

"I was trying to find out how to curse Dudley."

"I'm not sayin' that's not a good idea, but yer not ter use magic in the Muggle world except in very special circumstances," said Hagrid. "An' anyway, yeh couldn' work any of them curses yet, yeh'll need a lot more study before yeh get ter that level."

Hagrid wouldn't let Harry buy a solid gold cauldron, either ("It says pewter on yer list"), but they got a nice set of scales for weigh-ing potion ingredients and a collapsible brass telescope. Then they visited the Apothecary, which was fascinating enough to make up for its horrible smell, a mixture of bad eggs and rotted cabbages. Barrels of slimy stuff stood on the floor; jars of herbs, dried roots, and bright powders lined the walls; bundles of feathers, strings of fangs, and snarled claws hung from the ceiling. While Hagrid asked the man behind the counter for a supply of some basic po-tion ingredients for Harry, Harry himself examined silver unicorn horns at twenty-one Galleons each and minuscule, glittery-black beetle eyes (five Knuts a scoop).

Outside the Apothecary, Hagrid checked Harry's list again.

"Just yer wand left — oh yeah, an' I still haven't got yeh a birth-day present."

Harry felt himself go red.

"You don't have to —"

"I know I don't have to. Tell yeh what, I'll get yeh animal. Not a toad, toads went outta fashion years ago, yeh'd be laughed at — an' I don' like cats, they make me sneeze. I'll get yeh an owl. All the kids want owls, they're dead useful, carry yer mail an' everythin'."