



## THE BOY WHO LIVED



Albus Dumbledore didn't seem to realize that he had just arrived in a street where everything from his name to his boots was unwelcome. He was busy rummaging in his cloak, looking for something. But he did seem to realize he was being watched, because he looked up suddenly at the cat, which was still staring at him from the other end of the street. For some reason, the sight of the cat seemed to amuse him. He chuckled and muttered, "I should have known."

He found what he was looking for in his inside pocket. It seemed to be a silver cigarette lighter. He flicked it open, held it up in the air, and clicked it. The nearest street lamp went out with a little pop. He clicked it again — the next lamp flickered into darkness. Twelve times he clicked the Put-Outer, until the only lights left on the whole street were two tiny pinpricks in the distance, which were the eyes of the cat watching him. If anyone looked out of their window now, even beady-eyed Mrs. Dursley, they wouldn't be able to see anything that was happening down on the pavement. Dumbledore slipped the Put-Outer back inside his cloak and set off down the street toward number four, where he sat down on the wall next to the cat. He didn't look at it, but after a moment he spoke to it.

"Fancy seeing you here, Professor McGonagall."

He turned to smile at the tabby, but it had gone. Instead he was smiling at a rather severe-looking woman who was wearing square glasses exactly the shape of the markings the cat had had around its eyes. She, too, was wearing a cloak, an emerald one. Her black hair was drawn into a tight bun. She looked distinctly ruffled.

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

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



## CHAPTER ONE



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

"All day? When you could have been celebrating? I must have passed a dozen feasts and parties on my way here."

Professor McGonagall sniffed angrily.

"Oh yes, everyone's celebrating, all right," she said impatiently. "You'd think they'd be a bit more careful, but no — even the Muggles have noticed something's going on. It was on their news." She jerked her head back at the Dursleys' dark living-room window. "I heard it. Flocks of owls . . . shooting stars. . . . Well, they're not completely stupid. They were bound to notice something. Shooting stars down in Kent — I'll bet that was Dedalus Diggle. He never had much sense."

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

"I know that," said Professor McGonagall irritably. "But that's no reason to lose our heads. People are being downright careless, out on the streets in broad daylight, not even dressed in Muggle clothes, swapping rumors."

She threw a sharp, sideways glance at Dumbledore here, as though hoping he was going to tell her something, but he didn't, so she went on. "A fine thing it would be if, on the very day You-Know-Who seems to have disappeared at last, the Muggles found out about us all. I suppose he really *has* gone, Dumbledore?"

"It certainly seems so," said Dumbledore. "We have much to be thankful for. Would you care for a lemon drop?"

"A *what*?"

"A lemon drop. They're a kind of Muggle sweet I'm rather fond of."



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“No, thank you,” said Professor McGonagall coldly, as though she didn’t think this was the moment for lemon drops. “As I say, even if You-Know-Who *has* gone —”

“My dear Professor, surely a sensible person like yourself can call him by his name? All this ‘You-Know-Who’ nonsense — for eleven years I have been trying to persuade people to call him by his proper name: *Voldemort*.” Professor McGonagall flinched, but Dumbledore, who was unsticking two lemon drops, seemed not to notice. “It all gets so confusing if we keep saying ‘You-Know-Who.’ I have never seen any reason to be frightened of saying Voldemort’s name.”

“I know you haven’t,” said Professor McGonagall, sounding half exasperated, half admiring. “But you’re different. Everyone knows you’re the only one You-Know- oh, all right, *Voldemort*, was frightened of.”

“You flatter me,” said Dumbledore calmly. “Voldemort had powers I will never have.”

“Only because you’re too — well — *noble* to use them.”

“It’s lucky it’s dark. I haven’t blushed so much since Madam Pomfrey told me she liked my new earmuffs.”

Professor McGonagall shot a sharp look at Dumbledore and said, “The owls are nothing next to the *rumors* that are flying around. You know what everyone’s saying? About why he’s disappeared? About what finally stopped him?”

It seemed that Professor McGonagall had reached the point she was most anxious to discuss, the real reason she had been waiting on a cold, hard wall all day, for neither as a cat nor as a woman had she fixed Dumbledore with such a piercing stare as she did now. It was plain that whatever “everyone” was saying, she was not going



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to believe it until Dumbledore told her it was true. Dumbledore, however, was choosing another lemon drop and did not answer.

“What they’re *saying*,” she pressed on, “is that last night Voldemort turned up in Godric’s Hollow. He went to find the Potters. The rumor is that Lily and James Potter are — are — that they’re — *dead*.”

Dumbledore bowed his head. Professor McGonagall gasped.

“Lily and James . . . I can’t believe it . . . I didn’t want to believe it . . . Oh, Albus . . .”

Dumbledore reached out and patted her on the shoulder. “I know . . . I know . . .” he said heavily.

Professor McGonagall’s voice trembled as she went on. “That’s not all. They’re saying he tried to kill the Potters’ son, Harry. But — he couldn’t. He couldn’t kill that little boy. No one knows why, or how, but they’re saying that when he couldn’t kill Harry Potter, Voldemort’s power somehow broke — and that’s why he’s gone.”

Dumbledore nodded glumly.

“It’s — it’s *true*?” faltered Professor McGonagall. “After all he’s done . . . all the people he’s killed . . . he couldn’t kill a little boy? It’s just astounding . . . of all the things to stop him . . . but how in the name of heaven did Harry survive?”

“We can only guess,” said Dumbledore. “We may never know.”

Professor McGonagall pulled out a lace handkerchief and dabbed at her eyes beneath her spectacles. Dumbledore gave a great sniff as he took a golden watch from his pocket and examined it. It was a very odd watch. It had twelve hands but no numbers; instead, little planets were moving around the edge. It must have



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made sense to Dumbledore, though, because he put it back in his pocket and said, “Hagrid’s late. I suppose it was he who told you I’d be here, by the way?”

“Yes,” said Professor McGonagall. “And I don’t suppose you’re going to tell me *why* you’re here, of all places?”

“I’ve come to bring Harry to his aunt and uncle. They’re the only family he has left now.”

“You don’t mean — you *can’t* mean the people who live *here*?” cried Professor McGonagall, jumping to her feet and 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. And they’ve got this son — I saw him kicking his mother all the way up the street, screaming for sweets. Harry Potter come and live here!”

“It’s the best place for him,” said Dumbledore firmly. “His aunt and uncle will be able to explain everything to him when he’s older. I’ve written them a letter.”

“A letter?” repeated Professor McGonagall faintly, sitting back down on the wall. “Really, Dumbledore, you think you can explain all this in a letter? These people will never understand him! He’ll be famous — a legend — I wouldn’t be surprised if today was known as Harry Potter Day in the future — there will be books written about Harry — every child in our world will know his name!”

“Exactly,” said Dumbledore, looking very seriously over the top of his half-moon glasses. “It would be enough to turn any boy’s head. Famous before he can walk and talk! Famous for something he won’t even remember! Can’t you see how much better off he’ll be, growing up away from all that until he’s ready to take it?”

Professor McGonagall opened her mouth, changed her mind,