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

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

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Harry walks for a while and then collapses onto a low wall several streets away from Privet Drive. Once his anger wears off, he realizes that he is alone, stranded and will most likely be expelled from Hogwart's for performing underage magic. He contemplates what he is to do. He decides that his best bet would be to use a little more magic to get to London to make a withdrawal from Gringotts Wizards Bank. He will use his invisibility cloak, his broom and some magic to lighten the weight of his trunk so that he can fly unseen to London. He searches in his trunk for his cloak, when he senses something watching him from the shadows.

Harry lights his wand and sees a large, dark, hulking form across the way in the alley in front of him. He backs away and trips over his trunk. As he gets up, he is blinded by a bright light in the road. A triple-decker bus appears in the street before him with the name *The Knight Bus* spelled out on the windshield. A conductor, Stan Shunpike, leaps from the bus and tells him that the bus is emergency transport for stranded witches and wizards. Stan then invites Harry aboard and asks for his destination. Harry gets on the bus, pays Stan and asks to be taken to London.

As the bus flies through the streets at light speed, Harry notices that Stan is reading the Daily Prophet. Harry sees a picture of a crazy looking man on the front page, with the headline "Black Still at Large." Harry asks Stan if he could see the paper and reads the article. Sirius Black, the most infamous and dangerous prisoner of Azkaban, has escaped and is still at large. Stan tells Harry that Black was a loyal follower of Voldemort.

The bus arrives at the Leaky Cauldron and Harry goes to leave. He sees that Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, is in front of the Inn, apparently waiting for Harry to arrive. Harry's heart turns cold at the sight of him. He believes he is there to arrest him for what he has done to Vernon's sister Marge.

To Harry's surprise, Fudge is not there to expel or arrest him. He is there to make sure he does not stray from the area until it is time to leave for Hogwart's. Harry begs Fudge to sign his Hogsmeade permission slip, but he cannot or will not. The Minister then leaves, warning Harry, again, not to leave the area of Diagon Alley. Luckily, Hedwig has also turned up at the Leaky Cauldron in anticipation of Harry's arrival there.

Sirius Black is a very ominous and mysterious figure. Black is obviously very dangerous, so dangerous that the Minister of Magic feels the needs to warn Harry about him personally. Harry is quite relived that he will not be expelled or sent to Azkaban for his indiscretion. He is also a little confused by Fudge's concern for him in regard to Sirius Black and his refusal to sign the permission slip.

***Brief Analysis:***

Harry leaves the Dursleys and is not sure what to do next. He is certain that he will be expelled from Hogwarts for having practiced magic outside of school, and so he considers flying on his brookstick to London, where he could live as a wizard outcast. He feels himself being watched and he is alarmed to see a large outline of a dark creature staring at him. He falls into the gutter, and is suddenly rescued by the Knight Bus, a hitchhiking service for wizards in need. Harry boards the bus after some questioning from the nosey teenage conductor, Stan Shunpike, during which Harry gives a false name, Neville Longbottom, and flattens his hair over his famous scar. The bus flies through the city, managing not to hit anything, because obstacles jump out of its way. During the ride, Harry overhears a conversation between Stan and the driver, Ernie Prang, discussing the escape of Sirius Black, and Harry learns that Black was a follower of Voldemort. Black spent twelve years in Azkaban, the wizard prison, after murdering thirteen people with a single curse.

When the Knight Bus arrives at Diagon Alley, a wizard community in London, Harry gathers his things and gets off the bus, only to be greeted by Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic. Fudge reveals Harry's identity to the eavesdropping Stan and Ernie, and then he takes Harry inside for dinner, expressing great relief that Harry is unharmed. Harry thinks this concern is a bit peculiar, and he thinks it even more peculiar that Fudge has no intention of punishing him for having inflated his aunt, who, since her inflation, has been returned to her normal size. Harry does not think too much about this, however, and he falls asleep, exhausted, in the room at the Leaky Cauldron where Fudge arranged that he would stay until school begins.

***Summary in Detail:***

Harry gradually calms down and starts to panic – he just ran away from home after performing accidental, illegal magic.

He's convinced that he's going to be expelled from Hogwarts and starts planning his new life as a fugitive outcast.

But then he spies a giant black dog, which actually makes his situation worse because the darn dog is huge and scary.

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But then he trips and throws his wand hand out (just wait, it really does get better) and a giant purple bus appears out of nowhere and nearly mows him down.

No, really, it gets better.

Turns out, this is "the Knight Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard" (3.14). Oh, but of course.

Stan and Ernie, the Knight Bus crew, welcome Harry aboard. Harry plays it cool and acts like he meant to summon the bus.

He also tells them his name is Neville Longbottom.

Harry requests transport to Diagon Alley in London and the bus takes off.

On the way, Stan and Ernie gossip to Harry and fill him in on the escaped convict Sirius Black, a lunatic murderer and Voldemort supporter who broke out of the wizarding prison Azkaban recently.

After Harry defeated Voldemort (as a baby), Sirius Black went nuts and blew up a street, killing thirteen people.

Finally, the bus arrives in London and Harry is welcomed to The Leaky Cauldron by Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic.

Stan and Ernie are super excited to learn that "Neville" is actually Harry Potter.

Harry flips out, but Fudge just wanted to make sure he was safe and sound. Fudge assures Harry that he won't be punished for blowing up his aunt.

Harry finds all this really suspicious.

Fudge tells Harry that he can get a room at The Leaky Cauldron and can stay in Diagon Alley for the rest of the summer.

Hedwig shows up, proving how smart she is.

Fudge leaves finally and an exhausted Harry goes to bed.

***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) gets several blocks before he has to rest in Magnolia Crescent. After ten minutes, he's in a full-blown panic. He did illegal magic and, to make matters worse, he's stranded in the muggle world. Harry wonders if he'll be kicked out of the wizarding world and laments that [Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) is gone—he can't even ask [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) or [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) for help. Realizing he also has no muggle money, Harry wonders if, since he's already expelled, he could enchant his trunk and fly to London. As Harry starts to fish in his trunk for the Invisibility Cloak, he feels like he's being watched. He senses somebody in an alleyway and lights his wand. He sees something huge with bright eyes. Terrified, he steps back and trips over his trunk.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Harry's belief that he's expelled already for what he did indicates that, at this point, he trusts the Ministry of Magic to follow through on what they said would happen. In other words, Harry sees the government as being black and white and doesn't expect to encounter shades of gray with it. This sets Harry up to, over the course of the novel, discover that the Ministry of Magic isn't actually black and white at all: while they'd like wizards to think they are, it's actually far more complicated.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) throws his hand out to catch himself and just as he hits the street, he hears a loud bang. He rolls out of the way as a purple bus stops in front of him. It reads "The Knight Bus" on the windshield. The conductor steps out and begins his spiel, introducing himself as [Stan Shunpike](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/stan-shunpike). When he notices Harry on the ground, he stops and asks why Harry is lying down. Annoyed, Harry jumps up and looks back to the alleyway. He starts to explain that he saw a dog, but stops when he notices Stan looking uneasy. He tells Stan his name is [Neville Longbottom](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom) and asks to go to London. Stan accepts Harry's money and then helps lift Harry's trunk onto the bus.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The fact that Harry didn't know about the existence of the Knight Bus reminds the reader again that Harry, with only two years of formal education and exposure to the wizarding world, still has a great deal to learn about his world. At this moment, Harry is receiving a valuable practical lesson about how his world works and what's available to him if he knows how to ask for it.

***Summary Part 3:***

The bus is filled with beds instead of seats. [Stan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/stan-shunpike) settles [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) in the bed behind the driver, [Ernie Prang](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters). With a bang, the bus seems to jump 100 miles—Stan explains that they're in Wales when he notices Harry's shocked face and says that muggles don't hear the bus because they don't listen well. He fetches an ill-looking witch, sees her off the bus, and then with another bang the bus jumps. Harry's stomach churns, both from to the bus's action and from his worry about [Aunt Marge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge).

***Analysis Part 3:***

Stan's comment about muggles not listening properly suggests that their inability to detect the wizarding world is just a matter of knowing what to look for—in other words, they don't see it because it's never occurred to them to question their own versions of reality, where buses like this are only fantastical ideas.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Stan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/stan-shunpike) opens up a copy of the Daily Prophet and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) notices [Sirius Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black), the man from the muggle news, on the front page. When Harry shares this with Stan, Stan chuckles and gives the front page to Harry to read. The article reads that Black is still at large and that [Cornelius Fudge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge) is facing criticism for telling muggles about Black. It says that wizards are afraid of another massacre like the one twelve years ago: Black murdered thirteen people with one curse. Harry hands the page back to Stan and Stan explains that Black was in league with You-Know-Who. Not thinking, Harry says "[Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort)," which makes [Ernie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) swerve and Stan yelp in fear.

***Analysis Part 4:***

This article confirms that Uncle Vernon was way off base with his assessment of Sirius Black on the muggle news: there's more to worry about, even for muggles, than the fact that Black looks terrifying. Further, when the article notes that Fudge is being criticized for telling muggles about Black, it indicates that the government is being questioned for its policies, which suggests that Harry should question it too.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) apologizes and asks [Stan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/stan-shunpike) to tell him more about [Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black). Stan says that after Harry Potter bested [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort), the government tracked down Voldemort’s supporters. Ministry officials cornered Black on a street and Black blew half the street to pieces, killing a wizard and twelve muggles. Then, he laughed and went quietly to Azkaban. Stan says that nobody's ever escaped from Azkaban before, since the Azkaban guards are so effective. [Ernie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) tells Stan to change the subject; he hates the Azkaban guards.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Notice that in Stan's story, there's no indication that Sirius Black ever went on trial for what he did. This suggests that while the story Stan tells was believed by many, there's a possibility that Black would be able to tell a different story and never got the opportunity to do so. In turn, this indicates that the wizard justice system isn't entirely fair and doesn't look deeper when it prosecutes someone.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) feels horrendous. He thinks that he broke the law just like [Sirius Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) did and wonders if inflating [Aunt Marge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge) is enough to land him in Azkaban. All Harry knows about the prison is what he heard from [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid), who spent two months there last year.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Harry's belief that he’s done something as bad as Sirius Black did points to how young and naïve he still is, while his fear of going to Azkaban suggests he thinks the Ministry won't take into account that he's only 13 in their punishment.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Stan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/stan-shunpike) gives [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) his hot chocolate and, finally, Harry is the last passenger. [Ernie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) stops the bus in front of the Leaky Cauldron. Stan helps Harry with his trunk but instead of saying goodbye, he stands transfixed by something behind Harry. Harry hears a voice say, "There you are, Harry," and sees [Cornelius Fudge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge). Fudge puts his hand on Harry's shoulder, testily thanks Stan for picking Harry up, and steers Harry inside. Stan and Ernie carry Harry's trunk in and Harry sadly waves goodbye before following Fudge.

***Analysis Part 7:***

As far as Harry is concerned, this is the end of his life as he knows it. Again, this indicates that he takes the Ministry of Magic seriously and believes that they'll follow through and punish him for blowing up Aunt Marge. However, Fudge's behavior towards Harry, which reads as more fatherly than anything else, suggests that Harry is wrong in this regard.

***Summary Part 8:***[Fudge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge) motions for [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) to sit down and introduces himself. Puzzlingly, Fudge says that everyone was terrified when Harry ran away from the Dursleys, but all that matters is that he's safe now. He says that [Marge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-marge) is back to normal and won't remember a thing, and then he kindly says that though [Vernon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/uncle-vernon) and [Petunia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/aunt-petunia) are angry, they'll still house Harry next summer as long as he doesn't come home for Christmas or Easter. Harry insists he never wants to go back, which prompts Fudge to worriedly say that the family must all like each other deep down.

***Analysis Part 8:***Everything that Fudge says points to the possibility that Harry is somehow not in trouble, which indicates that Harry seriously misjudged what was going to happen. While it's still unclear why the ministry has made this change, it suggests that there's more information that Harry doesn't have yet. Without that information, Harry cannot get a full picture of what's going on.

***Summary Part 9:***[Fudge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge) says that the only matter left to discuss is where [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) should stay for the last three weeks of the summer holiday. Harry asks about his punishment for breaking the Decree for the Restriction of Underage Wizardry, but Fudge waves this away. Harry reminds Fudge that last year, he got a warning because a house-elf did magic at the Dursleys’ house. Fudge insists that circumstances change and then goes to talk to [Tom](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) about booking Harry a room. Harry feels like there must be something going on—underage magic seems a small problem for the Minister of Magic to deal with personally.

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***Summary Part 10:***[Fudge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/cornelius-fudge) and [Tom](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) return and Fudge makes [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) promise to stay in Diagon Alley. He seems oddly cheery as he packs up to leave, but seems to slip a little when Harry asks about [Sirius Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black). As the two shake hands, Harry asks if Fudge can sign his Hogsmeade permission form. Fudge uncomfortably refuses and then leaves, while Tom shows Harry to his room. [Hedwig](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) is already there.

***Analysis Part 10:***Fudge's slip at Harry's mention of Sirius Black suggests that Black's escape has something to do with his leniency, though the narration is unclear about whether Harry puts this together or not. This reminds the reader that Harry's critical thinking skills aren't fully developed yet.