

“You got him yet?” Harry shouted.

“Hardly!” Jacob replied. The strength of the creature they faced was overwhelming, only with the pair of them working together could they hope to subdue it. Jacob found himself longing for his trusty service revolver, or better yet a Vickers machine gun; crystals tied to a three-foot stick felt hopelessly ineffective.

The snapping of the beast’s jaws mere inches from his nose reminded him to focus. Resisting the temptation to turn and run he wielded his staff (don’t call it a magic wand, the trainer had repeated) and summoned the energies latent within it. With a glance at Harry he drove this power forward into the monster’s chest. It staggered slightly, its roars abruptly halted, and it looked quizzically at him for a second before Harry’s own blast knocked it lifeless to the ground.

“Very good show, lads,” Christopher Grey shouted from his position on the sidelines. Checking the stopwatch in his hand he made some notes on his clipboard and nodded approvingly. “And a new record, for your current group of recruits.” He shook the hands of the other men around him, but made no move towards the recruits now getting their breath back.

Harry and Jacob exchanged a handshake of their own and walked over to inspect the defeated beast. About the size and shape of a bull, matted black hair hid its powerful muscles and made it appear even larger than it already was. Poking at its head with his staff, Jacob saw the once jet-black eyes beneath its thick fringe were already faded to a milky-grey colour.

Mr Grey gestured to a small man beside him who reluctantly separated from the group of observers and walked over to the beast. With a quiet “excuse me, gents,” he reached under the creature’s fur and unclipped a thick metal collar.