.L...."

"*Hem, hem.*"

"I wonder," said Professor McGonagall in cold fury turning on Professor Umbridge, "how you expect to gain an idea of my usual teaching methods if you continue to interrupt me? You see, I do not generally permit people to talk when I am talking."

Professor Umbridge looked as though she had just been slapped in the face. She did not speak, but straightened the parchment on her clipboard and began scribbling furiously, so hard that everyone heard the scratch of the quill.

Looking supremely unconcerned, Professor McGonagall addressed the class once more.

"As I was saying, we shall be practicing the Vanishing Spell in this class. This spell becomes more difficult with the complexity of the animal to be vanished. For this first Lesson, we shall only be using snails, which, as invertebrate, do not present much of a challenge. Alright, please line up and come here to collect your snails."

"How she can lecture me about not losing my temper with Umbridge!" Harry said to Ron under his voice.

A few minutes later, they were each assigned a snail, and Professor McGonagall explained the spell again in detail.

Harry found the Vanishing Spells horribly difficult, and by the end of the Transfiguration class, no one had managed to vanish the snails on which they were practicing, with the exception of Hermione, who successfully vanished her snail on the third attempt, earning her a ten-point bonus for Gryffindor from Professor McGonagall.

She was the only person not given homework; everybody else was told to practice the spell overnight, ready for a fresh attempt on their snails in the following Transfiguration class.

Umbridge sat in her corner and took many more notes on the clipboard. When Professor McGonagall finally told the class to pack away, she rose with a grim expression on her face and walked towards the teacher's desk.

Harry, Hermione, and Ron looked at each other and deliberately fell back to eavesdrop.

"How long have you been teaching at Hogwarts?" Professor Umbridge asked.

"Thirty-nine years this December," said Professor McGonagall brusquely, snapping her bag shut.

"Very well!" she said, "you will receive the results of your inspection in ten days' time."

"I can hardly wait," said Professor McGonagall in a coldly indifferent voice, and she strode off toward the door. "Hurry up, you three," she added, sweeping Harry, Ron, and Hermione before her.

Harry could not help giving her a faint smile, and he was pretty sure Professor McGonagall smiled back at him too.

Evan didn't find the evidence he needed in Umbridge's office, but he thought he could come here more.

He returned to the common room with the black quill and examined it briefly.

It was a type of magic he hadn't encountered before, and the magical reaction on the quill was also very strange. He made no progress even until Colin called him to Divination class.

Evan felt that he needed a little help, so he decided to write a letter to Rawya, asking about the principle of this witchcraft.

When he came to the shadowy Divination classroom, he was still pondering over this question.

Professor Trelawney looked the same as before, like a large, glittering dragonfly.

"Good day, class!" she said in her usual misty, dreamy voice. "And welcome back to Divination. I have, of course, been following your fortunes most carefully over the holidays, and am delighted to see that you have all returned to Hogwarts



safely — as, of course, I knew you would. This term, we shall be studying the motions of the stars, the planets, and the mystical signs they show, but only ...”

She stopped abruptly, and following her gaze, everyone turned round to see Professor Umbridge emerging through the trapdoor in the floor with a deliberate smirk on her face. The class, which had been talking cheerily, fell silent at once.

“Professor Trelawney,” said Umbridge with her wide smile. “I trust you received my note, giving the time and date of your inspection.”

It seemed that Umbridge hadn’t noticed Evan had already intruded into her office, nor did she spare him a glance.

Evan remembered that he saw Fudge’s reply letter in Umbridge’s desk, asking her to use her authority as High Inquisitor to quickly get rid of a professor. If anyone in the school was most likely to be targeted, it was undoubtedly Professor Trelawney.

Before entering a genuine trance, she was just an old fraud, lacking much credibility.

She was undoubtedly the worst professor in the school, and it didn’t take much evaluation to realize that.

Evan hoped that Professor Trelawney would perform better, so that she wouldn’t be cornered by Umbridge.

“I did!” Professor Trelawney nodded curtly, looking very disgruntled, and she continued in her misty, dreamy voice, “The movements of the planets and the mysterious signs they display can only be understood by those who know the rules of celestial dance...”

“*Hem, hem!*” interrupted Umbridge, who had little scruples about Professor Trelawney.

“I apologize, but could I have a word with you before the class begins? You know, my time is limited, and I can’t stay here indefinitely!” said Umbridge, rising from her chair.

It was apparent that outright refusal was not the best choice, so Professor Trelawney reluctantly nodded in response to Umbridge’s request.

“Very well, you’ve been in this post how long, exactly?”

Professor Trelawney scowled at her, arms crossed and shoulders hunched as though wishing to protect herself as much as possible from the indignity of the inspection. After a slight pause in which she seemed to decide that the question was not so offensive that she could reasonably ignore it, she said in a deeply resentful tone, “Nearly sixteen years.”

“Sixteen years... quite a period,” said Professor Umbridge, making a note on her clipboard. “So it was Professor Dumbledore who appointed you after he became the Headmaster?”

“That’s right,” said Professor Trelawney shortly.

“Oh!” Professor Umbridge made another note, “And I heard that you are a great-great-granddaughter of the celebrated Seer Cassandra Trelawney?”

Cassandra Trelawney was a highly renowned Diviner and mystic in magical history. It was said that she had the bloodline of a Seer and was active in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. She was one of the most famous Seers in the entire European region, on par with Nostradamus from France.

She single-handedly caused the once powerful Pharaoh’s Council to disintegrate, and reorganize into the present-day Ministry of Magic, a famous prophecy that had been repeatedly mentioned in the history of magic.

Furthermore, she predicted the time of the End of the World....

#### Chapter 947: A Failed Performance

Fortune tellers always liked to predict the end of the world as their last prophecy, but until now, the end had never come.

Such actions that undermined their credibility didn’t tarnish the reputation of these Farseers because by the time their predictions were verified, several hundred or even thousand years had passed. People, in fact, found great pleasure in discussing such matters and felt relieved that the prophecies did not come true.

If interested, one could easily find books on this subject, with almost every year having a prediction of the end of the world.

Just like omens of misfortune and death, they were everywhere, widely seen. If one believed in them, they would drive themselves crazy with fear.

“Yes, Cassandra Trelawney was my great-great-grandmother,” said Professor Trelawney, holding her head a little higher.

“But I think — correct me if I am mistaken — that you are the first in your family since Cassandra to be possessed of second sight?” said Umbridge, adding another note on the clipboard.

“These things often skip — er — three generations,” said Professor Trelawney.

“Of course, of course!” said Umbridge sweetly, making yet another note; and her toadlike smile widened. “This is a very precious talent. Since that’s the case, I wonder if you could just predict something for me, eh?”

She looked up inquiringly, still smiling.

Professor Trelawney had stiffened as though unable to believe her ears.

“I don’t understand you,” she said, clutching convulsively at the shawl around her scrawny neck.

“I’d like you to make a prediction for me,” said Professor Umbridge very clearly.

That was undoubtedly a challenge, soon to be verified if it came true.

That would indeed be a catastrophic act, something no fortune teller would do.

If every prophecy, every divination, every word came true, then it wouldn't be Divination. Perhaps only ancient Seers could achieve that.

Now, everyone in the classroom was staring transfixed at Professor Trelawney.

She drew herself up to her full height, her beads and bangles clinking.

“The Inner Eye does not See upon command!” she said in scandalized tones.

“I see,” said Umbridge softly, seeming disappointed, and made another note on her clipboard.

“I, I, but, but, wait!” said Professor Trelawney suddenly, in an attempt at her usual ethereal voice, though the mystical effect was ruined somewhat by the way it was shaking with anger. “I, I think I do see something ... something that concerns you ... Why, I sense something ... something dark ... some grave peril ...”

Professor Trelawney pointed a shaking finger at Professor Umbridge who continued to smile blandly at her, eyebrows raised.

“I am afraid ... I am afraid that you are in grave danger!” Professor Trelawney finished dramatically.

There was a pause. Professor Umbridge's eyebrows were still raised.

“Right!” she said softly, scribbling on her clipboard once more. “Well, if that's really the best you can do ...”

She turned away, leaving Professor Trelawney standing rooted to the spot, her chest heaving.

It was a failed performance, and Umbridge didn't believe any of it.

In Evan's opinion, it would have been more effective if Trelawney had predicted Professor Umbridge's own success, achieving significant reforms at Hogwarts and eventually becoming the Minister of Magic after returning. But that was just a thought.

Everyone sympathized with Professor Trelawney at first. Although they all knew that she was an old fraud, compared with her, they obviously loathed Umbridge much more, but this trace of sympathy quickly disappeared without a trace. The ensuing Divination class was a terrible nightmare. Stimulated by Umbridge, Professor Trelawney became a little hysterical. She kept making all kinds of terrible predictions. In this class, Evan was the main one. He was the student shrouded in death.

In fact, Umbridge's teaching evaluation caused every professor in the school to feel uneasy and anxious.

After the Divination class, Evan saw Umbridge again in Professor Sprout's Herbology class on Thursday, but she only showed up once.

Evan suspected it had to do with the environment in the greenhouse. This year, fourth-year students were studying bubotubers.

These plants were kept in the hazardous Greenhouse Three. They looked less like plants than thick, black, giant slugs, protruding vertically out of the soil. Each squirmed slightly and had a number of large, shiny swellings upon it, which appeared to be full of liquid.

The students were required to collect the pus; and the process of squeezing the bubotubers was disgusting.

As each swelling was popped, a large amount of thick yellowish-green liquid burst forth, smelling strongly of petrol that pervaded the greenhouse.

Umbridge observed for a while, asked a few simple questions, and then left with a frown!

Hermione also told Evan that Umbridge had inspected the Transfiguration class and Care of Magical Creatures class in the fifth year. Hagrid hadn't returned, but the substitute Professor Grubbly-Plank didn't seem to have any problems. After all, she had been teaching for so many years.

But Umbridge seemed displeased with Professor Grubbly-Plank's support for Dumbledore, and rightly so.

The only good thing was that Malfoy didn't say that he had been attacked by the hippogriff Buckbeak.

Although he was still dissatisfied with Hagrid, he often sent food to the hippogriff, which was kind of repaying him.

Another noteworthy point was that Umbridge seemed to have not inspected Snape's classes.

In Evan's opinion, she probably thought Snape was someone she could win over and was attempting to establish communication with him. However, Umbridge would soon be disappointed.

The others didn't think too deeply about it. Ron simply believed that they were both birds of a feather, colluding together.

And Harry said that he had naively thought there would never be a teacher he hated as much as Severus Snape, but he now found Umbridge to be a strong contender.

Umbridge's heart was undoubtedly malevolent; she was a wicked, perverted, crazy old woman.

Harry's detention continued, and Professor McGonagall's intervention had no effect.

She took out the black quill again on Tuesday night, but Harry was pleasantly surprised to find it had lost its power.

Immediately, Harry thought about Evan's statement that he would find a way, and he suspected that he had somehow rendered the quill powerless. Although it might not have a decisive impact since Umbridge could quickly replace it, at least during this period of detention, he wouldn't have to endure that dreadful punishment.

Umbridge soon discovered this, and amidst disappointment and suspicion, she didn't spare Harry. She made him repeatedly write '*I must not tell lies,*' and forced him to fill three large rolls of parchment. It was nearly midnight before she allowed him to leave.

Chapter 948: Letter from Sirius

Harry had to go to Umbridge's office every night for detention, which left him no time to finish his homework.

As it was the O.W.L. year, there was an extra load of assignments for the fifth-year students, evident from the first week of school.

Snape's essay on the properties of moonstone and its use in potion-making was particularly challenging, not to mention Professor Binns's paper on the Giant Wars, Umbridge's essay on 'The Case for Non-Offensive Responses to Magical Attack', Professor Flitwick's requirement to work out a countercharm, Professor McGonagall's Vanishing spells, finish the Bowtruckle drawing for Professor Sprout, and Professor Trelawney's diary to record dreams every night.

With all these assignments piling up, it was an overwhelming task. Fred and George had said that the O.W.L. year was going to be tough, and they were certainly not wrong at all.

Every fifth-year student was complaining, even Hermione found it challenging, spending more time in the library than ever before.

And then there was Harry, who had been in detention in Umbridge's office every evening. He returned to the Gryffindor common room exhausted in the early hours of the morning, with no energy left to spare. But he couldn't go to bed right away; instead, he opened his books and started working on his assignments.

On Tuesday, he completed the assignments for Professor Binns, Professor Flitwick, and Professor Trelawney.

On Wednesday, Harry had to write until three o'clock in the middle of the night because the paper on the moonstone that Snape had assigned was due on Thursday. By the end, he had no idea what he was writing, and just mechanically copied the words from the book.

He had done a poor job, but there was no help for it; unless he had something to give in he would be in detention with Snape next.

He then dashed off answers to the questions Professor McGonagall had set them, cobbled together something on the proper handling of Bowtruckles for Professor Grubbly-Plank, and staggered up to bed, where he fell fully clothed on top of the bed covers and fell asleep immediately.

It was conceivable that in his state the next day, he might faint at any time.

Joining Harry in his drowsy state was Ron, who was preparing to try out for the position of Gryffindor's Quidditch Keeper, so he had to practice every night.

To avoid being mocked by Fred and George, he usually waited until everyone was asleep before sneaking out.

Ron didn't want anyone to know, but he couldn't hide it from Harry, who was staying up later and later, and also Evan found out.

The Fourth years didn't have as much homework, but there was a lot of research Evan needed to do here.

Apart from the existing subjects of magical studies, he also needed to add the black quill and make a new broom. Evan had already reserved his weekends to accompany the first-year students on campus tours and help Hermione and the others practice magic on Sundays to improve their skills.

So after Ron's first practice session, they knew what he was doing sneakily in the hallway with a broom.

After repeated questioning, Ron finally said the matter with some embarrassment.

No one laughed at him; both Evan and Harry encouraged Ron to participate in the Keeper tryouts.

Evan even helped him bewitch Quaffles to fly at him.

The magic power might have been too strong. The following day, Hermione knew that Ron was secretly practicing, because his face was bruised and swollen, showing marks of the Quaffles's heavy impact; and there was no way to hide it.

In addition, Evan also promised Ron that he would make the first broom before the fifth week.

Now that the main body was complete, Hermione and Ginny were responsible for the rest of the assembly, and Colin joined in with great interest.

The traditional brooms were typically named after celestial bodies to signify their unimaginable speed.

After discussion, they decided to name this newly made broom "*Starcatcher*".

Currently, the Starcatcher was still in its experimental stage, but its performance had already generated high expectations.

What was also worth mentioning was that Evan's letter requesting Rawya's help was also mailed out. When he went to the Owlery early in the morning to find the owl for Egypt, Filch, the caretaker, came wheezing into the room.

There were purple patches on his sunken, veined cheeks, his jowls were aquiver and his thin gray hair disheveled; he had obviously run here, and the purpose was very clear, just to intercept the letter Evan was about to mail.

Filch gave a laughable reason, claiming to have received a tip-off that Evan was intending to place a massive order for Dungbombs.

In a self-satisfied hiss, he asked Evan to hand over the letter for him to check.

Evan ignored him and let the brown owl leave in front of Filch.

"I can't hand it over, it's gone!" He said calmly, watching the owl flying farther and farther.

“You, you, you...” Filch stuttered, his face contorting with rage. “How dare you let the owl leave?!”

“Because your tip-off is inaccurate, I didn’t order Dungbombs. This is just my personnel letter. And there is no regulation in Hogwarts, allowing the caretaker to check the students’ private letters,” said Evan.

“Nonsense, that letter was the evidence that you ordered Dungbombs. I have my sources,” said Filch.

“I believe that as Head Boy of the school, my position guarantees that I won’t order such things.”

“I will report this to the professor if I get so much as a whiff of a Dungbomb.” Filch finally backed down and stumped off down the stairs.

Mrs. Norris cast a last longing look at the owls and followed him.

There was no doubt that Filch had sided with Umbridge, which was just one of many crazy changes that were under way at Hogwarts.

After the Basilisk incident, Filch had been getting along with Evan pretty well.

He would turn a blind eye to some mischievous deeds, but at the beginning of this term, he had completely taken a stand against Evan and his friends.

Umbridge must have asked him to spy on Evan and the others, checking their private letters. There was really no bottom line!

For now, they managed to hide some things and avoid direct inspections, but it wouldn’t be long before they started magically intercepting the owls in the sky. Mad-Eye’s warning was right on point. The Hogwarts postal system was currently under the surveillance of the Ministry of Magic. They hoped to gather information about the Order of the Phoenix from Evan and Harry.

They had been advised not to correspond with members of the Order of the Phoenix and to avoid contacting them as much as possible. That was something they had to be careful about.

But as soon as Evan returned to the Great Hall, he saw a letter in Harry’s hand, a letter from Sirius Black...

#### Chapter 949: The Starcatcher

This was the fourth letter they had seen from Sirius since the summer vacation. .

The first three letters included one addressed to Harry, inquiring about his encounter with the Dementors and offering some advice.

The other one was addressed to Lupin, primarily discussing Harry’s education and requesting Lupin to pass on certain information to Harry.

The final letter was for Evan, where Sirius briefly informed him that he was in contact with vampires in Norway. He mentioned that the security of owl mail couldn’t be guaranteed, so he didn’t provide much detail, only assuring Evan that he would continue to stay in touch once things settled down.

Sure enough, in the letter Harry received, Sirius had only one sentence on it: *all is well, keep in touch.*

If it weren't for the signature "Snuffles", Sirius's alias when he was lurking in Hogwarts the previous semester, nobody would know what it meant.

"He shouldn't be writing to us, it's too risky," said Hermione, studying the note carefully.

"Don't worry, Hermione, no one can get secret information from this letter!" said Harry hurriedly. "What do you think Sirius means? How are things going for him in Norway?"

"Since he can write to us, it probably goes well!" said Evan. According to their previous agreement, this meant that he had made progress recently, but as Sirius couldn't write those things down and mail them over, what would he do?

With Evan's understanding of him, he wouldn't have written such a letter unless he had other plans for action.

After all, less contact was better, and no news was good news.

Sirius wouldn't be unaware of this fact, those vampires...

The group discussed for a while until Cho Chang came over to greet them. She seemed to want to inquire about Cedric.

Ever since Harry revealed a few days ago that Cedric had become a vampire, the news spread throughout the school.

And up until now, it was still the hottest topic. Everyone wanted to hear more information from Harry.

As Cedric's girlfriend, Cho's desire seemed even more urgent, and she had other thoughts...

"Hello, Evan; hello, Harry, um..." said Cho, as if she had finally mustered up her courage.

"Hi," said Harry, looking at Cho in surprise, feeling his face grow hot.

Cho Chang was alone, which was most unusual.

It was known that she was almost always surrounded by a gang of giggling girls; Harry remembered the agony of trying to get her by herself to ask her to the Yule Ball.

"Hello, Cho!" said Evan softly, "How was your summer?"

This was the first time he had seen her since the start of the school year. He had been extremely busy these days, even hurried when he came to the Great Hall for meals.

"it was all right, I..." She took a deep breath.



“Wow, is that a Tornados badge?” Ron demanded suddenly, pointing at the front of Cho’s robes, to which a sky-blue badge emblazoned with a double gold T was pinned. “You don’t support them, do you?”

“Yeah, I do,” said Cho.

“Have you always supported them, or just since they started winning the league?” said Ron, in an inexplicable, almost accusatory tone of voice.

“I’ve supported them since I was six,” said Cho coolly. “Anyway ... see you. I have to go to class now!”

She walked away, and Hermione rounded on Ron angrily.

“You are so tactless!” she muttered.

“What? I only asked her if...”

“What on earth were you attacking her about her Quidditch team for?”

“Attacking? I wasn’t attacking her, I was only...”

“Who *cares* if she supports the Tornados?”

“Oh, come on, half the people you see wearing those badges only bought them last season.”

“But what does it *matter*?”

“It means they’re not real fans, they’re just jumping on the bandwagon...” said Ron loudly.

“Class is about to start, Snape’s Potions class, we better not be late!” said Harry listlessly.

He bid farewell to Evan and Colin, and made his way to Snape’s dungeon, Hermione and Ron hurriedly followed.

Harry suddenly realized that between Hermione and Ron he would be lucky ever to have two minutes’ conversation with Cho that he could look back on without wanting to leave the country.

The heartache that had disappeared because of Evan’s touching actions reappeared...

Harry arrived at Snape’s dungeon classroom, and the slightly improved mood he had from receiving Sirius’s letter quickly turned sour. The Moonstone essay he had submitted was handed back to him with a large, spiky black “D” scrawled in an upper corner.

“I have awarded you the grades you would have received if you presented this work in your O.W.L.,” said Snape with a smirk, as he swept among the students, passing back their homework. “This should give you a realistic idea of what to expect in your examination.”

Snape reached the front of the class and turned to face them.

“The general standard of this homework was abysmal. Most of you would have failed had this been your examination. I expect to see a great deal more effort for this week’s essay on the various varieties of venom antidotes, or I shall have to start handing out detentions to those dunces who get D’s.”

He smirked, and Harry quickly slid his Moonstone essay into his bag.

He felt embarrassed and didn’t want anyone else to know about it. He was probably the only one in the class to get a ‘D.’

Determined not to give Snape an excuse to fail him this lesson, Harry read and reread every line of the instructions on the blackboard at least three times before acting on them.

His Strengthening Solution was not precisely the clear turquoise shade of Hermione’s but it was at least blue rather than pink, like Neville’s, and he delivered a flask of it to Snape’s desk at the end of the lesson with a feeling of mingled defiance and relief.

While Harry was concentrating on brewing the potion, Evan, Colin, Ginny, Fred, and George all gathered in the Room of Requirement, where they were assembling the final parts of the Starcatcher, the new broom.

Evan waved his wand, and the Starcatcher gently vibrated, fitting perfectly together.

According to their previous design, the main body of the Starcatcher was much thicker than the mainstream brooms, but longer, streamlined, and exquisitely crafted. It had been polished with a diamond-like substance, shimmering with a sleek black radiance, exuding an indomitable aura.

They meticulously selected every twig at the tail of the broomstick, following the design of the Starcatcher.

Only the best materials were used to achieve perfection. In terms of core technology such as speed, balance, accuracy, and responsiveness, Evan abandoned traditional Spellcraft and opted for Alchemy. This made the magic on the broomstick more powerful, effective, and long-lasting.

#### Chapter 950: Ginny's Performance

The Starcatcher represented the highest level of craftsmanship of the current brooms. Although the speed was slightly inferior to the Firebolt’s, it was still comparable to the latest Nimbus series. Its thickness, size, stability and durability were unmatched by the long and slender handle of the Firebolt.

The feeling it brought was also different. Evan was confident that the Starcatcher could definitely exhilarate the rider, igniting every cell in their body.

It might not be suitable for Seekers, but it was the best broom for Beaters and Keepers who often engaged in physical collisions.

The special invisible seat cushion design and the magic applied by Evan on it ensured that players could perform various difficult postures and still sit firmly on the broom without falling off or losing control.

The second braking engine allowed the Starcatcher to suddenly accelerate in a short period, reaching unimaginable speeds. Its design was thicker, larger, and more solid than mainstream brooms, encouraging players to engage in physical collisions, resembling a falling meteor.

The glossy black surface throughout the body gave the Starcatcher a metallic texture, providing a strong sensory stimulation and visual impact.

With such a broom, even the pickiest person would not find any issues here.

Although the design concept was different from the mainstream, it could better reflect its special features and uniqueness.

Considering that they personally made it from scratch, it held even more special meaning.

“This broom is simply amazing!” said Fred. “It’s even better than I imagined.”

“It’s unparalleled, a revolutionary product that can rival the Firebolt,” said George. “I can’t wait to see it on the market; it’s bound to be a huge success.”

“I hope so!” Evan carefully observed the Starcatcher, trying to find areas for further improvement but found none.

“What are we waiting for?” said Ginny, holding the broom in her hand, “Don’t stand here stupidly, I can’t wait to try it out. Remember, you promised to let me test it first...”

They took the Starcatcher and came to the Training Grounds outside the castle, Fred and George didn’t even attend Professor Flitwick’s Charms class. With the help of their Skiving Snackboxes, they managed to skive off the lesson.

Under the watchful eyes of everyone, Ginny sat on the broom and slowly ascended...

On the Training Grounds, Madam Hooch was giving riding lessons to the first-years. Many of them were experiencing a broom for the first time, but that didn’t stop them from knowing that the best broom out there was the Firebolt, and Harry had one in hand.

The first-years relished talking about it, combining the Firebolt with Harry’s past exploits.

If anyone was willing to ask, Madam Hooch was more than willing to provide the first-year students with information about the Firebolt.

“Well, children, although I don’t mind continuing to talk about the Firebolt, let’s not forget what we’re supposed to do in this class,” said Madam Hooch.

“Everyone stand by a broomstick now. Come on, hurry up.”

The first-years returned to their brooms, which were all shared by the school.

Most of these brooms were worn out and old, with some of the twigs stuck out at odd angles.

“Stick out your right hand over your broom,” called Madam Hooch at the front, “and say ‘Up!’”

A few minutes later, all the first-years were all trembling as they floated a few feet above the ground, each one excited and yet displaying a hint of fear on their faces. Several pure-blood young wizards showed off, making their brooms soar higher.

Just then, a black broom swiftly flew above their heads, astonishingly fast. Everyone looked up in surprise and saw a beautifully crafted broom they had never seen before, sparkling with a dazzling black radiance under the sunlight. The graceful girl on the broom continuously performed difficult maneuvers.

Amidst the awe of the crowd, the broom flew at a 360-degree angle in the sky, spinning rapidly, ascending, and diving...

Everyone was stunned, holding their breath and watching the girl on the broom.

They had never seen such advanced flying skills, something even professional Quidditch players couldn't achieve. After seeing her spin several times in mid-air, she suddenly accelerated and shot straight towards the clouds.

“Goodness, how can a broom be this fast!”

“It's faster than a Firebolt, like the wind!”

“Who is that girl, and how did she do it?!”

“Professor, what model is that black, thick broom?”

Madam Hooch didn't know how to answer; she had never seen such a broom before.

In fact, even she was shocked and hadn't fully reacted yet. She had just witnessed Ginny performing a dreamlike flight on this broom she had never seen before. She knew Ginny flew well, but she never expected her to be this incredible.

Ginny's current performance was simply genius-level, something only top Quidditch players could achieve.

But what surprised her even more was the astonishing speed unleashed by the black broom beneath Ginny. It could easily rival the maximum speed of a Firebolt. How was this possible?

Ginny activated the speed enhancement mechanism, feeling as if she had left her own self behind. Because of her excitement, her heart suddenly came to a standstill. An invisible magic barrier formed around the broom, making her feel no vibration or disturbance from the air currents while riding the Starcatcher.

This gave her an unreal, dreamlike sensation, but the shouts and cheers from the crowd below were clearly audible.

Ginny continued to ascend, suddenly deciding to try the Wronski Feint. Ever since she saw this Quidditch move at the Quidditch World Cup last year, she had wanted to give it a try. However, she lacked confidence in her own skills. After all, the Wronski Feint was claimed to be achievable only by the best Seekers, requiring exceptional flying skills and mastery of the broom. Only a few people in the world could do it.

“With this broom, there shouldn’t be a problem!” Ginny looked down at the black Starcatcher, determined.

After she passed through the clouds, she turned around and began descending. The speed was truly incredible, as if she had jumped out of a plane without a parachute.

There was another burst of exclamation below, and everyone was looking at Ginny.

“Ginny has gone mad! What is she doing?!”

“Has she lost control?”

“No, it’s the Wronski Feint!”

“She won’t make it...”

“No, she will! Look, oh my goodness!”

They saw Ginny plummeting from the clouds, streaking across the sky like a shooting star. As she neared the ground, she gently lifted the Starcatcher, creating a beautiful arc in front of everyone, leaving behind only a black shadow...