

A young boy with glasses and a plaid shirt is the background for the text. He is looking down and to the side with a thoughtful expression.

Dudley thought for a moment. It looked like hard work. Finally he said slowly, "So I'll have thirty ... thirty ..."

"Thirty-nine, sweetums," said Aunt Petunia.

"Oh." Dudley sat down heavily and grabbed the nearest parcel. "All right then."

Uncle Vernon chuckled.

"Little tyke wants his money's worth, just like his father. 'Atta boy, Dudley!" He ruffled Dudley's hair.

At that moment the telephone rang and Aunt Petunia went to answer it while Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike, a video camera, a remote control airplane, sixteen new computer games, and a VCR. He was ripping the paper off a gold wristwatch when Aunt Petunia came back from the telephone looking both angry and worried.

"Bad news, Vernon," she said. "Mrs. Figg's broken her leg. She can't take him." She jerked her head in Harry's direction.

Dudley's mouth fell open in horror, but Harry's heart gave a leap. Every year on Dudley's birthday, his parents took him and a friend out for the day, to adventure parks,

hamburger restaurants, or the movies. Every year, Harry was left behind with Mrs. Figg, a mad old lady who lived two streets away. Harry hated it there. The whole house smelled of cabbage and Mrs. Figg made him look at photographs of all the cats she'd ever owned.

"Now what?" said Aunt Petunia, looking furiously at Harry as though he'd planned this. Harry knew he ought to feel sorry that Mrs. Figg had broken her leg, but it wasn't easy when he reminded himself it would be a whole year before he had to look at Tibbies, Snowy, Mr. Paws, and Tufty again.

"We could phone Marge," Uncle Vernon suggested.

"Don't be silly, Vernon, she hates the boy."