

Chapters 1-4

Book Intro

Ten-year-old Harry Potter is an orphan who lives in of Little Whinging, [Surrey](#), with the Dursleys: Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and cousin Dudley. On Harry's 11th birthday, a giant named Hagrid arrives and reveals that Harry is a wizard and that he has been accepted at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Upon arrival at the school, Harry is sorted into Gryffindor and becomes close friends with two other members of the house, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Harry also finds that he has an enemy in Draco Malfoy (Slytherin). Harry's prowess in flying on a broomstick makes him a star of Gryffindor's Quidditch team. Harry gradually begins to suspect that Professor Snape, who teaches Potions, dislikes him intensely and is up to no good.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione deduce that the treasure under the trapdoor is the Philosopher's Stone, which can transform metal into gold and can also give people immortality. They later discover that Voldemort has been killing unicorns in the Forbidden Forest and drinking their blood, another way to achieve immortality. The trio comes to believe that Snape is in league with the evil wizard. The three classmates use the cloak of invisibility on a secret mission to get the Stone themselves to keep it from Voldemort. Harry is confronted with Professor Quirrell who turns out to be hiding Voldemort, revealing his face on the back of his head. Voldemort/Quirrell and Harry fight for the Stone and Dumbledore saves him. The Stone is to be destroyed, and Voldemort has escaped.

Chapter 1



Summary

- The Dursleys are a well-to-do, status-conscious family living in Surrey, England. Eager to keep up proper appearances, they are embarrassed by Mrs. Dursley's eccentric sister, Mrs. Potter, whom for years Mrs. Dursley has pretended not to know. On his way to work one ordinary morning, Mr. Dursley notices a cat reading a map. He is unsettled, but tells himself that he has only imagined it. Then, as Mr. Dursley is waiting in traffic, he notices people

dressed in brightly coloured cloaks. Walking past a bakery later that day, he overhears people talking in an excited manner about his sister-in-law's family, the Potters, and the Potters' one-year-old son, Harry. Disturbed but still not sure anything is wrong, Mr. Dursley decides not to say anything to his wife. On the way home, he bumps into a strangely dressed man who gleefully exclaims that someone named "You-Know-Who" has finally gone and that even a "Muggle" like Mr. Dursley should rejoice. Meanwhile, the news is full of unusual reports of shooting stars and owls flying during the day.

That night, as the Dursleys are falling asleep, Albus Dumbledore, a wizard and the head of the Hogwarts wizardry academy, appears on their street. He shuts off all the streetlights and approaches a cat that is soon revealed to be a woman named Professor McGonagall (who also teaches at Hogwarts) in disguise. They discuss the disappearance of You-Know-Who, otherwise known as Voldemort. Dumbledore tells McGonagall that Voldemort killed the Potter parents the previous night and tried to kill their son, Harry, as well, but was unable to. Dumbledore adds that Voldemort's power apparently began to wane after his failed attempt to kill Harry and that he retreated. Dumbledore adds that the baby Harry can be left on the Dursleys' doorstep. McGonagall protests that Harry cannot be brought up by the Dursleys. But Dumbledore insists that there is no one else to take care of the child. He says that when Harry is old enough, he will be told of his fate. A giant named Hagrid, who is carrying a bundle of blankets with the baby Harry inside, then falls out of the sky on a motorcycle. Dumbledore takes Harry and places him on the Dursley's doorstep with an explanatory letter he has written to the Dursleys, and the three part ways

First Impressions



Questions

- What do we think of first impressions? Read out loud the first page of introductions with the Dursleys and tell me what you think about them. Is there anyone in your life that the Dursleys remind you of?
 - o Appearances are important!

- Do you like the Dursleys? Why/why not? Would you read a book about them?
- 'He hurried to his car and set off for home, hoping he was imagining things, which he had never hoped before, because he didn't approve of imagination.'
 - o What do we think of this, do we agree? Do we think imagination is a good thing?
- 'Nothing like this man had ever been seen on Privet Drive. He was tall, thin, and very old, judging by the silver of his hair and beard, which were both long enough to tuck into his belt. He was wearing long robes, a purple cloak that swept the ground, and high-heeled, buckled boots. His blue eyes were light, bright, and sparkling behind halfmoon spectacles and his nose was very long and crooked, as though it had been broken at least twice. This man's name was Albus Dumbledore.'
 - o What do we think of this first impression?
- Have a think about names and what they tell us about people. What impression do you get from the characters' names? And then You-Know-Who...
- Do we agree with Dumbledore's decision to put Harry with the Dursley's? What else might he have done? What would you have done?
- 'If the motorcycle was huge, it was nothing to the man sitting astride it. He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as wide. He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild - long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face, he had hands the size of trash can lids, and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. In his vast, muscular arms he was holding a bundle of blankets.'
 - o First impressions! Are we shocked later on when he 'howls like a wounded dog' at letting Harry go? Does this show us how appearances can be deceiving?
- Why do you think Dumbledore makes the decision to leave Harry with the Dursleys and not a wizarding family, and how does that shape him as a person?

Chapter 2



Summary

- Ten years have passed. Harry is now almost eleven and living in wretchedness in a cupboard under the stairs in the Dursley house. He is tormented by the Dursleys' son, Dudley, a spoiled and whiny boy. Harry is awakened one morning by his aunt, Petunia, telling him to tend to the bacon immediately, because it is Dudley's birthday and everything must be perfect. Dudley gets upset because he has only thirty-seven presents, one fewer than the previous year. When a neighbour calls to say she will not be able to watch Harry for the day, Dudley begins to cry, as he is upset that Harry will have to be brought along on Dudley's birthday trip to the zoo. At the zoo, the Dursleys spoil Dudley and his friend Piers, neglecting Harry as usual. In the reptile house, Harry pays close attention to a boa constrictor and is astonished when he is able to have a conversation with it. Noticing what Harry is doing, Piers calls over Mr. Dursley and Dudley, who pushes Harry aside to get a better look at the snake. At this moment, the glass front of the snake's tank vanishes and the boa constrictor slithers out onto the floor. Dudley and Piers claim that the snake attacked them. The Dursleys are in shock. At home, Harry is punished for the snake incident, being sent to his cupboard without any food, though he feels he had nothing to do with what happened.

First impressions



Questions

- How do we feel about the way the Dursleys treat Harry? Does it make us angry? Do we know anyone like Dudley?
- Look at the two pictures of Dudley – which one do we feel best describes him?
- ‘He looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley’s, and Dudley was about four times bigger than he was. Harry had a thin face, knobby knees, black hair, and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead that was shaped like a bolt of lightning. He had had it as long as he could remember, and the first question he could ever remember asking his Aunt Petunia was how he had gotten it.’
 - appearances! And his unruly hair – what does that tell us about him?
 - ‘Harry was frying eggs by the time Dudley arrived in the kitchen with his mother. Dudley looked a lot like Uncle Vernon. He had a large pink face, not much neck, small, watery blue eyes, and thick blond hair that lay smoothly on his thick, fat head. Aunt Petunia often said that Dudley looked like a baby angel -- Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig.’
 - Compare to Dudley
- What do Harry and the snake have in common? Why do you think they get on?

Chapter 3



Summary

- Punished for the boa constrictor incident, Harry is locked in his cupboard until summer. When finally free, he spends most of the time outside his house to escape the torments of Dudley's cohorts. Harry is excited by the prospect of starting a new school in the fall, far away from Dudley for the first time in his life. One day, Uncle Vernon tells Harry to fetch the mail. Harry notices a letter bearing a coat of arms that is addressed to him in "The Cupboard under the Stairs." Uncle Vernon grabs the envelope from him and shows it to his wife. Both are shocked. They force Dudley and Harry to leave the kitchen in order to discuss what to do. The next day, Uncle Vernon visits Harry in the cupboard. He refuses to discuss the letter, but he tells Harry to move into Dudley's second room, previously used to store Dudley's toys.

The next day, another letter comes for Harry, this time addressed to him in "The Smallest Bedroom." Uncle Vernon becomes alarmed. Harry tries to get the letter, but Uncle Vernon keeps it from him. The following morning, Harry wakes up early to try to get the mail before anyone gets up, but he is thwarted by Uncle Vernon, who has slept near the mail slot waiting for the letters. Though Uncle Vernon nails the mail slot shut, twelve letters come for Harry the next day, slipped under the door or through the cracks. Soon letters flood the house, entering in impossible ways. Uncle Vernon continues to prevent Harry from reading any of them. Enraged, Uncle Vernon decides to take everyone away from the house, but at the hotel where they stay, a hundred letters are delivered for Harry. Uncle Vernon decides on even greater isolation. On a dark, stormy night, he takes the family out to an island with only one shack on it. Inside, Vernon bolts the door. At midnight, as it becomes Harry's birthday, there is a loud thump at the door.

Questions

- How would you feel if you had got a letter accepting you for Hogwarts?
- Do we think Vernon is being sensible or being silly, why do we think he's acting the way that he is?
- What is the importance of Harry getting a letter addressed to him in terms of making him feel more like a person?
- How does the move to the shack on the island change the tone or mood of the chapter so far? Does it get more serious?

- Who do we think might be at the door? What does it remind you of? (Horror films, ghost stories)
- How does Hagrid then go on to surprise us?

Chapter 4



Summary

- The thump is heard again. A giant smashes down the door. Uncle Vernon threatens the giant with a gun, but the giant takes the gun and ties it into a knot. The giant presents Harry with a chocolate birthday cake and introduces himself as Hagrid, the “Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts.” Hagrid is disturbed to find out that the Dursleys have never told Harry what Hogwarts is. Vernon tries to stop Hagrid from telling Harry about Hogwarts, but to no avail. Hagrid tells Harry that Harry is a wizard and presents him with a letter of acceptance to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Vernon protests that he will not allow Harry to attend Hogwarts. Hagrid explains to Harry that the Dursleys have been lying all along about how the boy’s parents died. Harry learns that they did not die in a car crash, as he had always thought, but were killed by the evil wizard Voldemort. Harry does not believe he could be a wizard, but then he realizes that the incident with the boa constrictor was an act of wizardry. With Uncle Vernon protesting, Hagrid takes Harry from the shack.

First Impressions



Questions

- How do we feel about how Hagrid treats the Dursley's? Are we satisfied, do we think they get their just deserts?
- How does Hagrid seem to defy expectations? Do we trust him and why?
- What do you think 'biggest Muggles' means when Hagrid calls the Dursley's it?
- "'Knew!" shrieked Aunt Petunia suddenly. "Knew! Of course we knew! How could you not be, my dratted sister being what she was? Oh, she got a letter just like that and disappeared off to that-that school-and came home every vacation with her pockets full of frog spawn, turning teacups into rats. I was the only one who saw her for what she was -- a freak! But for my mother and father, oh no, it was Lily this and Lily that, they were proud of having a witch in the family!"
 - o Do we feel sorry for her here? Can you imagine how it must have been to grow up with this?
- What questions do we have at the end of these four chapters, and do we think they'll be answered?

Homework

- Write a story about how you would feel if you got accepted into Hogwarts. You can imagine that you come from a Muggle family or a Wizarding family – if you are in a Wizarding family you might expect your letter and have been told a bit about Hogwarts by your parents! Describe your feelings at getting accepted, and what you look forward to most about going to Hogwarts.