

## Harry Potter 951

### Chapter 951: Reserve Players

Amid a burst of applause and cheers, Ginny controlled the broom to land.

Her face was rosy, she was panting quickly, filled with excitement and exhilaration. The performance of the Starcatcher exceeded her expectations. With just a slight touch or even the mere thought of turning, it responded as if obeying her mind rather than her tight grip.

She had ridden Harry's Firebolt before, but she felt that this broomstick's responsiveness was even more agile than that of the Firebolt, with incredibly smooth movements, exceptional acceleration, and precise turns. It showcased the qualities that only the finest brooms possessed.

Not to mention, the Starcatcher had an unparalleled sense of solidity and innovative design features, such as the secondary acceleration.

This was an epoch-making breakthrough. After riding the Starcatcher, the satisfaction brought by the previous brooms would be greatly reduced.

As expected, the first appearance of the Starcatcher had achieved astounding results.

Everyone was immersed in Ginny's performance. Madam Hooch and all the first-year students surrounded her, asking about the model of this broom. When they learned that it was made solely by Evan and his team, a burst of astonishment erupted from the crowd.

It was not a newly purchased product; it was a self-made broom. How was that possible?!

Ginny's performance just now was really amazing. In everyone's eyes, this broomstick's performance could only be matched by the Firebolt. The fact that the young wizards and witches of Hogwarts could create a broomstick on par with the Firebolt was somewhat intimidating.

If they hadn't seen it with their own eyes, nobody would believe it...

But since it happened to be related to Evan, nothing seemed impossible. The first-year students would soon come to realize this.

Through this incident, they would also further understand Evan.

In short, the performance of the Starcatcher was satisfactory. Under the admiring and worshipful gazes of the first-years, Evan, Colin, Fred and George all took turns test flying it. Their flights might not have been as dazzling as Ginny's, but they were exciting enough.

Especially after Madam Hooch's test flight and her highly professional evaluation, the momentum of the Starcatcher reached its peak.

The students gathered around, all whispering excitedly, everyone staring at the broom.

The Starcatcher captured everyone's attention, becoming the second broom to receive such an honor after the Firebolt.

After Evan allowed the first-year students to use the Starcatcher for a test flight, this flying lesson turned into an exclusive exhibition of the broom.

The students formed a line, following Madam Hooch's lead, and they stepped forward one by one...

Everyone was extremely cautious, as if the Starcatcher were made of glass.

Evan really wanted to tell them that there was no need to be so careful. The broom's structure was not unnecessarily thickened or enlarged; even if it fell from the sky, the protective Charms on the Starcatcher would be activated, ensuring the safety of the rider and the broom itself.

This was another aspect that set the Starcatcher apart from traditional brooms, focusing on the protection of the rider's body.

This allowed driving without worries, without fear of the broom going out of control or encountering accidents.

Everyone was immersed in the great joy and satisfaction brought by the black broom, and the morning passed quickly.

In the end, the first-year students were reluctant to part with it, and many of them did not have a chance to ride the Starcatcher.

Evan told them that they could come to the field at five o'clock tonight to watch the Gryffindor Quidditch team tryouts.

By then, the Starcatcher would be officially unveiled.

Furthermore, after they familiarized themselves with the campus tomorrow, they could continue to come here for test flights. Evan guaranteed that everyone would have a chance to ride the Starcatcher, which made the new students very excited.

Even until they returned to the Great Hall for lunch, people were still discussing this matter.

It wouldn't be long before the entire Hogwarts students would know that Evan and the others had created an unparalleled new broom.

"Ginny, I met Madam Hooch in the corridor just now, and she recommended you to join the Gryffindor team." Angelina strode over, with a smile on her face. Without waiting for Ginny's response, she continued, "She told me about your performance, it was incredible, you must come for the tryouts. Oh, and she also mentioned a new broom, what's it called..."

"Starcatcher!"

"Yeah, that's it!" said Angelina, looking at Evan. "Evan, Madam Hooch said you made this broom. It can match the Firebolt in performance, surpassing it in agility and solidity. It has many innovative features."

"That's right, strictly speaking, compared with mainstream brooms, there are a total of fifty-four innovations," said Evan. "If you count the magic involved in the internal main braking device, sensing device, and balancing device, there might probably be hundreds of innovations involved. In fact, I reconstructed all the core components using Alchemy, which enhances the effectiveness of magic..."

Angelina blinked, speechless in shock.

“Anyway, you just have to know it’s a great broom!”

“It’ll be Gryffindor’s trump card. We have the Firebolt and the Starcatcher, and we will definitely win this year’s Quidditch Cup, and we will successfully defend our title.”

“Come on, Angelina; let me introduce you this broom!” said Fred. “I was involved in the whole process of making it!”

Harry and Ron had just walked into the Great Hall when they saw this scene.

“Ginny, Angelina wants you to participate in the tryouts?” said Ron in surprise, his mouth wide enough to fit an egg.

“Yeah, but I’m not interested in being a Keeper,” said Ginny hesitantly. “I prefer to be a Chaser.”

With her excellent performance in the morning flight, if she participated in the tryouts, there probably wouldn’t be any chance for anyone else...

At least in Evan’s opinion, Ron’s flying was not as good as Ginny’s.

Obviously, Ron also realized this, opened his mouth but didn’t know what to say.

“Many Gryffindor team members will graduate next year, so I think we should recruit a few more reserve players,” said Evan. “Just in case something unexpected happens, we won’t be short of players for the matches.”

“I’ll talk to Angelina about it,” said Harry wearily, his energy drained from the morning Potions class. “So, the test flights went smoothly this morning?”

“Very smoothly. How was your Potions class? Snape didn’t give you a hard time, did he?” Evan asked.

“Not as bad as before. I feel like I’m getting into the groove, and my homework grades weren’t too bad,” said Hermione, taking her homework out of her schoolbag. On it was an ‘O’, the highest grade, “I don’t expect top grades every time because he grades us on O.W.L standards. To be honest, I think it’s very encouraging to pass at this stage, don’t you?”

Chapter 952: Tryouts

“You’ve written this paper very well, almost covering all the pharmaceutical applications of Moonstone,” said Evan, looking at Hermione’s paper. “And these examples you provided are very insightful. Well, Snape gave you a fair grade.”

Harry made a noncommittal noise in his throat.

He had never received fair treatment from Snape, never.

Just look at his two potions assignments this semester, one scored zero and the other an unprecedented D. It was absolutely terrible.

“Of course, a lot can happen between now and the exam, we’ve got plenty of time to improve, but the grades we’re getting now are a sort of baseline, aren’t they? Something we can build on...” Hermione continued.

“Alright, Hermione, we all know you got an O, and I’m genuinely happy for you!” Harry interjected, attempting to change the topic. He didn’t want to dwell on this anymore. Instead, better talk about the performance of the Starcatcher. He had been looking forward to it for a long time!

“But.....”

“If you want to know what grades we got, ask!” Ron snapped irritably. Madam Hooch suggested Ginny to take part in the tryouts for the Quidditch team, which made him worry. He knew Ginny, she was a strong competitor.

He couldn’t help but wonder what if he didn’t fly as well as Ginny this afternoon?

She could also use the Starcatcher, which meant he had no other advantage!

Even if he showed all his skills, what if Angelina favored Ginny? What should he do then?

“You know I didn’t mean it that way. I just wanted to say that we still need to work hard, but grades are really important,” said Hermione, wrinkling her nose.

“Well, if you two want to tell me your grades...”

“I got a P!” said Ron, ladling soup into his bowl. “Happy?”

“Well, that’s nothing to be ashamed of,” said Fred, holding the Starcatcher. He and George had just returned from parting with Angelina. “Nothing wrong with a good healthy P.”

“But!” said Hermione, “doesn’t P stand for...”

“ ‘Poor,’ yeah,” said George. “Still, better than D, isn’t it? ‘Dreadful?’”

Harry felt his face grow warm and faked a small coughing fit over his roll.

When he emerged from this he was sorry to find that Hermione was still in full flow about O.W.L. grades.

It could be seen that Hermione was very interested in this topic. But he didn’t want to talk about it, and Harry’s attention was immediately drawn to Fred’s Starcatcher, the black broom that looked fantastic.

“So top grade’s O for ‘Outstanding,’ ” Hermione was saying, “and then there’s A...”

“No, E,” Fred corrected her, handing the Starcatcher to the impatient Harry and Ron. “E for ‘Exceeds Expectations.’ And I’ve always thought George and I should’ve got E in everything, because we exceeded expectations just by turning up for the exams.”

They all laughed except Hermione, who plowed on, “So after E, it’s A for ‘Acceptable,’ and that’s the last pass grade, isn’t it?”

“Yeah!” said Evan, after reading Hermione’s paper. He had to admit that it was basically impeccable.

“Then you get P for ‘Poor’, and D for ‘Dreadful.’” said Hermione.

“And then T,” George reminded her.

“T?” asked Hermione, looking appalled. “Even lower than a D? What on earth does that stand for?”

“‘Troll,’” said George promptly.

Harry laughed again, though he was not sure whether or not George was joking. He imagined trying to conceal from Hermione that he had received T’s in all his O.W.L.s and immediately resolved to work harder from now on.

“Well, Hermione, at your level, you don’t have to worry about getting grades below E,” said Evan. “Hmm, I think you still need to strengthen your Defense Against the Dark Arts and practical spellcasting. We can focus on that over the weekend.”

“Now that we’ve brought this up, I’ve given it some thought recently and it can be scaled up appropriately,” said Hermione. “We all now know what a dreadful teacher that woman is, and how we’re not going to learn any defense from her at all. But she got the job and we can’t get rid of her, Fudge’ll make sure of that. So, we need to learn by ourselves now. Teaching everyone magic now takes on a different significance.”

“We should indeed expand the scale and include Colin, Neville, and the others!” said Evan, looking at Hermione, “What are your plans? Do you have any good ideas?”

“Some, but I haven’t decided yet!” said Hermione, her brown eyes sparkling, just like the passionate fervor she showed for S.P.E.W. and O.W.L.s. “But this thing is really important now, like Harry said in Umbridge’s first lesson, we need to be ready for what’s waiting out there. We need to make sure we really can defend ourselves, especially in the current situation...”

Next, Harry, Ron, Colin, Ginny, Fred, and George were discussing the Starcatcher, while Evan and Hermione began to discuss organizing everyone to learn magic with him. It was evident that Hermione had thought a lot about this matter, probably because Umbridge gave her a lot of stimulation. Hermione considered learning magic from Evan and studying Defense Against the Dark Arts to be of utmost importance. Her vision extended beyond just a few individuals within Gryffindor.

Because of the Gryffindor Quidditch team tryouts at five o'clock, everyone was a little absent-minded throughout the afternoon lessons.

When the last lesson was over, everyone came out of the castle and onto the school grounds.

Except for Harry, because he had to go to Umbridge for detention, where he spent seven hours writing '*I must not tell lies,*' and he was not allowed to leave if he couldn't write the required amount. It was truly agonizing!

From the window of Umbridge's office, the Quidditch pitch could be seen in the distance.

If he was lucky, thought Harry, he might even catch a glimpse of Ron's tryout. He separated from the others with this thought in mind...

At five o'clock, Evan, Hermione, Ron, Colin, and Ginny arrived promptly at the pitch below.

The tryouts were about to start, and the captain of the team, Angelina, was trying to maintain order. Nearly half of the Gryffindor students, ranging from first to seventh year, had shown up, and there were also many students from Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw.

Because of the Starcatcher, almost all the first years were there, even the Slytherins.

Chapter 953: The Process of the Selection Competition

The team members and the students participating in the tryouts gathered in the center of the field, and Evan, Hermione, and Colin went up to the stands.

"I hope Ron doesn't get so nervous, he looks like he's about to faint!" said Hermione worriedly, looking at Ron in the crowd. "Angelina not allowing him to use the Starcatcher seems to be affecting him greatly."

"From a fair standpoint, everyone should indeed use the same type of broom," said Evan.

On the advice of others, Angelina asked everyone to use the school's Cleansweep or comet brooms, disallowing the use of the Firebolt, the Nimbus, and the Starcatcher.

After all, that was a selection for a Keeper, not a competition for the best broom.

The Firebolt and the Starcatcher could be used as Gryffindor's secret weapons, but ultimately, it was the skill of the driver that mattered.

On the field, the first years were nervously clutching a selection of the dreadful old school brooms. The students from higher grades were mostly in the same situation, but their stature appeared more robust, especially the sixth and seventh-year students who stood out, towering over the rest, looking coolly intimidating.

Among all the people involved in the tryouts, Ron was probably the most nervous; he was a delicate shade of green.

The more people gathered around and the louder the cheers became, the more anxious he appeared.

Furthermore, Ginny did not participate in the Keeper tryouts. After careful consideration, she felt that being a Keeper was simply not suitable for her. However, Angelina adopted Evan's advice and recruited Ginny as a substitute. She didn't want to miss out on such a talented player.

She had to consider the future of the Gryffindor team. It was different when Wood was around. By next year, after she, Alicia, Fred, and George graduated, the team would face reorganization. If they didn't start training new players early, the team could potentially decline.

Therefore, this time, the focus would be on the lower-grade students. Even if they fell slightly short, these substitute players could train with the team regularly and gain experience by participating in matches if possible.

Angelina asked all the students participating in the tryouts to fly once around the pitch first to assess their basic skills.

Some flew quite well, but it was evident that some were just trying to get by, crashing into a mess halfway through.

There were also many Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff students mixed in, who were angrily chased away after Angelina found out!

Among them, Ron's performance was average, but at least he could sit steadily on his broom.

Next was the actual tryout. Angelina had all the players take the pitch and gather around the three tall goalposts. She was still unhappy that Harry couldn't participate in the tryouts, as she hoped to find a Keeper that would satisfy everyone.

The Keepers who passed the preliminary test stepped forward one by one. Angelina, Alicia, and Katie formed a triangle, each responsible for an area, and began to throw the Quaffle into the goals. Fred and George, on the other hand, were hitting Bludgers to create interference, simulating a match scenario.

The first one to take the field was a third-year student who performed terribly. Out of ten shots, he only saved one goal and got hit by Bludgers several times. In the end, he was knocked off his broom and had a bleeding nose...

He was followed by Ritchie Coote, the only first-year student who made it to the final selection.

This boy looked fragile and extremely thin, but he flew quite well and had quick reflexes.

He was not fit to be a Keeper, but was more suitable to be a Seeker. Whenever a Quaffle approached him, his first instinct was to dodge.

In the end, he didn't save any goals, but he managed to avoid being hit by Fred and George's Bludgers.

It was quite impressive, and after careful consideration, Angelina decided to recruit him as a substitute player.

Similar to him was a third-year girl named Demelza Robins. She also had quick reactions and was agile in her movements, but she never dared to use her body to block the Quaffle. Angelina also recruited her as a substitute player.

There was also Geoffrey Hooper, a very strong guy, comparable to Gore and Crabbe.

He saved nine out of ten shots and got hit by a Bludger twice, but he seemed unfazed. This performance was already remarkable, but it would have been even better if he hadn't been moaning about the weather, the pitch, and the broom. Angelina found him quite annoying but reluctantly kept him on the team.

However, this guy had the audacity to say that he didn't want to be a substitute player and didn't want to waste his time.

He wanted to join the team as an official player. This infuriated Angelina, and she promptly kicked him out.

The next few students did not show any remarkable performances.

The best performer of the show was Vicky Frobisher, Evan's roommate. He flew incredibly well on his old Comet. Under his control, it seemed to unleash the speed of a Firebolt. Amidst the cheers of the crowd, he perfectly dodged all the Bludgers and blocked all ten Quaffles. *(T.N: I said before that Vicky was in fact a girl, but that was here a mistake from the author.)*

His performance was impeccable, and even Wood wouldn't have done better if he were here.

Evan couldn't find any reason not to choose him as the Keeper, and everyone else agreed. Angelina even announced on the spot that he would be the team's Keeper.

But this guy had the nerve to say that he didn't have time. He only wanted to participate in matches and not team training.

Evan really knew Vicky very well. He was involved in all sorts of societies and had the names of all the girls in the school. He practically knew them all, went on dates every day with different girls, and even introduced girlfriends to his roommates....

If there was a time conflict, he would certainly put Quidditch on the back burner, and would not budge.

This was unacceptable to Angelina. What good was a player who couldn't participate in team practices, even if their performance was outstanding?

In fact, so did his sister, Vinnie Frobisher. She was a cute third-year girl with short hair and perfect flying skills. However, her mind was not on Quidditch at all, but all kinds of messy social activities.

She didn't have so many boyfriends, but she had set up a "Charm Club" and put Charms first.

Colin told Evan and Hermione that the uncle of the Frobisher siblings was a professional Quidditch player and the Seeker of the Caerphilly Catapults Team. He had trained both of them in Quidditch since they were young, which was the main reason for their exceptional performances.

Compared with Geoffrey Hooper and the Frobisher siblings, Ron's performance was much worse.

He saved only seven out of ten shots, and he wasn't hit by any Bludgers. However, Evan couldn't be sure if that was because Fred and George were showing mercy. Angelina hesitated for a long time before announcing that he would be the team's Keeper.

In her words, Ron's performance was not the best, but after some training, there should be no problem.

Besides, he was Fred and George's younger brother and Harry's friend, which was another factor that had to be considered...

#### Chapter 954: Scars and Omens

While the Tryouts on the pitch were going on, Harry was still in Umbridge's office for the last time, and he kept writing '*I must not tell lies*' on the parchment, hoping that this would be the last time he would be given detention by that woman.

Umbridge had just informed him that she had reordered a new black quill, which would be delivered next week.

The underlying implication of her statement was that if Harry made another mistake, it wouldn't be as simple as writing sentences. She would not hesitate to subject him to the same bloody punishment as before. But Harry didn't care. He had made up his mind not to tell lies because of threats.

But as Evan had said, there was no point in arguing with her, this woman was hopeless.

Umbridge was now focusing on inspecting the professors, and had no time to bother with Evan and Harry.

One week was enough for her to get a general idea of the situation, and she was a little disappointed that, except for the castle caretaker Filch, no professor had taken the initiative to join her or expressed support for her reforms so far.

The entire Hogwarts stood as a united front, supporting Dumbledore, seemingly dismissing Umbridge's inspections and the authority of the Ministry of Magic.

Umbridge had made up her mind to drive away one professor to establish her own authority.

And she had a new plan. Lucius Malfoy and some pure-blood wizard families had voluntarily contacted her earlier today. They were very interested in her role as a High Inquisitor and hoped she could do something to drive out Dumbledore.

Although she had no supporters in this castle, her power behind the scenes surpassed that of the Wizarding School.

If this were a power struggle, she was confident in achieving the final victory.

Harry saw that Umbridge was not paying attention to him, so he took a risk and glanced through the window.

He had a distant view of the Gryffindor Quidditch team soaring up and down the pitch, while half a dozen black figures stood at the foot of the three high goalposts, apparently awaiting their turn to Keep.

It was impossible to tell which one was Ron at this distance.

Harry wrote a few more lines, and pretended to shift himself closer to the table. He could hear the scratching of Umbridge's quill.

He chanced another glance out of the window. Whoever was defending the goalposts now was doing a very poor job indeed.

Katie Bell scored twice in the few seconds Harry dared watch.

He lowered his gaze, looked at the long parchment; of which he had written less than one-fifth, and hoped very much that the Keeper wasn't Ron.

And so, Harry continued to write '*I must not tell lies*' while occasionally stealing glances outside for a few seconds.

He saw a Keeper save all the balls, and there was a cheer erupting from the pitch, which could be heard faintly from the castle, and Harry wasn't sure if it was Ron, because the guy was performing exceptionally well!

Based on his understanding of helping Ron in training these days, it was a bit difficult for Ron to do this.

Just like that, the sky was darkening, Harry couldn't see anything, and his parchment was full of '*I must not tell lies*', and his wrist was so sore that he didn't have the strength to write any more.

"Mr. Potter, I hope you can remember this sentence. If there is a next time, it will not be as simple!" said Umbridge's soft voice, as she walked over, and took the parchment from Harry.

Their hands, Harry's and her short be-ringed fingers, touched briefly, and pain seared across the scar on his forehead.

At the same time, he had a most peculiar sensation somewhere around his midriff.

Harry leapt to his feet and stared straight at her.

She looked back at him, a smile stretching her wide, slack mouth.

"Well, Mr. Potter, you may go!" said Umbridge, not noticing anything unusual about Harry.

Harry caught up his schoolbag and left the room, his heart beating loud and fast.

His scar hadn't hurt for a long time, and Evan said that his scar pain could only be related to Voldemort.

Some terrible thoughts popped into Harry's mind.

*Stay calm*, he told himself as he sprinted up the stairs. *Stay calm, it doesn't necessarily mean what you think it means*

...

Anyway, he had to talk to Evan, to let him know about this piece of information.

*“Mimbulus mimbletonia!”* Harry gasped at the Fat Lady, who swung forward once more.

He froze for a moment, and a roar of sound greeted him.

Ron came running toward him, beaming all over his face and slopping butterbeer down his front from the goblet he was clutching.

“Harry, I did it, I’m in, I’m Keeper!” said Ron, almost crying.

“What? Oh ... brilliant!” said Harry, trying to smile naturally, while his heart continued to race.

“Have a butterbeer.” Ron pressed a bottle onto him, “I can’t believe it.”

“Where’s Evan?” Harry asked urgently.

“Oh, he’s there, with Hermione,” said Ron, looking a little overwhelmed, not paying attention to Harry’s tone, “I was selected, and Evan’s Starcatcher was a success. Gryffindor’s having a double celebration today. We’re definitely going to win the Quidditch Cup this year.”

“Yeah, we’ll definitely win.” Harry looked up and saw Evan and Hermione sitting on the sofa by the fire, a piece of parchment popped out of Evan’s arms, and he was writing something quickly on it with his head down, while Hermione was dozing next to him, her drink tipping precariously in her hand.

Harry wanted to go over, but he and Ron were intercepted by Lavender and a group of girls, all of them ecstatic.

“Harry, you’re back!” Angelina and Katie walked over. “We have a new Keeper now.”

“Come here, Ron, and see if Oliver’s old robes fit you. He gave them to me when he graduated and I just dug them out,” said Katie Bell with a smile. “We can take off his name and put yours on instead. He’ll certainly agree, and we can write him a letter about it.”

As Ron moved away, Angelina came striding up to Harry.

“Sorry I was a bit short with you earlier, Potter,” she said abruptly, taking a few sips of butterbeer. “It’s stressful, this managing lark, you know, I’m starting to think I was a bit hard on Wood sometimes.”

She was watching Ron over the rim of her goblet with a slight frown on her face.

“Look, I know he’s your best mate, but he’s not fabulous,” she said bluntly. “I think with a bit of training he’ll be all right, though. He comes from a family of good Quidditch players. I’m banking on him turning out to have a bit more talent than he showed today, to be honest. The Frobishers and Geoffrey Hooper all

flew better this evening, but Hooper's a real whiner, he's always moaning about something or other, and Vicky and Vinnie involved in all sorts of societies, they admitted themselves that they couldn't attend training. Anyway, we're having a practice session at two o'clock tomorrow, so just make sure you're there this time, and bring your Firebolt. You can also test Evan's Starcatcher and compare it to the Firebolt. Oh, and I have one more favor to ask. Please help Ron as much as you can, okay?"

Harry nodded and Angelina strolled back to Alicia Spinnet.

Chapter 955: Water

Harry walked to Evan's side; all the noisy sounds around him disappeared, and suddenly became very quiet. Despite the festive atmosphere in the Gryffindor common room, there was no sound around Evan; it was as quiet as a library.

The warm fire was burning quietly, and Hermione leaned gently against Evan's shoulder. He looked up and saw Harry approaching.

The scene in front of him was in stark contrast to the carnival party not far away, like two different worlds.

"I've cast a Quietening Charm, so no one can disturb this place. Hermione is tired because of the O.W.L. exams. She's been staying up late studying and reading books, which is quite draining. I thought she could use a little more sleep," Evan explained to Harry. His face slightly reddened in the light of the fire.

"Ah!" Harry nodded absently, a little ashamed.

Compared to Hermione, he had spent too little time and effort on his homework.

Earlier this morning, he had sworn to study hard, but he had already forgotten about it. However, there were more important things now.

"Evan, I was just ..." Harry stopped because Hermione woke up suddenly.

"Harry, you're back," she said sleepily, stretched herself, and rubbed her eyes vigorously. "I must be too tired, I fell asleep without realizing it. Oh, sorry, Evan, I didn't notice..."

Only then did Hermione notice that there was a damp spot on Evan's shoulder, right where she had leaned.

Normally, if that spot was wet, it couldn't be anything other than her saliva.

Hermione looked at Evan apologetically, a bit confused but mostly embarrassed. It was already embarrassing enough to sleep on his shoulder in front of so many people, and now she had made it wet.

"It's alright. It would be better for you to get some sleep earlier these days," said Evan calmly, without any trace of concern.

As long as it was Hermione's water, whether it was saliva, tears or anything else, he didn't mind. Besides, Evan found that Hermione looked so cute when she was asleep, and couldn't help but feel a little moved. She wasn't leaning on his shoulders at first, but he had gently guided her to do so, leading to their current situation...

So, the fact that his shoulder got wet had nothing to do with Hermione; it was all Evan's doing.

"I'll be more careful," Hermione nodded, wondering why she had suddenly drooled.

She had never done that before. She thought it would be best to change the subject. After all, Harry was still there, watching. From Evan's expression, she sensed that there might be some indescribable meaning behind it. It would be fine if they were alone, but with others around...

"Ron became Gryffindor's Keeper! He's amazing, isn't he? He had always dreamed of being a Gryffindor player, and now his wish has finally come true!" said Hermione, looking at Ron dancing in his Wood's robes in the distance.

"Yeah, really great," said Harry hurriedly, not paying attention to the ambiguity between Evan and Hermione or the ongoing celebration. If he didn't talk to someone about what had just happened, he would burst. "Listen, you two, I was just up in Umbridge's office, and she touched my arm..."

Evan and Hermione listened closely to Harry's words. This was indeed an interesting piece of information.

Harry's scar was only related to Voldemort, but when he touched Umbridge, it hurt.

Obviously, if it wasn't a coincidence, it would mean that Umbridge and Voldemort were somehow connected.

"You mean, you touched her, and the scar started hurting?" Evan asked, frowning.

"Yeah, exactly. The scar started hurting badly the moment I touched her. I've felt this sensation before," said Harry. "It happened back in my first year when I met Quirrell. Evan, you mentioned that this scar is related to Voldemort."

"Yes!" Evan replied, "That's a very special magic."

"Well, you're worried that Voldemort's controlling her like he controlled Quirrell back then?" said Hermione slowly.

"It's a possibility, isn't it?" said Harry, dropping his voice.

"I suppose so," said Hermione, though she sounded unconvinced. "But I don't think Voldemort can be possessing her the way he possessed Quirrell, I mean, he's properly alive again now, isn't he, he's got his own body, he wouldn't need

to share someone else's. He could have Umbridge under the Imperius Curse, I suppose ...”

“Umbridge is acting of her own accord,” said Evan simply.

So far, Umbridge had been doing a ‘good’ job at Hogwarts. In less than a week, she had thrown the school into chaos. Voldemort didn’t need to use the Imperius Curse to control her. It would be too easy to be discovered.

It was possible that she had come into contact with Voldemort, leaving traces of his magic on her.

Although Evan felt this possibility was also unlikely, the signal was too vague, and anything was possible.

Harry watched Fred, George, and Lee Jordan juggling empty butterbeer bottles, remaining silent for a moment.

“It’s also very likely to be a coincidence, isn’t it?” Hermione analyzed. “Think about it, Harry, last year your scar hurt when nobody was touching you, and didn’t Dumbledore say it had to do with what You-Know-Who was feeling at the time?”

“When his emotions are intensely fluctuating, the connection between him and Harry will strengthen,” said Evan.

“That’s it, I mean, maybe this hasn’t got anything to do with Umbridge at all, maybe it’s just coincidence it happened while you were with her?”

“I don’t know, but she’s evil,” said Harry flatly, “Twisted!”

“She’s horrible, yes, but...” Hermione paused. “Harry, I think you ought to tell Dumbledore your scar hurt.”

“I’m not bothering him with this. Like you both just said, it’s not a big deal. Since he came back, it’s been hurting on and off all summer ... it was just a bit worse tonight, that’s all...”

“Harry, I’m sure Dumbledore would want to be bothered by this.”

“Yeah,” Harry blurted out before he could stop himself, “that’s the only bit of me Dumbledore cares about, isn’t it, my scar?”

“Don’t say that, it’s not true!”

“Alright, there’s no need to tell the Headmaster about this until we’re certain,” Evan interjected. “But just to be safe, I think we should double-check by having Harry touch Umbridge again.”

Chapter 956: Quidditch Training

Harry was now like a radar; able to sensitively detect people who had had contact with Voldemort.

If Umbridge was indeed in cahoots with Voldemort, then something else would have to be done.

“What should we do?” Harry asked.

“Bump into her in the corridor, or make a surprise attack, or get detention by her again.”

The key to this matter was not to arouse Umbridge’s suspicion, and it was best not to be noticed by others.

The easiest way was to follow Umbridge, wait for a secluded corner with no one around, and hit her with a Stunning Spell, and then they could do whatever they wanted!

At that time, Harry could touch Umbridge as much as he wanted, no matter where he touched.

Or it would be better to wait until Umbridge went to inspect the Care of Magical Creatures class or Herbology class, drag her into the dark and deserted Forbidden Forest, and no one would find out what they did to Umbridge.

It would be nice to take advantage of this opportunity to eliminate her, since no one would find out anyway, but it would be too evil to do so.

Moreover, Umbridge was insignificant and could be dealt with anytime.

The key was Fudge and the Ministry of Magic behind her. If something unexpected happened to her at Hogwarts, Fudge would have an excuse to blame Dumbledore and interfere with Hogwarts!

He didn’t even need to find whoever hurt Umbridge since Dumbledore would be taken as responsible for whatever happened anyway.

As long as Umbridge was at Hogwarts, not only could she not be touched, but she must be protected.

Therefore, it was not advisable to directly attack Umbridge before completely turning against her. Harry could only pretend to accidentally bump into her; and this matter needed to be carefully planned, waiting for the right opportunity without raising her suspicion.

The next day was the first Saturday of the term.

For the whole day, Evan didn’t see Umbridge. She stayed in her room and no one knew what she was doing.

Evan and Hermione organized the first-year students to familiarize themselves with the campus as planned, while Harry and Ron stayed in the common room to write the essay for Sprout on Self-Fertilizing Shrubs and Professor McGonagall’s Inanimatus Conjurus.

One week was enough for first-year students to have a preliminary understanding of Hogwarts.

Affected by the environment, barriers between them started to appear. For example, the students of Slytherin obviously had inexplicable hostility towards the students of Gryffindor, but they did not refuse Evan’s call and invitation; they all came.

Filial children are always innocent and do not have deep-rooted hatred. After getting to know one another, they also let go of their animosity.

Unity is based on understanding. If Harry and Malfoy had communicated more and had more contact initially, their differences might not have been so great, and they wouldn't end up fighting every time they saw each other.

Now that conflicts had arisen, it was difficult to resolve them, especially for older students, but it was easier for new students.

As long as there was someone with enough influence and prestige to stop them and provide a platform for interaction, it could be done.

Evan was qualified for that, and he was doing very well.

He and Hermione took a group of people around the school, and went to the kitchens to see the house-elves. Hermione took the opportunity to promote the theory of Elfish Welfare. It was unclear how many people actually absorbed her message, but everyone had a great time.

The house-elves were also extremely excited, trembling with joy. They seemed to have never seen so many people come to the kitchen at once, constantly serving various delicious foods to everyone.

Immediately afterwards, Evan took everyone to the pitch to try riding the Starcatcher, which was the most anticipated activity for everyone.

Undoubtedly, this event was a great success. By the time they had lunch, rare laughter and joy filled the Great Hall. The first-years had become familiar with each other, and many of them made friends in other Houses.

During lunch, Katie sat next to the Ravenclaw table and had a lively conversation with a little girl.

Regarding what Evan did, not everyone agreed. Mainly the senior Slytherin students warned the new students not to mingle with 'Mudbloods' and not to forget the honor of purebloods and similar nonsense. However, they didn't have the courage to interfere with Evan.

According to Hermione's plan, she went to the library in the afternoon to complete her homework and review what she had learned this week.

Harry and Ron weren't going to do that, they were going to practice Quidditch on the pitch.

The two of them had been practicing all morning instead of finishing their homework as planned.

Hermione warned them that if they didn't put in more effort, they would definitely fail all their O.W.L.s.

But the two of them didn't take this kind of thing to heart. They thought they could do their homework later in the evening..

In Ron's words, 'we've still got tomorrow, and Hermione gets too worked up about work— that's her trouble'.

"Hmph, you two have no sense of responsibility at all. Anyway, I'm going to the library, so don't expect me to lend you my assignments to copy this time!" said Hermione, grabbing her bag and leaving the Great Hall.

“Do you think she meant it when she said we weren’t copying from her?” said Ron, in a slightly anxious tone.

“Not sure, but Hermione might be serious this time. What she’s doing is also for your own good,” said Evan.

“Well, we still have time, don’t we? Besides, Hermione just talks every time,” said Harry, also a bit anxious. “Still, this is important too, we’ve got to practice if we want to stay on the Quidditch team.”

“Yeah, that’s right,” said Ron in a heartened tone. “And we have got plenty of time to do it all.”

So, in this self-deluding state, they left the castle and headed to the Quidditch pitch outside.

Evan thought for a while, and followed the two of them out.

Proper exercise was necessary, and he also needed to record the flight data of the Starcatcher, and see what needed to be improved before the official version was released.

The Quidditch teams of the four Houses were all preparing for the first training of this semester today, and by the way, they could see the level of the new recruits.

Evan, Harry, and Ron came very early, and there was no one else on the pitch.

They collected balls from the cupboard in the changing room and set to work, Ron guarding the three tall goalposts on the Starcatcher, Harry playing Chaser on his Firebolt and trying to get the Quaffle past Ron. Evan also rode his own Nimbus and cooperated with Harry to attack, observing Ron’s reactions and the performance of the Starcatcher.

Ron’s performance was quite good, even better than yesterday’s performance in the tryouts.

Ron blocked three-quarters of the goals they attempted to put past him and played better the longer they practiced.

By the end, he could save almost every shot, flawlessly and perfectly.

But when the official training session started, everything took a turn for the worse.

Chapter 957: A disastrous training session

Before long, everyone from the team came to the pitch, including the substitutes, ready to start the first training session.

“How do you feel, Ron?” said George, winking at him.

“Alright,” said Ron, controlling his broom as it descended. “The Starcatcher’s response is really good!”

“Of course, it’s a great broom, you should have seen Ginny’s performance yesterday morning.”

“Ready to show us all up, Ickle Prefect?” said Fred, a slightly malicious grin on his face.

“Shut up,” said Ron, stony-faced.

“Okay, everyone,” said Angelina, waving her hands vigorously. “Hurry up and change into your robes. We must make good use of our time. Alicia and Fred, if you can just bring the ball crate out for us. Oh, and the substitute players should join in the practice too.”

Gryffindor’s substitute players consisted of three individuals: Ginny, third-year Demelza Robins, and first-year Ritchie Coote.

All three of them had small and fragile-looking bodies.

Especially Ritchie, this boy blushed even when talking to others.

It was conceivable that after Angelina and the others graduated next year, Gryffindor’s style would completely shift towards agility and skill. Since they could not engage in direct confrontation, tactics were particularly important, which had always been the strength of the Ravenclaw team.

From a rational perspective, Evan had to admit that Gryffindor’s future looked worrying.

Especially when Evan saw the Slytherin Quidditch team members and assorted hangers-on coming onto the field, he felt a stark contrast. Each one of their players was tall and sturdy, with physicality that could easily overpower Gryffindor.

They noticed Evan sitting alone on the empty stands and gestured and discussed a few words among themselves but didn’t come over.

Although they didn’t like him, provoking the Head Boy would be an irrational act.

Evan didn’t pay them any attention either. He smiled and waved at Astoria Greengrass in the crowd.

The girl smiled back at him, nodded slightly, but turned around quickly. Evan was now Slytherin’s number one public enemy. At least on the surface, the entire Slytherin students tried not to contact him

After a while, the Hufflepuff team also came to the pitch, and they all came to say hello to Evan.

This team was known for its stable and cohesive style of play. They would play until the last second and were adept at endurance battles. They had once been strong contenders for the Quidditch Cup, but to be honest, they suffered a heavy blow after their captain Cedric left. They were emotionally low and hadn’t recovered until now. They even believed they didn’t stand a chance this year.

The Hufflepuff team recruited a new Seeker and a new Chaser this year, respectively, fourth-year Arnot Rosek and first-year Alecia Esther, who was the first student to officially join the Quidditch team in her first year after Harry. *(T.N. These two names are to be found nowhere in Harry Potter. Maybe just characters created by the author)*

Alecia was a girl with long blond hair. Her parents were both Muggles. Before coming to Hogwarts, she had never been exposed to brooms and Quidditch. However, Evan remembered that when she took a test flight on the Starcatcher in the morning, she flew very well.

She was very talented in this, just like Harry back then, her performance was amazing, and Professor Sprout specially approved her to join the team.

Of course, she was just as shy as other first-year students and didn't dare to talk to Evan.

The Hufflepuff team found her a Cleansweep Ten. This old broom was a model from three years ago. It was slow, but it was also the average level of the Hufflepuff team. For an ordinary student, it was already their limit! (*T.N. there's no Cleansweep Ten In the original story*)

About five minutes later, the Gryffindor players came out in their robes.

It was the first time for Ron to wear his own team robes. They fitted him well considering they had been Oliver Wood's, who was rather broader in the shoulder. Ron seemed somewhat surprised when he saw the Slytherin and Hufflepuff teams at the edge of the field.

There was a storm of catcalls and jeers from the Slytherin crowd.

They didn't seem to be in a hurry to conduct their own training, but instead commented on the Gryffindor players, focusing on Ron, their voices echoing loudly around the open-air stadium.

Their purpose was obvious; they wanted to see the performance of the Starcatcher.

The reputation of this new broom made by Evan had spread almost throughout Hogwarts. People from other Houses were very worried. One Firebolt was deadly enough, and now there was the Starcatcher, which was no less impressive in terms of performance.

Not to mention skill, Gryffindor could crush their opponents with the Broom itself.

"These guys are so annoying!" said Ginny. As Ron used the Starcatcher, she was using Evan's Nimbus today.

"Ignore them," said Harry. "We'll see who's laughing after we play them!"

"Exactly the attitude I want, Harry. Our goal this year is the championship!" said Angelina approvingly, soaring around them with the Quaffle under her arm and slowing to hover on the spot in front of her airborne team. "Okay everyone, we're going to start with some passes just to warm up, the whole team please, spread out now, let those down there see what we can do!"

The practice started, and Angelina raised the Quaffle with one hand and threw it hard to Fred, who passed to George, who passed to Ginny, who passed to Harry, who passed to Ron, who dropped it.

There was another burst of laughter from the Slytherins. Ron controlled the Starcatcher and rushed to the ground, trying to catch the Quaffle before it hit the ground. But the broom was too fast, and he seemed unprepared. With a loud bang, he crashed hard onto the ground.

The Gryffindor team froze, the Slytherins nearly fainted with laughter, Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, and Pansy Parkinson laughed rough and screamed, The Hufflepuffs also stopped their training and turned to look at Ron.

Evan covered his head powerless; he never thought that such a thing would happen. Ron hadn't gotten used to the Starcatcher yet, and starting the second acceleration in such a short distance

caused the broom to become too fast, so fast that he didn't even have time to react before he hit the ground.

Fortunately, the sturdy and large Starcatcher, unlike other brooms, had built-in protection magic, so Ron was not injured.

Even so, his face was already red enough to bleed, and his ears were also red.

He remained silent, and returned to playing height, looking embarrassed.

Harry wanted to comfort Ron, but didn't know what to say. Crashing onto the ground was not a common mistake.

He saw Fred and George exchange looks, but uncharacteristically neither of them said anything, for which Harry was grateful.

"Pass it on, Ron," called Angelina, as though nothing had happened.

Ron threw the Quaffle to Alicia, who passed to Ritchie, who passed to Harry, Harry passed to George, who passed to Angelina; she reverse passed to Harry, who had not been expecting it, but caught it in the very tips of his fingers and passed it quickly to Ron, who lunged for it and missed by inches.

Chapter 958: Training Ends

Ron dived for the ground again, chasing the Quaffle. It was evident that this time he made a deliberate effort to control the broom's speed, avoiding crashing into the ground. However, his recovery from the dive was awkward, and he almost slipped off the broom.

"You can't control that broom, Weasley?" The Slytherins burst into laughter.

"A Keeper who can't even catch a ball!"

"Look at him, he looks so foolish. Even a chimpanzee could ride that broom better than him."

"Come on now, Ron," said Angelina crossly, seemingly surprised by Ron's performance, "Pay attention. You're riding the best broom, if you react a bit faster, there's no reason you can't catch the Quaffle."

Ron was already nervous enough. The Starcatcher did not help him improve as expected; instead, it added a lot of pressure that nobody had anticipated.

It would have been hard to say whether Ron's face or the Quaffle was a deeper scarlet when he returned again to playing height.

Training continued, and on his third attempt, Ron caught the Quaffle, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

He seemed to think the same way himself, and he was glad he caught the Quaffle this time. Perhaps out of relief he passed it on so enthusiastically that it soared straight through Katie's outstretched hands and hit her hard in the face.

Bang! Even from afar, Evan could hear the impact as he sighed lightly.

“Sorry!” Ron groaned, zooming forward to see whether Katie had been seriously hurt.

“Get back in position, she’s fine!” barked Angelina. “But as you’re passing to a teammate, do try not to knock her off her broom, won’t you? We’ve got Bludgers for that. And don’t aim for the face in the future.”

Katie’s nose was bleeding. Down below, the Slytherins were stamping their feet and jeering, completely forgetting about their own training. Even the Hufflepuff players were looking at Ron jokingly, while Fred and George converged on Katie.

“Here, take this,” Fred told her, handing her something small and purple from out of his pocket. “It’ll clear it up in no time.”

“All right, let’s practice something else,” called Angelina, somewhat exasperated, “Fred, George, go and get your bats and a Bludger; Ron, get up to the goalposts. Harry, Ginny, Ritchie, Demelza, the four of you play the Quaffle. We’re going to aim for Ron’s goal, obviously. Yes, we won’t practice anything else. Today’s main task is to help Ron adapt...”

Ron flew clumsily to the goalposts, and Harry and the twins flew down to get a Bludger, and they landed near Evan.

“Ron’s making a right pig’s ear of things, isn’t he?” muttered George. “It’s quite bad!”

“He’s just nervous,” said Harry. “He was fine when I was practicing with him this morning.”

“He probably hasn’t gotten used to the Starcatcher yet,” said Evan, with only a few records on the clipboard in his hand. He had intended to record the performance and various response data of the Starcatcher, but based on Ron’s performance, he felt that more safety features should be added to the broom. Flying and Quidditch were indeed quite dangerous...

“Yeah, well, I hope he hasn’t peaked too soon,” said Fred gloomily, “and that he adapts quickly.”

They returned to the air. When Angelina blew her whistle, Fred and George let fly the Bludger.

Everyone started moving, passing the Quaffle to each other as they flew toward the goalposts.

The three newcomers Ginny, Ritchie, and Demelza performed very well, giving full play to their own agile advantages.

But too soon, Angelina blew the whistle again, and everyone stopped.

“Stop — stop — STOP!” screamed Angelina. “Ron — you’re not covering your middle post!”

Evan could see clearly that Ron was hovering in front of the left-hand hoop since the first whistle sounded, staring at the incoming players, leaving the other two completely unprotected, as if they didn't exist, and several balls were easily thrown into them.

"Oh, sorry, I forgot..."

"*Forgot?! You have to keep an eye on the Chasers while constantly shifting!*" said Angelina. "Either stay in the middle and move when you have to defend a hoop; or circle around all three hoops. You can't just inexplicably move to the side; that's how those four goals got past you!"

"Sorry ..." Ron repeated, his red face shining like a beacon against the bright blue sky.

"And Katie, can't you do something about that nosebleed?"

"It's just getting worse!" said Katie thickly, attempting to stem the flow with her sleeve.

Hearing her words, Fred looked anxious and was checking his pockets.

"Go back to your positions, let's try again," said Angelina weakly.

In the stands, the Slytherins were so happy that they set up a chant of "*Gryffindor are losers, Gryffindor are losers.*" Angelina took a deep breath and pretended not to hear, but there was a certain rigidity about her seat on the broom nevertheless.

Ron returned to the hoop in the middle, but it was futile. Several more balls were easily thrown past him.

This time they had been flying for barely two minutes when Angelina's whistle sounded.

Everyone rushed over, including Evan, who flew up to check on Katie. She was Chalk-white and covered in blood, and she was teetering on the broom, and she might fall at any time due to excessive blood loss.

Poor girl, she should have known not to try anything the twins gave her so easily...

"I have a blood-stopping potion here!" said Evan, taking out a small bottle of potion and giving it to Katie, which helped reduce the nosebleed slightly.

"She needs the hospital wing," said Angelina decisively, "She's lost too much blood; there's no way she can continue training."

"We'll take her," said Fred. "She — er — might have swallowed a Blood Blisterpod by mistake. Madam Pomfrey might need to know the ingredients to provide the right treatment..."

"Well, there's no point continuing with no Beaters and a Chaser gone," said Angelina glumly, as Fred and George zoomed off toward the castle supporting

Katie between them. She didn't have the heart to continue practicing. She waved her hand wearily and said, "Come on, let's go and get changed."

The Slytherins continued to chant as the Gryffindors trailed back into the changing rooms.

At that moment, the Ravenclaw team had just arrived at the edge of the pitch...

They had come to observe the Starcatcher's performance, but to their surprise, the Gryffindor team's training had ended early.

Chapter 959: Sirius in the Fireplace

"Oh, you three are back, how was practice?" asked Hermione rather coolly half an hour later, with a stack of thick books in front of her as Evan, Harry and Ron climbed through the portrait hole into the Gryffindor common room.

"Completely lousy," said Ron in a hollow voice, sinking into a chair, his eyes glazed.

Evan exchanged a glance with Hermione, who seemed to understand something, and her frostiness seemed to melt.

"Well, it was only your first one," she said consolingly, "it's bound to take time to..."

"Who said it was me who made it lousy?" snapped Ron.

"No one," said Hermione, looking taken aback, "I thought..."

"You thought I was bound to be rubbish?"

"No, of course I didn't! Look, you said it was lousy so I just..."

"Nonsense... I'm going to get started on some homework," said Ron angrily and stomped off to the staircase to the boys' dormitories and vanished from sight.

"What's going on?" Hermione turned to Evan and Harry, "Was he lousy?"

"No," said Harry loyally.

Hermione raised her eyebrows, obviously not convinced, and turned to Evan.

"He's just too nervous and needs to get used to it," said Evan.

"Yeah, I suppose he could've played better." Harry muttered, "It was only the first training session..."

Ron didn't show up for dinner.

Although Ron wasn't there, Evan, Harry, and Hermione were not bringing up the topic. They all knew that he was too preoccupied with how badly he had performed at Quidditch practice and he himself was having difficulty in getting the chant of "*Gryffindor are losers*" out of his head.

On Sunday, Evan taught Harry, Hermione, and Ginny their first magic study since the beginning of the new term. The number of people increased appropriately. Colin, Neville, and first-year Kate also joined in. This time, the main learning was still basic spells.

Fred and George didn't come, and neither did Ron.

The spell practice lasted for only about two hours. After some simple exercises with Stupefy and the Impediment Jinx, it was over.

Everyone's minds seemed to be off the top; Harry and the others were still thinking about their homework, and except for Hermione, it seemed like the rest hadn't finished theirs either. Others spent the day out in the grounds, enjoying what might well be some of the last sunshine that year.

At lunch, Ron finally emerged from his bedroom. It seemed like the incident had passed, and he appeared back to normal. Perhaps he was just hungry, and there was no need to starve himself over a poor performance in Quidditch training.

After lunch, Evan and Hermione went for a walk, while Harry and Ron stayed in the common room, buried in their books.

The Quidditch teams of the other three Houses were still training on the pitch. Evan and Hermione stood and watched for a while, then walked to Hagrid's cabin on the edge of the Forbidden Forest.

Hagrid hadn't come back yet, and they had no idea where he might be.

Even now, Hermione still believed that Hagrid's impulsive decision to bring a giant back was too reckless. He could encounter any dangers on the way.

Also, they saw the Bowtruckles that Professor Grubbly-Plank had brought.

The Bowtruckles were gathered around a carefully prepared tree, never straying too far. These magical creatures were tree-guardians and usually lived in wand-trees.

They looked like tiny pixieish creatures made of wood, each with knobbly brown arms and legs, two twiglike fingers at the end of each hand, and a funny, flat, barklike face in which a pair of beetle-brown eyes glittered.

Evan and Hermione played with the Bowtruckles for a while, and Hermione decided to go back and revise her sketch. She hadn't drawn well a few body parts.

In the common room, Harry and Ron curled up by the fireplace, looking particularly exhausted and worn out.

"How's it outside?" Harry asked Evan, but his eyes were looking at the blue sky outside the window.

"The weather is lovely; everyone is playing outside, what about your homework?"

"Well, not much progress, we should've tried to do more of it during normal times." Harry sighed, as he was wracking his teeth with Professor Sinistra's essay about Jupiter's moons.

Ron was writing a long parchment on Professor McGonagall's long essay on the Inanimatus Conjurus spell, and he tried to use the one Harry had already completed as a reference.

But to be honest, there was no reference value, it was better to look through the textbook.

"Yeah," said Ron, rubbing slightly bloodshot eyes and throwing his fifth spoiled bit of parchment into the fire beside them. "Evan, tell me, shall we just ask Hermione if we can have a look at what she's done?"

"I don't think she would agree!" said Evan, taking out a magic book.

Meanwhile, Hermione was busy revising her sketch of the Bowtruckle, with Crookshanks on her lap while chatting merrily to Ginny.

The three of them fell silent again, and Evan was immersed in the magic treatise in his hand about the accumulation of magic power and the release of energy.

Unlike tedious magic spells and techniques, this spell abandoned other effects and converted magic directly into energy, causing damage to hit targets. It was a very interesting research direction, which was more suitable for Evan's current situation.

In a battle, there was no need to think about which spell to use; instead, he could directly use magical power to harm the opponent, significantly reducing the casting time.

Moreover, Evan had incredibly strong magic power, capable of gathering far more energy than anyone else.

Beside him, Harry and Ron continued to rack their brains, doing their best to complete their essays.

The sky outside the windows became steadily darker; slowly, the crowd in the common room began to thin again.

At half-past eleven, there was no one else in the common room except for Hermione, who finally wandered over to them, yawning.

She sat next to Evan, looked at the book in his hand, and knew that it was taken out of the Black family library.

Driven by Evan, she now also started to read these magic books.

Hermione hesitated for a while, then turned to look at Ron, and tried to say, "It's time for bed, nearly done with your homework?"

"No," said Ron shortly.

"Well, Jupiter's biggest moon is Ganymede, not Callisto," she said, pointing over Ron's shoulder at a line in his Astronomy essay, "and it's Io that's got the volcanos."

"Thanks," snarled Ron, scratching out the offending sentences.

"Sorry, I only..." Hermione seemed to want to apologize for yesterday's Quidditch incident.

“Yeah, well, if you’ve just come over here to criticize...”

“You know, I’m not, I’m... God, SIRIUS!” Hermione exclaimed in surprise, watching Sirius’s head suddenly appear from the flames in the fireplace.

Chapter 960: Information from Sirius

Following Hermione’s gaze, Evan, Harry, and Ron turned their heads to look at the fireplace, and there was nothing in it except the flames.

“Did you see Sirius?” Harry asked.

He immediately slid off his chair onto his knees and crouched on the singed and threadbare hearthrug, gazing into the flames.

“Yes, I’ve just seen Sirius’s head in the fire!” Hermione assured.

“But there’s nothing...”

“He should come out in a while. Remember the letter we received on Friday?” Evan analyzed, “I’ve been thinking that Sirius probably wanted to meet us, and that letter was a signal...”

“I thought you’d figured that out!” Sirius’s voice came from the fireplace.

In the middle of the dancing flames loomed his head, long dark hair falling around his grinning face.

“Sirius!” Harry exclaimed delightedly.

“How are you, Harry?” said Sirius in a cheerful voice. “I haven’t seen you in half a year, and you seem to have grown a little taller. In fact, since Friday night, I’ve been coming every hour to check on you. I didn’t want anyone else to find out that I appeared in the fireplace at school to meet you...”

On Friday, there was a celebration in the Gryffindor common room because Ron joined the Quidditch team, and last night, because of Ron’s poor performance in training, everyone lost interest and went to bed early.

Therefore, nobody noticed Sirius in the fireplace.

“I should have thought that you wouldn’t write us a letter for no reason,” Harry said, suddenly realizing.

“I thought you would notice, I left a code on the letter.”

“We didn’t even notice!

“So, the four of you are still far behind, and you have a lot to learn...” said Sirius with a smile.

“Wait, Sirius, Mad-Eye said that Hogwarts is under surveillance. You shouldn’t be here, if the Ministry of Magic finds out...” said Hermione worriedly.

“Don’t worry; I don’t think they’ve had time to monitor the fireplace yet.”

“But what if you’re seen?” Hermione remained undeterred.

“Yeah, I think a girl — first year by the look of her — might’ve got a glimpse of me earlier!”

“It’s Kate. She just came over to talk to Evan,” Harry explained.

“She probably didn’t notice you. Otherwise, she would have said something,” said Evan hurriedly, not noticing Hermione’s concerned expression.

“That’s right, I was gone the moment she looked back at me and I’ll bet she just thought I was an oddly shaped log or something,” said Sirius proudly. “I move very quickly.”

“It’s not about how fast you are; it’s just too risky to do something like this!” Hermione persisted.

“Oh, Hermione, you sound like Molly, she keeps telling me to watch out for this, watch out for that!” said Sirius in a disapproving tone. “Don’t worry about it. I just wanted to see you all before things get worse.”

“Things get worse?” Evan frowned at him, “What on earth were you doing in Norway?”

“It’s a long story, mainly trouble with vampires,” said Sirius, his expression turning serious. “Apart from those who have missions and can’t leave, most of the members of the Order of the Phoenix in Europe have gathered here, even Dumbledore!”

“That can’t be. I saw the headmaster in the Great Hall during dinner on Friday,” said Ron, surprised.

“For a wizard like him, long-distance travel is not difficult. It may only take a few minutes,” said Sirius. “Of course, to outsiders, he’s still at Hogwarts.”

“What’s going on with the vampires?” Harry asked. “Is it something to do with Voldemort?”

“Well, it took me a few months to figure out what’s really going on here,” Sirius explained. “As you four probably know, these vampires are different from other clans. They are descendants of Salazar Slytherin himself. About a thousand years ago, that crazy old man left Hogwarts alone, carrying something dreadful with him. He traveled across Europe and eventually died in this country, leaving

that thing behind. His descendants stayed here to guard it. The thing itself holds immense power and is extremely dangerous...”

“What is that thing?” Evan asked, following up, suspecting it might be what Caresius and Elaine were talking about.

“I don’t know. Those vampires don’t trust us. The information I got is not complete. We have to rely on our own deductions in many cases,” said Sirius, glancing slightly at Evan. “According to the current information, that thing should be related to the evil god you’ve seen. Dumbledore believes that whatever it is, Voldemort wants to get his hands on it to make himself even more powerful. He has made some progress, and he might be here as well. We must stop him.”

It was hard to imagine that the first confrontation between the Order of the Phoenix and Voldemort would take place in the faraway country of Northern Europe.

“This kind of thing is not as simple as two gangs getting together in a fight. The trouble here lies in the chaos of the situation. In addition to Voldemort and his Death Eaters, the Vampire Clan is also divided into different factions, and their opinions are not unified,” Sirius continued. “Besides, this is Durmstrang’s traditional sphere of influence, and those who advocate Dark magic might not necessarily be our allies. Furthermore, there are also the indigenous magical creatures in the Northern European region...”

“What do you mean?” Hermione asked, “Fantastic Beasts?”

“Not magical animals, but magical beings like centaurs, possessing intelligence and civilization. They lead relatively primitive lives and readily attack any wizards they encounter. We had a skirmish with them yesterday,” said Sirius. “But that’s not even the most troublesome part. Dumbledore is now concerned about something left behind by Grindelwald here. As things progress, we’ve discovered that Grindelwald had contact with those vampires decades ago. You should know that he was once an even more evil dark wizard than Voldemort, and no one knows how Dumbledore managed to defeat him.”

While the specifics of Sirius’s situation were unclear, the thought of so many forces gathering together was frightening. Durmstrang, vampires, hostile magical beings, Voldemort and his Death Eaters, evil gods, and Grindelwald...

With all these elements coming together, one could easily imagine that the area where Sirius was must be in complete chaos!