

It was stifling hot inside. Even though it was such a warm day, there was a blazing fire in the grate. Hagrid made them tea and offered them stoat sandwiches, which they refused.

"So — yeh wanted to ask me somethin'?"

"Yes," said Harry. There was no point beating around the bush. "We were wondering if you could tell us what's guarding the Sorcerer's Stone apart from Fluffy."

Hagrid frowned at him.

"O' course I can't," he said. "Number one, I don' know meself. Number two, yeh know too much already, so I wouldn' tell yeh if I could. That Stone's here fer a good reason. It was almost stolen outta Gringotts — I s'pose yeh've worked that out an' all? Beats me how yeh even know about Fluffy."

"Oh, come on, Hagrid, you might not want to tell us, but you *do* know, you know everything that goes on round here," said Hermione in a warm, flattering voice. Hagrid's beard twitched and they could tell he was smiling. "We only wondered who had *done* the guarding, really." Hermione went on. "We wondered who Dumbledore had trusted enough to help him, apart from you."

Hagrid's chest swelled at these last words. Harry and Ron beamed at Hermione.

"Well, I don' s'pose it could hurt ter tell yeh that ... let's see ... he borrowed Fluffy from me ... then some o' the teachers did enchantments ... Professor Sprout — Professor Flitwick — Professor McGonagall —" he ticked them off on his fingers, "Professor Quirrell — an' Dumbledore himself did somethin', o' course. Hang on, I've forgotten someone. Oh yeah, Professor Snape."

"*Snape?*"

"Yeah — yer not still on about that, are yeh? Look, Snape helped *protect* the Stone, he's not about ter steal it."