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

#### **Chapter 10-The Firebolt**

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Harry is miserable about the conversation he overheard, and dangerously angry at Sirius Black. Ron and Hermione try to talk him out of doing anything risky, such as pursuing Black for revenge, and as a change of topic and scenery, they decide to visit Hagrid. The visit is not a happy one, as Hagrid has just received note that Buckbeak, the hippogriff that attacked the Malfoy, is going to be put to trial in April and potentially executed. Harry, Ron, and Hermione comfort Hagrid and then head back to the library to research historical cases in which magical creatures won trials. They find nothing hopeful.

On Christmas day, Harry wakes up to find a Firebolt broomstick in his pile of presents. Although there is no card, he is thrilled. Hermione is wary, and after the Christmas dinner, during which Professor Trelawney predicts several more deaths, Hermione reports the broomstick to Professor McGonagall, who comes into the common room that night to take it away for examination, in case it had been sent by Sirius Black. Ron and Harry are furious at Hermione.

***Synopsis:***

* Harry returns to the castle in shock over what he's heard.
* He's angry that no one ever told him the full story.
* Harry goes up to his room to look at the photo album Hagrid made for him, full of old pictures of his parents.
* He searches through it until he finds his parents' wedding photo. And standing next to his dad is none other than a young and happy Sirius Back.
* Harry has nightmares all night about Black.
* The next day is the start of the holiday break and the three friends go visit Hagrid.
* Harry plans to angrily confront Hagrid about Black.
* But Hagrid is so upset when they arrive that Harry doesn't have the heart to do it.
* Turns out, Buckbeak has to go on trial for his attack on Malfoy, and Hagrid is really upset.
* They agree to help Hagrid with his case, and the project helps distract Harry.
* On Christmas morning, the gang check out their presents.
* Harry has an anonymous gift that turns out to be a Firebolt broomstick.
* The boys flip out in excitement, but Hermione finds the whole thing shifty.
* That night, they head down for Christmas dinner with the few other students still at the castle and the professors.
* Professor Trelawney decides to join them, after having a vision where she did just that. How convenient.
* McGonagall and Trelawney provide the dinner entertainment as they proceed to bicker.
* Snape glares at everyone and Dumbledore acts cheerfully oblivious to everyone.
* Finally, the world's most awkward dinner ends and Hermione stays behind to chat with McGonagall.
* The boys go back to the common room to gaze at the Firebolt some more.
* They're about a few minutes away from composing sonnets to it.
* But then McGonagall arrives to break up the love fest. She's come to confiscate the Firebolt.
* The boys are furious with Hermione and McGonagall.
* Hermione defends herself: "Because I thought – and Professor McGonagall agrees with me – that the broom was probably sent to Harry by Sirius Black!" (11.2.204).

***Brief Analysis:***

Harry is upset that no one told him the truth about the friendship between his parents and Sirius Black. He is tortured by thoughts of Sirius betraying them and is filled with overwhelming hatred and a desire for revenge.

When he wakes up the next morning, the castle is deserted. Everyone has left for the holidays. Hermione and Ron are sitting in the common room and the three of them decide to go to Hagrid's. Harry wants to ask him why he never told him the truth. When they get the Hagrid's hut, however, he is so distressed over a letter he has gotten from the school governors. The letter tells him he must have a hearing with Buckbeak to uphold the official complaint of Mr. Lucius Malfoy. Lucius is, of course, Draco's father. Hagrid is certain that the man's pull with the committee will end in Buckbeak's execution. Harry feels so bad for Hagrid, he does not even bring up the issue of Sirius Black with him.

On Christmas morning, Ron and Harry wake up to loads of gifts on their beds. Harry sees a long package and opens it curiously. It is a Firebolt riding broom. It is the fastest and most expensive broom sold anywhere in the wizarding world. It is Harry's dream broom. The boys are extremely excited and wonder who could have sent it as there is no card attached or enclosed. Ron suggests Dumbledore, but Harry thinks not. Then Ron suggests Lupin, as he seemed very sorry that Harry's broom got ruined.

As they are admiring the new broom, Hermione walks in. She sees the broom and asks who sent it. They tell her they don't have a clue. She tells Harry that he should not ride the broom. It could be a trap and it could be jinxed. She is about to continue when her cat, Crookshanks, smells Ron's rat and jumps from her arms to chase him.

The three go down to dinner and a small group is gathered in the Great Hall. The staff, two first years and a Slytherin fifth year are sitting at a long table. They enjoy a fine Christmas feast and Harry and Ron head back to the common room. Hermione stays behind to speak with Professor McGonagall.

As Harry and Ron gaze at the new Firebolt, McGonagall and Hermione come into the common room. Pointing to the Firebolt, the Professor asks Harry to give it over to her. He's flabbergasted and asks why. She tells him since there was no card, it could be jinxed and they need to have it tested for spells. She will return in about two weeks. Harry and Ron are furious with Hermione, but she stands her ground telling them that she thinks Sirius could have sent the broom. Professor McGonagall agrees with her.

Harry remains kind to his friend Hagrid, even though he is very angry with him for not telling him about Sirius. Likewise, he is angry at Hermione but does not scream at her the way that Ron does. Harry understands that she meant well and told McGonagall only because she was concerned for his safety. He is showing a very mature sense of control and thoughtfulness. He is becoming wise beyond his years.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

As [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) runs back through the tunnel to Hogwarts, he wonders why nobody told him that his parents died because their best friend betrayed them. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) keep a nervous eye on Harry until after dinner, when Harry excuses himself early to go to bed. He digs in his cabinet until he finds the photo album that [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) made him. Harry finds a photo of [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)'s wedding and notices [Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) as their best man. Harry thinks that Black doesn't have to hear Lily screaming whenever the [dementors](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors) get close, slams the album closed, and crawls into bed. When Ron comes up moments later, Harry pretends to be asleep. Harry lies awake for hours, feeling as though his anger at Black is like poison.

***Analysis Part 1:***

To the reader, it makes more sense that nobody told Harry the "truth" about Black because they knew he'd react this way. He and Ron already have a reputation for getting into trouble, and chasing after an escaped criminal sounds exactly like something they'd try to do. This shows that the adults in Harry's life understand how to filter what he hears and control his perspective to try to keep him safe from harm.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) wakes up close to lunchtime the next day and finds [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) in the common room. Hermione tells Harry that no matter what he heard, he can't do anything stupid. Incensed, Harry tells them that he hears [Lily](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/lily-potter) screaming when the dementors get near, and now that he knows who's responsible, he wants revenge. Hermione looks panicked as Harry says that [Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/draco-malfoy) has known about this all along, but Ron points out that Malfoy would love it if Harry got destroyed like [Pettigrew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew).

***Analysis Part 2:***

Ron and Hermione's choice to confront Harry about his anger shows that, like the adults around them, they're also aware that Harry is prone to following his emotions instead of logic or the promise of safety. This shows that, in this way, they're capable of behaving more maturely than he is, if only because their emotions aren't quite so high.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) tries to change the subject by suggesting they go visit [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) jumps at the idea, as he can ask Hagrid why he never mentioned [Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black). Hagrid doesn't answer when they knock and Ron hears a strange noise inside. When they call for Hagrid he finally opens the door in tears and flings himself at Harry. Harry, Ron, and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) guide Hagrid to a chair, and Hagrid motions towards an official letter on the table. Harry reads it aloud; it's from the school governors, who have decided to refer Hagrid and [Buckbeak](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/buckbeak)'s case to the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures. Ron insists that Buckbeak will get off and Harry notices that Buckbeak is inside.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Ron's remark that Buckbeak is innocent shows that he still trusts that, with proper preparation and witness testimony, Buckbeak can win his case. This represents a belief in the goodness and righteousness of the Ministry of Magic that they'll soon realize is unfounded: the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures is controlled by Lucius Malfoy, and it cares little for the facts of the case.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) says that they should be able to put up a good defense, but [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) cries that the Committee members are [Lucius Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/lucius-malfoy)'s cronies and [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/albus-dumbledore) is too busy to help. [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) can't bring himself to mention [Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black), so he suggests that he can help Hagrid prepare for the case. After [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) makes tea, Hagrid starts to calm down, though he says that nobody likes his classes and the [dementors](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors) make him feel terrible. This is the first time Hagrid has ever spoken about his time in Azkaban. When Hermione points out that Hagrid was innocent, he says that the dementors don't care.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Again, Hermione's insistence that they can win the case if only they prepare is predicated on a belief that the justice system is fair and unbiased—which, given that Lucius Malfoy controls this committee, it's clearly not. Hagrid's comment about the dementors mirrors this, given that the dementors also don't care about innocence—they'll suck the life out of anyone, innocent or otherwise.

***Summary Part 5:***

After their visit, [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter), [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley), and [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) devote themselves to helping [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) prepare for the hearing. They work almost nonstop until Christmas, when Harry and Ron wake to find sweaters and sweets from [Mrs. Weasley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/mrs-weasley). Harry also has a long, thin package and opens it to discover a Firebolt. There's no card and the boys wonder who sent it. Hermione arrives with [Crookshanks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) and when she learns that the broom came without a note, she's not excited. Before she and Ron can argue, Crookshanks leaps at Ron and [Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew). Ron tries to kick at Crookshanks but kicks Harry's trunk instead, which reinvigorates the Pocket Sneakoscope. Hermione huffs out of the room while Harry puts the Sneakoscope away.

***Analysis Part 5:***

When the Sneakoscope goes off again, it's doing so because of Scabbers. Ron's insistence that Scabbers is a victim, however, keeps him from being willing to question who around him might be untrustworthy. This reminds the reader that, because the trio doesn't have enough information to make truly informed decisions and assessments, they're missing clues right and left that could lead them towards a better understanding of the events taking place around them.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) notices that [Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) looks awful and thinks that he's likely not going live much longer. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) refuse to speak to each other all day. When they go to the Great Hall for lunch, they discover a single table in the middle of the room for the few teachers and students still at school for Christmas. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/albus-dumbledore) greets everyone warmly, makes [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) hold one end of his Christmas cracker, and puts on the ridiculous hat that comes out of it. Harry and Ron smile when they see that the hat has a vulture on it, just like the hat that boggart Snape wore.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Hermione and Ron's tiff still looks childish and silly, which reminds the reader that the trio still has a long ways to go in their journey toward maturity. When Dumbledore makes Snape participate in the Christmas cracker, he attempts to humanize Snape for the students in attendance and show them a side of Snape they wouldn't otherwise see.

***Summary Part 7:***

As the group begins to eat, [Trelawney](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-trelawney) comes into the Great Hall. [Dumbledore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/albus-dumbledore) draws up a chair for her, but Trelawney refuses to sit down since she'd be the thirteenth guest. With [McGonagall](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-mcgonagall)'s prodding, Trelawney finally sits, looking as though she expects something to go wrong. She and McGonagall heatedly discuss [Lupin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin)'s absence and Trelawney's "inner eye," but Dumbledore stops them by saying that Lupin is ill again. He confirms that [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) made Lupin his potion and then offers a first-year boy a plate of sausages.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The fact that Dumbledore knows about the potion that Snape is making for Lupin should tell Harry, Ron, and Hermione that there's nothing nefarious going on—they trust Dumbledore, and Dumbledore has encouraged them in the past to trust him about Snape and his other hiring decisions.

***Summary Part 8:***Two hours later, [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) get up from the table at the same time. [Trelawney](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-trelawney) shrieks and asks who stood up first, but [McGonagall](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-mcgonagall) drily says that the boys will be fine unless there's a murderer in the hallway. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) stays behind as Harry and Ron head back to the common room to admire the Firebolt. A few minutes later, Hermione and McGonagall both come through the portrait hole. McGonagall takes the broom and tells Harry that she has to confiscate it to test it for jinxes. Ron and Harry are aghast, but McGonagall carries the broom away. Ron turns on Hermione and asks why she told. Hermione defiantly says that she believes that [Sirius Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) sent the broomstick.

***Analysis Part 8:***Hermione's actions should be commended here, as she acted to make sure that Harry stayed safe at a time when most people believe that Harry isn't safe at all. She knew that Harry and Ron would be upset with her, but she acted anyway. Per the novel's portrayal of friendship, this is one of the most powerful things friends can do for one another, and it's a mark of maturity for Hermione that she did this. On the other hand, Harry and Ron's anger looks shockingly immature in comparison.