

“Finally!” Harry let out a breath he was holding as he finished writing the schematics of the ward scheme and some assortment of enchantments that he thought would be useful for Hogwarts.

He took a last cursory look at the scroll's contents before rolling it up. Harry patted himself on the back for having the foresight to take up Ancient Runes and Arithmancy in his fourth year. Without those two subjects, he'd have sounded like an idiot while describing the spells in the scroll. Most Latin-based spells were derived from their Anglo-Saxon runic counterparts and streamlined by Arithmancy. Even the most basic spells that were in use before the advent of wands were converted to fit the modern script. This also meant the spells in Harry's repository of knowledge were only as useful if wizards and witches were using their wands and not their staves.

This was why he was not surprised when he was asked to incorporate the wards and charms into the ward scheme of Hogwarts. The Founders understood that their way of magic was not suited to the wards he proposed, not without some heavy modifications. But Rowena was not someone so easily let down by the differences in their approach to magic. He didn't know how, but the woman had found a wand on short notice and started practising with it. Or maybe she had the wand long before he met her. According to the history lessons he received in Hogwarts, the invention of wands preceded Hogwarts, but it took time to get popular with wizards and witches.

Harry supposed the advent of the modern English script hastened the popularity of wands. Since the modern script of English was derived from German and Latin, it was not a long shot to assume the Gaelic-based spells became unpopular among wizards and witches, which led to the decline of staves. Of course, there could be other reasons, and Harry was merely basing his observations on pure conjecture at this point.

Setting aside the quill, Harry stretched his limbs. He was feeling the telltale signs of boredom as he had been cooped up in a chamber Salazar Slytherin had graciously offered him in Hogwarts. In return, Harry had started giving lectures to the handful of students that Hogwarts was currently housing. Some were newly made orphans, and Harry felt obligated to help them get back on their feet. Seeing that they needed financial security, he had them training in magical sensing and some gouging spells that could work in their favour. Gold and other precious metals were the currency of the time. Harry felt like wizards could utilise their magic to unearth precious metals and make a decent living. While the four Founders covered other bases of their knowledge, Harry tried to impart the knowledge they needed the most to thrive in the world.

But that was not the extent of his involvement. He had been lobbying the families to build a new village near Hogwarts. He even offered them aid in the construction and warding of the village to give them a safe place to live without being bothered by any foe. But the people were still hesitant to form a tight-knit magical community for idiotic reasons. At this point, Harry was starting to think most wizards and witches were closet masochists and had zero survival instincts. All of them were worried about how they'd get cut off from trade with muggles when they should be worrying about their lives.

But, at the same time, he could see the disadvantages of cowering behind wards for perpetuity. While wizards needed tight-knit communities under protective wards, they also needed to get exposed to the world.

Harry was broken out of his musings when he heard a knock on his door. With a flick of his wand, the door swung open, and it was none other than his apprentice.

“Carlan. You should be with Lady Hufflepuff.” Harry said, staring at the boy confusedly.

“Lady Hufflepuff cancelled the classes. The families are moving out today.”

“What!” Harry sat up straight in his chair. “Where are they going?”

“No one knees. I suppose most of ‘em want to return to their old homes and rebuild.” Carlan said with a shrug.

Harry almost facepalmed and wanted to use a few choice words on the stubborn wizards and witches.

“What do you want to do, Carlan?” Harry asked patiently, suppressing his annoyance.

“I want to stay close to Hogwarts and you, my lord.”

“What about your mother?” Harry asked.

“She wants to stay. She thinks staying close to Hogwarts is safe.”

“Good. Your mother is wise, unlike those idiots with a death wish.” Harry muttered, shaking his head disappointedly.

“My mother says they’ll listen if you talk to them again. If you promise protection, they’ll follow you.” said Carlan in a manner that was supposed to look innocent, but he knew his apprentice was a crafty fellow.

The little bugger was goading him to assume responsibility for the thirty or so families and build a village for them. Voldemort’s philosophy of ‘Magic is Might’ had some elements of truth in it, especially during this era. Power was a currency highly sought after at this time.

‘Perhaps across time.’ Harry mused.

“My mother asked me to give you this,” said Carlan before placing a black cloth on the table. “It’s a gift for saving our lives, my lord.”

The innocent look on the brown-haired boy’s face let Harry know that it was another trick of some sort. When he unruffled the cloth, he was met with the three-headed dragon banner of House Targaryen.

‘Crafty little fellow. Trying to appeal to my ‘noble lineage’ and guilt trip me or entice me with the opportunity to lead a village. Not bad.’ Harry thought.

Of course, he had suspected something of this sort when they had insisted on seeing his family’s sigil. Their reasoning was to honour the noble lineage that saved their lives.

“I believe I’ll have a talk with them one last time. Let’s see whether I can’t persuade them.” Harry said eventually, which lit up his apprentice’s face with a radiant smile.

It was not like he was making much progress with deciphering the time turner anyway. There were so many unidentified spells bound to the time turner in his hand, and he could not discern most of them. The library in Hogwarts had so far proven to be a giant disappointment. There was not a grain of information about magic related to the aspect of time. He was still searching and combing through the many available scrolls in his free time, but he was starting to get the feeling that he was wasting his time.

The only good news so far was he managed to keep the Time Turner intact. He had even secured the delicate piece of cosmic time bomb in a charmed box under heavy wards. With nothing much going

for him, Harry thought it'd be worth his time to help the refugees in Hogwarts settle. Besides, there was a certain thrill in participating in the construction of what'd eventually become Hogsmeade village.

If he didn't know warming charms, he was sure he'd have been suffering from hypothermia or worse as the climate had taken a turn for the worse overnight. Still, Harry made sure to buy some fur from the local hunters. However, it became a problem when the families did not have enough fur to keep them warm on the snowy nights in Scotland. It became all the more important to gather as much fur as possible because the refugees had no homes to resettle after the war.

That was how Harry found himself facing the first challenge to make Hogsmeade possible. Fortunately, hunting for fur was an easy enough activity for a wizard with a certain skillset. All he had to do was track the wildlife using tracking charms and have them killed before they could blink. After some judicious use of cutting charms, Harry scored the highest number of kills among the hunting party. The number of bears, badgers and red deer that fell prey to his spells was enough to keep a good number of people warm in the worsening cold that was setting in. When Harry returned with the hunting party from the nearby forest, he found the people were fast working on raising temporary tents a bit farther from the Black Lake. But they needed more forest area to construct houses for the families.

"Cut down the trees and make a long clearing. I'll have the trees marked." Harry ordered the wizards and witches around him.

It took him the better part of the day to cut down the trees and make a clearing near the Black Lake. Fires were up and running by the time the evening sun was shining in the sky. The tents the people erected were charmed with warming charms to ward off the cold during the night. By the time the sun started to disappear from the sky, Harry had nearly finished placing all the relevant wards he knew that could safeguard the budding wizarding community from harm. He even made it into a practical session of his class for his students while he helped their families set up their new homes.

"You must visualise the result of the spell that you're using. The imagery helps in the concentration and execution of the spell." Harry advised some of his struggling students to perform the spell.

Harry walked among his students, observing their work and, if need be, helping them with the spell. When the light started to dim, he escorted the children back to the castle while he stayed behind to light the fires to keep the families warm. While the tents were warm thanks to the vigorous use of the warming charm, the lands around them were another issue. People had to cook their food and could not do it inside their measly tent. It'd have been possible if space expansion charms were used. Unfortunately, that spell was something Harry never bothered to learn. His one-track mind of focusing on offence and defence was biting him on his back.

Harry looked up when he picked up on the sound of flapping wings. A strong gale of wind rushed past him, making him shield his eyes as the snow acted like arrows on his body. He observed the red dragon circling back in the sky, intent on landing near the small camp they had set up.

"Don't panic. The dragon is harmless." Harry shouted to assure the inhabitants the safety of the camp.

But the howling winds and fear of dragons proved to be an effective barrier in warding off his words from having the intended effect. Wizards and witches ran out of their tents in droves, screaming their hearts out. Harry immediately touched his throat with the tip of his wand when he saw the chaos unfolding.

“Sonorus.”

“Go back to your tents. The dragon is harmless.”

The magnifying charm did the trick in projecting his sound to all the camp's inhabitants.

“But my lord. That’s a dragon!” Keith said with frightened eyes.

“So what?” Harry shrugged, walking a few paces away from the folk in the camp.

Once he put some distance from the people, the dragon landed in front of him, unceremoniously kicking up sleet mixed with sand. If it weren’t for the shield he put up, Harry would’ve most likely swallowed a whole lot of snow and sand.

“Your wings seem to have healed.” Harry observed.

The red dragon let out a huff through its nose and stretched its wings to show it was completely healed.

“Good for you. So, what’s the plan now? You could go anywhere you know. Find a nice place to nest and hunt in the mountains away from goblins or wizards.” Harry suggested.

The dragon cocked its head to the side before looking back at the castle, making Harry frown thoughtfully.

“You want to stay here?” Harry asked curiously.

Harry's eyes widened in realisation when the dragon bobbed its enormous head.

“You want to stay with me?” Harry asked, staring into the large yellow eyes of the huge dragon.

The dragon lay down on the ground and looked expectantly at him.

It took Harry a moment to realise what the dragon was doing. It was all so surreal, but excitement smashed away the doubts in his mind. He made tentative steps towards the dragon and let out a breath he was holding when he reached the neck of the dragon. His eyes lit up when the dragon adjusted itself, giving him a clear path to climb onto its neck. Harry didn’t think anything else and followed his instincts by climbing atop the dragon. He promptly used the sticking charm on himself once he nuzzled between two giant spikes and cushioning charms to make himself comfortable. He could see the inhabitants of the camp looking at him with their jaws on the floor.

“All right then. Let's fly!”

The dragon let out a roar before flapping its massive wings. Harry slightly lurched forward despite the sticking charm as the dragon climbed into the sky.

“Whoo-hoo!”

Harry laughed as he soared through the sky, riding a dragon. It was not the first time he was flying, but this was the first time he was riding a dragon, and the feeling was powerful. At first, he thought it was because of speed, but he dismissed that absurd thought as he could fly faster in his spirit form.

‘No, it's because of the powerful magic emanating from the dragon I'm riding.’ Harry thought, nodding to himself as they soared high into the sky.

Closing his eyes, he could feel the draconic magic pulsing with a unique magical signature emanating from the dragon's body. He knew what it was. It was the raw form of fire magic, given shape and form. Ultimately, dragons were creatures of fire given shape and form by magic. Dragons were supposed to be the guardians of Elysium, while the Giants were supposed to be the gatekeepers of the mythical dimension that was the source of all magic. He had read about several elder races of magic from the tomes and scrolls in Slytherin's personal collection. Dragons were one of the most prominent races. It was no coincidence that dragon blood had such innumerable properties when used correctly.

He didn't know how long they sailed among the clouds. But he returned to reality when the dragon made a steep dive towards the ground, making the air rush past Harry. It felt like his heart was about to exit through his mouth. Thankfully, the dragon gracefully pulled out of the dive and glided over the surface of the Black Lake with its talons and tail skimming the surface. It gracefully landed on the side of the Black Lake near Hogwarts, and Harry carefully dismounted from the dragon's back once it settled on the ground.

“That was exhilarating. I can see the appeal of being a dragon rider.” Harry muttered, patting the long neck of the red dragon with his gloved hand.

The dragon shook its head before settling down on the ground with its head tucked between its limbs. Harry found it amusing that the dragon was now peeking at him from between its limbs. One moment, the dragon was all adventurous, and in the next, it acted like a shy toddler. Harry frowned thoughtfully before looking towards the castle to find a familiar figure walking towards them at a sedate pace.

“I think it's time that you take a name. How does Athena sound?” Harry asked, but the dragon withdrew into itself, refusing to communicate with him any further.

“You are naming that dragon after the Greek goddess of war?” Rowena asked with some amusement.

“Athena is also the goddess of wisdom. She had the wisdom to behave in your presence.” Harry said with a chuckle, seeing the dragon snort out a puff of smoke in displeasure.

“It's fascinating to see a familiar bond form between a wizard and a dragon. I think this is the first time in our islands.” Rowena commented, her green eyes holding a peculiar gleam that was hard for Harry to discern.

“Hmm. Is there something that you wanted, Rowena?” Harry asked.

“Your method of magic seems to be easier for the students to learn. We've been noticing a marked improvement in their spell work as of late.”

“I see. That's mostly because the students already have a thorough base in magic. You've educated them very well.” said Harry.

“I doubt that,” Rowena said with a slight smile before her expression smoothed out. “We are impressed with your unique magical skills, and I'd like to see it imparted to the children on a more permanent basis.”

“What're you saying?” Harry questioned the woman.

“We’d like to offer you a permanent spot in Hogwarts. Like the rest of us, you can make Hogwarts your home and spend the rest of your life educating the young ones on the intricacies of magic.”

Harry was, in parts, surprised by the offer, but at the same time, he was sort of expecting it.

“As I told you earlier, I’m on a journey to unearth the secrets of time. At the same time, I might get called back to my home by my family. If they call, I’ve got to leave.”

“You could build a home here and have a family.” said Rowena.

“It’s not that simple.” Harry said nervously, reluctant not to divulge any details.

“Why? You said you were not your family’s heir and have travelled afar from your people. Why go back when you could build a new life here?” asked Rowena.

Harry had no answer to that question. He had even asked himself this same question for many sleepless nights while lying in bed. He had almost given up hope in finding anything of value regarding time magic in Hogwarts. The fact that the Founders had also bluntly told him they had never encountered time magic was also a blow to his hopes. As of now, he had little hope of returning to his time from his end. All his hope was now on the incompetent Ministry, and he felt they were their usual bumbling self.

Still, he hoped Dumbledore and the Flamels would never allow him to be lost. Their self-interest would make them work hard to rescue him from the clutches of time. Of course, it was possible that even Dumbledore and his grandmother might fail in their endeavour.

“I suppose I could stay for a while.” Harry hedged a little.

“Hmm.” Rowena hummed in the back of her throat before she moved into his personal space.

Harry was a little taken aback as he was treated with a full-blown equivalent of a death stare from Basilisk from Rowena Ravenclaw.

“That’ll do for now, I suppose. Now come. We have something important to talk about.” said Rowena, taking his hand into her own before dragging him towards Hogwarts.

Harry had the distinct feeling that Rowena was giving him some mixed signals. Either way, he was curious to find out what the future holds as he had nothing better to do.

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Harry muttered to himself as he followed Rowena Ravenclaw.