

Harry Potter and the Shopping Trip of Doom **The Shopping Trip of Doom**

HARRY POTTER AND THE SHOPPING TRIP OF DOOM

After leaving Gringott's, Harry pulled his cloak hood up to cover his trademark messy hair and lightning-bolt scar. With this rudimentary disguise in place, he headed for the darker side of town: Knockturne Alley.

Traffic in the narrow alley seemed to be as heavy as ever, if not more so; apparently Voldemort's growing influence was doing wonders for the trade in shrunken heads and trolls' toenails. In order to get through the crowds, Harry had to use the most important lesson he'd ever learned from Snape: How to make your cloak billow threateningly. That, combined with a hand gesture he'd picked up from Luke Skywalker in Return of the Jedi, made the crowds part before him like ... well, like magic.

His destination loomed before him: the seedy, rundown storefront of Borgin & Burke's. It hadn't changed much since the last time he was here, although it did make a huge difference that he was now confidently walking in the front door instead of trying to sneak out unnoticed. The scruffy, unkempt proprietor (whether Borgin or Burke he didn't know and didn't care) hurried out from the back room and glowered at him when he didn't immediately recognize one of his regular customers.

"Can I be of assistance to ye, sor?" grunted the shopkeeper.

"Quite possibly," said Harry, attempting to duplicate the loftiness of Lucius Malfoy's tone. "You see, my townhome was burglarized not so long ago, and I have it on good authority that items such as the ones I'm missing tend to end up here."

"Are you implying that this store deals in stolen goods? I'll have ye know that I'm an honest dealer in antiquities."

"Of course, I was implying no such thing. I'm sure my family treasures are long gone to some other, less ... scrupulous ... dealer. After all, if I found any of my own, stolen goods here, I'd have to call the Aurors to deal with it, and then who knows when – or if – I'd get them back. I hope merely to replace the stolen items with similar ones, for which I am more than willing to pay a reasonable price. Are we clear on that?"

The shopkeeper nodded, accepting the terms. If his unknown customer did, indeed, find any of the stolen artefacts, they would be sold back to him at a reasonable price – otherwise, the Aurors would be called, which would be a truly dreadful thing given his stock in trade. Given the pittance that was paid to the sneak thieves that usually supplied Borgin's stock, he was sure he'd make a profit on the transactions anyway – not a handsome one, perhaps, but a profit nonetheless. "Feel free to look around at yer leisure, sor," he said.

Harry nodded casually and proceeded to look about the store. The first thing he spotted was a set of four silver goblets with a familiar crest on them – the only four goblets that had not been retrieved when Mundungus Fletcher's depredations into the Black family treasures had been discovered. Harry had Borgin place the goblets on the counter and wrap them. "I like the style of these goblets very much," said Harry. "They're quite similar to my own. Now, would you perhaps have other items supplied by the same, er, source? Perhaps I'll find other things that would make good replacements."

Sweat broke out on the shopkeeper's brow. He knew what the other man was looking for, now, and produced several other items that he'd bought from Fletcher before the little sot had so abruptly disappeared. Most of it was simple household items, but there were a few darkish magical items and some items of jewelry as well.

Harry looked over the selection, running his fingers over a silver candy dish, a heavy gold locket, and a music box. "Yes, I think these will do nicely. What is your price for these items?"

Borgin named a price for the entire lot which, while not exorbitant, was not exactly cheap. Harry understood that haggling was expected, and talked the price down a bit, pointing out that the locket was damaged and wouldn't even open, and that the music box was out of tune. He paid Borgin the price agreed upon.

"Will that be all yer wantin', sor?"

"Perhaps, perhaps not," said Harry, hesitating only a moment before putting the locket on for safekeeping. "There were some other things I was interested in, as well. Things that would make good additions to my family collection, you understand."

Borgin rubbed his hands together in anticipation. This transaction would be quite different from the previous one, since there was no question of stolen goods involved, and he was prepared to make back what he'd lost in profits on the earlier exchange. He watched as his customer stalked about the store, occasionally touching the locket as if to make sure it was still there.

"Ah. I like the looks of this," Harry said, picking up a simple gold cup. "Quite nice. And that inkwell. The same maker, do you think?" he asked, turning the inkwell over to look at the manufacturer's mark. "Now, if I could look at your trays of jewelry there, and ... do you have anything in the way of, er, cutlery? Not household items, you understand, but more useful items?"

"That's in the back, sor. Ye'll understand we don't keep things like that on display."

"I'll be interested in seeing them after I'm through with these," Harry said as he perused the jewelry tray. "I have an old sword, you see, and I'm looking for something to match it for display purposes."

One diamond ring later, Borgin, feeling much happier with the prospects now, led his still unknown but undoubtedly well-heeled customer into the back room, where he spent a good half an hour pawing through the collection of swords and knives of various sorts, before selecting an antique dagger with a ruby in the pommel. If Borgin found it unusual that none of the items selected had any noticeable magical aura, he didn't say anything. Not all of his stock was Dark, just of dubious origin. The haggling over these items was much harder, but in the end both parties were mostly satisfied.

Harry returned to 12 Grimmauld Place with his hood still drawn up. "Who are you and what are you doing here?" snapped Ron, brandishing his wand.

Hermione groaned, slapped Ron on the arm, and pushed Harry's hood back. "It's Harry, you dolt."

"Oh. Great disguise, mate!" Ron said, grinning. Harry and Hermione both rolled their eyes and shook their heads.

Harry led the way into the parlour, obviously feeling incredibly pleased with himself. "Come look what I found!" He started unpacking the items Dung had pawned first. "Look, here's the locket! And that stupid music box! And the missing candy dish from the silver service!"

"Why'd you want to get the music box back?" asked Ron, remembering how annoying it had been the first time around.

"Didn't, really, but since I said was trying to recover certain items, I didn't want to draw attention to the locket by only redeeming that. But look, look what else was there! Once I was wearing the locket, I could see that there were other items there that had an aura matching it!"

He pulled out the cup, the inkwell, and one of the daggers. "The cup of Helga Hufflepuff, the inkwell of Rowena Ravenclaw, and the Dagger of Godric Gryffindor."

Hermione gasped. "How did all of those wind up at Borgin & Burke's?"

Harry shrugged. "Voldemort was too clever for his own good. I mean, really, the way to get anything burgled is to put it someplace secret with really heavy security on it – it's practically like a sign saying 'Come Steal Me.' It says so right in the Evil Overlord's List. And there are only a couple of decent pawnshops in the entire wizarding community, and only one that would handle items like these. It's obvious in retrospect." He picked up the dagger, letting the light shine along the blade. "Pity we'll have to destroy these, but that's the way it is. With these, the diary and the ring gone, that leaves only Nagini."

"Good," said Ron, licking his lips. "I've always wanted to find out if snake meat really does taste like chicken."