

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Chapter Fourteen

Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback

"I'm going to see what section he was in," said Ron, who'd had enough of working. He came back a minute later with a pile of books in his arms and slammed them down on the table.

"Dragons!" he whispered. "Hagrid was looking up stuff about dragons! Look at these: *Dragon Species of Great Britain and Ireland: From Egg to Inferno*, *A Dragon Keeper's Guide*."

"Hagrid's always wanted a dragon, he told me so the first time I ever met him," said Harry.

"But it's against our laws," said Ron. "Dragon breeding was outlawed by the Warlocks' Convention of 1709, everyone knows that. It's hard to stop muggles noticing us if we're keeping dragons in the back garden - anyway, you can't tame dragons. It's dangerous. You should see the burns Charlie's got off wild ones in Romania."

"But there aren't wild dragons in Britain?" said Harry.

"Of course there are," said Ron. "Common Welsh Green and Hebridean Blacks. The Ministry of Magic has a job hushing them up, I can tell you. Our lot have to keep putting spells on muggles who've spotted them, to make them forget."

"So what on earth's Hagrid up to?" said Hermione.

When they knocked on the door of the gamekeeper's hut an hour later, they were surprised to see that all the curtains were closed. Hagrid called, "Who is it?" before he let them in and then shut the door quickly behind them.

It was stiflingly hot inside. Even though it was such a warm day, there was a blazing fire in the grate. Hagrid made them tea and offered them stoat sandwiches, which they refused...

Harry noticed him glance at the fire. Harry looked at it too.

"Hagrid - What's that?"

But he already knew what it was. In the very heart of the fire, underneath the kettle, was a huge, black egg.

"Ah," said Hagrid, fiddling nervously with his beard. "That's - er..."

"Where did you get it Hagrid?" said Ron, crouching over the fire to get a closer look at the egg. "It must've cost you a fortune."
"Won it," said Hagrid. "Las' night. I was down in the village havin' a few drinks an' got into a game o' cards with a stranger. Think he was quite glad to get rid of it, ter be honest."
"But what are you going to do with it when it's hatched?" said Hermione.
"Well, I've been doin' some readin'," said Hagrid, pulling a large book from under his pillow. "Got this one outta the library - Dragon Breeding for Pleasure and Profit - it's a bit outta date o' course, but it's all in 'ere. Keep the egg in the fire 'cause their mothers breathe fire on 'em see, 'an when it hatches, feed it on a bucket o' brandy mixed with chicken blood every half hour. An' see here - how ter recognise diff'rent eggs - what I got there's a Norwegian Ridgeback. They're rare them."
He looked very pleased with himself, but Hermionie didn't.
"Hagrid, you live in a wooden house," she said.
But Hagrid wasn't listening. He was humming merrily as he stoked the fire....

When the bell sounded from the castle at the end of their lesson, the three of them dropped their trowels at once and hurried through the grounds to the edge of the forest. Hagrid greeted them looking flushed and excited.

"It's nearly out," he ushered them inside.

The egg was lying on the table. There were deep cracks in it. Something was moving inside; a funny clicking noise was coming from it.

They all drew their chairs up to the table and watched with bated breath.

All at once, there was a scraping noise and the egg split open. The baby dragon flopped on to the table. It wasn't exactly pretty; Harry thought it looked like a crumpled, black umbrella. Its spiny wings were huge compared to its skinny jet body and it had a long snout with wide nostrils, stubs of horns and bulging, orange eyes.

It sneezed. A couple of sparks flew out of its snout.

"Isn't he beautiful?" Hagrid murmured. He reached out a hand to stroke the dragons head. It snapped at his fingers, showing

pointed fangs. "Bless him, look, he knows his mummy!" said Hagrid.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Chapter Nineteen

The Hungarian Horntail

... Hagrid led Madame Maxime around a clump of trees, and came to a halt. Harry hurried up alongside them - for a split second, he thought he was seeing bonfires, and men darting around them - and then his mouth fell open.

Dragons.

Four fully-grown, enormous, vicious looking dragons rearing on their hind legs inside an enclosure fenced with thick planks of wood, roaring and snorting - torrents of fire were shooting into the dark sky from their open, fanged mouths, fifty feet above the ground from their outstretched necks. There was a silvery-blue one with long, pointed horns, snapping and snarling at the wizards on the ground; a smooth-scaled green one, which was writhing and stamping with all its might; a red one with an odd fringe of fine gold spikes around its face, which was shooting mushroom-shaped fire clouds into the air, and a gigantic black one, more lizard-like than the others, which was nearest to them.

At least thirty wizards, seven or eight to each dragon, were attempting to control them, pulling on chains connected to heavy leather straps around their necks and legs. Mesmerised, Harry looked up, high above him, and saw the eyes of the black dragon, with vertical pupils like a cat's, bulging with either fear or rage, he couldn't tell which...it was making a horrible noise, a yowling, screeching scream...

"Keep back there, Hagrid!" Yelled a wizard near the fence, straining on the chain he was holding. "They can shoot fire at a range of twenty feet, you know! I've seen this Horntail do forty!" "Isn't it beautiful?" Hagrid said softly.

"It's no good!" Yelled another wizard, "Stunning spells, on the count of three!"

Harry saw each of the dragon-keepers pull out his wand.

"Stupefy!" they shouted in unison, and the stunning spells shot out into the darkness like fiery rockets, bursting in showers of stars on the dragons' scaly hides.

Harry watched the dragon nearest to them teeter dangerously on its back legs; its jaws stretched wide in a suddenly silent howl; its nostrils were suddenly devoid of flame, though still smoking - then, very slowly, it fell - several tons of sinewy, scaly black dragon hit the ground with a thud that Harry could have sworn made the trees behind him quake.

The dragon-keepers lowered their wands and walked forwards to their fallen charges, each of which was the size of a small hill. They hurried to tighten the chains and fasten them securely to iron pegs, which they forced deep into the ground with their wands.