

“Alright, who are you asking, then?” Neville went beet red.

“I haven’t decided yet.”

Harry stuck his tongue out, and Neville rolled his eyes. “It doesn’t matter whether I go with anyone or not. I’m not a school champion.” That deflated Harry’s smug balloon, and he scowled again, sitting down at the Gryffindor table for breakfast.

An owl dropped a rolled-up copy of the *Daily Prophet* in front of Neville, and the glimpse Harry got of the headline made him groan.

‘Explosive Classes at Hogwarts

With all eyes on Hogwarts during the Triwizard Tournament, I, Rita Skeeter, decided to investigate a little of the school’s day-to-day life, and you can imagine my surprise when I discovered the creatures our dear champion, Harry Potter, was forced to interact with as part of his Care of Magical Creatures lesson. No wonder the dragon was such a doddle, if this is what he’s facing in class! I ask you, reader, which creature is more dangerous; the fire-breathing, biting, bang-ended scoot, or the teacher himself, Mr Rubeus Hagrid?’

The whole article went on to talk about how Hagrid was constantly endangering his students with his reckless classes, including a quote from Pansy Parkinson about how Draco had been mauled by a hippogriff the year before, and another from Crabbe about being bitten by a flobberworm. Like with the last article, it was incredibly Harry-centric, though it didn’t have a single quote from him. Skeeter was clearly looking for loopholes.

“Flobberworms don’t even have teeth!” Harry exclaimed, tossing the paper angrily down on the table, almost knocking over a milk jug. “This is such bullshit, how can she possibly be allowed to publish this and call it journalism?”

“There aren’t many laws about what can and can’t go to print,” Neville told him. “The Wizengamot were meaning to get around to it back at the turn of the century, but then Grindelwald happened, and...” The wizarding world had essentially been on pause for the last century, with Albus Dumbledore sticking his fingers in everything and refusing to allow real progress. “It didn’t used to be that bad, but in the last couple of decades the standards have really slipped, once people realised they could get away with publishing fiction if there was a tiny scrap of fact behind it.”

“All the same, this can’t be legal.” Harry looked up at the head table; Hagrid hadn’t come to breakfast. Guilt squirmed in Harry’s stomach as he remembered his last argument with Hermione. Several seats down, she was glaring at him pointedly, *Prophet* in hand. This wasn’t really his fault, but he still felt responsible. There had to be something he could do about it.

He scanned the hall, catching sight of a curly red ponytail just on its way out the door. Muttering an excuse to Neville, he jumped up and hurried out, calling Susan’s name. She turned, both her and Ernie stopping with curious looks on their faces. “Harry? What’s the matter?”