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

***Chapter 6***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Ron and Harry experience the consequences of their behavior. Ron receives a furious howler from his mother, a magical letter that shouts at him in angry tones that everyone in the Great Hall is able to hear. She is outraged with Ron and Harry, and informs them that Mr. Weasley is now in trouble, too, being investigated by the ministry and in danger of losing his job. This sets a sober tone to the first day of school, with both boys feeling bad about the effect their behavior had on the Weasley family.

Gilderoy Lockhart has settled into his role at Hogwarts and is soon telling other people what to do. He tells the Herbology teacher how to repair the Whomping Willow (advice which doesn't impressed her, this being her subject, not his). He takes Harry to one side, under the impression that Harry and Ron took the car for publicity, and warns Harry about being greedy for press exposure. Unbeknown to Harry, his escapade with Ron has made the front page of The Daily Prophet. Harry is stunned and dismayed. Contrary to Lockhart's belief, he doesn't want any unnecessary attention and would rather just live his life peacefully. This proves to be difficult for Harry. His reputation precedes him, and a first-year pupil, Colin Creevey, is in awe of Harry. He wants to take Harry's picture to send to his father. Draco Malfoy overhears Colin and exaggerates the situation, to make it seem as if Harry is signing photos of himself to sell. To make the situation even worse, Lockhart is in the vicinity and once again warns Harry of the consequences of fame and fortune, apparently with his best interests at heart.

The first lessons of the year are interesting. In Herbology, they study Mandrakes, magical creatures with healing properties. The Mandrakes' screams are dangerous, requiring the use of earmuffs when handling them. Lockhart takes the second lesson. His reputation has preceded him as a great wizard with lots of famous conquests, all written up in the books set for the pupils' study. Hermione is besotted by his glowing good looks and reputed skills as a wizard; she has drawn love hearts on her timetable when she has classes with him. His lesson, however, is less than impressive. He has brought Cornish Pixies for the class to study. These pixies are small and blue, with very high-pitched voices. They are a bit wild and not appropriate for a second year class to study. The lesson goes disastrously wrong, with the pixies escaping and Lockhart being unable to control them. The pixies cause mayhem and lead Ron to question Lockhart's ability as a teacher and the validity of his conquests.

***Brief Analysis:***

Professor Lockhart is a major focus in this chapter. He is a wizard of worldwide repute, known for his incredible bravery and prowess. He loves to be the center of attention, setting his classes all his books to read, setting a test about himself and obsessing about press coverage of himself. Earlier in the book, he used Harry to divert attention to himself in the bookshop by including Harry in the photo shoot. In this chapter, he appears to be warning Harry of the dangers of too much press attention because he is concerned for Harry; in reality, he is worried that Harry will threaten his popularity and receive more attention than he does. His conquests as a wizard are also questioned, as he cannot control simple pixies when he professes to have conquered really dangerous creatures. The issue of vanity is interesting, as Lockhart is incredibly vain yet doesn't seem to live up to his reputation. By contrast, Harry is modest and prefers to go unnoticed, despite having a well-deserved reputation for fighting evil.

***Summary in Detail:***

At breakfast the morning after the arrival by car, Hermione is acting sulky and annoyed with Ron and Harry, although most of their other friends are still clearly impressed. Soon a flock of owls arrives, bringing the day's letters and packages. Errol, the Weasley's aged owl, falls into Hermione's milk jug, and when Ron digs him out and cleans him off, he notices that the envelope in his beak is red and beginning to smoke. It is a Howler, and Ron opens it….and the voice of Mrs. Weasley explodes loudly and furiously into the great hall, yelling at Ron for ruining the car, getting Mr. Weasley in trouble with his job, and putting his own and Harry's lives in danger.

From this point on, Hermione is friendly again, as she seems to feel that Harry and Ron have been punished enough. Together, the three friends walk to Herbology class, where Gilderoy Lockhart, dressed in flamboyant turquoise robes, is cheerfully and smugly advising a disgruntled Professor Sprout on how to doctor the Whomping Willow. Lockhart pulls Harry aside and says, with great pain and understanding in his voice, that he blames himself for the car incident. It soon grows apparent that he believes that ever since he gave Harry a taste of fame that day in the bookstore, Harry has been trying to recapture that fame by behaving recklessly. Harry is stunned and offended as he collects himself and joins his classmates in the greenhouse.

In the greenhouse, Professor Sprout is explaining that the lesson of the day will involve repotting seedling Mandrakes, which Hermoine explains are a strong restorative, used to return transfigured people to their original state. These plants are pale green, mottled-looking babies with leaves growing out of their heads and a cry that is fatal, so the entire class puts on earmuffs to handle them. Before they begin repotting, a boy from Hufflepuff House named Justin Finch-Fletchley introduces himself to Harry, Ron, and Hermione. He explains that he almost went to Eton (implying that he is Muggle-born since Eton is not a wizard school) and that he persuaded his parents to send him to Hogwarts after showing them Lockhart's books, persuading them how useful wizards can be. The students work with the Mandrakes, and the Gryffindor House second-years head over to Transfiguration class with Professor McGonagall, where Ron's broken wand malfunctions, casting putrid smoke everywhere.

On the way to his next class, defense against the dark arts, which is taught by Professor Lockhart, Harry is accosted by a small camera-clutching Gryffindor first-year named Colin Creevey, who shyly asks Harry for a signed picture to prove that they met. He makes a large sentimental fuss about Harry's history, Hogwarts, magic in general, the whole time humiliating Harry. To make matters worse, Draco Malfoy passes by them during this and loudly announces that Harry is giving out signed photos; when Ron steps up to defend Harry, Malfoy says dryly that one of the signed photos would be worth more than Ron's entire house. Before a fight can break out, Lockhart strolls through, overhears, and suggest that he and Harry both pose for a signed photo for Colin.

Afterwards, Lockhart gives Harry yet another bit of fatherly advice about why not to give out signed photos this early in his career. Harry is horrified and sits as far back in Lockhart's classroom as possible. Lockhart begins the class with a quiz to make sure they've been doing their reading of his many books. The quiz contains over fifty questions pertaining to Lockhart's personal interests, secret desires, favorite color, and greatest achievements. The day's assignment is dealing with pixies, who wreak havoc when Lockhart lets them out of their cage. He is unable to get them back into their cage, so he hastily leaves the room, asking Ron, Harry and Hermione to clean up the angry pixies.

***Analysis in Detail:***

This chapter gives a clearer and more thorough look at the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Gilderoy Lockhart. In his interaction with his peers, such as Professor Spout, he is bossy and patronizing, giving them self-satisfied advice in their own fields of expertise. As a teacher in his own class, he does not know how to control the dark arts nearly quite so well as he professes in his books. The pixies destroy the classroom, hanging students from the ceiling and tossing wands out the window. Lockhart is unable to stop them or to recapture them. When he leaves this job to Harry, Ron, and Hermione, his boasting tales of adventures with frightening creatures seem suspect; although is a handsome man, his actions and abilities do not make credible his stories.

Most importantly, Gilderoy Lockhart is portrayed here as a contrast for Harry. Lockhart vastly misunderstands Harry's famous history. Harry is humiliated when people like Colin Creevey approach in varying states of awe; any special treatment makes him uncomfortable, especially since Draco Malfoy resentfully mocks whatever "famous" attention Harry Potter happens to be getting. So for Harry to get caught twice by Lockhart in situations that bring him extra attention is horrifying; he does not want Lockhart to identify with him, to give him pointers on fame and to involve him in photo sessions. Lockhart, we begin to see in this chapter, will spare no sacrifice in order to arrive at some sort of eminence, while Harry, who was thrust into eminence without being knowing or wanting it, will do anything he can in order to feel that he is treated fairly despite his fame. He wants to succeed on his own merit, not resting back upon the history of the scar on his forehead, as opposed to Lockhart, who we soon see has little integrity on what he will do to become famous, and in how he will handle that fame. Lockhart revels in the end result, while Harry strives to make worthwhile the process.

***Critical Study:***

At breakfast the next morning, [Errol](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#errol), the Weasleys’ owl, delivers a Howler to Ron. When Ron opens the red envelope, Mrs. Weasley’s voice shakes the Great Hall. She is furious that they stole the car and risked their lives and Mr. Weasley’s job. He is now facing an inquiry at work. She threatens to bring Ron back home if he puts another toe out of line. Hermione also disapproves. Harry feels guilty.

Their first class of the day is Herbology, with Professor Sprout. She arrives to meet them at the greenhouses with her arms full of bandages. Harry spots the Whomping Willow in the distance, with its branches in slings, and feels guilty again. Gilderoy Lockhart accompanies Professor Sprout, claiming that he has been showing Prof. Sprout how to bandage a Whomping Willow. She looks unusually disgruntled. Lockhart pulls Harry aside. He thinks that Harry flew the car to Hogwarts to get attention. He also assumes that he gave Harry a taste for publicity when they appeared together on the front page of the newspaper.

Harry rejoins his class in the greenhouse. Professor Sprout is explaining that they will be repotting Mandrakes. Hermione volunteers the properties of a Mandrake: it is a powerful restorative, used to transform people who have been transfigured or cursed back to their original state. The cry of a Mandrake is fatal to anyone who hears it. Everyone puts on earmuffs. Professor Sprout demonstrates how to repot a Mandrake. It looks like a very ugly baby. Harry, Ron, and Hermione struggle to repot resistant Mandrakes, along with [Justin Finch-Fletchley](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#justin-finch-fletchley), a Hufflepuff student who almost went to Eton and is impressed by Lockhart.

Next, they attend Transfiguration class with Professor McGonagall, where their task is to turn a beetle into a button. Harry has difficulty, but Ron has it worse with his damaged wand. Hermione makes perfect buttons. They break for lunch, before their afternoon class: Defense of the Dark Arts with Gilderoy Lockhart. Ron discovers that Hermione has outlined all of Lockhart’s lessons with hearts, causing her to blush.

Colin Creevy, a first-year Gryffindor student, approaches Harry, carrying a camera. He asks if Ron will take his picture with Harry and asks Harry if he will sign it. Colin wants to prove that he has met the famous [Harry Potter](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#harry-potter). He is amazed at everything at Hogwarts. He explains that he didn’t know all the odd stuff he could do was magic until he got a letter from Hogwarts. His dad is a milkman and couldn’t believe it either. So he is taking lots of pictures to send home to his father.

Draco Malfoy walks up with his thuggish cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, and mocks Harry for giving out signed photos. Colin defends Harry, saying that Draco is jealous. When Ron defends Harry as well, Draco makes fun of Mrs. Weasley’s howler, and the Weasley family’s poverty. Ron whips out his taped-up wand to fight Malfoy, but is interrupted by Gilderoy Lockhart, who is eager to join the photo with Harry. He offers Colin a double portrait and signature. Lockhart sweeps Harry away with him, advising him to avoid handing out photos at this point in his career so as to not look big-headed.

Professor Lockhart begins his class with a quiz all about himself. The boys are incredulous. Hermione is enraptured by Lockhart and gets a perfect score on the quiz. Lockhart lifts a large covered cage onto his desk, asks everyone to remain calm, and then whips off the cover to reveal “Freshly Caught Cornish Pixies.” He opens the cage and releases the pixies, causing pandemonium in the classroom. The pixies smash the windows, wreck the classroom, and lift Neville Longbottom into the air by his ears. Half the class hides under their desks. Neville swings on the chandelier. Lockhart brandishes his wand and bellows a spell, which has no effect. A pixie throws his wand out of the window. He dives under his desk, narrowly avoiding Neville, who falls as the chandelier gives way.

There is a rush to the exit when the bell rings. When Harry, Ron, and Hermione are almost to the door, Lockhart asks them to “just nip the rest of them back into their cage” and leaves quickly. While struggling to round up Pixies, Ron and Harry agree that Lockhart has no idea what he’s doing. Hermione defends him, reminding them of all of the amazing things he’s done. Ron is skeptical, and thinks that Lockhart made up the stories in his books.

**Critical Analysis(ch4-6):**

Harry’s status in the wizarding world is the opposite of his status in Muggle world. For one thing, he has lots of wizard money, which he inherited from his parents. This represents a fairy-tale wish fulfillment. But Harry learns quickly that the same problems exist in the wizarding world as the Muggle world, which complicates the dichotomy. It also creates an awkward tension in his character, as he knows what it’s like to be poor, and so is uncomfortably aware of his privilege as compared to Ron. This contrast is symbolized by their respective boomsticks: Harry’s new, fast Nimbus 2000 vs. Ron’s older, slower Shooting Star. When they visit London to prepare for school, Harry is especially aware of his class status. In the Muggle world he is powerless and penniless; in the wizarding world he watches the Weasleys struggle at Gringotts, the wizard bank, to find enough money to buy school supplies.

Harry’s experience with Floo powder demonstrates that magic is something that takes practice. It can sound fun, but turn out dark, disorienting, and dangerous. Knockturn Alley introduces the world of the Dark Arts. Lucius Malfoy used to have power but has lost it, and is forced to hide his Dark Arts tools. His manner implies that he is of the British gentry. He is both wealthy and anti-Muggle, a foil for Arthur Weasley. He is forced into appeasement of the Ministry, as he is a minority of a minority, in alignment with Lord Voldemort before Harry defeated him. Lucius Malfoy warns his son Draco about openly complaining about Harry Potter, as “most of our kind regard him as a hero.”

Draco Malfoy thinks that Harry Potter’s fame gets him special treatment and is jealous. Harry’s fame is a burden for him, as it makes him different from his peers, and leads to jealousy and suspicion. Gilderoy Lockhart, a hyperbolic character, represents the hollowness of undeserved fame. He tries to use Harry’s fame to increase his own. When the Malfoys and the Weasleys fight at his book signing, Lockhart enjoys the conflict as it brings him more publicity. In the content of the conflict, he displays no moral rudder.

Hagrid, although one of Harry’s closest friends, is suspicious when he finds Harry in Knockturn Alley. Then Hagrid expresses casual prejudice in his judgment of the Durselys as “lousy Muggles.” Hermione, a Muggle who is also Hagrid’s friend, interrupts the moment. Even Hagrid, Harry’s rescuer and protector in book one, is not consistently free of suspicion and prejudice.

Mr. Weasley finds satisfaction in Lucius Malfoy’s worry due to the Ministry of Magic raid on his mansion. Mrs. Weasley is more cautious. In the end, she is proven right, as Malfoy uses the Dark Arts to try to regain power. Arthur Weasley is delighted to meet Hermione’s Muggle parents. This meeting sets the stage for the future coupling of Ron and Hermione. Ron and Draco act as foils throughout the book, in parallel with their fathers. The argument between Arthur Weasley and Lucius Malfoy is political: How should wizards behave? As Arthur says, they “have very different ideas about what disgraces the name of wizard.” Lucius think that Weasley’s poverty, time spent with Muggles, and raids on wizard mansions is a disgrace; Weasley thinks that Malfoy hiding Dark Arts paraphernalia and touting pureblood supremacy is a disgrace. The conflict between the Malfoys and the Weasleys leads to the inciting incident of the plot: Lucius Malfoy plants Tom Riddle’s diary on [Ginny Weasley](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/study-guide/character-list#ginny-weasley). Malfoy uses Ginny to undermine her family’s power, in an effort to change the government of both Hogwarts and the Ministry of Magic. This leads ultimately to conflict between Good, represented by Harry Potter, and Evil, represented by Voldemort.

Platform 9 ¾ at Kings Cross Station, where students board the train to Hogwarts, is a metaphor for magic: irrational, invisible to Muggle eye, it takes faith the first time Harry encounters it. The fact that Harry and Ron can’t enter the platform means that something is seriously amiss in the relation between the magical and mundane worlds. When Ron asks Harry, “Have you got any Muggle money?” it shows how Harry’s status has reversed. He’s stuck again. We learn later that this was the work of Dobby, a trickster figure. In the study of folklore the trickster archetype is identified as a figure who has secret knowledge and uses it to play tricks. He disobeys rules, ignores conventional behavior, and disrupts normal life. Dobby challenges the division between Muggle and wizarding world, disrupting Harry’s expectations, and the plot.

When Ron and Harry decide to fly Arthur Weasley’s car to Hogwarts, they seize it as a symbol of independence. The faulty invisibility booster on the car represents the tenuousness of Harry and Ron’s adolescent position. They go from the “fabulous dream” of freedom to being semi-visible and thirsty. They are not yet able to handle adulthood, running the car into a tree. In crashing into the Whomping Willow they learn that magic is not all enchantment. Magical creatures have a will of their own which is not to be messed with. The car ejects them, likely because it is filled with Mr. Weasley’s magic.

As they arrive at Hogwarts, Harry and Ron enter more fully into the gothic genre, reflected in both the architecture of the school and Snape’s dour antagonism. When Harry didn’t think to send a message by owl to inform the school that they needed help, it could be because he had been unable to do so at Privet drive. He has difficulty managing the transitions between various worlds, and his vastly different powers in each. Dumbledore sets up the threat of expulsion if they break any more school rules.

Harry and Ron find that their entrance is perceived as exciting and heroic by their peers—a heroism of novelty, originality, surprise, and spectacle. The reaction from Mrs. Weasley is the opposite of their peers: her howler is a humiliating spectacle, which also makes them feel personally ashamed. Harry and Ron learn some of the consequences of rebellion. Mr. Weasley’s enchanted car was his quiet rebellion. They made it public. Hermione is unimpressed, and characterized as a rule-obeyer; this will make it more significant when she breaks the rules later. She is generally risk-averse, and is friendly to Harry and Ron once they are punished. She believes in a system of justice.

Professor Lockhart becomes a vehicle for dramatic irony as he constantly overstates his abilities and deeds. The reader knows that Lockhart didn’t mend the Whomping Willow, and that Harry wasn’t trying to become famous by crashing into it. Lockhart also acts as comic relief in a book that can turn dark. The earthy Professor Sprout provides a contrast with the ostentatious Lockhart. The Mandrakes are a symbol of maturation, as they grow from babies into adults. It’s gruesome that the Hogwarts community waits for them to mature enough to use them as a restorative. Like the gnomes, their ugliness and dispossession make them less sympathetic. They are also plants, although personified ones. Both Justin Finch-Fetchly’s name and his name-dropping the prestigious “Eton” implies that he came from an upper-class Muggle family. Ron’s wand is a phallic symbol, and its dysfunction forms part of the coming-of-age narrative. He struggles with potency throughout the story. Hermione, like Ginny, has a crush: on Lockhart. This seems contrary to her intelligent character, but perhaps she believes what she reads in books. She is inexperienced, but a reader. Her naivety parallels Ginny’s, who believes in the voice in Riddle’s diary.

Colin Creevy, who asks for a photo with Harry, reinforces the theme of fame. Rowling became famous very quickly after the publication of the first Harry Potter book. [Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets](https://www.gradesaver.com/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets) could be read as her examination of that experience. While Colin is a fan, Draco is a jealous, mocking critic. Lockhart is an undeserving blowhard desiring fame for its own sake and taking credit for the work of others. Popularity and financial success matter most to Lockhart, exemplified by his gloating over his book being “six solid months at the top of the best-seller list.”

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next morning at breakfast, [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) is still disapproving of [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter)’s arrival method. When the mail arrives, Ron receives a letter from [Mrs. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mrs-weasley) called a Howler. When he opens it, it screams in Mrs. Weasley’s amplified voice. It scolds him for stealing the car, particularly because [Mr. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/mr-weasley) is now facing an inquiry at work, and also says that Ron and Harry could have died. The entire Great Hall looks at Ron, who has turned a bright red. Harry feels incredibly guilty for what they’d done.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Harry and Ron begin to realize the real ramifications of their actions. Here, they start to realize that breaking the rules without thinking, and without having a truly good reason, is a problem. Even though Ron is the one getting in trouble, Harry understands that he is just as responsible for what happens and that the two of them spurred each other on to this plan—and he is particularly guilty because of the kindness that Ron’s family showed him over the summer.

***Summary Part 2:***

[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), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) then go to their first class: Herbology with the Hufflepuffs. On their way to the Greenhouses, Harry notices that [Gilderoy Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) and [Professor Sprout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters) have just been patching up the Whomping Willow, and Lockhart brags about showing Professor Sprout the proper way to do so. He then spots Harry and pulls him aside for a moment. He notes that Harry has gotten “a taste for publicity” and wanted to fly the car to school to get himself noticed. Harry tries to protest, but Lockhart simply counsels him to take it easy and not try to garner so much attention yet.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Lockhart’s speech to Harry continues to confirm the celebrity identity that others have bestowed upon him, and reinforces the idea that people may view his choices as attention-seeking. Despite Harry’s attempt to set the record straight, Lockhart only sees the actions that Harry has taken. Lockhart himself also illustrates the idea that one’s choices shape one’s identity, because Lockhart’s identity is completely self-created.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) returns to Herbology class, where [Professor Sprout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters) announces that they’ll be repotting Mandrakes. When she asks who can name the properties of the Mandrake, [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger)’s hand immediately shoots up and she explains that Mandrakes can be used to restore someone who has been transfigured or cursed to their original state, but she adds that their cries are fatal. Professor Sprout gives Hermione twenty points.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Hermione’s intellect and work ethic recur again and again in this chapter. She actively combats the prejudice that Muggle-born students are less intelligent, less deserving, or somehow inferior to the other students, because she outperforms them all.

***Summary Part 4:***

The students put on earmuffs to prevent them from hearing the cries—though these Mandrakes are only seedlings, and thus their cries will only knock the students out for several hours if heard. As [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), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) work, they are joined by a Hufflepuff student who introduces himself as [Justin Finch-Fletchley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/justin-finch-fletchley). Justin knows who they all are, and he tells them that he’s glad to be at Hogwarts—though his mother had always wanted him to go to Eton. They don’t have much more chance to talk, as they spend the rest of the class with their earmuffs on.

***Analysis Part 4:***

In this exchange, Justin reveals with his reference to Eton that he is a Muggle-born student. Though Harry, Ron, and Hermione treat everyone with kindness and respect, when rumors later fly that Harry doesn’t like Justin or is targeting him, Justin’s revelation that he is Muggle-born is given as the reason.

***Summary Part 5:***

The Gryffindors’ next class is Transfiguration with [Professor McGonagall](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/professor-mcgonagall). [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) feels like he’s forgotten everything he learned the previous year, and he has a very difficult time turning a beetle into a button. [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) has even worse problems, because his wand appears to be damaged beyond repair. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) transfigures several beetles perfectly.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Hermione’s transfiguration skills again reinforce her magical talents, as she does better both than Harry (who is “half-blood”) and Ron (who is pure-blood)—proving that blood status has little to do with one’s abilities.

***Summary Part 6:***

After class, [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), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) eat lunch and then sit out in the courtyard for a bit. An eager first-year student named [Colin Creevey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters) comes over and introduces himself to Harry, saying that he knows all about Harry, and asks him for a picture to prove that he’s met Harry. Colin marvels at Hogwarts, explaining that he never knew the odd stuff he was doing was magic until he got the letter from Hogwarts, and now he’s taking lots of photos to send back to his dad. He asks Harry if he could perhaps sign the photo.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Harry continues to face the prospect of being defined by what other people see in him. Colin, like Ginny and Justin, sees Harry as a celebrity, and their treatment of him adds to his celebrity hype. Colin exasperates Harry throughout the book because Harry tries to choose not to have this kind of fame, knowing that to many people it seems conceited, as Lockhart points out moments later.

***Summary Part 7:***

Just then, [Draco Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/draco-malfoy) comes over, sarcastically asking if [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/harry-potter) is giving out signed photos and then insulting [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/ron-weasley) by saying that one would be worth more than his family’s house. [Gilderoy Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) then comes over, wondering who’s giving out signed photos until he sees Harry. He poses for a picture with Harry, then pulls him aside again and says that handing out signed pictures looks “a tad bigheaded.” Harry can’t get a word in to explain that he wasn’t giving out signed photos.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Malfoy continues to demonstrate his prejudice against those who don’t have as much wealth as he does. Additionally, it is ironic here that Lockhart cautions Harry against arrogance, given the fact that Lockhart is the most arrogant person in the book. Still, Harry realizes that he has to actively fight against this perception of him.

***Summary Part 8:***

The students then go to [Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart)’s classroom for Defense Against the Dark Arts. Lockhart begins the class by giving a quiz, with questions entirely about himself (“What is Gilderoy Lockhart’s favorite color?”; “What is Gilderoy Lockhart’s secret ambition?”). Lockhart collects the quizzes and grades them, disappointed that so few remembered the answers. But he commends [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) for getting every question right.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Where Harry wants to be humbler, Lockhart chooses to be anything but. As is revealed at the end of the novel, he has no qualifications to be a teacher. All his life choices are based on what will gain him fame and fortune, allowing him to craft an identity in the wizarding world that is based on his charm and deceptions rather than real accomplishments.

***Summary Part 9:***

[Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) then lifts a covered cage from behind his desk, warning that the students are about to face their worst fears. When he uncovers the cage, he reveals what is inside: Cornish pixies, eight inches high and bright blue. Lockhart then opens the cage, and the pixies start to cause pandemonium in the classroom: lifting [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters) by the ears into the air, breaking through the glass window, dumping ink bottles onto the class.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Lockhart also shows how a lack of knowledge can create fear and chaos. He releases the Cornish pixies but has no idea how to contain them, causing panic among the students in the class. Lockhart’s lack of knowledge on various subjects inspires fear throughout the rest of the book, as Harry and the others worry about the ramifications of Lockhart’s stupidity.

***Summary Part 10:***

[Lockhart](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/gilderoy-lockhart) tells the students to round up the pixies, then tries to cast a spell to stop them. But the spell has no effect, and the pixies seize his wand and throw it out the window. Lockhart dives under the desk. The bell rings and the students dash toward the door. Lockhart then tells [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), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-chamber-of-secrets/characters/hermione-granger) to take care of the rest of the pixies before leaving the classroom. Ron and Harry are flabbergasted. Hermione immobilizes the pixies and then defends Lockhart, saying that he’s trying to give them hands-on experience; he obviously knows what he’s doing, she says, because of all the things he’s done in his books. Ron clarifies: all the things “he says he’s done.”

***Analysis Part 10:***

In contrast to Lockhart’s lack of knowledge and his inability to contain the pixies, Hermione comes to the rescue and uses her intellect in order to recapture them.Additionally, Ron makes a good point about Lockhart’s identity: just because someone says that they have done something doesn’t mean that they have actually done it, again reinforcing the idea that Lockhart has created the identity that the world knows.

***Important Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

Mrs. Weasley's yells, a hundred times louder than usual, made the plates and spoons rattle on the table, and echoed deafeningly off the stone walls. People throughout the hall were swiveling around to see who had received the Howler, and Ron sank so low in his chair that only his crimson forehead could be seen.

"— LETTER FROM DUMBLEDORE LAST NIGHT, I THOUGHT YOUR FATHER WOULD DIE OF SHAME, WE DIDN'T BRING YOU UP TO BEHAVE LIKE THIS, YOU AND HARRY COULD BOTH HAVE DIED —" (6.18-19)

***Explanation:***

Ron and Harry both felt really cool, arriving at school in a flying car, but Mrs. Weasley's Howler – and the news that Mr. Weasley is facing an investigation at work because of the whole Misuse of Muggle Artifacts thing – suddenly makes them realize that they were taking a huge risk that freaks out Ron's parents. Harry feels guilty for abusing the Weasleys' trust and Ron feels mortified. A Howler seems like a really humiliating thing to receive in the middle of a full dining hall, though. Does this seem like effective parental discipline? Or does it seem like overkill? If you had kids, would you be willing to send Howlers to their schools? Would your parents Howler you if they had the chance? What might their Howlers say?

***Quotation 2:***

"Harry, Harry, Harry," said Lockhart, reaching out and grasping [Harry's] shoulder. "I understand. Natural to want a bit more once you've had that first taste – and I blame myself for giving you that, because it was bound to go to your head – but see here, young man, you can't start flying cars to try and get yourself noticed. Just calm down, all right? Plenty of time for all that when you're older. Yes, yes, I know what you're thinking! 'It's all right for him, he's an internationally famous wizard already!' But when I was twelve, I was just as much of a nobody as you are now. In fact, I'd say I was even more of a nobody! I mean, a few people have heard of you, haven't they? All that business with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named!" He glanced at the lightning scar on Harry's forehead. "I know, I know – it's not quite as good as winning Witch Weekly's Most-Charming-Smile Award five times in a row, as I have – but it's a start, Harry, it's a start." (6.43)

***Explanation:***

Compared to the Defense Against the Dark Arts instructors we get later on in the series, Professor Lockhart seems vain and stupid, but mostly harmless. Still, it's definitely a bad sign about his character that he actually bothers to interrupt class to pull out one of his twelve-year-old students and assure that student that some day he'll be lucky enough to be as famous as Professor Lockhart himself. Professor Lockhart is absurdly jealous of Harry, which, again, given that he's about three times Harry's age, is pretty pathetic.

***Quotation 3:***

"What've we got this afternoon?" said Harry [...]

"Defense Against the Dark Arts," said Hermione at once.

"Why," demanded Ron, seizing her schedule, "have you outlined all Lockhart's lessons in little hearts?" (6.77-79)

***Explanation:***

Here's a moment where we really see the disadvantage to poor Hermione of having two boys as best friends. She clearly has a normal girly crush on Professor Lockhart (her 100% on the pop quiz he offers about his own famous deeds is further proof that Hermione likes him). Still, her twelve-year-old girl behavior gets merciless ribbing from Ron – who, of course, is too emotionally dense to start wondering why it bothers him so much that Hermione has a giant crush on their handsome Defense teacher.

***Quotation 4:***

Everyone filed out of the classroom except him and Ron, who was whacking his wand furiously on the desk.

"Stupid – useless – thing —"

"Write home for another one," Harry suggested as the wand let off a volley of bangs like a firecracker.

"Oh, yeah, and get another Howler back," said Ron, stuffing the now hissing wand into his bag. "It's your own fault your wand got snapped —" (6.73-75)

***Explanation:***

This is why we don't think Howlers are a good form of discipline. Ron is so embarrassed by them that he doesn't tell his parents about his very real need for a new wand. At the same time, this seems like kind of a flimsy excuse, since he obviously desperately needs one – why might Ron be worried about telling his parents that he needs a new wand? We wonder if this might be related to Fred and George's earlier concern about the cost of all of the Lockhart books. Could Ron be worried about costing his family lots more money?

***Quotation 5:***

My name was down for Eton, you know. I can't tell you how glad I am I came here instead. Of course, Mother was slightly disappointed, but since I made her read Lockhart's books I think she has begun to see how useful it'll be to have a fully trained wizard in the family. (6.67)

***Explanation:***

This passage of dialogue comes from Justin Finch-Fletchley, a Muggle-born Hufflepuff second year. He seems like a nice enough kid, if a little too trusting of Professor Lockhart. (By the way, Eton is a very expensive, old, and established boys' school in Britain. So, Justin must be pretty highly placed in terms of social class.) Not only does this passage go to show that Professor Lockhart's reputation has spread far and wide; it also indicates that the kids at Hogwarts come from lots of different backgrounds. It's hard to imagine that Justin's mother was "slightly disappointed" at Justin's choice to go to Hogwarts instead of Eton – how could you not be insanely excited that your son is going to be a wizard? Why do you think Justin's mother values Eton over Hogwarts? What might Eton mean to her or to her family, that she's excited about Justin going there? Can you imagine a reason not to attend Hogwarts?

***Quotation 6:***

"All right, Harry? I'm – I'm Colin Creevey," [a mousy-haired Gryffindor first year] said breathlessly, taking a tentative step forward. "I'm in Gryffindor, too. D'you think – would it be all right if – can I have a picture?" he said, raising the camera hopefully.

"A picture?" Harry repeated blankly.

"So I can prove I've met you," said Colin Creevey eagerly, edging further forward. "I know all about you. Everyone's told me. About how you survived when You-Know-Who tried to kill you, and how he disappeared and everything and how you've still got a lightning scar on your forehead [...] It's amazing here, isn't it? I never knew all the odd stuff I could do was magic till I got the letter from Hogwarts. My dad's a milkman, he couldn't believe it either." (6.84-86)

***Explanation:***

Colin Creevey is Harry's one-person cheering squad in Book 2. He's so admiring of Harry that it gets a little embarrassing. Yet we find Colin interesting for two other reasons. First, like Justin Finch-Fletchley in the same chapter, he's a Muggle-born. Yet his father's a milkman, so he comes from a lower social class than Eton-bound Justin. Still, Colin and Justin's Muggle social backgrounds don't seem at all relevant at Hogwarts. In fact, Hogwarts seems more diverse in terms of social class than most Muggle private schools. Second, Colin's enthusiasm about Hogwarts and all the neat stuff he can do with magic keeps the wonder going from Book 1 to Book 2. In Book 1, everything at Hogwarts is new to Harry and he keeps discovering new things around every corner. By Book 2, there are still strange things for Harry to find (like the Mandrakes or Fawkes, the phoenix), but Hogwarts itself is starting to appear familiar. Colin's response reminds us how marvelous the wizarding world still is.