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

***Chapter 19***

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

* Sirius and Snape instantly resume their years-old grudge match and start threatening and insulting one another.
* The kids try to calm Snape down but he finally loses his cool and starts shouting at them all to shut up.
* "But there was a mad glint in Snape's eyes that Harry had never seen before. He seemed beyond reason" (19.20).
* Back away slowly, Harry.
* Instead, Harry opts to yell back at Snape and calls him out for being a pathetic loser who can't get over a grade school prank.
* Snape yells back and insults Harry's family.
* So Harry goes to disarm Snape, but Ron and Hermione had the same thought and Snape gets slammed with a triple dose of Expelliarmus. Whoops.
* He's down for the count, and everyone returns to Story Time with Professor Lupin.
* They finally get down to the business of Peter.
* Black takes over the story and says that he saw the picture of Peter in the newspaper, from when Ron's family took their trip to Egypt.
* He noticed that Ron's rat was missing a toe.
* Lupin says, "Didn't you ever hear, Ron? […] The biggest piece of Peter they found was his finger" (19.51).
* Conspiracy alert.
* Black explains that Peter faked his own death, that *he* was the Potters' Secret-Keeper and the one who betrayed them, and that Sirius chased after Peter, not the other way around.
* Harry yells at Sirius some more.
* Sirius explains that it's his fault, that he encouraged James to switch to Peter at the last minute, thinking that no one would ever suspect Peter.
* Finally, Ron hands over Scabbers and Lupin casts a spell alongside Sirius to make Peter reveal himself.
* And Scabbers transforms into a short, balding man who sounds like George Costanza.
* Peter stutters out a series of increasingly lame and unbelievable excuses as Sirius and Lupin do a tag-team interrogation on him with their patented mild-mannered-cop, insane-cop routine.
* Hermione does her District Attorney routine again and asks both Lupin and Sirius questions about Peter's story, and asks how Sirius escaped Azkaban.
* Sirius thinks Hermione is a bit nuts (um, that's a bit like the pot calling the kettle black, Sirius, but carry on), but he does answer her.
* He says he held on to the fact that he was innocent and that when he saw Peter's picture he just wanted revenge. So he slipped through the bars of his cell in his dog form and swam to shore.
* Eventually, the kids believe Sirius's story.
* So Lupin and Black prepare to kill Peter.
* Peter, of course, starts begging everyone to spare him.
* Black delivers a damning verdict against Peter, accusing him of being a coward and a traitor and an overall despicable human being.
* Peter breaks down and admits everything, but says he was scared and that Voldemort was powerful, so what was a guy to do?
* Sirius has an answer to that: "THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED!" (19.165).
* So, not what Peter did, basically.
* But, at the last second, Harry yells for the men to stop and to spare Peter.
* He says that his dad wouldn't want his old friends to become murderers and that Peter deserves to go to nasty old Azkaban instead.
* So the gang all head back out the passageway with an unconscious Snape and a tied-up Peter in tow.
* Lupin and Ron tie themselves to Peter so he can't escape.

***Brief Analysis:***

Snape sneers and says that he found the invisibility cloak where Harry had dropped it, at the base of the Whomping Willow. He proceeds to tie up Lupin and point his wand at Black, threatening to kill him. Snape refuses to hear the full story because he is set on vengeance. Finally Harry, Ron and Hermione all disarm him at once, knocking him out. Black then explains that he recognized Scabbers as Peter Pettigrew in a photo in the newspaper Cornelius Fudge gave him during a visit, and he set out to Hogwarts after him. He explains Scabbers' missing toe by saying that Peter must have cut off his own finger before blowing up the street and disappearing into the gutter. Black adds that Hermione's cat Crookshanks had collaborated with him in pursuit of Peter.

Even with these explanations, Harry is frightened and skeptical, and so, to clarify things once and for all, Lupin reverses Scabbes' form into that of a short, balding man—Peter Pettigrew. Peter is squirmy and nervous and pleads with each of the people in the room to believe his innocence and let him go, and only after many more facts are clarified does Harry believe that Sirius Black is innocent, and that Peter Pettigrew did in fact support Voldemort and turn Harry's parents over to him. Peter finally admits, after much evasion, that he is and was the servant of Lord Voldemort. Lupin and Black prepare to kill Peter, when Harry stops them by saying that his dad probably wouldn't have wanted his two best friends to become murderers. They all tie up Peter and secure him between Lupin and Ron, and they bring with them the unconscious Snape as together they troop back to Hogwarts.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) screams as [**Snape**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) thanks [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) for the Invisibility Cloak. He explains that he took a goblet of the Wolfsbane Potion to [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin)'s office, where he found the Marauder's Map. Snape says that it's evidence that Lupin has been helping [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) into the castle, and refuses to listen to Lupin trying to explain. He binds Lupin and threatens to kill Black. Nervously, Hermione asks Snape to listen to Lupin, but Snape reminds her that she's already in trouble and then shouts at her to be quiet. Black snarls that if [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) brings **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)** to the castle nobody will go to Azkaban. Snape threatens to call the [**dementors**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors) and Harry notices a crazy glint in Snape's eye.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Given what Snape knows and how he feels about Lupin and Black, he's able to come to his own conclusions about what's going on here. Notice how Snape screams at Hermione, which stands in sharp contrast to how Lupin handled Hermione's questions. This shows that, especially in intense and emotional moments like this, Snape isn't a teacher that the trio can trust to actually listen to them or think of what's best for them—he's more concerned with his own grudges.

***Summary Part 2:***

[**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) points out that [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) could've killed him many times over the school year. When [**Snape**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) refuses to listen, Harry yells that he's pathetic for holding onto a silly grudge. Snape insults Harry and [**James**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter), then tells Harry to get out of the way. At the same time, Harry, [**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) all disarm Snape, which sends him flying back into the wall and knocks him out. Hermione whimpers as [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) unties Lupin.

***Analysis Part 2:***

In particular, Hermione's choice to disarm Snape shows that she's learning to think more critically about the systems of power around her and understand that they're not always good or to be trusted.

***Summary Part 3:***

[**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) tells [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) that it's time to provide proof that his story is true. [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) asks for [**Peter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew), but [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) weakly asks how Black is sure that **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)** is Peter. Black pulls out the newspaper clipping of the Weasleys in Egypt, with Scabbers on Ron's shoulder. He explains that [**Fudge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge) gave him his paper last summer, and Lupin notices that Scabbers is missing a toe. He asks if Peter cut off his finger himself before he transformed. Black affirms this and says that when he cornered Peter on the street, Peter yelled that Black betrayed [**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), blew up the street, and ran away with the other rats. Ron won't have it; he insists Scabbers lost the toe in a fight and is so old because his family takes good care of him.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Black's version of events shows that Pettigrew was a master manipulator and fully understood how the Ministry was operating twelve years ago. He knew that because he's an unregistered Animagus, he had an easy escape route and could therefore not ever be around to give any credence to Black's story. This also suggests that Pettigrew understood that Black wasn't going to be given a trial and would therefore have no chance to even try to prove his innocence.

***Summary Part 4:***

[**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) notes that **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)** looks awful now, and he and [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) argue about whether Scabbers's health started going downhill after [**Sirius**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) escaped or after [**Crookshanks**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/crookshanks) came on the scene. Black says that Crookshanks is a smart creature and has been trying to bring Peter to him, and he stole the list of passwords to get into Gryffindor Tower. [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) thinks this is all absurd as Black says that Peter faked his death by leaving blood on Ron's sheets. This jolts Harry to his senses and he shouts that Black was going to kill Pettigrew like 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 agrees that he wants to kill Pettigrew, but Lupin says that Harry has it wrong: Peter betrayed his parents. Harry yells that this isn't true; Black admitted he was the Potters' Secret Keeper.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Because things still don't add up for Harry, he continues to focus his anger on Sirius Black and doesn't yet understand that he doesn't have the whole story. Lupin's presence in this situation likely helps Harry choose to see that Lupin and Black are right, given that Harry already trusts Lupin and seems more willing to continue to do so since Lupin gave back Harry's wand. It's worth noting, however, that Black isn't helping his case by admitting he wants to kill Pettigrew, as that only increases Harry's belief that he's a murderer.

Summary Part 5:

[**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) says that in a way, he did kill [**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): he persuaded them to make [**Peter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) their Secret Keeper, not knowing Peter was working with [**Voldemort**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort). [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) cuts him off and says that they can prove this by making Peter show himself. He assures [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) that if **[Scabbers](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew)** is really just a rat, it won't hurt him, and Ron hands the rat over. As Scabbers squeaks wildly, Lupin and Black point their wands at the rat and it suddenly grows into a shrunken, rodent-like man. Eyes darting to the door, he greets his friends. Lupin casually tells Pettigrew about their chat as Pettigrew insists that Black killed the Potters and now wants to kill him. He says he knew that Sirius was going to escape from Azkaban because Sirius's dark magic is so strong.

Analysis Part 5:  
Though Scabbers's transformation into an adult man is compelling information enough, Pettigrew's insistence on sticking to the story he's already told shows that he understands the importance of not budging on this matter. He likely believes that if he refuses to admit that he's lying, he still has a chance to convince Harry, Ron, and Hermione that Black is guilty and Lupin is complicit.

Summary Part 6:

[**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) laughs at the thought of [**Voldemort**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort) teaching him tricks, notices that [**Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) flinches, and says that Pettigrew has been hiding from Voldemort's supporters, not from him. He suggests they'll be displeased to learn that Pettigrew is alive, and [**Lupin**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) asks why an innocent man would spend twelve years as a rat. Pettigrew tries to insist that he was just scared of Black, whom he refers to as a spy, but Black growls that Pettigrew has spent his life sucking up to powerful people and he should've seen from the start that Pettigrew was the spy. [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) notices that Pettigrew's face is pale.

Analysis Part 6:

The fact that Harry is looking at Pettigrew's body language more than he's listening to what Pettigrew says indicates that he's beginning to shift his thinking to believe Black and Lupin's story. Lupin does have a point that Pettigrew isn't acting innocent, and hasn't acted innocent by spending the last twelve years in his rat form.

Summary Part 6:  
Timidly, [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) asks why [**Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) hasn't tried to kill [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) already, since he's been sleeping in the same room for years. [**Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) says that Pettigrew doesn't do anything unless there's something in it for him. With [**Voldemort**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort) gone, there's no incentive. Hermione politely asks Black how he got out of Azkaban *without* dark magic. Black says that the knowledge he was innocent wasn't exactly happy, so the [**dementors**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors) couldn't take it. He spent time as a dog, which made his emotions less complex and kept him sane. When he got the picture of Pettigrew and realized what would happen, it also wasn't a happy thought and he slipped out as a dog and swim to the mainland. He appeals once more to Harry and says he never betrayed [**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). Harry nods.

Analysis Part 6:  
Black's assessment of how Pettigrew operates indicates that Pettigrew has a very different idea of friendship and how it works—namely, it has to give him power, not just camaraderie. Black's explanation of how he got out of Azkaban suggests that a truly innocent person cannot go crazy in Azkaban, as the truth isn't a happy thought; it's simply a fact. This again discredits the Ministry and the dementors as keepers of the peace, as it shows that they're not successful in convicting the right people or punishing them effectively.

Summary Part 7:  
  
At this, [**Pettigrew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/scabbers-peter-pettigrew) falls to his knees and pleads with [**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). They decide to kill Pettigrew together, so Pettigrew turns to [**Ron**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley). Ron, however, looks revolted. Pettigrew turns to [**Hermione**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) and then to [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter), whom he tells that [**James**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter) would've shown mercy. Lupin and Black make Pettigrew confess that he gave [**Lily**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/lily-potter) and James to [**Voldemort**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort) but as they point their wands at him, Harry leaps in front. Harry says that Pettigrew deserves the [**dementors**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors), and he doesn't think James would've wanted his friends to be killers. Lupin ties up Pettigrew, they all agree that if he tries to escape they'll kill him, and Lupin splints Ron's leg. Ron and Lupin chain themselves to Pettigrew, while Black levitates [**Snape**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape)'s body to take him back to the castle.

Analysis Part 7:  
By deciding to pardon Pettigrew, Harry momentarily steps into his dad's shoes and in some ways connects the two generations of friendships. In doing so, he also learns that as an individual, he does have the power to enact justice on a small scale where the Ministry cannot be trusted to do so. With Pettigrew alive, Black can prove his innocence—assuming the Ministry of Magic will listen, which they've not proven themselves willing to do thus far.