

The
Rowling
Library

Issue 76
April 2023

Magazine



10 Years of Strike

*Celebrating a Decade of
Cormoran Strike adventures*

Hogwarts Legacy:
Subtle Echoes

**A Unique
Dutch Copy**

Half-Blood Prince:
Shadowy Reflections

Ours

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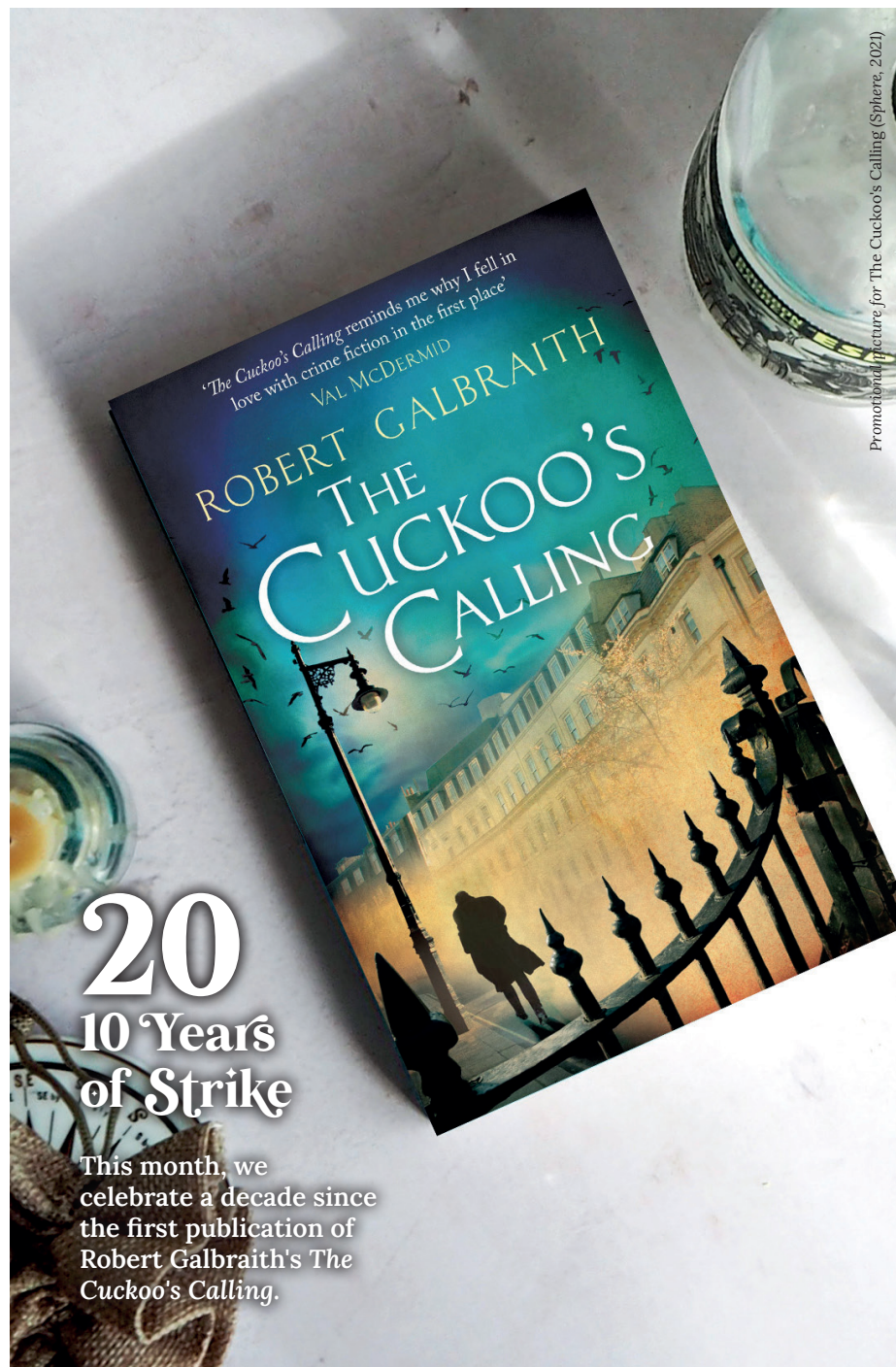
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20 10 Years of Strike

This month, we celebrate a decade since the first publication of Robert Galbraith's *The Cuckoo's Calling*.

Welcome A word from the Founder

Welcome to the April 2023 issue of our magazine! If you are a returning reader, you may notice something exciting and different about this issue... Our friends at Otter Studio have worked on a complete redesign, taking the magazine to a whole new level. We're thrilled with the fresh new look, and we think you will be too!

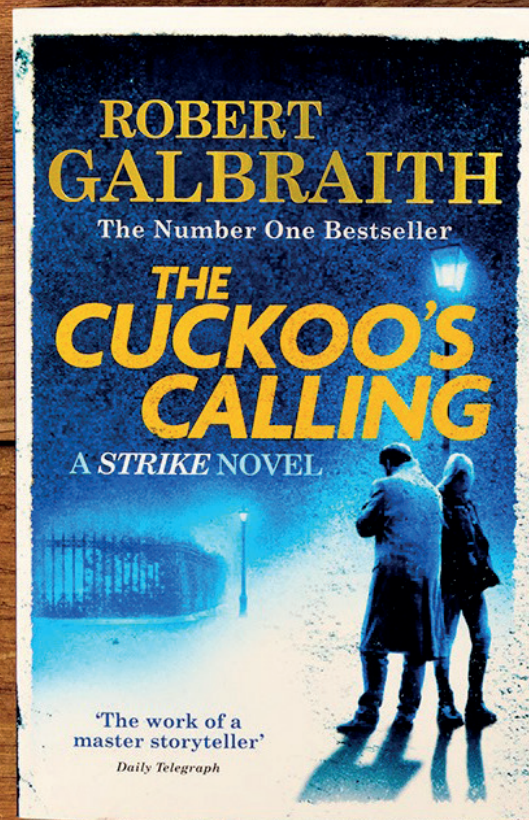
Our redesign is more than just a cosmetic update. We have reimagined the magazine's layout, typography, and graphic elements to create a more engaging and immersive reading experience. We've worked hard to ensure that every page is visually stunning and easy to read, with crisp typography and eye-catching visuals that draw you in.

In this issue, we have a range of fantastic articles that we believe you will find engaging and informative. Our cover article celebrates the 10th anniversary of *The Cuckoo's Calling*, the debut novel by J.K. Rowling published under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. We also have an essay by Oliver Horton about the characters of the sixth Harry Potter book, and an article by Joe Kourieh about *Hogwarts Legacy* and how it relates to the narrative of the original Harry Potter series.

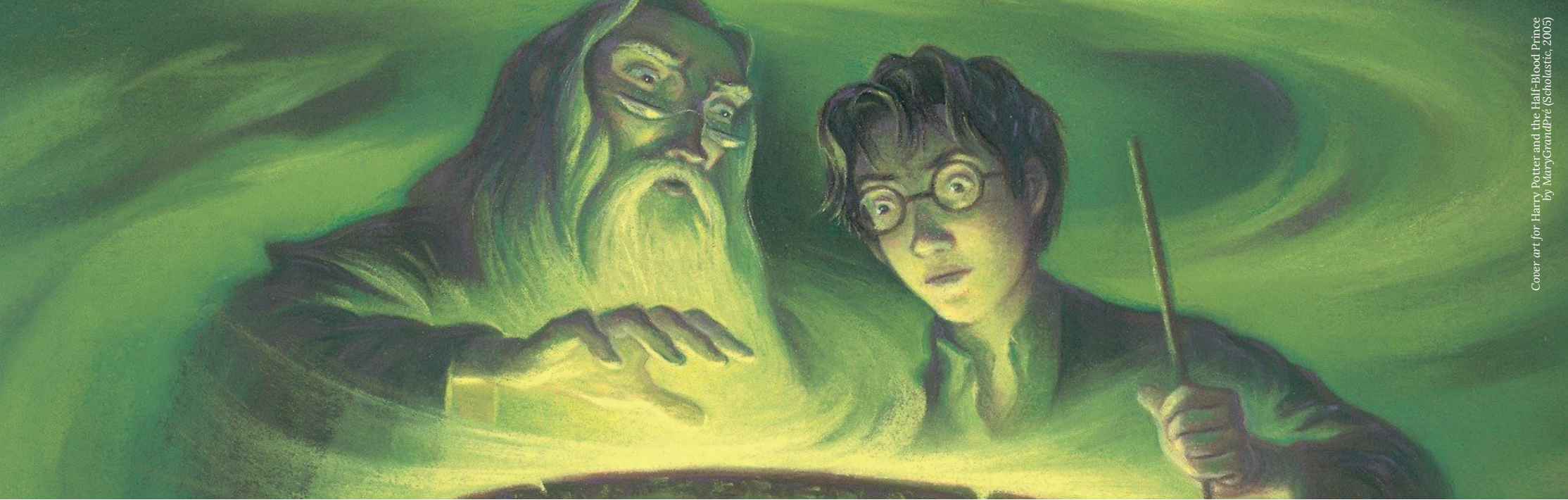
One of our favorite features of this issue is an article about a very rare Dutch copy of *Half-Blood Prince*. We've also included several more articles that we think you will enjoy.

We are excited to share this new and improved magazine with you. We hope you find it both entertaining and enlightening, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on the redesign. Thank you for joining us, and we'll see you next month!

Patricio



Promotional picture for *The Cuckoo's Calling* (Sphere, 2021)



Cover art for *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by *Mary GrandPré* (Scholastic, 2005)

ESSAY

Shadowy Reflections

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

An article by **Oliver Horton**

Opposites attract and distract in Harry's sixth year at Hogwarts. The divide between good and evil becomes less clear. Character is tested to the extreme.

"There is nothing I would not do any more!" shrieks Narcissa Malfoy, en route to Spinner's End, desperate for salvation. She is addressing her sister, Bellatrix Lestrange, the two in contrast: one blonde, the other dark-haired; one tortured by love, the other energised by restless hate.

While Narcissa unpacks her dilemma, Severus Snape looks out of his sitting-room window, scanning the deserted street, checking for trouble. This same gesture is made, in the opening chapter, by the Muggle Prime Minister. And when we find Harry in chapter three, the young wizard is slumped, snoring, against a

window. Like the PM and the Potions Master, Harry welcomes a magical guest who arrives without invitation. These characters are more similar than they know. The story then repeats: dynamic duo Harry and Dumbledore drop in unannounced on Horace Slughorn. Harry arrives unexpected at the Weasleys.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince employs pairs and opposites to dig into its characters. The other that completes you. The other that drains you. The other that reflects you, for better or worse. The divided halves of the wizarding war are revealed, not as black and white, but as shadowy reflections. Everywhere, doubles. Two Ministers for Magic visit the Prime Minister, soggy Cornelius

Fudge and leonine Rufus Scrimgeour. Hogwarts hosts two Potions Masters, acidic Snape and effervescent Slughorn. The Gryffindor Quidditch team suffers two goalkeepers and two Seekers. Harry commands two House-elves, cheerful Dobby and grouchy Kreacher. Ron Weasley has one true love and one *amour fou*. Fred and George, twins, own the only successful business on Diagon Alley. Lord Voldemort, with his Michael Jackson face, stops at Hogwarts for drinks with Dumbledore: two confirmed bachelors who are really into magic.

Narcissa Malfoy's visit to Cokeworth ends with a ceremony that resembles a wedding. Narcissa and Severus Snape make the Unbreakable Vow.

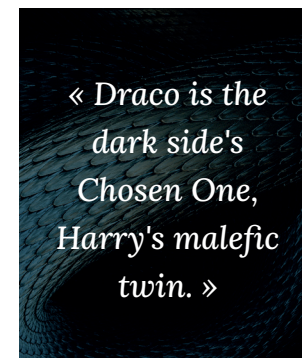
She rejects her sister and forges a new alliance with wizardry's most famous spy. Another odd couple, the juxtaposition of Narcissa's blonde hair and Snape's black indicate the epic chess game that is underway.

Mirror Image

Harry's similarity to the Hogwarts-loving orphan Tom Riddle is made more explicit. And he really clicks with this Half-Blood Prince bloke, whose annotated potions book is like having a friend. Severus Snape is the Prince, which spoils things for now, but Harry and Voldemort are both half-blood royalty worthy of the title, and this penultimate book unwraps them all. Draco Malfoy has a very Potter year: sneaking about, Polyjuicing his mates, in trouble with Filch, and a chat with the headmaster before leaving school. Draco, sobbing: *looked up into a cracked mirror and saw Harry staring at him.* Harry and Draco inflict appalling damage upon one another, which is rapidly repaired. Draco is the dark side's Chosen One, Harry's malefic twin.

"Calamity. Disaster. Coming nearer all the time..." warns Professor Trelawney, flourishing a Tarot card: the lightning-struck Tower. Tarot cards, arranged in pairs, create a combination of archetypes, often oppositional and contradictory. Dumbledore, positive and skilful, represents Tarot card number one, The Magician. The most wizardly wizard returns to Privet Drive to confront the authoritarian Emperor (card four), embodied by Vernon Dursley, and to demand protection. The Magician and The Emperor are found in the Tarot deck's major arcana, which comprises numbered trump cards, one to 21, plus a Fool. Every card has a story. In cartomancy, the major arcana is big life stuff, including The Lovers (card six) and Death (unlucky 13), while the 56 cards in the minor arcana are organised much like normal playing cards and their resonance is more everyday.

Yet the interpretation of Tarot cards is open, not locked. The violence of sudden change can bring insight and revelation. Negative turns positive, light to dark, loss to gain. ▶





Albus Dumbledore, by Jim Kay (Bloomsbury, 2015)

The "Murder" of Dumbledore

Albus Dumbledore tests Snape with an ugly request: kill me. He is dying from a curse, and requires public euthanasia. At the top of the Astronomy Tower he freezes Harry, and positions himself by a perilous precipice to set up a quick drop and a sudden stop. Draco proves unwilling. Snape points his wand and says the words: “*Avada Kedavra*.” The bolt of green light blasts the headmaster off his feet. But Snape’s curse fails. Victims of *Avada Kedavra* simply drop down dead. His empty spell only shoves the headmaster over the ledge, just as Harry’s empty *Crucio* knocks Bellatrix off her feet in *Order of the Phoenix*. The killing curse takes deep psychological commitment, and Snape’s heart is not in this killing, even with compassion as a motive. Dumbledore dies from the fall, not the spell.

The old sorcerer tumbles off the Tower. Harry screams. But the scream is silent. Dumbledore’s final spell renders Harry immobile, and continues to lock him in place, unable to move or speak. Out of sight Dumbledore hits the ground and dies. Only then is Harry liberated. Dumbledore’s restraining spell breaks when the headmaster’s life ends – at the bottom of the Astronomy Tower, not the top. The slippery Snape has honoured his promise to Dumbledore, honoured the Unbreakable Vow, while preserving his fragile soul. Later, Professor McGonagall confirms that Dumbledore’s life ended on the flagstones. After the duel with the teachers in *Deathly Hallows*, Snape jumps out of a window. Snape’s dead? asks Harry. No, says McGonagall: “*Unlike Dumbledore, he was still carrying a wand.*”

- ▶ “The Lightning-Struck Tower” is the pivotal chapter in which Dumbledore dies. The tragedy spurs Harry into maturity.

Exploding Snap

Dumbledore is popularly assumed to represent Death. He is the source of the three Deathly Hallows. He orchestrates, in the first book, the deaths of Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel, and assumes responsibility for other passings, including Sirius Black’s. He is god-like, apparently all-knowing and omnipresent. He is death steeped in compassion, death that makes way for new life, as indicated by his pet phoenix. In the theatre of Dumbledore, grief is the price of love. Finally, he greets Harry as an old friend.

But Death is not always rational and timely. Death can be frightening and threatening. Death disturbs our sleep and mangles our thoughts, drags us into self-harm or depression. Death is murder, manslaughter and collateral damage. Death leaves us wanting, makes us angry, catches us off guard. Voldemort is this other, anarchic Death. Voldemort and Dumbledore are death’s two faces, dark and light, yang and yin, opposing

but interconnected forces.

The clock ticking, Professor Dumbledore takes Harry on a tour of Voldemort’s history. Tom Riddle and Harry are peas in a pod, handsome orphans popular among the staff. Violence follows them. Pre-Hogwarts, Tom takes a young boy and girl into a cave, to be traumatised, altered forever. This subtly twists a typical *Harry Potter* finale into something terrible: Harry takes young Ron and Hermione through the trapdoor in Book One, under the Whomping Willow in Three, deep into the Ministry of Magic in Book Five. Transformative events in surrogate caves, Ron is badly injured on each occasion.

Again there is the glimpse of an alternative story beneath the magical hijinks, in which the bereaved and troubled Harry is the source of madness and mayhem. At Wool’s Orphanage, dipsomaniac Mrs Cole explains how Billy Stubbs’ rabbit was hung from the rafters the day after he quarrelled with Tom Riddle. This is conspicuously reminiscent of *Chamber of Secrets*, where Argus Filch’s cat Mrs Norris is hung from a torch bracket. Harry’s girlfriend accepts the blame. But is the besotted Ginny Weasley merely

a proxy for Harry's wickedness? Does he, like Voldemort, exert a powerful influence over weak-egoed neurotics? Are private lessons in the headmaster's office code for psychotherapy? Discuss Tom Riddle, reveal Harry Potter. "And don't tell me it's all in my head," Harry snarls.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Contrary to what Snape tells Bellatrix, the headmaster does not see the best in everyone. Dumbledore sees no good in Madam Lestrangle or Fenrir Greyback. He sees nothing to salvage in Tom Marvolo Riddle. Dumbledore's trusting nature is calculated. He trusts Snape just as far as he can use him. He exploits Snape's flawed nature, for his own means.

Dumbledore tempts Horace Slughorn to return to work via the judicious application of a 16-year-old schoolboy. But this is perfectly fine and you'd be a fool and a pervert to think otherwise. The fruity old Potions Master just wants to mount Harry on the dresser. His photograph, that is. "[Horace] prefers the backseat," observes Dumbledore. Well, quite. Dumbledore's methods draw from chess. He uses his most

valuable piece, Harry, to lure out the old queen. At the end of the book, like Ron on the chessboard in *Philosopher's Stone*, like Harry's mother, Dumbledore sacrifices himself to win.

Dumbledore's death is necessary, for several reasons. The headmaster is too big a safety net. Like his phoenix, he is a salve for any wound. Harry needs room to grow, to come of age, to be a "brave man". Forced to take charge, Harry becomes the most powerful piece on the board. Despite his far-sightedness, Dumbledore represents the old order. All those secrets and lies. As Dumbledore tells Harry from beyond the grave: "I have known, for some time now, that you are the better man." Harry's new order is built on emotional truth, an era of love above all, and he must put the past in the rear view mirror.

The Fool's Journey is another occultist interpretation of the Tarot. The heroic Fool is truly an innocent and the Journey engenders his personal growth. In this reading, the hero changes as the story develops, and he absorbs the aspect of other cards. Harry, initially innocent, becomes The Magician and The Lovers and Justice (card 11). The unexpected tragedy of Dumbledore's death puts



Horace Slughorn and Harry, in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Warner Bros, 2008)

Harry's progress in the shade, but he has come a long way. Compare the boy's shellshocked reaction to Cedric's murder and his near-mania after Sirius's demise. Here he is solid, balanced, willing to talk: Temperance (card 14). Rather than scatter his emotions, Dumbledore's death strengthens (card 8) Harry's commitment to saving The World (card 21). Harry's individuation, his becoming whole, is inextricably linked to the fate of the wizarding world. "Destination, determination, deliberation."

Treacle Tart

Horace Slughorn opens a pathway to Harry's mother. Lily Evans has been rather overlooked until now, what with all the fuss about James Potter. None of her friends have shown up at Hogwarts as teachers or godparents. But Professor Slughorn prizes Lily Evans above all. Harry exploits that affection to unlock Horace's sluggish

memory, but unlocks something in himself in the process. Lily is love, and Harry soon-after finds true love with the delectable Ginevra Weasley.

Love goes under the microscope in *Half-Blood Prince*. Tom Riddle grew up in the absence of love. Conversely, the "appalling damage" inflicted upon Dudley Dursley is love in excess, love beyond all reason. Molly's love for her eldest child blinds her to the strength of Bill and Fleur's bond. Ron caves into his insecurity and tries to find self-esteem via a shallow hook-up with Lavender Brown, forsaking a nourishing relationship with Hermione Granger. The once-perky Tonks mopes about her old school, pining for raggedy Remus Lupin. At the same time, but not shown until *Deathly Hallows*, Snape reveals his lifelong love for Harry's mother: "Always." Dumbledore's abiding love for his family is summoned to the surface, agonisingly, by Voldemort's emerald potion.

Dumbledore's love for Harry is announced obliquely. "I am not worried, Harry" says the ailing headmaster. "I am with you." These are his dying words, demonstrating his peace and contentment, even if death must wait a chapter. The sentiment is a callback, inverted like a reflection, to lines from earlier in the book: "I do not think you need worry [...] You are with me." Harry echoes this, as he presses Felix Felicis on his friends: "I'll be fine. I'll be with Dumbledore." Being Harry Potter means never having to say I love you.

Dumbledore's death turns out to be a magical piñata. Love scatters everywhere. The aftermath yields two weddings, like the ending of a Jane Austen novel: Bill and Fleur, Lupin and Tonks. Hagrid reunites with Madame Maxime. Grumpy Argus Filch pairs up with waspish Madam

Pince. "Dumbledore would have been happier than anyone that there was a little more love in the world," concludes Professor McGonagall.

A remarkable capacity for love does not seem like a cool superpower to a teenager in a world where people can fly. "Big deal," thinks Harry, echoing Voldemort's sneering attitude, another reminder of how much they are the same. But love makes him strong. Voldemort is an ageing man not in touch with his emotions, and lacking in self-awareness. Dumbledore is an elderly man not in touch with his emotions – and he knows it, and he makes some bad decisions trying to compensate. See also: Vernon. See also: Snape. See also: Ron. But not: Hagrid. Harry's first magical companion wears his heart on his sleeve. Which might be the only lesson that matters. ♦

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Our current supports, to which we are really grateful, are:

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Concept art for the Albus Dumbledore funeral (Warner Bros, year unknown)



Harry Potter en de Halfbloed Prins copy (Winter Rare Books)

REPORT

A Unique Dutch Copy

The *Harry Potter* book series has captured the imaginations of millions of people worldwide since its inception in 1997. However, the success of the books was not immediately evident when they were first published in the Netherlands. In fact, the Dutch translation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the first book in the series, received

no reviews, and the publisher, De Harmonie, did not launch any significant marketing campaigns for the book. Despite the lack of immediate success, the popularity of the books grew over time, and De Harmonie went on to publish all seven books in the series. The seventh and final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, had a print run of

900,000 copies, an extraordinary number for a small country like the Netherlands.

The Dutch covers of the *Harry Potter* series have become well-known among the most attentive fans for their unique design, which sets them apart from the original English or American editions. Artist Ien van Laanen and graphic designer Anne Lammers were responsible for creating the covers for the Dutch translations, starting with the first book in the series. Their designs are notable for the absence of visible *Harry Potter* characters, allowing readers to imagine their own representations of the characters, a fact that made Rowling herself once praised them.

But this story is about a particular Dutch copy of *Harry Potter*. It started back in London in 2005 when Dorinda Roos, director of the Multiple Sclerosis Research Netherlands Foundation, met the author. J.K. Rowling has a personal connection to multiple sclerosis (MS), as her mother suffered from the disease and passed away from complications related to MS at the age of 45. Rowling has been a longstanding supporter of MS research and patient care, donating significant amounts of money to fund

research and establish clinics that specialize in treating the disease. In fact, the writer was a patron of the Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland for ten years and later founded the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic in partnership with the University of Edinburgh.

After the meeting, and to generate extra publicity for the 25th anniversary of the Dutch MS Foundation, Roos tried to contact J.K. Rowling again to ask her if she could donate a signed book. With the help of colleagues from Scotland and the publishing houses, she was able to do so. In response, Rowling donated a signed copy of the Dutch translation of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, which had just been published.

Initially, the signed book was intended to be the main attraction of a fundraising auction organized by the MS Foundation. However, the board of the foundation decided to make the book available as the top prize in a puzzle action organized by De Telegraaf, the largest newspaper in the Netherlands, with the proceeds benefiting the MS Foundation. This allowed them to reach more people who otherwise would not have known about it. It is also important

to understand that if the prize was not something as rare but interesting as a Dutch book signed by Rowling herself, this would not have been possible.

Mrs. Marjorie van der Vaart-Howell, an 81-year-old puzzle enthusiast and former United Kingdom resident who had moved to the Netherlands, won the signed copy of the book. She was not a great *Harry Potter* fan, but the publicity surrounding the prize made her understand its value, and she kept it safe in her house for over 16 years. Unfortunately, Marjorie passed away in June 2022 at the age of 98, and the signed book was finally revealed to the public eye again

in a recent auction. The book was auctioned for £3,750.00 (including buyers' premium), and it now belongs to "Winters Rare Books", a rare book store in The Netherlands specialized in J.K. Rowling and J. R. R. Tolkien.

The signed copy of the Dutch translation of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* is a rare and valuable item, not only because of its unique story of philanthropy and the unexpected way it was won by a puzzle enthusiast, but also because of its rarity: it is not often that J.K. Rowling signs non-English editions of her *Harry Potter* books, and this was an exceptional case. ♦



Harry Potter en de Halfbloed Prins copy, along with newspaper clipping (Winter Rare Books)

« Fawkes, Professor Dumbledore's phoenix, was standing on his golden perch beside the door. The size of a swan, with magnificent scarlet and gold plumage, he swished his long tail and blinked benignly at Harry. »

J.K. Rowling
in
HARRY POTTER AND THE
GOBLET OF FIRE



10 Years of Strike

ESSAY

Celebrating a Decade of
Cormoran Strike adventures

The first book J.K. Rowling published after Harry Potter was *The Casual Vacancy*, which ended up becoming a bestseller. This prompted the obvious comment that the book sold mostly because of the author's name rather than for its literary quality. After all, it was almost natural that the first novel by the author of Harry Potter not set in the wizarding world would sell so well. Rowling had already demonstrated great talent in writing, imagining, and devising complex novels, which generated interest in her new material, now was the time to discover what her first "adult" book would be like.

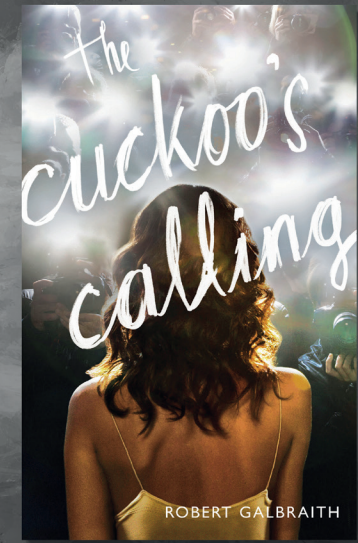
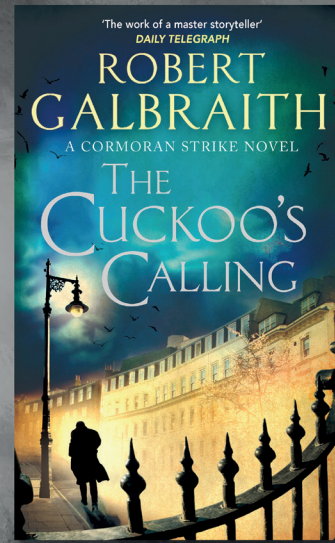
Rowling's next step as a writer, although a shock for most when it got revealed, only made sense: why not try to experience the euphoria of publishing a new book without having to go through these comments? She decided to publish her next novel under a pseudonym: Robert Galbraith. The secrecy of the process was not only aimed at the public, but also at the publishing industry itself. Rowling sent her manuscript to different publishers, who rejected it until Little Brown's Sphere imprint finally accepted it. There, she started working with her editor David Shelley, one of the few who knew her true identity.

The Cuckoo's Calling was published in early April 2013 in the United Kingdom by Sphere, and at the end of the same month by Mulholland Books in the United States. Although its official publication date is considered to be April 4, the book did not have a fixed release date, and the bookstores that received it began selling it as it arrived, just like Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone back in 1997. And also like Harry Potter, it was not an immediate bestseller, but it quickly received very good reviews.

The detective novel, set in London, follows the story of ex-military and private detective Cormoran Strike and his assistant, Robin Ellacott, as they investigate the death of a supermodel. "One of the most unique and compelling detectives



Replica of a rejection letter addressed to Robert Galbraith



I've come across in years," said writer Mark Billingham, and Scottish crime writer Alex Gray added, "One of the best crime novels I have ever read." Famous Scottish crime writer Val McDermid said "The Cuckoo's Calling reminds me why I fell in love with crime fiction in the first place." Of course, all of them made these statements before even knowing that Rowling was actually the writer behind the book, as their reviews were used on the cover of the first edition. Two of them, McDermid and Billingham, ended up interviewing Robert Galbraith/J.K. Rowling when promoting the following books in the Cormoran Strike series.

The author played along to the fullest extent: she gave no interviews

that could jeopardize her identity, not even a photo of herself. The excuse given by the publisher was that, indeed, Robert Galbraith was a pseudonym, as the writer had been part of the Royal Military Police and had to keep his identity secret. However, she did agree to sign copies using the made-up name for the famous London bookstore Goldsboro Books, which received 250 signed copies from the author. Of course, no one at the bookstore knew the truth.

The secret was kept hidden until July 13th, when everything was finally revealed. The Sunday Times newspaper was the first one to reveal the truth, while the explanation of how they came to such a conclusion wasn't clear at first. To try and



protect their source (something that sounds fair when following the ethics and morals of journalism), they claimed that it had all started because they wanted to investigate how a new writer "with a background in the army and the civilian security industry" could write such a gripping novel. For this matter, The Sunday Times contacted two professors, one from the University of Oxford and the other from Pittsburgh's Duquesne University, in order to conduct an analysis of the novel using some specialized software that would compare *The Cuckoo's Calling* with other books already published by several authors. The software indicated a great similarity with J.K. Rowling's writing style, a fact that the newspaper used to justify the discovery. Despite this explanation, it kept sounding strange for some people that the newspaper had launched an investigation simply because a new author had had a successful first novel. Some argued that there seemed to be more behind it. A few days later, it was finally made public that someone had actually leaked Rowling's identity to the newspaper: the culprit was a friend of the wife of a lawyer working for Russells Solicitors, a firm with which J.K. Rowling had been collaborating. Once this new explanation got

revealed, the firm publicly apologized and made a "substantial charitable donation" to the Soldiers' Charity in response to a lawsuit initiated by Rowling herself.

Up until the point when the identity was leaked, the book had sold around 1,500 copies (and over 5,000 digital copies, including ebooks and audiobooks). The signed copies at Goldsboro Books had not yet sold out - the bookstore actually had a great gesture: even after the identity was revealed, they maintained the original price of those copies. However, once it was revealed that Rowling was behind the cases of *Cormoran Strike*, sales grew by 150,000%, and publishers (on both

sides of the Atlantic) struggled to keep up. Bookstores quickly became out of stock, and even Amazon had a backlog for book deliveries, as publishers reprinted copies that quickly sold out.

This month marks ten years since the publication of *The Cuckoo's Calling* and the birth of the *Cormoran Strike* series. Back then, some believed that the first novel would be just that, while others believed that if Rowling decided to create a new saga, it wouldn't be as successful as *Harry Potter* was. Of course it depends on how one measures success, but these past ten years may have proven this second statement wrong.



While Harry Potter got its movie adaptations, the Cormoran Strike novels have been successfully adapted for television by the BBC. This TV series has been critically acclaimed, both for its casting and its ability to capture the essence of the characters and the plot of the books. Tom Burke has been especially praised for his portrayal of Cormoran Strike, and Holliday Grainger has received congratulations for her role as Robin Ellacott. The series has also been recognized for its ability to capture the atmosphere of London and its surroundings, as well as its attention to detail in recreating key plot settings. The Cormoran Strike books also have a large fanbase online, creating websites and forums, writing theories, shipping characters,

recording podcasts and more. Lately, J.K. Rowling even interacted with Cormoran Strike fans on Twitter, much more than with Harry Potter fans. It seems that we are not far from a StrikeCon in the future in London, where fans from all over the world travel to meet other fans in person, exchange ideas and share fanmade creations.

Rowling also seems to have more plans for Cormoran Strike than for Harry Potter. On several occasions, she has said that she has plans for books eight and nine, sometimes even saying that she has plans for up to the tenth book in the series. With the possible publication of *The Running Grave* this year, the upcoming seventh book in the Strike series,

Rowling would match the same pace that she achieved with Harry: seven books in ten years. However, the six novels that have been published so far in the Strike series have, in total, more pages and more words written than the seven novels in the Harry Potter series. A measure that no one imagined Rowling could easily break back in her Harry Potter years.

Although it's unlikely that the Cormoran Strike series will ever reach the same level of impact as Potter did, it doesn't mean it can't be successful in its own right. The quality of the books and the attention to detail in the characters and plot made the series earn a loyal fanbase that appreciates the series for what it is. While it may not have the same

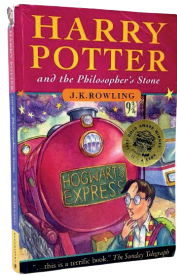
massive following as Harry Potter, the Strike series has its own niche of devoted fans who eagerly anticipate each new release and actively engage in discussions and fan creations. If JK Rowling decides to change her mind and continues writing Strike books for 10 more years - something that doesn't seem so unlikely to happen as she enjoys working on them so much - we could very well be looking at a series that continues to captivate readers for decades to come, with a fanbase that grows steadily and passionately over time. Who knows what new challenges and mysteries Cormoran and Robin might face in the future, and how will they continue to evolve and develop as characters? It's an exciting prospect that we can only hope becomes a reality. ♦



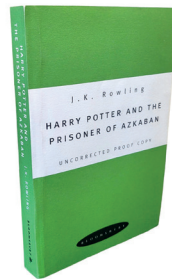
Auctions

March
2023

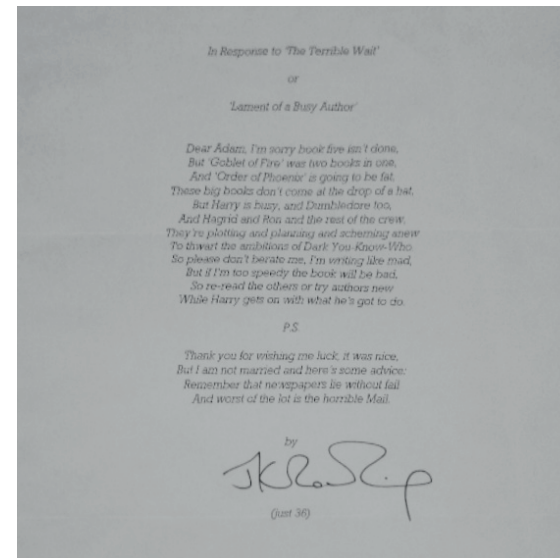
Welcome to our monthly roundup of Harry Potter book auctions. As passionate fans of J.K. Rowling's iconic series, we understand the excitement and joy that comes from collecting rare editions of the books that have captured the hearts and imaginations of millions worldwide. In this section, we will provide a brief overview of recent auctions, including details on prices and features of each item, for those interested in collecting rare editions of J.K. Rowling's beloved series.



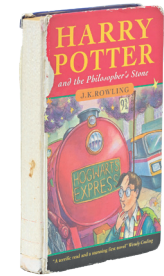
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
UK, 11th print paperback.
Signed, good condition.
Sold for £1400
Hanson Auctioneers, Mar. 7



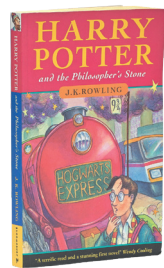
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
UK, 2nd state uncorrected proof. Near fine condition.
Sold for £6.500
Chiswick Auctions, Mar. 16



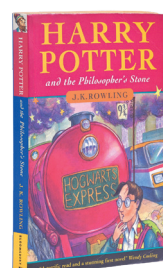
In Response to 'The Terrible Wait', or 'Lament of a Busy Author'
J.K. Rowling signed poem. Fine condition.
Sold for £1.600
Cuttlestones, Mar. 30
Read more about this never-seen-before item on page 00 of this issue.



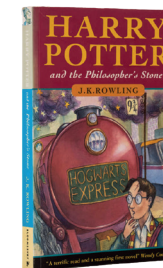
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
UK, First print hardcover.
Poor condition.
Sold for £23.000
Bonham's, Mar. 29



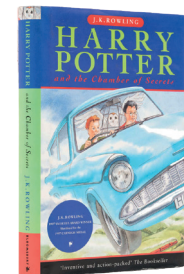
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
UK, First print paperback.
Very good condition.
Sold for £6.500
Bonham's, Mar. 29



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
UK, First print paperback.
Good condition.
Sold for £5.000
Bonham's, Mar. 29



Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
UK, First print paperback.
Good condition
Sold for £4.800
Forum, Mar. 30



Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
UK, 1st print HC. Signed by Rowling & Wright. Good cond.
Sold for £4.200
Forum, Mar. 30



Hogwarts Legacy promotional picture (Warner Bros. Games, 2023)

ESSAY

Hogwarts Legacy

Subtle echoes

An article by Joe Kourieh

The franchise's new game offers a gorgeous snapshot of the Wizarding World, but lacks a strong narrative to match Potter.

As we the fans had hoped and expected, the experience of *Hogwarts Legacy* is a magical one, albeit delivered through the heavy filter of its development. Many of the practical elements of a life of witchcraft and wizardry are simplified to make for a concise playable experience suited for a wide range of consoles. But ultimately to play this game is, as true fans of the franchise had envisioned, to inhabit the Wizarding World of J.K. Rowling - to spend some time in her imagination, to walk (and fly) through her creation.

What is it that makes us feel we're truly in Rowling's World? Maybe it's the lovable beasts, from majestic hippogriffs to curious little Nifflers (or the big-eyed Mooncalves purring ecstatically during a brushing session - that one really got me). Maybe it's a mischievous Weasley conscripting you to steal potions ingredients for a misguided enterprise? Is it the moving portraits eyeing students as they go about their days in the halls of Hogwarts, with Peeves occasionally popping out to harass

little first-years? Or is it perhaps the stunning views of the Castle from the Hogwarts grounds and beyond, with the mountains of the Scottish Highlands standing mighty in the background?

The truth is, it's all of these things and much more. To play *Hogwarts Legacy* is to be awash in the details of the Wizarding World. But, in a way, it's regrettable that it is largely the details of the world which offer the most compelling representation of the familiar lore and narrative substance of the beloved *Harry Potter* series. This abundance of juicy details - while fun on their own merits and absolutely critical to the quality of the experience - ultimately works to highlight even more distinctly the unfortunate emptiness at the core of the experience, where a richly emotional, thought-provoking, and historically consequential main storyline should lie. We don't get that profound core narrative, unfortunately, but a somewhat tedious meat-and-potatoes affair whose major players are flat,

whose themes are too subtle, and whose ramifications for the greater Wizarding World are so faint as to be negligible in the grander context of our beloved franchise.

The game developers present us with an obscure snapshot of the Wizarding World, rather than a pivotal moment in its history. The primary tale of the game is marked by a Goblin rebellion that fails at the hands of a fifth-year student (the playable character) with the help of some ragtag allies and, at the very end, the Hogwarts faculty. It's the failure (as well as the overall clandestine nature) of Ranrok's

rebellion that ultimately leaves it unmentioned among discussions of Goblin-Wizard conflicts in the lore of the *Potter* series and Rowling's connected works.

In perhaps its most disappointing fumble, *Hogwarts Legacy* does no favors to the nature or cause of the Goblin rebellion of the 1890s. The loyalists allied to rebel leader Ranrok are little more than a vicious rabble, more akin to Tolkien's roving Orcs of Mordor than to any alliance of socio-political activists or revolutionaries. Now, that is not to say that the Goblin race in general is represented as a



Hogwarts Legacy promotional picture (Warner Bros. Games, 2023)

bunch of vicious monsters. Quite the opposite - through snatches of dialogue between Ranrok's loyalists, we gain glimpses into the wide rift that exists among Goblins during this time. While infiltrating an underground dragon-fighting ring, we can hear a pair of Goblins discussing this rift. One Goblin describes how his two brothers view the violent insurrection against wizardkind as counter-productive. The Loyalists' response to this criticism is straightforward - if the Goblins can manage to kill all wizards, he says snarkily, then the Goblins win, and their efforts will be quite productive. We can tell from this particular exchange that Ranrok does not employ socio-political activists from Goblins to bolster a rational dispute against the superiority of wizardkind. Rather, he appeals to the most brutal, anti-social, and psychopathic of his race.

As Potter fans, we are certainly not unfamiliar with the vicious and psychopathic actors among the magical races - these are, certainly, the same barbarous sentiments with which most Death Eaters would regard Muggle-borns and those pure-bloods who they view as traitors. Furthermore, this genocidal perspective is sadly recognizable

in our world as well. However, presented as it is in this tale, with little to no political bent on the part of the Goblins - no distinctive goal for wand-use, for example, nor plans to control Gringotts or the treasure therein - this rebellion is simply not a compelling plot device. It's a missed opportunity to make a thought-provoking commentary on this longstanding conflict. It's just a singularly-focused campaign of terror by Ranrok as he seeks to, ostensibly, become the dominant force in the world by gaining the Ancient power hidden beneath Hogwarts, as well as to obtain a wand. Despite all his efforts, Ranrok's gambit is thwarted, rendering him and his movement a non-entity in the annals of Wizarding history, at least as far as we're informed in the Potter books. Though several references are made to Goblin rebellions in the 17th and 18th centuries (even noting their distinct objective to wield wands), there is no mention of Ranrok's rebellion. Notwithstanding, the events of *Hogwarts Legacy* do still fit logically into the lore of the Wizarding World on the basis that Ranrok's rebellion is simply one small episode in a long saga of conflict between Wizards and Goblins.

We can note that Lodgok, the



peaceful brother of Ranrok, aids the Protagonist in undermining Ranrok's apocalyptic campaign, and while doing so, warns that if Ranrok gains the power he seeks, it will initiate a great war between Goblins and Wizardkind. It's a war that never happens - a disappointment for gamers anticipating a thrilling final act of the tale in which total war occurs in the Wizarding World. It is, however, a marked relief for the inhabitants of that World who would suffer the consequences. This is a bittersweet tradeoff. If we think about the long, ancestral conflicts of our own world, it's easy to imagine the wild fury of so many small

insurgencies which had the potential to reshape societies, but which were ultimately thwarted, nullifying that potential devastation. History, as the saying goes, is written by the winners, and in the Wizarding World, the perpetual winners are Wizardkind, who pick and choose which episodes of their society's history ought to be lectured to drowsy students as they suffer through Professor Binns' droning on in History of Magic class. Ranrok's rebellion is likely not one of those episodes.

The other primary element of the plot regards the Keepers, the guardians of the secret Ancient

Magic hidden beneath Hogwarts. The Protagonist learns that wielders of this mysterious Ancient Magic are capable of drawing negative emotion directly out of the spirits of those feeling heartbreak and sorrow. A Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher named Isadora Morganach, a practitioner of this unique ability, used it to create a reservoir of pure magic power, nested beneath the Castle, offering limitless power to whoever can obtain it. It is this power source that Ranrok seeks, deploying his goons to drill into the bowels of the Castle to access it and turn him into an unparalleled monstrosity.

Like the rebel Goblins, the Keepers are ultimately one-dimensional, living up to their name - as the moving portraits of former professors of Hogwarts, their sole focus is keeping the Ancient Magic away from any outsider's grasp. They, with the help of the deceased and thus uninvolved magical researcher Miriam Figg, send the Protagonist on a meandering mission to stop Ranrok from accessing it. Their mission, it seems, is rendered unworthy of a place in the wizarding history books, perhaps due partly to its straightforward success, but likely due as well to the discretion of those involved, seeking to obscure

the existence of the ancient magic for safe keeping. It fits logically, but makes for a disappointingly bare-bones storyline. This game, once again, offers a snapshot, a glimpse into the Wizarding World - not an axis of its history by any means.

And so, as it were, it falls to the detailed playable world and some intriguing side characters to send out the best quality echoes of the well known Wizarding World lore - these are the echoes that are the most thought-provoking, and which offer the most intriguing connections to Potter.

Consider, for example, Ominis Gaunt, a prominent Slytherin, talented wizard and generally overbearing personality, as befitting his descendents who share his surname, and one who does not. Ominis is perhaps the most fascinating character in the game for the intense similarity he evinces to his descendent Tom Riddle in terms of assertiveness, while simultaneously representing a flatly contradicting worldview. When we first meet Ominis, he finds the Protagonist exiting the hidden door to his favorite secret room in the Castle. Outraged by the intrusion, Ominis demands to know how the player gained access. As this interrogation ramps up, I quite expected to hear a command of "Tell the truth!" to arise just like that which Riddle directs toward Dumbledore during their first meeting in Riddle's orphanage bedroom. As we engage with Ominis' plotline, however, we learn that he is deeply compassionate, and disagrees with his family in regards to the dark arts and blood purity, treating these as wicked ideas worthy of scorn. A likely cause of this interesting inversion is the fact that Ominis is disabled, blind from birth. One can imagine that Ominis, who might otherwise have followed in the chauvinism of his family and peers,





quite understands the struggles of those who are burdened by the uncontrollable circumstances of their birth - as is the experience of Muggleborns, along with a certain scarred boy whose destiny is forged by prophecy. Ominis, I can't help but think, would have made a good friend to Harry.

Yet more minor characters enchant us with connections to the source material as we make our way around Hogwarts, none more instantly recognizable in name and vibrant appearance than the Weasleys.

Garreth Weasley, specifically, is a definite precursor to Fred and George, always working to invent exciting new potions, often aimed at amusement rather than practicality. Professor of Transfiguration and Deputy Headmistress Matilda Weasley is of the very same stock as the elder Weasleys of *Potter*, representing an endearingly positive presence - always helpful, willing to lend a hand for anything from a tour of the halls all the way to a major battle against an evil Goblin. It is Matilda who introduces the player to the Room of Requirement - for

use in potion brewing, equipment upgrades, and beast storage - with the aid of her friend Deek, one Hogwarts' most helpful house elves. These little creatures are as tragically subservient as ever, but undoubtedly clever and full of surprises. Take for instance Scrope, the Black family servant - precursor to Kreacher - who leads the player (provided they are in Slytherin House and worthy of Scrope's time) on a hunt for a Black family ring in a secret grotto as a gift for his master, Headmaster Phineas Nigellus Black. This is despite the fact that his previous taskmaster within the family, Apollonia Black, was abusive to the point of dismembering Scrope's ear. Clearly, like Kreacher, Scrope's dedication to the family is unbreakable, at least in regards to proper Muggle-hating Slytherins. Phineas Nigellus, the only character we know directly from *Potter*, is as pompous and dismissive in life as he is in portrait form. Look no further than his opening and closing speeches of the school year - in the first he cancels the Quidditch season seemingly out of convenience for himself, while in the last he speaks about Professor Fig (who died in the battle against Ranrok) with a eulogy so blithing and negligent that Professor Weasley is forced to cut him off. It is abundantly clear

why Professor Black is considered the most despised Headmaster in Hogwarts history.

If nothing else, through its detailed environs, its action, and its core plot, *Hogwarts Legacy* proves that the Wizarding World is a vibrant and dangerous one. Even in an obscure conflict like Ranrok's rebellion, the forces of darkness are always mustering some new design for death and destruction. The obscurity of the moment is lamentable, but understandable if we view the game as a snapshot - nothing more, nothing less - of the magical world in which we've already spent so much time in the many pages and hours of this franchise. We learn little that we didn't already know about the Wizarding World from this experience, but nonetheless, we can be tantalized by the echoes of the lore, and in this medium, we can get up close and personal with that lore like never before. In fantasy worlds, the lore is only as good as the characters, creatures, and physical territory that embody it. This game offers one more unique format with which to engage with those, and I hope to see this format utilized for plenty more Wizarding World content in years to come. ♦

AUCTION

Lament of a Busy Author

A poem allegedly written and signed by J.K. Rowling in 2001 was recently sold at a British auction house. This exclusive text is entitled 'In Response to 'The Terrible Wait', or 'Lament of a Busy Author'.

The poem is said to be a response sent by J.K. Rowling to fan mail from a reader named Adam, who asked in his letter when the next Harry Potter book would come out.

It is not the first time a letter from J.K. Rowling that looks more like a piece of fiction than an actual letter comes up for auction. In 2015, another 2001 response to a fanmail that she wrote as Newt Scamander went up for sale at RR Auction, then fetching more than \$6.800.

The poem was sold on March 30 for £1,600 (hammer price, not including buyer's premium). ♦



In Response to 'The Terrible Wait' or 'Lament of a Busy Author'

Dear Adam, I'm sorry book five isn't done,
But 'Goblet of Fire' was two books in one,
And 'Order of Phoenix' is going to be fat,
These big books don't come at the drop of a hat,
But Harry is busy, and Dumbledore too,
And Hagrid and Ron and the rest of the crew,
They're plotting and planning and scheming anew
To thwart the ambitions of Dark You-Know-Who.
So please don't berate me, I'm writing like mad,
But if I'm too speedy the book will be bad,
So re-read the others or try authors new
While Harry gets on with what he's got to do.

P.S.

Thank you for wishing me luck, it was nice,
But I am not married, and here's some advice:
Remember that newspapers lie without fail
And worst of the lot is the horrible Mail.

"It is easily the most professional and thorough collection of facts about the 'Wizarding Phenomenon'"

HogwartsProfessor.com

"An extensive and descriptive work of non-fiction, 'Secret History...' is a Harry Potter buff's dream."

MuggleNet.com



SECRET HISTORY OF THE WIZARDING PHENOMENON

HOW THE HARRY POTTER
BOOKS, MOVIES, THEME PARKS
AND MORE CAME TO LIFE

Available on
amazon





EXPERIENCES

Konnichiwa Harry!



Tokyo is set to get a new Harry Potter attraction opening in June 2023, called the Warner Bros. Studio Tour Tokyo – The Making of Harry Potter. It will be located on the former Toshimaen amusement park site in Nerima and will be modeled after the Warner Bros. Studio Tour in London. This new attraction will feature replica sets from the Harry Potter films and creatures from the Fantastic Beasts series.

Fans can expect a wide range of exhibits, covering costumes, props, special effects, and models

used to make the beloved Harry Potter films. Sets include Diagon Alley, Platform Nine and Three-Quarters, The Forbidden Forest, and the Great Hall, with plenty of wizarding treats to enjoy at the Chocolate Frog Café, Butterbeer, and classic British dishes for the muggles.

Visitors can also expect to encounter creatures from the Fantastic Beasts series as the entrance will include a landscaping area with models of the beasts featured in the franchise. The facility will be dedicated to both



the Harry Potter movies and the spin-off series.

The organizers are planning to limit the number of attendees each day, so visitors can have a more leisurely experience and avoid getting squashed in the crowds. Tickets will be available for booking online from 2 pm JST on March 22, and the first round of ticket sales will be for visits between June 16 and September 30, 2023.

The Studio Tour will be the largest indoor Harry Potter attraction in the world and the first Warner Bros. Studio Tour to open in Asia. Building on the success of Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – the Making of Harry Potter which has welcomed

over 17 million visitors since opening in 2012, the Studio Tour Tokyo will feature exclusive sets only available at this location.

Visitors will journey through iconic locations from the Harry Potter series, entering the Great Hall of Hogwarts, boarding the Hogwarts Express at Platform 9 ¾, venturing into the depths of the Forbidden Forest, and exploring many more sets yet to be revealed. Hand-crafted by filmmakers, visitors will get a chance to see spellbinding costumes, come face to face with magical creatures, and learn moviemaking secrets.

The attraction is not limited to the studio tour itself. Two Tokyo train stations will also get a WIZARDING

World makeover. Toshimaen Station will be renovated to resemble the Hogsmeade train station featured in the books, and Ikebukuro Station will be modified to resemble King's Cross train station in London. Renovations for the stations are projected to be completed in the spring.

The pricing structure for the attraction varies according to age, with adult tickets (ages 18 and over) priced at ¥6,300 per person, junior tickets (ages 12 to 17) at ¥5,200, and child tickets (ages 4 to 11) at ¥3,800. Admission is free for children under the age of 4.

Overall, the Warner Bros. Studio Tour Tokyo – The Making of Harry Potter promises to be an exciting new attraction for fans of the Harry Potter series, offering a unique opportunity to journey behind the scenes of the spellbinding movies and discover secrets of the WIZARDING World.

The new facility offers exclusive sets only available at this location, and with the inclusion of creatures from the Fantastic Beasts series, it's sure to be a hit with fans of both Harry Potter and the spin-off series. ◆



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Magazine

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