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

#### **Chapter 2-Aunt Marge's Big Mistake**

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Harry walks down to breakfast the following morning to find his cousin Dudley, his uncle Vernon, and his aunt Petunia watching a television report about a dangerous escaped convict named Black. The Dursleys ignore Harry, as usual, and Vernon leaves to pick up his sister, Aunt Marge, at the train station, first warning Harry to pretend that he is "normal." Harry is horrified at the news, as Aunt Marge does nothing during her visits but cuddle her dangerous dogs and bark insults at Harry. Harry suddenly has an idea, and he bargains with Vernon that he will act normal and pretend he attends school at a center for incurably criminal boys, if afterwards Vernon will sign his Hogsmeade form. Vernon is not pleased, but he agrees.

Aunt Marge arrives, roaring praise at Dudley, sharing her tea with her dog, Ripper, and asking Harry whether he is being caned enough at his school. Harry answers the questions as carefully and politely as he can, but grows increasingly angry as Aunt Marge criticizes Harry's parents, saying of his mother, "If there is something wrong with the bitch, there'll be something wrong with the pup." Harry's anger causes her wine glass to break, and from that point on, Harry is even more cautious. Finally, one night at dinner Aunt Marge says flippantly that Harry's parents were irresponsible enough to get themselves killed in a car crash, and Harry is so livid that he causes her to expand and float. Chaos ensues, and in the middle of it Harry collects his things and leaves, threatening Uncle Vernon with his wand when his uncle tries to stop him.

***Brief Analysis Ch 1 and 2:***

The beginning of each Harry Potter book shows Harry in a miserable, abusive situation while living with the Dursleys, and then traces his method of escape from the stifling world of these particular Muggles—the wizards' term for non-magical people—over the threshold into the wizard world. This book acknowledges both the "ordinary" and the "magical" worlds, and it allows continuity between them, enabling us to experience the brilliance and novelty of Hogwarts with Harry.

Harry's method of escape shows his development as a character throughout the series. In these chapters, Harry takes more initiative than ever before in escaping his summertime plight and returning to Hogwarts; in the first book, Hagrid rescues him from the Dursleys; in the second book, Ron comes to his window in a flying car. Here, Harry sets himself free, thus signifying a step in his further confidence in his role in the magical world, in addition to his own maturation as an adolescent. Harry has reached a point where he understands his own personal thresholds, and he now has the boldness to act when these thresholds are crossed, such as when Aunt Marge insults his parents. Harry takes initiative not only to sneak his magical homework into his room, or to bargain with Uncle Vernon on signing the Hogsmeade form, but furthermore, to grab his trunk, brandish his wand at his uncle, and leave the house when he has had enough. Of all of Harry's journeys into the magical world, this one requires the most independence and courage.

Harry's friends' gifts each reflect their personality and foreshadow a later event in the story. Hagrid sends a biting monster book. Hagrid loves monsters dearly, and in this novel, his loyalty to one monster in particular constitutes a great part of the plot. Ron sends a sneakoscope and a picture of his family in Egypt; the same picture inspired Black to leave prison, and the sneakoscope will alert Harry and his friends when they were being overheard. Hermione sends a broomstick-servicing kit. This gift acknowledges Harry's deep devotion to his broomstick-sport, Quidditch; her thoughtfulness with this gift foreruns her later concern that his new broom was sent by Black.

***Summary in Detail:***

The Dursley's receive a visit from Uncle Vernon's sister Marge, who Harry is forced to call Aunt Marge. It is the day of Harry's birthday, but the Dursley's don't even acknowledge it.

Aunt Marge is a nasty woman, who never been married and had children. Instead, she has a dog, just as nasty as she is. She dotes on the dog and feeds it from her plate. She despises Harry and fawns over Dudley. She makes it clear that she thinks Harry is a burden to her brother and sister-in-law; and she believes Harry is a good-for-nothing child that should consider himself grateful for his life with the Dursleys.

After they all have had dinner, Harry gets busy cleaning up the dinner mess. Aunt Marge, who has been given a glass of after-dinner brandy, begins to pontificate on how rotten she thinks Harry really is. She warms to her subject and begins to turn to his parents as the cause of his obvious inbred deficiencies. Harry tries to remind himself that he needs to be nice, so that he can get his permission slip signed. His Uncle Vernon has said that he will sign it if the visit with Marge goes well.

She is obviously inebriated when she finally she goes over the line. She says that Harry's parents were probably drunk when they died in the car crash and left him a burden to his poor Aunt and Uncle. Harry is angry and shouts that they did not die in a car crash. Marge begins screaming at him, her face swelling with fury. Suddenly, she stops talking as her red face begins to expand, her eyes bulge and she inflates like a tweed-covered hot air balloon. Marge then slowly begins to rise off the chair and floats into the air.

Harry makes a mad dash to his room and shoves his things into his trunk. He grabs Hedwig's empty cage and heads back downstairs. His Uncle Vernon runs after him, screaming at him to fix his sister right now. Harry is overcome with reckless rage and points his wand at his Uncle. He tells him that he is going and that his sister deserved what she got. Harry goes out the door and into the dark night, dragging his trunk behind him.

***Analysis in Detail:***Aunt Marge is a horror and Harry just does not have the tolerance to stand her or the Dursleys any longer. There is no doubt in his mind, or the readers, that Marge got what she deserved. Harry has grown and changed since his first year at Hogwart's. He is no longer alone in the world and he has people who love and respect him. He also knows the truth about his parents. They were good, brave people. While it would seem that this would make it easier for him to live with the Dursley's, it is quite the opposite. As the saying goes, ignorance is bliss. Now Harry's life is in upheaval, as he recognizes a better life, without the ill-treatment of the Dursleys and Aunt Marge.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next morning, [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) goes down to breakfast and finds [**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) watching TV. Harry sits and helps himself to toast as a newscaster warns viewers to be on the lookout for [**Sirius Black**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black), an escaped criminal. Vernon snorts that Black is a "filthy layabout" and looks at Harry, whose hair refuses to behave but is still, in Harry's opinion, neater than Black's. The reporter turns to a new story, which angers Vernon—he shouts that hanging is the only way to deal with criminals like that.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Uncle Vernon's assessment of Sirius Black shows that what he thinks of the criminal is heavily influenced by the way the muggle news portrays Black: Harry will soon learn that Black is a dangerous wizard criminal, and that his unkempt appearance is the last thing anyone should worry about when it comes to Black.

***Summary Part 2:***

[**Uncle Vernon**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) announces that he needs to go pick up [**Aunt Marge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge). Startled, [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) asks if Marge is truly coming. She's been horrible to him since he was little. Vernon snarls that she'll be visiting for a week and tells Harry that he must behave and keep his "abnormality" a secret. Then, Vernon says that he's told Marge that Harry attends St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurably Criminal Boys. Harry, furious, feels that this is the worst birthday present ever. [**Petunia**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-petunia) fusses over [**Dudley**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) as Vernon heads for the door, but Harry has an idea. He follows Vernon to the hallway and brings up the Hogsmeade permission form. Harry says that if Vernon signs the form, he'll remember the story and play along. Panicked, Vernon agrees.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Uncle Vernon's fear of Harry and of magic in general encourages him to spin this ridiculous story for Aunt Marge, which suggests that feeling strong emotions can influence how a person chooses to portray facts. As Marge is a muggle, it's worth noting that were Harry to tell the truth, it would make Harry and possibly Vernon himself look ridiculous, which shows that Vernon has a lot at stake in making sure that his preferred story is the one that, as far as Marge is concerned, becomes "true."

***Summary Part 3:***

[**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) heads upstairs and morosely packs up his birthday haul to hide with his spellbooks. Then, he tells [**Hedwig**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) to go stay with the Weasleys; she's likely to give him away if she stays. Not long after he puts Hedwig's cage away, [**Aunt Petunia**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-petunia) yells for Harry to come downstairs. When they hear [**Uncle Vernon**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) and [**Marge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge) arrive, Harry opens the door. Marge, her bulldog [**Ripper**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) tucked under her arm, goes straight for [**Dudley**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters). Dudley escapes from the hug with money as Marge kisses Petunia. Harry takes Marge's suitcase upstairs as the rest of the family goes to the kitchen for tea.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Harry's desire to properly play the part of a criminal muggle boy shows just how badly he wants to earn the signature to go to Hogsmeade. For him, allowing his enrollment at St. Brutus's to be true means that he'll be able to go on to live a happier life at school. This indicates that there are times when lying or spinning tales like this has positive effects.

***Summary Part 4:***

When [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) finally enters the kitchen, [**Ripper**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) growls at him and [**Marge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge) confirms with a grimace that Harry still lives here. He remembers the Hogsmeade form, forces a grin, and as the conversation turns to St. Brutus's, he decides to play it up and tells Marge that they beat him all the time. She's not impressed. Throughout her visit, Marge torments Harry and insults his parents. At one point, her wine glass explodes and Harry excuses himself—he lost control and knows that if he keeps on accidentally destroying things, he could be expelled.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Harry was threatened with expulsion in the second novel if he did magic outside of school again. His fear here suggests that he could easily be expelled even for accidents like this, which begins to create the sense that the Ministry of Magic isn't very understanding: they'll persecute anyone, even if that anyone is a teenager who made a mistake.

***Summary Part 5:***

For the next few days, [**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) thinks of his broom care handbook whenever [**Aunt Marge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge) is mean to him. On her last night, they get all the way through dinner before Marge starts in on Harry. After a large glass of brandy, she compliments [**Dudley**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters)'s "healthy" size and then calls Harry "runty." She insults Harry's parents and when [**Uncle Vernon**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) says that [**James Potter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/james-potter) was unemployed, Harry loses his temper. He tells her that his parents didn't die in a car crash and as Marge swells with fury, she starts to literally swell. She rises out of her chair and bounces off the ceiling, and as Vernon tries to pull her down, [**Ripper**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) bites his leg.

***Analysis Part 5:***

When Harry makes Marge swell up because of his anger, it indicates that Vernon's lie and Marge's rudeness are too much for Harry to bear—for him, it's far more important to tell the truth and deal with the consequences. The fact that Marge feels entitled to talk this way about Harry at all indicates that the story she believes is true gives her a great deal of power, while Harry's status as a child means he has little power to stand up to her.

***Summary Part 6:***

[**Harry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) races away from the debacle. The door of the cupboard under the stairs flies open as he reaches it, and he heaves his trunk to the front door. As he fetches his things from upstairs, [**Uncle Vernon**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) accosts Harry. He yells at Harry to fix [**Aunt Marge**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge), but Harry refuses. His wand pointed at Vernon, he drags his trunk out into the street and starts to walk.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Vernon's request that Harry fix Marge indicates how little he knows about the wizarding world: it's unlikely that Harry, with only two years of education under his belt, has the skills necessary to put her right even if he agreed to try.