

Harrius Potter et philosophi lapis

J. K. Rowling (1997) – Latin translation by Peter Needham (2003)

— CAPUT PRIMUM —

Puer Qui Vixit

Dominus et Domina Dursley, qui vivebant in aedibus Gestationis Ligustrorum numero quattuor signatis, non sine superbia dicebant se ratione ordinaria vivendi uti neque se paenitere illius rationis. in toto orbe terrarum vix credas quemquam esse minus deditum rebus novis et arcanis, quod ineptias tales omnino spernebant.

Dominus Dursley praeerat societati nomine Grunnings, quae terebras fecit. vir erat amplus et corpulentus nullo fere collo, maxima tamen mystace. Domina Dursley erat macra et flava et prope alterum tantum colli habebat quam alii homines, quod magno ei usui fuit quod tantum tempus consumebat in collo super saepes hortorum porrigendo, finitimos inspiciens. Durslei filium parvum nomine Dudley habebant nec usquam, eorum sententia, erat puer splendidior.

Durslei omnia habebant quae volebant, sed rem quandam occultam tenebant, et maxime timebant ne quis hoc secretum cognosceret. putabant enim id fore intolerabile si quis de Potteris certior fieret. Domina Potter erat soror Dominae Dursley, sed aliquot iam annos altera cum altera non convenerat; re vera Domina Dursley simulabat se non habere sororem, quod soror et coniunx eius, vir nefarius, erant omnibus modis dissimiles Dursleis. Durslei horrescebant rati quid dicturi essent finitimi si in viam suam advenirent Potteri. Durslei sciebant Potteros quoque filium parvum habere, sed eum ne viderant quidem. hic puer erat alia causa cur Potteros arcerent; nolebant enim filium suum Dudleum puero tali familiarem esse.

ubi Dominus et Domina Dursley experrecti sunt illo die Martis obscuro et tenebroso quo incipit narratio nostra, caelum nubilum

— 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 mustache. 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 neighbors. 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 neighbors 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, gray Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside

externum haudquaquam ominabatur res novas et arcanas mox ubique eventuras esse. Dominus Dursley bombiebat dum fasciam hebetissimi coloris eligebat idoneam ad negotia gerenda et Domina Dursley animo contenta garriabat dum Dudleum ululantem cobeat in sellam altam ascendere quasi cum eo luctaretur.

nemo eorum animadvertit strigem magnam fulvi coloris praeter fenestram volitantem.

octava hora et dimidia, Dominus Dursley chartarum thecam sumpsit, basium brevissimum in genam Dominae Dursley impegit et conatus osculo valedicere Dudleo rem male gessit, quod Dudley nunc tumultuabatur et cerealia sua in parietes iaciebat. ‘furcifer parvulus,’ cachinnavit Dominus Dursley domo egressus. in autocinetum ascendit et retro vectus est e gestatione numeri quattuor.

in angulo viae primum animadvertit signum rei novae — felem chartam geographicam legentem. per secundum, Dominus Dursley non intellexit quid vidisset — tum subito motu caput convertit ut rem rursus inspiceret. feles maculosa stabat in angulo Gestationis Ligustrorum, sed nusquam erat charta geographica. quidnam animo conceperat? scilicet lux oculos suos fefellerat. Dominus Dursley punctum temporis connivuit et tum felem contemplant. invicem feles contemplant eum. Dominus Dursley, dum circum angulum et adversa via vehebatur, in speculo felem intuebatur, quae nunc legebat signum inscriptum verbis Gestatio Ligustrorum — immo signum inspiciebat — feles enim poterant legere nec chartas nec signa. Dominus Dursley se paulum concussit et felem ex animo summovit. vectus ad oppidum nihil cogitabat nisi copiam magnam terebrarum quam sperabat clientem illo die imperaturum esse.

sed in margine oppidi, terebrae ex animo eius re alia expulsae sunt. dum sedet, ut mane fieri solet, inter vehicula impedita non potuit facere quin animadverteret multos adesse homines novis indutos vestibibus. homines palliatis. Dominus Dursley non potuit ferre homines ridiculis indutos vestibibus — eius modi quas iuvenes gerebant! credebat id esse aliquid novi et stulti. rotam gubernatoris leviter digitis pulsavit et oculis discernit turbam

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 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 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 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, 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 toward 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 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

monstrorum illorum prope adstantem. commoti inter se susurrabant. iratus Dominus Dursley animadvertit duos non admodum esse iuvenes; nempe illum esse seniore[m] quam se, et pallium smaragdinum gerebat! quantam impudentiam! sed tum incidit in mentem eius id posse esse dolum aliquem ridiculum — scilicet pecuniam corrogabant ad aliquid ... ita vero, rem acu tetigerat. vehicula moveri coeperunt, et paucis post minutis Dominus Dursley advenit in stationem societatis Grunnings, animo rursus in terebras intento.

in sede officii in nono tabulato sita Dominus Dursley semper sedebat tergo fenestrae adverso. quodnisi fecisset, forsane mane illius diei difficilior ei fuisset animus in terebras intendere. ipse striges clara luce praetervolantes non vidit, quamquam homines inferiores in via versati eas viderunt; ordinem longum strigum super capita festinantium digitis demonstrabant et oribus hiantibus intuebantur. plerique eorum ne noctu quidem strigem viderant. quod tamen ad Dominum Dursley attinebat, matutinum tempus, ut fit, omnino strigibus vacabat. homines quinque increpuit. nonnulla colloquia telephonica magni momenti habuit et paulo plus clamavit. hilarissimus erat usque ad prandii tempus ubi constituit ambulare et transire viam ut libam sibi emeret de pistrino adverso.

palliatorum illorum omnino oblitus erat dum globum eorum iuxta pistrinum praeteriit. praeteriens eos animo irato contemplavit. causam nesciebat, sed aliquo modo eum vexabant. hi quoque commoti susurrabant, neque unum poterat videre vas nummarium. iam praeter eos pedem referebat, cum magna liba transatlantica in sacculo involuta, cum pauca verba sermonis eorum auribus cepit.

‘Potteri, ita est, id est quod audivi —’

‘— ita vero, filius eorum, Harrius —’

Dominus Dursley in vestigio constitit, timore oppressus. susurrantes respexit quasi aliquid eis dicere vellet, sed consilium mutavit.

reversus trans viam cucurrit, sursum in sedem officii festinavit, voce irata vetuit scribam se inquietare, telephonium arripuit et paene totum numerum domesticum elegerat cum mentem mutavit. instrumentum reposuit et mystacem mulsit, cogitans

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 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 swooping past in broad daylight, though people down in the street did; they pointed and gazed open-mouthed as owl after owl sped overhead. Most of them had never seen an owl even at nighttime. Mr. Dursley, however, had a perfectly normal, owl-free morning. He yelled at five different people. He made several important telephone calls and shouted 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.

He’d forgotten all about the people in cloaks until he passed a group of them next to the baker’s. He eyed them angrily as he passed. He didn’t know why, but they made him uneasy. This bunch were whispering excitedly, too, and he couldn’t see a single collecting tin. It was on his way back past them, clutching a large doughnut in a bag, that he caught a few words of what they were saying.

“The Potters, that’s right, that’s what I heard —“

“— yes, their son, Harry —”

Mr. Dursley stopped dead. Fear flooded him. He looked back at the whisperers as if he wanted to say something to them, but thought better of it.

He dashed back across the road, hurried up to his office, snapped at his secretary not to disturb him, seized his telephone, and had almost finished dialing his home number when he changed his mind. He put the receiver back down and stroked his mustache, thinking

... se errare, stultum esse. Potter non esse nomen tam insolitum. scilicet multos esse homines nomine Potter qui haberent filium appellatum Harrium. se ne certo quidem scire an filius sororis uxoris suae re vera appellaretur Harrius. se puerum ne semel quidem vidisse. nomen eius posse esse Harvey aut Haroldus. inutile esse sollicitare Dominam Dursley; eam tantum vexari si qua mentio facta esset sororis. se eam non culpare — si ipse sororem habuisset similem illi ... sed nihilominus palliatos illos ...

pomeridiano tempore multo difficilior ei erat terebris intendere animum, et cum ab aedificio quinta hora discederet, adhuc tam sollicitus erat ut recta inceserit in aliquem prope ianuam stantem.

‘da veniam,’ inquit grundens, cum senex minimus lapsus est et paene cecidit. pauci secundi praeterierunt priusquam Dominus Dursley sensit senem gerere pallium purpureum. ille haudquaquam videbatur perturbatus quod paene in terram deiectus erat. immo, subridens rictum diduxit et voce stridula locutus est quae oculos praetereuntium convertit: ‘non est paenitentiae locus, O vir carissime, nam hodie nihil potest me perturbare! gaude, nam Quidam tandem abiit! etiam Muggles similes tui debent celebrare hunc laetum, laetum diem!’

et senex Dominum Dursley circa medium amplexus discessit. Dominus Dursley constitit solo defixus. vir ignotissimus eum amplexus erat. putavit quoque se appellatum esse Muggle, quidquid id erat. obstupefactus est. ad autocinetum festinavit et domum profectus est sperans se haec animo fingere, quod nunquam antea speraverat, quod res animo fictas non approbat.

ubi primum intravit in gestationem numeri quattuor, vidit felem illam maculosam quam mane conspexerat — quod animum non in melius mutavit. nunc in mura horti sedebat. non dubitabat quin eadem esset; nam notas easdem circum oculos habebat.

‘abi!’ inquit Dominus Dursley voce magna.

feles immota manebat. modo oculis torvis eum contemplavit. Dominus Dursley nesciebat an sic semper essent mores felium. conatus se colligere, in aedes se admisit. in animo adhuc habebat nihil uxori dicere.

... no, he was being stupid. Potter wasn’t such an unusual name. He was sure there were lots of people called Potter who had a son called Harry. Come to think of it, he wasn’t even sure his nephew was called Harry. He’d never even seen the boy. It might have been Harvey. Or Harold. There was no point in worrying Mrs. Dursley; she always got so upset at any mention of her sister. He didn’t blame her — if he’d had a sister like that ... but all the same, those people in cloaks ...

He found it a lot harder to concentrate on drills that afternoon and when he left the building at five o’clock, he was still so worried that he walked straight into someone just outside the door.

“Sorry,” he grunted, as the tiny old man stumbled and almost fell. It was a few seconds before Mr. Dursley realized that the man was wearing a violet cloak. He didn’t seem at all upset at being almost knocked to the ground. On the contrary, his face split into a wide smile and he said in a squeaky voice that made passersby stare, “Don’t be sorry, my dear sir, for nothing could upset me today! Rejoice, for You-Know-Who has gone at last! Even Muggles like yourself should be celebrating, this happy, happy day!”

And the old man hugged Mr. Dursley around the middle and walked off. Mr. Dursley stood rooted to the spot. He had been hugged by a complete stranger. He also thought he had been called a Muggle, whatever that was. He was rattled. He hurried to his car and set off for home, hoping he was imagining things, which he had never hoped before, because he didn’t approve of imagination.

As he pulled into the driveway of number four, the first thing he saw — and it didn’t improve his mood — was the tabby cat he’d spotted that morning. It was now sitting on his garden wall. He was sure it was the same one; it had the same markings around its eyes.

“Shoo!” said Mr. Dursley loudly.

The cat didn’t move. It just gave him a stern look. Was this normal cat behavior? Mr. Dursley wondered. Trying to pull himself together, he let himself into the house. He was still determined not to mention anything to his wife.

Domina Dursley diem iucundum solito more degerat. super cenam ei dixit quam difficile esset Dominae Finitimae filiam suam regere et quomodo Dudley verbum novum ('nolo!') didicisset. Dominus Dursley conatus est non aliter ac solebat se gerere. cum Dudley in lectum impositus esset, in sessorium iit eo tempore quo nuntius novissimus commentariorum vespertinorum emittebatur.

'quod reliquum est, spectatores avium ubique nuntiaverunt mores strigum nationis nostrae hodie miro modo mutatos esse. quamquam striges plerumque noctu venantur et vix unquam interdiu videntur, ex ortu solis centenae multae harum avium conspectae sunt in omnes partes volantes. homines periti non possunt explicare cur striges subito rationem dormiendi mutaverint.' lector nuntiorum sibi permisit subridere. 'res maxime arcana. nunc vos trado meteorologo Jim McGuffin. an plures erunt imbres strigum hac nocte, Jim?'

'id nescio, Ted,' inquit meteorologus, 'sed non striges solum hodie se insolenter gesserunt. spectatores qui vivunt alii procul ab aliis in Cantio, in comitatu Eboraci, in oppido Dundee, per telephonium mihi dixerunt pro pluvia quam heri promisi se habuisse imbrem siderum cadentium! forsan homines maturius Noctem Ignium Festorum celebraverunt — haec proxima fiet hebdomade, mi amici! sed nunc possum vobis promittere noctem umidam.'

Dominus Dursley sedebat immobilis in sella reclinatoria. sidera cadentia per totam Britanniam? striges interdiu volantes? ubique miri homines palliati? et susurrus, susurrus de Potteris ...

in sessorium ingressa est Domina Dursley duo pocula theanae potionis ferens. maritus non potuit rem tacere. debuit aliquid dicere. trepidus tussim edidit. 'ehem — Petunia carissima — num nuper accepisti nuntium sororis tuae?'

sicut exspectaverat, Domina Dursley visa est offensa et irata. nam plerumque simulaverunt eam non habere sororem.

'minime,' acriter inquit. 'cur rogas?'

'res mirae relatae sunt in nuntiis,' mussavit Dominus Dursley. 'striges ... sidera cadentia ... et hodie in oppido erant multi homines insoliti aspectus ...'

'quid ergo?' voce mordaci respondit Domina Dursley.

Mrs. Dursley had had a nice, normal day. She told him over dinner all about Mrs. Next Door's problems with her daughter and how Dudley had learned a new word ("Won't!"). Mr. Dursley tried to act normally. When Dudley had been put to bed, he went into the living room in time to catch the last report on the evening news:

"And finally, bird-watchers everywhere have reported that the nation's owls have been behaving very unusually today. Although owls normally hunt at night and are hardly ever seen in daylight, there have been hundreds of sightings of these birds flying in every direction since sunrise. Experts are unable to explain why the owls have suddenly changed their sleeping pattern." The newscaster allowed himself a grin. "Most mysterious. And now, over to Jim McGuffin with the weather. Going to be any more showers of owls tonight, Jim?"

"Well, Ted," said the weatherman, "I don't know about that, but it's not only the owls that have been acting oddly today. Viewers as far apart as Kent, Yorkshire, and Dundee have been phoning in to tell me that instead of the rain I promised yesterday, they've had a downpour of shooting stars! Perhaps people have been celebrating Bonfire Night early — it's not until next week, folks! But I can promise a wet night tonight."

Mr. Dursley sat frozen in his armchair. Shooting stars all over Britain? Owls flying by daylight? Mysterious people in cloaks all over the place? And a whisper, a whisper about the Potters ...

Mrs. Dursley came into the living room carrying two cups of tea. It was no good. He'd have to say something to her. He cleared his throat nervously. "Er — Petunia, dear — you haven't heard from your sister lately, have you?"

As he had expected, Mrs. Dursley looked shocked and angry. After all, they normally pretended she didn't have a sister.

"No," she said sharply. "Why?"

"Funny stuff on the news," Mr. Dursley mumbled. "Owls ... shooting stars ... and there were a lot of funny-looking people in town today ..."

"So?" snapped Mrs. Dursley.