***Harry Potter and the Chambers of Secret***

***Chapter 17***

***Summary and analysis***

***Summary:***

### Dobby's Reward

* Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Professor Lockhart arrive, covered in grime and blood, at Professor McGonagall's office.
* Mr. and Mrs. Weasley throw their arms around Ginny.
* Professor Dumbledore is also standing by, as is Professor McGonagall.
* Harry places the Sorting Hat, the ruby-covered sword, and Riddle's destroyed diary on Professor McGonagall's desk.
* Then he explains everything that has happened.
* Ginny confesses that she's been writing in Riddle's diary all year.
* Mr. Weasley asks her, "Haven't I taught you anything? What have I always told you? Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can't see where it keeps its brain" (18.21).
* Professor Dumbledore sends Ginny to the Hospital Wing to recover.
* Professor Dumbledore turns to Professor McGonagall: "You know, Minerva […] I think all this merits a good feast. Might I ask you to go and alert the kitchens?" (18.28).
* Ron explains to Professor Dumbledore about Professor Lockhart's total amnesia.
* Professor Dumbledore asks Ron to bring Professor Lockhart to the Hospital Wing, too.
* So, Harry is left alone with Professor Dumbledore.
* Harry finally admits what's bothering him: "Riddle said I'm like him. Strange likenesses, he said" (18.51).
* Professor Dumbledore tells Harry that, when Voldemort tried to kill him as a baby, he left Harry with some of his skills (Parseltongue, for example).
* Harry chose to be in Gryffindor, though, which makes him very different from Voldemort.
* The fact that Harry could draw this ruby-encrusted sword from the Sorting Hat is proof enough that Harry is a true Gryffindor.
* After all, the sword belonged to Godric Gryffindor.
* Lucius Malfoy appears at Professor McGonagall's office, seething with fury. Dobby is hiding behind him.
* Lucius demands to know why Professor Dumbledore has come back.
* Professor Dumbledore tells him, "the other eleven governors contacted me today […] They seemed to think I was the best man for the job after all. Very strange tales they told me, too…Several of them seemed to think that you had threatened to curse their families if they didn't agree to suspend me in the first place" (18.73)
* Lucius goes pale with rage.
* Professor Dumbledore shows him the diary that had contained Lord Voldemort.
* Professor Dumbledore points out that, if Harry and Ron hadn't found the diary, Ginny might have taken all the blame herself.
* Then what might have happened?
* He continues, "Imagine the effect on Arthur Weasley and his Muggle Protection Act, if his own daughter was discovered attacking and killing Muggle-borns" (18.84).
* Thanks to some signaling from Dobby, Harry suddenly realizes that it must have been Lucius who slipped Ginny the diary during that fight at Flourish and Blotts at the beginning of the year.
* Professor Dumbledore admits that they can't prove anything, but he warns Lucius not to try anything like that again.
* Lucius turns to leave.
* Harry has a great idea, and turns to Professor Dumbledore for permission to give back the diary. Permission is granted.
* Harry runs after Lucius with the destroyed diary in his hand.
* He yanks off one of his grimy socks and sticks the diary inside.
* Harry tells Lucius he's got something of his.
* He jams the sock-covered diary into Lucius's hand.
* Lucius pulls the sock off the diary and throws it to the floor.
* Lucius warns him, "You'll meet the same sticky end as your parents one of these days, Harry Potter […] They were meddlesome fools, too" (18.107).
* Lucius tries to order Dobby to follow him, but something is different.
* Dobby has caught the sock Lucius threw down.
* Lucius has given Dobby clothes, so Dobby is free of the Malfoy family.
* Lucius pulls his wand on Harry, but Dobby commands Lucius to go.
* Dobby weeps, thanks Harry for freeing him, and disappears with a loud crack.
* The celebration feast that night is fabulous.
* All of the Petrified people have woken up, exams are canceled after all, and Professor Lockhart has left the school.
* Lucius Malfoy has been fired as school governor, and everything is right with the world.
* On the Hogwarts Express, Harry asks Ginny what she saw Percy doing that he didn't want her to talk about.
* Ginny caught Percy kissing Penelope Clearwater, the Ravenclaw prefect who got Petrified with Hermione.
* That's who Percy was writing to all the previous summer.
* Harry takes out his quill and writes his phone number down for Ron and Hermione.
* He asks them to call, because he won't be able to take two more months of the Dursleys.
* Hermione asks him, "Your aunt and uncle will be proud, though, won't they? […] When they hear what you did this year?" (18.144).
* Harry thinks that's unlikely, but he still continues on into the Muggle world.

***Brief Summary:***

Fawkes takes them to McGonagall's office. They are prepared for the worst but are warmly welcomed, especially by Mr. and Mrs.. Weasley, who had been worried about Ginny. Harry is pleased to find Dumbledore in the office and proceeds to tell everyone how they worked out what was in the Chamber, how they found it and what happened while they were in it. Ginny is worried that she will be expelled; Dumbledore prevents this by asking how Voldemort enchanted Ginny, so Harry explains the role of the diary.

Ginny is sent to the hospital wing to recover, while Dumbledore questions Harry and Ron further. He reminds them about his warning earlier in the year about breaking school rules and being expelled, but he is prepared to forget about it in this case. Instead, he rewards them with two hundred house points each. Dumbledore also wants to know why Lockhart is unusually quiet, so they tell him about Lockhart's actions in the chamber with Ron's wand backfiring on him. Dumbledore asks Ron to take Lockhart to the hospital wing, as he wishes to speak to Harry alone.

Dumbledore praises Harry for his bravery and loyalty, informing Harry that Fawkes would only come to the assistance of someone showing true loyalty to Dumbledore. Harry is moved by Dumbledore's words but worried by Voldemort's comparison of Harry and Voldemort. He seeks reassurance from Dumbledore that he isn't like Voldemort. Dumbledore informs him that when Voldemort attacked Harry the first time, he left some of his power in Harry. Harry is distressed that this means he is like Voldemort and should be in Slytherin, but Dumbledore reassures him that only a true Gryffindor could have used the sword, as it originally belonged to Godric Gryffindor the founder of Gryffindor house. He tells Harry that it's what we do as people that makes us who we are, more than what we are capable of doing.

Harry is just about to leave the office when Lucius Malfoy bursts in; he is furious that Dumbledore is back at the school and demands to know why. Dumbledore informs him that all the other governors requested it and in turn had informed him of Malfoy's threats to them. Dumbledore tells Malfoy that the culprit, Lord Voldemort had been found and dealt with, but implies that he had help in his quest. At this point, Dobby is frantically signaling behind Malfoy's back, and Harry realizes that Mr. Malfoy is responsible for planting the book on Ginny the day they were buying their schoolbooks. Harry accuses him. He denies it, but no one believes his denial and Dumbledore warns him to be careful in future not to give away any more of Voldemort's possessions, as Dumbledore will ensure that they will be traced straight back to him.

Harry devises a plan to release Dobby, and follows Malfoy under the pretence of giving back the diary. Malfoy hands Dobby the sock that the diary was wrapped in…and Dobby is free to go! Harry is grateful to Dobby for helping him. In return fpr setting him free, Dobby vows to remain loyal to Harry, protecting him when Malfoy tries to attack him.

Life at school returns to normal with a feast to celebrate Voldemort's defeat. The festivities continue late into the night, with everyone happy except Draco Malfoy, who is subdued. The rest of term passes quickly and Gryffindor win the school cup again. The pupils are soon returning home for the holidays via the Hogwarts Express.

***Brief Analysis:***

The final chapter is a triumph of good over evil. Those who have acted in a corrupt, evil fashion are punished for their actions, like Lucius Malfoy, who is sacked from his position of authority as school governor and warned to behave in the future. Characters who are brave and loyal but have been mistreated are rewarded; Dobby is set free from the evil Malfoy and Hagrid is released from Azkaban.

Harry is commended for his faith and loyalty to the school and to Dumbledore. Although inwardly worried that he may really be a Slytherin, he rarely shows this, desperately not wanting it to be true. His internal struggle about his true magical orientation is resolved by Dumbledore, who assures him that through not wanting to be evil and always remaining loyal to the good forces of magic, Harry is truly a Gryffindor and a good wizard.

***Critical Analysis(Ch16-18):***

Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Lockhart are greeted by a moment of silence. Then Mrs. Weasley screams her daughter’s name. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley fling themselves on Ginny. Harry sees Dumbledore, beaming, standing next to Professor McGonagall, hyperventilating, by the fireplace. Fawkes flies past Harry to land on Dumbledore’s shoulder. Mrs. Weasley embraces Harry and Ron, excited that they saved Ginny, and wanting to know how they did it. McGonagall adds that they would all like to know that.

Harry lays the Sorting Hat, the sword, and Riddle’s diary on the desk. Then he relates the story of how they figured out that the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets is in Myrtle’s bathroom. McGonagall points out that they broke a hundred school rules along the way, and then demands to know how they got out of the Chamber alive. Harry then tells them about Fawkes' timely arrival and the Sorting Hat giving him the sword. Then Harry hesitates, worried that if he tells them about Riddle’s diary, Ginny will be expelled. She is still crying, standing next to her mother. He wonders how, without a working diary, he could prove that Riddle had been responsible, not Ginny. Harry looks at Dumbledore, who understands, and says what interests him most is how Voldemort managed to enchant Ginny. Harry is deeply relieved. Mr. Weasley is stunned that his daughter was enchanted by “you-know-who.” Harry explains that it was the diary, picking it up from the desk to show Dumbledore.

Dumbledore takes the diary and examines it, declaring it brilliant. He then explains to the Weasleys that Voldemort was once called Tom Riddle. Fifty years ago, Riddle was “probably the most brilliant student Hogwarts has ever seen.” He disappeared after leaving the school and sank so deeply into the Dark Arts that when he emerged as Lord Voldemort he was barely recognizable. Mrs. Wesley wonders what Ginny has to do with him. Ginny explains, sobbing, that she has been writing in his diary and he has been writing back all year. Mr. Weasley, flabbergasted, asks Ginny why she didn’t show the diary to him or her mother. He says that a suspicious object like that was clearly full of Dark Magic. “Haven’t I taught you anything? What have I always told you? Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can’t see where it keeps its brain?” Ginny replies sobbing that she found it inside one of the books her mom got her.

Dumbledore interrupts that Ginny should go to the hospital wing right away. He kindly sympathizes with the ordeal that she has been through. He declares that there will be no punishment and suggests hot chocolate to cheer her up. Dumbledore says that she will find Madam Pomfrey is still awake. She is giving out the Mandrake juice to the petrified patients, who should wake up at any minute. Ron is happy that Hermione is ok. Dumbledore assures Ginny that there has been no lasting harm done. Mrs. Weasley leads Ginny out, followed by a shaken Mr. Weasley. Dumbledore asks McGonagall to alert the kitchens to prepare a feast. She replies “I’ll leave you to deal with Potter and Weasley, shall I?” making Harry and Ron wonder if they are about to be punished. Dumbledore reminds Ron and Harry that he warned them he would have to expel them if they broke any more school rules. Then he adds “which goes to show that the best of us must sometimes eat our words” and grants them Special Awards for Services to the School and two hundred points apiece for Gryffindor. Dumbledore inquires about Lockhart, who has been standing in the corner quietly: “Why so modest Gilderoy?” Lockhart looks over his shoulder to see who he’s talking to. Ron hastens to explain that there was an accident in the Chamber of Secrets, where Lockhart tried to do a Memory Charm and the wand backfired. Dumbledore replies, “Impaled upon your own sword Gilderoy!” and asks Ron to take him to the infirmary.

Once they are alone, Dumbledore invites Harry to sit with him by the fire. He thanks Harry for his loyalty, while stroking Fawkes, who has landed on Dumbledore’s knee. Then they discuss Tom Riddle. Harry relates that Riddle said he and Potter have a strange likeness. He starts to say that they’re nothing alike, and then confesses his doubts: The Sorting Hat told him he’d have done well in Slytherin. And everyone thought he was Slytherin’s Heir for a while because he can speak Parseltongue. Dumbledore explains that Harry can speak Parseltongue because Voldemort can speak Parseltongue. Voldemort transferred some of his powers to Harry unintentionally the night he gave Harry the scar.

Harry is thunderstruck at the idea that Voldemort put some of himself into him, and takes that as confirmation that he should be in Slytherin house. Dumbledore replies that Harry has many of the qualities that Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students: resourcefulness, determination, and a “certain disregard for rules.” Yet the Sorting Hat placed Harry in Gryffindor. Dumbledore says that Harry knows why, if he thinks about it. Harry answers that the Sorting Hat placed him in Gryffindor because he asked not to go into Slytherin. Dumbledore adds: “Exactly. Which makes you very different from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” Then he offers proof that Harry belongs in Gryffindor: He picks up the sword and hands it to Harry, who turns it over to see the engraved name [Godric Gryffindor](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list" \l "godric-gryffindor). Dumbledore reassures him that only a true Gryffindor would have pulled that out of the hat.

Dumbledore pulls a bottle of ink and a quill out of McGonagall’s desk. He suggests that Harry enjoy the feast and get some sleep while he writes to Azkaban and drafts an advertisement for a new Defense of the Dark Arts teacher. Harry is just reaching for the handle when the door bursts open violently revealing a furious [Lucius Malfoy](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#lucius-malfoy) with Dobby cowering behind him. Apparently Malfoy left the house in a great hurry, because he looks uncharacteristically disheveled. Dobby is attempting to finish polishing his shoes. Malfoy is angry because Dumbledore has returned to Hogwarts even though the governors had suspended him. Dumbledore explains that the other eleven governors contacted him when they heard that [Arthur Weasley](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#arthur-weasley)’s daughter had been killed, saying they wanted him back at Hogwarts at once. Several governors told him that Malfoy had threatened to curse their families if they didn’t agree to suspend Dumbledore.

Malfoy demands to know if he has stopped the attacks yet. When he learns that the culprit has been caught, he wants to know who it is. Dumbledore says it’s the same as last time: Voldemort, but this time acting through someone else by means of his diary. When Dumbledore holds up the diary he watches Malfoy closely, while Harry watches Dobby. The elf stares at Harry meaningfully, points to the diary, to Malfoy, and then hits himself on the head. Dumbledore stares Malfoy in the eye while he relates the “clever plan”: if Harry and Ron hadn’t discovered the diary, then Ginny Weasley would have been blamed for the attacks. “The Weasleys are one of our most prominent pure-blood families. Imagine the effect on Arthur Weasley and his Muggle Protection Act, if his own daughter was discovered attacking Muggle-borns.”

Harry suddenly understands Dobby. He nods at the elf, who backs into a corner and twists his ears in punishment. Harry accuses Malfoy of slipping Riddle’s diary into Ginny’s Transfiguration textbook at Flourish and Blotts. Malfoy demands that he prove it. Dumbledore says that no one will be able to do that. But he advises Malfoy not to give out any more of Voldemort's old school things, or Arthur Weasley will trace them back to him.

Malfoy wrenches open the door and kicks Dobby through it. Harry hears Dobby squealing with pain. Harry asks Dumbledore if he can give the diary back to Malfoy. When Dumbledore hands it to him he rushes out of the office. Harry takes off one of his shoes, and then his filthy sock, and stuffs the diary into it. He runs down the corridor and catches up with Malfoy and Dobby at the top of the stairs. He tells Malfoy he has something for him, and forces the sock and diary into his hand. Malfoy rips the sock off the diary and casts it aside. He glares at Harry furiously and insults his parents.

When Malfoy turns to go and orders Dobby to come, Dobby doesn’t move. He holds up Harry’s slimy sock and looks at it as though it were a priceless treasure. Dobby says “Master has given a sock...Master gave it to Dobby...Got a sock...Master threw it, and Dobby caught it, and Dobby—Dobby is free.” Lucius Malfoy lunges at Harry, shouting that he has lost him his servant. Dobby shouts that he shall not harm Harry Potter. Malfoy is thrown backward down the stairs with a loud bang. Malfoy stands up and pulls out his wand, but Dobby raises a threatening finger and tells him that he shall not touch Harry Potter, that he shall go now. Malfoy hurries away.

Dobby gazes at Harry and says “Harry Potter freed Dobby!” Harry tells him it was the least he could do, but makes him promise never to try to save his life again. Dobby pulls on Harry’s sock. Harry asks Dobby why he told him that all this had nothing to do with “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.” Dobby replies that it was a clue: the Dark Lord, before he changed his name, could be freely named. Dobby hugs Harry, praises him, wishes him farewell, and disappears with a loud crack.

The feast lasts all night. Hermione runs towards Harry screaming that he solved the mystery. Justin apologizes effusively for suspecting him. Hagrid turns up and cuffs Ron and Harry so hard on the shoulders they are “knocked into their plates of trifle.” Harry and Ron secure the House Cup for Gryffindor with their four hundred points. Professor McGonagall tells the students that exams have been canceled as a school treat. Dumbledore announces that Professor Lockhart will be unable to return next year. Everyone cheers.

For the rest of the term, Hogwarts is back to normal, with a few differences: Defense of the Dark Arts classes are canceled. Lucius Malfoy loses his position as governor. [Draco Malfoy](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#draco-malfoy) is back to being resentful and sulky. Ginny Weasley is happy again.

Harry, Ron, Hermione, Fred, George, and Ginny travel in a compartment together on the Hogwarts Express. They make the most of the last few hours in which they’re allowed to do magic before the holidays. Right before they reach Kings Cross station Harry remembers to ask Ginny what she saw Percy doing that he didn’t want her to tell anyone. She giggles and says that Percy has a girlfriend: Penelope Clearwater, the Ravenclaw Prefect. Ginny walked in on them kissing in an empty classroom. She explains that Percy was very upset when Penelope was attacked. Fred and George are delighted with the tease-worthy information. Harry writes his telephone number on parchment for Ron and Hermione, and asks them to call him at the Durselys’. He tells Ron that he has explained to his father how telephones work. Hermione assumes that Harry’s aunt and uncle will be proud when they hear what he did this year. Harry replies that they will be furious that he could have died and didn’t manage it. They walk together back through the gateway to the Muggle world.

Harry wonders what he has learned so far this year. Harry, Ron, and Hermione apply their learning on Potions and Transfiguration to the Polyjuice potion, on history to the Chamber of Secrets, and the Defense Against the Dark Arts to Riddle’s Diary. The attempts to protect them as children prevent them from doing the work they have to do. The Mandrakes are ready for cutting: They symbolize maturity. Harry and Ron are hoping to be off the hook and that Hermione will have all of the answers for them. They swing back and forth between bravery and a desire for things to be taken care of. Percy’s authority frightens Ginny away from telling Ron and Harry the truth. Percy dismisses what Ginny was about to say, thinking it was about when she walked in on he and Penelope kissing. Puberty is a secret, but it’s the wrong kind. Percy’s romance is a red herring producing odd behavior that is irrelevant to the mystery. [J.K. Rowling](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/j-rowling) has discussed that she got the idea of a romantic subplot as a red herring from the mystery writer Dorothy L. Sayers.

Harry lies to Professor McGonagall. She should be a respected authority figure they could confide in. Why isn’t she? Harry and Ron seek the truth from Myrtle, an original source. The school is putting its faith in the Mandrakes to revive the students. Ginny wants to tell the truth to be free from Riddle. These developments are at cross purposes. Harry and Ron use their friendship with Hermione as an excuse, but then it ends up being key to solving the mystery. Harry also manipulates Lockhart by agreeing that the security measures are unnecessary. This is a moment where they are allies in their desire to circumvent authority. Hermione was able to figure out the identity of the monster through inductive reasoning, and then found a description of it in the library with a name: basilisk. Harry figures out how it was that the students didn't die: They were petrified by looking at the snake indirectly. At this point, Harry and Ron feel they have concrete evidence to share with McGonagall. They didn’t feel comfortable going to her when they were just investigating.

Lockhart has changed from being comic relief to being simply inappropriate to being an active antagonist. The other teachers discredit him as a group, showing him to be a fraud and a blowhard. They call his many bluffs. The tone of the story has changed with the possible death of Ginny. Lockhart pretending to be able to battle the Dark Arts won’t stand.

Harry and Ron miss what is happening in the dynamics among the teachers. They take the conversation literally, believing that Lockhart intends to search for Ginny. That is why they go to him with information. The teachers had no confidence that he could actually do anything, and were just trying to get rid of him. They would no doubt be unsurprised that he is running away. Harry is shocked and incredulous when he learns that Lockhart only pretended to write his books. There is some inconsistency in Harry and Ron’s decision to go to Lockhart for help, as they have been making fun of him, and disbelieving him throughout the book. It also feels odd that Harry would force Lockhart to join them in going into the Chamber, adding an awkward burden to the quest.

Harry and Ron’s anger and vindictiveness towards Lockhart seems out of character. If Ron was really worried about his sister, why waste time forcing Lockhart to go to the Chamber? They could be using him as a human shield, or it could be that they distrust leaving him alone. He tries to pull a memory charm on them once, and then tries again in the Chamber, causing the ceiling to fall accidentally. His presence seems helpful mainly for advancing the plot and adding dramatic tension, which makes it feel a bit contrived. Lockhart is thoroughly demystified as a fraud, disempowered by the boys, and then receives his just desserts when his own memory charm backfires and erases his memory. The book might be cruelest to this character.

The snakeskin foreshadows the enormity of the basilisk and the danger that Harry faces. The wall falling repeats a structure from the first book, when Ron can only go so far and no further. Harry, as the hero, must face Voldemort alone again. The setting of the Chamber has an Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Arc vibe, with giant pillars and snakes, and a lone white man walking into an exotic environment. Harry is presented as an anti-hero everyman: skinny, with no special talents. It could be that they are both referring to Egyptian mythology. Psychoanalytic critics have written about the phallic and yonic imagery of the snake in the cave, and the phallic symbol of the wand. This fits into a monomyth pattern as described by Joseph Campbell, with a male rescuing a female. Ginny will go on to be Harry’s love interest in the series.

Tom Riddle’s name represents his character: He is a Riddle for Harry to solve. This evokes the mystery genre. Harry trusts Riddle at first, and asks for his help. There is a lot of exposition in this chapter. The main reveal is that Lord Voldemort, the villain in the first Harry Potter book, was a student at Hogwarts named Tom Movolo Riddle. Harry is speaking to Riddle’s teenage self, who has been preserved as a memory in his diary. Because Ginny has told Tom that Harry goes on to defeat him in Tom’s future (and Harry’s past) Riddle wants to know how he did it. There is a bit of a paradox to this, because if the young Riddle learns the source of Harry’s power, why would the older Riddle try to destroy him? One possibility is that when Harry kills Riddle’s diary at the end, he erases all knowledge that the teenage Riddle learns in this encounter with Harry. Riddle’s diary has been compared to online manipulation. It also represents the power and risks of reading. Ginny’s experience is similar to the Catholic idea of being possessed by the devil. She is easily manipulated in her adolescent insecurity.

Riddle’s hatred of Muggles has an origin story, which is personal: His father, a Muggle, abandoned his mother when he found out that she was a witch. Riddle played on Dippit's prejudice against Hagrid, and used the pathos of his own story to manipulate him. This fits with the theme of prejudice. He assumed a new name with his new identity. He chose to recreate himself.

Harry challenges Riddle’s claim to be the greatest sorcerer in the world, invoking the good and powerful Dumbledore. Harry brings Fawkes by “wishing rather than believing.”The arrival of Fawkes is a multi-sensory experience that Harry hears, feels, sees. Riddle points out the dramatic and situational irony of the situation. Neither Harry nor the reader expected this, and it seems inadequate to the task at hand. Ginny’s fragility adds time pressure to the scene, leading to a more rapid climax. Harry has the reverse biography of Riddle: His Muggle-born parent died to save him. The difference is love. Riddle misinterprets love as luck.

Auditory imagery and lack of sight are used to invoke terror, as in the scene with Aragog and the other spiders. Fawkes' poking out the eyes of the snake echoes the method Odysseus used to escape the cave of Polyphemus the Cyclops in the Odyssey. Harry prays, asking for help from someone, anyone. The spirit of Gryffindor responds with the sword, through the Sorting Hat. His loyalty to Gryffindor helps him; his tribe helps him. Gryffindor’s sword is an allusion to the legend of Excalibur, the sword of King Arthur which must be drawn from a stone by the rightful king. He must be fit to carry the sword. It’s a symbol of bravery.

Harry’s friendships with Fawkes, whom he praises, and with Dumbledore creates an emotional bond that causes the bird to weep at Harry’s death. Fawkes' tears provide the grace that saves Harry. In contrast, Riddle dies from being stabbed by the fang of the basilisk, a creature that should have been his ally.

The battle solidifies Harry’s identity, as he is assisted by his friends Hermione and Ron and his mentor Dumbledore in his quest to save Ginny, who will be his love. He must defeat Riddle, and Slytherin, who he feared was part of him or resembled him. A Christian reading would be that he defeated the evil within himself by showing love, loyalty, and trust. The moment when Harry comes back to life is a type of resurrection. The phoenix is a symbol of rebirth. He has also been interpreted as the Holy Spirit. Fawkes has also been interpreted as a *deus ex machina*, an unlikely occurrence in the plot that resolves all problems, in the story. When Harry stabs the diary the ink is a metaphor for blood. Riddle’s life was preserved in the ink of the diary. This is a meta-moment, as Harry Potter himself is a character in a written story.

Ginny sees Harry at his most heroic and is “bemused.” Harry and Riddle are rivals for the possession of Ginny. Riddle wants to manipulate her for his own gain, while Harry wants to save and reassure her. He is attached to the Weasleys as a surrogate family. And Ron is his best friend, so Ginny is an extension of him. At this point, he treats her more like a sister than a future wife.

Harry has returned with wisdom, and emerged with treasure: the Sorting Hat, the sword, and Riddle’s diary. In Joseph Campbell’s interpretation of the monomyth, this is called the "return." In this denouement, the plot wraps up tidily, as the Mandrake draught is administered to return the petrified students to life at the same moment.

Mr. Weasley blames Ginny for trusting the diary. She is an adolescent with new secrets, which need an outlet. Dumbledore is kind and interrupts this victim-blaming of Ginny. The tension of possible expulsion from Hogwarts is relieved for Ginny, but it’s transferred to Harry and Ron. This shows their renewed status as children and so their vulnerability and powerlessness.

When Dumbledore says that Lockhart was impaled on his own sword, this is a reference to Shakespeare’s line “hoisted on your own petard.” Dumbledore knows something that Harry does not: Voldemort transferred a part of himself into Harry as a baby. Dumbledore implies that some Slytherin qualities are positive: resourcefulness, determination, and a disregard for rules. These are the virtues of the rebel. Harry shares these abilities.

When Malfoy arrives, we learn the political context for the plot: Lucius has planted the diary on Ginny to try to destroy the reputation of the Weasley family and so gain control of Hogwarts, and the government. The children were used as pawns and proxies. It’s amazing to believe that Harry has the energy to tell the story and then rescue Dobby after nearly dying in the Chamber. The book describes his internal world very little. Why is he not exhausted?

How did Dobby know that Voldemort as Riddle would put Harry’s life in danger? It seems like Lucius Malfoy was targeting Ginny Weasley more than Harry Potter. Riddle says that he learned about Harry Potter from Ginny. There is a missing element in the plot—what exactly did Dobby see or overhear? When Dobby communicates to Harry that Malfoy was responsible for planting the diary on Ginny, he betrays his master, which he is enchanted not to do, and must suffer for. He sacrifices his comfort to help Harry understand the truth.

Harry’s sock sets Dobby free. It is a reward and a symbol of Dobby’s service to Harry. The humble object is slimy from Harry’s ordeal. It’s of little value to Harry and disgusting to Lucius Malfoy, but for Dobby the sock is priceless. There is a wonderful silliness in this reversal of value. And it shows that Harry’s goodness is as important as his greatness. Harry tricks Malfoy: He frees Dobby by following the rules, technically, but showing no respect for the spirit of the law, judging it to be cruel. One of Harry’s gifts is to see justice apart from the rules of social convention. He has no problem disregarding authority when authority is wrong. Dobby is unable to free himself but he is able to protect Harry. So he has a magic of his own, which is unleashed fully when he becomes a free elf. Harry frees Dobby even though the elf has been an inconvenience to him, because he empathizes with him. And he sees that Dobby risked everything to try to save Harry from Malfoy’s plot.

The structure of the book fits into the school year. The story ends on an ironic note with a reminder that Harry, despite his heroism at Hogwarts, is not a hero in his family. It’s surprising that the adults at Hogwarts permit him to return to a home where he was locked up and starved. It’s a reverse fairy tale, inconsistent with the crisis in chapter two. At least Harry will be able to talk on the phone with his friends, so he has progressed a bit from his complete isolation in the beginning. This return to “normal” sets up the next book to begin again at the Dursleys', and so to repeat the structure. This may be written for children in unhappy situations, offering the hope of a magical escape through imagination—if only a temporary one.***Critical Study:***

Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Lockhart enter McGonagall's office to find Dumbledore and Molly and Arthur Weasley waiting inside. The Weasleys fling themselves on their daughter and ask Harry how he saved her. Harry tells them everything from the voice to Aragog to Moaning Myrtle, managing to avoid the parts involving Ginny and the diary. When asked directly about this topic, Harry instinctively looks to Dumbledore, who gently prods him to answer the question of how Voldemort managed to enchant Ginny. So the part of the diary comes out into the open, and Dumbledore sends Ginny to the infirmary for rest and hot chocolate, and he informs all of them that the Mandrake juice is presently being administrated to the petrified victims. Dumbledore calls for a feast for the entire school, and he awards Harry and Ron each two hundred points for Gryffindor House on account of their daring tasks in battling the monster. Dumbledore then sends the clueless Lockhart to the infirmary under Ron's care, and finally he asks Harry to remain.

While Dumbledore is alone with Harry, he explains that Fawkes came to his aid because of the true loyalty Harry showed Dumbledore down in the Chamber. Harry asks Dumbledore the question that has been bothering him for so long, whether he is in fact like Riddle, marked with evil potential and predestined for Slytherin House. Dumbledore explains here in a gloriously reassuring passage that the Sorting Hat put Harry in Gryffindor because Harry did not want to be in Slytherin, and that choices made are far more important than abilities. Dumbledore also adds that only a true Gryffindor could have pulled Godric Gryffindor's sword out of the Sorting Hat.

The door bangs open and Lucius Malfoy appears, Dobby squealing at his heals. Lucius is most upset that Dumbledore has returned to Hogwarts, and Dumbledore calmly explains that the attacks have been stopped, and that eleven of the school governors contacted him, begging him to return to Hogwarts and suggesting that they had been blackmailed into suspending him. When Dumbledore holds up the diary as evidence from the recent events, Dobby begins to make strange faces and gestures, which Harry ultimately understands to mean that Lucius had slipped the diary into Ginny's books in Flourish and Blotts, so many months ago. Lucius acts shifty and defensive when Harry accuses him of this, and he sweeps out of the room, yelling at Dobby to follow. Harry thinks quickly and wraps the diary inside one of his slimy socks, then hands it to Lucius. Lucius unwraps it and disgustedly throws down the sock, which Dobby retrieves with a thrilled expression on his face. In handing him an article of clothing, Lucius has inadvertently freed his house-elf, and Dobby thanks Harry profusely in front of the livid Lucius, and then the elf disappears with a crack.

Harry then attends the great feast. Hagrid returns, exams are cancelled, and Lockhart is officially removed from the school staff, and Gryffindor is given the House cup. Harry has not been this happy for a long time. The last bit of school passes calmly and happily. Defense Against the Dark Arts classes are cancelled, and Lucius Malfoy is fired as school governor. All is well. On the train ride back to London, Harry curiously asks Ginny what she caught Percy doing. She giggles and replies that he was kissing his girlfriend, Penelope Clearwater, in an empty classroom. Fred and George are pleased by this bit of knowledge, and together they all walk back into the Muggle world for their summer vacations.

This chapter neatly ties up all loose ends still dangling after the rest of the story has been resolved. We see the reason why Percy was sneaking suspiciously into empty rooms and corridors, and we understand finally how Ginny came to possess the diary. Most importantly, we are reassured that Harry was not, in fact, destined for the dark wizard House, Slytherin. Dumbledore's speech in which he explains to Harry the importance of choices over ability reveals Harry's success as a character. In none of the books is he a stereotypical or epic hero; he simply is marked and helped by the people who have loved him and his flights into adventure and detective work have the noble intentions of keeping himself, his friends, and his school safe. Harry is simply a good person with courage and people looking out for him, and this combination, more than any natural or learned talents, brings him to triumph again over the world's most powerful dark wizard. He and Ron and Hermione each add their individual talents to the group, but their group efforts and initiative as a whole is what makes them so successful in their ventures. The same is the case for Harry; he is a sum of decent parts, but he uses them in ways that make him a truly impressive magical hero.

The ending serves justice to all characters. Dobby is liberated, Lucius Malfoy is without a servant and loses his job as school governor. Ginny is freed from enchantment, and her involvement in the Chamber of Secrets is kindly and instantly forgotten by her friends and family. Gryffindor wins the House cup, which is always a delight, since we know that the students in it are a good, smart, deserving bunch of kids. Harry is happy and satisfied and safe as he heads into summer vacation. The fairness element is crucial in this book, as a children's book and somewhat of a fantasy/fairy tale. Good triumphs over evil with no casualties to be mourned, and Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets ends in a nice, tight conclusion. This was the case in the first book and also the third, but as the series progresses, the author does involve incidents in which life is not fair at all, and is in fact laden with unnecessary tragedy. In this book, the ending follows a standard storybook pattern, but it is not an easy ending. Everything that happens has a reason behind it, something significant in the lessons learned or the personalities shown in the dealing with danger. Whichever morals seem vague are soon explained by Dumbledore, who once again is safely overlooking Hogwarts' affairs. A sense of comfort ends this book, and for the time being, Hogwarts is left in its natural state-a cheerful and eccentric place where students grow up, make friends, and learn magic.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter), [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley), [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley), and [Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) go to [McGonagall](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-mcgonagall)’s office, where [Mr. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mr-weasley) and [Mrs. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mrs-weasley) sob with relief to see Ginny, and [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) sits beaming. Harry tells the story of how they came to discover the Chamber of Secrets and how Harry defeated the [basilisk](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/symbols/the-monster-basilisk). He leaves [Riddle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort)’s diary out of it, however, worried that Ginny would get into trouble because they would be unable to prove that he made her do it.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Even though Harry has already risked his life for Ginny, and broken lots of school rules to do it, he is still worried about being loyal to Ginny and making sure that she is not implicated in the attacks. On the other hand, Harry has no trouble admitting his own rule-breaking because he knows that he did so for the right reasons.

***Summary Part 2:***

But to Harry’s relief, [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) asks how [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort) managed to enchant [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley). [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) then explains what happened with the diary. [Mr. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mr-weasley) scolds Ginny, saying: “Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can’t see where it keeps its brain.” Ginny says she didn’t know that it was full of Dark Magic; she explains that she found it inside one of the books she bought for school.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Mr. Weasley’s warning to Ginny is akin to the lessons that the students learn about rumor: it is important not to trust information unless it comes from a reliable source. Riddle’s diary allowed him to manipulate the information he told Ginny and Harry, and in this way he was able to control them.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) tells [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley) that she will not be punished for being possessed by [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort). He also  announces that the Mandrake Draught is ready, and that the students are being revived as they speak, so there has been no harm done. Then Dumbledore turns to [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley), reminding them that he said if they broke any more rules they would be expelled—before saying that he must “eat [his] words.” They will both receive Special Awards for Services to the School, plus two hundred points each for Gryffindor.

***Analysis Part 3:***

In rewarding rather than punishing Harry and Ron for their rule-breaking, Dumbledore reinforces the idea that sometimes it is necessary to break the rules in order to do what is right.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) then asks for a few moments alone with [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter), and everyone else leaves the office. Dumbledore thanks Harry for showing him immense loyalty down in the Chamber, as nothing else could have called [Fawkes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/symbols/fawkes) to him.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Dumbledore shows how much he values Harry’s loyalty—proving again how important it is, and how characteristic it is of the quintessentially good characters in the story. Friendship, loyalty, and bravery become the backbone of what allows Harry to become a hero.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) asks [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) about meeting [Tom Riddle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort), and Harry confesses that he is troubled by the ways in which they are similar. He admits that the Sorting Hat told him he’d do well in Slytherin, and everyone thought he was Slytherin’s heir because he could speak Parseltongue. Dumbledore informs Harry that he suspects Harry can speak Parseltongue because  Voldemort gave some of his powers to Harry the night he tried to kill Harry.

***Analysis Part 5:***

This becomes the crux of Harry’s worry as he tries to get a sense of who he is and who he is meant to become. It is interesting to note that here, Harry can only express disappointment in feeling like he belongs in Slytherin, but over the course of the series, as Harry and Voldemort’s fates become more and more intertwined, Harry will worry that he is becoming more and more like Voldemort.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) sulks, saying that in that case he really does belong in Slytherin. The Hat only put him in Gryffindor, he thinks, because Harry asked it to. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) seizes on this, saying that this is what makes him very different from [Tom Riddle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort). He says that “it is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” He proves this idea by showing that the [sword](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/symbols/the-sword-of-gryffindor) the Hat conjured belonged to Godric Gryffindor, and only a true Gryffindor could have pulled that from the Hat.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Dumbledore’s advice becomes one of the key themes throughout the series as a whole. Even though Harry and Riddle seem similar on the surface, Harry always chooses love, friendship, self-sacrifice, and bravery, while Voldemort chooses power, greed, hatred, and cowardice.

***Summary part 7:***

The door then opens violently—it is [Lucius Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/lucius-malfoy), accompanied by [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby). Lucius is furious that Dumbledore is back. Dumbledore says the other eleven governors contacted him after [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley) was taken into the Chamber, asking him to come back immediately. And, he reveals, they seemed to think that Lucius had threatened them in order to suspend Dumbledore in the first place.

***Analysis Part 7:***

When Dumbledore confronts Lucius about his manipulation of the other school governors, it confirms for Harry once again how institutions and governing bodies that make the rules can be easily corrupted by those in power, and therefore the occasional rebellion is sometimes warranted.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Lucius](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/lucius-malfoy) asks if they’ve caught the culprit. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) confirms that it was [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort), acting through [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley) via the diary. Dumbledore stares at Lucius, saying that if [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) hadn’t discovered the diary, Ginny might have taken all the blame—also endangering [Mr. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mr-weasley)’s Muggle Protection Act in the process. Harry realizes then that Ginny got the diary from Lucius in Flourish and Blotts. Lucius says, “prove it,” and leaves with [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) in tow.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Lucius’s planting the diary in one of Ginny’s books puts him firmly on the side of Voldemort and racial prejudice. This act enabled the return of the basilisk as well as the attacks on and potential murder of Muggle-born students in the school. And by planting it on Ginny, Lucius also demonstrates his prejudice against families like the Weasleys who strive to protect and befriend Muggles.

***Summary part 9:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) gets a spark of inspiration. He takes the diary and pulls off his filthy sock. He stuffs the diary into it and then runs after [Lucius](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/lucius-malfoy), giving the sock to him. Lucius pulls the diary out of the sock and tosses the sock aside, furious. He tells Harry that he’ll meet the same end as his parents, and then tells [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) to come. But Dobby caught the sock after Lucius threw it: Dobby is free now because his master has given him clothing.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Harry’s action both counteracts the hateful prejudice that the Malfoys bear against Dobby and also serves as another example of breaking the rules to do what is right. Harry’s freeing of Dobby circumvents an established social structure in order to prevent Dobby’s further abuse and enslavement.

***Summary Part 10:***

[Lucius](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/lucius-malfoy) is furious at [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) for tricking him and lunges toward him. But [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) shouts for Lucius not to hurt Harry and sends Lucius backward, crashing down the stairs. Lucius gets up and has no choice to leave. Dobby ecstatically thanks Harry for freeing him, sobbing with gratitude. Harry only makes him promise not to try and save his life again.

***Analysis Part 10:***

In return for Harry’s kindness, respect, and protection, Dobby repays the favor and prevents Lucius from being able to hurt Harry. Thus, Harry’s friendship inspires great loyalty in Dobby and also gives him the bravery to stand up to Lucius (his former master) in this moment.

Summary Part 11:

Hogwarts throws an end-of-year feast like never before. The celebration lasts all night, and in that time [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) appears, cured and very excited that [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) were able to solve the mystery. Additionally [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/rubeus-hagrid) returns from Azkaban, Gryffindor is named as the House Cup winner, and [McGonagall](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-mcgonagall) announces that exams have been canceled. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) also announces that [Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) will be unable to return to his post next year, at which many people cheer.

Analysis Part 11:

The final passages of the book reinforce the happy ending of the novel and particularly highlight friendship as the primary force for good in the book. Hermione and Hagrid’s returns demonstrate that the best endings, at least in Harry’s mind, are the ones in which he is able to reunite with his friends.

Summary Part 12:

The rest of the term passes in a blur, and Hogwarts more or less returns to normal. [Lucius](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/lucius-malfoy) is sacked as a school governor, [Draco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/draco-malfoy) sulks around the castle, and [Ginny](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ginny-weasley) is happy once again. Too soon, everyone boards the train home. As the students exit the train, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) gives [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) his phone number and asks them to call him over the summer.

Analysis part 12:

The very end of the book reasserts that the love Harry gets from friendship is the most important thing in his life. In contrast to the beginning of the book, in which Harry feels isolated and vulnerable, he makes sure to give his phone number to his two best friends so that he cannot feel that way again.

***Quotations***

***Quotation 1:***

"Ginny!" said Mr. Weasley, flabbergasted. "Haven't I taught you anything? What have I always told you? Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can't see where it keeps its brain. Why didn't you show the diary to me, or to your mother? A suspicious object like that, it was clearly full of Dark Magic —"

"I d-didn't know," sobbed Ginny. "I found it inside one of the books Mum got me. I th-thought someone had just left it there and forgotten about it." (18.21-22)

***Explanation 1:***

This is certainly a useful lesson to have: only trust thinking things if you can tell where their brains are. Wizarding lessons are definitely different from ours. At the same time, we find this rule completely puzzling. Why would a visible or invisible brain case make a difference to trustworthiness? What does Mr. Weasley's lesson mean? How might this lesson apply to another book we come across in the series, the Half-Blood Prince's advanced potions textbook in Book 6?

***Quotation 2:***

"This is called a telephone number," [Harry] told Ron, scribbling it twice, tearing the parchment in two, and handing it to them. "I told your dad how to use a telephone last summer – he'll know. Call me at the Dursleys', okay? I can't stand another two months with only Dudley to talk to…"

"Your aunt and uncle will be proud, though, won't they?" said Hermione as they got off the train and joined the crowd thronging toward the enchanted barrier. "When they hear what you did this year?"

"Proud?" said Harry. "Are you crazy? All those times I could've died, and I didn't manage it? They'll be furious…" (18.143-145)

***Explanation 2:***

How can Harry say things like this about his home life and yet continue to get sent back to the Dursleys? He's joking, yes, but – not really. Still, we also find it amazing that Hermione, one of Harry's best friends, doesn't seem aware of how bad things are at Harry's aunt and uncle's house. It's naive of her to think they'll suddenly grow some pride in their nephew, when they haven't all of these years. What long-term effects does Harry's treatment at the Dursleys have on his character? Why do you think J.K. Rowling chose to give Harry this kind of Muggle home life? How would the novels be different if his aunt and uncle loved him as they are supposed to?