

"Who?"

"Well — I don' like sayin' the name if I can help it. No one does."

"Why not?"

"Gulpin' gargoyles, Harry, people are still scared. Blimey, this is difficult. See, there was this wizard who went ... bad. As bad as you could go. Worse. Worse than worse. His name was ..."

Hagrid gulped, but no words came out.

"Could you write it down?" Harry suggested.

"Nah — can't spell it. All right — *Voldemort*." Hagrid shuddered. "Don' make me say it again. Anyway, this — this wizard, about twenty years ago now, started lookin' fer followers. Got 'em, too — some were afraid, some just wanted a bit o' his power, 'cause he was gettin' himself power, all right. Dark days, Harry. Didn't know who ter trust, didn't dare get friendly with strange wizards or witches ... terrible things happened. He was takin' over. 'Course, some stood up to him — an' he killed 'em. Horribly. One o' the only safe places left was Hogwarts. Reckon Dumbledore's the only one You-Know-Who was afraid of. Didn't dare try takin' the school, not jus' then, anyway.

"Now, yer mum an' dad were as good a witch an' wizard as I ever knew. Head boy an' girl at Hogwarts in their day! Suppose the mys-try is why You-Know-Who never tried to get 'em on his side be-fore ... probably knew they were too close ter Dumbledore ter want anythin' ter do with the Dark Side.

"Maybe he thought he could persuade 'em ... maybe he just wanted 'em outta the way. All anyone knows is, he turned up in the village where you was all living, on Halloween ten years ago. You was just a year old. He came ter yer house an' — an' —"

Hagrid suddenly pulled out a very dirty, spotted handkerchief and blew his nose with a sound like a foghorn.

"Sorry," he said. "But it's that sad — knew yer mum an' dad, an' nicer people yeh couldn't find — anyway ..."