Hagrid tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella. The brick he had touched quivered — it wriggled — in the middle, a small hole appeared — it grew wider and wider — a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight.

“Welcome,” said Hagrid, “to Diagon Alley.”

He grinned at Harry’s amazement. They stepped through the archway. Harry looked over his shoulder and saw the archway shrink back into solid wall.

The sun shone brightly on a stack of cauldrons outside the nearest shop. Cauldrons — All Sizes — Copper, Brass, Pewter, Silver - Self-Stirring — Collapsible - said a sign hanging over them.

“Yeah, you’ll be needin’ one,” said Hagrid, “but we gotta get yer money first.”

Harry wished he had about eight more eyes. He turned his head in every direction as they walked up the street, trying to look at everything at once: the shops, the things outside them, the people doing their shopping. A plump woman outside an apothecary’s was shaking her head as they passed, saying, “Dragon liver, seventeen Sickles an ounce, they’re mad …”

A low, soft hooting came from a dark shop with a sign saying Eeylops Owl Emporium – Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown and Snowy. Several boys of about Harry’s age had their noses pressed against a say, ‘the new Nimbus Two Thousand – fastest ever – ’ There were instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bats spleens and eels’ eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon …

“Gringotts,” said Hagrid.

They had reached a snowy white building which towered over the other little shops. Standing beside its burnished bronze doors, wearing a uniform of scarlet and gold, was –

“Yeah, that’s a goblin,” said Hagrid quietly as they walked up the white stone steps towards him.