

— CHAPTER ONE —

The Boy Who Lived



Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were happy to say they were very normal people. They did not like anything strange or mysterious.

Mr. Dursley was the boss of a company called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, heavy man with almost no neck. Mrs. Dursley was thin, blonde, and had a very long neck, which was useful for looking over garden fences to watch her neighbours. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley. They thought he was the best boy in the world.

The Dursleys had everything they wanted. But they also had a secret, and their biggest fear was that someone would find out. They did not like to think about the Potters. Mrs. Potter was Mrs. Dursley's sister, but they had not met for many years. In fact, Mrs. Dursley pretended she did not have a sister. She thought her sister and her useless husband were very different from the Dursleys. The Dursleys knew the Potters also had a small son, but they had never seen him. This was another reason

to avoid the Potters—they didn't want Dudley to meet a child like that.

A Strange Day

On the grey Tuesday when our story begins, the cloudy sky seemed normal. Nothing suggested that strange things were about to happen across the country.

Mr. Dursley chose a very boring tie for work. Mrs. Dursley talked happily while she tried to put the screaming Dudley into his high chair. None of them saw a large, brown owl fly past the window.

At half past eight, Mr. Dursley left for work. He kissed his wife goodbye and tried to kiss Dudley, but Dudley was having a tantrum and throwing his cereal. "Little tyke," laughed Mr. Dursley as he left.



He got into his car. At the corner of the street, he saw something very unusual—a **cat reading a map**. He looked again, but the map was gone. A tabby cat was just standing there. "It must be a trick of the light," he thought. The cat stared back at him. As he drove away, he saw the cat in his mirror, looking at the street sign. "Cats can't read," Mr. Dursley told himself and tried to forget about it.



Later, in a traffic jam, he saw many **strangely dressed people** wearing cloaks. Mr. Dursley hated unusual clothes. He thought it was a stupid new fashion. He saw a group of these people whispering excitedly. He was angry to see that one was an old man wearing a bright green cloak! "They are probably collecting money for something," Mr. Dursley decided, and soon he was thinking about drills again.

Mr. Dursley's office was on the ninth floor. He sat with his back to the window, so he did not see the **owls flying in the daylight**. People in the street pointed at them, surprised. They rarely saw owls, even at night.

Mr. Dursley had a normal morning. He shouted at five people and made important phone calls. At lunch, he went to buy a bun from the bakery across the street. Near the shop, he saw more people in cloaks, whispering. He felt uneasy. As he walked back, holding his doughnut, he heard a few words:

"The Potters, that's right, that's what I heard—"

"—yes, their son, Harry—"

Mr. Dursley stopped suddenly. He was filled with fear. He looked at the people but decided not to speak to them.

He ran back to his office. He almost called his wife but changed his mind. "Potter is not a rare name," he thought. "Many people are called Potter and have a son named Harry. Maybe my nephew's name is Harvey or Harold. No need to

worry my wife." But he couldn't stop thinking about the people in cloaks.

That afternoon, he found it hard to concentrate. At five o'clock, as he left work, he was so worried that he walked into a small old man.

"Sorry," Mr. Dursley said. The man was wearing a violet cloak. He didn't seem upset. In fact, he smiled a wide smile and said in a squeaky voice: "Don't be sorry! Nothing could upset me today! Be happy, for **You-Know-Who** has gone at last! Even **Muggles** like you should celebrate this happy day!"

Then the old man hugged Mr. Dursley and walked away.

Mr. Dursley stood still, shocked. A complete stranger had hugged him. The man had also called him a "Muggle"—whatever that meant. He felt very nervous. He drove home quickly, hoping he was imagining things. He never liked imagination.

When he arrived at his house, the first thing he saw was the same tabby cat from the morning, now sitting on his garden wall.

"Shoo!" said Mr. Dursley loudly.

The cat didn't move. It just gave him a serious look. Was this normal? Mr. Dursley went inside, determined not to tell his wife anything.

That evening, Mrs. Dursley talked about the neighbours and how Dudley had learned a new word ("Shan't!"). Mr. Dursley tried to act normally. After they put Dudley to bed, he watched the last news report:

"...and finally, bird-watchers report that the nation's owls are behaving very unusually today. Owls normally hunt at night, but hundreds have been seen flying in all directions since sunrise. Experts cannot explain why the owls have changed their habits. Most mysterious. Now, the weather. Jim, will there be more showers of owls tonight?"



"Well, Ted," said the weatherman, "I don't know about owls, but viewers are calling to say that instead of rain, they saw **shooting stars** last night! People are celebrating Bonfire Night early! But I can promise a wet night tonight."

Mr. Dursley sat frozen in his chair. Shooting stars all over Britain? Owls flying by day? Mysterious people in cloaks everywhere? And that whisper about the Potters...

He had to say something to his wife. "Er—Petunia, dear—have you heard from your sister lately?"

As expected, Mrs. Dursley looked shocked and angry. "No. Why?"

"There was strange news. Owls... shooting stars... and there were many funny-looking people in town today..."

"So?" she said sharply.

"Well, I thought... maybe it was something to do with... her kind of people."

Mrs. Dursley sipped her tea. "Their son... he would be about Dudley's age now, wouldn't he?"

"I suppose so," she said stiffly.

"What's his name again? Howard?"

"**Harry**. A nasty, common name."

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Dursley, his heart sinking. "Yes, I agree."

He said no more about it. Before bed, he looked out the window. The cat was still there, staring down the street as if waiting for something.

"Am I imagining things?" he wondered. "Does this have anything to do with the Potters? If people find out we are related to them... I couldn't bear it."

He went to bed. His last comforting thought was that even if the Potters were involved, they would never come near him. The Potters knew what he and Petunia thought of them. Nothing strange could affect them.

How very wrong he was.

The Mysterious Visitors

The cat on the wall was not sleepy. It sat perfectly still, watching the far corner of Privet Drive. It was nearly midnight when it finally moved.

A man appeared on the corner **so suddenly** it was as if he had popped out of the ground.

This man was like no one ever seen on Privet Drive. He was tall, thin, and very old, with long silver hair and a beard. He wore long robes, a purple cloak, and high-heeled boots. His bright blue eyes twinkled behind **half-moon spectacles**, and his nose was very long and crooked. His name was **Albus Dumbledore**.

Dumbledore seemed busy looking for something in his cloak. Then he looked up and saw the cat. He smiled. "I should have known," he chuckled.



He took out a **silver cigarette lighter**. He clicked it, and the nearest street lamp went out. He clicked it again—the next lamp went out. He clicked it twelve times until the whole street was dark, except for two tiny points of light in the distance: the cat's eyes. Now, no one could see what was happening outside.

Dumbledore walked to number four and sat on the wall next to the cat.

"Fancy seeing you here, Professor McGonagall."

The cat was gone. In its place was a rather severe-looking woman wearing square glasses. She wore an emerald cloak. Her black hair was in a tight bun. She was Professor Minerva McGonagall.

"How did you know it was me?" she asked.

"My dear Professor, I've never seen a cat sit so stiffly."

"You'd be stiff if you'd been sitting on a brick wall all day," she said.

"All day? When you could have been celebrating? I passed many parties on my way here."

Professor McGonagall sounded impatient. "Yes, everyone is celebrating. But they are not being careful! Even the **Muggles** have noticed. It was on their news. Flocks of owls... shooting stars..."

"You can't blame them," Dumbledore said gently. "We've had little to celebrate for eleven years."

"I know. But people are being careless! They are on the streets in daylight, in our clothes, talking about rumours."

She looked at Dumbledore sharply, then continued:

"Everyone is saying the same thing. They say **Voldemort** went to Godric's Hollow last night. He went to find the Potters. The rumour is that Lily and James Potter are... **dead**."

Dumbledore bowed his head. Professor McGonagall gasped.

"Lily and James... I can't believe it..."

"I know... I know," Dumbledore said heavily.

"That's not all," Professor McGonagall went on, her voice trembling. "They say he tried to kill their son, Harry. But he couldn't. No one knows why. They say when he couldn't kill Harry Potter, Voldemort's power broke—and that's why he's gone."

Dumbledore nodded.

"Is it... true? After all he has done... all the people he's killed... he couldn't kill a little boy? But how did Harry survive?"

"We can only guess. We may never know."

Dumbledore's Plan

"I have come to bring Harry to his aunt and uncle. They are his only family now."

"You don't mean—the people who live here?" cried Professor McGonagall, pointing at number four.

"Dumbledore—you can't! I've been watching them all day. You couldn't find two people who are less like us. They have a son—I saw him kicking his mother, screaming for sweets. Harry Potter live here?"

"It is the best place for him. His aunt and uncle can explain everything when he's older. I've written them a letter."

"A letter? You think a letter can explain all this? These people will never understand him! He'll be famous—a legend! There will be books about Harry—every child in our world will know his name!"

"Exactly," said Dumbledore seriously. "Fame would turn any boy's head. Famous before he can walk and talk! Famous for something he won't even remember! Don't you see? It's better for him to grow up away from all that until he's ready."

Professor McGonagall finally agreed. "But how is the boy getting here?"

"**Hagrid** is bringing him."

"Hagrid? Is it wise to trust Hagrid with something so important?"

"I would trust Hagrid with my life."



Hagrid's Arrival

A low rumbling sound broke the silence. It grew louder and louder. They looked up at the sky—and a **huge motorbike** fell from the air and landed on the road in front of them.

The man on the motorbike was even bigger. He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and five times as wide. His face was hidden by bushy black hair and a beard. In his enormous arms, he held a **bundle of blankets**.

This was Hagrid.

"Hagrid, at last. And where did you get that motorbike?"

"Borrowed it, Professor Dumbledore, sir. Young Sirius Black lent it to me. I've got him, sir."

"Were there any problems?"

"No, sir. The house was almost destroyed, but I got him out before the Muggles started swarmin' around. He fell asleep as we was flyin' over Bristol."

Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall looked inside the blankets. There was a baby boy, fast asleep. On his forehead, under a tuft of black hair, was a strange cut shaped like a **lightning bolt**.

"Is that where...?" whispered Professor McGonagall.
"Yes," said Dumbledore. "He'll have that scar forever."



Dumbledore took Harry and walked to the Dursleys' front door. He placed Harry gently on the doorstep. He took a letter from his cloak and tucked it into the blankets. Then he returned to the others.

For a full minute, they stood looking at the little bundle. Hagrid's shoulders shook. Professor McGonagall blinked hard. The usual twinkle in Dumbledore's eyes seemed to have gone out.

"Well," said Dumbledore finally, "that's that. We have no reason to stay. We may as well go and join the celebrations."

They left. On the corner, Dumbledore took out his silver Put-Outer and clicked it once. All the street lamps came back on. Privet Drive glowed orange again. He could just see the bundle of blankets on the step of number four.

"Good luck, Harry," he murmured. He turned and, with a swish of his cloak, was gone.

A breeze blew on Privet Drive. The street was silent and tidy again—the last place you would expect astonishing things to happen.

Harry Potter rolled over in his blankets without waking up. One small hand closed on the letter beside him. He slept on, not knowing he was special. Not knowing he was famous. Not

knowing that in a few hours, he would be woken by Mrs. Dursley's scream when she opened the door to put out the milk bottles.

He could not know that at that very moment, people meeting in secret all over the country were holding up their glasses and saying in hushed voices:

"To Harry Potter—the boy who lived!"

Vocabulary Help (B1 Level):

- **Drills** - Tools for making holes.
- **To spy on** - To watch secretly.
- **Owl** - A bird that usually flies at night.
- **Cloak** - A long, loose coat without sleeves.
- **To whisper** - To speak very quietly.
- **Muggle** - A non-magical person.
- **Shooting star** - A bright light that moves quickly in the night sky (a meteor).

- **Spectacles** - Glasses.
- **Bundle** - A number of things tied together.
- **Lightning bolt** - The flash of light in the sky during a storm.