

"Spells — enchantments," said Hagrid, unfolding his news-paper as he spoke. "They say there's dragons guardin' the high-security vaults. And then yeh gotta find yer way — Gringotts is hundreds of miles under London, see. Deep under the Under-ground. Yeh'd die of hunger tryin' ter get out, even if yeh did man-age ter get yer hands on summat."

Harry sat and thought about this while Hagrid read his newspaper, the *Daily Prophet*. Harry had learned from Uncle Vernon that people liked to be left alone while they did this, but it was very dif-ficult, he'd never had so many questions in his life.

"Ministry o' Magic messin' things up as usual," Hagrid mut-tered, turning the page.

"There's a Ministry of Magic?" Harry asked, before he could stop himself.

"Course," said Hagrid. "They wanted Dumbledore fer Minis-ter, o' course, but he'd never leave Hogwarts, so old Cornelius Fudge got the job. Bungler if ever there was one. So he pelts Dum-bledore with owls every morning, askin' fer advice."

"But what does a Ministry of Magic *do*?"

"Well, their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there's still witches an' wizards up an' down the country."

"Why?"

"*Why*? Blimey, Harry, everyone'd be wantin' magic solutions to their problems. Nah, we're best left alone."

At this moment the boat bumped gently into the harbor wall. Hagrid folded up his newspaper, and they clambered up the stone steps onto the street.

Passersby stared a lot at Hagrid as they walked through the lit-tle town to the station. Harry couldn't blame them. Not only was Ha-grid twice as tall as anyone else, he kept pointing at perfectly ordi-nary things like parking meters and saying loudly, "See that, Harry? Things these Muggles dream up, eh?"