

“Mom?” he whispered. “Dad?”

They just looked at him, smiling. And slowly, Harry looked into the faces of the other people in the mirror, and saw other pairs of green eyes like his, other noses like his, even a little old man who looked as though he had Harry’s knobbly knees — Harry was looking at his family, for the first time in his life.

The Potters smiled and waved at Harry and he stared hungrily back at them, his hands pressed flat against the glass as though he was hoping to fall right through it and reach them. He had a powerful kind of ache inside him, half joy, half terrible sadness.

How long he stood there, he didn’t know. The reflections did not fade and he looked and looked until a distant noise brought him back to his senses. He couldn’t stay here, he had to find his way back to bed. He tore his eyes away from his mother’s face, whispered, “I’ll come back,” and hurried from the room.

“You could have woken me up,” said Ron, crossly.

“You can come tonight, I’m going back, I want to show you the mirror.”

“I’d like to see your mom and dad,” Ron said eagerly.

“And I want to see all your family, all the Weasleys, you’ll be able to show me your other brothers and everyone.”

“You can see them any old time,” said Ron. “Just come round my house this summer. Anyway, maybe it only shows dead people. Shame about not finding Flamel, though. Have some bacon or something, why aren’t you eating anything?”

Harry couldn’t eat. He had seen his parents and would be seeing them again tonight. He had almost forgotten about Flamel. It didn’t seem very important anymore. Who cared what the three-



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headed dog was guarding? What did it matter if Snape stole it, really?

“Are you all right?” said Ron. “You look odd.”

What Harry feared most was that he might not be able to find the mirror room again. With Ron covered in the cloak, too, they had to walk much more slowly the next night. They tried retracing Harry’s route from the library, wandering around the dark passageways for nearly an hour.

“I’m freezing,” said Ron. “Let’s forget it and go back.”

“No!” Harry hissed. “I know it’s here somewhere.”

They passed the ghost of a tall witch gliding in the opposite direction, but saw no one else. Just as Ron started moaning that his feet were dead with cold, Harry spotted the suit of armor.

“It’s here — just here — yes!”

They pushed the door open. Harry dropped the cloak from around his shoulders and ran to the mirror.

There they were. His mother and father beamed at the sight of him.

“See?” Harry whispered.

“I can’t see anything.”

“Look! Look at them all . . . there are loads of them. . . .”

“I can only see you.”

“Look in it properly, go on, stand where I am.”

Harry stepped aside, but with Ron in front of the mirror, he couldn’t see his family anymore, just Ron in his paisley pajamas.

Ron, though, was staring transfixed at his image.

“Look at me!” he said.

“Can you see all your family standing around you?”

“No — I’m alone — but I’m different — I look older — and I’m Head Boy!”

“*What?*”

“I am — I’m wearing the badge like Bill used to — and I’m holding the House Cup and the Quidditch Cup — I’m Quidditch captain, too!”

Ron tore his eyes away from this splendid sight to look excitedly at Harry.

“Do you think this mirror shows the future?”

“How can it? All my family are dead — let me have another look —”

“You had it to yourself all last night, give me a bit more time.”

“You’re only holding the Quidditch Cup, what’s interesting about that? I want to see my parents.”

“Don’t push me —”

A sudden noise outside in the corridor put an end to their discussion. They hadn’t realized how loudly they had been talking.

“Quick!”

Ron threw the cloak back over them as the luminous eyes of Mrs. Norris came round the door. Ron and Harry stood quite still, both thinking the same thing — did the cloak work on cats? After what seemed an age, she turned and left.

“This isn’t safe — she might have gone for Filch, I bet she heard us. Come on.”

And Ron pulled Harry out of the room.

The snow still hadn’t melted the next morning.

“Want to play chess, Harry?” said Ron.

“No.”



CHAPTER TWELVE



“Why don’t we go down and visit Hagrid?”

“No . . . you go . . .”

“I know what you’re thinking about, Harry, that mirror. Don’t go back tonight.”

“Why not?”

“I dunno, I’ve just got a bad feeling about it — and anyway, you’ve had too many close shaves already. Filch, Snape, and Mrs. Norris are wandering around. So what if they can’t see you? What if they walk into you? What if you knock something over?”

“You sound like Hermione.”

“I’m serious, Harry, don’t go.”

But Harry only had one thought in his head, which was to get back in front of the mirror, and Ron wasn’t going to stop him.

That third night he found his way more quickly than before. He was walking so fast he knew he was making more noise than was wise, but he didn’t meet anyone.

And there were his mother and father smiling at him again, and one of his grandfathers nodding happily. Harry sank down to sit on the floor in front of the mirror. There was nothing to stop him from staying here all night with his family. Nothing at all.

Except —

“So — back again, Harry?”

Harry felt as though his insides had turned to ice. He looked behind him. Sitting on one of the desks by the wall was none other than Albus Dumbledore. Harry must have walked straight past him, so desperate to get to the mirror he hadn’t noticed him.

“I — I didn’t see you, sir.”

“Strange how nearsighted being invisible can make you,” said Dumbledore, and Harry was relieved to see that he was smiling.

“So,” said Dumbledore, slipping off the desk to sit on the floor with Harry, “you, like hundreds before you, have discovered the delights of the Mirror of Erised.”

“I didn’t know it was called that, sir.”

“But I expect you’ve realized by now what it does?”

“It — well — it shows me my family —”

“And it showed your friend Ron himself as Head Boy.”

“How did you know — ?”

“I don’t need a cloak to become invisible,” said Dumbledore gently. “Now, can you think what the Mirror of Erised shows us all?”

Harry shook his head.

“Let me explain. The happiest man on earth would be able to use the Mirror of Erised like a normal mirror, that is, he would look into it and see himself exactly as he is. Does that help?”

Harry thought. Then he said slowly, “It shows us what we want . . . whatever we want . . .”

“Yes and no,” said Dumbledore quietly. “It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. You, who have never known your family, see them standing around you. Ronald Weasley, who has always been overshadowed by his brothers, sees himself standing alone, the best of all of them. However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible.

“The Mirror will be moved to a new home tomorrow, Harry,