

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Harry goes and talks to Hagrid, obviously.

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... It was far more likely that Filch would have information for him than Hagrid. Harry acknowledged that fact. However, as he considers his options, in the end he lets the squib continue on his way down to his office in the dungeons without following. Instead, Harry turns and makes his way back out of the castle and down to Hagrid's Hut.

Admittedly, by the time he's gotten there, Hagrid is already out, having gone to eat lunch with the rest of the castle. This isn't surprising. Unlike Filch, Hagrid is a social creature, a caring man with a heart as big as his body. He wasn't the type to self-isolate for no reason and it honestly makes Harry happy to see that the half-giant isn't as afraid of being around the all-female Hogwarts Population as Filch is for some reason.

Fang is still in the hut however, the oversized boarhound dog acting as an excellent guard dog... to anyone who didn't know any better. Indeed, when Harry lets himself in, Fang lifts his head and begins to growl... but a moment later is entirely placated by the massive slab of beef that Harry conjures up for him.

It's the best stuff that Harry's magic can make too, which is of course quite good. Fang immediately starts going to town on it, while Harry settles himself at Hagrid's sole table and sets about making himself a cup of tea using a conjured tea set and Hagrid's favorite blend.

It's another hour before the half-giant gets back to his hut but Harry doesn't mind the wait or the solitude. If there's one thing he's learned over his many lifetimes, it's to slow down once in a while and just enjoy the quiet. Besides, he takes additional solace in the fact that he would be conversing with Argus Filch of all

people right now if he weren't here enjoying a slow moment with Fang. So... you know, can't deny this is better than that would have been.

Finally though, Hagrid returns. The door to the hut opens, the half-giant's immense frame filling it up in an instant even as he pauses at the sight of Harry at his table.

"Wha- James?!"

Hagrid's choked off exclamation brings a small, apologetic smile to Harry's face. Before he can correct things or even so much as shake his head though, Hagrid squints at him and does it first.

"... No... not James."

Far from being afraid of Harry, or even all that concerned about having an intruder in his hut, Hagrid just grunts and moves forward. Harry isn't worried either, even as the hulking half-giant approaches until he's looming over him. He knows Hagrid's character quite well, after all. There were certainly situations where the half-giant might seek to use his size and bulk to intimidate, where he might get angry enough or courageous enough to go all out.

This was not one of them and Harry isn't surprised in the slightest when Hagrid, a mere moment after arriving before him, sits down instead of continuing to loom. Indeed, the half-giant doesn't make even a token attempt at intimidation. Instead, he gives Harry a nod of appreciation when Harry passes over a fresh cup of tea to him, prepared just the way Hagrid would like it.

"Thanks."

The half-giant takes a long swig before peering at him with a snort.

"You're his spitting image you know. James Potter. Any relation?"

Harry smiles crookedly at that. Frankly, the whole situation between the name Hallows and House Potter and Black is already as out there as it can be, so

while it may not be public knowledge necessarily, he sees no reason to hide it from someone like Hagrid.

“My name is Harry Hallows. I did recently claim both the Potter and Black Vaults upon my arrival in the British Magical World. So yes, there is some relation.”

Hagrid grunts and nods.

“Think I heard something about that. The name ‘Hallows’ rings a bell. Plus... well, ain’t many wizards who would show up at Hogwarts these days, definitely not to speak to me.”

Harry can’t help himself...

“No? Not even to sell you a dragon egg or two, perhaps?”

Hagrid’s eyes widen and he sits up ramrod straight in his seat.

“Now who told you about that, huh? You know something about Norbert?”

For a brief moment, Harry wonders what happened with Norbert in this timeline. Things had probably gone the same as they had in his original timeline though, or at least close enough considering Hagrid was still here and not in Azkaban or anything like that.

Though... unfortunately, it sounded as if Charlie Weasley had died before getting the chance to tell Hagrid that Norbert had actually been a ‘Norberta’.

Harry considers filling in for the deceased Weasley for a moment before ultimately deciding against it with a shake of his head.

“Unimportant. That situation was resolved many years ago after all, now wasn’t it?”

“... Aye. That it was.”

Hagrid finishes the rest of his cup of tea, prompting Harry to refill it with a flick of his wand. Giving him an appreciative nod, the half-giant sips a little bit more slowly nod. He seems content to sit in silence though, waiting rather casually for Harry to continue the conversation.

Hm, the Hagrid that Harry had known would have been filling the silence. While the half-giant was perfectly capable of being alone with his thoughts, he tended to talk and talk when he had company. But then, Harry had already realized this Hagrid was not like the other versions of Rubeus Hagrid who he was familiar with. This Hagrid had clearly seen some things and been through a lot. More than his other incarnations, that was for sure.

“I’m impressed by your resilience. From what I’ve been told, you and Filch are the last living males in the entirety of the British Magical World... excepting me, of course.”

Hagrid snorts derisively.

“That’s right. Just me and Filch. And now you.”

In an instant, Hagrid leans forward, any mirth in his bearded face vanishing as he looks far more serious... and concerned.

“You should probably go before the worst happens, you know. Leave the isles before the curse can latch onto you too.”

Hagrid’s earnest concern brings a fond smile to Harry’s face. Even worn out and wary, the half-giant was still the man Harry knew. That was nice to see. Although...

“Hm, so you think it’s a curse too then, do you?”

Blinking, Hagrid leans back again, his brow furrowing.

“I mean... that’s what everyone says, ain’t it? That there’s a curse on the whole o’ the wizarding world, killing wizards left and right.”

Harry tilts his head to the side.

“But then, why are you and Filch still here? It can’t be Hogwarts protecting you, can it?”

Hagrid frowns, drawing himself up a bit.

“And why not? Hogwarts is a good gal. She could be keeping us safe.”

But then, before Harry can even respond, Hagrid grows thoughtful, his shoulders slumping a bit.

“Eh... though I guess it is weird that we were safe but nobody else was. Lost a lot of wizards in those castle walls over these past few years... good and bad.”

Now Hagrid looks contemplative... and confused.

“But then, if it ain’t a curse... what’s causing all the deaths?”

Was it worth explaining all of this to Hagrid? Was he potentially endangering the half-giant by telling him things, no matter how obvious those things were? Harry... didn’t think it was too much of a risk. And in the end, he’d probably already said too much and gotten the half-giant’s gears turning in his head anyways. Hagrid wasn’t an idiot; he just wasn’t as quick on the uptake as others sometimes.

“Not ‘what’ Hagrid. ‘Who’.”

Hagrid’s eyes widen at that, his shock pronounced.

“You think... you think someone has been going around killing off all the wizards. What for?!”

Harry shakes his head.

“Their motivations remain opaque to me, but yes I am convinced that the deaths are not just deaths... they’re killings. And it hasn’t been just wizards either. Filch is the only squib to survive. Even muggle men who have been brought into the Magical World haven’t made it for long.”

From the surprised noise Hagrid makes in the back of his throat, that last bit of information was news to him. Harry supposed he shouldn’t have been too shocked. The people trying to circumvent the death of all the magical world’s males and stop their society from crumbling probably weren’t going to be consulting Rubeus Hagrid of all people any time soon.

Although... there was something to be said about desperate times and all that. His mind goes into the gutter for a moment, imagining some truly... depraved methods by which those at the Ministry could have asked Hagrid to help with their... gender divide issue.

Dragging his thoughts out of that particularly filthy place, Harry gives himself a shake to dispel the images in his mind and refocuses on the matter at hand.

Hagrid, meanwhile, looks truly disturbed by their conversation, having no idea what just went through Harry’s head.

“But if someone’s been killing off all o’ the wizards... why are me and Filch alive? Why not kill us off too?”

That was the question, wasn’t it? Admittedly it really could be something as simple as ‘no self-respecting witch would touch Filch with a seven foot pole and Hagrid’s half-giant nature made him a less than acceptable lover as well’, but Harry wasn’t sure that was it. After all, there were all sorts of people in the world... you never knew where a woman’s tastes would lie, that was something he’d learned over his many lifetimes as well.

“I couldn’t exactly say, Hagrid. But that’s why I wanted to talk to you, actually. You’ve lived the last eight years of the Magical World’s downfall firsthand. I’m late to the party. Is there anything you can tell me? Personal or general, I’ll take

it all. Like... have there been any attempts on your or Filch's life that just failed, perhaps?"

Hagrid looks taken aback by that last question... and then thoughtful as he looks up at the ceiling of his hut.

"Hm... don't think so. I mean, someone DID try to kill Filch a few years back but the Aurors investigated and that wasn't anything to do with the curse so..."

Wait, what? Harry holds up a hand, calling for a pause.

"Hagrid, back up for a second and think about what we just talked about. I believe there is no curse and instead someone is trying to kill off every male in the Magical World directly. Ergo..."

Hagrid's eyes widen as he gets it.

"Ah! You think the one who tried to kill Filch was also connected to all the other deaths!"

Well... no. Thinking about it bit more, Harry wasn't sure he bought that. However, it did explain why Filch was so anxious and flighty and afraid back in the castle. It was also an interesting lead in Harry's opinion even if it ultimately led nowhere.

"Perhaps. But you said the Aurors investigated... did they catch the culprit?"

Hagrid nods along.

"Aye, they did. Turned out to be a student who thought they could kill Filch amidst all the other deaths and make it look like the curse. Except they fucked it up and he survived to tell the tale, so it all fell apart. For half a moment there though, people thought Filch had somehow survived the curse itself. He got a lot of attention for a day or two before the Aurors finished their investigation."

Intriguing...

“And where is this student now?”

Hagrid gives Harry a peculiar look before something dawns on him and he flushes, turning bashful.

“Ah, sorry... I’m being dumb. It was a wizard who tried to kill Filch. Colin Creevey, his name was. Seemed like such a nice boy, but after he lost his little brother... think he went off the deep end. They said he thought Filch had done it, that the man was the reason his little brother died and that’s why he tried to murder Filch. But... Colin Creevey died too after being shipped off to Azkaban.”

... Damn. Harry takes that in for a moment, processing the news. Harry of course knew who Colin Creevey was. A muggleborn wizard who’s time at Hogwarts had been almost as rough as Harry’s himself, at least in Harry’s original timeline.

In his first year, Colin had been petrified by the Basilisk and very nearly killed. By his sixth year he was forced to deal with being expelled from Hogwarts on account of being muggleborn. And then, in the final Battle of Hogwarts, he’d fought only to die to Death Eaters.

As for his little brother Dennis, well, he’d survived in Harry’s timeline. But it sounded like he hadn’t made it through his Hogwarts years in this world. And Colin, losing his brother... had snapped? Or was there some truth to Colin’s accusations? Did Filch have something to do with Dennis’ death or was it just the mad ravings of a grieving older brother?

... Fuck. He had to talk to Filch after all, didn’t he? Even if this wasn’t involved in the killings of all the males, even if it was its own contained situation, Harry really wasn’t sure if he could bring himself to leave well enough alone...

Of course, the alternative to interrogating Filch was to just use the Resurrection Stone to call upon Colin Creevey’s ghost, much like he had done with Lady Parkinson back at the Parkinson Manor. However, that would most definitely be

'cheating'. After all, there was a reason he'd done everything else first before bringing Lady Parkinson forward to answer their questions...

Was he really going to 'cheat' just to avoid having to talk to Filch? Harry was certainly tempted to do so... very tempted, in fact.

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!