

Chapter 74

Chapter Notes

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Classes resumed on Tuesday, but the teachers' hearts weren't really in it. Flitwick spent the whole of the double period talking to them about the charms involved in various wizarding sweets — while letting them sample said sweets, naturally. Then, because McGonagall was still gone from the castle, their double Transfiguration was a free period. It was a glorious day outside, so Harry was happy to accompany Neville out towards the edge of the forest so the boy could look at some plant that had recently bloomed. Harry wandered his way over to Hagrid's hut; he'd hardly seen his half-giant friend all school year, he thought guiltily.

"Good to have you back, Hagrid," he said as they sat on the front step of Hagrid's hut in the sunshine, and Hagrid grinned.

"Aye, good to be back. I hear you got into quite the adventure while I was away!" Harry shrugged, holding out his arms in a '*these things happen*' sort of gesture, and Hagrid laughed. "Least you came out the end alright."

"I always do."

"An' everyone knows you been tellin' the truth, now," Hagrid added supportively. "You an' Professor Dumbledore." The bearded man's face grew concerned. "'E's worried about you, y'know."

"I know. But he doesn't need to be." Harry's stomach squirmed; one of these days, he was going to have to ask Hagrid to make a big decision about their friendship, and he wasn't sure which way it would turn out. "Hagrid... we're friends, right? And you trust me?"

"O' course!" Hagrid replied immediately.

"Good. Then... when it comes to Professor Dumbledore, and the way things go between me and him... just remember that, yeah?"

Hagrid frowned at him. "What d'you mean?"

"Nothing, just... I really hope we keep being friends, Hagrid. Even as I get older and things change."

A large hand came down heavy on his back. "Yer not gettin' rid 'o me any time soon, 'Arry, don't you worry!" Hagrid's grin turned a little sad. "Even though I know yer gonna tell me yer not takin' my class for NEWTs."

Harry winced; he hadn't even thought about how to bring that up, yet. "Hagrid, I—"

"Nah, nah, it's fine. S'not for everyone," Hagrid assured. "I reckon you've got classes a bit more important than mine to take."