

# *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

## *Lesson One*

### *Chapters One - Four*

#### *Chapter One - The Worst Birthday*

##### *Summary*

The chapter begins back in Privet Drive with Vernon complaining about Harry's owl, Hedwig, and the noise she is making. Ever since his return, Vernon treats Harry like 'a bomb that might go off any moment'. The Dursleys have forgotten all about Harry's twelfth birthday and are instead focused on an important dinner party for Vernon's work. The day is made even more miserable by the fact that his friends Ron and Hermione seem to have forgotten his birthday too. After spending all day slaving away



cleaning the house for Aunt Petunia, Harry eats his pitiful supper alone and retires to his room where he promises not to make a sound. When he enters his room, however, he finds someone else there.

What happens in this chapter?

1. Who is coming to visit the Dursleys?
2. Describe how you would feel if you were Harry in this situation?
3. Why is today a particularly sad day for Harry? What factors make this worse?
4. Why are the Dursley's afraid of Harry?
5. Predict what will happen at the dinner party that evening.

## Chapter Two – Dobby's Warning



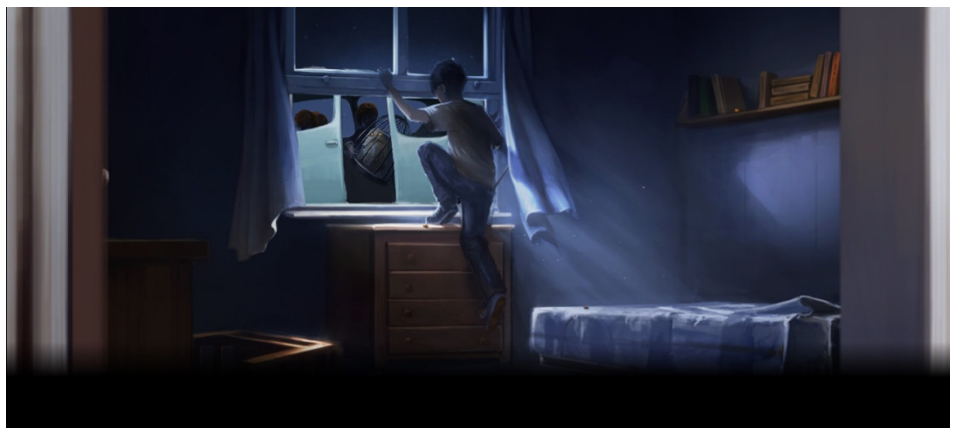
### Summary

The creature in Harry's room turns out to be Dobby the house-elf, a strange and small creature with big ears and a long nose. Dobby does not immediately explain why he is there, but instead makes a lot of noise, crying and banging his head on the door which almost gets Harry into trouble. Eventually, Dobby warns Harry not to go back to Hogwarts because he will be in 'mortal danger'. When Harry tries to question him further, he begins to beat himself over the head with Harry's desk lamp. Vernon soon comes storming up the stairs and tells Harry to be quiet. Once Vernon has left, Dobby reveals that he has been stealing Harry's letter in the hopes that Harry would not want to go back to Hogwarts if he thought his friends didn't like him. Harry tries to take the letters back, but Dobby escapes and runs downstairs. Harry follows him, just in time to see Aunt Petunia's masterpiece of a pudding floating in the air. Dobby says Harry must promise not to go back to Hogwarts or he will drop the pudding. Harry says he can't promise, so Dobby lets it drop.

Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia are furious, but try to save face in order to save the evening for Vernon's work. Shortly after, however, a large brown owl flies into the dining room, scaring the Muggles away. The owl bears a letter from the 'Improper Use of Magic Office' saying that they have received intelligence of a love charm being used at the residence (the one Dobby used to levitate the pudding). Uncle Vernon reads the letter and realises that Harry has been bluffing about being able to use magic, and decides to lock Harry up. After days of being locked up, Harry is lonely, desperate, and hungry. One night, however, Harry is woken by a noise at his window. It is Ron Weasley.

What happens in this chapter?

1. Who is Dobby and why is he in the Dursley's house?
2. What danger do we think is at Hogwarts, and who do we think is behind it?
3. How do we think Harry feels in this chapter?  
Try to sum up his experience.
4. Do we think the letter from the Improper Use of Magic Office is fair? Why?
5. How do we think Ron is going to get Harry out of the room?



## Chapter Three - The Burrow



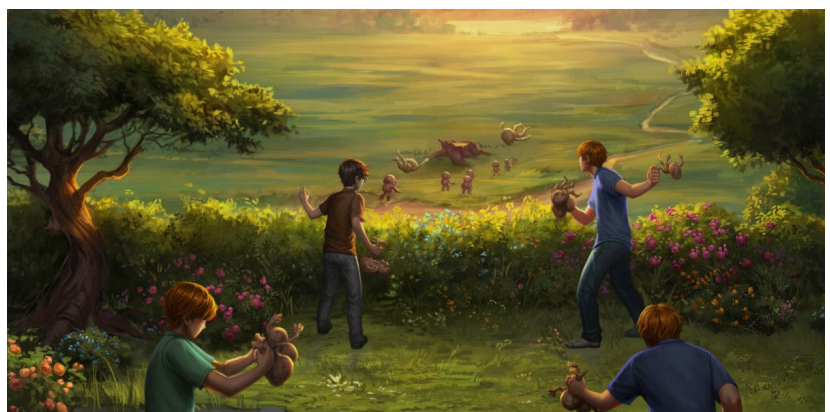
### Summary

Ron and his twin brothers Fred and George greet Harry from their flying, blue car. The three Weasleys have come to rescue Harry as he hadn't replied to any of their letters. The three pull the bars from Harry's window, pile his things into the car, and flee the house just as Vernon storms into the room. Harry and the three Weasleys fly away, and Harry begins to explain about Dobby and the pudding incident. Ron, Fred and George speculate that someone may have been trying to play a prank on Harry, and suspicion immediately falls on to Draco Malfoy. Ron explains that the three are 'borrowing' the car from their father, who works in the Ministry of Magic in the most boring department, The Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office.

Just as the sun begins to rise, the four boys arrive at the Weasley's house, a ramshackle building called the Burrow. Unluckily, Mrs Weasley knows the boys have stolen the car and is waiting for them outside. Mrs Weasley gives Ron, Fred and George a strong telling off, but spares Harry who she greets warmly. After breakfast, the boys go into the garden to begin 'de-gnoming' it. Soon after, Ron's father arrives back from work, complaining about the amount of raids he had to do that night. Mr Weasley greets Harry, and Harry and Ron retreat to Ron's room as Mrs Weasley berates Mr Weasley for enchanting the car to fly.

What happens in this chapter?

1. What is a gnome, and how does one 'de-gnome' a garden?
2. How do you think Harry feels when he sees Ron at the window?
3. Who do we think has sent Dobby, and what do we think he is warning Harry about?
4. Why do we think Ginny is so shy around Harry?
5. Why is Harry so pleased to be at the Burrow?



## Chapter Four – At Flourish and Blotts



### Summary

Harry enjoys life at the Weasley's greatly, particularly the fact that everyone seems to like having him there. One morning, all of the children's book lists for the coming school year arrive. The family decide to go to Diagon Alley that day to pick up the supplies. Harry is introduced to travel by Floo Powder. Mrs Weasley says he must step into the fireplace and say the name Diagon Alley very clearly. Harry, however, inhales a large amount of soot and stutters. As a consequence, Harry arrives in a very strange and dark shop, with no idea where he is. Harry sees Draco Malfoy about to enter and dives into a black cabinet. Malfoy enters with his father, and immediately begins complaining to him about Harry. Harry overhears Draco's father selling a lot of illegal potions to the shopkeeper. When the Malfoys have left, Harry slips out of the cabinet and into the street where he bumps into Hagrid who quickly reunites him with the Weasleys and Hermione.

The group do their shopping together, enjoying the bustle of the street. When they approach the bookshop, they notice a large crowd outside. They realise this is due to the presence of Gilderoy Lockhart, author of almost every book on the students' list for that year. Upon seeing Harry, Lockhart drags him to the front of the crowd and announces that he will be teaching Defence Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts that year. Draco and his father enter the shop, and a fight breaks out between Mr Weasley and Lucius Malfoy, which Hagrid breaks up. The subdued group heads back to the Burrow.

What happens in this chapter?

1. What does Harry overhear while in the cabinet?
2. What kind of shops do we think are in Knockturn Alley, and why might people go there?
3. What do we think of Lockhart, what do we think he is going to do in the book?
4. Do we think Mr Weasley was right to attack Lucius? What are some of the consequences of this act?
5. Why is the group subdued when they leave Diagon Alley?



## Themes

### Fear

- In *Chamber of Secrets*, we find a number of examples of people fearing others who are different from them. The Dursleys fear Harry's magical abilities, so they lock him in a room by himself to keep him hidden from the rest of their neighbourhood. The rest of Hogwarts fears Harry because he can do things they can't: he can speak Parseltongue, a Dark gift... and he seems to have a real talent for finding trouble.
- How has fear functioned in the stories so far? Is fear presented as something that is powerful? How does Voldemort use fear for his benefit, and are there any similarities between Voldemort's use of fear and Harry's use of fear against the Dursleys?

### Isolation

- Ron and Harry almost get expelled from Hogwarts for flying their magic car near where Muggles could see them. Why might wizards go to such great lengths to keep themselves isolated from Muggles? What danger does the Muggle world present to the wizarding world?
- What effect does Harry's isolation from his friends over the summer have on him? What effect did Dobby hope it would have?
  - o Remember what we've discussed about CHOICE. If Harry never made any friends, do we think he might have ended up a bit like Voldemort?

### Vocabulary

- Dormitory
- Mortal
- Chimney
- Lopsided
- Mantelpiece
- Indignant
- Subdued

## Homework

Imagine that you are Harry and you haven't heard from Ron or Hermione for the whole of Summer. Things are getting desperate at the Dursley's, and you've been locked in your room for weeks. Write a letter to Ron and Hermione describing your situation and asking for help.