

## Harry Potter and the Giant Squid The Giant Squid

Hermione was concerned about Harry. He was avoiding his friends (though that was not exactly a new occurrence, it tended to happen periodically) and had developed a habit of bringing a bucket of bait, but no fishing pole, down to the stone jetty where the first-year boats were moored on the 364 days a year they weren't being used. Then he would sit there tossing bits of things into the water. Once his bucket was empty, he would return to the castle, whistling.

After almost two weeks of this, Hermione followed him out onto the jetty to confront him. "Harry, what are you doing? And what are those ... those things in your bucket?"

"Mostly fish guts. Sometimes chicken giblets, though. The house elves give me the bits nobody else wants."

"What do you want them for?"

"I bring them for the little ones. They like a treat." He gestured at the murky lake water.

Hermione stared at the waves for a little bit, and asked, hesitantly, "Little ones of what?"

"Focus just under the surface of the water. You'll see them."

Trying to look past the sparkle of sun on the surface was harder than it sounded, but after a few moments Hermione managed it, and she saw dozens – maybe hundreds – of glowing green spots gathered around the jetty. "Harry, what are they? They're not dangerous, are they?"

"Not at all. Here, I'll show you." The bucket was now empty, and he jumped down into one of the boats to rinse it off, then held it under the water for a bit, making a clicking sound with his tongue. Then he passed the bucket up so Hermione could see. "Be careful and don't spill it."

Hermione peered into the bucket. "Harry, it's a ... squid? A little one. But it has green eyes. They practically light up. So those ..." She gestured at the lights in the water and some water slopped out of the bucket. Harry grabbed it, making sure no more spilled.

"I told you to take care of it! Look, you made him ink himself." Sure enough, the water in the bucket was now opaque black. "Here, I'll put you back now," he said, almost crooning as he returned the little squid to the lake. "She didn't mean to frighten you, no she didn't."

"So all those lights are more squids?"

"Got it in one."

"Where did they all come from?"

Harry blushed. "Well, you remember last fall when Malfoy sabotaged that Transformation Potion and then sloshed it all over me?"

"And you got all slimy and slipped down the drain in the Potions room and we couldn't find you for a week and then when you came back you wouldn't say where you were? Of course I remember."

"Malfoy adulterated the potion with squid ink."

"So you turned into a squid."

"Not just any squid. He used Giant Squid ink, so I had to get down the drain and into the lake fast, before Malfoy could make calamari out of me or the size transformation trapped me in the pipes under the castle. And when the change was complete, I met the Giant Squid that lives in the lake."

"But that doesn't explain ... oh no. Harry, tell me you didn't ..."

"Well, she was a girl squid, and I was a boy squid, and she was lonely, and she had all these real sexy, um, tentacles, and, well ..."

"Harry, that's disgusting!"

"Hey, I learned lots of really neat things to do with my tentacles!" he protested, wagging his fingers and then his tongue at her.

"... And disturbingly arousing," Hermione concluded.

Harry gestured helplessly out at the lake full of green-eyed squidlets. "But I didn't know she was gonna lay eggs! We never covered the Squid in Care of Magical Creatures!"

"It'll probably be on the curriculum now. So your buckets of fish guts are ..."

"Child support, yeah. And I babysit while their mum goes off to do ... squid things."

"What are you going to do with all of them?"

"Well, a lot of the monsters in the lochs are getting ready to retire, so there are jobs opening up. And some of them, of course, are going to be Wizards. There's a school in Atlantis they can go to." He reached down to the surface of the water and a tiny tentacle rose and wrapped around his finger. He smiled fondly.

"It's a good thing you're rich," said Hermione, seriously. "Can you imagine the school fees?"

He shuddered. "Tell me about it. But maybe some of them will make the team. They'll be naturals, of course."

"What sport could they possibly play?" asked Hermione, curiously.

Harry's eyes gleamed with the light that said she'd fallen into his trap. "Why... Squidditch, of course."