

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS

1. The Escape

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Harry slunk warily along the footpath, his head slightly bowed, eye's darting up and down the street, glancing every now and then left and right. His right hand hovered over the pocket in his worn out faded jeans where his wand lay hidden, but within easy grasp. His fist was unconsciously clenching and unclenching. Most people would have found the misty cool night air soothing, pleasant, but Harry was on edge.

As he rounded the corner of Privet Drive, he stopped. His head turned to survey the street before him. There was nothing out of the ordinary, but he knew someone was there, somewhere, lurking in the darkest corners, or hidden by magic. He could feel their presence as sure as he knew he was standing there himself. He waited for someone to show. He never knew who it would be, but he could predict their appearance down to the last second. He stood for a moment, almost overwhelmed by his impatience. It had been the same every night ever since he had been at his Aunt and Uncles. And tonight, as before, a figure gradually emerged from the nothingness.

Harry was able to make out the features as it made it's way towards him. It was Kingsley Shacklebolt. After scanning the area as soon as he had seen Harry, Kingsley had removed his invisibility cloak and given Harry a quick nod in greeting. When they were within a few feet of each other, Harry spoke.

'What's happening? Who's here with you?' His voice was calm, but his look was determined. 'Goldstein is at the other end of the street' Kingsley said in his deep voice 'But he'll be replaced by Tonks at midnight. I'm on until dawn.' Even as he spoke, he never stopped surveying the area. 'Nothing to report?'

This is how the quick exchanges between Harry and his guard had gone every night. 'No, nothing.' Harry's eye's barely met Kingsley's as he looked down at his shuffling feet. 'So ... when am I getting out of here?'

'Nothing yet I'm afraid.' Kingsley was used to Harry's impatience, he had stood guard five out of the eight nights since Harry had returned to Privet Drive. 'Give it a bit of time,' he said 'things are not as ... easy ... as they were. It's going to take a fair bit of organizing. As it is Podmore has to leave early ...' he brushed his hand over his bald head 'so I'm going to be hear alone for about half an hour.'

Harry looked up suddenly, and then looked back at the ground just as quickly, his eyes seeming to be searching for something. This was it! He thought. This was what he'd been waiting for. It was only a short amount of time, he would have to cut it close, but he knew he could do it. With one guard gone, he could slip through.

'Is there any other news?' Harry always dreaded asking this, but he had to know. If he was going to go through with his plan, he had to learn everything he could about what The Order knew. There was silence as

Harry waited, eyes still lingering on the ground. He was sure if Kingsley caught his eye, he would see the guilt Harry tried so hard to conceal. Kingsley cleared his throat. 'Some of the usual stuff.' he said, though he seemed hesitant. 'A few more missing people ... they found Fudge's body late last night.'

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