***Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azakaban***

***Chapter 1***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Harry Potter is a young wizard. He lives with his non-magical, or "Muggle," Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon and Cousin Dudley at number four Privet Drive. It is summer vacation from his school of magic, but he does not see it as much of a holiday. He is about to turn thirteen years old and it has grown increasingly hard for him to endure his relations' verbal abuse and emotional neglect. It has become more difficult, not only because he is getting older and thus less tolerant of their ignorance, but also since he has found out he is a wizard.

It is very difficult for him, as he is not allowed to practice his lessons or do his homework in the Dursley's house. He has to sneak his books into his room and do his homework by wand light. Still, it is decided by the Headmaster of his school, Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, that Harry continue to live with these relations until he is old enough to be on his own. It is the safest place for him since the murder of his parents when he was an infant. It is believed that their murderer, the dark wizard, Voldemort, is still at large in some form. Harry needs to be kept out of reach of this wizard, who ultimately wants to kill him.

Even though Harry is not allowed calls or visits from his friends, he does receive birthday cards and gifts via his owl companion and message carrier, Hedwig, as well as deliveries from his friends' own owls. His best friends from school, Ron and Hermione, do their best to stay in touch with him. He looks forward to spending some time with Ron and his family before the start of the term. He has five more long weeks till the start of the term.

Presently, Harry's biggest concern is getting his Aunt or Uncle to sign a permission slip, which will allow him to go to Hogsmeade Village. The Village is an area of shops and Inns that caters exclusively to the wizarding community. Third year students and above are allowed to go to Hogsmeade on occasional weekends; if they have a signed permission slip.

***Brief Analysis:***

Harry is allowed no phone calls or visits and he has no friends in town. His cousin Dudley, his Aunt and Uncle are terrible people and take advantage of every opportunity to give Harry a hard time. While other children his age look forward to the coming school year with dread, Harry looks forward to the freedom and friendship he knows awaits him.

The reader again meets Harry on the eve of his thirteenth birthday. This chapter is written for new readers who are not familiar with Harry Potter, as well as for veteran readers of the series. It is a balance between introducing the history of the books for novices and filling in old readers on some new facts and information.

***Summary in Detail:***

Harry is being rebellious: it's midnight and he's up...writing an essay for his History of Magic class?

This really is rebellious, though, since Harry's Muggle relatives, the Dursleys, don't approve of magic and won't let Harry have access to his school books during the summer.

Harry actually had to sneak his magic books up to his room so he can do his homework.

Summers are a real bummer for Harry since he doesn't get to see or talk to his friends.

His friend Ron tried to call, but Ron didn't know how to use a telephone and ended up just shouting at Uncle Vernon.

It's Harry's thirteenth birthday and it's shaping up to be yet another bummer.

"Yet another unusual thing about Harry was how little he looked forward to his birthdays. He had never received a birthday card in his life" (1.26).

But then Harry's owl Hedwig comes bearing gifts.

Harry gets a letter and a birthday gift from his three closest friends: Ron, Hermione, and Hagrid.

Ron's family won a drawing and took a vacation to Egypt – he sends Harry a picture of the Weasley clan that appeared in The Daily Prophet.

Ron sends Harry a Sneakoscope, which goes off like an alarm if something untrustworthy or shifty is going on in the vicinity.

Hermione sends Harry a Broomstick Servicing Kit and Hagrid gives Harry a monster of a book – literally. It's the Monster Book of Monsters and it tries to eat Harry's arm before he restrains it with a belt.

We'll never complain about our heavy textbooks again.

Harry also gets a letter from Professor McGonagall, though it's not about his birthday. Professor McGonagall just writes to give him his list of books for the new school year and a permission slip that a guardian needs to sign so that Harry can visit the wizarding village of Hogsmeade this year.

Harry goes to bed happy on his birthday for the first time.

***Synopsis:***

It is midnight when the story opens. Harry is lying quietly on his bed, trying to write an essay about witch-burning for his Hogwarts classes without waking up his aunt, uncle, and cousin, all of whom would be horrified to know that he was engaged in any form of magic while in their house. Harry realizes that it is now one o'clock, an hour past his thirteenth birthday. Since the Dursleys have never celebrated his birthday, Harry does not consider this event remarkable. Harry reminisces about his parents' death at the hands of Lord Voldemort, and on his own encounter with Voldemort the previous spring at Hogwarts. Harry feels relieved to have lived to see his thirteenth birthday.

Harry notices an odd flapping thing coming toward his window, and he soon sees that it is three owls, his own loyal, snowy Hedwig, a second unfamiliar owl, and held up by the first two, Errol, his friend Ron Weasley's feeble family owl. The owls deliver birthday cards and gifts from Ron, Hermione, and Hagrid, his three closest friends. From Ron, Harry receives a pocket Sneakoscope and a letter describing a family trip to Egypt. From Hermione, he receives a Broomstick Servicing Kit (which Harry greatly appreciates, since his favorite sport, Quidditch, is played on broomstick). From Hagrid, he receives a schoolbook entitled "The Monster Book of Monsters." Lastly, Harry receives a letter from Hogwarts requesting forms from guardians allowing the students to venture into the wizard village of Hogsmeade; Harry knows that he will not be able to persuade his uncle or aunt to sign the form. Nevertheless, Harry glances again at his cards and falls asleep that night feeling, for the first time ever, that his birthday was a special occasion.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The narrator explains that [Harry Potter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) is very unusual: he hates the summer holidays, desperately wants to do his homework, and is a wizard. Late at night, Harry lies in bed under his covers. With a flashlight, he reads through his textbook and tries to write his essay on the pointlessness of fourteenth-century [witch hunts](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/witch-hunts). As he works, he listens carefully for the Dursleys. [Aunt Petunia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-petunia), [Uncle Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon), and [Dudley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) are Harry's only relatives, but they're non-magical people (muggles) and hate magic. They'd initially tried to keep Harry's spellbooks from him, but Harry managed to sneak a few out so he could finish his homework and avoid detention.

***Analysis Part 1:***

By introducing the third installment of the series with Harry's homework on witch hunts and burnings, the novel makes it clear that justice will be a primary concern of Harry's third year. Readers even vaguely familiar with the history of witch hunts will know that they were a pointless endeavor that sought to make a show of justice—just as the Ministry of Magic goes on to do throughout the novel.

***Summary Part 2:***

Unfortunately, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) is already on thin ice with [Uncle Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) and [Aunt Petunia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-petunia): his best friend [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) tried to telephone early in the summer, but being a wizard, he'd never used a telephone before. Vernon picked up Ron's call and Ron proceeded to yell into the phone and tell Vernon he went to Hogwarts. After that, Vernon yelled at Harry for giving out his phone number and Ron didn't call again. Harry's other friend, [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger), didn't call either, which has made for a lonely summer. Vernon did decide that Harry could let his owl, [Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters), out at night, but forbade him from sending letters.

***Analysis Part 2:***

When Uncle Vernon forbids Harry from using Hedwig to send notes, it shows that he understands how important Harry's friendships are to him. This introduces the idea that loneliness is a dangerous state to be in, as at this point, it means that Harry is entirely isolated from his wizarding community and has no idea what's going on in his world.

***Summary Part 3:***

When [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) gets to a stopping point in his essay, he hides his books under a loose floorboard. He checks the time and notices it's one in the morning, and it's now his birthday. Harry doesn't care much about his birthdays; he's never received a card. He walks to the window, wondering where [Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) is.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The fact that Harry hasn't received a card before reinforces how alone he is, and not just because he's at the Dursleys': The house-elf Dobby kept him from receiving birthday cards last year, which though not Ron and Hermione's fault, certainly influences how Harry thinks of his birthdays and how others perceive them.

***Summary Part 4:***

The narrator explains that the most unusual thing about [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) is the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. He got it twelve years ago when the dark lord [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort) murdered Harry's parents, [Lily](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/lily-potter) and [James](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter), and failed to murder Harry. The curse rebounded onto Voldemort and he disappeared. Harry fought Voldemort last year, and he thinks he's lucky he made it to age thirteen.

***Analysis Part 4:***

For Harry, he recognizes that growing up is a privilege he's lucky to have, given how close he's come to Voldemort. His previous brushes with Voldemort suggest that the wizarding justice system isn't entirely effective, given that a child was more useful than the Ministry.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) notices three owls flying towards him and opens his window to let them in. The large gray owl, [Errol](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters), keels over. He belongs to the Weasleys and is old, so Harry unties the parcel and carries him to [Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters)'s cage. Hedwig joins Errol once Harry takes her package. The third owl is from Hogwarts; it carries a letter and another package. Harry opens Errol's package and finds his first birthday card and a newspaper article saying that [Mr. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/mr-weasley) won the Daily Prophet's Grand Prize Galleon Draw. The accompanying photograph shows all nine Weasleys and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley)'s pet rat, [Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew), on vacation in Egypt. In a letter, Ron apologizes for the phone debacle and talks about the curses on the pyramids. He also incudes a note about his gift: a Pocket Sneakoscope, which is supposed to detect untrustworthy people.

***Analysis Part 5:***

The simple fact that Hermione and Ron send Harry gifts this year (Hedwig has Hermione's package) indicates that they're starting to grow up, become more mature, and discover different ways to show Harry that they care about him. With this, the novel situates itself as a midway point in the series that sees Harry, Ron, and Hermione transform from innocent and naïve children into functional adults, gradually becoming more mature as the series progresses.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters)'s parcel contains a card from [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger). She writes that she's on vacation in France and asks if [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) will be able to meet her and Ron in London. Harry opens her gift, a broomstick servicing kit. He can't wait to use it on his Nimbus Two Thousand. Then, Harry picks up the final parcel. It's from [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid), the Hogwarts gamekeeper. Before Harry can get it unwrapped all the way, the object snaps like it has jaws. Harry picks up his lamp and then dumps the object out of the wrapping. It's a book titled The Monster Book of Monsters and it scuttles away.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Hagrid plays a special role in the trio's friendship, as he's both an adult authority figure and a friend who treats them like people worthy of trust and respect. Hagrid then becomes the trio's first indication that they can indeed be friends with adults. Hagrid's questionable gift, however, impresses upon Harry that Hagrid isn't a perfect friend, even if he is an adult.

***Summary Part 7:***

Hoping the Dursleys are still asleep, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) stalks the book and finally manages to tie a belt around it. He then opens [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid)'s card, which ominously says that the book will be useful for the school year. Harry turns to the letter from Hogwarts itself, which includes his booklist and a permission form that, if signed, allows the student to visit the village of Hogsmeade. Harry's heart sinks; he knows his aunt and uncle won't want to sign the form. He decides to worry about it tomorrow, crosses off another day on his countdown to September first, and lies down in bed to look at his birthday cards. He feels happy for the first time that it's his birthday.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The ominous note from Hagrid doesn't make sense to Harry now, but it does introduce the novel's exploration of perspective to the reader. In other words, what seems strange and ominous to Harry makes perfect sense to Hagrid, as this is the required textbook for his Care of Magical Creatures class. Hagrid also finds such items or creatures funny, while Harry clearly doesn't share this interpretation.