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

#### **Chapter 7-The Boggart in the Wardrobe**

***Summary and analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

The next day, they have Potions with Snape. Professor Snape makes the lives of all but the students of his own house, Slytherin, miserable. They find out during potions that Sirius Black has been spotted near the area of the school.

Hermione keeps appearing unexpectedly and Ron is confused as to why she is carrying so many books with her. Their next class after lunch is Defense Against the Dark Arts with Professor Lupin. He is the same Lupin who saved Harry from the Dementor on the train ride to school.

The lesson starts with a lesson about Boggart's, shape shifting spirits who become whatever their victim's worst fear is. He tells the students they must think of something funny to deflect the Boggarts and also cast the spell "Riddikulus!." Lupin releases a Boggart and calls the students up one by one to try the spell out.

First, Neville turns the Boggart into Snape, wearing his grandmother's clothes, which in turn makes them all laugh and confuses the Boggart. Then, Ron is confronted with a huge spider, his worst fear, which he turns into a spider on roller skates. All the students go in turn, until Harry is before the Boggart. It is just about to change form when Lupin jumps in front of Harry. The spirit turns into a shiny orb which becomes a cockroach with the Riddikulus spell cast by Lupin. Lupin dismisses class for the day and Harry is put out that Lupin did not allow him to try on his own.

The class is a big success and everyone immediately loves Lupin, even Hermione. Only Harry seems upset by the class and Lupin jumping in front of him before he's had a chance to cast the spell on his own.

Harry wonders if Lupin has stopped him from trying the Riddikulus spell because of what happened on the train. He thinks that Lupin must think he would pass out again if he were confronted with the Boggart. He is upset and annoyed at Lupin's actions.

***Brief Analysis:***

Malfoy, his arm bandaged dramatically, returns to class several days later. During Potions class with Professor Snape, Malfoy sits idly watching other students do his cutting and mixing, while he gossips to his fellow Slytherins about his father's influence on Hagrid's job status. Harry is furious, but is also puzzled by something Malfoy says about how he should want revenge on Sirius Black. Harry ignores him and class progresses as usual: Snape picks first on Neville Longbottom for confusing his potion instructions, and then on Hermione for helping Neville. Harry, Ron, and Hermione walk upstairs to the defense against the dark arts class. Hermione suddenly disappears from sight and is seen, hurrying behind them back at the base of the stairs.

Professor Lupin leads them all into an empty classroom to combat a Boggart that had lodged itself in a wardrobe. As the students file into the classroom, they encounter Snape, who makes a nasty comment about Neville. In response to this comment, Lupin says that he wants Neville to be the first to fight the Boggart. Neville is terrified but manages quite competently to perform the "Riddikulus" spell, in which he transforms the Boggart from the shape that terrifies him most into something that makes him laugh. The students take turns, watching the Boggart try to frighten them but finally fall victim to their laughter as they transform it. When it is Lupin's turn, the Boggart takes the shape of an orb, and when it is Ron's, a giant spider. The class defeats the Boggart successfully, although Harry himself does not get a turn.

***Synopsis:***

* Malfoy milks his injury for all it's worth and doesn't go to class for a few days.
* The Gryffindors and Slytherins are in Potions today, with the dreaded Professor Snape.
* Snape forces Ron and Harry to help Malfoy prepare his potion.
* Meanwhile, Neville is botching yet another assignment due to his fear of Snape.
* Snape threatens to try Neville's Shrinking potion out on his toad, Trevor.
* Neville begs Hermione to help him, since his potion will likely kill poor Trevor.
* Meanwhile, the class begin to discuss Sirius Black.
* Malfoy goads Harry and drops hints about Sirius Black, which only confuse and annoy Harry: "But if it was me, I'd want revenge. I'd hunt him down myself" (7.1.51).
* Finally class is over and Snape tries Neville's potion out on the poor toad Trevor, which is some sort of animal rights violation. Watch your back, Snape, PETA might be coming for you.
* The potion works, and Snape docks points from Gryffindor since Hermione helped Neville after he told her not to.
* Ron is furious.
* Hermione suddenly disappears and then reappears at the bottom of the stairs. Huh? Ron and Harry are confused too.
* Hermione is vague about everything and then they're all distracted when Hermione's overloaded book bag busts open.
* The Gryffindors head to Defense Against the Dark Arts, with Professor Lupin.
* He tells them to put their books away and takes everyone to the staff room, where a boggart is lurking in a closet.
* Snape is in there and snarkily insults the entire class on his way out, especially poor Neville.
* Lupin tells Snape that Neville is going to help him out with the lesson. So there, Snape.
* During the class Q&A session, we learn that boggarts are shape-shifters that appear as the thing a person fears most.
* The spell to defeat a boggart is "Riddikulus." Basically, you have to think of something funny and force the boggart to change into something non-threatening.
* Lupin asks Neville what scares him most, and poor Neville answers Professor Snape.
* But Lupin instructs Neville to picture what his grandmother wears; he wants Neville to force the Snape-boggart to appear wearing Grandma Longbottom's clothes.
* We wish we had a camera.
* Neville manages to do it and the class laughs loudly, confusing the boggart.
* Lupin asks everyone to line up and have a turn at the boggart.
* Harry gets increasingly nervous, though, since he knows his boggart is going to turn into a Dementor. And how do you make a Dementor not scary?
* But Lupin jumps in front of Harry at the last minute and takes care of the boggart himself.
* Lupin's boggart appears as a silver orb. Curious.
* The class is psyched after the exciting lesson. "Harry, however, wasn't feeling cheerful. Professor Lupin had deliberately stopped him from tackling the boggart. Why?" (7.2.100).

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/draco-malfoy) remains in the hospital wing until Thursday morning, when he comes to Potions halfway through class. [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) idly tells Malfoy to settle down and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) scowls; he knows that Malfoy is playing up his injury and that Snape would've yelled at him if he'd come in late. Malfoy sets up his cauldron next to Harry and [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) and asks Snape for help cutting his ingredients, since his arm is in a sling. Snape makes Harry and Ron help Malfoy, which gives Malfoy the opportunity to smirk, feel superior, and tell them that his father is going to get [Hagrid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/rubeus-hagrid) fired.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Harry's side note about the way that Snape would treat him indicates that Snape doesn't treat his students impartially. This begins to set Snape up as a bad teacher and an unethical one at that, as playing favorites means that Malfoy may not be held to a high enough standard while Harry will have to work twice as hard to learn anything.

***Summary Part 2:***

At the next table, [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom) struggles with his Shrinking Solution and his fear of [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) makes the subject even harder for him. His potion is supposed to be green, but Snape berates him when he notices that Neville's potion is orange. Snape tells Neville that they'll test his potion on his toad [Trevor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) at the end of class and instructs [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) to not help Neville.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Berating students also shows that Snape is an awful teacher, while suggesting they test the potion on Trevor shows that Snape is cruel and doesn't care about Neville or his pets. By forbidding Hermione from helping, he also tries to ensure that Neville will fail.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Seamus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) asks [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) if he's heard—there's been a sighting of [Sirius Black](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/sirius-black) nearby. [Malfoy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/draco-malfoy) gives Harry a mean look, asks Harry if he's planning on catching Black, and says that if he were in Harry's place, he'd be seeking revenge. Before Harry can make Malfoy explain what he means, [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) tells the class to clean up so they can test Neville's potion. Harry notices [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) whispering instructions to Neville.

***Analysis Part 3:***

It's telling that Harry thinks twice when Malfoy indicates that there's something more to the Sirius Black story than Harry knows already. It suggests that Harry isn't willing to question adults—he trusts them—but because he doesn't trust Malfoy, everything he says is worth scrutinizing.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) calls the class to gather around [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom)'s cauldron. He gives [Trevor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) a few drops of the potion and Trevor turns into a tadpole. Sourly, Snape administers the antidote and takes five points from Gryffindor since [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) helped. [Ron](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/ron-weasley) grouses about Snape as they walk to lunch but stops when he realizes that Hermione is no longer behind them. They see her hurrying towards them, and she insists she had to go back for something as her bag splits. Ron looks at the book she hands him and asks why she has it—it's not for a subject she has today.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Again, Snape clearly prioritizes making Neville feel horrible. He abuses his power instead of actually teaching his students anything about potions—or for that matter, praising the students that do understand the material and are capable of helping others. With this, Snape turns his classroom into a place that isn't safe and where nobody can learn.

***Summary Part 5:***

Later, the Gryffindors sit in the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom with quills and parchment ready. [Lupin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) arrives, announces a practical lesson, and leads the class towards the staffroom. They run into [Peeves](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) the Poltergeist on the way, and Lupin shows the class a spell that sends the gum Peeves was stuffing in a keyhole into Peeves's nose. They find [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) in the staffroom. As Snape starts to leave, he warns Lupin to not trust [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom) with difficult tasks unless he has [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) to help him. Mildly, Lupin says he'd actually like Neville to help him with their first exercise. Neville turns red as Snape leaves.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Nobody likes Peeves, so this spell is a surefire way for Lupin to start building rapport with his students and show them that he's on their side. Lupin continues this endeavor when he so calmly defends Neville to Professor Snape. This suggests that Lupin knows how Snape likely treats students in his classroom, and that he sees it as his responsibility to undo some of the damage that Snape is doing.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Lupin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) leads the class to a wardrobe and explains that there's a boggart inside. [Hermione](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/hermione-granger) defines a boggart as a shape-shifter that takes the shape of whatever scares a person most, and [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) says that the class has an advantage because there's so many of them, the boggart might not know what shape to take. Lupin leads the class through a defensive charm, "riddikulus," and then asks [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom) to join him. Neville nervously tells Lupin that he fears [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) more than anything, and then with prompting, tells Lupin about the clothes his [grandmother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters) wears. Lupin instructs Neville to think of his grandmother's clothes while he says the charm, and Snape the boggart will be forced into Neville's grandmother's clothes.

***Analysis Part 6:***

The fact that Neville's greatest fear is Professor Snape reinforces just how poor a teacher Snape is, since Neville doesn't fear him just because he's not good at Potions. It's possible that Neville could be passably good at Potions if Snape didn't terrorize him so much, which suggests that it's Snape's fault alone that Neville is so bad at his class. This exercise with the boggart allows Neville to face his fears in a safe, supportive environment, thereby encouraging him to trust Lupin.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Lupin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-lupin) asks the rest of the class to think of what scares them the most and how to make it funny, as they'll take on the boggart in turn. [Harry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/harry-potter) first thinks of [Voldemort](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/voldemort) but realizes he fears the [dementors](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/symbols/dementors) more. Lupin begins the exercise before Harry is ready. Neville successfully forces the boggart Snape into a ridiculous dress and hat. Several other classmates tackle the boggart but before Harry has a chance, Lupin steps in. The boggart turns into a white orb, and Lupin asks [Neville](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/neville-longbottom) to finish the boggart. After [Snape](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters/professor-snape) once again ends up in [Neville's grandmother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban/characters)'s clothes, the boggart explodes. Lupin gives out points and assigns homework. Harry leaves the class feeling sad. He wonders why Lupin didn't let him tackle the boggart and wonders what Lupin thinks of him.

***Analysis Part 7:***

When Neville so perfectly fights the boggart a second time, it shows what a little bit of confidence from a good teacher can do: this is a full turnaround from Neville's performance in Potions, with a teacher who thinks little of him. Harry's fear that Lupin thinks poorly of him or doesn't think he's capable suggests that Harry understands that at Hogwarts, he can't trust that teachers will actually treat him fairly—Snape is proof of that.