

A Nundu for A Pet Chapter 25 (First Year Ends)

"I still say it was worth it," Harry declared, scrubbing a particularly stubborn stain off the basement floor while Itisa watched from a relatively clean corner, her tail twitching in annoyance.

"Absolutely worth it," Fred agreed from where he was wrestling with what appeared to be centuries-old potion residue.

"Though I must say," George added, "Snape's really outdoing himself with the creative punishments."

"Indeed," Snape's silky voice came from behind them, causing all three boys to jump. "And since you seem to have enough energy for conversation, perhaps I should add another evening to your detention schedule?"

Harry bit back a retort, mainly because Itisa had already risen to her feet, her eyes fixed on Snape with dangerous intensity.

"No need, Professor," Harry said quickly, both for Snape's sake and to keep Itisa calm. "We're making excellent progress on these... fascinating stains."

"Fascinating is one word for it," Fred muttered, examining what looked suspiciously like crystallized dragon mucus.

"Your father would have given up by now, Potter," Snape commented coldly. "He never did have the patience for actual work."

Harry felt Itisa's anger spike and quickly spoke before she could do anything rash. "Really? Because I heard he was quite brilliant at Transfiguration. That takes patience, doesn't it?"

Snape's eyes narrowed. "Five points from Sly--You will extra detention for your cheek, Potter."

"Worth it," Harry whispered once Snape had swept away, his robes still showing traces of Gryffindor red from their prank.

"You know," George said thoughtfully, "I've been meaning to ask - what's the deal with your cat? Sometimes she looks at Snape like she's considering whether he'd make a good scratch post."

Harry glanced at Itisa, who was now pretending to be deeply interested in cleaning her paws. "She's... protective."

"Protective is an understatement," Fred observed. "Remember when Malfoy tried to hex Harry last week? That cat appeared out of nowhere and somehow Malfoy tripped over his own feet."

"Pure coincidence," Harry said innocently, while Itisa made a sound suspiciously like a snicker.

The next day found them in Professor Flitwick's detention, which was considerably more pleasant. The Charms professor had them organizing his collection of enchanted objects, occasionally stopping to demonstrate particularly interesting ones.

"Now, the charm work you three managed with those robes was quite impressive," Flitwick admitted, levitating a stack of books. "Particularly the anti-tampering clause. That was your idea, wasn't it, Mr. Potter?"

"Guilty," Harry grinned, carefully placing a singing teacup on a shelf.

"The way you linked it to increase duration if someone tried to reverse it was particularly clever," Flitwick continued. "Though perhaps next time, leave the faculty robes alone?"

"But sir," George protested, "the sight of Snape in Gryffindor colors was a public service!"

"We were spreading joy," Fred added solemnly.

"And inter-house unity," Harry contributed.

"Indeed," Flitwick chuckled. "Though I suspect Professor Snape didn't quite see it that way."

"Professor," Harry said suddenly, "I've been meaning to ask - how did you manage to combine the Levitation Charm with a permanent Stability Charm on these shelves? I've been trying to figure it out."

Flitwick's eyes lit up with enthusiasm, and for the next hour, their detention turned into an impromptu advanced Charms lesson. Itisa dozed peacefully in a patch of sunlight, occasionally opening one eye to check on them.

Professor Garlick's detention was even more enjoyable. She had them helping her reorganize her greenhouse, which mostly involved carefully handling various magical plants while she told stories about her own school days.

"You know," she said, carefully pruning a Whispering Willow, "when I was a student here, I once turned all the suits of armor into chorus singers for a day."

"No way," Fred gasped.

"Professor Garlick, you rebel," George grinned.

"Please tell me they sang something inappropriate," Harry begged.

"Let's just say Professor McGonagall wasn't impressed with their rendition of 'A Cauldron Full of Hot, Strong Love,'" she winked.

"That's brilliant," Harry declared. "How did you manage the synchronized choreography?"

"Now, Mr. Potter, I couldn't possibly encourage more mischief," she said, though her eyes twinkled. "Though if one were to attempt such a thing, the key would be in the timing charm..."

Itisa, who was lounging near a patch of catnip (which seemed to affect her just like regular cats), gave Harry a look that clearly said, 'Don't even think about it.'

"This Bouncing Bulb reminds me," Professor Garlick continued, "how is Anna doing, Mr. Potter? Sebastian mentioned you've been lending her books about magical creatures."

"She's doing much better now," Harry said more seriously. "But she really enjoyed the book about Moon Dragons that Ne- that I lent her."

Professor Garlick nodded sympathetically. "That girl has such a bright mind. It's a shame she can't attend classes regularly. Though I hear she particularly enjoyed hearing about your... different encounter with Professor Quirrell."

Harry tensed slightly, but kept his voice casual. "Oh? What version is going around now?"

"The current favorite involves you defeating him in a dramatic duel involving a hundred snakes and possibly a dragon," Fred supplied helpfully.

"Don't forget the part where Harry supposedly turned him into a toad," George added.

"If only it had been that exciting," Harry said lightly, though Itisa had moved closer to him, sensing his discomfort.

oo‘

Professor McGonagall's detention was, as expected, far more stern. She had them transfiguring various mismatched objects back to their original forms - apparently, the aftermath of failed student attempts throughout the term.

"Really, Mr. Potter," McGonagall said, watching him restore what appeared to be half-teacup, half-hedgehog back to its proper porcelain state. "I expected better judgment from you. Your father, at least, kept his pranks within his own house."

"Actually, Professor," Harry couldn't help saying, "from what I've heard, my father pranked pretty much everyone."

McGonagall's lips thinned. "That's not something to aspire to, Mr. Potter."

"Of course not, Professor," Fred said solemnly.

"We aspire to much greater heights," George added.

"Boys," McGonagall warned, though Harry could have sworn he saw the ghost of a smile.

"You have to admit, Professor," Harry ventured, expertly transforming a chair that occasionally barked back to normal, "the spell work was pretty impressive."

"Yeah, Harry here figured out how to make the color changes randomize every hour," Fred boasted.

"And how to make them resist counter-spells," George added proudly.

McGonagall raised an eyebrow. "Indeed? And where exactly did you learn such advanced transfiguration, Mr. Potter?"

Harry shrugged, trying to look innocent while Itisa watched the exchange with apparent amusement. "Just... reading ahead?"

"Hmm," McGonagall studied him. "Your father was also talented at transfiguration. Though he typically used his skills for more... dramatic displays."

"Like what?" Harry asked eagerly.

"I am not about to give you ideas," McGonagall said firmly, but her expression softened slightly. "Though I will say your mother would have appreciated the technical skill, if not the application."

"Did my mum ever pull any pranks?" Harry asked, genuinely curious now. He remembered the professor telling him about the one time his mother probably made a teacher smell like shit for a whole week.

McGonagall's eyes took on a distant look. "Lily was more subtle in her mischief. She once enchanted all the textbooks in the library to whisper helpful hints - but only to students who were genuinely struggling and trying their best."

Harry felt a warm glow in his chest. Itisa moved closer, rubbing against his legs comfortingly.

"That's brilliant," he said softly.

"Yes, well," McGonagall cleared her throat, "perhaps next time you could channel your abilities into something more constructive?"

"Like turning all the armor into a choir?" Fred suggested innocently.

McGonagall's head snapped up. "Who told you about- never mind. Back to work, all of you."

As they continued working, Harry noticed McGonagall watching him with an odd expression - something between exasperation and fondness.

"Professor," Harry said as they were finishing up, "hypothetically speaking, if someone wanted to transfigure multiple objects simultaneously while maintaining independent color variations..."

"Hypothetically," McGonagall interrupted dryly, "such a person would need to understand the principles of linked transformation matrices and color-shift harmonics. Which are covered in sixth-year studies."

"Hypothetically," Harry grinned.

"Get out, all of you," McGonagall ordered, but Harry caught her small smile as they left.

"She likes you," Fred observed as they headed back to their common rooms.

"Nah, she likes Itisa," Harry corrected. "Who doesn't?"

oo‘

Harry sat cross-legged on his bed in the Slytherin dormitory, carefully examining his talisman under the soft glow of a Lumos charm. Itisa lounged nearby, occasionally offering what seemed like judgmental looks at his work.

"I know, I know," Harry muttered to her. "The copper isn't ideal. But you try finding enchantment-grade silver in a school full of teenagers."

"Talking to your cat again, Potter?" Daphne Greengrass's cool voice came from the common room entrance. She had an irritating habit of appearing when he was deep in concentration.

"She gives excellent feedback," Harry replied without looking up. "Very constructive criticism. Unlike some people."

Daphne moved closer, her interest clearly piqued despite her attempted indifference. "Your rune work is sloppy. The protection matrix is barely holding together."

"Thank you for proving my point about constructive criticism," Harry said dryly. "And I'd like to see you do better with Nordic runes on copper."

"Obviously, you should be using silver," Daphne said, now openly studying his work. "And those protective runes would be much more stable in Greek."

"Well, if you happen to have some spare enchantment-grade silver lying around..." Harry trailed off suggestively.

Daphne was quiet for a moment. "I might know where to get some."

Harry finally looked up. "Really? And what would this hypothetical silver cost me?"

"You will help me on Runes. Rune Arcs are very different from normal Runes, and I need help with them." Daphne said with a strange look. Harry was sure there was more to that, but he needed that silver.

"Done," Harry agreed quickly. Perhaps too quickly, given Daphne's suspicious look.

"Just like that?"

"Just like that. Though I should warn you, Itisa will be supervising. She's very particular about proper technique."

The Nundu in question gave Daphne what could only be described as a calculating look.

"Your cat... will be supervising," Daphne repeated flatly.

"She's very qualified," Harry said solemnly. "Graduated top of her class in cat school."

"Sometimes I wonder if you were dropped on your head as a child, Potter."

"Multiple times. It's part of my charm. Now, about that silver..."

"Fine. Meet me in the empty classroom on the third floor tomorrow after dinner. And bring your notes on Egyptian protection runes."

"I don't have any notes on Egyptian runes," Harry admitted.

Daphne sighed dramatically. "Of course you don't. I'll bring mine. Try not to blow yourself up before then."

After she left, Harry turned to Itisa. "See? I can play nice with others."

Itisa made a sound that clearly conveyed her skepticism.

o-o '

The next evening, Harry found himself in the empty classroom with Daphne, several books on rune crafting spread between them, and a small ingot of silver that looked suspiciously expensive.

"So," Daphne said, all business, "show me how to carve a Greek rune."

"Watch carefully," Harry said, taking out a small piece of wood and a carving tool. "The most basic rune is Ansuz - it represents communication and signals. Perfect for beginners."

He placed the wood between them on the desk and held up the carving tool. "First rule - always carve away from yourself. You don't want to slip and stab your hand."

With precise movements, he demonstrated drawing two angled lines that formed something like a capital F, but with the horizontal lines slanting downward: †

"See how the lines are clean and connected? That's crucial. A broken line means broken magic. It's like... imagine trying to pour water through a pipe with holes - the magic leaks out instead of flowing properly."

He handed Daphne the tool. "Magic flows through runes like water through channels. The shape guides the magic, tells it what to do. Ansuz tells magic 'carry a message' or 'make a signal.' Even a simple light spell needs the right pathway."

"That's it?!"

"Don't sound so shocked. Now, about these Egyptian runes..."

oo ‘

Harry sat cross-legged on the floor of the abandoned classroom he'd claimed as his workshop, various tools and reference books scattered around him in what he insisted was an "organized chaos." Itisa watched from her perch on a nearby desk, occasionally making disapproving sounds when he made particularly questionable decisions.

"The theory is sound," Harry muttered, carefully etching an Egyptian protection rune into the silver disk. "If I just align the power flow with the natural magical conductivity of the—"

BANG!

A small explosion sent Harry flying backwards, his face covered in silver soot. Itisa gave him a look that clearly said, "I told you so."

"Okay," Harry coughed, waving away the smoke. "Maybe the power flow wasn't quite aligned."

"You're lucky you didn't blow your fingers off," came Daphne's voice from the doorway. She'd taken to checking on his progress, claiming it was purely to protect her investment in the silver.

"I had it under control," Harry protested, trying to wipe the soot from his glasses.

"Clearly," Daphne said dryly. "Is that why your eyebrows are smoking?"

Harry quickly patted his eyebrows. "Just adding some dramatic flair to my appearance."

oo ‘

Over the next few weeks, Harry continued his experiments, with varying degrees of success (and explosions). The classroom walls now bore several scorch marks, which he'd tried to pass off as "decorative elements" when Professor Flitwick had walked past one day.

One particularly frustrating afternoon, after his fifteenth failed attempt at incorporating an Egyptian protection matrix, Harry threw down his carving tools in frustration.

"This isn't working," he declared to Itisa, who was cleaning her paws with exaggerated casualness. "Maybe I should try something simpler."

He pulled out his book on Mortex Runes, which were less powerful but more straightforward in their application. "See? These actually make sense. Look at the power flow diagrams—they're practically connect-the-dots compared to the Egyptian ones."

Itisa gave him a look that suggested she was reserving judgment.

Harry began carefully carving the basic Mortex protection rune into a fresh piece of silver. As he completed the final line, something strange happened. The air in the room suddenly grew cold, and the talisman emitted a low, haunting hum that made the hair on the back of his neck stand up.

Itisa was instantly alert, her eyes fixed on the talisman with intense interest.

"That's... different," Harry said slowly, studying the rune. The silver seemed to pulse with a faint inner light, and he could feel a subtle vibration in his fingers where they touched the metal.

Then it hit him.

"Of course!" he exclaimed, jumping to his feet so suddenly that Itisa had to dodge to avoid being stepped on. "It's not about the complexity of the runes—it's about the resonance!"

He quickly pulled out his notes on voice magic, spreading them beside his rune diagrams. "The Mortex runes responded to the natural frequency of the silver, but Egyptian runes need a specific magical frequency to activate properly."

Itisa tilted her head, clearly intrigued.

"Watch this," Harry said excitedly. He picked up his carving tools again, but this time, before he began carving, he started humming softly. It wasn't quite like his usual voice magic—this was deeper, more primal, a sound that seemed to resonate with the silver itself.

As he carved, maintaining the humming, the Egyptian runes began to flow more naturally. Instead of fighting against the metal, they seemed to merge with it, each line glowing briefly before settling into a subtle shimmer.

"Mr. Potter," Professor McGonagall's voice cut through his concentration, making him jump. "What exactly are you doing?"

Harry looked up to find not only McGonagall but also Professors Flitwick in the doorway, all wearing expressions of varying concern and curiosity.

"Er," Harry said eloquently, suddenly very aware of how this might look—him sitting in a scorched classroom, covered in silver dust, humming to a piece of metal while his cat watched approvingly. "Extra credit project?"

"Using advanced runic magic without supervision?"

"Actually," Flitwick piped up, moving closer to examine the talisman, "this is rather impressive work. It's a very advanced technique, typically only used by master craftsmen. Where did you learn it?"

"I... didn't?" Harry admitted. "I just sort of... figured it needed the right kind of hum?"

McGonagall pinched the bridge of her nose. "Of course you did."

"Perhaps," McGonagall interjected, "Mr. Potter would benefit from some proper supervision in his... experiments?"

"I would be happy to—" Flitwick began enthusiastically.

"Under multiple teachers' guidance," McGonagall amended firmly.

And that was how Harry found himself with official permission to continue his work, though now with regular check-ins from various professors. Even Snape, despite his obvious reluctance, occasionally stopped by to offer grudgingly helpful criticism.

Over the next few weeks, Harry refined his technique. The combination of voice magic and proper runic carving produced results that even Daphne had to admit were impressive. The finished talisman was a marvel of magical craftsmanship—a silver disk the size of his palm, covered in intricate runes that seemed to shift and flow in the light.

"The protection matrix is stable," Daphne observed, examining the finished piece. "And the reactive defense system is actually quite elegant. Though I still think adding that modification to reflect hexes was unnecessarily flashy."

"It's not flashy, it's efficient," Harry argued. "Besides, Itisa approved."

The Nundu in question was examining the talisman with obvious approval, occasionally batting at it gently with her paw and purring when it produced small sparkles of protective magic.

"Your cat's opinion is not exactly a scientific measure of magical efficiency, Potter."

"You'd be surprised," Harry muttered.

"Just remember," Daphne said as they packed up their materials, "if anyone asks, I had nothing to do with this."

"Worried about your reputation?"

"Worried about being associated with your inevitable next explosion," she corrected, but there was a hint of a smile in her voice.

Harry grinned, slipping the talisman around his neck. The silver felt cool against his skin, humming softly with protective magic. Itisa brushed against his legs approvingly.

"No more explosions," he promised. "Well, no unintentional ones, anyway."

Daphne rolled her eyes. "That's not as reassuring as you think it is, Potter."

As they left the classroom, Harry caught his reflection in a window. The talisman gleamed against his robes, the runes catching the light in a way that made them seem alive. It had taken a month of failures, several singed eyebrows, and more magical explosions than he cared to count, but he'd finally created something that worked—something that was uniquely his.

"You know," he said thoughtfully, "I think I'm getting the hang of this whole magical crafting thing."

Behind him, both Daphne and Itisa made remarkably similar sounds of skepticism.

"Your confidence is overwhelming," Harry said dryly.

"Someone has to keep your ego in check," Daphne replied. "It might as well be me and your suspiciously intelligent cat."

Itisa purred in agreement, and Harry couldn't help but laugh. Between his enhanced talisman, his improving magical skills, and his unlikely friendship with the most sarcastic Slytherin in his year, things were definitely getting interesting.

He just hoped the talisman would work as intended when he really needed it. Given his luck so far at Hogwarts, he had a feeling that test would come sooner rather than later.

∞ ∞ ‘

Harry stood in Professor McGonagall's office, rolling the silver talisman between his fingers as the stern witch watched him from behind her desk. The late afternoon sun cast long shadows through her office windows, making the silver catch the light in mesmerizing patterns.

"I've completed it," Harry said, holding up the talisman so she could see the intricate runes carved into its surface. "And I wanted you to know what it can do."

McGonagall adjusted her square spectacles, studying the magical artifact with careful interest. "And why, Mr. Potter, are you bringing this to my attention rather than Professor Snape's? He is, after all, your Head of House."

Harry's expression hardened slightly. "Because I trust you, Professor."

McGonagall's features softened almost imperceptibly. She was well aware of the circumstances that had led to Harry's placement with the Dursleys.

"Very well," she said, gesturing to the chair across from her desk. "Please, explain what you've created."

Harry told her everything this talisman could do, and Minerva seemed quite impressed by what she just heard.

"Fascinating," she murmured. "And this works consistently?"

"Every time," Harry confirmed. "But that's just the start. Watch this." He stood up, gently displacing Itisa, who moved to a nearby windowsill. "Try casting a minor hex at me. Something harmless."

McGonagall hesitated only briefly before sending a mild Stinging Hex his way. The talisman chimed again, louder this time, and the hex bounced back toward her. She deflected it easily, but her eyes widened with surprise.

"It can reflect weak spells back at the caster," Harry explained. "Nothing too powerful—it won't stop a serious curse or anything. When it encounters something too strong to deflect, it makes a much louder warning sound, giving me time to dodge or shield myself."

"That's quite advanced magic for a student your age," McGonagall observed, though Harry detected a note of pride in her voice.

"There's more," Harry continued. "It can absorb weak spells and hexes, storing their magical energy. When it's collected enough, I can release it as a burst of light." He paused. "Though I probably shouldn't demonstrate that in here. The light's intense enough to cause minor burns, and it's nearly impossible to look at directly."

McGonagall nodded thoughtfully. "A defensive measure transformed into an offensive capability. Very Slytherin of you, Mr. Potter."

Harry grinned. "The Sorting Hat knew what it was doing."

McGonagall was quiet for a long moment, studying Harry with an unreadable expression.

"That's extraordinarily complex magic, Mr. Potter. The kind that requires not just skill, but understanding of the deeper principles of magical theory. May I ask why you felt the need to create such a powerful protective device?"

Harry met her gaze steadily. "Because I'm tired of being caught unprepared. The troll, Professor Quirrell. I won't be helpless again." *And because I want to gain more influence in the magical world*, Harry wanted to say but held his tongue on this part.

"And you don't trust the adults in your life to protect you?" There was no judgment in her voice, only a sad understanding.

"With respect, Professor, adults haven't had the best track record so far." Harry's voice was quiet but firm. "Dumbledore left me with people who—" he cut himself off, taking a deep breath. "And Snape... well, you've seen how he looks me in class."

"The Headmaster made mistakes," McGonagall acknowledged. "Grave ones, regarding your placement. But he truly believed he was acting in your best interest."

"The road to hell, Professor," Harry said with a wisdom beyond his years, "is paved with good intentions. And I have the scars to prove it."

Itisa jumped down from the windowsill, rubbing against Harry's legs comfortingly. McGonagall's eyes followed the creature's movement.

McGonagall sighed, removing her glasses and cleaning them with her robes—a habit Harry had noticed she displayed when deep in thought. "Mr. Potter... Harry. While I understand your reservations about confiding in certain staff members, I must ask: why tell me about the talisman at all? Why not keep its capabilities to yourself?"

"I didn't just make this as a single protective device. I want to duplicate it."

McGonagall's brow furrowed slightly. "Duplicate it? What exactly do you mean by that, Mr. Potter?"

"Well, initially I thought about making them for people I care about," Harry explained. "Hermione, Susan, Sebastian, Anna, Neville... and of course, Nym and her parents." His voice softened at the mention of the Tonks family. "They took me in. They deserve protection too."

"A noble intention," McGonagall nodded. "Though I sense there's more to it than that."

Harry straightened in his chair, a determined glint in his eyes. "I want to produce them on a larger scale. Not just for friends and family, but for anyone who needs protection."

McGonagall's eyebrows rose, genuine intrigue crossing her features. "Are you suggesting you wish to become a talisman maker? That's quite an ambitious career path, Mr. Potter. Though given what I've seen of your work, not an unrealistic one but I thought you told Mister Newt that you want to become a Magizoologist."

"I can be both. I like making talismans, and I like magical creatures," Harry admitted. "I wouldn't mind making a name for myself beyond just being 'The Boy Who Lived.' But there's something more important driving this."

He stood up and began pacing, his passion for the subject evident in his movements. "I've been studying magical history, reading about old innovations and inventions. And I've noticed something concerning. It seems like the magical community has... stagnated."

"Stagnated?" McGonagall repeated, watching him carefully.

"Yes. We've gotten lazy with our magic, Professor. Comfortable. When was the last time someone created something truly new? Something that pushed the boundaries of what we think magic can do?" Harry gestured to the talisman. "This isn't just about protection—it's about showing what's possible when we actually try to innovate."

McGonagall leaned back in her chair, considering his words. "You believe wizards and witches have become too complacent?"

"Exactly!" Harry exclaimed. "We have this incredible power at our fingertips, but what do most people do with it? The same spells their parents used, and their parents before them. No one asks 'what else can we do?' anymore."

"And you see your talisman as a way to challenge that mindset?"

Harry nodded eagerly. "It combines different branches of magic in new ways. Protection charms, temperature regulation, energy storage and release, even healing magic. It shows that we can do more when we think creatively about how magic works."

A thoughtful expression crossed McGonagall's face. "You know, Mr. Potter, you might be onto something more significant than you realize. Have you considered the potential applications for law enforcement?"

"I thought about it, but I don't know anyone in the Ministry."

"I can think of at least two people who would be very interested in your creation—Amelia Bones and Alastor Moody." McGonagall's eyes sparkled. "In fact, if the Auror Department got wind of this, I suspect they'd be quite insistent about implementing it on a larger scale."

"You think the Ministry would want to equip Aurors with these? This is not exactly cheap."

"I think Amelia Bones would be breaking down the Minister's door demanding exactly that, and they are not the type to care about the price," McGonagall said with a slight smile. "And Alastor... well, anything that provides extra protection would certainly appeal to his 'constant vigilance' philosophy."

"That would mean..."

"Ministry contracts, Mr. Potter. Significant ones. The kind that not only provide substantial financial rewards but also considerable influence in the magical community." McGonagall adjusted her spectacles. "Though I suspect that's not your primary motivation."

Harry shook his head. "No, but I'm not naive enough to ignore the advantages. Money means independence, and influence means the ability to make real changes."

"Very Slytherin of you," McGonagall noted approvingly. "Though I see plenty of Ravenclaw innovation in there as well. The Sorting Hat certainly had an interesting choice with you."

"It considered all four houses," Harry admitted. "But it said Slytherin would help me achieve my goals. I'm starting to see why."

"And these goals extend beyond just creating protective talismans?"

Harry nodded seriously. "This is just the beginning, Professor. I want to show people what's possible when we push ourselves, when we question old assumptions about magic. The talisman is proof that we can do more, be more creative, more innovative."

"You're talking about changing the entire magical culture," McGonagall observed. "That's no small ambition."

"Nothing worth doing is small," Harry replied with a slight grin. "Besides, I've got time. I'm starting with something practical—something that can help people right now. The bigger changes... those can come gradually."

McGonagall studied him for a long moment. "You know, Mr. Potter, sometimes I forget just how young you are. You speak with the vision of someone far beyond your years."

"The Dursleys ensured I grew up quickly," Harry said quietly. "And living with the Tonks family... well, they encouraged me to think bigger, to question things. Lady Andromeda especially—she knows what it's like to break away from old ways of thinking."

"Indeed she does," McGonagall agreed. "Have you discussed your plans with them?"

"Some of it. They're supportive, especially about making talismans for family and friends. Ted's been helping me research magical patent laws, actually. Says it's important to protect the invention properly before going public."

"Wise advice," McGonagall nodded. "Though I imagine certain parties will be very interested in how you achieved these effects. The combination of defensive and healing magic alone is quite remarkable."

Harry's expression turned shrewd. "That's one of the reasons I came to you first, Professor. I need allies I can trust before this goes public. People who understand what I'm trying to achieve beyond just making a profit."

"And you trust me with this information?"

"You've earned it," Harry said simply. "You have known about Itisa for years, and you were there to help me. And you understand the importance of innovation in magic—I've seen how you encourage creativity in Transfiguration class."

McGonagall's expression softened slightly. "Well, Mr. Potter, it seems you've given this a great deal of thought. What's your next step?"

"First, perfecting the duplication process. Each talisman needs to be exactly right—there's no room for error when people's lives might depend on them. Then, creating the initial batch for friends and family." Harry paused. "After that... well, I was hoping you might have some advice about approaching Madam Bones?"

"I believe I might be able to arrange an introduction," McGonagall said. "Through proper channels, of course. We'll need to ensure everything is done legally and transparently."

"Of course," Harry agreed. "I want to do this right. Set a proper foundation for everything that comes after."

"And what exactly comes after, Mr. Potter?"

Harry's eyes lit up with determination. "Research, innovation, pushing boundaries. The talisman is just the first step. I want to create a whole new field of magical development, encourage others to experiment and innovate. Maybe even start a company dedicated to magical research and development."

"Ambitious indeed," McGonagall commented. "Though if anyone could achieve it, I suspect it would be you, Mr. Potter. You have your mother's brilliance with charms and your father's creative spirit, combined with your own unique determination."

"And now I have support from people I trust," Harry added meaningfully. "That makes all the difference."

McGonagall rose from her desk. "Very well, Mr. Potter. I will make some discrete inquiries regarding Madam Bones. In the meantime, I suggest you continue your development work, and perhaps prepare a proper presentation of your talisman's capabilities."

"Thank you, Professor," Harry said sincerely. "For everything."

As he left McGonagall's office, Itisa padding silently beside him, Harry felt a surge of excitement. The talisman hanging around his neck was more than just a protective device now—it was the first step toward something bigger, something that could change the magical world.

He smiled to himself as he headed back to the Slytherin common room. The wizarding world had grown too comfortable, too set in its ways. But change was coming, one silver talisman at a time. And with this, he would gain more power over things.

Tomorrow

"Try it now," Harry said, holding up the modified talisman as Sebastian took up a fighting stance in the empty classroom they'd commandeered for testing.

"Are you sure about this?" Sebastian asked, his fist raised hesitantly. "I might 'accidentally' knock you down."

Harry rolled his eyes. "That's the whole point of testing it. The first version shattered when Professor Dumbledore slammed it against the table. I need to know this one can take a hit."

"Fine, but don't blame me if you end up in the hospital wing." Sebastian threw a punch at Harry's chest where the talisman hung.

There was a soft humming sound, and Sebastian's fist bounced off from the silver disk. Harry grinned triumphantly.

"Brilliant!" Hermione exclaimed from where she sat cross-legged on a desk, a thick tome open in her lap. "The physical protection enchantments are holding. How did you solve the stability issue?"

"Layered runic matrices," Harry explained, pulling out his notebook. "The problem before was I was trying to handle physical and magical protection with the same set of runes. But they need different energy pathways or they interfere with each other."

"Show me?" Hermione leaned forward eagerly, but Susan cleared her throat from the doorway.

"As fascinating as your runic discussions are, we have exams starting tomorrow. Professor Garlick's practical is first thing in the morning, and I for one would like to review the proper handling of Devil's Snare."

Harry suppressed a groan. While he excelled in Charms and Defense Against the Dark Arts, Herbology was far from his favorite subject. Professor Garlick was nice enough—young and enthusiastic about her subject—but he found it hard to get excited about magical plants.

"She likes you, you know," Anna teased as they gathered their study materials. "Always giving you extra attention in class."

"She's a teacher!" Harry protested, feeling his cheeks warm slightly.

"A very pretty teacher," Sebastian added with a grin. "With that red hair—"

"Can we please focus on the exams?" Harry interrupted, pulling out his Herbology textbook with more force than necessary. "I'd rather not fail just because you lot are too busy gossiping about our professors."

They settled into their usual study formation, with Hermione taking the lead on organizing their review materials. Despite his reluctance, Harry had to admit that having study partners made the less interesting subjects more bearable.

"Okay," Hermione began, "let's start with the practical exam requirements. Professor Garlick mentioned we'll need to demonstrate proper handling of at least three different plants..."

The next morning found them in Greenhouse One, waiting nervously as Professor Garlick called students in one at a time. When Harry's turn came, she smiled warmly at him.

"Ready, Mr. Potter? Let's see how you handle these lovely specimens."

The practical went better than he'd expected, though he did fumble slightly with the Bouncing Bulb. Professor Garlick steadied his hands with her own, helping him adjust his grip.

"Gentle but firm," she instructed, her voice soft. "Like this."

Harry managed not to blush this time, focusing on the task at hand. When he finished, she gave him an approving nod.

"Well done. You've improved significantly since the start of term."

"Thank you, Professor," Harry replied politely, hurrying out before his friends could make any more teasing comments.

The rest of the exam week passed in a blur of practical demonstrations and written tests. Defense Against the Dark Arts was easily his best performance—Since Professor Quirrell was dead, Professor Dumbledore would be the one teaching them until they found a new Professor. Dumbledore had barely started explaining the practical exam before Harry had completed it perfectly.

Charms was similarly successful, with Professor Flitwick actually clapping in delight at Harry's demonstration of advanced levitation control.

"Remarkable, Mr. Potter! Taking after your mother, I see. She had quite the talent for charms as well."

Transfiguration with Professor McGonagall was more challenging, but Harry managed to perform all the required transformations correctly, if not with the same natural flair he showed in Charms.

"Acceptable work, Mr. Potter," McGonagall said, though her slight smile betrayed her approval. "Though perhaps if you applied yourself to Transfiguration with the same enthusiasm you show for your talisman projects..."

"Sorry, Professor," Harry grinned. "Charms are just more interesting."

"So your mother always said as well," McGonagall replied dryly. "Though she still managed to excel in all her subjects."

The real challenge came with Potions. Snape prowled the dungeon like an ill-tempered bat, hovering particularly close to Harry's cauldron as they brewed their exam potion.

"Tsk, tsks, Potter," he muttered. "Your stirring technique is sloppy. Just like your father—all flash and no precision."

Harry gritted his teeth and focused on his work, carefully following the instructions. He might not love Potions, but he'd studied enough to produce a perfectly adequate Forgetfulness Potion. Snape's scowl when he couldn't find anything to criticize was almost worth the stress.

"I swear he has it out for you," Sebastian muttered as they left the dungeon. "Even though you're in Slytherin."

"He hated my father," Harry shrugged. "And apparently that's more important than House loyalty."

"At least it's over," Susan said consolingly. "And you did well enough to pass, which is all that matters."

"Speaking of passing," Hermione interjected, "shouldn't you be working on those talisman duplicates now that exams are finished? You promised to have them ready before summer break."

Harry patted his bag where his notebook of talisman designs sat. "Already on it. The physical protection enhancement was the last major hurdle. Now it's just a matter of precise replication."

"And then what?" Anna asked. "Are you really going to try selling them to the Ministry?"

"Eventually," Harry nodded. "But first, I want to make sure they're perfect for the people I care about. You lot, the Tonks family... people who've actually been there for me."

"Always the strategist," Sebastian laughed. "Make sure they work flawlessly with friends and family before going commercial."

"It's not just strategy," Harry protested. "I want to protect the people I trust first. The business side can come later."

"Speaking of trust," Hermione said carefully, "have you thought about how you're going to handle the production process once you do start selling them? The enchantments are quite complex."

Harry's expression turned serious. "That's something I need to figure out. The spellwork has to be exact, and the runes have to be carved perfectly. I can't just hand over the designs to random craftspeople."

"You could train people," Susan suggested. "Start small, with trusted employees who sign magical contracts."

"Maybe," Harry mused. "Though finding people I trust enough to teach them the full process..." He trailed off, fiddling with his own talisman.

"One step at a time," Sebastian said practically. "Let's get through the end of term first. Speaking of which, what are your summer plans?"

"I will go to France with Mister Newt Scamander," Harry replied, his mood brightening. "He has promised to show me all the good places, the magical creatures and he even thinks we might have a talk with the Minister of Magic there, his name was Maximilien Delacour."

"And the talisman production?" Hermione pressed.

"That too. Ted's already looking into patents and business regulations. But mostly," Harry grinned, "I'm looking forward to having time to really experiment. No more studying for exams I don't care about."

"You should care about all your subjects," Hermione chided. "A well-rounded education is important."

"Sure," Harry agreed easily. "But admit it—even you find History of Magic boring. I saw you working on that arithmancy book during Binns' lecture on the Goblin Rebellion of 1612."

Hermione flushed slightly as the others laughed. "Well, yes, but that's different. I was still studying, just... advanced material."

"Exactly my point," Harry said. "We should be pushing ourselves to learn new things, not just memorizing old facts. That's what the talisman project is about—showing what's possible when you think creatively about magic."

"And making a name for yourself that has nothing to do with being the Boy Who Lived," Susan added shrewdly.

Harry shrugged. "Can't hurt. Better to be known for something I've actually done than for something I can't even remember."

They reached the entrance hall, where they would split up to their respective common rooms. Harry paused, looking at his friends.

"Thanks, by the way. For helping with all the testing and studying. I know I've been a bit obsessed with the talisman project..."

"That's what friends are for," Sebastian said, punching his arm lightly. The talisman hummed softly, and they all laughed.

"Still working perfectly, I see," Anna grinned.

"Just wait until you have your own," Harry promised. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have some runic calculations to work on before bed."

"Of course you do," Hermione sighed. "Just don't stay up too late. We still have Astronomy tomorrow night."

One Week Later

Harry climbed the spiral staircase to Dumbledore's office, his silver talisman gleaming against his black school robes. He'd left Itisa with Tonks, who was more than happy to spend time with the unusual familiar while he attended this meeting. When he reached the heavy wooden door, he heard multiple voices engaged in conversation inside.

"Come in, Harry," Dumbledore called before he could knock.

Harry entered to find the office more crowded than usual. Dumbledore sat behind his desk, wearing robes of midnight blue decorated with silver stars that seemed to actually twinkle. To his right stood Mad-Eye Moody, his magical eye whirling in its socket, dressed in his characteristic weathered leather coat and dark combat robes.

Amelia Bones stood near Fawkes' perch, her monocle glinting in the afternoon light. She wore formal charcoal gray robes with the DMLE insignia, her bearing as commanding as ever.

The three unfamiliar faces in the room drew Harry's attention. The first was a tall, lean man with salt-and-pepper hair tied back in a neat queue. He wore expertly tailored robes in deep bronze, with intricate runic patterns embroidered along the hem and cuffs in copper thread. A collection of enchanted rings adorned his long fingers, and a crystal monocle similar to Amelia's hung from a golden chain around his neck.

"Elliot Finch," he introduced himself with a slight bow. "Chief Examiner of Magical Artifacts."

Beside him stood a shorter, broader man with a carefully trimmed beard and kind eyes. His robes were a practical dark green, but the fabric seemed to shimmer slightly when he moved, suggesting powerful protective enchantments woven into the material. Multiple pouches and tool holders hung from a leather belt at his waist.

"Leo Hartwell," he said warmly, extending a calloused hand. "Runic Integration Specialist."

The third visitor was a woman who appeared to be in her early forties, with striking silver-streaked black hair arranged in an elegant twist. She wore robes of deep purple silk, with what appeared to be actual starlight dancing along the fabric. Various magical instruments hung from chains around her neck, and her wand holster was crafted from mother-of-pearl.

"Clara Dovewood," she smiled, her voice carrying a slight Welsh lilt. "Senior Talisman Assessor. We've heard quite remarkable things about your creation, Mr. Potter."

"It's nice to meet you all," Harry replied politely, noting how their eyes all tracked to the talisman at his throat. "Professor McGonagall mentioned you might be interested in examining my work."

"Interested is putting it mildly," Moody growled, his magical eye fixed on the silver disk. "Any artifact that combines defensive and healing magic that effectively deserves proper investigation."

"Indeed," Clara agreed, stepping forward. "With your permission, Mr. Potter, we'd like to conduct a formal assessment of your talisman. This would involve a series of standardized tests to evaluate its capabilities, durability, and magical integration."

"The results would determine its official ranking," Elliot added, adjusting his monocle. "Which would be necessary for any future production or distribution plans."

"The testing process is quite thorough, Harry. These three are the finest magical artifact assessors in Britain." Dumbledore said with an encouraging smile.

"What exactly do the tests involve?" Harry asked, his hand unconsciously rising to touch the talisman.

Leo pulled out a leather-bound notebook. "We examine five primary aspects: magical power output, physical durability, spell integration, runic stability, and sustained performance under stress. Each test builds on the previous ones."

"Some talismans barely achieve Ashborn rank," Clara explained. "They're little more than simple enchanted trinkets. Others reach Kindleheart, showing decent magical potential but limited practical application."

"Gilded Fang is where things get interesting," Elliot continued. "Those talismans demonstrate significant power and craftsmanship. Very few achieve Phoenix Crown status—those are the ones that show truly exceptional magical innovation."

"And Eclipse Eternal?" Harry asked, curious.

The three exchangers glanced at each other before Clara spoke. "In the last century, only one talisman have been ranked Eclipse Eternal. They're the kind of artifacts that reshape our understanding of what magic can do."

"From what Amelia and Alastor have told us," Leo added, "your creation might be more remarkable than you realize."

Harry straightened his shoulders. "I'm happy to have it tested. When would you like to begin?"

"No time like the present," Moody stated. "Unless you have objections, Albus?"

"Not at all," Dumbledore smiled. "I've taken the liberty of preparing the Hogwarts Grounds for your use."

"Excellent," Clara said, pulling out a crystal instrument that hummed faintly. "Shall we proceed, Mr. Potter?"

As they filed out of the office, Harry felt a mixture of nervousness and excitement. He'd put months of work into perfecting the talisman's design, pushing the boundaries of what he thought possible. Now he'd find out if it was truly as innovative as he hoped.

"One moment," he said as they reached the corridor. "Would it be possible to have Professor McGonagall present for the testing? She's been instrumental in helping me develop this."

"Of course," Amelia nodded approvingly. "Minerva's insights would be valuable, and she's already familiar with the project."

"Nervous?" Moody asked gruffly, his magical eye swiveling to focus on Harry.

"A little," Harry admitted. "But mostly curious. I want to know if I'm on the right track."

"Good attitude," Moody approved. "Constant vigilance applies to invention as much as defense. Never assume you've got it perfect."

oo ‘

The group assembled on a clear area of the Hogwarts grounds, far enough from the castle to be safe but close enough that curious students could watch from the windows. Harry spotted Sebastian and Hermione's faces among the onlookers and gave them a small wave.

"Where's that interesting cat of yours, Potter?" Moody asked, his magical eye scanning the surroundings. "The one that's not quite what it seems?"

Harry kept his expression neutral. "Itisa's staying with Tonks until we're done here. I thought it best to avoid any distractions."

Moody's normal eye narrowed slightly, but he nodded in approval. "Good thinking, lad."

Clara stepped forward, her starlit robes flowing gracefully. "Let's begin with the basic power output test. Mr. Potter, please stand in the center of this runic circle." She waved her wand, and glowing symbols appeared on the ground.

Leo pulled out several crystalline instruments from his pouches. "These will measure the talisman's magical signature and energy levels. Try to remain still while we take the initial readings."

Harry stood quietly as the three examiners moved around him, their instruments humming and clicking. Elliot's monocle glowed as he studied the talisman intently.

"Fascinating layering of the protection charms," he murmured. "The warning system is particularly elegant. Shall we test it?"

"I'll cast first," Clara decided, raising her wand slowly. Before she could utter a spell, the talisman emitted a clear, musical tone.

"Early warning system," Harry explained. "It detects hostile intent when someone aims their wand at the wearer."

"Impressive," Amelia commented. "That could give Aurors valuable extra seconds in a confrontation."

Clara cast a mild Stinging Hex. The talisman hummed, and the spell rebounded, forcing her to step quickly aside.

"Automatic defensive reflection," Leo noted, scribbling in his notebook. "Limited to lower-power spells, I assume?"

Harry nodded. "It can't handle anything too powerful. That's why it has a different warning sound for—"

"STUPEFY!" Moody barked suddenly, sending a powerful stunning spell at Harry. The talisman let out a sharp, loud tone, and Harry dove to the side, the spell missing him by inches.

"Alastor!" McGonagall scolded, but Harry grinned.

"That's exactly what it's supposed to do," he said. "The louder warning means it can't deflect the incoming spell, so the wearer knows to dodge."

"Good design choice," Moody approved. "Better to know your limitations than overestimate your protection."

Elliot raised his wand next. "Let's test the absorption capacity. Multiple minor hexes in succession, if you're ready?"

At Harry's nod, he began casting a series of small jinxes. The talisman absorbed each one, its silver surface beginning to glow faintly.

"The stored magical energy can be released as a defensive measure," Harry explained. "Would you like to see?"

"Please proceed," Clara said, her measuring instruments at the ready.

"Release," Harry commanded. The talisman pulsed, and a brilliant beam of white light erupted from it. Everyone except Harry had to look away or shield their eyes. Even from several feet away, they could feel the heat of it.

"Merlin's beard!" Leo exclaimed, rubbing his eyes. "That's quite the deterrent. Could be very effective for crowd control or escape situations."

"The light can cause mild burns if you're too close," Harry warned. "I learned that the hard way during testing."

"Let's move on to environmental adaptability," Clara suggested. She waved her wand, creating a sphere of intense cold around Harry. The talisman glowed softly, and Harry remained comfortable despite his breath fogging in the frigid air.

"Temperature regulation," Elliot noted. "Both heating and cooling capabilities?"

"Yes," Harry confirmed. "It responds automatically to extreme temperatures in either direction."

"Very practical," McGonagall commented. "Especially for those working in varying climates."

"Now for the more rigorous durability testing," Leo said, pulling out what looked like a miniature battering ram. "Physical impact resistance first."

Over the next hour, they subjected the talisman to a battery of tests: physical strikes, magical bombardment, attempts to disable the runic arrays, and even exposure to various magical substances. The talisman held up well, its protections remaining stable.

"There's one more capability we should discuss," Clara said finally, consulting her notes. "The emergency healing function. Though I assume we won't be testing that directly."

Harry touched the talisman gently. "No, that's a last resort only. It can save the wearer's life if they're critically injured, but the talisman destroys itself in the process—burns to ash after using that much power."

"A significant sacrifice," Amelia observed. "But one that could make the difference between life and death."

"Have you witnessed this function in action?" Elliot asked.

"Once, during early testing with a prototype," Harry admitted. "An accident in the lab. The talisman healed the injury completely but burned out immediately after."

The three examiners conferred quietly for several minutes, comparing notes and measurements. Finally, Clara turned to address the group.

"Mr. Potter, your talisman demonstrates remarkable innovation in several areas. The integration of multiple protective functions is skillfully done, and the warning system shows particular ingenuity."

"The runic arrays are elegantly constructed," Leo added. "Especially for someone your age. The layering of protective and reactive enchantments is highly sophisticated."

"The power management is also noteworthy," Elliot continued. "Many young artificers try to make their creations too powerful, but you've carefully balanced capabilities with limitations."

"However," Clara said, "the most impressive aspect is how the various functions work together as a cohesive whole. This isn't just a collection of useful enchantments—it's a thoughtfully designed protective system."

"So what's the verdict?" Moody asked gruffly. "Where does it rank?"

The three exchangers shared another look before Clara spoke. "Based on our comprehensive testing and analysis, we rank this talisman as Gilded Fang tier."

A murmur of appreciation went through the observers. Harry felt his heart leap. For his first talisman. This was wonderful.

"Really?" he asked. "Even with its limitations?"

"Those limitations are part of why it deserves the ranking," Leo explained. "You've created something that knows its boundaries and works within them effectively, rather than trying to do too much and failing."

"The craftsmanship is exceptional," Elliot added. "And the innovation in combining these specific functions opens up new possibilities for protective artifacts."

"I would say it barely missed Phoenix Crown ranking," Clara said thoughtfully. "The only reason it didn't quite reach that tier is that some of the individual functions have been seen before, albeit not combined in this way. Phoenix Crown and Eclipse Eternal is reserved for completely revolutionary innovations."

"Still, Gilded Fang is a remarkable achievement," McGonagall said proudly. "Especially for a first-year student."

"There will be significant interest in this design," Amelia noted. "Both from the DMLE and other departments."

"Speaking of which," Clara interjected, "we should discuss the possibility of refinements and production standards if you're planning to create more of these."

"I've already made a few for friends and family," Harry admitted. "But mass production would be more complicated. The runic carving has to be exact, and the enchantments have to be layered in precisely the right order."

"We could help with developing standardized production methods," Leo offered. "While maintaining the quality control necessary for such powerful artifacts."

As they discussed technical details, Harry noticed movement at the castle windows. The number of student observers had grown considerably, and he could see them pointing and talking excitedly.

"Perhaps we should continue this conversation somewhere more private," Dumbledore suggested, his eyes twinkling. "I believe the house-elves have prepared refreshments in my office."

As they walked back to the castle, Moody fell into step beside Harry. "Good work, Potter. But remember—"

"Constant vigilance," Harry finished with a smile. "I know. That's why I built in all those warning systems."

"Aye. And speaking of warnings, you might want to keep that unusual pet of yours out of sight when the Ministry folks are around. Some people get nervous about magical creatures they don't understand."

Harry gave Moody a measured look. "I'll keep that in mind. Itisa's very good at staying inconspicuous when she needs to."

"I'm sure she is," Moody replied dryly. "Just like her owner."

Inside the castle, Harry could hear excited chatter as they passed groups of students. The news of the talisman's testing and ranking would be all over the school by dinner.

"You realize you'll be getting a lot of requests for these now," McGonagall said quietly as they climbed the stairs.

"I know," Harry sighed. "But I want to do this right. Make sure they're perfect before they go to anyone outside my trusted circle."

"A wise approach," she approved. "Though perhaps we should discuss adding some advanced Transfiguration to your studies next year. It could open up new possibilities for your work."

Harry grinned. "As long as I can keep focusing on Charms too."

"Of course," McGonagall smiled. "Though I still say you're wasted in Slytherin. That innovative mind of yours would have done well in Ravenclaw."

"The hat knows best, Professor," Harry replied diplomatically, thinking of all the connections and resources his house placement had given him access to.

As they entered Dumbledore's office, Harry felt a wave of satisfaction. The talisman had exceeded expectations, and new possibilities were opening up. He missed Itisa's reassuring presence, but he knew she was safe with Tonks, probably being spoiled with treats.

There was still so much to learn, so many improvements to make, but today had proven he was on the right path.

This was just the beginning.

Hello everyone. I'm happy to publish a New Chapter of A Nundu for A Pet.

Leave a Like if you enjoyed the Chapter, and let me know in the Comments what you think about the Chapter.

NOTE: The Ranks for Talismans

- Ashborn (Weak Talisman Rank) – The faintest ember of power, a fledgling tool for minor spells.
- Kindleheart (Mid Talisman Rank) – A warm, steady source of magic, but not that capable.
- Gilded Fang (Good Talisman Rank) – Sharp and gleaming with magical potential, trusted for significant spells and protection.
- Phoenix Crown (Excellent Talisman Rank) – Majestic and radiant, imbued with a near-legendary magical force.
- Eclipse Eternal (Masterpiece Talisman Rank) – A timeless creation, its power eclipses all other creations.