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Hagrid rolled up the note, gave it to the owl, which clamped it in its beak, went to the door, and threw the owl out into the storm. Then he came back and sat down as though this was as normal as talking on the telephone. Harry realized his mouth was open and closed it quickly. "Where was I?" said Hagrid, but at that moment, Uncle Vernon, still ashen faced but looking very angry, moved into the firelight. "He's not going," he said. Hagrid grunted. "I'd like ter see a great Muggle like you stop him," he said. "A what?" said Harry, interested. "A Muggle," said Hagrid, "is what we call nonmagic folk like them. An' it's your bad luck you grew up in a family o' the biggest Muggles I ever laid eyes on." "We swore when we took him in we'd put a stop to that rubbish," said Uncle Vernon, "we swore we'd stamp it out of him! Wizard indeed!" "You knew?" said Harry. "You knew I'm a wizard?" "Knew!" shrieked Aunt Petunia suddenly. "Knew! Of course we knew! How could you not be, my dratted sister being what she was? Oh, she got a letter just like that and disappeared off to that school and came home every vacation with her pockets full of frog spawn, turning teacups into rats. I was the only one who saw her for what she was—a freak! But for my mother and father, oh no, it was Lily this and Lily that, they were proud of having a witch in the family!" She stopped to draw a deep breath and then went ranting on. It seemed she had been wanting to say all this for years. "Then she met that Potter at school and they left and got married and had you, and of course I knew you'd be just the same, just as strange, just as abnormal and then, if you please, she went and got herself blown up and we got landed with you! Harry had gone very white. As soon as he found his voice he said, "Blown up? You told me they died in a car crash!" "CAR CRASH!" roared Hagrid, jumping up so angrily that the Dursleys scuttled back to their corner. "How could a car crash kill Lily an' James Potter? It's an outrage! A scandal! Harry Potter not knowin' his own story when every kid in our world knows his name!" "But why? What happened?" Harry asked urgently. The anger faded from Hagrid's face. He looked suddenly anxious. "I never expected this," he said, in a low, worried voice. "I had no idea, when Dumbledore told me there might be trouble gettin' hold of yeh, how much yeh didn't know. Ah, Harry, I don't know if I'm the right person ter tell yeh but someone's gotta yeh can go off ter Hogwarts not knowin'." He threw a dirty look at the Dursleys. "Well, it's best yeh know as much as I can tell yeh mind, I can't tell yeh

everythinâ€™, itâ€™s a great mystâ€™ry. parts of itâ€™.â€ He sat down, stared into the fire for a few seconds, and then said, â€It begins, I suppose, withâ€ with a person calledâ€ but itâ€™s incredible yeh donâ€™t know his name, everyone in our world knowsâ€â€ Who?â€ â€Wellâ€ I donâ€™t like sayinâ€™ the name if I can help it. No one does.â€ â€Why not?â€ â€Gulpinâ€™ gargoyles, Harry, people are still scared. Blimey, this is difficult. See, there was this wizard who wentâ€™, bad. As bad as you could go. Worse. Worse than worse. His name wasâ€™.â€ Hagrid gulped, but no words came out. â€Could you write it down?â€ Harry suggested. â€Nah canâ€™t spell it. All rightâ€ Voldemort.â€ Hagrid shuddered. â€Donâ€™t make me say it again. Anyway, thisâ€ this wizard, about twenty years ago now, started lookinâ€™ fer followers. Got â€™em, tooâ€ some were afraid, some just wanted a bit oâ€™ his power, â€™cause he was gettinâ€™ himself power, all right. Dark days, Harry. Didnâ€™t know who ter trust, didnâ€™t dare get friendly with strange wizards or witchesâ€™, terrible things happened. He was takinâ€™ over. â€™Course, some stood up to himâ€ anâ€™ he killed â€™em. Horribly. One oâ€™ the only safe places left was Hogwarts. Reckon Dumbledoreâ€™s the only one You-Know-Who was afraid of. Didnâ€™t dare try takinâ€™ the school, not jusâ€™ then, anyway. â€Now, yer mum anâ€™ dad were as good a witch anâ€™ wizard as I ever knew. Head boy anâ€™ girl at Hogwarts in their day! Suppose the mystâ€™ry is why You-Know-Who never tried to get â€™em on his side beforeâ€™, probably knew they were too close ter Dumbledore ter want anythinâ€™ ter do with the Dark Side. â€Maybe he thought he could persuade â€™emâ€™, maybe he just wanted â€™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 anâ€™ anâ€™â€ Hagrid suddenly pulled out a very dirty, spotted handkerchief and blew his nose with a sound like a foghorn. â€Sorry,â€ he said. â€But itâ€™s that sadâ€ knew yer mum anâ€™ dad, anâ€™ nicer people yeh couldnâ€™t findâ€ anywayâ€™. â€You-Know-Who killed â€™em. Anâ€™ thenâ€ anâ€™ this is the real mystâ€™ry of the thingâ€ he tried to kill you, too. Wanted ter make a clean job of it, I suppose, or maybe he just liked killinâ€™ by then. But he couldnâ€™t do it. Never wondered how you got that mark on yer forehead? That was no ordinary cut. Thatâ€™s what yeh get when a powerful, evil curse touches yehâ€ took care of yer mum anâ€™ dad anâ€™ yer house, evenâ€ but it didnâ€™t work on you, anâ€™ thatâ€™s why yer famous, Harry. No one ever lived after he decided ter kill â€™em, no one except you, anâ€™ heâ€™d killed some oâ€™ the best witches anâ€™ wizards of the ageâ€ the McKinnons, the Bones, the Prewettsâ€ anâ€™ you was only a baby, anâ€™ you lived.â€