



A low, soft hooting came from a dark shop with a sign saying Eeylops Owl Emporium — Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown, and Snowy. Several boys of about Harry's age had their noses pressed against a window with broomsticks in it. "Look," Harry heard one of them say, "the new Nimbus Two Thousand — fastest ever —" There were shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bat spleens and eels' eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills, and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon. ...

"Gringotts," said Hagrid.

They had reached a snowy white building that towered over the other little shops. Standing beside its burnished bronze doors, wearing a uniform of scarlet and gold, was —

"Yeah, that's a goblin," said Hagrid quietly as they walked up the white stone steps toward him. The goblin was about a head shorter than Harry. He had a swarthy, clever face, a pointed beard and, Harry noticed, very long fingers and feet. He bowed as they walked inside. Now they were facing a second pair of doors, silver this time, with words engraved upon them:

*Enter, stranger, but take heed
Of what awaits the sin of greed,
For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn.
So if you seek beneath our floors
A treasure that was never yours,
Thief, you have been warned, beware
Of finding more than treasure there.*