CHAPTER ZERO

The speeding motorcycle took the sharp corner so fast in the darkness that both policemen in the pursuing car shouted, "Slow!" Sergeant Fisher slammed his large foot on the brake, realizing that the boy who was riding the motorcycle was sure to be thrown under the wheels; however, the motorcycle made the turn without a scratch on either of its riders and with a wide blast of its red tail light, vanished up the narrow side street.

"We've got him now," cried PC Anderson excitedly. "That's a dead end!"

Heaving head on the steering wheel and coaxing his fears, Fisher turned half the point off the fleecy of the car as he forced it up the alleyway in pursuit.

There was no light but the car doors and the wheels of the alley that Fisher and Anderson had difficulty distinguishing features from the vehicle.

They strained their eyes to have the least, should the accident take place, the present. Fisher switched off the headlight, raised the bonnet to be seen,

and finally stopped off the wide mirror with his boot.

Set off the bike!! he called out at the shouting youths. Stop backing into the flashing blue light as though it were his own.

They did so; they were told. Finally, pulling free from the broken wing mirror, Fisher scrambled up the car they seemed in their late teens. The one who had driven had long black hair; his insolent young face reminded Fisher unpleasantly of the boy who had had black hair, though his was short and stuck up in all directions; he wore glasses and a broad grin. Both were dressed in T-shirts and trousers with a large folder bird; the other, no doubt, in some beaver; a huckster bead.

"No bullets," Fisher yelled, pointing the unscrewed head to his nose. Exceeding the speed limit by a considerable amount, Waterson's What's your story? (If the speed registered had been greater than Fisher was prepared to admit that the motorcycle could travel.) Failure to stop for the police!

"We've asked you to stop for a clock," said the boy, "but only we were trying.

"Don't get smart — you're just one in a heap of trouble," yowled Anderson. Names?"

"Name?" demanded the long-haired driver. "Well, let's see. There's Waterson...

Fisher asked...

"And what's nice about that one if you can use it for a boy or a girl," said the boy, "if you can have them in the same.

Oh, our names, did you mean? asked the boy, as he stuck up with a half smile. "You should know that this is James Potter, and I'm Sirius Black." They're the same black for you in a minute or two.

"But neither James nor Sirius is paying attention. They can be playing, playing, playing,...

They could laugh, an effect on the Superintendent, and the roof of the police car at its dark mouth.

The boys, with identical folder movements, they reached into their back pockets.

For the space of a heartbeat both policemen searched their hands at them, but a second later they saw the holster guns had drawn, holding them.

"Drums," said James Anderson. "Right pair of jokers, aren't you? Right, we're splitting you as a charge." But Anderson never got to name the charge. James and Sirius had shouted something incomprehensible, and the beams from the headlight had moved.

The officers, steadied around, then stepped back, watching for any on the upper part of the car. The streetlights shining above them, they were away—actually flying up the alley on bromochlorides—only at the same moment, the police car was tearing up on its back wheels. Fisher's knees buckled; he sat down hard; Anderson tripped over Fisher's legs and fell to the top of him, as Fisher, keeping steady, they heard the bone on bone, that into the upper part of the car and fell, apparently irresistible to the ground, while broken bits of bromochlorides, electrodias, down around them.

The motorcycle had raced into life again, this morn. Holding up open, Fisher took the strength to look back at the two teenagers behind it. Now it was the motorcycle's turn to roar. Before the policemen's blistering rage, it broke off into this air. James and Sirius looked away into the night sky, their tail light blinkingly behind them like a venoming radi..."
The speeding motorcycle took the sharp corner so fast in the darkness that both policemen in the pursuing car shouted “Whoa!” Sergeant Fisher slammed his large foot on the brake, thinking that the boy who was riding pillion was sure to be flung under his wheels; however, the motorbike made the turn without unseating either of its riders, and with a wink of its red tail light, vanished up the narrow side street.

“We’ve got ’em now!” cried PC Anderson excitedly. “That’s a dead end!”

Leaning hard on the steering wheel and crashing his gears, Fisher scraped half the paint off the flank of the car as he forced it up the alleyway in pursuit.

There in the headlights sat their quarry, stationary at last after a quarter of an hour’s chase. The two riders were trapped between a towering brick wall and the police car, which was now crashing towards them like some growling, luminous-eyed predator.

There was so little space between the car doors and the walls of the alley that Fisher and Anderson had difficulty extricating themselves from the vehicle. It injured their dignity to have to inch, crab-like, towards the miscreants. Fisher dragged his generous belly along the wall, tearing buttons off his shirt as he went, and finally snapping off the wing mirror with his backside.

“Get off the bike!” he bellowed at the smirking youths, who sat basking in the flashing blue light as though enjoying it.
They did as they were told. Finally pulling free from the broken wind mirror, Fisher glared at them. They seemed to be in their late teens. The one who had been driving had long black hair; his insolent good looks reminded Fisher unpleasantly of his daughter’s guitar-playing, layabout boyfriend. The second boy also had black hair, though his was short and stuck up in all directions; he wore glasses and a broad grin. Both were dressed in T-shirts emblazoned with a large golden bird; the emblem, no doubt, of some deafening, tuneless rock band.

“No helmets!” Fisher yelled, pointing from one uncovered head to the other. “Exceeding the speed limit by — by a considerable amount!” (In fact, the speed registered had been greater than Fisher was prepared to accept that any motorcycle could travel.) “Failing to stop for the police!”

“We’d have loved to stop for a chat,” said the boy in glasses, “only we were trying —”

“Don’t get smart - you two are in a heap of trouble!” snarled Anderson. “Names!”

“Names?” repeated the long-haired driver. “Er — well, let’s see. There’s Wilberforce . . . Bathsheba . . . Elvendork . . .”

“And what’s nice about that one is, you can use it for a boy or a girl,” said the boy in glasses.

“Oh, our names, did you mean?” asked the first, as Anderson spluttered with rage. “You should’ve said! This here is James Potter, and I’m Sirius Black!”

“Things’ll be seriously black for you in a minute, you cheeky little —”

But neither James nor Sirius was paying attention. They were suddenly as alert as gundogs, staring past Fisher and Anderson, over the
roof of the police car, at the dark mouth of the alley. Then, with identical fluid movements, they reached into their back pockets.

For the space of a heartbeat both policemen imagined guns gleaming at them, but a second later they saw that the motorcyclists had drawn nothing more than —

“Drumsticks?” jeered Anderson. “Right pair of jokers, aren’t you? Right, we’re arresting you on a charge of —”

But Anderson never got to name the charge. James and Sirius had shouted something incomprehensible, and the beams from the headlights had moved.

The policemen wheeled around, then staggered backwards. Three men were flying - actually flying - up the alley on broomsticks - and at the same moment, the police car was rearing up on its back wheels.

Fisher’s knees bucked; he sat down hard; Anderson tripped over Fisher’s legs and fell on top of him, as flump — bang — crunch — they heard the men on brooms slam into the upended car and fall, apparently insensible, to the ground, while broken bits of broomstick clattered down around them.

The motorbike had roared into life again. His mouth hanging open, Fisher mustered the strength to look back at the two teenagers.

“Thanks very much!” called Sirius over the throb of the engine. “We owe you one!”

“Yeah, nice meeting you!” said James. “And don’t forget: Elvendork! It’s unisex!”

There was an earth-shattering crash, and Fisher and Anderson threw their arms around each other in fright; their car had just fallen back to the ground. Now it was the motorcycle’s turn to rear.

* 4 *
Before the policemen’s disbelieving eyes, it took off into the air: James and Sirius zoomed away into the night sky, their tail light twinkling behind them like a vanishing ruby.

*From the prequel I am not working on — but that was fun!*

J.K. Rowling

2008.