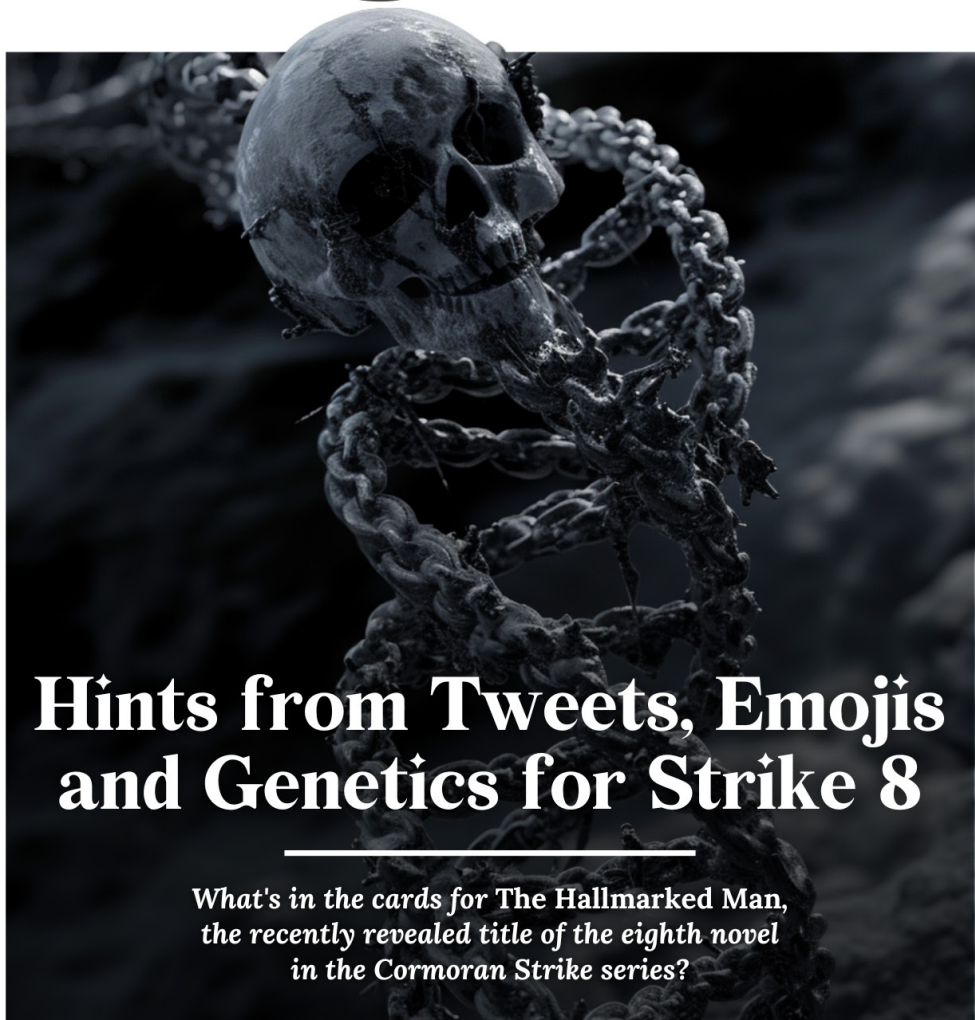


The  
**Rowling  
Library**

Issue 88  
April 2024

# Magazine



## Hints from Tweets, Emojis and Genetics for Strike 8

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*What's in the cards for The Hallmarked Man,  
the recently revealed title of the eighth novel  
in the Cormoran Strike series?*

*And he  
shall appear*

*Muggle  
misunderstanding*

*Dark  
Detentions*

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# 06

## Scene Autopsy

An occasional series in which we examine a single scene from a movie set in the wizarding world.

# 28

## Muggle Misunderstanding

A spirited defense of adult Harry Potter fandom's enduring magic.

# 22

## And he shall appear

The complicated act of saying unsayable names in J.K. Rowling's fantasy world.

# 32

## Dark Detentions

The worst punishments at Hogwarts and how to avoid them.

- 04** A word from the Founder
- 10** Famous Wizard Card
- 31** Support us!
- 37** Auctions

# 12

## Strike 8: Hints from Tweets, Emojis and Genetics

What's in the cards for *The Hallmarked Man*, the recently revealed title of the eighth novel in the Cormoran Strike series?



# Welcome

## A word from the Founder

Welcome to a new issue of The Rowling Library Magazine! We've reached April, and with this month comes the 88th edition of our magazine about J.K. Rowling and her various fictional worlds.

Our cover story comes from Louise Freeman, discussing the March revelation: J.K. Rowling shared on Twitter the title of the eighth book in the Cormoran Strike series along with a couple of hints about what this new novel might entail. Freeman analyzes them to try to guess where we might see Strike and Ellacott heading.

Oliver Horton dissects the interrogation scene from *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* in his new section, "Scene Autopsy", and Joe Kourieh presents the first part of "And he shall appear," his essay on the act of uttering forbidden words in the Wizarding World. Rio Romero tells us about punishments at Hogwarts (and how to avoid them), and we also present a piece that reflects on why some adult fans can't (and shouldn't) let go of Harry Potter.

We also feature the Famous Wizard of the Month card (a familiar one this time), and more!

Thank you for being with us, and see you in May!

Patricio



# Fantastic Beasts 1: The Interrogation

An article by  
**Oliver Horton**

**An occasional series in which we examine a single scene from a movie set in the wizarding world.**

The first *Fantastic Beasts* film (2016), written by J.K. Rowling, directed by David Yates, contains a scene that transcends all others in the series: one scene to rule them all! Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne), a magi-zoologist visiting New York in the 1920s, is arrested for setting loose magical creatures in the city. Alas, the magical congress of the USA is on high alert because a Muggle has been murdered by an Obscurus, a rare rogue magical force. At the movie's midpoint Newt is interrogated by New York's top wizard cop, Percival Graves (Colin Farrell). But not everything is what it seems.

The interrogation scene is a spaghetti junction of story threads

and marks the moment that Graves shifts from disconnected sub-plot to primary antagonist. For half the film Graves' quest for a powerful Obscurial exists entirely apart from Newt, whose focus is recovery of his AWOL animals. Meanwhile, Newt and disgraced detective Tina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston) are just beginning to trust one another.

Percival Graves faces Newt across his desk. Tina, shackled, stands behind Newt, flanked by two death-matrons. Tina tries to plead their case, but is shushed by Graves, and it's a shush for the ages: this verbal duel will be men-only. Except that Newt is mostly interested in Tina's good opinion and twists in his chair

*Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* (Warner Bros, 2016)



to address his answers to her. Graves questions Newt about his expulsion from Hogwarts and suggests that releasing creatures in New York was a deliberate act to start war between the magical and Muggle worlds. “Mass slaughter for the greater good, you mean?” Newt replies, a suggestion that excites the MACUSA investigator. But Newt continues, “I’m not one of Grindelwald’s fanatics.” Graves smirks and changes the subject. Because – spoiler! – Percival Graves is the evil wizard Gellert Grindelwald transfigured. But we don’t find this out until the end of the movie. The undercurrents can only be appreciated on a second viewing.

## Future Proof

Knowing Grindelwald is the interrogator transforms the meaning of the scene. His opening question has nothing to do with the murder investigation but has the highest stakes for him personally. “What is it that makes Albus Dumbledore so fond of you?” The line is imbued with sadness, anger and jealousy. Gellert is thinking, can this handsome young Brit be Albus’s new beau? Grindelwald is guilty himself of trysting in alleyways with the damaged Credence Barebone (Ezra Miller). But Newt bats the enquiry aside, “I really couldn’t say.” Reassured, Grindel-Graves moves



on to the topic of monsters at large and takes advantage of the police-interview setting to learn more about the Obscurus. Newt, coincidentally, has an Obscurus contained and protected in his Tardis-like suitcase, but that evil cloud is benign in comparison to the murderous rage tornado terrorising New York. Still, this is Newt's dark secret and he pleads: "It could not hurt anyone, Tina."

Grindel-Graves is greedy for a weapon of mass destruction and he over-reaches, "So it's useless without the host?" Newt looks at Graves as if seeing him for the first time. "Useless?" he asks twice, shocked. "That is a parasitical, magical force that killed a child. What on earth would you use it for?" Tina, too, realises something is badly wrong; her old boss is an extremist. Grindel-Graves, knowing they know, sentences them both to death, "Do it immediately." Villain revealed!

However, giving this order upsets Grindelwald. He crumples in disappointment as if the decision contradicts his core beliefs, an evil necessary to protect his identity. Fans are reminded of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the book not the films: "I regret it," says Voldemort

after murdering Severus Snape, and "Every drop of magical blood spilled is a loss and a waste." Fortunately the execution chamber turns out to be an easily escapable situation involving an overly elaborate and exotic death. Newt and Tina are smuggled out of MACUSA HQ in Newt's deceptively capacious luggage. From that moment they are united, camaraderie reigns, and Graves becomes the enemy who must be defeated.

## Sorcerer's Apprentice

Muggle hero Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler) is parked in a jail cell for the duration of the interrogation scene. Kowalski is arguably the movie's protagonist, a stealth protagonist: the fool or ordinary guy who enters a special world. He is the sorcerer's apprentice who unleashes magic that he cannot control. Jacob has a clear want, to open a bakery, and a clear need, to live a full life. He achieves all of this and wins a delectable witch girlfriend because, as Newt says, "People like you, don't they, Mr Kowalski?" By people he means people not in authority; Jacob's charm does not seduce bank managers or canning factory foremen. And here we find the root of Newt's problem, too. Burnt by a broken relationship

with Leta Lestrange (Zoe Kravitz), Newt has hidden himself among the animals. The change Newt undergoes in the first *Fantastic Beasts* movie is to reconnect with people (his need), and Jacob is the catalyst. Having bonded with the Muggle, the interrogation scene shows Newt desperate to protect the fragile connection with Tina, a witch and an equal. He needs her to understand that his creatures are harmless, that he is not reckless; he likes her, he is sorry, no more lies. Newt is autistic or some magical equivalent and has trouble making eye contact, but in the interrogation his eyes reach for Tina again and again. They only really find Graves at the scene's turn. "Useless?" The characters in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* are all in some way repressed. Newt and Tina are both closed-off, wounded people. Grindelwald is closed-off by necessity and his impersonation of Graves is not as slick as FakeMoody's in *Goblet of Fire*; Gellert's emotions ripple beneath the surface like the Erumpent under the ice. Credence Barebone is closed so tight that it tears him apart, his Obscurus spilling into the city. But Jacob and Tina's sister Queenie (Alison Sudol) are open, if unfulfilled, and they draw Newt and Tina into the light. When Newt asks Jacob, "People like you, don't



### Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them (2016)

Writer: J.K. Rowling

Director: David Yates

they, Mr Kowalski?" he means, "I like you." Which is what he tells him at the end of the film: "You're my friend." In the finale Jacob sacrifices himself, or rather sacrifices his knowledge of the Wizarding World, out of love for his enchanting friends. Which is a super Harry Potter thing to do. Blessedly the Murtlap bite or its antidote protect him from Obliviating rain and his merry memories of magic are only shunted to his subconscious. Cue happy ending. ♦



# Famous Wizards

## Card Collection



Cut around each side, then stick them together to create your own collectible card!

#26

« 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. »

**J.K. Rowling**

in

HARRY POTTER AND THE  
PHILOSOPHER'S STONE





An article by  
Louise Freeman

# Strike 8: Hints from Tweets, Emojis and Genetics

**What's in the cards for *The Hallmarked Man*,  
the recently revealed title of the eighth novel  
in the Cormoran Strike series?**

Cormoran Strike fandom was abuzz on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, when J.K. Rowling announced that the title of Book Eight would be *The Hallmarked Man*. This announcement followed a series of three X (formerly Twitter) header changes that have been made since February first. The first was a picture of the coat of arms on the Freemason's United Grand Hall in London. The second was of La Coupee, a bridge connecting two parts of Sark, a Channel Island, and the third a sterling silver model ship made by the famous Pairpoint Brothers of London and currently selling for more than \$42K. In

addition, Rowling announced on February 21<sup>st</sup> that she had finished writing part six of the book.

The tweet announcing the book title was also Sark-related: the collage of photos in the tweet included a lovely silver bracelet Rowling received from her husband as a souvenir of her recent trip there. She has confirmed that at least a few chapters of *The Hallmarked Man* will be set on the Channel island, and that she planned her visit there in February to correspond with the time of year her characters (presumably Robin and Strike) visited in the book.



What could this all mean? The two items of fine silver suggest the meaning for “hallmark” is the original one: a stamp put on British precious metal goods that certified the purity. Fans expecting the Strike and Ellacott Detective Agency team to turn up on greeting cards, as commemorative Christmas ornaments or perhaps in a cheesy TV holiday movie will be disappointed.

But, the notion of fine quality silver will no doubt delight those fans who track literary alchemy in the series; that was the immediate thought of several bloggers and podcasters<sup>1</sup>. If Strike himself is to be the Hallmarked Man, it suggests the *albedo*-purification process that was so apparent amid the weight loss, smoking cessation and the abundant river and baptismal imagery<sup>2</sup> of *The Running Grave* will continue, and perhaps be completed in the next

book. This is consistent with the idea that the *nigredo*, *albedo* and *rubedo* elements that were seen in the last three *Harry Potter* books would be spread out over the last six volumes of the ten-part Strike series<sup>3</sup>.

A strong case has been made that both *Troubled Blood*<sup>4</sup> and *The Ink Black Heart*<sup>5</sup> contain *nigredo* elements, with Strike emotionally broken down in the former and physically broken down in the latter. The allusion to refined silver and the watery environments suggested by the Sark setting and the decorative ship sets the scene for a potential two-part *albedo* in *The Running Grave* and *The Hallmarked Man*, then the completion of the alchemical cycle with Books 9 and 10 as a paired *rubedo*, or perhaps a *citrinitas-rubedo* combination. I particularly like the idea of *citrinitas*, or yellowing phase being included between the white



Sterling silver model ship. J.K. Rowling's header image on X (Twitter).

*albedo* and red *rubedo*, something there wasn't room for in the *Harry Potter* series.

Typically, the titles of the Strike series relate to the detectives' major mystery. There has been speculation that the “Hallmarked Man” could be a murder victim identified by a particular scar or tattoo. It also seems that, as in *The Running Grave*, the case will take them out of London and into a seaside environment, at least for a time. The Freemason building will also likely relate in some way to our heroes' major mystery. As others have pointed out, the United Grand Hall is a popular event venue, so it is possible the detectives could go there for an event that has little or nothing to do with the Freemason organization itself. However, Rowling is no stranger to Masonry symbols, as Beatrice Groves pointed out in an earlier article about the Deathly Hallows icon<sup>6</sup>, so it is possible some active member of the organization will be involved.

A particularly interesting aspect of the Freemasons is their association with police corruption in the 1970's, apparently as a result of some Met cops being in the same lodges with career criminals<sup>7</sup>. This recalls gangsters like Mucky Ricci, whom

the police were clearly powerless to stop and makes me wonder if the mystery will involve some dirty cops, past or present. If so, that could certainly complicate things for Robin and Murphy. More importantly, it could be a connection to some of themes of *Troubled Blood*, which also involved looking back at police work in the 1970's.

Strike fans were given more fodder for speculation when *The Rowling Library Magazine* Editor-in-Chief Patricio Tarantino asked on social media for an “emoji title” like the ones Rowling had provided for *The Ink Black Heart* and *The Running Grave*. Rowling obliged, but in a way that left more questions than answers.

*The Ink Black Heart*'s symbol was quite simple: a black heart. For *The Running Grave*, Rowling used a wave to represent the ocean, followed by a gravestone. This was a clear indicator of the George Barker poem, “On a Friend's Escape from Drowning off the Norfolk Coast,” that Jonathan Wace plagiarized in the newspaper account of his first wife's death. Between the emojis and the Cromer Pier pictured on her X header, it was clear that this setting would be crucial. For *The Hallmarked Man*, Rowling presented a three-part



emoji sequence: a chain, a strand of DNA and a skull, none of which have any obvious relationship to the title. While the metal chain could represent silver or other refined metal, there are plenty of other emojis that more readily recall “man.” And just what does the double helix of DNA mean?

DNA testing turns up in many murder mysteries. In the Strike series, it proved Quine never touched the planted typewriter ribbons recovered from his office and was undoubtedly necessary to identify the remains of long-deceased victims like Margot Bamborough and Daiyu Wace. Strike himself stated in earlier books that a DNA test forced Rokeby to accept paternity, but it didn’t; Strike was acknowledged as Rokeby’s son at age five, at least seven years before DNA testing was available<sup>8</sup>. The DNA next to the skull brings to mind some sort

of dangerous, perhaps fatal, genetic disease. One such condition has already turned up in the series; the Lethal White title referred to a fatal condition in horses.

A type of code exists around modern-day emojis, as the use of the eggplant as a sexual reference<sup>9</sup> demonstrates. Thus, it seemed wise to consider possible symbolic meanings for the images used. The chain, for instance, can mean B & D practices when used in sexting. In less erotic contexts, it can mean being jailed or otherwise restricted<sup>10</sup>; being trapped in a relationship that is going badly, or, more positively, strength and stability<sup>11</sup>. Strike fans on social media were quick to suggest that this could represent a modern-day slavery or trafficking situation, or a client wrongly convicted and jailed.

The DNA emoji is used as its literal

meaning much of the time<sup>12</sup>. If the wrongful conviction aspect is true, perhaps faulty or corrupt DNA testing was behind the frame-up. However, it can also mean an erotic coupling where pregnancy is the goal<sup>13</sup>. The combination of the chain with the DNA, therefore, has led some to think “pregnancy trap,” another oft-repeated theme in the Strike series, with the Orca, Sarah Shadlock, Bijou Watkins and possibly Leda Strike all conceiving children for that reason. It is possible that the major case involves a client wanting to prove, or disprove, paternity. A less pleasant thought is a pregnancy trap for one of our protagonists. This could mean Bijou trying to ensnare Strike rather than the rich Q.C., although that would mean both having lied about the dates of her pregnancy in *The Running Grave* and not showing at approximately 20 weeks along. Even less savory would be Ryan Murphy trying to trap Robin into marrying him by sabotaging her birth control.

Rowling chose a skull for the third element, which evokes “death” (literal or figurative) much more than “man.” If it refers to the agency’s major case, it could mean that what begins as a paternity case winds up as a murder, or a murder victim identified by DNA. If Strike or Robin is more personally

involved, I think we can rule out a literal death, unless the author concocts an escape from the trap through miscarriage, abortion or stillbirth. But is there another way that these three images might be connected to the actual title of *The Hallmarked Man*?

Scientists frequently speak of genetic “markers.” Our DNA can, in a sense, be a trap, if you carry a deadly gene like the unfortunate foal of “Mare Mourning.” It is possible a person with such a condition might engage a detective to locate a lost genetic relative, perhaps a child placed for adoption, so they could warn of the possibility and the relative could be tested. Or, someone in need of a transplant might seek out biological relatives. Shanker’s stepdaughter Angel, for example, might eventually require a bone marrow transplant to treat her leukemia. It is interesting that Robin and Strike discussed how much of destiny is decreed by genes, back in *Troubled Blood*.

*“Mightn’t be a bad sideline for us, setting grifters up with each other.” Robin laughed. “So they can have dodgy children together, thus keeping us in business forever?” Strike lit his cigarette, exhaled and then said, “Not a perfect business*

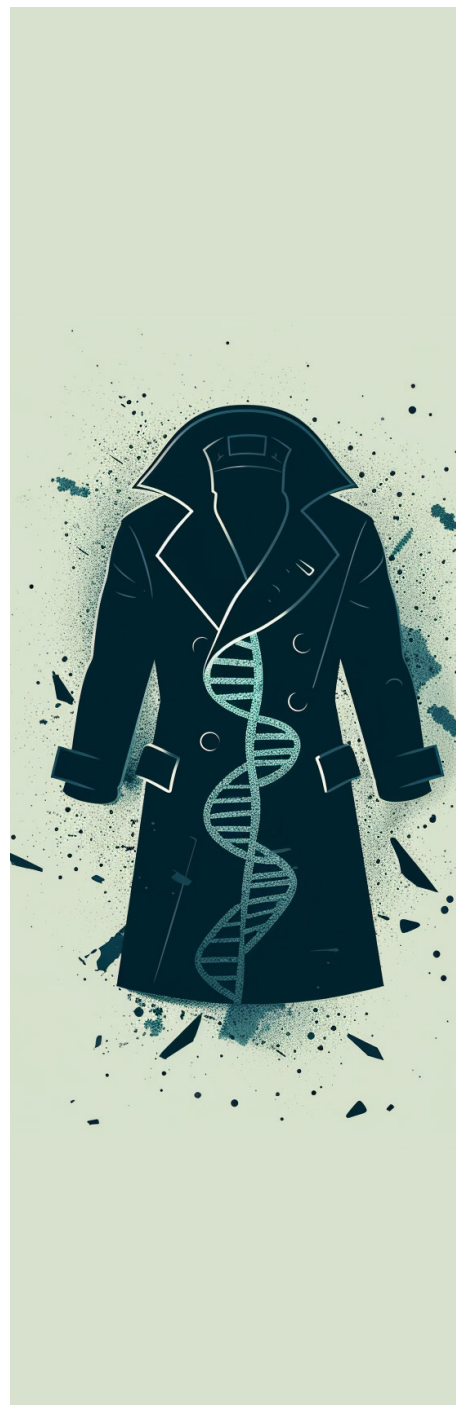
*plan. There's no guarantee breeding two shits together will produce a third shit. I've known decent people who were raised by complete bastards, and vice versa."*  
*"You're nature over nurture, are you?" asked Robin.*

However, a newer scientific discovery might be even more relevant to the book's title. A "hallmark gene set" is a group of genes that tend to be expressed together, as part of a well-characterized biological process<sup>14</sup>. Hallmark gene sets are a fairly recent discovery; the earliest publication I could find with the term was from 2015, and the vast majority of papers were published post-2020. For example, the hallmark DNA repair gene set is a group of genes all involved in DNA repair. The hallmark androgen response gene set is a group of genes activated by androgenic steroid hormones, such as testosterone. The hallmark hypoxia gene set is the group of genes expressed by tissues during oxygen deprivation. There appear to be roughly 50 such sets identified, involving a variety of cellular processes like development, proliferation, metabolism and signaling.

Probably the most interesting application of hallmark gene sets

is in cancer research. Researchers have known for some time that abnormal gene expression is a characteristic of cancerous tissues. By comparing expression of specific hallmark gene sets in healthy and cancerous tissues, different subtypes of cancer can be identified, and treatments more precisely targeted. For example, hallmark DNA repair gene set comparisons have been used to identify a genetic signature associated with a particularly deadly form of liver cancer<sup>15</sup>.

While the title of the Strike book has always related to the major mystery, it can have a secondary meaning for the protagonists. *Troubled Blood*, for instance, referred to Strike's struggles with his blood family as much as Roy Phipps' clotting disorder. There is one character with cancer, whose DNA makeup could be of particular interest to Strike. We have heard almost nothing about Jonny Rokeby since *Troubled Blood*, and his prostate cancer was not mentioned in the last two books, meaning two years have passed since his diagnosis. This likely means that Rokeby, like the majority of prostate cancer patients, was easily treated. Still, recurrences can happen, and the cancer can turn deadly. Furthermore, genetic testing is available for some subtypes;



prostate cancer has been linked to the same genes that cause breast and ovarian cancer in women<sup>16</sup>.

One common treatment for prostate cancer is to block testosterone action through either physical or chemical castration. Paradoxically, some tumors that don't respond to castration can be successfully treated by extra-high doses of testosterone. Analysis of hallmark androgen response genes have been used to identify tumors that are good candidates for this high testosterone treatment<sup>17</sup>. So, "hallmark genes" have a connection to the specific type of cancer Rokeby has and, given his wealth, he may have access to this cutting-edge science if his tumor does not respond to typical treatment. It would be ironic, given to what extent Cormoran Strike has rejected any connection to his biological father, if he found himself "hallmarked" with the same genes.

Given how new the science is, a connection between hallmark gene sets and the plot of Strike 8 may be a stretch. Rowling's record on scientific accuracy is a mixed bag. There is some good psychology<sup>18</sup> and neuroscience<sup>19</sup> embedded in her writing, but she also makes some serious errors, like mischaracterizing



the symptoms of Brown-Sèquard syndrome<sup>20</sup> and calling Lady Bristow's Valium an opiate<sup>21</sup>. Could Rowling handle the advanced molecular genetics needed to understand hallmark gene sets and incorporate them into a bestselling popular mystery? Time, and the next book, will tell. ♦

## Footnotes

1. See <https://fartingsofafaculty.blogspot.com/2024/03/strike-book-eight-is-hallmarked-man.html>, <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/beatrice-groves-the-hallmarked-man/>, and [https://thesefilespod.com/podcast\\_episode/episode-23-the-liquids-arent-important/](https://thesefilespod.com/podcast_episode/episode-23-the-liquids-arent-important/) as examples.
2. <https://fartingsofafaculty.blogspot.com/2023/10/water-water-everywhere-baptism-baths.html>
3. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/strike-extended-play-or-how-a-seven-book-series-can-be-stretched-into-ten/#more-28291>
4. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/troubled-blood-strikes-transformation/>
5. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/flips-pentagrams-and-expanded-playlists-why-did-the-tone-we-expected-in-book-5-wind-up-in-book-6/#more-28296>
6. <https://www.therowlinglibrary.com/read/84>
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/02/secret-handshake-police-freemasons>
8. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/science-in-cormoran-strike-narrative-misdirection-or-plain-old-error-part-i-dna-and-paternity-testing/> More recent books in the series have corrected the reference to say "paternity testing".



Louise Freeman is a psychology professor emerita with an interest in discussing contemporary fiction and pop culture. She runs "The Farting Sofa Faculty Lounge", where she discusses Harry Potter, Cormoran Strike and more. A shorter version of this article was originally published on that blog.

9. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggplant\\_emoji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggplant_emoji)
10. <https://emojiguide.com/objects/chains/>
11. <https://cufinder.io/marketing/emoji/chains-emoji>
12. <https://emojiguide.com/objects/dna/>
13. <https://emojis.wiki/dna/>
14. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4707969/#:~:text=The%20hallmarks%20summarize%20information%20across,biological%20space%20for%20GSEA%20analysis.>
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17. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9220831/>
18. <https://journals.shareok.org/studyandscrutiny/article/view/121>
19. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/cormoran-strike-and-the-itch-he-cant-scratch/>
20. <https://fartingsofafaculty.blogspot.com/2023/09/the-neuroscience-of-brown-sequard.html>
21. <https://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/science-in-cormoran-strike-narrative-misdirection-or-plain-old-error-part-2-pharmacology/>

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An article by  
Joe Kourieh

# And he shall appear

## Part one: Bad Vibrations

**The complicated act of saying unsayable names  
in J.K. Rowling's fantasy world.**

The Wizarding World's intrinsic fear of saying or hearing Voldemort's name is foundational to our experience of J.K. Rowling's storytelling in the *Harry Potter* series. The linguistic gymnastics undertaken to avoid saying the name and the visceral reactions to hearing it are truly iconic. The common euphemisms implemented by Wizardkind to that purpose ("You-Know-Who" and the more formal "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named") have become part of the standard lexicon in the English

language, even to those who have never read a page nor watched a minute of *Harry Potter*. Whether in fiction or in real life, any entity with a reputation so awful that its name has become taboo is destined to be compared to the unspeakable Lord Voldemort. This taboo is woven so consistently into the story world we are liable to take for granted the literary dynamism inherent in this trope.

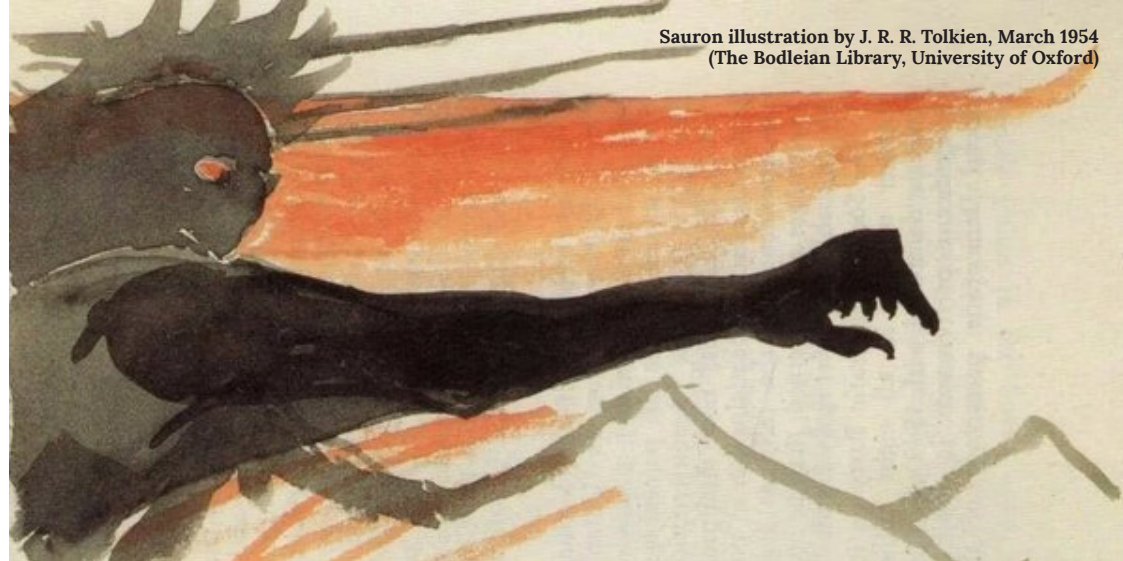
This essential element of Potter

does not arise spontaneously from Rowling's imagination, prolific as it may be. The taboo of naming the story's villain was utilized by the original master of the Fantasy genre, J.R.R. Tolkien, in *The Lord of the Rings*. In this series, the taboo is subtler, and contained in a particular region of Middle Earth. As the intrepid Hobbits travel further east and encounter the men of Gondor, they soon come to appreciate the Gondorians's avoidance of Sauron's name, despite having heard that name spoken freely by others back west.

When discussing the topic of Sauron with his guest Frodo, the prominent Gondorian captain Faramir explains that their founder Isildur "took somewhat from the hand of the Unnamed," and at another point describes Sauron as "He whom we do not name." This phrasing is sure to

excite Potterheads by its similarity to the aforementioned euphemism for Voldemort in the Wizarding World ("He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named"). Seeing the DNA of Tolkien's masterpiece reflected so distinctly in our beloved Potter series is deeply satisfying, directly connecting two of the greatest works of the genre through the intergenerational exchange of ideas.

Though Sauron and Voldemort are essentially equal in the dire threat they pose to their respective story worlds, the taboo around speaking Voldemort's name is generally more stringent and universal in its application, since his reign of terror is recent in the minds of his enemies, and the story is contained within the bounds of the comparatively small island of Great Britain. Only a handful of ancient elves living in Middle Earth



Sauron illustration by J. R. R. Tolkien, March 1954  
(The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford)



during the events of *The Lord of the Rings* remember the true terror of Sauron's reign thousands of years ago, whereas Britain's Wizarding community is populated largely by those who witnessed Voldemort's wrath firsthand just a few decades previously. Thus, Sauron's evil is more conceptual and less raw in the minds of most of LOTR's characters (before Sauron launches his all-out assault on Gondor later in the story, of course). As mentioned, it is the Gondorians alone who share a border with Mordor, and this geographic proximity is likely the primary reason for their particular sensitivity to the Dark Lord's name.

During an introductory tour of the lands around Minas Tirith, the Gondorian soldier Beregond tells the hobbit Pippin, "*We seldom name it; but we have dwelt ever in sight of that shadow.*" Though Beregond is referring generally to the evil aura of Mordor, this acts as a second-degree stand-in for the name of Mordor's master. Pippin is quite understanding of this Gondorian sensitivity to anything related to the Dark Lord. He finds himself unwilling to talk freely about Sauron's dreaded Nazgul, saying, "*I will not speak of them now, so near, so near.*" We get the sense that, in Gondor, one cannot merely

see Sauron's dark presence, but feel it in the air. To speak freely about this ambience might possibly agitate it, and provoke it into further acts of aggression.

Meanwhile, in the wizarding world of the *Potter* series, the taboo of Voldemort's name is much more on-the-nose. Wizarding youths who were born after Voldemort's mysterious disappearance learn to fear him (and the sound of his name) as a mere fact of life while growing up with traumatized parents who witnessed mass murder and mayhem carried out by Voldemort and his followers. Muggle-born Hogwarts students quickly learn to adhere to the taboo surrounding the absent Dark Lord's name or else risk alienation and antagonism from the community at large. For instance, Hermione, despite being Muggle-born, understands the significance of the taboo well enough that she never utters Voldemort's name until *The Order of the Phoenix*, and physically struggles to get it out the first few times that she does say it.

The breaking of the naming taboo often causes tension and strife between characters, but it can also provide comic relief. One of my favorite comedic moments in

the series comes in *Prisoner of Azkaban* when Knight Bus operator Stan Shunpike, in his heavy accent, describes Sirius Black as "*a big supporter of You-Know-'Oo.*" Harry, at this point still a relative newcomer to the Wizarding World, responds, "*What, Voldemort?*". The driver Ernie nearly loses control of the bus, while Stan goes white all the way to his pimples and clutches his chest as if in the throes of a heart attack. Harry's excuse that he "*forgot*" about the taboo is treated with extreme suspicion.

While the over-the-top reactions to Voldemort's name could perhaps be explained as a simple result of the discomfort provoked in people upon hearing the name of (and thus being

made to think about) a psychopathic mass murderer seeking world domination, it seems there must be some deeper meaning to it. After all, evil exists in our world as well, while these cartoonish taboos do not. For instance, it's awkward and potentially quite rude to go around flippantly talking about Adolf Hitler or any other murderous tyrant while in public, especially depending on who's nearby listening. But people certainly won't fall out of their chairs or have panic attacks at the sound of his name. This would be considered a massive overreaction even when naming the worst villains in human history. Doubtless there is some deeper nature to the worlds of *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* which invites and ultimately necessitates



Stan Shunpike, played by Lee Ingleby, reading the Daily Prophet in the Knight Bus (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Warner Bros, 2004)



such extreme reactions to the mere speaking of taboo names. That nature is, of course, the genre itself.

I believe that the obsessive regulation of speaking problematic words and names is the rational endpoint of existing in a fantasy world rich with mystical forces. Magic is not restricted merely to the use of very specific incantations channeled through magic wands. Rather, it is an ambient, ever-present natural aether, as represented in all

variations of fantasy. For example, in *Star Wars* (which, despite common misconception, is very much a fantasy series) this is known as “The Force.” Obi-Wan Kenobi describes The Force as “*an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together.*” In the realm of fantasy, magic is ever-present, connecting everyone and everything no matter the distance, as fundamental to the natural world as the vibrations of atoms.

Thus, speaking the name of a magical being is a kind of physical act, tantamount to reaching out and prodding that being in a way that is both telekinetic and telepathic. We see this basic premise at work on a much smaller scale when it comes to house elves. A master only needs to speak their elf’s name, and the elf will promptly appear. And so, naming an enemy as dangerous as Voldemort is considered a kind of foolhardy provocation, as if to invite its wrath. As the saying goes in our

own world, “*Speak of the Devil, and he shall appear.*”

Of course, no matter how stringent the warnings and admonishments attached to an established taboo may be, we can always expect the boldest heroes in a story to break the rules as a matter of principle. Front-line warriors like Harry and Hermione continue to put more and more stock in saying the unsayable as the series unfolds. Meanwhile, Ron remains the holdout, clinging to the status-quo, never relenting in his insistence that to speak of the devil is to invite him into your life – and no good can come from that. In the second part of this article, we’ll take an even closer look at the complex practical aspects of speaking taboo names throughout Potter. Most importantly, we’ll explore how the ever-stubborn Ron is ultimately vindicated in his conservative approach to the “You-Know-Who” taboo by the efforts of the leading taboo-breaker himself, Albus Dumbledore. In classic Rowling fashion, the topic is delightfully and frustratingly ironic.

**To be continued: Part Two of *And He Shall Appear* will be published in the May 2024 edition of *The Rowling Library Magazine*. ♦**



Ron Weasley, portrayed by Rupert Grint  
(*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part One*, Warner Bros., 2010)

# Muggle Misunderstanding

## A spirited defense of adult Harry Potter fandom's enduring magic.

In a recent interview with New Zealand's 1News, actress Miriam Margolyes, who played Professor Sprout in the *Harry Potter* film franchise, made some eyebrow-raising comments about fans of the massively popular book and movie series.

"I worry about *Harry Potter* fans because they should be over that by now," Margolyes remarked. She then doubled down on her stance in a subsequent interview with ABC Australia, bluntly stating, "I just think that it's for children! And if your balls have dropped, then it's time to forget about it!"

Her words have sparked a heated debate within the *Harry Potter* fandom. Many fans feel Margolyes is being dismissive and condescending toward the strong emotional connection millions have with J.K. Rowling's *Wizarding World*. However, her comments bring up an interesting underlying issue – the idea that some believe *Harry Potter* fans should "move on" and abandon the series for other fantasy works.

It's a flawed line of thinking that fundamentally misunderstands why the *Harry Potter* saga resonates so deeply with its most ardent fans in the first place.

Often there are those who say, "You should abandon *Harry Potter* and read other fantasy sagas; there are much better ones." These individuals quickly fall into a fallacy without realizing it. The *Harry Potter* series is undoubtedly of high quality, but that's not the core reason why it means so much to countless readers across generations.

There exists a profound sentimental attachment to the *Harry Potter* books and films that transcends any objective assessment of their artistic merits. The most passionate *Harry Potter* fans are not enamored simply because we deem it the indisputably finest saga ever penned. Rather, we cherish what the story symbolizes in our lives and how it has accompanied us through various life stages and personal journeys. The *Boy-Who-Lived* series has become inextricably woven into the lives and personal

narratives of millions worldwide precisely because of its unparalleled ability to transport readers on a journey that transcends the printed page. It's a modern cultural touchstone that brings joy, comfort, and nostalgic escapism to people from all walks of life.

For many, Harry's story was their first exposure to unabashed imagination and high-stakes fantasy adventure. They grew up beside Harry, Ron, and Hermione, eagerly awaiting each new book release like the arrival of an old friend. The series became a constant, providing an immersive magical realm to return to during the turbulence of adolescence and the stresses of adulthood. Potterheads didn't just read Harry's tale – they lived it.

That magic hasn't faded even now that the original book series is complete



Myriam Margolyes as Professor Sprout, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Warner Bros., 2002)



and many fans are adults. Rereading the books or rewatching the films provides a poignant reminder of the unadulterated wonderment they first experienced cracking the spine of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. It rekindles precious memories of childhood, of family, of fleeting inner freedom before the harsh realities of the world crept in. *Harry Potter* is a tether to the nostalgia and the unvarnished imagination of youth.

On a deeper level, the series' enduring themes of love, sacrifice, courage, and acceptance in the face of prejudice and totalitarianism continue to resonate, perhaps more powerfully than ever in tumultuous times. That's why zealously pursuing *Harry Potter* as an adult is about more than just partaking in an engaging fantasy world. It's about celebrating the intrinsic tie between the story and one's own reality over decades of personal evolution. For millions, the books and films aren't just incredible entertainment – they're beloved pieces of themselves.

Attempting to abruptly discard that connection in favor of simply moving on to other fantasy works, no matter how highly they may be regarded, is akin to ripping away a

beloved childhood keepsake. The flippant suggestion to "just get over" *Harry Potter* fails to recognize the series' profound cultural imprint, its intergenerational resonance, and the myriad emotional underpinnings of fans' enduring passion.

So while Miriam Margolyes' crass comments clearly came from an insensitive, surface-level perspective, they do raise an interesting philosophical quandary. When should we relinquish the fantasy worlds that captivated us as children? Is adult fandom over beloved franchises like *Harry Potter* somehow unacceptable or unhealthy? Perhaps most importantly – should personal sentiment ever be subjugated to purely objective analysis? The overwhelming response from *Harry Potter*'s vast adult following seems clear: Never. ♦



Harry Potter fans in bookstore at midnight  
(Illustration by Héctor Figueiras)

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An article by  
Rio Romero

# Dark Detentions

## The Worst Punishments at Hogwarts and How to Avoid Them

The splendor and enchantment of the wizarding world comes with a caveat – the consequences for student misbehavior at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry can be severe. While hauling cauldrons or scrubbing bedpans may seem mild by Muggle standards, the creative detentions doled out by Hogwarts staff are enough to chill any wizard's bones.

From grisly punishments that border on cruel and unusual to the merely embarrassing or unpleasant, Harry, Ron, and Hermione's misadventures provide a vivid guide to the worst detentions at Hogwarts. And of

course, the Weasley twins managed to rack up a boatload of undesirable disciplinary duties over the years too. Let's start with some of the most dreadful...

### The Cursed Quills

Few punishments exemplify the sadistic side of certain Hogwarts professors than forced use of torture quills. This dark instrument of discipline inflicts excruciating pain, quite literally carving the assigned lines into the back of the student's hand and drawing blood. Harry suffered this medieval form of detention under the watchful eye (all

of them) of Dolores Umbridge, whose "I must not tell lies" etchings remain among the series' most cringe-worthy scenes.

The cruel effects of these inhuman quills could linger too. Hermione's brief use left scars on her hand long after the fact. One can only imagine the permanent disfigurement from repeated applications, like the punishments Umbridge's Inquisitorial Squad endured at her ruthless demand.

### Prison Details with Filch

Being sentenced to detention with Argus Filch, Hogwarts' cranky caretaker, was a risk no student wanted to take. His punishments ranged from heavy physical labor like polishing awards and trophies by hand, to downright nauseating tasks like gutting lashings of putrid fish guts to refill school rat traps. And you'd better not shirk your duties or provoke the ill-tempered squib's wrath -- his defined sense of discipline could often spill into psychological torture.

Filch took a perverse glee in tormenting students in detention. His punishments were often designed

to maximize discomfort, making wrongdoers wretch in disgust. Cleaning reeking toilet stalls with aging toothbrushes, scraping built-up kitchen grease off pots and pans, and wallowing through the dimly lit castle's most cobweb-infested corners were all fair game in Filch's grim detention repertoire.

### The Forbidden Forest

Hogwarts' shadowy woods contain some of the most terrifying creatures in the wizarding world. Acromantulas, Werewolves, violent Centaur tribes, and who knows what other horrors lurk among the twisted trees and underbrush. Yet brazenly sending underage students into this threatening territory to serve detention was standard practice under Dumbledore's lax leadership. The Forbidden Forest's mortal dangers make it one of the worst, most irresponsible punishments Hogwarts could bestow.

During one such detention, Harry endured a chilling encounter with Lord Voldemort himself while hunting for a tragically injured unicorn. Given the forest's myriad hazards, it's a miracle more students didn't lose their lives simply for comparatively



Harry's hand after using Umbridge's Quill. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Warner Bros., 2007)

minor school discipline infractions.

While not explicitly life-threatening, a host of other shame-inducing detentions frequently saw students publicly humiliated or subjected to psychological stress and duress. Harry was no stranger to being trapped and forced to endure Snape's combative Legilimency probes into his mind. Draco Malfoy found himself transformed into a bouncing ferret by the impostor Moody after being caught insulting Harry behind his back. And poor Neville was often the

cruel victim of Snape's wrath, forcing him to disrobe his boggart fears in front of his classmates, or serve time assisting the critical Professor Sprout in the stifling greenhouses. Even McGonagall wasn't above doling out harsh detentions to keep her lions in line.

Given the risks and lack of accountability among professors openly deploying psychological torture techniques, it's essential for any prospective Hogwarts students to study up and avoid landing

detentions altogether. Here are some tips:

- ♦ Attend all your classes and avoid chronic tardiness.
- ♦ Master basic charms like the Muffliato and practice strict OpSec in common areas.
- ♦ Stay vigilant at all times and avoid suspicious situations that could go awry.
- ♦ Know all school rules, prohibited areas, and disciplinary policies inside and out.
- ♦ Ration prank supplies carefully and keep Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes use to a minimum.
- ♦ Be respectful of faculty at all times, even ones you loathe like Snape or

Umbridge

- ♦ If you must break rules, make sure it's for a noble and justifiable cause like Dumbledore's Army.
- ♦ Perfect your Marauder's Map skills and learn all Hogwarts' secret passages.
- ♦ For the truly mischief-prone, mastering the rules of time travel via a Time-Turner or becoming an unregistered Animagus could also provide key detention avoidance benefits, as proven by Hermione and the Marauders...

Of course, mindfulness, discretion and restraint are the safest routes. Hermione's impeccable class



Unicorn in the Forbidden Forest, by Jim Kay (Illustrated Edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Bloomsbury, 2015)



participation, diligent rule-following and brilliant academic performance ensured she largely avoided any major disciplinary repercussions during her Hogwarts tenure. Though even she faced embarrassing boggart punishments after being caught by the petty schemer Dolores Umbridge.

Ultimately, it's wise to weigh any delinquent actions against the lasting physical and psychological harm of Hogwarts' harshest punishments. Sometimes, a simple lecture from a professor or point deduction for your House may be the better option. Because while the brave exploits of Harry and his friends make for entertaining reading, having your hand permanently mutilated with your own blood is a harsh price for any student to pay - even in the wizarding world where such medieval disciplinary standards inexplicably persist.

So heed this cautionary guide, and keep your wits about you on those hallowed Hogwarts grounds. Otherwise, you could find yourself at the mercy of Filch's mops, on the wrong end of Snape's wand, or facing down Aragog's deathly brood deep in the Forbidden Forest. And that's a detention none but the bravest or most foolish would wish to endure. ♦



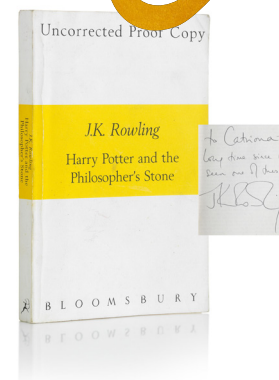
David Bradley as Argus Filch, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Warner Bros., 2002)

# Auctions

March  
2024

Compilation by  
David Schmeling

These are some of the most important auctions of Harry Potter books in the past month for the collector community, featuring three differentes copies signed by J.K. Rowling: Two uncorrected proof copies, and a third printing of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

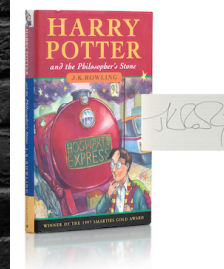


## Signed & Inscribed Proof Copy of Philosopher's Stone

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Uncorrected Proof Copy, inscribed and signed by the author.

Sold for £35,840

Bonhams, Mar. 20

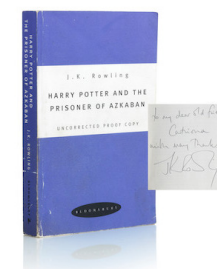


## The Philosopher's Stone (Signed)

Hardback 3rd printinf of *The Philosopher's Stone*, signed.

Sold for £5,760

Bonhams, Mar. 20



## Prisoner of Azkaban, Proof Copy (Signed)

Proof copy of *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, signed by the author.

Sold for £23,040

Bonhams, Mar. 20



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