

# Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" was published by J. K. Rowling in 1997. It was her first novel and it was brilliant! The book sold off the shelves leading to more books in the series. Children couldn't wait to see what happened to Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, and Hermione Granger in the next year of school. There were just enough questions left unanswered to make the reader yearn for the next book.

In this book, the beginning of the series, we meet Harry Potter. He is a little boy who is living an unloved life with his aunt, uncle and cruel cousin. They make him sleep in a cupboard under the stairs. They told him that his parents died in an automobile accident, but Harry learns they were wizards and so is he. He learned they were killed by an evil, very powerful wizard named Voldemort. He tried to kill Harry, too, but couldn't. So, Harry is now known as the "boy who lived".

Harry is taken by a giant, Hagrid, who teaches him about his past, and takes him to Hogwarts, the school for wizards. There he makes two friends, Ron Weasley, and Hermione Granger. Although he makes other friends, those two remain his best friends throughout the series of books.

At the school, Harry makes enemies, too. Draco Malfoy is a little boy from a powerful wizard family. His father and Harry's father were enemies, so Draco carries on the tradition and carries the attitude of his father of cruelty to those of lesser power. Also, Harry has a lot of trouble with his teacher, Professor Snape, who seems to dislike Harry. He even seems to make problems for Harry when he is playing Quidditch, a kind of soccer game played while flying on broomsticks.

When Harry learns the Sorcerer's Stone is hidden in the school and Voldemort wants it to acquire immortality, he tries to find a way to protect it. This leads to a showdown where Ron plays a deadly game of chess, and Hermione works through a deadly game of logic while facing a wall of fire. After his friends master their challenges, Harry has to face Voldemort, again. He defeats him, but the fight is close and requires the help of Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts.

## Book Summary

"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone", by J. K. Rowling opens in a normal suburb in a town in England. The Dursley's are a normal, higher income family, living in a normal house with a normal baby boy, Dudley. Mrs. Dursley, Petunia, does have a sister, Lilly, who is a bit eccentric and married to James Potter, who is also questionable. But, as long as the Dursley's don't have to acknowledge her, everything is fine.

One fine day, Mr. Dursley, Vernon, is coming home from work when he notices a few odd people about. Since he is the kind of gentleman who ignores those who are different and/or of a lower income bracket, he hurries past them. Even seeing a cat apparently reading a map' and overhearing a conversation in front of the bakery that seems to mention his sister and brother-in-law, don't make him pause. That night, the Dursley's learn of some strange reports in the news of owls and shooting stars, but , they shrug it off and go to bed.

Meanwhile, as the streetlights go out, an old man in a strange outfit is walking down the street toward their house. He is Albus Dumbledore, the head wizard of the Hogwarts Wizarding Academy. A cat comes up to him, changing into a woman as it does. She is Professor McGonagall, of the same academy. Dumbledore tells her that "you-know-who", or Voldemort, as he keeps trying to persuade people to use, has killed Lily and James Potter, little Harry's parents. When he tried to kill Henry, something happened, and his power began to dim. Voldemort ran away afterward.

Voldemort is the villain of this book. A fallen, but powerful wizard, he is in search of ultimate power and immortality. Therefore, he wants the Sorcerer's Stone. The fabled stone that the alchemists are always looking for in order to make the elixir for immortality. Voldemort is so feared that wizards don't say his name, for fear he will hear them. He is always referred to as "you-know-who".

Dumbledore and McGonagall are talking about James and Lily's one-year-old son, Harry. Having spent the day observing the Dursley's, McGonagall is against leaving him with them. But, Dumbledore insists it is the safest place for him. He says that when Harry is old enough, the boy's aunt and uncle will tell him about the prophecy. He wrote them a letter, explaining the whole thing.

After the giant, Hagrid, arrives from the sky, on a motorcycle carrying the baby, Dumbledore places him on the doorstep of the Dursley's with the letter of explanation. Then Hagrid wipes his eyes, mounts the motorcycle and leaves, and McGonagall blew her nose, then left, also. Finally, Dumbledore returned the lights to their streetlamps and left with a swirl of his cloak. All this time, baby Harry slept only to be awakened in the morning by his aunt's screams when she opened the door for the milk delivery. But, all night, people toasted to him, "The boy who lived."

Ten years later, Harry is not living the life of a hero. He is an eleven-year-old boy, who is regularly abused by his aunt, uncle and especially their disgusting son, Dudley. He is spoiled and cruel. Dudley has always pinched and hit Harry. Today is Dudley's birthday and he is angry because he received one less gift than the year before, and since the next door neighbor can't watch Harry, he will be going along on Dudley's birthday trip to the zoo.

While at the zoo Harry is scorned by his aunt and uncle, and by Dudley and his friend. While in the snake habitat, Harry is surprised to discover he can speak

with the boa constrictor. Dudley comes up looking for mischief and suddenly the glass in front of the boa's cage disappears. Although Harry swears he had nothing to do with it, he is sent to the cupboard he sleeps in under the stairs, without any food. There he stays until summer. He is only allowed out for school and chores.

When summer arrives, Harry spends most of his free time outside. His cousin and his friends are inside, and they like to torment him. One day, a letter arrives addressed to him in "The Cupboard under the Stairs." When his uncle sees it, he grabs it. He and his wife make the children leave so they can discuss the letter, then later, his uncle tells him to move into the small room next to Dudley's that held his toys.

The next day, another letter arrives, addressed to "the smallest bedroom". Harry's uncle is enraged. No matter what steps he takes to keep the letter from Harry, it just keeps coming. Hundreds of letters arrive addressed to Harry. Finally, he takes the family to a remote island and bolts the door, sure that he has thwarted the letters. Then at midnight, just as it turns to Harry's birthday, they hear a banging at the door.

Hagrid, the giant and Keeper of the Keys at Hogwarts, breaks down the door. When the uncle tries to shoot him with a shotgun, he takes it and ties it into a knot. Hagrid is very upset to learn that his aunt and uncle haven't told Harry about Hogwarts and that he is a wizard. Even though his uncle tries to stop him, Hagrid gives Harry the letter of acceptance for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Then Hagrid tells Harry the truth about how his parents died, not in a car accident like his aunt and uncle told him. Against his uncle's protests, Hagrid takes Harry away.

The next morning, Harry is surprised to learn the night before was not a dream and he is still with the giant. Hagrid takes him towards London to shop for school supplies. Harry is concerned about costs, but Hagrid tells him that his parents left him with plenty of money. They go to the Leaky Cauldron pub and on through to a brick wall. Hagrid taps on it and the bricks part revealing Diagon Alley. The street is lined with odd shops and busy with shoppers. The first stop is Gringotts Bank run by goblins, where Harry sees his parent's vault full of gold and silver. Hagrid helps him remove enough for his needs, then Hagrid makes a stop at vault #713, where he picks up a dirty little package, tucks it in his pocket and tells Harry not to ask about it.

While Harry is being fitted for his school uniform, he meets a snobby boy about his age. As the boy is talking about Hogwarts and Quidditch, a kind of soccer played with four balls and on broomsticks in the air, Harry feels less and less prepared for life as a wizard. Then Hagrid takes him to be fitted for his wand. After trying a few, the one that works for Harry is made of holly and has a phoenix feather. The shop owner tells him the only other wand with a feather from that

phoenix was owned by Voldemort. It is the same wand that gave Harry the scar on his forehead shaped like a lightning bolt.

Finally, the day comes to leave for school. Harry's ticket says his train leaves on track 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Unsure how to find the track, he overhears a family speaking of Hogwarts. Harry asks the mother for help and she shows him how to go through the barrier between tracks nine and ten. It is a family of red-haired children and three of the boys are headed to Hogwarts. Twin boys, Fred and George Weasley are returning, and Ron Weasley is starting like Harry is. Ron and Harry become fast friends as Ron explains the wizard world to Harry and Harry uses some of his new found wealth to buy treats for the train ride.

As Harry meets more of the students, he is a little uncomfortable with his fame. He and Ron meet Hermione Granger, an overachieving girl their age, and Harry sees the unpleasant boy from the uniform shop, Draco Malfoy. When the train stops, Hagrid leads all the first year children to some boats which transport them across a great black lake to the castle of Hogwarts School.

At the door, they are met by Professor McGonagall, who takes them into the Great Hall. Along the way she tells them about the houses they will be separated into, and how the houses earn points with the Quidditch games and can then lose points with infractions. The students are called forward one at a time, a pointed hat is placed on their heads and it announces which house they will be assigned to. The four houses are Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Harry meets some of the ghosts that reside at the school.

As the "sorting ceremony" gets under way, Hermione is called forward and the hat puts her in Gryffindor House. Then after a few more, Harry is called. His name is whispered around the room in awe. When the hat is put on his head, it suggests Slytherin, but, Harry knows that is the house Draco is going into and the house Voldemort was in, so as the hat is put on his head, he keeps thinking, 'not Slytherin.' The hat thinks Slytherin would be a good choice, but complies with Harry's wish and says Gryffindor. When the hat puts Ron in the same house, Harry is thrilled.

After the sorting ceremony is finished, they all settle into eating the sumptuous dinner. While they are eating and getting to know each other, Harry sneaks a glance at the head table where the teachers are all sitting. He notices the teacher of potions, Professor Snape, staring daggers at him. His scar gives a twinge. After dessert, Albus Dumbledore, the Head Master, gives a welcoming speech. He warns them to stay away from the Forbidden Forest and to avoid the third-floor corridor on the right side of the school. They all sing the school song, then retire to their prospective houses.

Harry settles into life at Hogwarts with its moving staircases, paintings that talk and ghosts roaming the halls, conversing with the students. He likes most of his classes but realizes quickly that Professor Snape does not like him. One day

Harry receives an invitation for tea at Hagrid's. Harry brings Ron along. At tea, the boys are at first startled by Hagrid's dog, but they discover he is very tame. Hagrid tells Harry not to worry about Snape since he has no reason to dislike Harry. Harry notices a newspaper with an article of a break-in at the bank on Harry's birthday. Harry worries Hagrid may be the culprit.

Flying lessons begin, and Harry is not happy to learn the lessons will be shared with the house of the Slytherins. Whenever Neville hurts his arm and must be led to the infirmary by the instructor, Draco begins to be his usual devilry. He takes a ball that belongs to Neville and takes off with it. Harry mounts his broom in the chase and when Draco tosses it into the air, Harry performs some amazing flying stunts and catches it. Since the instructor told them to stay on the ground, Harry is sure he is in trouble when she pulls him aside, but, instead, she wants him to be on the Quidditch team for the Gryffindor House. Although she wants him to keep it a secret, for now, Harry tells Ron that night at dinner.

Draco and his cronies come up to Harry. After some harsh words between them, Draco challenges Harry to a Wizards Duel. Against Hermione's protests, Harry accepts. That night, when Harry and Ron go to meet Draco, Hermione is still trying to prevent them and gets locked on the wrong side of the door. Now, she and Neville will have to tag along. But, when they get to the meeting place, Draco is nowhere to be seen. Instead, Argus Filch, the school caretaker and his cat, a thoroughly creepy pair, show up. So, the children run for safety. They lose their way and somehow end up on the forbidden third floor, where they are frightened off by a three-headed dog.

After the children have gotten back to their dorm safely, during another one of Hermione's lectures about the proper things to do, Harry notices she says something about the trap door the dog was sitting on. Now, he's curious. Harry gets a new broomstick, and his training as a Quidditch player begins. Meanwhile, during a class on how to make things fly, a skill that Hermione excels at quickly, she overhears a mean comment from Ron and leaves in tears. She doesn't appear at dinner for the Halloween feast and Harry is concerned. Especially when they are told about a troll loose in the school. Realizing that Hermione can't know about the troll, he and Ron search for her.

Before they find Hermione, the two find the troll. They think themselves clever for trapping it in the girl's bathroom until they realize that's where Hermione is. Using magic and working together, the three manage to get Hermione free and trap the troll. But, before they can get back to their rooms, Professor McGonagill catches them. As she is reprimanding the boys for leaving their rooms in order to catch the troll, Hermione speaks up that she was the one who was going after the troll and they tried to stop her. After that, she officially becomes their friend.

During Harry's first game of Quidditch, against the Slytherin House, Harry starts having trouble with his broom while trying to catch the Golden Snitch. The team that catches it wins the game. Hermione notices that Professor Snape is staring

at Harry and muttering words, she stops him by catching his robe on fire. Suddenly, Harry has control of his broom again and catches the Golden Snitch, winning the game for Gryffindor.

Later, while having tea at Hagrid's shack, Hermione reveals that Snape was controlling Harry's broom. Hagrid disagrees, even when Harry tells him that he thinks Snape was wounded by the three-headed dog, who the children learn is Hagrid's dog, Fluffy. He tells them Fluffy is guarding something only Dumbledore and a man named Nicholas Flamel to know about.

During Christmas vacation, Harry has to stay at the school. Although Draco teases him about it, Harry is secretly glad. Christmas with the Dursley's was never very good. The only toys were for Dudley. But, this year, Ron is going to stay there, too, so Harry is quite happy. Christmas morning brings the first gifts he can remember ever receiving. Ron's mom knit him a sweater. Also, from a mysterious benefactor he received an invisibility that used to belong to his father. That night after a huge Christmas Dinner, he dons his cloak and goes to the library to explore the restricted books that he has turned away from earlier by the librarian. But, when he opens one of the books, it starts screaming, so he dashes off. Harry ends up in another room where he finds a full-length ornate mirror. When he looks in the mirror he doesn't see himself, but a whole crowd of people. Turning and seeing no one, then when he turns back, he sees his parents, and upon closer inspection, he sees other members of his family. They don't speak to him, they just wave.

The next morning at breakfast, he tells Ron all about the mirror. That night, he and Ron use the cloak for concealment and go back to the mirror. But, instead of his family, Ron sees himself as older, head boy and Quidditch champion. After almost being caught, they rush back to their room. Although Ron warns him not to go back, Harry goes the next night. Dumbledore finds him there. Harry expects him to be angry, but Dumbledore just tells him the mirror shows you your deepest desire and is addictive.

After Christmas break, Hermione returns. The group finally discovers who Nicholas Flamel was. He was Dumbledore's partner and the only wizard to have made a Sorcerer's Stone. They also learn the stone is supposed to turn lead into gold and make an elixir for immortality. They think this is what the three-headed dog is protecting.

The next Quidditch match Harry catches the Golden Snitch within five minutes and the Gryffindor House takes the championship. Then Harry follows Snape into the woods where he is meeting with Professor Quirrell and talking about the Sorcerer's Stone.

As the plot thickens, the children are also worried about homework and exams coming up. Around Easter, Hagrid invites them to see a dragon's egg he won in a poker game. He would like to raise it, but they are illegal, so, the children arrange

for Ron's older brother, who is studying dragons to pick it up after it hatches. Flush with victory, they forget to use the invisibility cloak and are discovered going back to their rooms.

For punishment Ron, Hermione and Harry each lose fifty points for their house. They also have to do detention with Neville and Draco, who were also caught out. They all arrive in the Forbidden Forest where they spend their detention helping Hagrid. Something in the forest has been killing unicorns. After a harrowing time, Harry discovers it was Voldemort drinking unicorn blood to keep going until he can find the Sorcerer's Stone.

After learning from Hagrid that he had too much to drink and revealed to Voldemort that the way past Fluffy was with music the children dash off to warn Dumbledore. But, finding him gone, they decide to take the stone and keep it safe. When they get there they see someone else is there already. They get past Fluffy, then fall into a plant that tries to hold them. Hermione uses magic to get them loose. Next is a large room full of birds, that are actually keys. Harry's Quidditch skills come in handy to catch the right bird-key. Then Ron plays a violent game of chess with himself as a piece. He must be captured and beaten by the queen in order to win.

The next hurdle is a series of potions and a logic puzzle. Hermione figures out which potion to drink and then goes back for Ron. Harry drinks one of the bottles and goes through the flame expecting to find Snape. But, it is Quirrell he finds, instead. Harry discovers that Quirrell has Voldemort's face on the back of his head. Voldemort tells Quirrell to use Harry with the mirror that has been moved into the room. When Harry looks in it, he sees himself putting the stone in his pocket, then it magically is in his pocket. Voldemort tries to get Harry to join him and give him the stone. When he refuses, Voldemort orders Quirrell to capture him. But, he can't touch Harry without burning his hands.

Harry grabs Quirrell and his scar produces excruciating pain. Finally, Harry passes out. When he wakes, Dumbledore is standing over him. Harry tries to tell him that Quirrell took the stone. Harry realizes he is in the medical ward at the school. Dumbledore tells him that he arrived just in time to save him from Quirrell, who couldn't touch him because he was protected by his mother's love. The reason Harry was able to find the Sorcerer's Stone is because he was the only one who wanted it for the stone itself, not for what it could do. He also tells him that he and Nicholas Flamel decided to destroy the stone. Then he leaves him with his invisibility cloak.

When Harry meets his friends for the end of year banquet. He is a bit bummed that Slytherin has won the cup, but, then Dumbledore goes up to the podium. He hands out more points. Ron gets fifty points for the best game of chess ever, Hermione for logic in the face of fire, fifty points. Then for nerve and outstanding courage, Harry was awarded sixty points, and Neville got ten more points for

bravery in standing up to his friends. The decorations magically changed to the colors of Gryffindor.

Finally, the grades are handed out, Harry and Ron pass, Hermione is at the top of her class. After being told not to use magic over the summer break, the children are sailed back across the lake. Then, they board the train back to London. After they go back through the portal, they meet up with their families. Ron's little sister, Ginny points out Harry. Harry thanks, Mrs. Weasley for the Christmas gifts and Ron tells him he will get in touch with him over the summer to come over to the Weasley's for a visit. When Hermione wishes him a good summer, she is looking at the Dursley's uneasily. But, Harry just smiles and says it will be fine, the Dudley doesn't know he isn't allowed to use magic over the summer.

## Character Analysis

**Harry Potter** – the hero of this story. Harry is eleven years old. He has been living with his aunt, uncle, and cruel cousin since the death of his parents at the hands of the demonic wizard, Voldemort. Harry is extremely unloved by his family. They keep him tucked away in a cupboard under the stairs. His self-esteem is low because of the continuous verbal abuse he receives. So, when the book begins he seems to have no courage. But, as the book progresses the reader watches him grow into the hero who saves the world. To do that he must defeat Voldemort. In this book he defeats him by keeping the Sorcerer's Stone from him, that would have given the evil wizard immortality.

Including the character surprise of additional courage, is the addition of a inherited ability to fly on a broomstick, to the extent that he is amazingly talented at Quidditch, a game that is close to soccer, but played in the air on a broomstick. Another surprising development is Harry's adventurous spirit. He often goes into dangerous situations almost fearlessly, with a strong sense of duty.

**Ron Weasley** – Ron comes from a warm and loving family. There are four boys and one girl, they all have red hair and are very gregarious. Ron's family is not very well to do, but they are rich in love. His oldest brother has graduated and is working with dragons, his brothers just older than him, are twins. They are very mischievous, always in trouble. He also has a little sister, that comes up as more of an important character in later books.

Ron is very loyal and brave, but not as foolhardy as Harry or as naughty as his brothers. He is an average boy, who just happens to be a wizard. He often provides the comic relief needed in intense situations.

**Hermione Granger** – Hermione is that irritatingly perfect student who always raises her hand and knows the answer. But, as her character progresses, she becomes best friends with Ron and Harry. She is often the voice of reason and the brains of the group. She is an unusual wizard since she comes from a family

with no magic. Not coming from a family of wizards means she is more of a newcomer than even Harry is. She has to learn everything from scratch, as Harry does, but she also doesn't have the predisposed following he has as a survivor of an attack by Voldemort and a member of a prestigious wizard family. Hermione feels she must work harder than everyone else in order to fit in. She is also loyal to her friends and very courageous.

**Voldemort** – the ultimate evil villain. He has no redeeming qualities. An extremely powerful wizard in search of even more power. His ultimate goal is to control the world. When Harry's parents tried to stop him, he killed them. At that time, he also tried to kill Harry, but only managed to leave a scar on his forehead shaped like a lightning bolt. For some unknown reason, probably a spell of protection placed on Harry by his mother with her death, Voldemort's attempt on Harry's life sapped a lot of Voldemort's power.

### **J.K. Rowling Biography**

Born on July 31, 1965, to Peter James Rowling, a Rolls-Royce aircraft engineer, and Anne Rowling (nee Volant), Joanne Rowling was a divorced mother living in Gloucestershire, England when she hit upon the idea of a book about a young wizard boy, who is alone and trying to overcome obstacles to find his way to becoming the hero of his story.

Every day she would take her baby for a walk in his pram and stop at a coffee shop while he napped. There she worked on her story and made one cup of a coffee stretch. Some of her ideas for her stories came from the romantic stories she heard all her life. Stories including how her parents met, while on a train departing King's Cross Station and headed for Arbroath in 1964. Stories about her heroic grandparents gave her ideas of courage under extreme circumstances. Also, her headmaster while she attended St. Michael's in the village of Winterbourne was probably the inspiration for Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts. She also based a lot of Hermione Granger on herself at eleven years old. Although her teacher at the time, Steve Eddy, said she actually didn't stand out but was very bright and good at English.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Edinburgh and also having studied at the University of Exeter, she should have been able to find a meaningful and supportive job. But, as with so many people with college degrees, she learned finding a job that would support her family and pay child care is very hard, if not impossible, especially with a degree in the arts.

While she was working as a researcher for Amnesty International, she began to brew the idea for the Harry Potter series. Within seven years, she had lost her mother, her job and divorced her husband. Rowling also gave birth to her first child during this time. Now she was divorced, lonely and living in relative poverty. In 1997 J. K. Rowling published her first novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone". The book quickly became one of the world's most well-

loved books. She since has written six sequels and a few short stories in the series. Her books have brought the love of reading to a whole generation of children around the world.

Her publisher asked her to use a more male sounding name “since young boys might not want to read a book written by a woman”. Since she didn’t have a middle name, she used the K. from her paternal grandmother, Kathleen Ada Bulden Rowling. But, she calls herself, Jo. She also writes under another pen name, Robert Galbraith.

Since the success of the Harry Potter series, J. K. Rowling has become the best selling living author in the United Kingdom. She was ranked as the forty eighth most powerful celebrity in 2007. She is also one of the twelve richest women in the world. In 2010 she was chosen as one of the most influential women in Britain by the leading magazine editors in the area.

J. K. Rowling continues to use her fame to help others. She supports charities, including Comic Relief, One Parent Families, and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain. In 2007, Time Magazine named her as runner up for the social, moral and political inspiration she has given her fans.