***Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone***

***Chapter 13***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Even though Harry is happy about seeing his parent's images for the first time in his life, he begins having nightmares. The term begins again after the holidays and he is working very hard at Quidditch and his lessons.

One day, Hermione announces that she has found out about Nicolas Flamel. He was a wizard noted for his work in alchemy with his partner, Albus Dumbledore. Flamel is credited with creating the Sorcerer's Stone. The Stone turns metal into gold and produces the Elixir of Life, which makes the drinker immortal. Flamel is 665 years old. They realize that Dumbledore must be keeping the stone safe for Flamel at Hogwarts.

The day of the Quidditch game against Slytherin for the School Cup dawns and Professor Snape will be refereeing the game. The game is crowded and even the Headmaster has come to watch. The game is over before it even starts; Harry catches the Snitch and wins the game in less than 5 minutes. As he goes to celebrate with Ron, he sees a cloaked, hooded figure head toward the forbidden forest. He believes it is Snape up to no good, so he follows the figure.

He peeks through the branches and sees Snape speaking with Professor Quirrell, the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. He creeps closer and hears Snape and Quirrell speaking. From the conversation Harry understands that Snape is trying to get Quirrell to figure out how to get past Fluffy the dog, and he is threatening the professor. Quirrell seems frightened of Snape's words. Snape leaves the other professor with a sweep of his cloak.

Harry rushes back to the school and finds Ron and Hermione and tells them what he has overheard. He relays that Snape is trying to coerce Quirrell to help him get the Sorcerer's Stone against his will. He supposes that there are Dark Art spells guarding the stone, and that without Quirrell, Snape would not be able to get to the Stone. The three decide that it is just a matter of time before Quirrell, who is rather meek, cracks under Snape's pressure.

***Brief Analysis:***

Harry is very proud of winning the game and feels that he has finally done something to prove that he is not just some famous name from some old legacy.

He overhears a conversation between Professor Snape and Professor Quirrell that seems suspicious, but he might be wrong. There are hints here that Harry's dislike of the Potions teacher, Snape, is clouding his thinking.

***Summary in Detail(12 and 13):***

Harry and Ron spend their Christmas holiday at Hogwarts. Although Malfoy teases Harry for staying at school during the vacation, Harry is actually looking forward to having Christmas away from the Dursleys, who always make the holiday a particularly unpleasant occasion. Hermione is going home for the vacation, but she forces Harry and Ron to spend a few more hours researching [Nicolas Flamel](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone/study-guide/character-list#nicolas-flamel) before she has to leave. Despite their best attempts since [Hagrid](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone/study-guide/character-list#hagrid)’s accidental slip, Harry, Ron, and Hermione have had no luck finding out anything about Nicolas Flamel. Hermione urges them to keep looking while she is away.

Harry and Ron spend most of their holiday relaxing in the Gryffindor common room, roasting marshmallows over the fire, and playing wizard chess. On Christmas day, Harry is surprised to find a small pile of presents at the base of his bed. In additional to a fifty pence piece from the Dursleys, Harry receives a box of fudge and a hand-knitted sweater from Ron’s mother, a large box of Chocolate Frogs from Hermione, and a wooden flute from Hagrid. He also receives a rare invisibility cloak from an anonymous source; the package is accompanied only with a note that tells him that the cloak once belonged to Harry’s father.

Harry decides to use the invisibility cloak to sneak into the restricted section of the library during the night and do some more research on Nicolas Flamel. Once of the books starts screaming after he opens it, and Harry runs out of the library and hides in an abandoned classroom while Filch prowls around. Inside the classroom, Harry discovers a massive mirror that is ornately decorated and carved with a strange inscription: “Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi.” Harry looks in the mirror and is terrified when he does not see his own reflection. Instead, he sees several people smiling and waving at him. One of the figures is a very pretty woman with striking green eyes, and Harry realizes that he is looking at his mother.

Harry runs back to the dorm to get Ron and show him his family in the mirror. When Ron looks, however, he only sees Harry’s reflection. When he looks in the mirror for himself, he sees himself as Head Boy and captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch team. Ron wonders if the mirror shows the future, but Harry knows that it does not because it shows his dead family. The next day, Harry is preoccupied with the images that he saw in the mirror. Ron urges him to forget it, but Harry feels a growing obsession to see his family again.

That night, he rushes off to the room and is so eager to sit in front of the mirror again that he does not notice that Dumbledore is already in the room. Dumbledore explains that the Mirror of Erised shows an individual’s most earnest desires. Yet, it does not provide knowledge or truth, and Dumbledore warns that its images can be very addictive and cause a person to lose sight of reality. Dumbledore tells Harry that the mirror will be moved to a new location the next day and urges Harry not to look for the mirror again.

Harry heeds Dumbledore’s advice not to look for the Mirror of Erised, but he finds himself haunted by the images that he saw. He also starts to have nightmares about his parents. When Hermione returns from vacation, she is shocked at Harry’s adventures with the invisibility cloak but is disappointed that he was not at least able to find out about Nicolas Flamel in the process. Quidditch practice begins in earnest again, and Harry is horrified to learn that Snape is going to referee Gryffindor’s next match against Hufflepuff. Ron and Hermione urge him not to play, but Harry does not feel that he can back out and let down the team.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione finally uncover the mystery of Nicolas Flamel from the collectible card on Dumbledore found in a Chocolate Frog. The description on the card mentions Nicolas Flamel as Dumbledore’s partner in his work on alchemy, and Hermione uses one of her books to find a more detailed description. Flamel is the only known maker of the Sorcerer’s Stone, which can turn metal into gold and produce the elixir of life. Harry, Ron, and Hermione conclude that Flamel asked Dumbledore to take the Stone from Gringotts and place it under his protection at Hogwarts. Harry becomes increasingly nervous as the Quidditch match approaches. If Gryffindor wins the match, they will also be likely to win the House Cup championship. Yet, Harry worries about Snape as the referee for the match, especially since he is unsure of Snape’s motivation for stealing the Sorcerer’s Stone. Harry’s Potions classes are almost unbearable, and Harry gets the sense that Snape is treating him particularly bad because of the impending match.

When the match finally arrives, Harry feels more confident when he sees Dumbledore in the stands; he knows that Snape will not try to harm him in Dumbledore’s presence. Harry catches the Snitch in the first five minutes of the game, allowing Gryffindor to claim victory over Hufflepuff in an unprecedented amount of time. After the game, Harry flies toward the Forbidden Forest on his way to broom shed and overhears Snape threatening [Professor Quirrell](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone/study-guide/character-list#professor-quirrell). Snape mentions the Sorcerer’s Stone and warns Quirrell not to become his enemy before stalking back to the castle. Harry decides that Snape is bullying Professor Quirrell to help him get past the three-headed dog and steal the Sorcerer’s Stone for his own purposes. Harry tells Ron and Hermione, and the three fear that the stammering Defense Against the Dark Arts professor will not be able to stand up to Snape for long.

***Analysis in Detail(Chapter 12 and 13):***

For the majority of the text thus far, Dumbledore is a detached, almost abstract figure in Harry’s life. He is introduced in Little Whinging when Harry is an infant, but Harry has no idea that Dumbledore played such a crucial role in placing him with the Dursleys and protecting him from attention until his entrance to Hogwarts. He also has no idea that Dumbledore gives him the invisibility cloak for Christmas that he had borrowed from [James Potter](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone/study-guide/character-list#james-potter). From Harry’s perspective, then, Dumbledore is little more a figure on the trading card of a Chocolate Frog, more of an idea than an actual person.

With Harry’s discovery of the Mirror of Erised and Dumbledore’s subsequent conversations with him, all of this changes. Dumbledore is no longer a detached wizard but rather becomes a sort of father figure for Harry. He demonstrates genuine affection for Harry and a clear interest in Harry’s life and personal development, far more than that of any other student. He also takes it upon himself to teach Harry the valuable lesson of the Mirror of Erised: that desire can bring neither knowledge nor truth. Dumbledore’s position as a father figure will become increasingly important over the course of the book series, just as Harry’s loyalty to him and Gryffindor House will be.

Because of Dumbledore’s well-timed intervention, Harry avoids becoming dangerously obsessed with the Mirror of Erised and the images that he sees within it. At the same time, however, Harry’s visions in the mirror reveal elements of his character of which he was not even aware. As Dumbledore explains, the Mirror of Erised (“desire” spelled backward) reveals an individual’s deepest, most earnest desires. While Ron’s deepest desire is to surpass his successful brothers, Harry’s desire is far more poignant: a wish to be reunited with the family that he never knew.

Until this moment, Harry does not realize the extent to which the memory of his murdered parents directs his actions. His beliefs about [Voldemort](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-philosophers-stone/study-guide/character-list#voldemort), his interest in the Sorcerer’s Stone, and even his refusal to be placed in Slytherin House all lead back to his loneliness and desperate desire to know his parents. The Mirror of Erised provides Harry with a clarifying glimpse into his own nature and ensures that he will view all of his future actions in light of this deep desire. As Dumbledore reminds him, a glimpse is all that Harry needs to develop this self-awareness; any more than a glimpse threatens to overpower Harry’s sense of reality and trap him into becoming fixated on family that will never be.

Interestingly, through his interactions with Harry in this scene, Dumbledore presents himself as a familial replacement for Harry’s lost family. The family that exists in the Mirror of Erised can never exist again, but that does not mean that Harry cannot create a new family in his life. Ron, Hermione, and Harry’s other close friends can each become a part of this new family, just as Dumbledore presents himself as a possible candidate. The most important thing is that Harry does not dwell in the past but focus on the future. Although Voldemort took away Harry’s true family, he did not take away Harry’s ability to make new friends, new loyalties, and new ties that are as strong as family.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) doesn’t search for [the Mirror of Erised](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/symbols/the-mirror-of-erised) again, but he starts to have nightmares about “his parents disappearing in a flash of green light” and a strange evil laugh. Then, just before the start of term, [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) returns. She can’t believe that Harry was out of bed three nights in a row and still didn’t find out who [Flamel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters) is. Harry, [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley), and Hermione return to scanning books during their breaks.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Harry attempts to push his desires away, but family is a large pull for him. Fortunately, Harry is provided with a different kind of love and support in Ron and Hermione, who try to redirect Harry back into something more pressing and productive.

***Summary Part 2:***

Quidditch practice also starts up again, and the team is excited: if the Gryffindors win their next match against Hufflepuff, they’ll overtake Slytherin in the House Championship. [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) trains harder than ever, finding that he has fewer nightmares when he does. However, when [Wood](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters) reveals during one training session that [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape) is refereeing the upcoming match, Harry worries that Snape could try to kill him again.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Harry’s devotion to Quidditch, which gives him a sense of purpose and belonging, also helps alleviate Harry’s longing for his family and the nightmares that consume him as a result.

***Summary Part 3:***

Later that afternoon, when [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter), [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) are in the common room, [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/neville-longbottom) returns with his legs invisibly bound together by a Leg-Locker Curse that [Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/draco-malfoy) had set upon him. Hermione performs the counter-curse, and Ron tells Neville that he has to stand up to Malfoy, but Neville admits that he doesn’t feel “brave enough to be in Gryffindor.” Harry tries to comfort Neville, offering him a Chocolate Frog and saying that Neville is “worth twelve of Malfoy.”

***Analysis Part 3:***

Just as friends have helped Harry with his insecurities, Harry in turn provides support  for Neville with his own insecurities: thinking that he’s not brave enough to be in Gryffindor. This moment foreshadows when Neville will be brave enough to stand up to Malfoy in the next chapter, as well as Harry, Ron, and Hermione themselves near the end of the novel.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/neville-longbottom) thanks [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) and gives him the card from the Chocolate Frog, knowing that he collects them. It’s the [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/albus-dumbledore) card again, but Harry notices something: [Nicolas Flamel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters)’s name. The card says that Dumbledore worked on alchemy with Nicolas Flamel. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) then gets a strike of inspiration: she pulls out a large book that she had checked out a few weeks earlier and reads that Flamel “is the only known maker of [the Sorcerer’s Stone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/symbols/the-sorcerer-s-stone).”

***Analysis Part 5:***

Here, friendship allows Harry, Ron, and Hermione together to discover who Nicolas Flamel is. Harry’s support for Neville leads him to a key clue about Flamel, which in turn leads Hermione to her own discovery. Thus, only together, through their friendship, is the trio able to continue unraveling the mystery behind what the dog is guarding.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley) and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) don’t know what [the Sorcerer’s Stone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/symbols/the-sorcerer-s-stone) is. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) explains that it transforms any metal into gold, and that it also produces the Elixir of Life, which makes the drinker immortal. The Stone currently  belongs to [Nicolas Flamel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters), who is 665 years old. They realize that this is what Fluffy must be guarding, and what [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape) is trying to steal.

***Analysis Part 6:***

The revelations about what the Sorcerer’s Stone is immediately associate the Stone with power and greed, as it gives the person who has it the ability to defy death (perhaps the ultimate form of power) and gain infinite wealth. Thus, it becomes an immediate attraction to anyone who wants power and greed.

***Summary Part 7:***

The day of the Quidditch match, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) feels incredibly anxious. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley) have secretly been practicing the Leg-Locker Curse to use on [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape) if necessary. To add to the pressure, [Wood](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters) tells Harry that they need him to catch the Snitch early on in the game—before Snape can favor Hufflepuff too much. [Fred](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/fred-weasley) notes that the whole school is in the stands, including [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/albus-dumbledore). This makes Harry feel relieved, as he knows that Snape wouldn’t try to hurt him with Dumbledore there.

***Analysis Part 7:***

It is notable that even when Harry believed that Snape might have tried to kill him at the last game, he still wants to play in this match because without him, his team would have to forfeit. The love of both Ron and Hermione as well as Dumbledore eases Harry’s mind, because he knows that they are there to protect him.

***Summary Part 8:***

The game begins. [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape) awards Hufflepuff early penalties for no reason as [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) looks for the Snitch “like a hawk.” Up in the stands, [Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/draco-malfoy) makes fun of Harry, and then of [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley) and [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/neville-longbottom), who are sitting nearby. Neville stands up, and stutters that he’s “worth twelve of [Malfoy.]” Malfoy continues to taunt him, remarking on his lack of intelligence and Ron’s lack of money. Ron starts to wrestle with Malfoy.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Neville again benefits from the friendship that Harry, Ron, and Hermione have shown him. Their words earlier in the chapter allow Neville to stand up to Malfoy and discover his own form of courage, which also in turn helps him feel that he belongs with the Gryffindors.

***Summary Part 9:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) then makes a “spectacular dive,” after which he raises the Snitch in triumph. The stands erupt: no one can remember the Snitch being caught so quickly. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/albus-dumbledore) congratulates [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter), saying it’s nice to see that he’s “keeping busy.” The Gryffindors lift Harry onto their shoulders victoriously, cheering his success. When Harry leaves the locker room alone some time later, he’s happier than he’s ever been. He has done something he can really be proud of, and is not just a famous name anymore.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Dumbledore’s remark that he’s glad Harry has been “keeping busy” is a reference to the Mirror of Erised. Instead, Harry has been pursuing a different, more tangible desire: the desire to prove himself through hard work and to feel that he belongs among the people he loves. It is notable that his success in Quidditch does not fuel any kind of ego; rather, it relieves him because he feels like he has finally done something to justify the fame that has already been afforded to him.

***Summary Part 10:***

As [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) returns his broom to the broom shed, he notices a hooded figure walking toward the forbidden forest—[Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape), sneaking around during dinner. Harry takes off on his broom and follows, climbing into a tree to watch. Snape is there, and so is [Quirrell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-quirrell). Snape asks, threateningly, if Quirrell has found out how to get past [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/rubeus-hagrid)’s dog and get to [the Sorcerer’s Stone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/symbols/the-sorcerer-s-stone) yet. Snape concludes their conversation by saying that they will have another chat soon, when Quirrell has had time to “decide where [his] loyalties lie.”

***Analysis Part 10:***

Now that Harry has discovered what Fluffy is guarding, he feels even more emboldened to break the rules, knowing that it would be wrong to let someone he believes to be bad (even if that person is a teacher) get their hands on the Stone. Because of the Stone’s association with  power, and because of power’s association with evil, Harry understands the importance of keeping it safe.

***Summary Part 11:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/harry-potter) returns to the castle, and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/ron-weasley) and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/hermione-granger) meet him, asking where he’s been. They tell him everyone is waiting in the common room to have a party for him. Harry breathlessly tells them that [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-snape)’s trying to steal [the Stone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/symbols/the-sorcerer-s-stone), and trying to force [Quirrell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-sorcerer-s-stone/characters/professor-quirrell) to help him get to it. They worry that the feeble, stuttering Professor Quirrell is the only thing standing between Snape and the Stone.

***Analysis Part 11:***

Again, Harry shows his humility and self-sacrificing nature. Instead of resting on his laurels and enjoying the party that has been set for him, he worries instead about the future danger that could be headed their way if Snape gets his hands on the Sorcerer’s Stone, and how they can work to prevent that outcome.

***Important Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

"Very well," Snape cut in. "We'll have another little chat soon, when you've had time to think things over and decided where your loyalties lie." (13.114)

***Explanation:***

Here, Snape is taunting Quirrell, trying to provoke him into revealing whether he knows how to get past Fluffy or not. Snape does this by questioning Quirrell's loyalty. Harry overhears this and wrongly suspects Snape of evildoing, but we can totally see why Harry would think that.

***Quotation 2:***

"You've got to stand up to him, Neville!" said Ron. "He's used to walking all over people, but that's no reason to lie down in front of him and make it easier."  
  
"There's no need to tell me I'm not brave enough to be in Gryffindor, Malfoy's already done that," Neville choked out. (13.28-29)

***Explanation:***

Ron's trying to encourage Neville, but Neville takes it as an insult. It's too bad, because Ron's right – they all have to "stand up" for themselves. Yet, that's easier said than done, especially for someone like Neville, who's frequently made fun of and shamed by the idea that he's "not brave enough."

***Quotation 3:***

"It's people they feel sorry for. See, there's Potter, who's got no parents, then there's the Weasleys, who've got no money – you should be on the team, Longbottom, you've got no brains."  
  
Neville went bright red but turned in his seat to face Malfoy.  
  
"I'm worth twelve of you, Malfoy," he stammered. (13.77-79)

***Explanation:***

Malfoy just doesn't stop with the insults, does he? We're guessing that, in this case, he's being so cruel because he's jealous: the Gryffindor Quidditch team is actually very good, and they really have assigned the best players to the field. Since their team is a match for Slytherin technique-wise, Malfoy tries to undercut them on a morale level. It takes a lot for Neville to reply to Malfoy here, even if it doesn't accomplish very much.

***Quotation 4:***

The ancient study of alchemy is concerned with making the Sorcerer's Stone, a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The stone will transform any metal into pure gold. It also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal. (13.50)

***Explanation:***

This quotation from a book Hermione gets from the Hogwarts library doesn't say anything that different from what a Muggle book about alchemy might say. The philosophical study of alchemy, after all, can also be thought of as a science. The difference is that, in the magic world, phrases like "will transform… into gold" and "will make the drinker immortal" aren't just "legendary"; it really works.