

A Little Homework

Accidents happen. It's a fact of life. That accidents tended to happen rather frequently whenever Harry Potter was in the vicinity was also a well known, documented and remarked upon fact. At least to those people who knew the poor lad.

It was rarely Harry's fault that these accidents happened, strangely enough, but nobody could argue that he seemed to attract trouble in much the same way that honey attracted flies. It was only his third year at Hogwarts, yet this was already considered to be an immutable law of the universe.

Which meant that it was rather odd that Harry had nothing to do with the terrifying beast that was currently rampaging about Gryffindor tower.

No, this time the blame fell squarely in the lap of one Colin Creevey.

With the threat of escaped murderer Sirius Black hanging in the air, not to mention the dreadful presence of the Dementors of Azkaban now guarding the school, it was almost expected that tensions amongst the students would be running high. Thus it was inevitable that one of the aforementioned accidents would happen.

In an unlikely and improbably chain of events, which most likely nobody who hadn't witnessed it would give any credence to, Colin had stumbled over Ginny Weasley's book bag. Arms flailing wildly in an attempt to maintain his balance, he had lost hold of his camera, which tumbled to the floor. The camera was somehow triggered upon landing, its flash going off in a brilliant burst of light that temporarily blinded Patricia Stimpson. The fourth-year witch had staggered into the nearest table, which happened to be where the twins, Fred and George Weasley, were working.

This was something akin to begging for trouble.

The twins had been working on... something. Nobody was quite sure what it was. Not even the twins. The results, however, were impossible to miss. Magical fireworks that rivalled anything to be seen on Guy Fawkes Day exploded throughout the common room in a wave of light, colour and noise. Over a dozen wands were dropped as their owners sought shelter wherever they could find it. Hermione Granger was interrupted in a very complicated Transfiguration spell that she was attempting to explain and demonstrate to Neville Longbottom.

This was where things started to become interesting.

Hermione's spell was knocked off course and began to work its magic on the pewter cauldron Harry and Ron Weasley were using for a Potions assignment. Stigar's Sticking Solution, however, did not interact nicely with directed magic and promptly began spewing globs of putrid smelling brown goop into the air. Ron entered a state of panic as the potion unexpectedly turned volatile. He promptly upended the table he and Harry were working at in an attempt to get the heaving potion as far away from him as possible.

This resulted in lots of brown goop splattering across Seamus Finnigan and Dean Thomas's Care of Magical Creatures essay, which they had been unenthusiastically attempting to finish. Naturally when their homework and reference materials began to twitch, shiver, crawl about and hiss threateningly, the two third-years had immediately done their level best to remove the parchment from their presence.

This normally wouldn't have been too much of a problem, except that many of those present had tipped over the tables they had been working. This was so that they could hide behind them and avoid the fireworks. The various pieces of parchment, paper, notebooks, school books, library books and other paraphernalia that were usually set on said tables, were thus deposited in messy piles upon the common room floor.

Where Dean and Seamus' homework was banished to.

After that, things took a turn for the worse.

"Cut it off! Quickly! Cut it off!!" yelled Hermione frantically. "We can't let it get out into the school!"

"There's not enough of us! We're not going to make it!"

"Look out!" shrieked Lavender, dropping to the floor just in time to avoid the barrage of sharpened quills that the unholy conglomeration of animated books and parchment unleashed. Several other students were not so lucky and cried out as the quills cut into them.

His split lip oozing blood from a earlier blow, Oliver Wood rolled to cover behind the nearest piece of available furniture. A moment later the armchair in question was badly punctured by a dozen quills, giving it a passing resemblance to a pincushion.

Popping up from behind the chair, Oliver levelled his wand and cursed, "*Stupefy*!"

The streak of red light jetted across the common room and struck the brute's leather and canvas chest, only to rocket off at a sharp tangent and exploding harmlessly against the wall next to the fireplace. The beast staggered back a single step before retaliating with a blast of multicoloured ink that Oliver was barely able to dodge away from. The pincushion chair was now painted in almost every colour of the rainbow.

"Hit it with an Impediment Jinx!" yelled Hermione, who had just finished casting a Petrifying Curse of her own. The curse had, unfortunately, glanced

off the monster's rippling hide and slammed into Neville.

"It's hide's too tough! The magic just bounces off!"

"Somebody unpetrify Longbottom and get him back in the fight!"

"Why bother? He's already been cursed three times!"

"It's still coming!"

The beast gave a spine-chilling wail of fury, using its fang lined Monster Book of Monsters mouth (something none of the Gryffindors appreciated), as it doggedly stalked towards the portrait hole. Several of the old students tried to slow it down by flinging themselves in its path. One brave soul, Angelina Johnson, took a more direct route and jumped onto the monster's back.

"Stick yer wand up its nose! Up its nose!" yelled Ron desperately as he clung to the beast's tail.

"It's not a troll, Ron! It's a bunch o' bloody books!" Harry angrily countered as he tried to help his red-haired friend wrestle the writhing mass of paper, parchment and leather into submission.

"Aaaaaah! Bad idea! Bad idea!" screamed Angelina, wrapping both arms around the monster's neck and hanging on for dear life as it began to buck and twist about in an attempt to dislodge her.

"Atta-girl, Angie!" yelled George, who came running down from the boys' dormitories. The twins had fled upstairs a minute earlier in search of weapons to use against the magically resistant creature.

"Hang on!" shouted Fred in encouragement.

Brandishing their Beater's bats as if they were far more substantial weapons, the twins promptly charged at the beast without regard for their own safety. As the two Beaters began to pummel the creature with their bats, Oliver ducking in underneath its flaying arms and grabbed Angelina by the leg.

"Let go, girl!" he yelled. "I've got you! Leggo!"

"Bad idea! Bad idea! Bad idea!"

Angelina's fellow Chasers; Alicia Spinnet and Katie Bell also jumped to the black witch's rescue and latched onto her other leg in an attempt to pull her off the creature's back. As they were on the other side of the beast from their captain, this meant that they were effectively trying to pull her in the opposite direction.

Twisting violently, the monster spun on a heel and flicked its tail. Harry and Ron, who had been trying to slow its progress by pulling back on said tail, were sent careening across the common room. They landed in a tangle of arms and legs, having somehow managed to collect two other Gryffindors during their brief flight.

"Watch out for the tail! Watch out for the tail!" screamed Parvati.

"Forget the bloody tail! Watch out for its arms!" thundered one of the seventh-years as the monster grabbed Oliver by the ankle and hoisted him into the air.

"Stun it! Stun it! Stun it!" demanded Oliver, trying desperately to free himself even as the beast began to swing him at his fellow students as if he were a crudely fashioned club.

"Oi!" said Fred. "You let Ollie go, you bloody Potions essay!"

"Bad idea! Bad idea! Bad idea!"

With a roar that sounded like nails on a chalkboard, the beast reared up and slammed Oliver into George with a bone-jarring crunch. Both boys collapsed to the floor in a heap and no longer in any condition to continue. Incensed by this attack on his twin, Fred gave a roar of his own and redoubled his efforts to beat the monster into submission.

"Could this get any worse?" asked Ron as he and Harry scabbled back to their feet.

Blasting Fred back with a blast of neon pink ink, the creature raised its lumbering arms high above its head. Many of the students made to fire whatever curses, jinxes or hexes they knew, but were distracted when the beast's limbs split in two, leaving it with four arms in total instead of the original pair.

Seeing this, Harry turned to Ron and asked, "You had to ask, didn't you?"

With its arms now much less bulky and capable of more fluid and rapid movements, the homework monster renewed its journey towards the portrait hole.

"We're running out of time!" exclaimed Hermione. "It's almost loose!"

"It's just a bunch of animated paper and parchment," protested Seamus, nursing a badly bruised shoulder.

It's a bunch of animate paper and parchment that's wreaking untold havoc!" Hermione screeched in return, turning to the young Irishman and waving an angry fist.

"I know!" declared Neville in a moment of inspiration. Hermione had been kind enough to undo her Petrification Spell shortly after Angelina had jumped onto the monster's back. Taking a solid stance and levelling his wand, Neville cried out in a trembling voice, "*Incendio* !"

"Fire! Paper burns!" shouted Parvati in understanding.

Spurred on by Neville's small victory; a small patch of the beast's top right arm was now smouldering, many of the others began to take up the battle cry. Yells of *Incendio*, *Lacarnum Inflamarae*, *Gaav Flare*, *Elmekia Flame* and a host of other such incendiary spells filled the air. In very short order, the creature was ablaze with magical fires of a dozen different colours and origins.

"AAAHHH!! Stop that you idiots!" screamed Angelina, who was still clinging desperately to the beast. Luckily none of the spells had hit her directly, but the fires burning over the monster were spreading rapidly and had already succeeding in setting the hem of her Quidditch robes alight.

"Oh Merlin," groaned Hermione. "She'll be burned alive!"

"*Aguamenti* !" croaked Oliver, from his place on the floor. The spurt of water was small, and not nearly enough to extinguish all the flames, but it was enough to spur the others to follow his example.

Once again the air was filled with flying jets of colour and magic, successfully dousing the burning monster and soaking everything in the immediate vicinity. Smoke and steam billowed outwards and quickly filled the common room. Several older students cast spells to clear the room, revealing that Angelina still had both arms wrapped in a death grip round the sodden beast's thick neck.

The beast itself was for the first time looking somewhat the worse for wear. Its hide was burnt in patches and otherwise soaked in its entirety. It even appeared to be losing its shape as the paper and parchment that comprised its body soaked up the water that had been sprayed over it.

"Now!" yelled Harry, running forward. "Get it now! Before it can recover!"

"AAAAAAHHH!!" bellowed Ron, joining the Boy-Who-Lived in his charge.

Gryffindors, it had often been said, charge forward. This time was no different and almost everyone that was able did as Harry bid. The students made a concerted effort to dog pile the homework monster. Jumping onto it en masse they found, to their dismay, that while weakened by the fire and water, it was still able to put up fierce resistance.

Some measure of success was met when Fred and George managed to tear one of the beast's arms loose. The arm promptly lost all cohesion and disintegrated into a loose mass of water saturated pulp. Unfortunately this only served to drive the creature into a frenzy.

"Bad idea! Bad idea! BAD IDEA!!" chanted Angelina, barely able to maintain her hold on her impromptu steed as it bucked and whirled about in fury. Squeezing her eyes tightly shut, she jabbed her wand into what passed for the monster's face and screamed, "*Reducto* !"

The Gryffindors were quite surprised when their assailant's head suddenly exploded in a spray of ink and soggy bits of slightly charred paper. Even after the monster's now decapitated body twitched and Angelina slipped down and away, it was not until their homework finally fell apart with a gurgle that they realized the fight was apparently over.

After waiting for a minute or two, just in case it was a trick to lure them into a false sense of security, everyone slumped to the floor in exhaustion. It had taken the combined efforts of every Gryffindor in the tower nearly half an hour to destroy their seemingly demonically possessed homework.

"Blimey," muttered Seamus. "What the hell was that thing?"

"Dunno, but that was not how I wanted to spend my weekend," mumbled Katie, nursing a black eye.

"I'd rather have--"

"--detention with Snape," groaned Fred and George, leaned against each other.

Only Harry seemed less than utterly spent as he managed to remark, with appropriate amazement, "Well, what d'you know? Sticking her wand up its nose actually did the trick!"

Ron, who had collapsed next to him, turned to face Hermione. Their bushy haired friend was liberally splattered with several colours of ink and thoroughly soaked to the bone - much like everyone else.

"And you said a little homework wouldn't hurt anybody!"

Fin.

Author's Notes: Don't ask, it just came to me. A hopefully amusing little drabble of what might happen at Hogwarts when things get a little out of hand. Somehow, this strikes me as something perfectly possible, all things considered.