***Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban***

***Chapter 17***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

* Ron has some disturbing news for his rescue party, though: "He's the dog [...] he's an Animagus [....]" (17.72). What?
* Just then a filthy man emerges from the shadows: it's either a vampire or Sirius Black.
* OK, it's totally Sirius Black (who's doing a fantastic impression of a vampire. And not one of those sparkling, hot *Twilight* vampires either).
* "The waxy skin was stretched so tightly over the bones of his face, it looked like a skull" (17.74). Yikes.
* Black disarms Hermione and Harry with Ron's wand and thanks them for stopping by. No, really.
* Harry loses it and goes for Black, but Hermione and Ron yank him back.
* Ron yells that Black will have to kill all three of them.
* Harry snaps, though, and jumps Black, who fights Harry off and starts to choke him.
* Hermione then kicks Black and Ron joins in, too, forming a sort of dog pile.
* Harry gets their wands back and he aims his at Black – it's a moment of truth.
* Harry wants to kills him, but he freezes.
* Black tells Harry to listen to the whole story.
* Suddenly, they hear footsteps and Hermione screams for help.
* Professor Lupin bursts into the room and stares at Black.
* Lupin starts speaking, but he makes no sense at all.
* He asks Sirius where "he" is and then says "unless you switched [...] without telling me?" (17.128).
* Lupin then helps Black up and gives him a huge hug.
* This time, Hermione loses it and starts screaming at Lupin.
* She shouts that she trusted him and has covered for him, when he's been in league with Black this whole time.
* Lupin asks her to calm down but she shouts that Lupin is a werewolf.
* And not like Jacob in *Twilight*, either. Just saying.
* Hermione figured out the truth after Snape assigned the werewolf essay. Oh that Snape, so sneaky.
* Now all the kids start yelling at the two adults, who beg the lot to shut up so they can explain things.
* Lupin insists that he only learned the truth about Sirius tonight, when he saw someone who shouldn't be alive on the Marauder's Map.
* Sirius and Lupin then drop the bombshell: Ron's rat Scabbers is really Peter Pettigrew.
* What?!

***Brief Analysis:***

As Harry, Ron, and Hermione walk sadly away from Hagrid's cabin, they have difficulties staying hidden under Harry's cloak because Scabbers will not stay still. Harry sees the reason for Scabbers' uneasiness once he spies Crookshanks slinking out of the Forbidden Forest, followed closely by the large black dog, who first tackles Harry and then Ron, ultimately dragging Ron away into the forest. Harry and Hermione dart after them and watch as the dog pulls Ron down inside the Whomping Willow, breaking his leg in the process. They follow him, but only after Crookshanks surprises them by pressing a hidden knot on the tree, causing it to quiet its branches. The path beneath the tree leads them into a boarded-up house that they instantly recognize as Hogsmeade's Shrieking Shack. In an upstairs room they find Ron, seated by Crookshanks, and guarded by Sirius Black, who the black dog has transformed into. Black disarms Harry and Hermione through the expelliarmus spell, and Harry, insane with fury at finally facing the man who caused his parents' death, leaps onto Black, reclaiming his wand with the help of Ron and Hermione, and ultimately forcing the unarmed Black into a corner, where he remains, at Harry's mercy. Crookshanks sits protectively on top of Black's chest.

Before Harry can gather his courage to kill Black, Professor Lupin bursts through the door, disarming Harry. Lupin quietly asks, "Where is he?" and Black points to Ron. The two men nod in silent agreement over something, and then they embrace. Hermione shrieks at Lupin that he is a traitor, and that she should have exposed him as a werewolf long ago. She says that she deduced his nature as a werewolf from seeing his Boggart turn into the moon, and from noting that he was out sick during each month's full moon. Lupin commends her cleverness, and begins to speak, only to be interrupted again and again by the accusations of Harry, Ron and Hermione. An exasperated Lupin gives each one of them back their wands, and explains that he was examining the Marauder's Map, watching Ron, Harry and Hermione exit Hagrid's cabin, when he saw the name Peter Pettigrew alongside Ron's. At that point, he realized that Peter must alive and disguised as Scabbers.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[**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) stand in shock for a moment. When they hear [**Hagrid**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) howl, Harry turns to head back for him, but Ron stops him and leads them all towards the castle. Darkness starts to fall around them and **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)** continues to struggle. Harry notices [**Crookshanks**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) stalking them. With a final twist, Scabbers breaks free and races away. Crookshanks chases Scabbers, and Ron throws off the cloak to chase Crookshanks. Harry and Hermione follow until they trip over Ron on the ground, Scabbers safely in his pocket.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Again, Scabbers's bid for freedom suggests that, at the very least, he's done leading his cushy life as a Weasley pet. This indicates that there is more to Scabbers than Ron or the Weasleys suspected, while also opening up the possibility that Crookshanks knows what's going on with Scabbers and chases him for this reason.

***Summary Part 2:***

Before they can get back under the Invisibility Cloak, they hear something coming and a huge black dog leaps at [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter). It knocks Harry down, grabs [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley)'s arm, and starts dragging him away. Suddenly, something hits Harry, and he hears [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) shriek too. He lights his wand and sees that they're under the Whomping Willow. The dog tries to drag Ron into the tree's roots, but Ron hooks a leg around a root. Ron’s leg cracks and he vanishes. Harry tries to run through the branches, but [**Crookshanks**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) weaves through and puts his paw on a knot on the trunk. The tree stops moving. Harry tells Hermione that Crookshanks and the dog are friends, and all three of them climb into the tunnel after Ron.

***Analysis Part 2:***

When Crookshanks shows that he knows how to make the tree stop, it suggests that he knows more than Ron has previously given him credit for. While Harry and Hermione interpret his actions as allowing them to follow and save Ron, they later learn that he's actually leading them to Sirius Black—Ron is just an innocent victim in all of this. However, when they choose to go after Ron, it shows that they care more for his safety than their own in this case—they're acting like good friends intent on saving him.

***Summary Part 3:***

When [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) and [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) reach the end of the tunnel, they carefully raise their wands to see where they've ended up. They see a dusty room with smashed furniture. Hermione whispers that they're in the Shrieking Shack, and Harry notes that ghosts don't destroy furniture. They hear a creak upstairs and silently climb to a landing. They hear [**Crookshanks**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) purring and a moan through a doorway and see [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) on the floor. Ron moans that it's a trap and "he" is an Animagus. The door shuts behind Harry and Hermione and they turn to see a sallow, stringy man behind them. It's [**Sirius Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black).

***Analysis Part 3:***

Now that Harry is in the Shrieking Shack, he can start to put together the evidence before him that suggests that the shack isn't actually haunted—he'll need to reevaluate everything he knows about the shack with this new evidence. When they realize that the dog is Sirius Black, it does become puzzling why he didn't kill Harry, given that that's supposedly what he's after—there's more to the story.

***Summary Part 4:***

[**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) disarms [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) and [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) and, eyes locked on Harry, says that he knew Harry would come—Harry is just like [**James**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter), and this will make everything easier. Filled with rage, Harry starts for Black but [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) and Hermione pull him back. Ron pulls himself to standing and tells Black that he'll have to kill them too if he wants to kill Harry. Black tells Ron to lie down so he doesn't hurt his leg more and says only one person will die tonight. Harry taunts Black about having gone soft in Azkaban and throws himself at Black.

***Analysis Part 4:***

When Black expresses care and concern for Ron while saying that only one person will die, it offers a few clues that he's not actually after Harry or either of his friends. Harry is so filled with rage by Black's words because at this point, he still believes that Black betrayed his parents. Because of this, Harry takes Black's comparison to Harry's father like he takes Snape's similar comparisons: as an offensive insult.

***Summary Part 5:***

[**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) is too surprised to fight [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) in time. The two scrabble on the floor until [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) steps in. [**Crookshanks**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) tries to keep Harry from getting his wand, but in the end, Harry and Hermione get their wands and point them at Black. Harry reminds Black that he killed [**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). Black doesn't deny it but says Harry doesn't know the whole story. Before Harry can say anything else, Crookshanks settles himself on Black's chest. As Harry raises his wand, they hear footsteps downstairs. Hermione screams that they're upstairs with Sirius Black.

***Analysis Part5:***

Crookshanks's behavior again suggests that Harry is understanding something incorrectly when it comes to  this story. Notably, Crookshanks is also acting like a good friend here by protecting Black and therefore he leads Harry by example. When Hermione screams for whoever's downstairs, it shows that she still trusts all the teachers at school to care for her and take her concerns seriously.

***Summary Part 6:***

[**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) bursts through the door, takes in the scene, and disarms [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) and [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger). Then, he asks [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) where "he" is. Black points at [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) and Lupin, confused, mutters that "he hasn't shown himself" and asks if they "switched" without telling him. Black nods, Lupin helps him up, and the two embrace. Hermione screams wildly that she's been covering for Lupin and Harry, furious, shouts that he trusted Lupin. Lupin asks to explain, but Hermione tells Harry to not trust Lupin, as he's been helping Black, wants Harry dead, and is a werewolf. Calmly, Lupin says that Hermione is only right on one count: he is a werewolf.

***Analysis Part 6:***

It's telling that everything Lupin says to Black makes little sense to Harry, Ron, and Hermione. This makes it abundantly clear that they don't have the whole story. When Lupin tells Hermione that she hasn't fully understood everything, it shows that Hermione's cleverness isn't infallible and, without proper information, even she can come to incorrect conclusions. Harry's sense of betrayal shows how much he trusted Lupin.

***Summary Part7:***

[**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) whimpers and [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) starts towards him, but Ron gasps for Lupin to get away from him. [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) says that she figured it out after [**Snape**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) assigned the werewolf essay. Lupin tells Hermione she's clever and says that the entire staff knows; her telling anyone wouldn't have done anything. [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) yells again that Lupin has been helping [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black). Exasperated, Lupin throws Harry, Ron, and Hermione their wands and asks them to listen. He says that he was looking at the Marauder's Map, which he knows how to use because he helped write it, because he suspected that the trio would visit [**Hagrid**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid).

***Analysis Part 7:***

Lupin's admission that the staff knows about him being a werewolf reminds the teenagers that they're not experts and, because they're still children to many, they're not privy to everything that goes on at the school. By giving the trio their wands back, Lupin shows them that he'll now treat them like adults and tell them the truth, as long as they act like adults and listen.

***Summary Part 8:***

[**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) says that when [**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) left [**Hagrid**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid)'s, he saw that a fourth person was with them. He watched [**Sirius**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) pull two people into the Whomping Willow. Ron insists that it was just him, and then Lupin asks to look at **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)**. Hesitantly, Ron pulls Scabbers out of his robes. Black says that Scabbers isn't a rat; he's an Animagus named Peter Pettigrew.

***Analysis Part 8:***

This new information changes everything that the trio knows about Sirius Black and the reason he's in Azkaban. If Lupin is correct, this means that they'll need to entirely rethink what they believe is true and, most importantly, begin to treat the Ministry with caution.