

“Harry, are you back yet? Hermione’s a *nightmare*, honestly.” It was Ron. Harry scowled to himself; he’d been making progress there!

Hurriedly stuffing his book and notebook under his pillow, Harry dropped the wards around his bed and pulled the drapes back, offering the redhead a smile he hoped was sincere.

“Couldn’t make it to curfew?” he asked wryly, watching Ron’s disgruntled frown deepen. The other boy opened his mouth to respond, when his eyes flicked to the Wireless.

*“Owens is diving, but Griffiths is hot on his tail; who will reach the snitch first? They’re neck and neck — if they keep going, they’ll hit dirt! Griffiths is pulling level, and— Merlin’s beard, what a catch! In a remarkable show of speed, Griffiths has caught the snitch! The Harpies remain undefeated for another day!”*

“Since when do you have a Wireless?” Ron asked, an unreadable look on his face. Harry turned the volume down, shrugging.

“Bought it over the summer, when I was stuck in Diagon. I had no idea before that there was so much wizarding radio.” The Weasleys had a Wireless, but they only seemed to turn it on when Mrs Weasley wanted to listen to Celestina Warbeck.

“They’re expensive, those portable ones. Charlie bought one in his sixth year, but he took it with him to Romania.”

The expression on Ron’s face suddenly made sense; discomfort at Harry’s wealth. Before, Harry might have let it bother him; might have offered to give his to Ron, and buy himself a new one later. Back when he’d been under Dumbledore’s spells, and desperate to have friends by any means necessary. But things had changed. He could sympathise with Ron, of course — for most of his life, Harry hadn’t had two pennies to rub together — but he wasn’t going to let the other boy make him feel guilty for inheriting money when Harry’s parents had died in order for that to happen.

He reached out, turning the Wireless off and offering Ron a half-smile. “Well, the Cannons match is next week, if you want to listen to it with me.”

Ron grinned, only a hint of a shadow in his eyes. Harry ignored it; he could hardly keep up with Ron’s mood swings this year, and it wasn’t worth trying.

Letting the redhead grumble all about the work Hermione had forced him to do in the library, Harry couldn’t stop his attention returning to the faint tingle still running through his veins.

He had done wandless magic. Intentional, focused wandless magic.

How much more could he do, with a little practice?

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With the security in the castle amped up after Black’s second break-in, the trio couldn’t visit Hagrid in the evenings anymore. The only chance of getting to talk to him was during their Care of Magical Creatures class. Days later, and Hagrid still seemed to be in shock.