

★ ★ THE MAN ★ ★
WITH TWO FACES

Dumbledore sighed very deeply this time.

“Alas, the first thing you ask me, I cannot tell you. Not today. Not now. You will know, one day . . . put it from your mind for now, Harry. When you are older . . . I know you hate to hear this . . . when you are ready, you will know.”

And Harry knew it would be no good to argue.

“But why couldn’t Quirrell touch me?”

“Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn’t realize that love as powerful as your mother’s for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign . . . to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. It is in your very skin. Quirrell, full of hatred, greed, and ambition, sharing his soul with Voldemort, could not touch you for this reason. It was agony to touch a person marked by something so good.”

Dumbledore now became very interested in a bird out on the windowsill, which gave Harry time to dry his eyes on the sheet. When he had found his voice again, Harry said, “And the Invisibility Cloak — do you know who sent it to me?”

“Ah — your father happened to leave it in my possession, and I thought you might like it.” Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled. “Useful things . . . your father used it mainly for sneaking off to the kitchens to steal food when he was here.”

“And there’s something else . . .”

“Fire away.”

“Quirrell said Snape —”

“*Professor* Snape, Harry.”



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



“Yes, him — Quirrell said he hates me because he hated my father. Is that true?”

“Well, they did rather detest each other. Not unlike yourself and Mr. Malfoy. And then, your father did something Snape could never forgive.”

“What?”

“He saved his life.”

“*What?*”

“Yes . . .” said Dumbledore dreamily. “Funny, the way people’s minds work, isn’t it? Professor Snape couldn’t bear being in your father’s debt. . . . I do believe he worked so hard to protect you this year because he felt that would make him and your father even. Then he could go back to hating your father’s memory in peace. . . .”

Harry tried to understand this but it made his head pound, so he stopped.

“And sir, there’s one more thing . . .”

“Just the one?”

“How did I get the Stone out of the mirror?”

“Ah, now, I’m glad you asked me that. It was one of my more brilliant ideas, and between you and me, that’s saying something. You see, only one who wanted to *find* the Stone — find it, but not use it — would be able to get it, otherwise they’d just see themselves making gold or drinking Elixir of Life. My brain surprises even me sometimes. . . . Now, enough questions. I suggest you make a start on these sweets. Ah! Bertie Bott’s Every Flavor Beans! I was unfortunate enough in my youth to come across a vomit-flavored one, and since then I’m afraid I’ve rather lost my liking for them — but I think I’ll be safe with a nice toffee, don’t you?”

★ ★ THE MAN ★ ★
WITH TWO FACES

He smiled and popped the golden-brown bean into his mouth. Then he choked and said, "Alas! Ear wax!"

Madam Pomfrey, the nurse, was a nice woman, but very strict.

"Just five minutes," Harry pleaded.

"Absolutely not."

"You let Professor Dumbledore in. . . ."

"Well, of course, that was the headmaster, quite different. You need *rest*."

"I am resting, look, lying down and everything. Oh, go on, Madam Pomfrey . . ."

"Oh, very well," she said. "But five minutes *only*."

And she let Ron and Hermione in.

"*Harry!*"

Hermione looked ready to fling her arms around him again, but Harry was glad she held herself in as his head was still very sore.

"Oh, Harry, we were sure you were going to — Dumbledore was so worried —"

"The whole school's talking about it," said Ron. "What *really* happened?"

It was one of those rare occasions when the true story is even more strange and exciting than the wild rumors. Harry told them everything: Quirrell; the mirror; the Stone; and Voldemort. Ron and Hermione were a very good audience; they gasped in all the right places, and when Harry told them what was under Quirrell's turban, Hermione screamed out loud.

"So the Stone's gone?" said Ron finally. "Flamel's just going to *die*?"

"That's what I said, but Dumbledore thinks that — what was



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



it? — ‘to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure.’”

“I always said he was off his rocker,” said Ron, looking quite impressed at how crazy his hero was.

“So what happened to you two?” said Harry.

“Well, I got back all right,” said Hermione. “I brought Ron round — that took a while — and we were dashing up to the owlery to contact Dumbledore when we met him in the entrance hall — he already knew — he just said, ‘Harry’s gone after him, hasn’t he?’ and hurtled off to the third floor.”

“D’you think he meant you to do it?” said Ron. “Sending you your fathers cloak and everything?”

“*Well*,” Hermione exploded, “if he did — I mean to say — that’s terrible — you could have been killed.”

“No, it isn’t,” said Harry thoughtfully. “He’s a funny man, Dumbledore. I think he sort of wanted to give me a chance. I think he knows more or less everything that goes on here, you know. I reckon he had a pretty good idea we were going to try, and instead of stopping us, he just taught us enough to help. I don’t think it was an accident he let me find out how the mirror worked. It’s almost like he thought I had the right to face Voldemort if I could. . . .”

“Yeah, Dumbledore’s off his rocker, all right,” said Ron proudly. “Listen, you’ve got to be up for the end-of-year feast tomorrow. The points are all in and Slytherin won, of course — you missed the last Quidditch match, we were steamrolled by Ravenclaw without you — but the food’ll be good.”

At that moment, Madam Pomfrey bustled over.

“You’ve had nearly fifteen minutes, now OUT,” she said firmly.

★ ★ THE MAN ★ ★
★ WITH TWO FACES ★
★ ★ ★

After a good night's sleep, Harry felt nearly back to normal.

"I want to go to the feast," he told Madam Pomfrey as she straightened his many candy boxes. "I can, can't I?"

"Professor Dumbledore says you are to be allowed to go," she said sniffily, as though in her opinion Professor Dumbledore didn't realize how risky feasts could be. "And you have another visitor."

"Oh, good," said Harry. "Who is it?"

Hagrid sidled through the door as he spoke. As usual when he was indoors, Hagrid looked too big to be allowed. He sat down next to Harry, took one look at him, and burst into tears.

"It's — all — my — ruddy — fault!" he sobbed, his face in his hands. "I told the evil git how ter get past Fluffy! I told him! It was the only thing he didn't know, an' I told him! Yeh could've died! All fer a dragon egg! I'll never drink again! I should be chucked out an' made ter live as a Muggle!"

"Hagrid!" said Harry, shocked to see Hagrid shaking with grief and remorse, great tears leaking down into his beard. "Hagrid, he'd have found out somehow, this is Voldemort we're talking about, he'd have found out even if you hadn't told him."

"Yeh could've died!" sobbed Hagrid. "An' don' say the name!"

"VOLDEMORT!" Harry bellowed, and Hagrid was so shocked, he stopped crying. "I've met him and I'm calling him by his name. Please cheer up, Hagrid, we saved the Stone, it's gone, he can't use it. Have a Chocolate Frog, I've got loads. . . ."

Hagrid wiped his nose on the back of his hand and said, "That reminds me. I've got yeh a present."

"It's not a stoat sandwich, is it?" said Harry anxiously, and at last Hagrid gave a weak chuckle.