CHAPTER ONE

THE BOY WHO LIVED

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank yu very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense.

Mr. Durlsey was the director of a firm called grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with hardy any nexk, although he did have a very large mustache. Mrs. Durlsey was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the nieghbours. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley and in their opinion there was no finer boy anywhere. the Durlseys had everything they wanted, but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would diccover it. They didn't think they could bear it if anyone found out about the Potters. Mrs. Potter was Mrs. Dursleys's sister, because her sister and her good-for-nothinghusband were as unDursleyish as it was possible to be. The Dursley shuddered to think what the neighbors would to say if the Potters arrived in the street. The Dursleys know that the Potters had a small son, too, but they had never even seen him. This boy was another ggod reason for keeping the Potters away; they didn't want Dudley mixing with a child like that.

When Mr. and Mrs. Dursley woke op on the dull, gray Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloud sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening all over the country. Mr. dursley hummed as he picked out his most boring tie for work, and Mrs. Dursley gossiped away happily as she wrestled a screaming Dudley into his high chair.

None of them noticed a large, tawny owl flutter past the window.

At hald past eight, Mr. Dursley picked up his briefcase, pecked Mrs. dursley on the cheek, and tried to kiss Dudley good-bye but missed, because Dudley was now having a tantrum and throwing his cereal at the walls. "Little tyke,: chortled Mr. /dursley as he left the house. He got into his car and backed out of number four's drove.

It was on the corner of the street that he noticed the first sign of something peculiar - a cat reading a map. For a second, Mr. Dursley didn't realize what he had seen - then he jerked his head around to look again. There was a tabby cat standing on the corner of Privet Drive - no, liiking at the sign; cats couldn't read maps or signs. Mr. Dursley gave himself a little shake and put the cat out of his mind. As he drove toward town he thought of nothing except a large order of drills he was hoping to gat that day.

But on the edge of town, drills were driven out of his mind by something else. As he sat in the usual morning traffic jan, he couldn't help noticing that there seemed to be a lot of straangely dressed people about. People in cloaks. Mr. Dursley couldn't bear people who dressed in funny clothes - the getups you saw on young people! He supposed this was some stupid new fashion. He drummed his fingers on the steering wheel and his eyes fell on a huddle of these weirdos standing quite close by. they were whispering excitedly together. Mr. dursley was enraged to see that a couple of them weren't young at all, why that man had to be olser than he was,, and wearing an emerald-green cloak! The nerve of him! But then it struck Mr. Dursley that this was probably some silly stunt - these people were obviously collecting for something... yes, that would be it. The traffic moved on and a few minutes later, Mr. Dursley arrived in the Grunnings parking lot, his mind back on drills.

Mr. Dursley always sat with his back to the window in his office on the ninth floor. If he hadn't he might have found it harder to concentrate on drills that morning. He didn't see the owls swoop ing past in broad daylight, though people down in the street did, they pointed and gazed opnmothed as owl had a perfectly normal, owl-free morning. He yelled at five different people. He seemed several impartant telephone calls and souted a bit more. He was in a very good mood until lunchtime, when he thought he'd stretch his legs and walk across the road to buy himself a bun from the bakery.