

Full Pensieve
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On Course Untitled Chapter

Mr. Weasley peered into the bag strapped to the back of the buggy. "So it's a club?"

Harry forced a smile and pretended that he wasn't exasperated. "That's right, Mr. Weasley. It's the Royal and Ancient Golf Club."

Mr. Weasley's nose disappeared between the drivers. "I thought *these* were clubs," he muttered into the bag. "I don't see anything royal or ancient here."

"Did you have a Duelling Club when you were at school?" Harry asked.

Mr. Weasley's head abruptly popped up. "Oh! Of course! It's *that* sort of club – how thick of me. It's just... this is all so unusual..."

Harry couldn't help but laugh. It had taken considerable effort to coax Mr. Weasley into clothing that wasn't completely out of sorts. He had been unable to prevent the selection of a particularly garish pair of golf knickers, but Harry figured he'd seen stranger on the Old Course. The Norfolk jacket was surely odd, but the Royal and Ancient Golf Club was all about anachronism; Harry had taken a deep breath and moved on.

Curiously, it was Odd Lovegood who was in perfectly conventional dress – a windshirt over half-sleeve polo shirt, and casual slacks. Dumbledore rounded out the foursome, clad in tweed jacket, checked trousers and Greek fisherman's cap.

It was a blustery late-season day, and Harry had purposely brought them to the Strathtyrum Course – they could have buggies there, and duffers were acceptable. Considering that it had taken ten minutes to tear Mr. Weasley away from a close examination of the buggy's undercarriage, even with Mr. Lovegood's coaxing, Harry was satisfied with his choice. The irony of the four of them golfing in the midst of a war wasn't lost on Harry, but Dumbledore had insisted that an outing was in order.

"Is a gentlemen's wager customary with respect to the game?" Dumbledore asked.

Harry hesitated. "Erm... sure. I suppose we could play a skins game."

Dumbledore crooked an eyebrow. "A skins game? Perhaps you should explain."

"Each hole has a value, say fifty pounds. The winner of the hole wins the fifty pounds. If there's a tie, the fifty pounds carries to the next hole," Harry told him.

"I see." Dumbledore stroked his beard – which had been magically shortened for the occasion – thoughtfully. "Arthur and Oddment would be at a severe disadvantage. I have had the pleasure of playing now and again, though it has been a very long time." He drew himself up. "Very well, Harry. A skins game it shall be, between the two of us. What say you – fifty galleons per hole?"

Harry let out a small gasp. He had no idea what a Headmaster was paid, but was certain that fifty galleons would be much more onerous for Dumbledore than for himself. "Fifty? Are you sure about that?"

Dumbledore laughed. "Money means little to me. Fifty it shall be."

Mr. Weasley stood at the first tee, holding a sand wedge. Harry shook his head. "You'll need a driver," he said, and made for Mr. Weasley's bag.

"I thought Odd was the driver," Mr. Weasley said earnestly. Harry winced, and wondered whether they might set a new course record for the longest round.

After seven holes - and better than three hours, during which they'd allowed a dozen groups to play through - even Odd Lovegood didn't care to walk with Mr. Weasley. Thus it was left with Harry, who decided that this was surely one of Dumbledore's daily lessons. At last, Mr. Weasley asked a question that wasn't bizarre, much to Harry's pleasure. "So how is it that you came to be in this club of yours?"

"Rigel Black was one of the original 22 contributors," Harry answered. "I guess it's like the peerage – the Blacks always had a membership available, but no one took it up."

Mr. Weasley nodded thoughtfully, and then returned to surveying the course. "What's this about eighteen holes, then?" he asked abruptly. "I've counted no fewer than thirty holes, just since the last time we swung those drivers."

"Drivers," Harry muttered.

"Where did my ball go?" Mr. Weasley wondered aloud. "I seem to have lost track of it again."

"It's in the water," Harry said without thinking. He managed to catch Mr. Weasley's steps from the water hazard, and quickly seized the sleeve of his jacket.

"I was just going to retrieve the ball," Mr. Weasley said.

"Just drop a new one, remember?" Harry sighed. "I can't dry you again - someone's bound to see."

The tips of Mr. Weasley's ears flushed. "Oh, right," he said. "They should just drain these little ponds. It would be much easier to keep hold of a ball

that way. It's not as though they're spring-fed; just going to get brackish, sitting there."

Harry rubbed his hand across his face in frustration. "Look... I'm really glad you're here, but I need to concentrate on the game. Dumbledore keeps managing a tie. There's quite a lot at stake –"

Mr. Weasley frowned. "Albus is wagering with you?"

"It's just a gentlemen's bet," Harry snapped.

"Whatever you say," Mr. Weasley said, with a roll of his eyes.

Dumbledore and Odd Lovegood were already on the green when Harry chipped up. Mr. Weasley had taken to skipping his ball along the fairway like a flat stone on a loch, which suited Harry fine – it was much faster.

Mr. Weasley placed his ball at the fringe of the green, at Harry's direction, and shook his head. "I still don't understand why it's called a pin. I can't recall ever having seen a pin more than two inches long... and these are so springy... and with a flag attached."

"Mr. Weasley, just hit the ball," sighed Harry.

"With the Puter-Outer?" Mr. Weasley asked.

Harry closed his eyes tightly. "The putter, yes."

Mr. Weasley wielded the putter like a cricket bat, and the ball obliged by shooting across the green and deep into a sand hazard. He grinned sheepishly. "A bit too much on that, wasn't there?"

"A bit," Harry said flatly.

"You seem frustrated, Harry," Mr. Weasley observed. "Is this game intentionally frustrating, by chance?"

"It's beginning to seem that way, isn't it?" retorted Harry.

Odd Lovegood removed the pin, dropped to all fours on the green, and peered intently at the cup. "I knew it – there *is* a fezziwig in there."

Harry tapped his foot crossly. "Then the fezziwig can play through. After that, it's Dumbledore's turn."

Mr. Weasley stood knee deep in the sand hazard, gazing at the striking end of his putter - in fact, it was no more than an inch from his eyes. He shook it, and the graphite shaft suddenly flexed. Dumbledore quickly made his way into the sand, and took the dazed Mr. Weasley by the hand. He casually waved his free hand, and put a stop to the knot growing on Mr. Weasley's forehead. "I believe that end of the club belongs on the turf, Arthur," he said gently.

"Quite," Mr. Weasley managed.

Dumbledore waited until Odd Lovegood proclaimed that the fezziwig had managed a score of six and was moving on to the ninth hole, and then replaced his ball atop the marker. "Now, then, to matters at hand," he murmured.

He moved his hand loosely in the air as though he was somehow feeling the break of the green, then nodded, assumed a rather awkward stance, waggled his knobby knees, and struck the ball.

Harry watched the ball move through three highly improbable zig-zags along the length of the green, then double back, lip the cup, and abruptly drop into the hole. He threw down his putter in disgust, jabbed his index finger at the Headmaster, and shouted, "I *knew* it was magic!"

"Not at all, though I do suppose it could be construed as magical by some," Dumbledore returned. "It's simply a matter of being one with the green, Harry. As you can no longer win the hole, do I correctly assume that I am now 400 Galleons richer?"

Mr. Weasley grinned, and jammed his putter into the bag. "I'm driving the buggy this time," he informed Mr. Lovegood.

Mr. Lovegood dropped behind the wheel before Mr. Weasley could make his way around. "I don't believe so, Arthur," he insisted. "Those trousers of yours could draw a heliopath, and then you'd promptly drive us into that bungle over there –"

Harry slapped the heel of his hand against his forehead. "Bunker. *Bunker!*"

"No, no – definitely a bungle. They use the sand as camouflage. It's fortunate Arthur was minding where he stepped," Mr. Lovegood said.

Dumbledore dropped into the seat next to Harry, who drove the second cart. Harry scowled at him. "You planned this. You're a ringer, aren't you?" he snapped.

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. "I never said or implied that I was unfamiliar with the game. I believe I said that I hadn't played in some time."

"Doesn't look that way," Harry grouched.

"I spent a few fine summer days at St. Andrews and at Royal Lytham, long, long ago," Dumbledore said. "It is possible to pick up quite a lot by watching, especially with the proper partner. There was this fellow from America, by the name of Jones –"

Harry slammed on the brake. "You played with Bobby Jones?"

"Why, I believe that *was* his name, since you mention it," said Dumbledore. "He was a very helpful young man. Shall we continue with our wager?"

Harry snorted. "I'll quit while I'm behind, thank you very much."

Dumbledore patted him on the shoulder. "Always know your opponent, Harry – that is your lesson for today."

Odd Lovegood and Mr. Weasley were already at the next tee. Mr. Weasley had taken out a quill, and Mr. Lovegood was frantically trying to take it from him.

Harry stepped on the gas pedal. "What in Merlin's name is he doing now?"

Dumbledore laughed. "Addressing the ball, I imagine. Perhaps we should limit future golf outings to the two of us?"

Harry thought about that for a moment, and then grinned. "I'd like that. If I'd known you played, I could have booked the Old Course."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled yet again. "An excellent suggestion, Harry. I'll be happy to pay for our rounds, as well. My winnings today will more than suffice, I'm sure."

"It'll cover dinner, as well," Harry grumbled. "An expensive bloody dinner."