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Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

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J.K. ROWLING

HARRY POTTER

and the  
Philosopher's Stone



BLOOMSBURY

LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY

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## 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 you 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 Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with hardly any neck, although he did have a very large moustache. Mrs Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbours. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley and in their opinion there was no finer boy anywhere.

The Dursleys had everything they wanted, but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would discover it. They didn't think they could bear it if anyone found out about the Potters. Mrs Potter was Mrs Dursley's

sister, but they hadn't met for several years; in fact, Mrs Dursley pretended she didn't have a sister, because her sister and her good-for-nothing husband were as unDursleyish as it was possible to be. The Dursleys shuddered to think what the neighbours would say if the Potters arrived in the street. The Dursleys knew that the Potters had a small son, too, but they had never even seen him. This boy was another good reason for keeping the Potters away; they didn't want Dudley mixing with a child like that.

When Mr and Mrs Dursley woke up on the dull, grey Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy 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 half past eight, Mr Dursley picked up his briefcase, pecked Mrs Dursley on the cheek and tried to kiss Dudley goodbye 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 drive.

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 realise 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, but there wasn't a map in sight. What could he have been thinking of? It must have been a trick of the light. Mr Dursley blinked and stared at the cat. It stared back. As Mr Dursley drove around the corner and up the road, he watched the cat in his mirror. It was now reading the sign that said *Privet Drive* – no, *looking* 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 towards town he thought of nothing except a large order of drills he was hoping to get 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 jam, he couldn't help noticing that there seemed to be a lot of strangely dressed people about. People in cloaks. Mr Dursley couldn't bear people who dressed in funny clothes – the get-ups 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 older 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 car park, 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

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## CHAPTER ONE

## The Worst Birthday

Not for the first time, an argument had broken out over breakfast at number four, Privet Drive. Mr Vernon Dursley had been woken in the early hours of the morning by a loud, hooting noise from his nephew Harry's room.

'Third time this week!' he roared across the table. 'If you can't control that owl, it'll have to go!'

Harry tried, yet again, to explain.

'She's *bored*,' he said. 'She's used to flying around outside. If I could just let her out at night ...'

'Do I look stupid?' snarled Uncle Vernon, a bit of fried egg dangling from his bushy moustache. 'I know what'll happen if that owl's let out.'

He exchanged dark looks with his wife, Petunia.

Harry tried to argue back but his words were drowned by a long, loud belch from the Dursleys' son, Dudley.

'I want more bacon.'

'There's more in the frying pan, sweetums,' said Aunt Petunia, turning misty eyes on her massive son. 'We must feed you up while we've got the chance ... I don't like the sound of that school food ...'

'Nonsense, Petunia, I never went hungry when I was at Smeltings,' said Uncle Vernon heartily. 'Dudley gets enough, don't you, son?'

Dudley, who was so large his bottom drooped over either side of the kitchen chair, grinned and turned to Harry.

'Pass the frying pan.'

'You've forgotten the magic word,' said Harry irritably.

The effect of this simple sentence on the rest of the family was incredible: Dudley gasped and fell off his chair with a crash that shook the whole kitchen; Mrs Dursley gave a small scream and clapped her hands to her mouth; Mr Dursley jumped to his feet, veins throbbing in his temples.

'I meant "please"!' said Harry quickly. 'I didn't mean —'

'WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU,' thundered his uncle, spraying spit over the table, 'ABOUT SAYING THE M WORD IN OUR HOUSE?'

'But I —'

'HOW DARE YOU THREATEN DUDLEY!' roared Uncle Vernon, pounding the table with his fist.

'I just —'

'I WARNED YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MENTION OF YOUR ABNORMALITY UNDER THIS ROOF!'

Harry stared from his purple-faced uncle to his pale aunt, who was trying to heave Dudley to his feet.

'All right,' said Harry, '*all right* ...'

Uncle Vernon sat back down, breathing like a winded rhinoceros and watching Harry closely out of the corners of his small, sharp eyes.

Ever since Harry had come home for the summer holidays, Uncle Vernon had been treating him like a bomb that might go off at any moment, because Harry *wasn't* a normal boy. As a matter of fact, he was as not normal as it is possible to be.

Harry Potter was a wizard — a wizard fresh from his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. And if the Dursleys were unhappy to have him back for the holidays, it was nothing to how Harry felt.

He missed Hogwarts so much it was like having a constant stomach ache. He missed the castle, with its secret passages and ghosts, his lessons (though perhaps not Snape, the Potions master), the post arriving by owl, eating banquets in the Great Hall, sleeping in his four-poster bed in the tower dormitory, visiting the gamekeeper, Hagrid, in his cabin in the grounds next to the Forbidden Forest and, especially, Quidditch, the most popular sport in the wizarding world (six tall goalposts, four flying balls and fourteen players on broomsticks).

All Harry's spellbooks, his wand, robes, cauldron and top-of-the-range Nimbus Two Thousand broomstick had been locked in a cupboard under the stairs by Uncle Vernon the instant Harry had come home. What did the Dursleys care if Harry lost his place in the house Quidditch team because he hadn't practised all summer? What was it to the Dursleys if

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## CHAPTER ONE

## Owl Post

Harry Potter was a highly unusual boy in many ways. For one thing, he hated the summer holidays more than any other time of year. For another, he really wanted to do his homework, but was forced to do it in secret, in the dead of night. And he also happened to be a wizard.

It was nearly midnight, and he was lying on his front in bed, the blankets drawn right over his head like a tent, a torch in one hand and a large leather-bound book (*A History of Magic*, by Bathilda Bagshot) propped open against the pillow. Harry moved the tip of his eagle-feather quill down the page, frowning as he looked for something that would help him write his essay, 'Witch-Burning in the Fourteenth Century Was Completely Pointless – discuss'.

The quill paused at the top of a likely-looking paragraph. Harry pushed his round glasses up his nose, moved his torch closer to the book and read:

*Non-magic people (more commonly known as Muggles) were particularly afraid of magic in medieval times, but not very good at recognising it. On the rare occasion that they did catch a real witch or wizard, burning had no effect whatsoever. The witch or wizard would perform a basic Flame-Freezing Charm and then pretend to shriek with pain while enjoying a gentle, tickling sensation. Indeed, Wendelin the Weird enjoyed being burnt so much that she allowed herself to be caught no fewer than forty-seven times in various disguises.*

Harry put his quill between his teeth and reached underneath his pillow for his ink bottle and a roll of parchment. Slowly and very carefully he unscrewed the ink bottle, dipped his quill into it and began to write, pausing every now and then to listen, because if any of the Dursleys heard the scratching of his quill on their way to the bathroom, he'd probably find himself locked in the cupboard under the stairs for the rest of the summer.

The Dursley family of number four, Privet Drive, was the reason that Harry never enjoyed his summer holidays. Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia and their son, Dudley, were Harry's only living relatives. They were Muggles, and they had a very medieval attitude towards magic. Harry's dead parents, who had been a witch and wizard themselves, were never mentioned under the Dursleys' roof. For years, Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon had hoped that if they kept Harry as downtrodden as possible, they would be able to squash the

magic out of him. To their fury, they had been unsuccessful, and now lived in terror of anyone finding out that Harry had spent most of the last two years at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The most the Dursleys could do these days was to lock away Harry's spellbooks, wand, cauldron and broomstick at the start of the summer holidays, and forbid him to talk to the neighbours.

This separation from his spellbooks had been a real problem for Harry, because his teachers at Hogwarts had given him a lot of holiday work. One of the essays, a particularly nasty one about Shrinking Potions, was for Harry's least favourite teacher, Professor Snape, who would be delighted to have an excuse to give Harry detention for a month. Harry had therefore seized his chance in the first week of the holidays. While Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia and Dudley had gone out into the front garden to admire Uncle Vernon's new company car (in very loud voices, so that the rest of the street would notice it too), Harry had crept downstairs, picked the lock on the cupboard under the stairs, grabbed some of his books and hidden them in his bedroom. As long as he didn't leave spots of ink on the sheets, the Dursleys need never know that he was studying magic by night.

Harry was keen to avoid trouble with his aunt and uncle at the moment, as they were already in a bad mood with him, all because he'd received a telephone call from a fellow wizard one week into the school holidays.

Ron Weasley, who was one of Harry's best friends at Hogwarts, came from a whole family of wizards. This meant