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

***Chapter 2***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

The mysterious character introduced at the end of Chapter 1 is revealed to be a house elf named Dobby. Dobby has come to warn Harry that he is in grave danger and mustn't return to Hogwarts because, if he does, his life will be at risk. Dobby is in awe of the fact that he is in the presence of Harry Potter, and he is touched by Harry's kindness to him. No one has ever been pleasant to Dobby, and he has never been given any benign attention. When Harry treats Dobby with respect, the house elf is overwhelmed with emotion and exclaims that Harry is one of the greatest wizards ever. As a house elf, Dobby has to remain faithful to the family that owns him; in visiting Harry, Dobby is being unfaithful. In response to his disobedience, Dobby inflicts punishment on himself by beating himself on the head. Harry is worried about the noise that Dobby is making, as he doesn't want his uncle to hear them. If Mr. Dursley does, Harry will be in even more trouble. Harry is determined to return to Hogwarts despite Dobby's insistence that Harry's life will be at risk if he does. Dobby becomes more and more agitated when Harry won't listen to him. When he tries to persuade Harry that he has nothing to go back to, at Hogwarts, because his friends don't want to be around him, Dobby unwittingly gives away the fact that he knows that Harry's friends haven't been writing to him. Harry realizes that Dobby has been hiding Ron and Hermione's letters. He challenges Dobby, who gives in and shows Harry the letters he's been hiding. Harry is annoyed and even more determined to return to Hogwarts. Seeing this, Dobby resorts to desperate measures.

To force Harry to change his mind, Dobby runs down stairs and casts a spell on Mrs. Dursley's masterpiece of a pudding, a towering mass of cream and sugary violets. He levitates the pudding and threatens to destroy it unless Harry agrees not to return to Hogwarts. When Harry refuses to give in, the pudding crashes to the floor. Dobby disappears and Harry is blamed for the mess, Mr. Dursley explains to his important guests that Harry has emotional problems. At that point, the appearance of an owl with a letter convinces his guests to leave. Mr. Dursley is furious as his business deal has fallen through, but the owl has provided him with a way to punish Harry.

Mr. Dursley doesn't know that Harry is forbidden to perform magic away from Hogwarts. Up until now Harry, has let the Dursleys believe that he was allowed to do magic at any time. Learning the truth of the matter gives Mr. Dursley the confidence to lock Harry in his room, where his nephew can longer be a nuisance. Harry is given meals three times a day through a cat flap in his door, and he can only look out of the bars on his windows. He falls into an uneasy sleep and dreams that he is in a cage where the Dursleys are laughing at him. When he wakes up, there is someone looking through the bars- his friend Ron.

***Brief Analysis:***

The theme of power is continued in Chapter 2. When Mr. Dursley realizes that Harry is not allowed to use his magic away from Hogwarts, and is therefore powerless, he uses his power to imprison Harry in his room. The subject of loyalty is also interesting in this chapter. Dobby feels the need to warn Harry that he is in danger, yet in doing so he is being disloyal to his owners; this causes Dobby a lot of distress and makes him punish himself by hitting his head with various implements. The issue troubling Dobby is who should he be loyal to: Harry, whom he knows to be good and opposed to evil, or the family who owns him, who want him to stay at home and not get involved? The fact that Dobby chooses to get involved, despite the risk of getting harmed himself, illustrates the fact that good will triumph over evil, and that choosing to do good is always the right option.

***Summary in Detail:***

Harry discovers a little creature with bat-like ears and large eyes sitting on his bed. He realizes that this must be who was watching him from the hedge that morning. Harry hears the Masons arriving downstairs. The creature slips off the bed, bows to Harry, and says that he has wanted to meet Harry Potter for a long time. He identifies himself as Dobby the house-elf and wears an old pillowcase. Harry tells Dobby that it’s not a great time for him to have a house-elf in his bedroom and asks why he is there. Then Harry asks Dobby to sit down, causing the house-elf to burst into very noisy tears, saying that he has never been asked to sit down by a wizard, like an equal. Harry tries to keep Dobby quiet while also being comforting. When Harry says “You can’t have met many decent wizards,” Dobby shakes his head, and then starts banging it on the window, repeating “Bad Dobby!” Hedwig wakes up with a screech. Dobby explains that he had to punish himself because he almost spoke ill of the wizard family he is bound to serve forever. Harry asks if the family knows he’s here. Dobby says no, and that he will have to shut his ears in the oven door for it, but they won’t notice because he has to punish himself constantly.

When Harry asks why Dobby doesn’t escape, Dobby explains that a house-elf must be set free. Harry realizes that Dobby has it much worse than him, and asks if he can help, which makes Dobby wail in gratitude loudly. Harry begs Dobby to be quiet. Dobby says that he has heard of Harry’s greatness but not of his goodness. Embarrassed, Harry replies that whatever he’s heard about Harry’s greatness is rubbish. Dobby is impressed that Harry is so humble and modest after defeating “He-who-must-not-be-named” (Voldemort) twice.

The house-elf says that he has come to protect Harry, to warn him that he must not go back to Hogwarts, where he is in mortal danger. Dobby’s warning upsets Harry because anticipating going to Hogwarts is all that’s keeping Harry hopeful as he endures his terrible life at the Dursleys'. Dobby argues with Harry, saying that he must stay where it’s safe—there’s a plot to make terrible things happen at Hogwarts this year. When Harry asks who’s plotting, Dobby bangs his head against the wall. Harry asks Dobby if this has anything to do with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. Dobby shakes his head, while looking at Harry meaningfully, as if to give him a hint. Harry thinks that Hogwarts is protected from harm by Dumbledore, the headmaster and a great wizard. Dobby starts to refer to powers beyond any decent wizard’s ability to handle, then starts beating himself with Harry’s desk lamp, yelping loudly. Silence falls downstairs. When Harry hears Uncle Vernon come into the hall he stuffs Dobby into the closet. Uncle Vernon, angry that Harry has ruined the punchline of his Japanese golfer joke, threatens him: “One more sound and you’ll wish you’d never been born, boy!”

Letting Dobby out of the closet, Harry explains that this is why he has to go back to Hogwarts: it’s the only place he has any friends. Dobby says, “Friends who don’t even write to Harry Potter?” Harry discovers that Dobby has been stealing his letters, hoping that Harry wouldn’t want to go back to school if he thought his friends had forgotten him. Dobby pulls letters out of his pillowcase clothing from Ron, Hermione, and the Hogwarts gamekeeper, Hagrid. Harry tries to grab them. Dobby says that he will only give Harry the letters if he promises not to return to Hogwarts. When Harry refuses, Dobby sprints down the stairs.

Harry follows the elf soundlessly. He discovers him in the kitchen, crouched on top of a cupboard. Aunt Petunia’s elaborate pudding is floating in midair near the ceiling. Dobby is levitating the pudding through magic. Harry begs Dobby to put it down. The elf demands that Harry promise not to return to school. Harry says he can’t. With a tragic look, Dobby says he must do this for his own good. The pudding falls to the floor with a crash, shattering the dish and splattering the kitchen with cream. Dobby vanishes with the sound of a crack. There are screams from the dining room. Uncle Vernon discovers Harry in the kitchen covered with the remains of the pudding. Uncle Vernon tries to gloss the incident over with the Masons, calling Harry his “very disturbed” nephew. Vernon promises Harry that he will “flay him within an inch of his life” when the Masons leave, and hands him a mop.

An owl swoops through the dining room window and drops a letter on Mrs. Mason’s head, causing her to run screaming from the house. The letter is for Harry, from the Ministry of Magic. It notes that a Hoover Charm was used at his place of residence; that underage wizards are not permitted to use spells outside of school; that any magical activity risking notice by Muggles is a serious offense; and that any further spellwork will lead to his expulsion. Harry hadn’t told the Dursleys that he is not allowed to use magic outside of school. An enraged Uncle Vernon announces that he’s locking Harry in his room. He won’t permit Harry to go back to Hogwarts. And if Harry tries to use magic to escape, he will be expelled. The next day Vernon installs bars on Harry’s window, and a cat-flap through which to feed him. Harry stays locked up for three days, and has fallen into an uneasy sleep when he awakens to see his friend Ron Weasley’s face outside of his window.

The creature sitting on Harry's bed is small, has bulging green eyes and bat-like ears, and is wearing a tattered pillowcase for clothes. Harry, still shocked by its appearance, recognizes it as the thing that was staring at him from the bush earlier that afternoon. The creature stands and introduces himself as Dobby the house-elf, and Harry invites him to sit back down on the bed. Dobby bursts into noisy tears at being treated like an equal by a wizard, and this noise causes the dinner party voices downstairs to falter slightly. When Harry comments that Dobby must not know many nice wizards, the house-elf begins to bang his head on the window, explaining his behavior as a self-inflicted punishment for speaking disloyally of his masters, saying that he was bound to serve them until he died.

Dobby praises Harry for being famous, polite, good-hearted, and modest. Harry denies the praise until Dobby makes reference to Voldemort (calling him "He- Who-Must-Not-Be-Named"). We learn that Dobby wants to prevent Harry from returning to Hogwarts, as danger awaits him there. Harry protests, but Dobby will only respond by nodding or shaking his head. Their dialogue is interrupted by Dobby stopping to bang his head once more. This time, his yelps of pain are heard downstairs. Vernon Dursley reprimands Harry, and Harry quickly hides Dobby in the closet. Vernon leaves, and the conversation continues. Harry is furious to find that Dobby has been collecting all of his mail from Ron and Hermione. Dobby explains his actions as an effort to deter Harry from returning to school. Harry replies that he must return to Hogwarts, and Dobby leaps off the bed and enchants a violet pudding, causing the dessert for the dinner party to levitate. Dobby then causes it to crash to the ground in a failed attempt to persuade Harry to stay put.

The Dursleys are livid. They become angrier when a letter is delivered by owl and dropped on to the head of one of the guests. The guests leave, and the party is ruined. The drill deal is off. Harry fears for his life, especially when Vernon reads the letter aloud, which warns Harry that it is against wizarding rules for him to use magic outside of school. The Dursleys no longer fear that Harry will use magic on them, and Harry is locked in his room with the window barred, and he is fed through a flap in the door. His life has now reached an all-time low, and even in his dreams he is plagued by thoughts of being caged and taunted. He dreams that the bars of his cage are being rattled, and he wakes to see Ron Weasley, his best friend from Hogwarts, right outside his window.

***Analysis in Detail:***

The appearance of Dobby demonstrates Harry's great fame and shows how Harry deals with his renown gracefully. Everywhere Harry goes, wizards recognize him and know his history. Books have been written about him, theories concocted. We see this in action for the first time here, when Dobby weeps at meeting Harry and finding him to be tolerably polite. On the other hand, we see how thoroughly and genuinely embarrassed Harry is by this sort of attention. He does not ask to be known, to be a figure and an exception; more often than not, it causes him annoyance and suffering. But this is a part of him, like his scar or his glasses, and he must expect it and make with it what he can.

Rowling allows us to learn the novelty and nuances of the magical world while Harry himself learns them. Harry is eleven when he first discovers that the world of magic exists and almost instantly he was steeped into its lifestyle; we as mere observing "Muggles" cannot know any more than Harry does as he enters this strange alternate reality, and by making Harry somewhat of a beginner in that reality, the author allows us to come to understand it gradually. Harry, before this moment, has never seen or heard of a house-elf. But he learns through interacting with Dobby, and we learn through watching him. This pattern repeats itself throughout the story.

When Dobby drops the dessert and leaves Harry to be framed for it, we see the depths of injustice that are possible within the Dursley household. Harry began the day feeling rather low and he ends it infinitely lower, and we see that outside the relative safety of the wizard world, Harry is quite impotent. He is ignored, abused, belittled; he cannot escape his aunt, he cannot free himself or his owl, he cannot control what is happening to him, and his lack of control makes the need for an escape to magic all the more pressing.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

When [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) arrives in his room, a little creature with “large, bat-like ears and bulging green eyes” named [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) is waiting for him. Dobby explains that he is a house-elf. When Harry politely asks Dobby to sit down, Dobby begins wailing in gratitude at being treated “like an equal.” Harry tries to comfort Dobby while also asking him to be quiet, as the Masons have arrived downstairs.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Dobby’s words imply that he rarely receives equal treatment from wizards, demonstrating the prejudice that other wizards bear against house elves. Harry, however, does not have such a prejudice. Part of this is because he simply does not know that many people consider house elves inferior, but mostly this is due to the fact that Harry treats everyone he meets with respect.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) tries to explain to [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) why he is there, but he keeps beating his head furiously on the wall, saying that because he is visiting Harry against the wishes of the family of he works for, he must punish himself. Harry asks if he can help Dobby or save him from what seems like an abusive family. But Dobby explains that a house-elf can only be set free by the family he works for, and again he marvels at Harry’s kindness and modesty.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Harry’s gesture of friendship towards Dobby, even when he himself is abused by the Dursleys, strikes Dobby as an enormous kindness, given the fact that he is a house-elf and often thought of as inferior. This action gives Dobby a great deal of loyalty to Harry through this book as well as the rest of the series.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) asks [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) if the rumors are true that he escaped [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort) a second time. When Harry says yes, Dobby remarks on how “valiant and bold” Harry is. He then tells Harry why he is there: he wants to warn Harry that he should not go back to Hogwarts, implying that there is a plot to make “most terrible things” happen this year. When Harry asks who is plotting them, Dobby furiously bangs his head against the wall again. Harry understands that Dobby can’t tell him.

***Analysis Part 3:***

It is important to compare the loyalty that Dobby bears Harry with the loyalty that Dobby bears his family (the Malfoys). With the Malfoys, his loyalty is required by a magical contract between house-elves and their families. But with Harry, Dobby’s loyalty stems first from the desire to do good and then from the respect that Harry shows him. Rowling suggests that Dobby’s loyalty to Harry prevails because kindness and respect will always win over prejudice, even when it comes at great physical cost as it does to Dobby here.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) asks if [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby)’s warning has anything to do with [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/tom-riddle-voldemort), and Dobby slowly shakes his head, though he seems to be trying to give Harry a hint. Harry simply says that with [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-dumbledore) at Hogwarts, he can’t think who might try to make horrible things happen there. Dobby agrees that Dumbledore is a great wizard, but says there are powers that “no decent wizard” can wield. Dobby again beats himself with Harry’s lamp.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Harry’s loyalty towards Dumbledore is evident even in these early pages, and this loyalty is what allows Harry to be brave enough to know that he can return to Hogwarts without fear. Ultimately this loyalty, and Harry’s bravery, will be tested when Dumbledore leaves Hogwarts, but his departure ultimately demonstrates how Harry’s loyalty extends even beyond Dumbledore’s presence.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/vernon-dursley), hearing this beating, starts to climb the stairs. [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) shuts [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) in a closet. Vernon warns Harry not to make another sound. When Vernon leaves, Harry turns to Dobby and says that anywhere would be better than the Dursleys, and that he has friends at Hogwarts. Dobby notes that Harry’s friends haven’t written to him, which leads Harry to realize that Dobby has been stopping his letters, thinking that if Harry believed his friends didn’t care about him, he would not want to go back to school.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Even Dobby, who knows very little of Harry Potter, understands how much Harry values his friends and their loyalty to him, and thus how they can be used against him to make him feel vulnerable. Tom Riddle will explain later in the novel that he too takes advantage of the knowledge that Harry will always prioritize the well-being of his friends.

Summary Part 6:

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) grabs for the thick stack of letters that [Dobby](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/dobby) presents, but Dobby runs out of the bedroom and down into the kitchen. Harry follows him, and when he arrives he sees [Petunia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters)’s “masterpiece of a pudding” floating near the ceiling. Harry begs Dobby not to do anything. But when Harry won’t promise that he will not return to Hogwarts, Dobby lets the pudding drop to the floor and then vanishes.

Analysis Part 6:

It is interesting that for all of the trouble-making and lying that Harry does throughout this book, he is unable here to lie to Dobby. This moment actually reinforces the deep integrity that Harry possesses: he only lies when he knows that it will help to do what is right. Here he knows that lying is not morally right, even though telling the truth causes trouble for him.

Summary Part 7:

[Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/vernon-dursley) rushes into the kitchen and sees [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) covered in frosting. He apologizes to the Masons, saying that Harry is “very disturbed” and so they keep him upstairs. Vernon threatens to “flay” Harry, who starts mopping the kitchen. Vernon is almost able to salvage the night, but then an owl swoops through the window and drops a letter. The Masons run out of the house, as Mrs. Mason is very afraid of birds.

Analysis Part 7:

Later in the novel, Rowling establishes that many wizards are prejudiced against Muggles. Here, the opposite is true: Vernon and Petunia are so prejudiced against wizards that they even try to apologize for Harry by associating him with mentally ill people, another group that experiences discrimination.

Summary Part 8:

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) reads the letter, which is from the Ministry of Magic. It says that they have detected a Hover Charm used in Harry’s home, reminds Harry that underage wizards are not allowed to use magic outside of school, and says that if he uses any more magic he will be expelled from the school.

Analysis Part 8:

This is the first introduction to the Ministry of Magic, and it is not accidental that their warning is unfair. In the wizarding world, the Ministry of Magic often wants to appear to be doing the right thing (policing underaged wizards using magic) rather than actually doing the right thing (figuring out who really conjured the Hover Charm and punishing that person).

Summary Part 9:

[Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/vernon-dursley), who reads the letter as well, is livid that [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) didn’t tell them he couldn’t use magic. He puts bars on Harry’s window, puts a cat-flap in the door for food, and lets Harry out to use the bathroom twice a day. Other than that, Harry is locked in around the clock and Vernon is adamant that he will not be returning to Hogwarts.

Analysis Part 9:

In contrast to Harry’s inability to lie to Dobby, Harry chose to lie about his inability to use magic outside of school because he knew that without lying, he would be subjected to brutal abuse by the Dursleys.

Summary Part 10:

Three days later, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) is still locked in his room. He is nearly starving, but he splits his food with Hedwig, who is also trapped in her cage. He doesn’t know what to do: if he uses magic to escape, he will be expelled from Hogwarts. But that night, he hears the bars on his window rattling, and when he wakes up, [Ron Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) is outside his window.

Analysis Part 11:

The injustice of the rules is shown once again. Harry feels unable to perform magic even when he is essentially imprisoned in his room for no reason and is starving. These harsh circumstances make it clear that Harry feels like the Ministry is not interested in justice, because they do not make an exception for his dire circumstances.

***Important Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

"A house-elf must be set free, sir. And the family will never set Dobby free...Dobby will serve the family until he dies, sir..."

Harry stared.

"And I thought I had it bad staying here for another four weeks," he said. "This makes the Dursleys sound almost human. Can't anyone help you? Can't I?"

Almost at once, Harry wished he hadn't spoken. Dobby dissolved again into wails of gratitude. (2.32-35)

***Explanation:***

Poor Harry. He tries to be a nice guy to Dobby, but Dobby's loud cries annoy the Dursleys. He really can't win when he's staying with his aunt and uncle. More to the point: the house-elf/wizard relationship gets more attention in the later Harry Potter novels. When it's first introduced in this book, how is it represented? How do you feel about the fact that wizards basically have a slave population to look after them? How does the existence of house-elves reflect on wizarding society?

***Quotation 2:***

We have received intelligence that a Hover Charm was used at your place of residence this evening at twelve minutes past nine.

As you know, underage wizards are not permitted to perform spells outside school, and further spellwork on your part may lead to expulsion from said school (Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery, 1875, Paragraph C). (2.103-104)

***Explanation:***

This Ministry notice to Harry scolding him for a Hover Charm that he didn't even cast (it was Dobby!) seems terribly unfair. It's the first definite evidence we get that the Ministry of Magic is not the world's most competent governing body. After all, how can you send someone an official warning without even knowing for sure if that person is the one who broke the law?

***Quotation 3:***

"Friends who don't even write to Harry Potter?" said Dobby slyly.

"I expect they've just been – wait a minute," said Harry, frowning. "How do you know my friends haven't been writing to me?"

Dobby shuffled his feet.

"Harry Potter mustn't be angry with Dobby. Dobby did it for the best —" (2.72-75)

***Explanation:***

Dobby is the first in a long line of people – most notably, Professor Dumbledore later in the series – who keep things from Harry "for his own good." Here, Dobby is stopping Harry's friends' letters to make Harry think that he has nothing to go back to at Hogwarts. It doesn't work to keep Harry from going to school, of course. Still, do you think that it ever works to try and hide information from people "for their own good"? Are there times when it is necessary to keep secrets to prevent others from being hurt or offended? Do you think Dobby's deception here is justified?

***Quotation 4:***

[Uncle Vernon] was bearing down on Harry like a great bulldog, all his teeth bared. "Well, I've got news for you, boy... I'm locking you up...You're never going back to that school...never...and if you try and magic yourself out – they'll expel you!"

And laughing like a maniac, he dragged Harry back upstairs.

Uncle Vernon was as bad as his word. The following morning, he paid a man to fit bars on Harry's window. He himself fitted a cat-flap in the bedroom door, so that small amounts of food could be pushed inside three times a day. They let Harry out to use the bathroom morning and evening. Otherwise, he was locked in his room around the clock. (2.110-112)

***Explanation:***

Aside from being ridiculously inappropriate behavior, Uncle Vernon's punishment of Harry makes no sense. If he hates Harry's guts so much, why does he decide to lock him in his room – in other words, to keep him around at all? What do you think Uncle Vernon is trying to achieve with this horribly cruel punishment? What are the Dursleys trying to get out of this?

***Quotation 5:***

"Harry Potter says he's not going back to school —"

"Dobby...please..."

"Say it, sir —"

"I can't —"

Dobby gave him a tragic look.

"Then Dobby must do it, sir, for Harry Potter's own good."

The pudding fell to the floor with a heart-stopping crash. Cream splattered the windows and walls as the dish shattered. With a crack like a whip, Dobby vanished. (2.89-95)

***Explanation:***

Obviously, Dobby has a really misguided notion of what is for "Harry Potter's own good." By letting Harry take the blame for the destroyed dessert, Dobby gets poor Harry locked up in his bedroom by the Dursleys – there are even bars on the windows! Even though Dobby acts with the best of intentions, by not giving Harry any choices about his protection, he makes everything much worse. Dobby's actions underline one of the major themes of the Harry Potter series: the importance of free will and personal choice.