

Leviathan Rising

It was just after three in the morning and Harry was rapidly approaching the end of his wits. The second task was scheduled to begin in just over six hours and Harry did not have the faintest idea how he was going to complete it.

Perhaps he should just follow Ron's advice and stick his head into the lake and ask the merpeople politely if he could have whatever it was they had taken back. At the moment that looked like his best bet for any chance of success.

In the three or so hours he had been wandering about the library Harry had wrecked such havoc that Madam Pince would doubtless bar him from the facility for the remainder of his years at Hogwarts if she ever discovered it who it was that had caused such a mess.

Hundreds of books on every conceivable subject lay strewn on the shelves, tables and in quite a few cases, the floor. There were books on charms, books on curses, books on merpeople, books on the Loch Ness Monster, books on sirens, books on Atlantis, on Neptune and Poseidon, on anything and everything that had even the vaguest of references to water.

Thus far Harry had discovered that he knew next to nothing when it came to water. Even worse was the fact that over two thirds of the planet was covered in the stuff. What would he do if he had an accident whilst Apparating and dropped into the middle of the Atlantic? Of course, since he still had a good many years to wait before then, but his sleep deprived mind was beginning to lose its capacity for coherent thought.

In an act of desperation he donned his invisibility cloak once again and crept into the Restricted Section of the library. He knew this was probably a bad idea, but at this point Harry was willing to try just about anything, good or bad.

Dark Denizens of the Deep.

No.

Beneath the Storm Waters.

Uh-uh.

Man-eating Mermaids.

I bloody hope not!

Beasts of Bermuda .

Wrong hemisphere.

Harry had gone through close to a hundred books and was starting to drift off occasionally when his hands fell upon something different. It was unlike any other book in the Restricted Section, unlike any other book in the entire library for that matter.

It was tiny by comparison to most of the ancient tomes lying about, roughly the size of a Muggle paperback novel. It was very thin as well, barely as thick as Harry's wand. Its cover was plain brown leather and there was no indication of a title anywhere on its surface.

Useless.

Harry was about to cast it aside when he happened to notice the rune embossed on the cover. It was a circle, about as wide as his hand, with an odd spiral design inside of it. Even in his somewhat drowsy state Harry recognised it as a stylised ocean wave breaking. Since any book that seemed even remotely connected to water was fair game, Harry took it in hand and opened it.

Time seemed to stand still as Harry flipped through the pages, turning them faster and faster until his motions were almost a blur. His eyes had lost the glassy look of exhaustion and were almost glowing with some strange force.

Perhaps not as useless as he had originally thought.

It was somewhere between four and five o'clock when Harry set the book down on the shelf he had found it on. He did not pause to consider how, but he had read through the entire book in just under five minutes, something not even Hermione would have been able to accomplish.

With a smile on his lips, the first one in days, Harry wrapped his cloak around himself and left the library. The sun would be up soon and he wanted to catch a couple of hours sleep before he had to get up and make preparations. He would need a few things to pull this off, but otherwise it would be as easy as flying a broom.

Without a backwards glance he silently crept back to Gryffindor Tower, never seeing the small, inconspicuous book he had read melt into a puddle of black water.

By the time the sun crested the horizon there would be no trace that it had ever existed.

It was just his luck, Harry mused, that after discovering the perfect solution to the second task he would happen to oversleep. It was twenty past nine and Harry had less than ten minutes to get to the lake, where the other champions, judges and spectators were waiting.

He was almost flying along the corridors and down the stairs, vaulting them in dangerous leaps. Running as quickly as he could, definitely faster than he had ever managed before, Harry charged through the Entrance Hall. He was in such an urgent hurry that he did not even notice colliding with Colin and Dennis Creevey, knocking them to the floor.

Harry sprinted across the lawn, noticing that the stands used for the first task had been moved to the back of the lake. Hundreds, thousands, of people were crammed in their seats, their loud babble filling the air. With an almost audible screech, Harry skidded to a halt by the gold-draped judges' table, kicking up a spray of mud as he did so.

"Ack!" screeched Fleur, who had been splattered by the mud. She glared venomously at him and said something in French that Harry knew he didn't want to have translated.

"I'm... here..." he panted, bending over and gasping for breath. A stitch was lancing into Harry's side with a vengeance and he could feel his face burning with exertion.

"Where have you been?" a familiar voice asked in its customary bossy tone. "The task's about to start!"

Harry looked up incredulously at Percy Weasley, who was sitting at the judges' table. Obviously Mr Couch was once again inconvenienced and Percy had been sent in his place. Harry was too busy gulping in some air to answer.

"Now, now, Percy!" soothed Ludo Bagman. The commentator was looking very relieved at Harry's belated appearance, unlike Karkaroff and Maxmine. "Let him catch his breath!"

Bagman then proceeded to line the champions up along the shore of the lake, spacing them about ten feet apart. Harry, having been the last to arrive, ended up being last in the line. He was uncomfortably reminded of how he had been last to face the dragons in the first task, but shrugged his worries away.

"All right, Harry?" asked Bagman in a hushed whisper, "Know what you're going to do?"

"Watch closely, sir," Harry told him, rubbing at his aching side, "You're going to see just how ready I am for this."

"Excellent!" praised Bagman, giving Harry's shoulder an encouraging patting squeeze before ambling over to the judge's table. A moment later his voice was booming through the air, drawing everyone's attention. "Well, all our champions are ready for the second task, which will start on my whistle. They have precisely an hour to recover what has been taken from them. On the count of three, then. One... two... *three* !"

A shrill whistle sounded out and mass of spectators burst into cheers and applause. Harry stood calmly by the edge of the lake, its waters only just lapping against his shoes, and watched the other champions sprung into action.

Krum, to his left, had already stripped down to a pair of black swimming trunks before the start and was now wading out into the water. He stopped when he was waist-deep in and began performing an intricate looking piece of transfiguration. His head began to elongate and distort in strange ways that Harry knew must have been uncomfortable. After several seconds he had finished and, now with a shark's head on his shoulders, surged forward and disappeared under the water.

With detached interest Harry looked to where Cedric and Fleur were standing, also about waist-deep in the lake. Both were waving their wands and casting some sort of bubble charm over their heads. They had also changed into swimming trunks and were soon diving down, the murky waters of the lake being displaced around their heads as they sank from sight.

Harry could hear laughter coming from the crowd and imagined that he looked a right fool simply standing there, while the others had already swum out into the lake. He glanced to the side and saw the judges watching him like hawks. Bagman was twittering nervously for some reason and Percy was frowning sternly at him. Karkaroff and Maxime were looking rather smug at Harry's inaction, though Dumbledore appeared to be taking it in stride.

He bared his teeth and smiled ferally, turning away from the lake and striding over to his bag, which he had left further up the shore. Harry knelt down and opened his bag, pulling out four of the crystal phials he normally used in Potions. He walked back down to the edge of the water and dipped the phials into the lake, filling them up.

Moving away from the water Harry pulled out his wand and cast a quick Drying Spell on a nearby patch of earth. Returning his wand into his pocket, Harry then withdrew a stick of blue chalk, which he had tied a length of string to. He tied the other end of the string to a twig he found on the ground and then drove into the centre of the dry patch.

With deft precision Harry quickly swung the blue chalk around, using the twig as the centre and drew a large circle on the ground. It was a couple of yards across and when Harry was done he pulled out the twig and untied the chalk from the string. Discarding the twig and string, Harry knelt down within the circle and began tracing a series of intricate runes and glyphs outside its circumference.

He had no idea what he was writing, and on some level Harry was worried about that, but continued until he had returned to where he had started. He then threw aside the piece of blue chalk and pulled a white piece from within his robes. Now began tracing a second set of runes and glyphs,

only this time within the circumference of the circle.

His hands were moving in a blur, but the writing came out crisp and clear, without any mistakes. After finishing the second circle of markings, Harry discarded the piece of white chalk and then proceeded to place the phials of lake water at the edge of the circle. He did not have any means to check, but somehow he knew that he had laid one down at each of the cardinal points.

Finished with his preparations, Harry remained in the centre of the circle he had drawn and sat down in the lotus position. He took several deep and steadying breaths, aware of the muted noises coming from the spectators. They were whispering and muttering, obviously puzzled and wondering what he had planned.

With a smirk Harry turned his head to look at the judges, noting their confused expressions.

"Batten down the hatches, mateys," he said, "There's a storm brewing."

Harry turned his attention back to the lake and began to speak. His voice carried loud and clear in the morning air. His words echoed hauntingly across the surface of the lake, made even stranger by their unusual resonance.

Most amazing of all, however, was that Harry was speaking in a language that nobody present could understand. It was unusual and trilling, clearly not meant to be either spoken by human tongue or heard by human ears. It was both a beautiful, yet terrible sound and all that heard it felt cold shivers running up and down their spines.

Harry's words were quickening and had changed from mere speech into some form of chant. He held his left hand out to one side, turned palm up and fingers curled as though holding something. With a burst of light a ball of blue fire flamed into existence, hovering just above his hand. Not pausing in his chant, Harry repeated the gesture with his right hand and after a moment a ball of flaming white fire flared above his palm.

The chant was growing louder and louder, even though Harry was not speaking the words with any more force than when he had begun. Suddenly he arched back and raised his hands high above him, his eyes closed in rapture, the balls of fire flickering in the gentle breeze.

No, it was not a gentle breeze. When the task had begun, the air had been still and silent. Now that calm was becoming agitated and as Harry swung his arms around and clapped his hands together in a crash of thunder, the air began to stir.

At first it was a soft wind, not even bringing ripples to the lake's tranquil surface. But as Harry dropped his arms to his sides, the balls of fire gone, the wind began to pick up. With another crack of thunder, despite the clear skies, Harry opened his eyes. Only the judges, and a few others, were close enough to see it happen and the sight terrified them.

Harry's eyes were a complete storm-washed grey that writhed and broke as the ocean did in a terrible storm. Streaks of what could have been lightning seemed to crackle across the now bottomless orbs, which were firmly fixed on the lake.

The chant Harry was now nearly shouting was difficult to hear over the rising winds, which now tugged and pulled and whipped at those watching. Leaves, loose grass and dust swirled up into the air as the surface of the lake writhed in a manner that matched Harry's alien eyes.

Suddenly the chanting stopped.

A silence of anticipation hung in the air, even the fierce wind was now quiet. Then Harry raised his arms into the air and pulled them down in a sharp motion, a loud cry on his lips. It was the first word he had spoken that those watching could understand.

"Arise!!"

The lake was almost frothing from its frenzied motions, massive waves rising high and crashing against the shore. Then Harry held his hands before him and slowly rose them up, speaking an impassioned command as he did so.

"Arise, o Leviathan, arise! Lift your waters into your sister's arms and bare your secrets to me! Reveal that which I seek, that which lies beneath your glory!"

At first nothing could be seen, but with slow inevitability the waters of the lake seemed to retreat from the shore. A line of shadow became apparent along its edge, slowly growing broader and deeper with each passing moment. The water was trembling and rippling all over as it slowly rose upwards, higher and higher, matching Harry's movements.

Soon it was a foot off the ground, then a yard, then two, then three. Like a wall rising out of the earth the lake lifted into the air, floating high above the lakebed. Already the mass of water was a dozen yards into the air, the bulk of its mass still hidden from view, and yet it continued to rise up.

Occasional drops of water would form and drip from the unbelievable mass, but always they would only fall a short distance before slowing and then stopping. The drops would float in the air, perfect little spheres, before rising up and rejoining the main body of water.

Harry was lifting the lake into the air, pulling free just as if it were a loose tooth being pulled from its socket. Higher and higher the water rose, now looming dangerously above even the castle, its huge bulk casting a dark shadow on the ground.

Blood was streaming from the corners of Harry's mouth, which was bared in a grimace, as well as his nose, eyes and ears. It was a terrible sight, watching what looked like tears of blood slowly slid down his cheeks and along his jaw. Even worse was that Harry seemed completely oblivious to it all, his gaze never straying from the hovering lake.

A long minute had passed and the lake well over two hundred yards above the earth it had lain upon for so long. It rippled and shimmered where it hung, occasionally revealing shapes of the fish, and other creatures, that swam within it. Once or twice the thin tentacles of the giant squid even crested the water, hanging limply so high up.

Lowering his hands and slowly standing up, Harry watched the floating mountain of water with a broad grin. His eyes were still bottomless orbs of stormy waters, lightning crackling every so often. He turned to look at the stunned judges, of which Karkaroff and Maxime in particular seemed almost horrified, and gave them a short bow.

Grinning broadly, and ignoring the blood streaming from his eyes, ears, nose and mouth, Harry left the chalk circle he had drawn and jogged down into the empty lakebed. As he walked deeper into the cavernous hole left in the ground, Harry was aware of various creatures that had not been lifted into the air with the water. Some flopped about helplessly, others scurried around in a confused panic, all too preoccupied to pay any attention to him.

The summoning of power Harry had used had told him where his friends lay. He walked along the lakebed, which for the first time in a long while was exposed to sunlight, and made his way down to the merpeople village. Soon the primitive stone buildings were looming up around him, their windows dark and empty.

In the centre of the clustered dwellings was a large, roughly hewn statue of a merperson, with four people bound tightly its stone tail. First there was Hermione, looking very much like a drowned rat, then came Ron, equally soaked and dishevelled, then Cho Chang and then a tiny young girl that Harry felt sure was Fleur's sister. All of them appeared either drugged or enchanted into a deep sleep.

"*Diffindo!*" he muttered, waving his wand at the rope that tied them all to the statue. The fibres parted easily and the four hostages slumped to the muddy ground in a heap.

Since there was no way he could carry them all and his attempts at waking them proved to be unsuccessful, Harry stood back and used his wand. "*Mobilicorpus,*" he said, pointing at each of the four bodies spread out before him.

And so, with four limp bodies floating alongside him, Harry turned around and marched away from the merpeople village. A group of Grindylows crossed their path as one point, but were far too busy trying to work out where the lake had gone to bother them. After a few minutes Harry came to the slope leading up to the shore, his four sleeping companions drifting after him.

"Merciful Ancients," boomed Ludo Bagman's voice, in as hushed a tone as possible under a *Sonorus Charm*. "Potter's rescued *all four* of the hostages!"

The crowd was going berserk, and some of the judges were joining them. Dumbledore, Percy and several Hogwarts professors came running up to Harry as he walked up onto the bank and gently laid the four hostages on the ground. He looked at them all with a giddy smile and then blinked, his bottomless storm tossed eyes transforming back into their normal emerald green as he did so.

At that moment, with a thunderous crash, the lake --still hovering several hundred yards above-- dropped towards the ground. Harry whirled around and stretched out his arm, wand in hand, and the mass of water shuddered to a halt, barely a dozen yards above the earth. He then dropped his arm to his side, obviously exhausted, and the lake plummeted back into place.

It hit with a massive amount of force and twenty foot high waves rose up and broke all around its shores, soaking the spectators, judges and Harry. Screams and roars filled the air as everyone tried to back away from the water that sprayed over them.

Harry, soaked to the bone, stood amidst the dumbstruck professors. With a lopsided grin he lifted up his arm and looked at the battered watch strapped to his wrist.

"Thirteen minutes," he said in a joyous and bubbly voice, "I win!"

He then, in much the same manner as the lake, dropped to the ground.

With a low groan of protest Harry awoke to find himself being closely watched by the twinkling blue eyes of Professor Dumbledore. Blinking rapidly to clear his own eyes, Harry saw that he was in bed in the Hospital Wing of the castle, entirely alone save for the presence of the headmaster.

Since the world was apparently still intact and he himself was still alive, Harry could only conclude that somehow everything had worked out. Of course, it would have helped if he had even the faintest idea how he had ended up in the Hospital Wing yet again.

"Good morning, Harry," greeted Dumbledore, sounding especially happy.

Sitting up in the bed, Harry stifled a groan as his muscles protested the movement. His throat was painfully dry and he swallowed repeatedly to try and moisten it up. Seeing this Dumbledore presented Harry with a glass of water that he thankfully drank in a single gulp. Swaying as the cold from the water rushed to his head, Harry placed the empty glass on the table beside his bed and settled back against the pillows.

"'Morning', yes," he said, just a touch hoarsely, "'Good', remains to be seen."

"Perhaps," chuckled Dumbledore with a smile, "Considering how close we came to losing you, however, having you finally wake up is undoubtedly good."

Harry frowned and looked at his mentor in confusion, "What happened?"

Dumbledore raised his eyebrows at the question, "You mean you do not remember?"

"I remember I was in the library," replied Harry, thinking back, "I was trying to find something to help me in the second task. I - I think I went into the Restricted Section... but after that... it's kind of a blur. Like a dream from long ago."

"I see," nodded Dumbledore, apparently understanding something, even though Harry was thoroughly confused about the matter. "That would certainly explain your rather... interesting performance at the lake yesterday. Quite a spectacular win as a matter of fact."

Harry blinked, "I won?"

Dumbledore smiled benevolently, "Indeed you did. No doubt your fellow students will be quite happy to fill you in on the details once Madam Pomfrey allows you to return to your dormitory."

Harry was about to ask another question when Dumbledore rose from his seat and stared down at him with a stern and reproachful expression. "However I think it would be best if you refrained from any further visits to the Restricted Section of the library. The magic you employed yesterday was not only powerful but extremely dangerous."

With that Dumbledore turned to leave the infirmary, leaving Harry feeling properly chastised about his actions. Just as he reached the door, about to leave, Dumbledore stopped and turned back. "Oh, and Harry?" he said, his eyes sparkling merrily. "Not bad," he said, as if Harry had only just scraped by during an important exam. "Not bad at all."

Fin.

Author's Note: Just something that came to me in the middle of the day. Set in Gof, what if Harry had found a way to overcome the second task? What if while searching through the library he came across an insignificant seeming little book that teaches him the magic he needs?