

# Seven Hours Later

*by christev*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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He sat unmoving, eyes shut and feigning slumber, but he didn't allow the hypnotic sway of the car to lull him to sleep.

He'd been sitting for hours, traveling from one end of the city to the other, round and around. Keeping an eye and ear to the activity in the car, alert to potential dangers. Keeping watch. As always. Constant vigilance.

He snorted, inadvertently waking the young man leaning against him.

"What? Se- Something happen?"

His young companion was gradually learning to watch his words, to not completely give himself or others away, even upon waking.

Pity he'd woken. He'd had a hard enough time falling asleep, both from nerves and from the disconcerting experience of his first ride on Muggle underground transportation.

The boy would need experiences like this, knowledge of both worlds, if he planned to survive this mess. If he could ingratiate himself with the Order, then he'd be all right. They'd have to work on some information of value he could turn over to them as an entry. Perhaps it was time to give up Spinner's End, plan for a near-miss capture... There were other safe houses, other places to hide.

His companion settled again, letting out his breath in a deep sigh.

The dark man thought again of how the boy's father surprisingly had not insisted on him receiving the Mark upon reaching majority. That was indeed unexpected - perhaps that avenue remained open after all...

Without the Mark, and with the - hopefully accurate - testimony of the Annoyingly Chosen One of what actually transpired on the Tower, the blond resting beside him would find sanctuary, if not acceptance.

Opening his eyes, he confirmed they were still alone in the car. He straightened his torso, stretched his aching back, legs and arms.

Just seven hours earlier he had seen his mentor and only advocate fall to his wand. It seemed years ago. It seemed seconds ago.

He had to get the boy - the young man - to the Order. Yes, the Order was the only place he'd be safe.

Tomorrow. That would be tomorrow's task.

fin

A/N: As always, thank you to ApollinaV, MiaMadwyn and Mischievous\_T for reading these things ahead of time and letting me know what they really think. :)