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

***Chapter 18***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

* Harry, Ron, and Hermione decide that Black and Lupin are insane.
* Black doesn't seem to care much about that verdict and lunges for Scabbers/Peter to finish the job. Of killing him. In case that wasn't clear.
* Lupin tells him to hold up, and says they need to explain things to the kids, especially Harry.
* Ron just yells that they're all crazy.
* But Hermione channels her inner Jack McCoy and starts up a cross-examination of Lupin, using the power of logic.
* Hermione may have found her true calling here.
* Lupin tells everyone to gather round for story time and starts to explain everything.
* Peter, along with Sirius and James, all became unregistered Animagi while they were attending Hogwarts.
* That's one heck of an extra credit assignment.
* Lupin explains that the Shack and the Whomping Willow were installed the year he started at Hogwarts. He was secreted out of the castle for his monthly werewolf transformations and hidden away in the Shack so that he couldn't hurt anyone.
* The "shrieks" everyone heard were Lupin himself during his painful transformations.
* Poor guy.
* His friends eventually learned the truth and decided to become Animagi to help Lupin. Lupin could be around other animals while he was a werewolf.
* Peter became a rat, Sirius became a dog, and James became a stag.
* The gang started wandering around in their animal forms and ended up writing the Marauder's Map based on their explorations of Hogwarts.
* Hermione calls Lupin out on his group's reckless behavior; wandering around with a werewolf was probably not the best idea.
* Lupin admits it was super dumb and says he felt guilty about betraying Dumbledore's trust like that.
* And he debated all year whether or not to tell Dumbledore that Sirius Black is an Animagus.
* He admits that Snape was right to not trust him.
* Sirius perks up at the mention of Snape, and not in a good way. He hates the guy's guts.
* Lupin explains to the kids that Sirius played a joke on Snape one time and lured him to the Shrieking Shack while Lupin was in his werewolf form. James pulled Snape back at the last second, or else Lupin would have bitten Snape.
* Dumbledore forbade Snape from telling anyone the truth about Lupin. We can see why the guy held a grudge.
* And speak of the devil, Snape suddenly appears in the room, holding Harry's Invisibility Cloak.
* The cliffhangers don't stop!

***Brief Analysis:***

Ron is unwilling to believe that his faithful pet rat is really an animagus, a transformed version of a man named Peter Pettigrew. Black is furious and expresses his desire to kill Peter. Lupin stops him and demands that he explain everything first. Lupin begins saying that when he came to Hogwarts, a young werewolf, Dumbledore devised a way for him to leave Hogwarts secretly and safely through the Whomping Willow and remain, during the full moon, in the Shrieking Shack (thus explaining the name—the Shack was never haunted; just inhabited by a noisy werewolf). Lupin's good friends, James Potter, Sirius Black, and Peter Pettigrew, noticed his monthly absence and figured out his true identity. They then worked toward becoming animagi so they could assume animal form and keep Lupin company without placing themselves in danger. The four friends roamed everywhere and learned every part of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade, and they ultimately used this information to create the Marauder's Map.

Hermione points out that there have been only seven registered animagi over the century, and Lupin admits ruefully that they were unregistered; he then expresses his guilt for never having told Dumbledore that Black was an animagus and could have entered the castle in another form, but explained that he felt deeply grateful to Dumbledore for giving him an education and a job, that he didn't want to let him down. Lupin then explains that Snape, who now makes the revolutionary potion Wolfsbane that allows Lupin to keep his mind, thus remaining harmless during his transformation, as a student was always curious about the monthly disappearance. Once evening, Black played a prank by encouraging Snape to follow Lupin down the Whomping Willow, and James Potter ran after him and rescued him before he encountered the fully-grown werewolf at the other end of the tunnel. This trick is one of the reasons for Snape's grudge against Lupin, Black, James Potter and his son Harry. As Lupin finishes explaining this, Snape suddenly appears in the corner of the room, shedding Harry's invisibility cloak.

Harry is usually brave when facing enemies; he places his resisting hands on the face of Professor Quirrel in the first book, thus disintegrating his skin; he agrees to duel Tom Riddle, Voldemort's schoolboy shape, in the second; here, Harry attacks Black straight out, an unusual act of aggression for Harry. Perhaps he is emboldened by having his friends with him, or perhaps it is because he is still smoldering with anger over his parents' death at Black's hands. Whatever the reason, Harry pins Black to the ground quickly, preparing to kill him. This is unbelievable in principle, but within the context of events it makes a great deal of sense. Harry Potter grew up with a reputation of great competence against the Dark Arts, and instinctively when faced with them again, he knows what to do. Moments like this at the end of each story enable Harry to preserve this reputation.

During the dialogue with Lupin, many mysteries are explained, the most poignant of which involve Harry's father, James Potter, who was one of the cleverest students in the school, and a great friend to Black and Lupin. Hearing about James looking like Harry, playing Seeker for Gryffindor like Harry, or rescuing Snape from a werewolf just as Harry tried to rescue Ron from the black dog, brings a special meaning to Harry's reasons for being who he is. He is deeply proud of his parents, and Harry bears in mind who his parents were and what they would have wanted. This is the beginning of the point in the book where everything will be explained. Already, Harry's distrust of Black is countered by Lupin, whom Harry trusts, seeming to trust Black. Harry must trust his own good instincts in order decide for himself what to do and who to believe.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

After a moment of silence [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) says that [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) and [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) are crazy, and [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) points out that Black killed [**Peter Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) twelve years ago. Black lunges for Scabbers, but Lupin holds him back and insists that Harry, Ron, and [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) need to understand and have a right to know. Finally, Black stops struggling and agrees. Ron pulls himself up to leave but Lupin insists he stay and hold onto Peter. Black says that people didn't see what they thought they saw on the day that Peter "died."

***Analysis Part 1:***

Holding Black back and insisting that the trio needs to fully understand what's going on again shows that Lupin believes they're fully capable of handling this information like adults. He also recognizes that, if they don't get the full story, they'll never have a reason to question what they already believe.

***Summary Part 2:***

In a trembling voice, [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) says that [**Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) can't be an Animagus because the Ministry keeps a register and would've known. [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) laughs and tells Hermione that she's right, but there were once three unregistered Animagi at Hogwarts. He breaks off suddenly as the door opens. There's nobody there. [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) says that the shack is haunted, but Lupin says that the screams that used to come from it were his. He explains that he was bitten as a small boy and back then, the Wolfsbane Potion didn't exist. [**Dumbledore**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/albus-dumbledore) allowed Lupin to attend school and built the tunnel and the Shrieking Shack to keep people safe while he transformed. Dumbledore encouraged the rumors that the Shack was haunted.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Again, Hermione's insistence that there aren't unregistered Animagi shows that at this point, she still believes that the Ministry holds the absolute truth. As she learns that this isn't the case, she'll begin to come of age and learn to think more critically about things that are presented to her as fact. The same goes for the rumors surrounding the Shrieking Shack—in this case, while wrong, the rumors kept Lupin safe and kept people from investigating further.

***Summary Part 3:***

[**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) says that his transformations were awful, but he had three friends—[**Sirius Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black), [**Peter Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew), and [**James Potter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter)—all of whom eventually figured out where he went every month. Instead of deserting him, they spent three years figuring out how to become Animagi. They completed it in their fifth year and as animals, they could keep Lupin company since animals aren't in any danger around a werewolf. Because Sirius and James were such large animals, they could also keep Lupin in check and so they wandered the school grounds and around Hogsmeade. These explorations eventually culminated in the Marauder's Map.

***Analysis Part 3:***

What Sirius, Peter, and James did for Lupin was the ultimate act of friendship and sacrifice, as they made the worst times of his life into the best. This showed Lupin the power of friendship and impressed upon him that his friends would always be there for him. Though it's unclear exactly where Lupin has been for the last twelve years, his appearance also suggests that those years might have been easier with friends.

***Summary Part 4:***

[**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) interjects that what they did was extremely dangerous. [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) heavily says she's right; there were several times when he nearly bit someone. He feels extremely guilty now, as he's been inadvertently helping [**Sirius**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) all along. He says that he never told [**Dumbledore**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/albus-dumbledore) that Sirius was an Animagus, as that would mean admitting that he betrayed Dumbledore's trust as a boy. This is why [**Snape**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) has been so nasty to him. Black is surprised to learn that Snape is a teacher, and Lupin explains that once, Sirius told Snape how to get into the Whomping Willow. [**James**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter) learned what happened and saved Snape, but Snape did see Lupin as a werewolf. Harry asks if Snape is upset now because he thought Lupin was in on the joke, and Snape himself emerges from under the Invisibility Cloak and affirms this.

***Analysis Part 4:***

When Lupin is able to look back on the happiest time of his life and admit that it was also stupid and dangerous to have done that, it shows that while it doesn't compromise the great sacrifice that Lupin's friends made, it is possible to grow up and think critically about who he was as a young man. When the truth about the trick the group played on Snape comes out, it becomes clear that even though Black is beginning to shift to being a “good guy,” he does have a dangerous mean streak that affects whether or not people will trust him.