

Fellowship & Fairydust



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Submissions Wanted

Fellowship & Fairydust

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**CAUTION
SPOILERS
AHEAD**

EDITOR'S NOTE

So this is the 20th anniversary of the publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. And this is our Hogwarts themed issue. To kick-start this auspicious literary endeavor, I, in my editorial capacity, will follow suite from past *Ink & Fairydust* issues and proceed to outline my personal testimony of how the topic of interest has impacted me and how I first stumbled into the wide and wonderful (?) Wizarding World of Ms. Rowling's Neighborhood...

cues organ music

For over 20 years of my life, I somehow managed to live without the Boy Who Lived. I mean, I knew of his wider existence in the literary and cinematic spheres, mostly because it was simply unavoidable via pop culture merchandise, from cardboard castle cut-outs to toothpaste brands proffering a geeky little British kid with prehistoric specs and a gravity defying broom stick. But he had no major influence on my childhood developmental progress (actually...zilch!), and I felt no real desire to delve into a magical dimension of the United Kingdom when I found the place magical enough as it was through its rich and absorbing history, pageantry, and culture.

However, through the gentle proddings of friend and foe alike (stand and be accounted for, Earl Chatham...as part of the former category, of course! ;)), I was finally persuaded to give it a whirl, and ordered the first 3 films from the library. By the end of this media emersion experiment, I found myself overwhelmed by a profound sense of...shall we say mystification?

Somewhere between "You're a lizard, Harry", bathroom-invading trolls, a battle with a turtle-faced turban guy, sock-snatching Gollum-like house elves, a zillion creepy spiders chasing a flubber-esque flying vehicle, and a lot of hocus-pocus gibberish, I was left cross-eyed and car-sick, contemplating taking vertigo prevention medication and maybe some magical formula to erase all memory of my alternative life that unfolded for the previous 6 hours.

Abandoning my peer pressure post in front of the telly, I felt refreshingly empowered as I bid adieu to the fantastically fiendish franchise and high-tailed it out of the Forbidden Fandom Forest as opposed to electing myself a martyr for the cause Harry-holics Anonymous. This especially true since The Golden Boy, thanks to his glowingly punky teenaged persona, was getting increasingly fly-swatter-slappable by movie 3.

That having been said, there was one character who did interest me enough to look up his fate after the fact online. It was the toughie British boarding school teacher, Professor Severus Snape, who, due to my historical sensibilities, I felt like I could relate to far better than the rest of the kaleidoscopic cast. That, and because he was just as exasperated by his surrounding fictional universe and the residing characters as I was. And because he satisfied my deepest yearnings to snark and/or bonk Harry and his know-it-all/know-nothing (you can guess which one is which) side-kicks *cough*.

Plus, I mean, he doubles as Colonel Brandon from *Sense and Sensibility* in the Jane Austen universe, right? Everybody's gotta have a heart for the Colonel, who rescues that red-head *Titanic* chick from the slick charlatan dude who left her lamenting in a torrential downpour of the English countryside's famous liquid sunshine (she's always had water proofing problems, just like he's always had red head wooing dilemmas).

To consolidate his self-appointed position as consoler-in-chief, Brandon also makes a grand stand to win her favor by daily reading her his musty tomes of Elizabethan poetry in a snooze-inducing Shakespearian monotone while she is slumped lethargically in a lawn chair, convalescing from pneumonia after her rainy day roguish romance was washed up and Mr. Comfortably Boring began to seem like the safer bet for a stable yet monotonous future!

So yeah, he was my fave from the get-go.

This sense of character kinship degenerated into a state of dismal dismay and disillusionment when the Harry Potter plot twists became more sinister and outlandish, culminating in the shock factor studded scene of the Snape character getting brutally mauled by a giant CGI snake on YouTube, which left me, and evidently

many others who shared the experience, slightly cinematically traumatized!

At the time, my thoughts ran as follows:

Geez, J.K., did you have to be so gruesome in the process of venting your teacher disapproval ratings and vendettas?

Where's the sense of humanity?

Where's the chance for redemption?

You finally had a character with some 3-D potential here!

Like, the one original solid dark chocolate bunny in an Easter basket surrounded with tooty-fruity jelly beans!

He deserved a better ending than that!

All the emotional build-up and tension just went down the drain!

And c'mon, wouldn't he have had anti-venom??

*He's the chemistry-potions teacher, for crying out loud!! *sighs**

*Literary life just isn't fair... *sighs again**

light bulb goes off in head

authoress flicks open her notebook to write alternate ending of the Snape saga

So...yes. I started writing fan-fiction, in spite of the fact that I was far from being a fan. And surprisingly, I found myself garnering a little following over on fanfiction.net and beyond. In the process, I met a lot of people familiar with the fandom, either more focused on the pros or the cons. We chatted, debated, exchanged ideas, and ultimately I starting asking them for Hogwarts centered submissions to post out on our magazine website. We got so many, it seemed most appropriate to make it the topic of a themed issue, which happened to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the series.

In these pages, you will find a wide variety of HP related stories and articles, from ardent fans to ambivalent observers to those who are passionately opposed to the franchise altogether. You will discover alternative plotlines aplenty, character analysis, and personal testimonies to stack any convention audience. And take heart, grieving Snape-lovers; he gets more than a fair shake in this volume as well!

As a Christian-based enterprise, we hope it will bring a well-rounded and spiritually in-tune perspective to an oft-times controversial topic, and give everyone something to go for in the way of a fun and insightful reading experience. And if you find yourself too much of a fish out of water, you can always click together your ruby slippers and apparate away to read the non-Potter content on our blog, *The Fellowship of The King*...

Hmm...*jots down fandom crossover idea*

Yours Literarily,

Avellina Balestri (alias Rosaria Marie), Editor-in-Chief of *F&F Publications*



What's New at F&F



We are pleased to announce that the winner of our **New Logo Design Contest** is Amanda Pizzolato! Amanda was an enthusiastic contributor to both The Fellowship of the King and Ink and Fairydust and continues to contribute to Fellowship and Fairydust! As the winner of the contest, Amanda will receive a \$10 gift card to Amazon.com!

We sent Amanda's design to Ian at *Great Scot! Productions* to be finalized, and he did an awesome job! Check out his website at legendsandsongs.weebly.com!

Did you like the mug on the cover? We're working on them! Check out our new **Patreon** account! We're looking to find patrons to help us meet our F&F bills, update our site and hopefully even begin creating merchandise like that mug! Check it out at patreon.com/fellowshipandfairydust!



Take Good Care of Her

By Sheankelor

Based off of Adam Wade's song by the same title, which was written by Arthur Kent and Ed Warren.

Severus stood stock still, his eyes trying not to mist over. Tears were not common for him. As a matter of fact, they'd been perfect strangers since before he started primary school, but today, at this moment, his heart gave them permission to enter his eyes. Through the encroaching water, he watched as a black head leant closer to a red one. Turning on his heel, he stalked away, refusing to watch his heart being ripped out and destroyed before him, and instead sought the coldness of the Dungeon to soothe the ache filling him. He found an empty classroom to hide in, as he knew the dormitory would be full of people and questions. He could hear them without his dorm mates there to give them a true voice.

'The mudblood is with Potter.'

'See, Severus, she wasn't worthy of anything - she picked a blood traitor.'

'A mudblood and a blood traitor - they make a good couple, don't they?'

He leant against the closed door, the tears finally accepting his heart's permission. The darkness surrounding him hid them as they slipped out of his eyes and trailed down his cheeks. He bit the palm of his hand to stifle his sobs. His chest heaved as if to throw the pain away, or perhaps it was his tattered heart being forcefully shoved back into its place, bruising it worse than before. Knocking his head against the solid wood, his entire body shook as wave after wave of emotion rocketed through him. Anger, sadness, frustration, envy, jealousy, denial, and eventually bitter acceptance roiled, shaking him until he was sure that all his hopes and dreams were flung from him to lay in the dust at his feet. Gasping, he curled into himself, attempting to fend off the invisible attack.

His breathing slowed to a normal pace and the shakes left him as his emotions settled.

A voice in the back of his mind mockingly told him he should congratulate Potter. That's what one does when someone wins in a competition - you congratulate the winner. Severus knew he had technically lost Lily at the end of their fifth year, but he had still lurked around her. Just being near her was his greatest pleasure. It didn't matter if she noticed him, if she acknowledged him. All that mattered was that she was there. She was his greatest treasure - far greater than potions, the Dark Arts, or even being accepted by others - and Potter had taken her away from him. There was no way he could lurk about while she was with him. It would hurt too much; the pain would cut into him like a knife, reopening the wound that was trying to stitch itself closed.

Heaving a belly-deep sigh, he brushed the tears away, banishing them back to their former status. He just had to accept that Lily loved James Potter more than him. He would bow out gracefully, but he couldn't congratulate them. *Not Potter for winning, nor Lily for picking someone who would raise her status in the Wizarding World.* He pushed the jealous thought away - he knew Lily wasn't interested in status. He ran a soothing hand down his robes and hair. He doubted he would receive an invitation to the wedding, but even if he did, he would decline it. There was no way he could watch her there with Potter, accepting his ring, his vow, his kiss.

Severus squared his shoulders and strode out of the room. He was ready to face the rest of the school.

§§§§§§

Sirius, Remus, and Peter all peered over James' shoulder, staring at the unfamiliar barn owl. It clicked its beak at them, prompting Sirius to give it a piece of bacon. The owl then flew off, leaving the tightly rolled scroll next to James' plate.

James poked it with his wand, checking for any pranks. When nothing happened, he opened it. The other Marauders read the mysterious letter even as James was looking about the Great Hall. Giving up on seeing who the writer could be, James looked back down at the single sentence emblazoned on the parchment.

"Take good care of her."

Leaving a Mark:

The Christianity of Harry Potter

By Bradley J. Birzer

“Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing that Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn’t realize that love as powerful as your mother’s for you leaves a mark.”

-*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (1997)

Sometime around the year 2000, I was flying to Houston. On the way to the Detroit airport, I stopped at a grocery store in Ann Arbor. This was pre-9/11, and I stocked up on some drinks and food to take on the relatively long Detroit-Houston flight. In the checkout line, next to the horrific tabloids and child candy bait were a stack of mass-market paperbacks with the interesting name, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. The cover was rather plain, but I was taken by the title. Having nothing else to read at the moment, I grabbed a copy. From the moment I sat down for that flight, I found myself utterly immersed in J.K. Rowling’s world.

In part, my interest was purely academic. I was already writing a book on J.R.R. Tolkien, and I found this new book a wonder. Tolkien had argued that fantasy could never be set in the modern world as the technology of the modern era would ruin the atmosphere. While I would never claim Ms. Rowling’s writing to be at the level of Tolkien’s (not even on the same plane of existence!), I was taken with the author’s ability to set such a profoundly imaginary world in the midst of our own whirligig.

In equal part, however, my interest was purely selfish. I found the book absorbing at the level of pure gut-entertainment. The cleverness of it all, the character stereotypes, the Arthurian element of Harry, the inventions, the heroism. From the outset, it seemed rather clear to me that Ms. Rowling knew her mythology—Celtic, Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and classical—and that a sense of Christian charity and justice pervaded the book.

Immediately after devouring the first book, I bought and dove into the second and third and eagerly awaited the fourth. I not only purchased but read, within a day of their individual releases, the fourth, fifth, and sixth books. Each one brought something new to the mythos as a whole, and I found myself a privileged member of this fantastic world. Then came number seven. Released on July 21, 2007, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* bored and disappointed me as much as the previous six had enthralled me. The ending of the entire series, I thought, was nothing but cheap. It went against almost everything the story had created and advocated in the first six stories. Where was the heroism, the loyalty, and the justice that had seeped through and pervaded every page of every other book Ms. Rowling had published? Where was the mystery, the wonder, and the deep humanity of it all? My disappointment in the final book soured me. Whereas I had given serious thought to writing something long and scholarly on the series (for what it would have been worth!), devoting a few years to the task, I found myself beyond disappointment at the end of the summer of 2007. Indeed, I felt utterly apathetic about the subject.

I had hardly given J.K. Rowling or Potter another thought until about six weeks ago. My fourth child, ironically enough named Harry (age ten), had just picked up the first of the series. The infectious delight of it all—the boy, the school, the magic, the friendships—radiated from my Harry’s eyes as he read, giggled, grimaced, and kept reading.

Our Harry is very much his own person, but he also wanted to share this new joy with all of us. To do so, he started a Saturday Birzer family book club.

In an exclusive interview with this young reader, Harry told me: “I love the books because they’re full of magic. And, I’m a nerd, and I love everything science fiction and fantasy. Plus, they’re just awesome.”

Maybe enough time had passed since my disillusionment and apathy, or maybe I was just thrilled to see my Harry devour books with such intensity. Whatever the reason, almost a decade after forgetting the whole thing, I picked up the Harry Potter books again. Two weeks into my re-reading, I am somewhere in the middle of the third book. It all feels very fresh and clever again.

Whatever J.K. Rowling’s own political, cultural, and social stances as expressed may be—her retroactively labeling the main mentor-wizard of the Potter series a homosexual and her disappointment with the previous pope give clues to her leftist leanings—the books are, for the most part, deeply traditionalist and humane. Perhaps even more deeply, they are Christian.

In the time-tested tradition of western heroes, Harry suffers immense loss as a baby. An evil wizard has killed his parents. Orphaned, Harry grows up friendless, neglected, and abused by his mom’s wickedly gossipy relatives, a “Muggle” (ordinary) family. Yet, this ordinary family is deeply dysfunctional. Relatively middle class and lacking in any imagination, the father, tellingly, makes drill bits. He is, rather happily, a cog in the machine of modernity. The family craves the latest luxuries, repeats the conformist drivel they hear all around them, and desire nothing more than to be equal but slightly better off than their neighbors.

When clever and resilient Harry discovers at the age of eleven that his parents were wizards and that he is one as well, his destiny as a unique and powerful person becomes apparent. Gaining several close friends and attending a school for wizards, Harry finds himself in increasingly dangerous situations. Whatever his mischievous (and often quite normal boyish) faults, Harry never fails when it comes to loyalty or behaving heroically. Through the first three books, Ms. Rowling reveals—explicitly and implicitly—that her magical world is a traditional Socratic and Judeo-Christian world based on the seven traditional virtues and ethics, and that our modern world is based on power and manipulation. The evil, in Rowling’s magical world, have been conned into believing that power and manipulation transcend love and will work in the magical world as well. Such action, however, only leads to their own condemnation.

In one of her more explicitly Catholic moments, the main evil character in the story kills and drinks the blood of a unicorn. “The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price,” one character explains. “You have slain something pure and defenseless to save yourself and you will have but a half-life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches your lips.”

It would be difficult to find a more interesting Pauline (1 Corinthians 11:29) moment in modern children’s literature.



FOR ANY ONE WHO EATS AND
DRINKS WITHOUT DISCERNING
THE BODY EATS AND DRINKS
JUDGMENT UPON HIMSELF.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:29



A Hollow Promise

Harry Potter and the Betrayal of the Readers

by Kat Clements (alias Hikari Katana)

It took my friend Sarah two years to convince me to read the Harry Potter series.

I was in middle school and, as an introverted misfit recently transplanted from homeschool to Catholic school, I had a certain level of contempt for anything popular. I'd also read an article about the smash-hit phenomenon of Harry Potter in a *Time for Kids* magazine, and that only hardened my resolve to never crack open any of those tomes. I remember thinking how weird and dumb the names and words were. I mean, who calls a school "Hogwarts"? Having read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* only a few years prior, I still believed that a "real" fantasy saga should possess names with the proper level of gravitas.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire was hot off the presses when I finally caved to Sarah's entreaties and consented to at least read the first book (more to stop her nagging than out of any real interest).

To my utter shock, I found myself devouring the series and looking hungrily for more. The unique fun and charm of Hogwarts and its inhabitants drew me in; it was unlike any other fantasy I'd ever read. I had sort of a vague idea that wizards and witches had to learn magic, but always pictured it in a medieval or monastic setting, or in a Jedi Master and Padawan style of instruction. This was the first time I'd encountered a story with characters roughly my age in relatively modern times that actually showed you how wizards learned. (Jane Yolen's novel *Wizard's Hall* predates Harry Potter by eight years, but I didn't learn of its existence until after I'd been introduced to J.K. Rowling's work. Both authors say the similarities between the books are purely coincidental.) And so I found myself under the same spell as much of the English-speaking world, clamoring for more of Harry's adventures.

The year 2003 arrived and with it rose *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. Things had gotten pretty serious with Voldemort's resurrection, and I wanted to know what happened next. So I settled down and began to read. Within the first chapter I paused, checked the cover to make sure I'd picked up the right book, and continued, albeit with a deepening frown. This book seemed to be set in the same world. The details were the same, the character names, the events that they referenced... and yet this didn't feel like a Harry Potter book. It felt... dark. Angsty. Adult. Harry was a jerk, everything felt emotionally jagged, and one of my favorite characters died!

I couldn't believe it. I hoped that this was an aberration, a single-book dive into the darkness. Unfortunately, this trend continued, and in many ways became even worse. I kept reading because I wanted to know what happened, but this was not the story I'd signed up for.

Now, I don't want to browbeat people who enjoy the later Harry Potter books. I can even understand their argument about having the books become darker as Harry matured and the stakes rose. I get that from an artistic perspective, I really do. But I didn't *like* it.

The reason I enjoyed the first four books in the *Harry Potter* series was because of their balanced mix of levity and danger. Yes, Harry and his friends get into lots of scrapes and face real dangers. But there was a certain whimsical charm that never really left them. There was never a sense that characters I deeply cared for would die, even though lots of other bad things could (and did) happen. Some people dislike that sense of security in a book, but I prefer it, especially with younger protagonists.

The angst from book five onward was jarring compared to the relatively lighthearted tone of the previous ones. Because I had no idea that this change would occur or that it would happen so fast, I ended up being emotionally sucker-punched. I felt like I'd been given two separate continuities that got mashed together by accident. I'd signed up for one story, but halfway through got another one that didn't match. (It didn't help that the last two books, *The Half-Blood Prince* and *The Deathly Hallows*, felt rushed, like they needed another few rounds of editing before going to the printer.)

The worst part is that I don't think this abrupt right turn was necessary. I feel like the series could have maintained the original tone without sacrificing the sobriety and import of the latter half of the story. There have been other books that managed it, like *Deltora Quest* by Emily Rodda, *The Unicorns of Balinor* by Mary Stanton, or *Song of the Lioness* and *Circle of Magic* by Tamora Pierce. While these books may not be the exact same type or have the same style as Harry Potter, there was a certain level of consistency maintained throughout their series that helped avoid tonal whiplash. I know that J.K. Rowling claims that she mapped out the entire story of Harry Potter before writing the first book, so all of this may have been intended, but I never really recovered my love for the series after this deviation.

In the end, while I still say that I like the Harry Potter series, it comes with a huge caveat. When I picture the universe of Harry Potter or say I'm a fan of the series, I'm referring strictly to *The Sorcerer's Stone*, *The Chamber of Secrets*, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, and *The Goblet of Fire*. The darker, adult tone of the last three books felt like a betrayal of the promise of the original four. While I don't begrudge the enjoyment others take in the series as a whole or those who liked the later books, I remain wistful about the rest of a story that none of us will ever read.





Grandparents' Day

By BlueWater5

Ginny looked at the clock as she wiped Lily's face. Any time now... and sure enough, she heard the thunder of his feet as James and Albus came bounding into the kitchen. "Mommy, mommy, guess what?" James shouted. "Our school is having a Grandparent's Day! Can Grandma and Grandpa come?"

Albus jumped up and down. "Please, please, please! You know Grandpa loves muggle things!"

Ginny pulled her boys into a motherly embrace and then lifted Lily from her chair. "Tell me more. It sounds exciting!"

Before James could begin, Harry came out of the fireplace, dusted off his cloak and gave Ginny a kiss. "I'm home!" he said as he was attacked by his three children.

Ginny laughed. "So we've noticed! James and Albus were just filling me in on school today. James was telling me about ..."

"Grandparent's Day!" James interrupted.

Albus broke in. "We'll walk to school with Grandpa and Grandma and show them to our rooms and they'll meet our teachers!"

Harry was bemused. "So Grandma and Grandpa are going to school with you? When?"

"Next Friday!" James suddenly looked solemn. "They'll want to come, right?"

"Well, let's ask them," Ginny responded. She threw some powder in the fire. "Hi, Mom! The kids would like you two to visit their school next Friday morning. Are you available?"

"What a kind invitation!" Molly turned around. "Arthur!" As he was coming to the fireplace, she smiled to herself. She had never sent her children to a muggle school, preferring to teach them herself until they went to Hogwarts. When Harry and Ginny had told her they were sending their children to a local school she'd been wary. Now she could see for herself what the school was like.

Arthur's face appeared. "How are my favorite Potters this afternoon?"

"You can come to school with us next Friday!" said James excitedly.

"And you'll meet our teachers and see where we sit!" added Albus.

James continued, "Please, can you come?"

The flames of the fire accentuated how Arthur's eyes lit up. "Well, I certainly can't miss that! I've never seen the inside of a muggle school before. How exciting! What time should we be there?"

"7:30 will be fine," said Ginny. "We'll fill you in on the details when we come to the Burrow this Sunday afternoon for tea."

Eager to begin their trip to the school, Arthur and Molly walked into the Potter kitchen at seven the following Friday morning after apparating just outside the front gate. The grandchildren flew into their arms.

"My, you're looking smart today," Arthur said with a smile. Molly disentangled herself. "Are you two ready to escort us while your parents head off to work?"

"Hold on, Dad," Ginny said as she gave him a hug too. "Albus has been growing so fast his favorite t-shirt is getting tight. Let me just loosen it a bit." Ginny waved her wand. She smoothed out his hair at the same time. "There you go! Now, off you go, and have fun!"

The four set off in high spirits. Their chatter made the ten minute walk pass quickly and they soon arrived at the local primary school. James excitedly tugged his grandfather to his classroom while Albus took Molly down a different hall.

James and Arthur stopped outside a classroom at the end of a corridor. As he walked inside, Arthur saw that the room was bright, with windows lining one side. A multitude of colorful children's drawings were hung on the cork boards on the walls. A short woman with a kind, round face, dark, curly hair and glasses, wearing a school sweatshirt and cotton slacks, greeted them.

"Hi. I'm Mrs. Ackerly. James, this must be your grandfather," she said with a cheery, friendly smile.

James beamed with pride as he let go of Arthur's hand. "Good morning, Mrs. Ackerly. This is my grandfather, Arthur Weasley. Grandpa, this is Mrs. Ackerly."

Arthur smiled and held out his hand. "Hello, Mrs. Ackerly. James talks a lot about how much he enjoys coming to school."

The teacher took his hand. "James is a good student with an active imagination. He's a delight. Please look around. I'm sure you'll spot some of his creative works."

As he gazed around the room, Arthur's eyes fell on a fish tank in the back corner. "James, is that a real aquamar?" he whispered to his grandson.

James giggled at his grandfather's mistake. "Yes, Grandpa, it's a real aquarium. Want to see it?" They walked over to it.

"Fascinating," Arthur said, looking intrigued. Peering at the tank, he added, "I'm surprised the fish like it so dark, though,"

"Oh, Mrs. Ackerly said the light was burnt out. But look at this, Grandpa." James pointed down with a conspiratorial look.

Arthur sucked in his breath. "Oh, my, what a wonderful plug!" He leaned over to take a closer look.

"Do you know anything about aquariums?" Startled, Arthur bumped his head on the table holding the fish tank. Rubbing it, he stood up. "I'm just interested in the mechanics of one," he told Mrs. Ackerly.

"I was hoping you would when I saw you looking at the tank and not the fish. The light stopped working a month ago and it's beyond its warranty."

Warranty? Arthur made a mental note to ask Harry and Ginny when he took James home. He always liked to learn about muggle activities. "Perhaps if you can show me ...?"

James tugged his grandfather's arm. "Grandpa can fix anything!" he stated.

Mrs. Ackerly flipped the switch. Arthur watched closely. "I don't see anything happening."

"And that's the problem!" Mrs. Ackerly laughed.

Arthur looked down and James and smiled. "My guess is that you need a new plug. I just happen to have an extra one with me and the tools I need to replace it. Would you like me to take care of it? It would only take a minute."

"A plug? I thought the light was burnt out." She looked doubtful. "Well, if you'd like to give it try, there's nothing to lose I suppose. Oh, Ashdon's grandparents just arrived. I'll talk to you later." She walked to the door.

Arthur bent over the James conspiratorially. "Just watch a master at work!" He leaned over to the plug again, looked around to make sure no one could see him, and did a small, quick flick with his wand. "See? After I switched the plugs I just did a charm to have a light come on when anyone touched that switch, and to turn off if they touched it again. The plug I had was a duplicate anyway, and now I have a type I hadn't seen before. Now, don't tell anyone, all right?"

James nodded, his enthusiasm bubbling behind his eyes.

Arthur looked around the room again. On the back wall, one corkboard had a handwritten label on top saying "When I Grow Up."

Tacked to it were sheets of paper. Arthur strolled over. On the board each of the students had completed the sentence, "I want to be ..." Arthur read some of the responses. Annie wanted to be a veterinarian, Daniel wanted to be a fireman, Georgia wanted to be a movie star. He found the one he was looking for. James had carefully written, "I want to be a magician." He gave a broad smile and looked for James who came over. "I think that that can be arranged, James."

Mrs. Ackerly, temporarily free, came over as well. "James seems very enthusiastic about being a magician," she smiled.

Arthur nodded. "I guess it runs in the family," he said smoothly. "I have a son who runs a shop selling supplies to magicians."

"I want to go to the magic school!" James interrupted.

"Of course you will, young man!" Arthur answered. "But you have to wait until you're old enough."

"I've heard of clown schools," mused the teacher. "It makes sense that magicians too would have a school. Well, you certainly have an interesting family. James said he had an uncle who works with wild animals in Romania. And of course with his father working for the police and his mother as a sports reporter, he has a lot of different role models."

Arthur desperately tried to remember what Ginny and Harry had said were their cover stories. "True. I and my third son have desk jobs in the Ministry, and another son works in a bank."

Mrs. Ackerly stopped smiling. "Before Remembrance Day last November, James also mentioned an uncle who died in battle. Was that your son too, or was he from his father's side?"

Arthur felt a brief pang as he always did when Fred was mentioned. "That was my son."

"I lost a cousin in the desert too. He was a Royal Marine." There was a short, awkward silence. Mrs. Ackerly glanced around the room to make sure she wasn't needed anywhere. "James is very creative. Would you like to see some of the short stories he wrote?"

"Of course!" The three of them ambled over to the teacher's desk.

Mrs. Ackerly walked behind the desk and pulled out a heavy oak chair. She opened a drawer, took out a folder, and quickly leafed through it. "Here they are!"

Arthur wasn't surprised that the "short stories" were each a paragraph or two long. He ruffled James' hair as he read the first one. "Nice story, son."

The teacher smiled. "It's interesting that he has the prince and princess fighting together against an evil wizard. At this age, most boys ignore girls or write about rescuing princesses, not fighting side by side with them."

Arthur looked down at James. "You know your mom well. I can't see her waiting to be rescued either."

Mrs. Ackerly handed him the second sheet. "Here's another nice story, this time about dragons."

Arthur skimmed through it. After carefully scrutinizing the accompanying crayon illustration, he recognized the dragon was a Hungarian Horntail. The grandfather smiled to himself, thinking Charlie would appreciate how well James depicted the species. He then carefully phrased a question to James. "I like how the three managed to tame the dragon. I'm curious, though – you have two knights who are boys and one who's a girl. Doesn't the other knight have a girlfriend?"

James looked up with a serious look. "Yeah, but she's still too young to ride a dragon yet. Dragons are very dangerous even if they are tame, you know."

"Oh, of course." Arthur softly chuckled. He was looking forward to telling Harry and Ginny about James' stories.

Mrs. Ackerly smiled at James. "James actually got into a bit of dispute with Gregory when he read the story to the class. Gregory said girls couldn't be knights. Of course I mentioned Joan of Arc."

Arthur smiled, making a mental note to look up this person. She was obviously an important muggle.

"I was thinking about Aunt Hermione," James confessed. "She's brave enough to tame and ride a dragon and SHE'S a girl. Well, used to be, anyway. Now she's a grown-up."

Arthur grinned. "You're right, James. She's even brave enough to ride a dragon and THEN tame it."

"This aunt sounds like another interesting family member! What does she do?"

Arthur thought quickly. "She's sort of an, umm, human rights activist."

"Well, she must be very successful at it if she could tame a dragon."

"Yes, she's a very successful advocate for the rights of others," Arthur agreed, thinking of the werewolf, house-elf, and goblin legislation Hermione had managed to get through the ministry.

Mrs. Ackerly waved a hand. "Our reading nook is over in that corner. James, why don't you show your grandfather your favorite books?"

James pulled his grandfather over. Bookshelves were arranged so as to make a semi-enclosed area. Within it, pillows were scattered on the floor and a chair was set with its back against the wall. A half dozen of James' classmates were lounging on the floor, some in quiet conversation. "Grandpa, look," whispered James. "This is one of the books that talks about magic!"

Arthur looked curiously at the book. "Really? Can I read it?" He was interested in how the muggles would portray magic. James gave him the book and he sat down on the chair. James stood next to the armrest.

"Jack and the Beanstalk," Arthur read aloud. "Hmm, that doesn't sound magical!"

James giggled. "Read it, Grandpa!"

Arthur turned to the first page. "Once upon a time, a poor widow lived with her son..." He looked up to see the other children in the nook looking up at him. "Would you like to hear the story too?"

Eager with anticipation, they replied with a chorus of "Yeah!" and "Can we?"

"OK, gather around." Arthur was reminded of when he used to read to his children. "So, a poor widow and her son lived in a cottage." He stopped to look at the picture. Something was very wrong with the book. He unobtrusively fingered his wand

under his sweater and pointed it at the picture. The children suddenly became entranced. “Hey, the pictures are moving! It’s like a TV!”

Arthur suddenly remembered that muggle pictures didn’t move. However, the kids looked so entranced ... He came to a sudden decision. One time wouldn’t hurt. He continued.

Mrs. Ackerly looked over. The sudden excitement in the reading corner had caught her attention, but things were now quiet. Mr. Weasley seemed to be holding the children’s attention, so she resumed greeting grandparents.

Arthur was enjoying reading to a small crowd. He turned another page. “But overnight, one of the beans sprouted and grew and grew and grew until the beanstalk reached into the clouds.”

“See, Grandpa?” interjected James. “Magic beans!”

“My, you’re right!” smiled Arthur.

“Wow, it looks like the beanstalk is actually growing!” declared one of the girls in an awed voice. “That didn’t happen last time we read the story!”

At that, Arthur looked a bit guilty and froze the picture. “Isn’t reading wonderful? It can put images into your mind so that you can see things come alive! Now, to continue...” However, seeing the disappointed faces before him, he secretly fingered his wand again. Maybe the movements of the pictures should be a little more subtle.

It seemed that all too soon he was at the end of the story. “Jack and his mother lived happily ever after,” he concluded. He looked at the children on the floor. He unobtrusively gave a final two flicks of his wand. The pictures froze.

“OK, everyone, I think Mrs. Ackerly is indicating that it’s time to go to the next activity.” He stood up and placed the open book on the rocking chair. Reluctantly, his audience stood up too.

At the end of the day, as Mrs. Ackerly was straightening up that afternoon before heading home, she picked up the book from the chair. She was about to close it when the picture caught her attention. It was odd – she had read that story repeatedly to her class, but she’d never noticed how the faces of the townspeople looked just like the faces of the students in her class. She looked at it for a moment, then closed it and put it back on the shelf.

Earlier that morning, as his brother and grandfather walked away, Albus grabbed his grandmother’s hand more tightly, tugging her eagerly. “This way, Grandma,” he told her, happy to be her guide today.

At the end of the corridor a woman stood by a door to a classroom that buzzed with noise behind her. “Miss Morrison, this is my grandma, Mrs. Weasley,” Albus said politely.

Molly put out her hand. “A pleasure to meet you! Please, call me Molly.”

“I’m so glad you could come today,” Miss Morrison replied, smiling. She was a short woman with blond, wavy hair and lively blue eyes peering out of a slightly scarred but friendly face. She seemed full of energy. Molly liked her immediately. “I’ve been looking forward to meeting more of Albus’ family. As I told his parents, I’m impressed by his awareness of current events.”

Molly smiled back, a bit confused but hiding it. Maybe Ginny and Harry talked about muggle news in the house, even though she’d never heard them doing so.

At least she hoped the teacher meant muggle news and that Albus hadn't been mentioning something from the Daily Prophet. "Ah, are you referring to anything in particular?"

Miss Morrison glanced down the hall to make sure no more grandparents needed to be greeted at the moment. As she entered the sunny classroom, Molly saw that some other grandparents were already there. Miss Morrison looked around to make sure none of the others needed her right away and then motioned to her old oak desk which had a guitar on the chair behind it. The three walked over to it, Albus still holding his grandmother's hand. The teacher picked up a month old newspaper and showed Molly the front page picture of the newly-elected prime minister leaving 10 Downing Street with some aides in the background.

"When I showed this to the class last week, I asked them who the man in the photo was. I got some interesting answers! Albus was the only one who was able to identify it as a picture of our new prime minister."

Molly looked more carefully. In the background, Minister of Magic Kingsley Shacklebolt could be seen. The photo must have been taken when he was making an introductory visit on the British Prime Minister. It looked like Kingsley was about to leave, but because the picture was still it was hard to tell; the still muggle photographs could be confusing. Molly smiled. As an old friend of the family dating back to Order days, Kingsley was a frequent visitor to the house. That's who Albus had identified.

Miss Morrison hesitated and went on. "Albus mentioned that you'd had dinner with the Prime Minister in the past?"

Molly looked up, trying to decide how to answer. "Well ... actually we're good friends with one of his top aides. I'm sure that's who Albus was talking about."

Miss Morrison looked slightly disappointed. "That makes more sense." She gave a brief laugh. "I'd almost been hoping that we'd be able to get a letter from the Prime Minister for the class."

Molly smiled. "I'm sure that wouldn't be a problem. Our friend has quite a bit of influence in the government. Just let me know who it should come to." She thought to herself how Kingsley might even be willing to suggest a personal visit the next time the muggle Prime Minister was in the area.

Miss Morrison beamed. "That would be wonderful! I'll write up the information and give it to you before you leave." She looked up at the door. "If you'll excuse me, though, right now I have some more grandparents to greet."

"Of course! Albus can show me around."

Albus took Molly over to the window. On the sill was a row of flowers in small pots. "We planted these a couple of weeks ago," said Albus. "See, this one's mine."

Albus' plant drooped to one side. "I think you need to water it, dear," Molly suggested.

"That takes too long. Grandma, can't you ..." Albus looked around and lowered his voice, "you know, just make it bigger?"

Molly gently hugged him. "We don't have to use magic for everything," she whispered to her grandson. "Sometimes we can just use muggle ways."

Albus looked at her as he thought about what she said. "Mom and Dad say that sometimes magic can't be used because it would give us away. Is that what you mean?"

“Partly. But sometimes even if we can use it we shouldn’t.”

Albus nodded seriously and then looked around. “Grandma, do you want to see where we read?” Before she could answer she found herself tugged over to a small nook filled with children’s books. A half dozen children, sitting or laying on cushions, had books in front of them. Cushions were scattered on the plush rug and a plush rocking chair was in the corner. “What’s your favorite story, dear?” Molly asked Albus.

“Well, none of them are as good as yours,” Albus whispered. Then, speaking normally, he said, “I like the stories with magic in them.” He looked over to a large brown-haired boy as if he expected something to happen.

The boy looked up and rolled his eyes. “Dork! There’s no such thing as magic.” Molly narrowed her eyes.

“So you say,” Albus calmly responded, and looked at his grandmother.

Molly sighed and gave Albus a wink. “Well, we can still read stories about it. Albus, why don’t you pick one out?”

Albus picked up one with a house made of what looked like gingerbread and candy on the cover. Molly sat down on the rocking chair and took the book in her hand. “My, what’s this one about?”

“It’s about how two children almost get eaten by an ugly wicked witch!” a thin boy who was nearby informed her excitedly.

Molly looked at him sharply. “Of course I’ll be happy to read it to you, but don’t you have a story with a nice, pretty witch?”

A girl with short blond hair who hadn’t appeared to be paying attention looked up. “But witches are ugly and wicked!” she declared confidently.

Molly sighed again. She would have to make sure Ginny and James talked to Albus about the wicked witch stereotype that so many muggles seemed to hold. She didn’t want her children exposed to such prejudices which is why she had kept her children away from muggle schools. Ginny and James, though, had wanted their children to get to know their muggle neighbors. Molly looked at the girl. “I’m sure some are wicked, but others must be very nice and even pretty,” she said, looked at Albus who smiled at her. “Just like there are good and bad people in every group.” She thought for a moment. “In fact, would you like me to read you a story about a poor, misunderstood witch?”

The girl looked curious. “OK.”

Molly reached into her purse, subtly waving her wand. She pulled out a copy of Babbitty Rabbitty and the Cackling Stump. “I just happened to have this with me.” She looked around the small nook. The children were all looking at her expectantly. She smiled and sat back in the rocking chair. “Now, gather around if you want to hear the story.”

When Miss Morrison was putting the books away after class, she paused when she saw one she didn’t remember seeing before. She smiled as she flipped through it – it must have been hidden on one of the shelves. “Hmm,” she mused to herself. “This is certainly different from the typical fairy tales the students usually hear!” She resolved to read it to entire class the next day, and instead of putting in it the bookcase she left it on her desk as she gathered up her belongings. She never heard the soft whisper of “good night” from the book as she turned off the lights and shut the door behind her.





Everyone Loves... Snape?

By Sarah Levesque

As Avellina and I slowly collected articles for our Harry Potter issue of Ink & Fairydust, we were astounded when story after story came in, all about everyone's least favorite teacher, Severus Snape, and nearly all showing him in a good light. Apparently he's not so hated, after all. And I think I'm starting to understand why.

First of all, Snape had a horrible past. Growing up with an alcoholic Muggle father in a poor factory town, life must have been extremely difficult for him, as many fanfiction authors have written about, (including our own Avellina in "Legend of the Lost"). While I don't think it was explicitly said in the books or the movies – and I could be wrong, as I don't have a copy of either with me as I'm writing this – it would not be surprising if Snape had grown up hungry, dirty, and disliked by neighbors because of his father. Not much got better at Hogwarts, where his only friend, Lily, was sorted away from him, and where James Potter bullied him. When he grew up, he became a Master of the Dark Arts, then double spy for Voldemort and Dumbledore, which made his already hard life even tougher. This difficult life makes it easy to pity him and understand him better – he is stern and sarcastic because he feels the need to put up a strong front against bullies like his father, James Potter, and the Death Eaters. He belittles people because that's what he grew up with. Does this make it acceptable? No, but once we gain understanding of why a person does what he does, that person – whether real or fictional – is more relatable. With this scant knowledge of his upbringing and his years as a spy, it is easy to wonder what these experiences were like, and to want to imagine them.

There are two more reasons I can see why Snape is looked on more benevolently than he seems to deserve at first glance. As we all found out at the end of the books or movies, Snape wasn't actually a bad guy. His exterior was armor to protect his inner self. While he didn't like children and belittled them horribly, when any were in danger, he did his utmost to protect them, no matter how annoying they were, no matter how much he had ignored them or belittled them or disliked them. Even when he killed Dumbledore, it was because he had been asked to. Perhaps some of us write about Snape because we feel sorry that we didn't see him as a good character before it was revealed.

Lastly, and possibly most importantly, everyone who has a romantic side loves Snape because of his deep and unwavering love of Lily Evans Potter. Even though she didn't return his love, and instead married his rival and enemy James Potter, Snape still loved her. Let's admit it, Snape's "always" broke our hearts. He was extremely loyal to her, no matter what happened, and because of it, he was loyal to her son, no matter how hard it was to be loyal to James' son. What exactly happened to Snape when Lily died, we wonder. What happened each time Snape did something he knew she wouldn't approve of? How often did having Lily's eyes save her son? More things to wonder about, to write about.

I think this is why we write about Snape. Knowing just a bit about his shabby background, about his hard life, about his hidden goodness, about his love, we are left to wonder about his experiences and to make them up as we think best. Another thing that caught my fancy was how Snape reacted to praise, which made me wonder what he would do if he saw this article. I think his reaction would be something like this...

- - -

"Rubbish," Snape muttered as he balled up the parchment. "Where do they get this sickening sentimentality?" He marched down the hall to try to intercept any other of these reports. But Hogwarts was full of them; every student seemed to have a copy. Snape narrowed his eyes and heaved a great sigh.

"Severus," came the voice of Professor McGonagall.

"Minerva," he returned evenly, pivoting on his heel to look at the Head Mistress.

"Have you read..."

"Unfortunately, yes."

"Unfortunately? Severus, it was a good article. There's no reason why it shouldn't be circulated, that people shouldn't know that you are not a villain."

"They needn't have looked into my personal life." The thought of Lily still lingered in his mind, contrasting sharply with the remembered pain of his father beating him.

"How else would they have explained you?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"They needn't have bothered," Snape said and turned away to stride angrily down the corridor, his robes billowing satisfactorily behind him.



the DENTIST

By Prunus Padus



“Hello, my name is Dr. Granger. How are you today, Mr. S...”

The woman in the white coat looked up abruptly when she read the name of her new patient off the clipboard.

“Oh.” Her eyes widened. “It’s you.”

The man stopped on the doorstep to the little office, regarding the room with suspicion.

“Yes.” His voice was rougher than she remembered.

She was sure he recognised her, and groaned inwardly at what would surely be a very difficult examination. But at the moment, there was no trace of a surly attitude in his eyes. In fact, they were firmly fixed onto the large, blue chair in the middle of the room.

He took a wavering step backwards. “Actually...” His hands balled into fists at his side. “Actually, I’m afraid there has been a bit of a mistake...” He backed away even further.

She was almost relieved. This, she could handle.

“Don’t worry, Professor Snape.” She sat down by the computer, making sure to shield the equipment tray from his view. “I shan’t do anything to you unless we both agree upon it. Now, won’t you come inside and tell me why you’re here?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” He frowned. “My tooth hurts.”

She smiled. “Alright. When did this pain start?”

“I don’t know.”

“A week ago? Two?”

He shook his head. “I said I can’t remember. It’s been a while.”

“Ah.” She started typing. “When was the last time you saw a dentist then?”

He studied the large schematic drawing of a molar that hung on the wall with morbid fascination. “I didn’t.”

Well, that certainly explained a few things. She put latex gloves on. They were a bright pink, which she often found soothed the more skittish patients.

“Please, have a seat.”

He straightened. “What will you do?”

“I’m going to have a look at your teeth. Just a look. But I need you in this chair. You’re rather tall, you see. Now, just lie down and get comfortable.”

Hesitantly, he did as he was told, folding his hands tightly over his stomach.

She brushed away some of his hair as she fastened the dental bib. There were a few silver streaks in the

black now, and they gleamed in the bright exam light.

“This is the probe.” She held out the small instrument for him to see. “I use it to feel for cavities and to remove plaque. It shouldn’t hurt at all.”

She rolled her chair so that she would sit close to his head, noticing for the first time an angry red stripe of newly healed skin that crossed from his upper lip to his nose. It was obviously from a spell of some sort.

“Did you try to heal yourself?”

He nodded warily.

“With the *evanesco*?”

“No, I’m not mad,” he grumbled. “It was a severing charm. Much more containable.”

“Well, that won’t work,” she tutted. “Teeth are attached to the bones of the skull and jaw. Besides, you should know better than to aim a wand at your own face, Professor.”

He sighed heavily. “Yes, yes. I’m here now, aren’t I?”

“And that is very good for you.” She adjusted his chair. “Now, open up, and I’ll have a quick peek. There you go.”

She bent closer, supporting her lower arm on his chest. “Are you a smoker?”

He couldn’t do more than hum, what with her probe occupying his mouth, but she had a lot of experience with interpreting those.

“Yes, it figures. Your teeth have quite a bit of discolouration. It doesn’t necessarily mean they’re bad, though.” She adjusted the light. “Open up a bit wider, so I can see your molars.”

He grunted unhappily, but obeyed.

“The x-ray showed that you have two fully erupted third molars in your upper mouth. They actually don’t look too bad, which is a rarity.” She looked at him sternly. “Third molars are the most difficult to clean though, so keep that in mind when you brush.”

He looked up at her with the guilty kind of submission that is common to all dental patients.

“I don’t expect those in your lower jaw to cause any problems,” she said, “as you’re beyond the age when they usually erupt.”

She picked up the mirror. “Soo, let’s see... You have a few small cavities at the back there. Three...four... but the real problem, I think, is this cracked molar.”

His hand jerked up when she probed on a sore spot. He lightly touched her elbow before once again resting his hands on his abdomen.

“Just relax,” she soothed. “Do you grind your teeth a lot?” She gave him some space to talk.

“I used to, but not so much anymore.”

“Alright.” She continued the examination. “Bruxism often occurs during the night, so you might not know about it. An alternative explanation is that your teeth are rather uneven. It might put extra stress on certain places.”

She straightened. “It’s a rather deep fracture. It’s no wonder you’re in pain. Unfortunately, those are quite hard to treat.”

“Oh.” He made as though to get up, looking relieved. “Well, in that case-”

She stopped him with a hand on his arm. “Hold it. I’m just telling you I can’t save the tooth. There is no reason for you to continue like this, though. We’ll simply remove it.”

His eyes widened. Apart from that time in the Shrieking Shack, she’d never seen him frightened before. “You’ll pull it out?”

“Don’t worry,” she said. “I’ll give you a local anaesthetic.”

His head made a soft thump against the headrest. “How can you stand this job? I never took you for the type to enjoy torture.”

She laughed brightly as she prepared the syringe and laid out the necessary equipment for tooth extraction. “I like to think that I’m helping people,” she said mildly. “I know in my heart that I do, though it’s not the kind of profession where people shower you with gratitude.”

His eyes crinkled slightly at the corners. “You grew up, Miss Granger.”

She smiled. “I suppose so. Now, this might cause some mild discomfort.”

He gripped the armrests tightly as she injected the anaesthetic, his knuckles turning as white as his face.

“You’ll feel some pressure now, but it should be manageable.”

He watched her eyes intently as she started working with the dental elevator. She could feel his heart thumping heavily beneath her elbow.

“I’m going to switch to the forceps now. Are you holding up?” She interpreted his head jerk as an affirmative.

It was not a difficult extraction, because his tooth was already somewhat loose, but as she clasped it with the forceps, it split down the middle, causing her grip to slip.

“Hn... ouch...” His eyes watered from the pain. For a moment, he squeezed them tightly shut.

Without thinking, she wiped a stray tear from his cheek. “I know. Sorry about that.”

Dark brown eyes pleaded with her to finish quickly.

“The worst part is over. I’m just going to pick out the pieces and clean it up.”

All done, she placed a piece of gauze into the hole where his tooth had been. “Keep this there for half an hour or so, then remove it carefully. It might bleed for a while, but try not to disturb it.”

He nodded, looking slightly harassed.

She almost felt sorry for him. “The cavities I mentioned, we will deal with another time. I think you’ve had enough for one day.”

He sighed. “Quite.”

“Would you like a quick polish while I’m at it, though? It’s completely pain-free, and might remove some of the discolouration.”

He shook his head empathically. “No, no. I want to go home.”

She laughed, allowing him space to sit up. “I won’t hold it against you.” She removed her gloves as he gingerly felt his jaw. “You should eat soft foods for a few days. Lay off cigarettes for seventy-two hours, and don’t use a straw to drink. If you have lingering or renewed pain after three days, come see me immediately.”

He nodded again, and she had to suppress the urge to brush a stray lock of hair out of his eyes.

“I will.”

“Alright.” She smiled. “Have a nice day, Professor Snape, and take good care of yourself.”

“I will, Miss... Dr. Granger.”

“Please, you may call me Hermione. It’s not as though we’re strangers.”

He smiled crookedly, and she found that all in all, he was a rather handsome man. Yellow teeth and everything.

“Thank you... Hermione.”

“Now, remember to brush daily and floss at least twice a week,” she chirped.

“Yes, yes,” he grumbled unconvincingly, accepting the script for painkillers that she offered him, and hastily making for the exit.

“If you shirk, I’ll know!” she called. But when he was gone, her smile was indulgent.



My Duty Forbids It:

The Historical Context of Professor Severus Snape

By Avellina Balestri

One of the first things that struck me about the character of Professor Severus Snape as portrayed by Alan Rickman in the Harry Potter film series was how in sync it tended to be with the militaristic teaching styles of British boarding schools as commonly practiced well into the second half of the 20th century. He made a perfect stereotypical black-cloaked, pale-faced, long-nosed schoolmaster, who did not suffer fools lightly, took no “cheek” from his students, and would not wear his emotions on his sleeve.

As a history buff, the familiarity of such a character was a welcome relief in a sea of mystery and magic. Oddly enough, just watching him menacingly walking down the lines of his students, with eyes keen to pick up anything other than all due concentration on his lecture and their notes, made me feel a certain amount of historical security, consistency, and familiarity that the wizarding world in general seemed to lack.

In true British fashion, Snape was portrayed as having a “stiff upper lip”, and while he certainly went hard on his students, he also went hard on himself when it came to accomplishing what he saw as his duty. Indeed, while he was unquestionably a flawed and bitter man, with grudges and prejudices running deep (also in sync with the fierce house rivalries and class divides prevalent in British schooling and society), he also was profoundly courageous with a keen sense of obligation to others to whom he was bound in one form or another.

He may be infamous for verbally snarking his students, snatching their house points, and giving them long detention sentences for seemingly insignificant infractions (especially if they came from Gryffindor House), but you would also have to walk over his dead body to inflict any real harm on those in his charge. He is regularly harsh and petty, but at the end of the day, he’s also willing to make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of others, expecting very little in return. This is not a matter of frivolous affection, but dead-set duty, and very much in keeping with British school and military traditions.

As a student of British military history, I am more than familiar with a panoply of figures with this general character flavor, such as Major John Pitcairn, Sir John Moore, General Simon Fraser, the Duke of Wellington and many more who displayed this mixture of tough disciplinarian execution and verbal contempt for their soldiers (“the animals”, “the scum of the earth”, “dirty contemptible dogs” - you name it; they said it!), but also outstanding bravery on a personal level and a self-sacrificial duty to those under their command. The stories are numerous, and could easily make very fine cinematic dramas in their own right, of the officers putting their personal safety second in favor of their larger duty to secure the day and maintain the cohesion of their fighting force and the wellbeing of those under their command.

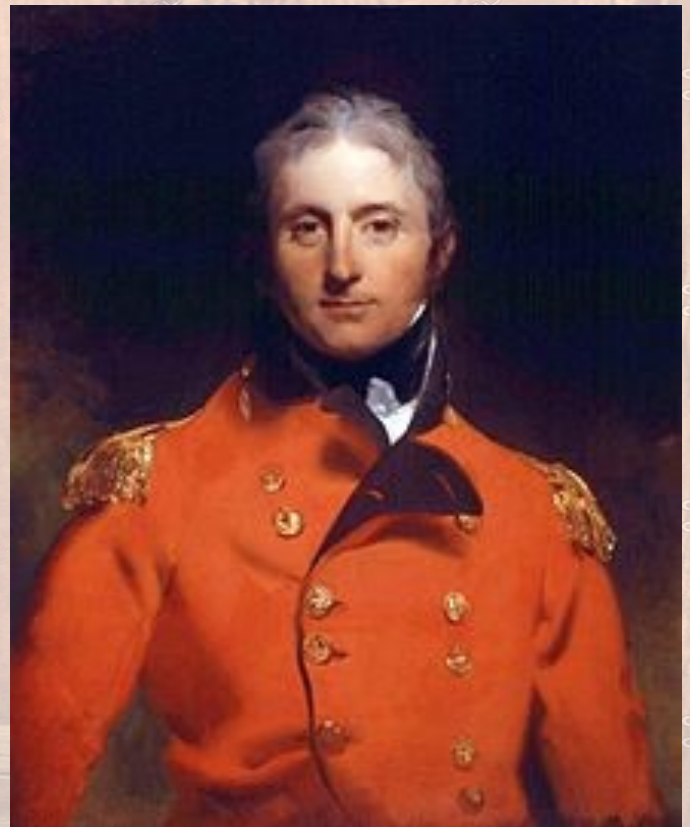
One story is of General Simon Fraser, one of the main British commanding officers at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, who refused to stop trying to rally his crumbling lines of defense, even when he had become a conspicuous target for American marksmen who were instructed to aim for his red coat. When his aide begged him to dismount from his horse, Fraser, realizing that his mere presence steadied the scattering men, famously replied, "My duty forbids it." He was subsequently mortally wounded and died the next day.

Another story is how Sir John Moore had always been a strong disciplinarian and taught his men never to cry out if wounded for fear of disrupting the other soldiers. This sounds quite harsh at first, but he put his word into practice when a cannon ball tore open his shoulder as he led his men at the Battle of Corunna in 1809, and he did not utter a sound, even during the excruciating surgery without the comfort of anesthesia. He was tough on his men, but also tough on himself.

Leadership carried with it responsibility and a sizable risk factor, but it was meant to mark out a gentleman, to distinguish that which he was, and how he could lead other men, and the emphasis of obeying those above you, whether you liked them or not, was intense. Yet a strange sense of bonding commonly developed between officer and soldier, to the point that when the officer was killed, the entire regiment, or even the whole army, experienced something of an emotional breakdown, even if they'd never much cared for the guy before. He came to symbolize the central point, the synthesis of their efforts, and the one who, in spite of everything, would get them through the worst of it. The point was, where he had led, the men had followed.



GENERAL SIMON FRASER



SIR JOHN MOORE

They were hardcore, no-nonsense men whose lives and deaths reflected a heroic level of dedication that left a mark on those who served with them, even up to the shedding of their blood on the battlefield. They were the products of the same traditional schooling system that was meant to pound young boys into men, prepared to serve and possibly die for king/queen and country. It could be excessively Spartan at times, but it wove into the fabric of the wider society. Indeed it was not unheard of for teachers and professors to raise companies of volunteers and double in a military capacity during wartime, especially when a threat to the homeland was impending.

Other times, they would be put to work in other military capacities, such as Colin Maclaurin, the mathematics professor from Edinburgh University who doubled as head of the fortifications construction when the city was under siege by Bonnie Prince Charlie's army during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Maclaurin's teenaged students were promptly snatched from their university halls and made to march to the gates of the city in case of an impending attack. But universities of that era had a strong military bent, and could be called a form of boot camp, with the schoolmasters and professors serving a similar purpose as drill sergeants and officers who could later command these young men, who often "donned the king's livery" and joined a regiment in arms as early as fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen.

Snape feels perfectly at home in this setting, which is so strongly a part of what comes forth from and goes back into the fabric of the British cultural psyche, and continued long after military emphasis began to fade in the aftermath of the Empire on which the sun never set. Without this historical background, a character like him simply makes no sense in the wider picture. He becomes an anomaly instead of the norm. But for centuries, Snape-like teachers were the norm (please watch documentary clips from British boarding schools into the 1960's-70's if you don't believe me...and for a classic literature take on it from days of yore, try *Tom Brown's School Days*), and Snape in this capacity would have been harsh and militaristic with or without his additional personal issues (such as lack of toleration for the Golden Boy of Gryffindor-dom!) revealed in the larger HP storyline. The basis for his teaching style would already have been laid, no melodramatic background saga necessary.

Schools could often be as much about drilling as teaching, and punitive forms of discipline were commonplace. In both books and movies, corporal punishment is never used at Hogwarts until the arrival of Professor Umbridge and later the Carrows, but the feel of the surroundings is evocative of an older age in which it might be utilized. While Snape never does anything of this nature beyond a snatch by the scruff of the neck and bonk with a paperback textbook to chattering students, it isn't a major stretch of the imagination to envision him giving Harry a good switching (especially following his



Colin Maclaurin

sterling “you don’t have to call me sir” moment!).

But all that having been said, Snape does not show any signs of being a genuine sadist, nor, indeed, were many of the teachers of his martial caliber that preceded him in real history. In fact, in later episodes, he makes a point of purposely giving his students comparatively minor detentions to protect them from torture under the mentally warped Umbridge and the monstrous Carrows.

Though imperfect and hard-edged, the man does not seem to be completely without heart. Indeed, another line in the story has Dumbledore saying: “Don’t be shocked, Severus. How many men and women have you watched die?”

Snape replies, “Lately only those whom I could not save”

This vaguely reminded me of the story of the Duke of Wellington, known as the Iron Duke for his unyielding toughness and stoicism. He had dealt in the arts of blood and steel for much of his life, but had proceeded with the utmost stiff upper lip possible. Indeed, he might be called the poster child for the British way in that department. However, at the end of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, his greatest and most costly victory, he finally had a breakdown due to all the bloodletting when the casualty list was read to him. He never completely recovered from his traumatic experience at Waterloo and would often go silent when the name of the place was mentioned, famously remarking, “Next to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained.”

Another element of being a professor was the fact that you assumed a title. You earned the right to be addressed as “sir”, to exert authority, and expect obedience. It was the weight of leadership only “gentlemen” were meant to carry. However, if the flashbacks are to be given credence in Harry Potter canon, Severus Snape had an upbringing that was the epitome of “growing up rough.” He was the son of a factory worker in the Midlands of England, an area of the country hit hard by the Industrial Revolution. It was also stripped of its natural resources, particularly its dense forests, so that the wood might be used to build ships for the Royal Navy.

It had a history of being associated with movements against tyranny, be it Robin Hood in the Nottinghamshire forests challenging the unjust hunting laws, or the “Cropper Lads” who responded to being put out of work by the factories by smashing the machinery in night raids. Even the contribution of England’s “heart of oak” through the Midland forests might be said to have contributed to the downfall of one of the greatest tyrants, Napoleon Bonaparte. It was the birthplace of the “free shires” and the “common land”, as well as the area where J.R.R. Tolkien grew up and after which he based his Hobbit Shire. It was also an area scorned for being a place that brought forth tough, hardworking, and ill-polished people, in contrast to the wealthier and more tranquil southern counties of England that did not have the same history of struggle to shape them.

Snape, therefore, according to the British social scale, would have had an extremely hard time overcoming the stigma of his background as being of the working class from the Midlands. In addition, with a mother who has the Irish name Eileen, it might be feasibly surmised that the immigration which was common to factory towns was in his bloodline, also. Going to a school of status, in his position, would have been a miracle in and of itself; it also would have invited much bullying from those of “better stock”, what Brits

commonly call “mouthy-southies.” This, I think, is the best and simplest explanation for James Potter and his cronies beginning the trend of torment. It also would go a long way in explaining Snape’s need for the powerful patronage found in the wealthy Malfoy family.

But this background would also greatly affect the personal growth of an ambitious young man struggling to rise above his circumstances against the odds. This would might also have been a factor in his decision to adopt the style of teaching that he does. If he has been raised in the Spinner’s End of a factory town, he has already been through hell and back. This was the low end of town where the impoverished and maltreated workers of dirt-poor English and immigrant background spent their lives from youth to old age, often working under deplorable and dangerous conditions, subjecting themselves to the various diseases contracted from working amidst the factory chemicals from sunup to sundown. The wages were pitiful, and oftentimes liquor was the cheapest way to drown the misery, as it is indicated in the case of Snape’s abusive father.

A folk song “The Chemical Worker’s Song” sums up their plight: “And it’s go, boys, go; they’ll time your every breath, and every day all in this way, it’s two days nearer death... and every bob made on the job you pay with flesh and blood...”

If this is not enough to harden a man, I don’t know what is. Furthermore, to finally rise in status to become a professor would most likely be accompanied by a great sense of insecurity about holding onto the position you finally achieved after fighting so hard to rise. This would add to the pressure to make his authority an unquestioned reality, and failing to be respected, he would at least be feared. Perhaps not a preferable method, but a rational enough one, for fear has a way of breeding the desired results, and pushes the questions of one’s background to the perimeter. The fact that he overcame such circumstances to become “titled”, to become a “gentleman”, is something that would also contribute to his suppression of that inner self that would always be a “working man”, and which might just as well translate into a fighting man when the time was right.

In historical language, I am tempted to call Severus Snape “a man of his times”, even though Hogwarts “time” is something of an enigma, cross-sectioned between the 1990’s, the Victorian Era, and the Dark Ages, which is one of the many issues I have with Rowling’s world-building. Evidently, she based the character of Snape after her own chemistry teacher from grade school, circa 1970’s. My own father, educated in Catholic schools in Eastern Coast USA in the 1960’s has tales to tell of his teachers that make Snape look like a pussycat. This includes nuns banging his head off a blackboard and brothers washing his mouth out with soap. My mother, public school educated in the same area, has her own stories to tell about militaristic teachers who ruled with an iron fist.

I am not trying to say this type of treatment was ideal for the development of young minds. What I am saying, though, is that harsh teaching methods have been commonly employed through history, even within living memory of this generation, and the accusation that Snape’s entire comportment can be summed up to his personal issues (although they certainly played a part) is bogus. This was a generational tradition that tended to be passed down, and it’s not hard to imagine that most of these “toughies” were themselves tough “toughies” and learned the name of the game from their predecessors from time et memoriam.

What we should be able to do is critique historical trends without casting modernistic



judgments on the participants. It is a basic principle of solid historical scholarship, which sadly seems not to have crossed over into the realm of fantasy. This, I think, is rather a shame because it sets the stage for teachers of this style and caliber being automatically relegated into the villain category, constantly accompanied by creepy, melodramatic music to punctuate the point (and by the way, they still exist...I had a music teacher who was not a far cry from him, and after slowly getting to know her better, we actually became quite close, and I still wear the turtlenecks she gave me out of her closet).

It actually reminds me quite a bit of the portrayal of red-coated British military figures in many modern blockbuster hits like *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Patriot*, and *Battle of the Brave*.

Oh, and fun fact: Jason Isaacs, the British actor who played the obnoxiously blondie death-eater Lucius Malfoy, also played both the villainous Colonel Tavington who randomly massacres most of the main characters and some side-shots in *The Patriot*. He also plays the wonked-out nutcase version of General James Wolfe, who spouts poetry incoherently with a queer gleam in his eye in *Battle of the Brave*. Isaacs evidently had to plead with Rowling to let his character keep making reappearances in the franchise in order to keep from going back to be bayoneted or riddled with bullets on North American battlefields.

But getting back to Snape, a much more compelling portrayal of the character in my opinion would have turned him into a more “ordinary”, if unpleasant, fixture, and put him in a wider variety of “ordinary” situations that enabled him to come into a more human light by gradual twists and turns of interaction. If a subplot like this could have been sustained and his backstory revealed more gradually, it would have instantly appealed to my human interest level, instead of the excess of hocus-pocus stunts involving an evil wizard dude who refuses to give up the ghost for seven long books and eight long movies until a keystone cops chase over a super-wand kills off a sizable chunk of the cast (human, animal, and CGI alike) and bleeps them off the wizarding radar. And I suppose Alan Rickman can almost count as collateral damage...

But in all actuality, being in a daily class being taught by the same person, tough as they may be, for over five years, does start to wear down the intrigue, which would in fact have been a good thing for all, including the storyline, which felt artificially puffed up on plot twist steroids and totally lost me in translation. Instead of going for a dark and kinky back-story far and away down the line, I would have much preferred a Snape who was just...Snape, a tough, flawed teacher, but one who everyone came to realize was human, and even heroic, in his own way, after all. That, I think, would have been far more relatable to the majority of us who have had tough teachers who *gasp* weren't spying for *Get Smart's* KAOS, after all!

And if you're in his class and haven't figured out how to survive Snape's methods (which, honestly, don't change much from film to film!) by the third movie, you're pretty darn dense. Basically, he's not here for fun and games, he's not a fan of kids (especially if you're a smart-aleck that looks strikingly like your bullying, brattish, girlfriend-stealing dad *spoiler* cough *spoiler*), he has no patience for your fumbings, and your best chance for surviving his monotone lecture sessions is to listen up, do your homework on time, and generally try and be inconspicuous and stay out of his way so you can bloody well pass the class. While he may still make his grudge-carrying, house-favoring tendencies manifest, your self-preservation chances will have at least risen to plausible proportions.

Oh, yeah, and maybe don't talk back to him...or correct him about page numbers....or get caught wandering the halls after curfew...or knock him out with a wand blast...or invade his super-secret memory stash...or drive a car into a tree on campus...or set his cloak on fire...or blow up his lab...or comment about his nasal dimensions...because life is precious, right?

Learn some respect, Mistah Pottah, or you'll wind up just like your fathah!



Altering Eternity

by Niaf

Some days are just not worth leaving the lab, or so Severus thought the morning of the 31st of October in 1981. If he was being honest with himself, quite a few days were just not worth it. End of discussion. He was bone tired. He'd been working far too many hours and he could hardly remember when he'd slept last. He rubbed a long-fingered potion-stained hand across his eyes in an effort to push away the headache he could feel building, blinking tiredly at the potion that he was watching turn from a dark midnight black to a pale violet by degrees. It was almost ready. This would be the last of the dozen potions the Dark Lord had requested three days ago. Honestly, all Severus wanted at this stage was to go home to Prince Manor and catch a few well-deserved hours of sleep in peace without anyone disturbing him.

He let his hand fall to his side as he continued to watch the delicate mixture bubble away. Long strands of greasy hair hung limp around his face. His black outer robes were draped on the back of the chair set behind his cluttered desk. Vials and bottles of ingredients sat interspersed with fresh and dried plants on his worktable. His knives and measuring scales were set neatly amongst the chaos. Great, he would still have at least another two to three hours of cleaning to do before he could leave, and that was if he used magic. Looking at the pile of cauldrons set in front of the sink, he decided magic would have to do. At this point he would just have to make sure he sterilized them before he used the room again next time he brewed. Not that he didn't do that out of force of habit anyways, seeing as this was a publicly used space the Malfoys allowed any of their 'guests' to use. Severus shivered at the memory of some of the nastier things he'd discovered in this room.

Finally the chime went off, pulling him out of his reverie and back to his work. The potion was a delicate, almost clear, violet. Perfect. He pulled the cauldron off the heat to cool and turned off the burner. He set about tidying up. His open potion case was soon filled with neatly placed vials as he waved his wand wordlessly around his work area, sending the ingredients back into their slot. He wouldn't use anyone else's ingredients; it was just not worth the risk of contamination with these more delicate mixtures. Severus had his pride after all, and his potions were perfect. That was just something he wouldn't compromise on. Making a mental note of what needed filling and replacing, he closed the case and cast cleaning charms about the room until it was just as spotless as it had been when he entered. Satisfied, he turned to the cauldrons and made short work of spelling them clean and away. Nodding to himself, he turned back to his potion to find a twirling, dancing mass on the bottom of the largest cauldron, and knew it was done. Decanting this particular potion took time and the finest ingredients.

Once he had exactly six equal portions of the potion divided up into diamond vials, Severus knew he was ready to deliver the crate of finished products to the Dark Lord. He unrolled the sleeves of his white button-down shirt, flinching slightly as his hand brushed the brand on his left arm. How he hated that mark. He let his eyes close slightly in regret and sorrow at what price he had already paid for his mistakes. Pushing away the maudlin thoughts, he clasped the buttons on the sleeve closed and pulled on his flowing outer robes. He slid his potion case into his pocket. He gathered up his books, notes, and notebook, making a neat stack tied with twine and shrank the lot, sliding it in his pocket. Gathering the six vials, he set them next to the glass and crystal vials in the large crate that held the potions in a stable environment. He'd worked hard on making these small crates that were spelled with a series of wards to keep their contents safe during shipping and travel.

He lifted the crate and briefly wondered if he should slip into his Death Eater robes before heading before the Dark Lord. Deciding he was just too tired and couldn't be bothered, he walked out of the lab and up the dungeon steps towards the Malfoys' reception room. About a month ago they had all moved to Malfoy Manor after the wards around Riddle Manor had been torn down in an Order Raid. A few of the Death Eaters were caught, but the Dark Lord escaped. Severus was slightly disappointed, but he'd known that would happen so he hadn't dwelt on it too much. He disliked being here enough as it was, and scowled as he turned another corner and climbed more stairs. Merlin help him, how he disliked the layout of this mansion. It was like the Malfoys just HAD to make everyone walk through the family hall so they could see the portraits of ALL the generations of Malfoys. Severus sneered at the moving portraits and strode through the hall with his robes billowing behind him in his typical bat-like movement. He loved the derogatory sneers and comments he received from the disgruntled portraits. Oh how he'd love to just tell them to shut it, or better yet, cast a permanent silencing charm on the lot! Pompous arrogant dunderheads!

The door to the reception room was ajar and as Severus neared it, he could hear two voices from within. He'd just started to step through when the first voice spoke loudly and he froze in startled surprise, nearly dropping his crate in the process.

"I know their location, my Lord!" The voice of Peter Pettigrew filled the hall with his loud joyful cry. He sounded like Christmas had come early, bearing loads of candies.



"Silence, fool!" the Dark Lord hissed darkly. His voice was much quieter and Severus nearly had to strain to hear it.

"But my Lord. I've done it. I've got their location and I know how to provide you with the location. Please, my Lord, won't you give me the honor of your mark now?" Pettigrew pleaded, his voice still resonating clear down the hall. The sheer volume of the petulant tone grated on Severus' refined hearing.

"Enough, worm! You will be silent!" the Dark Lord hissed in a deadly whisper. Before the cowering man could respond, the Dark Lord cried out with delight-filled malice, "Crucio!" Pettigrew's screams were instantaneous and nearly obscured the Dark Lord's next words. "Severussss, do come in, it doesn't become you to skulk in the shadows."

"Forgive me, my Lord, I was on my way to deliver the finished potions," Severus said in his smooth baritone voice as he pushed the door all the way open and walked into the room with his strong confident stride.

"Excellent, Severus. Leave them here; you're dismissed. Oh, do send dear Bella in on your way out, Severus," the Dark Lord said as Severus was about to walk out of the room, having left the crate on the side table the Dark Lord had indicated.

"Of course, my Lord," Severus said, bowing before departing the room and heading up towards the practice room on the second floor where he knew Bella and the Lestranges would be. He made quick work of delivering his message and leaving Malfoy Manor.

Severus apparated to his family's mansion, Prince Manor. He figured it was the safest place to go from Malfoy Manor. He was still thinking about what he'd overheard. He knew the Dark Lord was obsessed with the prophecy, something he had never thought of when he'd first overheard it. How foolish he'd been. How young. He knew countless innocent children had been affected by the war. Though even in his insanity, the Dark Lord had never

targeted a magical child for death or torture. Not that it made it right, but it had been one of the only reasons Severus could bear to continue as a Death Eater. He had been that scared child once; he couldn't stand to look at a child who suffered and not be reminded brutally of his upbringing.

Forcefully pushing those thoughts aside, he focused on the task at hand. He couldn't very well go straight to Godric's Hollow dressed as he was, smelling of the potion lab and exhausted beyond measure. No, he needed to shower and at the very least down a strengthening and invigorating draught before he contemplated his plan of action.

He made his swift way up through the winding hallways and staircases, idly wondering why all ancient pure-blood manors had to be built in a most infuriating labyrinth. It would be so much easier if everything was in nice linear paths. He shook his head. Merlin, he was truly tired for his thoughts to wander from topic to topic like that. Sighing, he pushed open the door to his bedchamber and stepped up to his wardrobe, selecting a fresh button-down shirt and black trousers, black frock coat and outer robes as well as a cloak, since it was likely to be chilly where he was headed. By the light of a candle on his bedside table, he threw his selections on his bed, ignoring the rest of the room. He pulled out the rest of what he would need and turned towards his ensuite bathroom.

Severus stepped into the burning spray of hot water with a soft sigh. He let his mind wander to the problem at hand as the water did wonders to loosen his tight muscles. He indulged in a rather lengthy shower, secure in the knowledge that nothing would happen until nightfall, the Dark Lord's favorite time. After all, they were to meet tonight at Riddle Manor in the graveyard to celebrate Samhain. The Dark Lord would likely wish to kill the Potters at nightfall, as that was the beginning of Samhain's power, right when the veil was thinnest. The peak of power would come at midnight, and the Dark Lord had a ritual he planned to perform then. That also might involve the Potters, for the Dark Lord's moods had been inching deeper into insanity for the last week. They had all been tasked with finding the 'child of Prophecy' before October 31st.

Severus wondered how best to go about warning them. He hadn't directly spoken to Lily since their row outside the Gryffindor Common-room in Fifth year. Not likely to be a good response there. Severus had never gotten along with Potter and their animosity hadn't dimmed at all. If Severus was honest with himself, he would admit that Potter infuriated him, but if the man were to stop antagonizing him Severus would be content to ignore the Auror. Likely not a good idea to just show up at their home uninvited and demand they leave. However, what other options did he have?

He could always attempt to get ahold of Dumbledore. Not likely to work, for the man was at the Ministry dealing with something or another for the last four days. So, he was either still there or too exhausted to deal with the problem tonight. Severus had to admit he didn't trust Dumbledore completely. Not after he realized tonight that Dumbledore wasn't the Secret Keeper for the Potters. No, that had shaken his faith in the man.

That brought him right back to where he'd begun. He couldn't call the Ministry or the Auror's, as he wasn't the Secret Keeper and he couldn't provide their location. That wouldn't help them escape. It would also likely lead to more death. The Dark Lord was likely to bring a few of his trusted field Death Eaters. Bellatrix, the Lestrangle brothers, the Carrows, maybe McNair. Severus couldn't be sure who all would be called. He knew that Lucius Malfoy and Hector Nott would be busy preparing for the Samhain festival celebration of tonight. That ruled them both out.

Shaking his head, he sighed. He had no choice. He couldn't in good conscience do nothing. An innocent child and his once-best friend whom he still loved as a blood sister would die if he did nothing. He couldn't condone that. He had to act. He didn't trust anyone else, so that left only him. Decision made Severus got out of the shower, dry, and dress himself. He would grab a meal, drink the potions he needed, and then apparate to Godric's Hollow and face the Potters. Come what may, the most important thing was ensuring the safety of the innocent child in

that home. Lily could fight, but she wouldn't stand a chance against the Dark Lord or his field Death Eaters. That left Potter, who could well take care of himself. He was an Auror, after all.

His meal was brief; he was as ready as he would ever be to face the Potters. He gave a tired sigh as he gazed up at the picture on his mantle, an enlarged print of two young children sitting on a grassy hillside under a large tree whose branches danced in the wind. The boy was smiling, something all too rare even back then, and the girl was laughing delightedly. Lily and Severus, as they had been at age ten. Severus trailed a finger down the simple black frame, then grabbed the pot of Floo Powder and tossed some in calling out "Leaky Cauldron" in a loud clear voice.

Stepping out of the fireplace, Severus gazed around taking stock of the room. It was crowded and dark. No one bothered to look up as he swept through the room, gave a brief nod to Tom the proprietor and slipped out into the entrance to Diagon Alley. He apparated away just as soon as he'd stepped outside. A dizzied eternity later, or so Severus thought as he began to worry about the coming confrontation, Severus found himself standing on the opposite side of the street from the Potter Residence.



With a final deep breath Severus let his features turn blank, bringing up his masks and shields so that nothing showed on his face. He walked up to the gate, pushed it open slowly and walked up the lane to the door. With three sharp raps on its wooden surface, Severus waited for its owner to come.

"What do you want, Snively?" Potter demanded from the smallest crack in the doorway.

"Let me in, Potter; what I have to say should not be relayed on doorsteps!" Severus growled in a dark hiss. So much for remaining neutral. Potter's utterance of that nickname was enough to make his blood boil. There was a long pause in which Potter glared at Severus before pulling the door open and letting Severus slip inside. The thud of the door closing behind him was all he heard resonating through the silence.

"Well, tell me what in Merlin's name you're doing here?!" Potter half-asked, half-demanded.

"You have been betrayed. Pettigrew has disclosed your location to the Dark Lord. Gather what you need; we must leave at once," Severus stated bluntly, his eyes leaving Potter to find the green eyes of the red-haired female standing in the doorway to the living room. In her arms was cradled her infant son, dressed in a green-blue-white striped onesie, his tiny arms wrapped around a stuffed blue-green snake with huge almond coloured eyes. One little hand was in his mouth while the other petted the stuffed toy. Severus could feel the corners of his lips twitch. That had been the gift he'd sent Lily when he'd learned she was pregnant. He hadn't written his name, only sent the gifts anonymously, but he had known she would know who they came from. That she'd kept them was reassuring for his mission here tonight.

"Like hell we are going anywhere with you, Snivellous. If He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named knows where we are, it's because of you! I'm not letting a Death Eater take my family anywhere. Albus said we're safe here and Peter would never betray us! Unlike you!" Potter ranted. It was clear he was building up a head of steam.

"Tell me Potter, how exactly could I have revealed the location of a residence under the Fidelius Charm when I am not its Secret Keeper?" Severus asked in a condescending tone to the ranting man before him. His arms crossed

over his chest as he glared at the impudent fool.

“You let him see it in your mind!” Potter declared after only a brief hesitation.

“Oh yes, and while I was at it I let him see that I was working for the Order of the Phoenix. That’s exactly why I’m upright and breathing right now! You’re an idiot, Potter. I can see that nothing’s changed in all these years,” Severus drawled sarcastically.

“You’re a Death Eater!” Potter stated, as if that was the answer to everything.

“Really Potter, stating the obvious is infantile. Your son could have done better!” Severus retorted, not impressed.

“There, you see? You don’t even deny it!” Potter stated loudly.

“James,” Lily said gently, coming to stand next to her husband, “maybe we should hear him out. If only for Harry’s sake.” Lily’s voice was just as soft as he remembered and her beauty was just as flawless in his eyes as it had always been. He felt his heart ache for what he had lost. Her friendship and trust.

“Ughmuagoo,” the strange sound resonated in the silence that fell after Lily’s words. It drew Severus’s gaze to the infant in Lily’s arms. He was startled to find two large green eyes almost identical to Lily’s, only slightly darker, gazing up at him from the small face. The boy’s eyes were almost too large for his face. He had wild black hair already beginning to match the unruly mop that Potter called hair. The tiny little fist that had been in the boy’s mouth earlier was reaching questioningly towards him. Without even realizing what he was doing, Severus extended his right hand slowly towards the child, letting the boy’s tiny fist close over his pointer finger, much like he’d do with his godson.

Before the boy had so much as finished latching onto Severus’s hand, Potter grabbed hold of Severus’s wrist and pulled it almost painfully away from the infant.

“Keep your filthy Death Eater hands off my son!” Potter growled darkly.

“Unhand me, Potter,” Severus hissed out darkly, his eyes flashing as his hand reached towards his wand. Severus had to forcefully remind himself of his purpose here and that cursing Potter wouldn’t accomplish it.

“Lily, take Harry upstairs,” Potter said calmly to his wife, though his gaze never left Severus.

“Yes, it’s Harry’s bedtime,” Lily replied. “I’ll just go lay him down in his crib and be back in a few minutes. Why don’t you two get settled down in the living room where we can talk?”

Severus watched as Lily walked off with Harry who turned in his mother’s arms to watch Severus.

“I want you gone, Snivellous,” Potter said, shoving him back towards the door and releasing him.

Severus caught himself on the door and glared at Potter. “I will once Lily and your son are safely out of this house. Whether that is with you or not is inconsequential.”

“You slimy rank bastard! If you think I’ll stand here and let you play your sick twisted Death Eater games with my family, you are sadly mistaken! Slimy greasy bastard, she’s MY wife. Mine! You can’t have her and your stupidly

inept attempts at winning her affections are pathetic. Did you seriously think we wouldn't see past your imbecilic attempt at taking her away? Well it won't work, Snivellous. Maybe if you took a shower once in a while you wouldn't be so blind! All that grease is affecting your..." As Potter continued ranting, Severus rolled his eyes and glared intently at the man, waiting until Potter paused long enough for him to speak.

"First!" Severus hissed in a cold deadly voice that silenced Potter instantly. "Had I wanted to simply 'steal your wife', to use your less than eloquent term, I would merely have to wait until the Dark Lord finished killing you and your son and presented her to me as my prize for being loyal. And second!" Severus sneered, cutting across Potter before he could even begin to speak. "I wouldn't be risking my life by coming here to warn you. I wouldn't have bothered to care if all I wanted was Lily. No, I am here because unless we leave NOW, your son will die. He is innocent in all this. I could care less about you; you're an Auror, take care of yourself," Severus spat the last out sourly. "Lily and your son do not deserve to die because you are a foolhardy Gryffindor who cannot see past his own selfish nose!"

"Why, you little slimy bastard. By Merlin's hairy—" Potter began, but never got to finish the sentence as Lily came down the stairs at that moment.

"JAMES CHARLES POTTER!" Lily thundered in that frighteningly reproachful tone of voice she had often used when they had been children. "What did I tell you about using such language in my house?" She glared at her husband. "Now it is clear that you BOTH," she added biting, shooting Severus a glare before turning her bright angry green eyes to Potter once more, "are unable to act like adults. Therefore, you will both march yourselves into the living room and SIT DOWN SILENTLY! We are going to act like adults and TALK this through like civilized humans! DO. I. MAKE. MYSELF. CLEAR!?"

Before either could so much as open their mouth, a loud shrieking could be heard coming from a chime on the mantle in the living room. Severus narrowed his eyes in that direction before turning around to look out the window that framed the door. Lily gasped loudly from behind him and Potter cursed, no doubt earning a glare from his wife.

"He is here," Severus stated plainly. His dark eyes narrowed at the figure that stood framed by two tall men at the gate. He had wasted too much time arguing with Potter. He ought to have just grabbed Lily while she held the boy and apparated them away. It would have angered Potter, and likely Lily as well, but she would be safe. Now he doubted any of them would survive.

"Merlin help us all," Potter cursed again. He grabbed Severus and forcefully turned him around. "Swear to me that you will keep them safe. Swear on your magic an unbreakable vow that you will do everything to keep them safe. Lily will bind us. Do it now and I will let you take them from here."

"Give me your hand, Potter," Severus said in a dark tone as he pulled back from Potter and faced him fully, extending his wand arm towards Potter. Lily held her wand, looking worried and concerned, fear creeping into her eyes. Potter took his hand firmly. Lily touched their joined hands with her wand tip.

"Do you swear to do everything in your power to protect Harry and Lily?" Potter asked.

"I do," Severus stated, and a band of white light shot from Lily's wand and circled their wrist. Potter remained silent and Lily pulled her wand away. The magic sank into their flesh, sealing the vow, and Potter released him, turning back to face the door.

"Lily, go upstairs and get Harry. Snape, get them out of here. I'll hold them off as long as I can," Potter said. For

the first time in Severus's memory, Potter had used his real name.

Severus nodded and followed Lily up the stairs. He could hear the sounds of raised voices downstairs. No doubt Potter was trying to buy time by arguing with the Dark Lord. Merlin help him. Merlin help them all.

Severus was still taken aback by the change in Potter. Maybe it was because he'd seen the Dark Lord on his doorstep and Severus had been the least foul option available to the man, or maybe he was just desperate to save his family. Severus didn't know. Frankly he didn't really care about Potter's motives. He was infuriated that Potter hadn't just gone with the vow from the start. Clearly it would have been simpler, though of course Severus couldn't really say anything more on the matter, since he himself hadn't suggested it because he loathed vows. He was already bound by too many of them, and they were growing harder to bear, the farther he went along down this path. He knew sooner or later one of them would claim his life. There was just no way around it, bound as he was by so many vows. At some point, they would conflict and he would suffer the cost either in magic or blood.



There was always a cost.

As his mother used to say, we all pay for our sins eventually...though never in the way we expect to. Severus sighed. He was thinking too much again. Then again, for him that wasn't unusual. They were nearing the nursery. Lily ran to her son who was crying loudly, no doubt scared from the blasting of the door and the shouting. The duel he could hear was reaching a crescendo. Then silence fell and he knew Potter was dead.

Lily froze, looking at the doorway where Severus stood. Her eyes were filled with tears, fear, and determination as she met his gaze. She gave a nod and

he walked over to her, holding out the slim black stone that was the Portkey. Lily took Harry's little hand in hers and pressed it flat so all three of their hands were intertwined around the stone. Severus whispered the activation word, "Prince Manor". They were pulled by the navel in the next minute. Severus felt the rush of power as the Potter's nursery was blasted apart in their wake. He hadn't seen who had sent the powerful blasting curse, but he did feel the Dark Lord's anger radiating in waves of blinding agony through the mark.

Their landing was rough. Severus had only a few seconds to grab Lily and pull her to himself to prevent her from falling and injuring Harry as they slammed into the ground. The infant got trapped between their bodies and Severus took the full brunt of the landing against his spine. He let out a gasp of air as pain shot through his back. Lily slowly pushed up off him and rose shakily to her feet, cradling her screaming son in her arms, rocking him gently back and forth to calm him. She looked around the ornate reception room they had landed in.

"Where are we?" she asked.

Severus pushed himself up, wincing at the agony of both the Dark Mark and his impact with the floor. "Welcome to Prince Manor, Lily," he said, indicating the family crest resting high above the fireplace and the ornate tapestry that ran down from it, showing generations of the Prince line. The last row held Severus's name and picture outlined in rich gold gilding, and a purple banner at the bottom read: Severus T. Snape, Lord Prince.

LESSONS FROM GEEKHOOD

Being Proud of My Inner Slytherin

By Reikhart Odinstrhall

I am something of a Geek (and probably also a bit of a Nerd in that I know the difference between the two, lol). I watch *Doctor Who* (I've made my own steampunk sonic screwdriver), I can quote from *Lord of the Rings*, I have an opinion of *Star Wars* vs *Star Trek* (neither are as good as *Babylon Five*), and I am a bit of a Potterhead (if you know what that is, you probably are one).

I am fascinated by the creation of whole new worlds where most problems are solved with determination, courage, and brain power rather than the application of violence. I appreciate writers who challenge the materialistic/consumerist “fact-free” judgmental nature of our society. And I value the legions of fans of all kinds who think about and debate what the author actually meant when a character does or says something, and who invest time and immense creativity in fan art and literature.

And only today, I was challenged about my understanding of a key character in the Harry Potter books, the Sorting Hat. For those who have no idea what I am talking about, the Sorting Hat is a talking hat that helps to sort new students at the Hogwarts School of Magic and Wizardry into their respective “Houses”: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house embodies certain values, such as courage, bravery, nerve, and chivalry for Gryffindor, and ambition, cunning, leadership, and resourcefulness for Slytherin.

Gryffindor is the House of the eponymous hero, Harry Potter, while Slytherin is home to some of his archenemies, including Draco Malfoy and of course Voldemort in his previous “incarnation” as a student at Hogwarts. Supporting the fan base, JK Rowling has also created a website called *Pottermore*, which supplies further insights and background information not included in the books, and where fans can be “sorted” into one of these four Houses. By and large, few people want to be selected for Slytherin, because that is where the “bad” people go...and I have to admit I was shocked when the sorting hat did just that...dropped me into Slytherin without any hesitation.

And yet, as one having an affinity for Norse gods, maybe that is exactly where I belong? It's not that I don't have the qualities represented by the other Houses, it's that these are the ones I need to recognize and embrace in my own life.

I do need to be more ambitious. Although my ambition isn't necessarily wholly personal, I have tended to be shy at pushing myself forward. It's been a huge step starting my blog, for instance, and part of me is still amazed that anyone wants to read what I write. But I also need to be ambitious for justice, for equality, for compassion, for truth.



I also need to recognize the value of cunning, and not see it as underhanded or “undesirable”. Life doesn’t play by the Queensbury rules, and certainly many of my enemies don’t. The Norse took the view that you did whatever it took to win the battle, and this is reflected in some of the stories where Odin and Loki, in particular, use cunning as a first option. The word “cunning” is actually derived from the same root as “kenning” (still used in Scots, as in the song “d’ye ken John Peel”). A kenning is a puzzle word, a way of describing something by another name. A sword is “Odin’s Fire”, a ship “a steed of the sea,” and the sun a “sky shield.” To be a cunning person meant being wise, particularly with hidden or occult wisdom.

And I need to step up to the mark with both leadership and resourcefulness. As I have said elsewhere, I believe our society is in grave danger where division, fear, ignorance, and falsehood are the qualities being promoted by many of our leaders and those in our media. To be a leader is to stand up for those who lack power or a voice, and resourcefulness is needed to bypass the trolls and gatekeepers who believe in a “post-fact” society. And after all, it can’t be all bad as a Slytherin when you are following in the footsteps of Severus Snape.

But, I also think there is a deeper purpose behind JK Rowling’s use of the Sorting Hat, and that is to challenge our tendency to categorize people or to group people into “houses”, and then to approve or disapprove of those people because they belong to those groups.

Some do it with gender, limiting a woman’s education and freedom, thus restricting her opportunities. Others do it with race, ascribing characteristics and assumptions according to skin color. And there are those who believe that all the members of a religious faith are either infidels or potential terrorists.

And yet, we are each of us assigned to those categories by a “Sorting Hat.” None of us remembers choosing to be born male or female, or our skin color, or the faith of our parents. We assume our “category” is great because we belong to it. I had to rethink my attitude to Slytherin because I was “made” a member. There is a psychological concept called “cognitive dissonance” where we do something that conflicts with our sense of who we are. Have you ever blushed or felt embarrassed at a compliment? That’s cognitive dissonance. Have you ever been challenged over an aspect of your behavior, and leaped to your defense? That is also cognitive dissonance.

In the Harry Potter books, Harry and his friends are terrified of being assigned to Slytherin. But at the end, when Harry’s son is on his way to his first term at Hogwarts, Harry tells him that a great hero was a member of that House. And there ARE heroes of all kinds from all different categories. There are warriors for truth and justice, and creative geniuses, and kind and compassionate citizens who support those in need. And yes, there are violent criminals, rapists, and psychopaths in all categories, because the categories are arbitrary and have little or no bearing in themselves on determining how a person acts.

If there is a key lesson from the Harry Potter books, it’s the need to assess each individual, not by some facile (and false) understanding of group or category, but how that person acts as an individual. We are all so much more than our labels, and so is everyone else. If someone starts with a generalization about ANY group, be wary, and if necessary challenge it. If you know you have a category or label you are negative about, a section of society who you feel are to be feared or judged, think about why that is. Is it informed by what others have told you, or a bad experience with one member of that community, or just plain lack of knowledge?

As Gandalf says in Lord of the Rings: “My dear Frodo, Hobbits really are amazing creatures. You can learn all that there is to know about their ways in a month and yet, after a hundred years, they can still surprise you.”

A COLORLESS DREAM

The Darkness in Harry Potter's World

By Amanda Pizzolatto (alias Aurora Mandeville)

We both entered the building ecstatically, fascinated by the idea of a haunted house. What would we find there, what would we see and feel? Would we get any particular kind of activity? Would we get any activity at all? We walked through the house and down into the basement, a cozy den complete with a sofa, a couple of recliners, a couple of tables for games, and a record player. I began to feel uneasy; something wasn't right, and a sense that something evil lurked in the room came over me.

I turned to my partner, none other than Harry Potter himself, and tried to voice my concerns, but no sound came out. He wasn't paying attention to me anymore; something else held his interest. I didn't know what it was until I heard heavy breathing. The sofa had begun to move, going in and out in time to the breathing sounds. The recliners soon joined in, followed by the turning of the record player as its needle began to jump around a record, revealing a haunting scramble of gibberish and laughter. The sense that something evil had arrived and planned on hurting us grew, and I cried out that we needed to leave, but again Harry paid me no mind. Instead, he walked towards the possessed objects as if he too was possessed. I wanted to tear him away, but both my body and a voice in my head told me to run. I did run, and I didn't look back until I was across the street from the house. There my dream ended, but not before I knew that the house fell in on itself, taking everyone who was inside with it.

Yes, my dear readers, it was just a dream. I'm sure many of you hate such openings, but it seemed the best way to start this. At the time, though, I did think it was merely Harry Potter as played by Daniel Radcliffe who was in my dream, for I never truly saw his face; I only knew him by instinct. As it has been in many such dreams, for even Frodo has visited me, but his presence has been much sweeter and kinder than that one time Harry came. Of course, I do also know that I dreamt it due to a previous conversation with a good friend's mother, who had forbade Harry Potter to her children because it reminded her far too much of her experiences with witchcraft. I cannot say more, for I promised to keep the rest a secret, but I can say that the incidents had scared her. However, years down the road, I felt that I was both brave and strong enough to face such a threat, especially now that many other friends had deemed Harry Potter safe. I enjoy a good story, so what could I say? Maybe it wasn't as bad as many others made it out to be; maybe they were reading too much into it, like some people like to do with Lord of the Rings and Chronicles of Narnia. So, I decided to give it a go. I will say this; Rowling is a pretty good author, but by the third book, things were starting to get darker, and for some reason, so was my eyesight. No, I am serious; I must notice anything that goes on with my eyes because I have many problems with them, and it worried me when this suddenly occurred. I decided then and there that I would not read the rest of the books, but I wanted to know what happened next, and eventually watched the movies. That's when things really started to bother me. What was it with these movies showing a colorless world? It irked me to no end, for I truly enjoy a good splash of color. And what worried me even more was that I was perfectly fine with any old Batman movie, but Harry Potter? Get me to Oz, Neverland, or Narnia quick, or I'd die of Color Loss Syndrome (I know, I made that up; be quiet). It really did feel like all color was being sucked out of

of me. What in the world was going on?

I have always had a fascination with color and symbolism, so to see such a lack of color in Harry Potter's world really drove me nuts. I will say this, though: Rowling has at least gotten me fired up to fill my world completely with colors and scents, so much so, that I probably really dipped my toes into fanfiction simply because I wanted to go around Hogwarts and graffiti it, just to add some color. While watching the movies, I actually would think about what colors might look good in those dreary halls filled with children. There seemed to be no light, hence, no colors, and if there were any, it was mostly muted. Previous children's classics, like *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Neverending Story*, had worlds full of colors, scents, and sounds as well as a sense of wonder at the world around us. In Harry Potter, there doesn't seem to be any wonder, any of the real magic of childhood. It seems more like Harry is simply being primed and readied like a soldier to defeat Voldemort (gasps . . . I said it! Wow, he's boring, too). Heck, even that glorious light in the sky, our greatest defender against the nightmares and horrors of night—the sun—is barely seen in Harry Potter. And the more I watched, the more I noticed that everything takes place on a cloudy day or in the darkest of night. Having had a Film & Literature class that delved somewhat into themes and symbolism, I began to wonder what the lack of sunlight meant because it was certainly by no means a typical England day (they get more sun than that). Was Rowling hiding something? If the sun shone on her magical world, would it melt away like the Wicked Witch of the West?

Of course, I have heard of the theory (that almost seems like fact now) that she wrote Harry Potter as a “revenge story” against her chemistry teacher. But the more I thought about it, the less likely that seemed, though it was perhaps a part of it. Then what? What could it be? Could it actually be because she was, in fact, pulling from real witchcraft—a very, very dangerous pastime? If many knew about that, then yes, parents would have every right to fear for their children. The devil is no mere boogeyman under the bed; he means to do real harm. But was that really the answer? To be honest, I really can't say, for I have only watched the Harry Potter movies once and have only read the first three books. Perhaps it's more evident in later books? Perhaps I would notice it if I watched it again and kept my eyes peeled? Quite possibly, but I shall never return to find out. Once was perhaps too much for me; unlike some people, I need a world full of color. So I guess you could say one good thing did come from this. I have never been so grateful for color and worlds like Oz, Narnia, and Neverland, in my entire life. So thank you, Rowling, at least for that.



"Fairy tales say that apples were golden only to refresh the forgotten moment when we found that they were green. They make rivers run with wine only to make us remember, for one wild moment, that they run with water."

— G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

This summer marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* [*Sorcerer's Stone* in the USA], the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*—and also, incidentally, this fall will be the tenth anniversary of my own first reading of the series.

Of course, like most adults of my generation, my childhood was saturated with references to Harry Potter. I even, at one time, watched part of the first movie. I knew a few things, like who Dumbledore was and such. But due to the subculture I was partially raised in, I did not truly delve into the world of J.K. Rowling until I reached college. This made me one of the very first readers to take up the series without having to wait a single day between books. (Okay, I'll admit, the library couldn't get me book four fast enough, but I had watched the fourth movie, which sparked my reading of the series, so I went right into book five and didn't actually read book four until the next week.)

I'll never forget that week. I picked up the first book with a sense of trepidation. It was such a controversial subject—but I had researched and prayed and I was ready to read. I didn't quite know what to expect. After all, despite being a worldwide phenomenon, it was still a book about an eleven-year-old. Would I like it?

I couldn't put it down. The responsibilities of classes and work demanded short breaks, but

OF FAIRY TALES AND JOY

A Reflection for the 20th Anniversary of Harry Potter

By Elizabeth Amy Hajek

the moment these obligations were fulfilled I would dive back into the adventures of Harry, Hermione and Ron. The magical world was utterly enchanting. I found myself filled with a sense of wonder, delighting in how Rowling's sub-creation could bring a sense of joy to the most mundane of objects, and how her keen sense of humor reminded me to laugh even in the darkest of times.

Indeed, it is the way that the reader inhabits the world that I think truly enables one to read the books over and over again. I will never forget my sense of awe the first time I read the reveals in each book (particularly book three!), but although Rowling has a superb mastery of narrative drive, this alone is not enough to bring a reader back again and again (seven times for me now, I think). The Harry Potter books are about more than the adventures—they are rich experiences of character and place, with deep breaths within the tension-riddled story that allow you to truly visit the world.

And yet, while the wonder of the magical enchantments is a delight to my creative senses, I don't find myself wishing I lived in a magical world. Rowling has created a story that fulfills Chesterton's descriptions of fairy tales—a world in which the magic of the objects reinforces our own joy in the real world. Harry, born with his powers, might be able to do things that a muggle-born cannot, but the true magic and joy in the books is those of the friendships—the power of love that transcends death.

Indeed, when I reached the end of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, I was filled with an awe and joy that few books have ever evoked in me. It is not, perhaps, quite the level of Aslan's Country in *The Last Battle*, but it comes far closer to showing the joy of the life awaiting than nearly any other book I have read.

This sense of joy, which I believe Rowling captured, has perhaps been best described by J.R.R. Tolkien:

"It is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the "turn" comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality ... In such stories when the sudden "turn" comes we get a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart's desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through."

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories*



MAGIC,

CHILDREN

&

Harry Potter

by Sarah Levesque

Harry Potter was, is and will continue to be controversial as reading material for children.

The greatest reason is because the young protagonists are witches and wizards, though there are other concerns such as how our trio continually ignores the rules and seems to know better than the adults, and yet always manages to come out on top, nearly unscathed, and certainly unpunished every time.

Magic in the hands of young protagonists makes many adults uncomfortable, though these seem far from a majority. This is not surprising when one considers that, literarily and historically, most wizards and witches have been evil (consider the weird sisters in *MacBeth* and the witch hunts throughout the centuries), though there have been 'good' witches and wizards, such as Merlin, followed much later by Gandalf of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and Glinda the Good Witch of L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz*. Both Gandalf and Glinda have evil counterparts, however, in Sauron and Saruman, the Wicked Witch of the East and the Wicked Witch of the West.

But why are wizards and witches looked on with suspicion, anyway? Are we not simply prejudiced against them? I think not. I believe in the existence of true, dark magic that can be addictive and take some control over one's life. When as a teenager I asked my mom if she would lift her ban on Potter in the house, she told me to research it for myself and make

my own decision. I did, and while I sadly cannot recall my sources, I was intrigued by what I found. There were articles about the disobedient Harry coming out on top, pointing out that it encourages childhood disobedience. There were blog posts about people joining magical cults, rarely with full knowledge and understanding, who felt a dark presence, fear and loss of control in their own lives until they managed to leave their respective cults – stories of real, terrible, dark magic hidden from the world that laughs at it as a fairytale.

If we concede that there may be real, black and terrible magic in the world, what does this have to do with Hogwarts? Simply put, there is a fear that any fictional magic is a reference to the real, scary magic, and that fantastical magic could lead people to the real thing. While this may seem like a stretch, there may be some truth behind it, as people may become interested in fantasy magic, then bridge into slight-of-hand magic, and finally discover real, dark magic. Is this likely? I would say no, it is not likely, but it is possible.

Let's say you agree with me that fantasy magic could potentially act as a gateway to real, dark magic. How do we prevent this? Some people keep magic out of their books and homes to the best of their ability. However, to be strict about it, you would miss out on literature such as *Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and all fairy tales and Arthurian stories, not to mention *The Magic School Bus*. Other people stress the difference between fact and fantasy, claiming magic as entirely fictional. But pretending something isn't real does not do a good job of protecting people from it.

While I was doing my research, I stumbled across a well-written article arguing that magic in the hands of venerated elders such as Gandalf, fairy godmothers and Aslan is harmless, as it comes from a higher power and disallows the average person to wield it, potentially protecting people from following the path to real, dark magic. On the other hand, the article explained spells and magic in the hands of a younger, human protagonist

should be avoided. This would eliminate books such as Harry Potter, Christopher Paolini's Eragon series, M.L. Forman's *Adventurers Wanted*, and many more that may otherwise be called acceptable.

As for me, I find myself agreeing with that article with regards to younger, more impressionable children, though I'm more inclined to open up the world of young human magical protagonists to more grounded and responsible teens. Harry Potter I would especially not give to young children, preferring to wait until they are more mature so the disobedience and every-growing darkness in the series would affect them less.

What do you think?

Suggested Reading

Magic: Harry Potter Vs. LOTR & Narnia... And What God Says About It by Kiri Liz (liannetaimenlore.blogspot.com, Sept 24, 2012)

The Difference Between "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings" by Dr. Tom Snyder (jashow.com, 2003).

Life & Death: Why I Avoid "Sorcery" in My Fantasy Novels by Kara Swanson (fellowshipandfairydust.com, 2017)



Behind the Scenes: Making of Fellowship + Fairydust

Once upon a time, there were two online publications; The Fellowship of the King, a Christian collective blog, and Ink + Fairydust, a Christian magazine. This is the story of how the two merged to create Fellowship + Fairydust



Courtney,
editor, Ink +
Fairydust
(I+F)

Avellina,
editor, Fellowship
of the King

Courtney hands ownership to Avellina



Sarah and Avellina
meet

Sarah
assistant
editor
I+F

* not in person



Sarah mocks up Fellowship +
Fairydust home page

Avellina seeks help from widding
forest creatures (not literally)



wanna
help?

Sure

I'm
game

me
too

I'm pretty
sure you
don't live in a
forest

well this is a
comic so it
doesn't matter

I'll
help!

yes

Yes!

Rachel
web team
member

Chris
team
member

Wesley,
web
team member
archivist

Emily,
web
team
member

Isabella,
web team
member

Tamara,
deputy
admin.

By Catherine Mudd

Harry Potter

and the day after

by Sunbow Pendragon

Harry Potter sat under the Whomping Willow, silently considering the events of the last few weeks. Surprisingly in the light of their past relationship, the usually taciturn and sometimes violent tree was calm and peaceful. It was also surprising to Harry that the tree's tendrils were now massaging his shoulders gently, as if to help him think. It was odd to him that the tree would be so welcoming, but in his thoughts he could hear a gentle voice expressing thanks for everything he had done to save the school and grounds. The tree's gentle actions made it easier for him to just sit and ponder, and of course Harry now understood the reason why the tree was usually so violent. It had been guarding something very secret, a hidden path to the Shrieking Shack, discovered by Harry and his friends years earlier.

His contemplations continued to recall how Voldemort had been destroyed, his followers scattered and pursued. Due to the battle between the two factions, Hogwarts now stood in need of significant repairs. He sighed heavily as he recalled that he could have done it all with the Elder Wand, but the young man had destroyed the most powerful wand in the world so it could never be used by an ambitious wizard again. As he continued to relax, his thoughts turned to Severus Snape, the unlikely hero of the entire event. Harry wondered how he could have been so very wrong about the man, now that he knew everything. All of his life at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry he had seen Snape as an enemy, someone who did not like him very much and was never pleased with anything he did. Harry also remembered that Snape and his own father James had never gotten along, either, but he knew now that was due to their rivalry over his mother. The young man could hardly help but wonder how his life would have been as Severus' son, instead of Potter's, and the thought brought a wry grin to his face.

The willow stirred, the tendrils retracted, and the grouchy tree returned to its usual pattern of wary vigilance at the sound of feet approaching. Harry patted the tree reassuringly, and murmured his appreciation for the massage.

"Harry, Harry!" he heard, and turned to regard Hermione, his lifelong friend, as she ran towards him, stopping just short of the huge willow's branches. "Harry, I had to come and find you! The council is meeting in a week and they want you to come! They want to hear how you defeated Voldemort! O my, what is wrong with the Whomping Willow?" she asked all in a rush.

"I think the tree is happy the war is finally over. As for me, I should be happy to tell the real story, finally," he answered. "I am not even sure I know all of it yet, myself."

"You have more of the story than most of us do," Hermione said as she came closer. "Are you terribly tired? Some of the teachers are going to try to start repairs in the dining hall. I am going to try and help, and so is Ron; you should be there so he doesn't get nervous and make it start raining. The poor boy is just gutted over losing Fred."

"I'm coming, but help me up, would you? It's been a long day," Harry answered.

She came and offered a willing hand, as she usually did, and soon they were walking slowly over the bridge back into the broken building. Once inside, he saw Professor McGonagall, Professor Slughorn, Professor Flitwick, and of course Rubeus Hagrid, who was now much more than Gamekeeper and Guardian of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. Several of the other students were joining in the effort; his friend Ron Weasley and the rest of the living Weasley clan, Luna Lovegood, and Neville Longbottom had apparently recovered enough to assist.

"Come Harry, help us if you can," McGonagall called. "We must repair at least the kitchen and dining hall; people are hungry and food must be prepared!"

"Yes, Professor McGonagall. I'm coming," Harry called back. "But I've no wand."

"Ah, but you do!" Professor Flitwick laughed, producing a wand that looked very similar to the one Harry had been given all those years ago as a first year. "I went to Ollivander's old shop and gathered a few wands for those who have lost theirs. I think you will find this one to your liking! It is Yew wood, with Dragonheart string, and it is slightly flexible."

Harry carefully picked up the wand and went back outside to test whether it would work with him or not. Making a few flourishes, he found that it behaved well enough, and walked back inside, smiling. It was good to hold a wand again, he thought, noting how comfortable it felt in his hand. Yes, this wand suited him nearly as well as his first, which was now broken and useless. He put it in his pocket and returned to the dining hall just in time to join the repair party.

"Come, come, and let us get started!" Professor McGonagall called out. "The day is passing quickly!"

They gathered together in the relatively undamaged center of the room and held their wands at the ready, meaning to combine their powers for a faster effect. As one, the word "Reparo!" issued forth, and pieces of the castle began to return to their places. As soon as one surface touched another, it melded and became as if it had never been broken. It took several hours, but when they finally finished, the kitchen and dining hall had been returned to their former state. The cooks retired to the kitchen, and soon the smell of food began to tantalize their senses. While they were so occupied, Harry and some companions entered the student quarters, helping to make them habitable as well. They used their magic now to make things right, putting everything back in order, when only a few hours before they had been using that same magic to defend their lives. Each time they came upon a bed belonging to a departed schoolmate, they would stop for a moment and remember the person before assuring that his or her cubicle appeared to be awaiting the owner's return as a gesture of respect and love.

Harry's mind remained focused completely on removing every trace of the battle. He loved Hogwarts and considered it his home, and he willingly joined the groups of students now attending to the repairs. It took several hours, but finally the four Houses were each returned to a modicum of order. In the common rooms, the hearths were set alight, and in the student quarters the stoves were lit to heat them. As the warmth spread, so did the feeling of normality, and the students began to relax and laugh a bit as they anticipated bathing and donning clean clothing.

With a smile Harry went on, continuing through the castle alone, looking for a special place, The Room of Requirement. He hoped he would find the advice he was looking for there, and wondered if that was where all of the castle ghosts had gone to hide from the battle. When he did find it, the door opened for him without needing the spell, as if it was welcoming him.

He entered cautiously. With dismay, he found it was still smoldering from the effects of the fire caused earlier in their search for the last of the horcruxes. He summoned up his magic again, and it took a few gestures and commands to finish dowsing the last of the sparks and vent out the smell of burnt wood and textiles.

"Oh, this will not do at all!" Harry thought with a sigh. "Hogwarts cannot be without its Room of Requirement!"

A ghostly touch crossed his shoulder, and he looked about to see one of the famous spirits that haunted Hogwarts in a friendly way.

"So, you have done what you said you were going to do," he heard her voice say, and he knew that this was the Grey Lady, Rowena Ravenclaw. "You have destroyed my Mother's diadem at last. Thank you," she smiled gently.

"I was happy to do it," Harry smiled back at the enigmatic spirit. "The Elder Wand is destroyed too, along with Voldemort."

"You have done well, Harry," she said. "Perhaps now, I shall not be so sad anymore."

"I hope you will not be sad anymore, either," Harry replied. "Are the others here?" he asked, meaning the rest of the spirits he had become so familiar with during his time at Hogwarts.

"Yes, poor Sir Nicholas is quite distraught, and the Bloody Baron is hiding over there in that corner after seeing Voldemort up close," Rowena told him with a silvery sigh. "My word, just look at the Room of Requirement! It is ruined, and all the beautiful things within are destroyed too."

"Not while a wizard has a wand, Rowena," Harry replied, smiling a bit. "Let me see what I can do. Perhaps

you would all like to help me?"

"I would like to see the room the way it was before the attack," Rowena said. "I shall help do what I can."

"I should like to help! Even being nearly headless, I still have my magic!" declared Sir Nicholas as he appeared from his place of concealment. Some of the others appeared as well, including one that Harry was not expecting.

"Hello Harry," he heard a deep and resonant voice say. "I hope you will let me help, too?"

"Of course Professor Snape," Harry replied, and a smile crossed his face. It seemed so right to him, that Snape would choose to remain and be of service. "I would like to talk to you in private at some point in the future. You and I have much to discuss."

"So we do, Potter!" Snape answered with faint smile of his own. "I am very proud of you, you know."

"You are?"

"Oh yes! You conquered your fear of death. You stood there and let it happen to you so that you could finally be free of Voldemort's influence. That took courage, and conviction. You are a fine wizard, and I am very proud and honored to have been a part of your education. You were very good at potions, almost as good as me."

"Oh, Hermione is the one who is the potion master, Professor." Harry laughed a bit. "If not for the book belonging to the Half-Blood Prince, my potion-making skills would barely have gotten me through the class."

"Come, let us return the room to its former glory," Snape urged. "Mind you, do not re-create the horcrux as you mend everything else. That would cause a terrible problem."

"I have had enough of dealing with terrible problems, Professor," Harry laughed. "Thank you for the warning."

All of the magic workers, living and dead, gathered together and gently flicked their wands, softly uttering the command, "Reparo."

It took a moment, but a slight breeze began, and Harry beheld the beginning of the process as charred wood was mended and returned to its formerly satin finish. Tapestries reassembled, books reappeared out of the ashes, statues and other occasional pieces also soon appeared, and within the hour, the Room of Requirement had been restored. It now looked as it had been, before the search for the horcrux concealed within the diadem of Ravenclaw, which had brought Harry, Hermione and Ronald here earlier. During their search, they had encountered the deluded Draco Malfoy and his bully boys. The young Malfoy heir had been intent on recovering his wand from Harry, having lost it in a duel with Potter, but a fire had been started inadvertently by the trollish Crabbe, who had paid with his life for his trouble.

Harry put away his wand and grinned as he looked about. Everything was as he recalled it before Crabbe's attempt to throw fire had gone terribly wrong. As he passed the place where he had located the diadem, he stopped and looked just to make sure it wasn't there, sighing with relief and laughing at himself for it.

"Thank you, everyone, for your help. It has been a long day today, but I feel better knowing this room is the way it should be."

"We will be seeing you, Harry. You will be taking a teaching position now, won't you?" Snape asked.

"No sir, I am going to ask Ginny Weasley to marry me, and then I am going to take a long, long rest."

"The Weasley girl?" Snape asked, somewhat aghast for a moment. Then his face relaxed a bit and he smiled. "Well she is very bright, for a Weasley, and she is very pretty, too. I wish you well, Harry."

"Thank you, Professor Snape!" Harry answered, slightly surprised. "I should be going now. Good night."

"Good night Harry!" he heard them all reply as he turned to leave the room.

Harry walked out, and pausing, turned back to watch the door be absorbed by the wall. Within moments, there was nothing to indicate there had ever been a door, and he smiled broadly, feeling a sense of satisfaction. His body reminded him—with a loud grumble from his midsection—that he had not eaten for several days, and he began the long walk back to the dining hall. As he approached it, the smell of hot food reached his nose, and his pace quickened a bit in anticipation of finally satisfying his appetite. Everyone was already there, and as soon as he walked into the room, all of the noise ceased. From the head master's chair, McGonagall stood and began to

applaud without a word. The students all rose, as did the teachers. The sound of clapping filled the huge vaulted room completely as Harry stood there, humbled by their accolade.

"Thank you, everyone," he finally said after waving for quiet. "But I did not do this all by myself. I could not have figured out the riddle of the horcruxes without Hermione and Ron to help me, and so many others helped, too," he told them modestly.

Another round of applause erupted for his two best friends, who also stood to accept it with gracious smiles and shy waves. He sat beside them, as he had so many times before, and watched as his plate filled with all of his favorite foods, including a small treacle tart. Picking up his fork, he dug in hungrily and quickly consumed that plateful, plus two more before he felt satisfied. Afterwards, he listened to the talk around the table until he leaned heavily on Hermione, and the young woman laughed a bit, waking him.

"You had better get to bed, Harry. You are all done in," she said kindly. "Come on, Ron and I will help you."

"I think I need help," Harry remarked comically as each of his friends took an arm over their shoulders and walked him through the moving staircases until they were in front of the Gryffindor House guardian, the famous Fat Lady.

"Thank you, Harry," the woman in the painting said simply, and opened the door without requiring the password, something unheard of at Hogwarts.

Harry sighed, and a wave of weariness passed over him as they slowly walked him into Gryffindor's common room. "I'll be alright now, Ron and Hermione," he said quietly to his escorts. "I just want to go to bed now."

"Are you sure?" Hermione asked as Harry lifted his arm free of her.

"Oh yes, I am quite sure, my friend." He smiled at her as Ron was relieved of the weight of his other arm. "Thank you both so much, it would have taken me much longer to walk here by myself."

He saw so many familiar faces, and they all came to hug him and shake his hand. Passing through them and returning their handshakes and hugs with warm affection, Harry found himself somewhat blocked in his pursuit of his quarters, and his bed. Having not seen it for many months, it seemed to him a fine place to be at the moment.

"Let him through, for pity's sake!" he heard Ginny's voice shout out in a commanding tone. "And shut it! He's had a long day!"

"Ginny, please?" he said quietly. "I just want to get a few hours of sleep before dawn."

"Come on, I'll help you," she smiled, holding out her hand to him.

"Shouldn't you be with your family, attending to your brother Fred?" he asked quietly.

"I said my goodbyes already," Ginny told him with a crooked smile. Harry's heart ached for his friend's family, but he was so tired. "Don't worry over Fred; Mum and some of the other women are seeing to him. Mum wants to build a pyre, and send him off in the old way," Ginny continued as they walked slowly to where his bed stood ready. She helped him off with his shoes as their conversation continued.

"I think Fred would like that," Harry chuckled. "He always was the dramatic one."

"Yes, he was," Ginny agreed. "Here's your room, I'll see you at breakfast. Do you want me to come and get you?"

"Yes, please send someone to fetch me," Harry told her. "You should probably not make a habit of visiting the boy's side of the hall."

"I wouldn't see anything I haven't seen before, having four brothers!" Ginny laughed. "But keep your modesty for a little while longer, anyway."

Blowing him a kiss, she left the room, closing the oaken door behind her, and he was finally alone. Letting his eyes wander around the familiar space, he happened to glance at the place where his owl Hedwig had liked to roost, and a wave of separation and sadness washed over him. The memory of watching her try to defend him from Death Eaters returned, and a tear trickled down his face as he recalled her bravery. Perhaps someday he would take another owl as a friend to honor Hedwig's memory, he thought with a heavy sigh. Sitting on the edge of his bed, he took off his shirt and lay down on the mattress he remembered so well. It still felt as good as always. Closing his eyes, he fell asleep.

The Path of Merlin

By Timothy Mather

Harry Potter walks between worlds, magical or muggle,
where power is more of a burden than a gift.
Dursleys are narrowminded, conventional, unimaginative,
self-obsessed and uncaring.

He Who Shall Not Be Named, cruel, manipulative,
would control dominion over all.

Both overcome by a wounded boy
trying to balance material and magical through Love.

A boy of hope grown into a man of transformation,
liberation, and sacred Alchemy.

A resurrection stone can ruin a life if wielded by the uninitiated,
or restore through monumental sacrifice.

The Elder Wand may be powerful only to those of faith,
a curse to those seeking oppression.

A veil of invisibility can only hide those willing to seek
and find the end of the pilgrim's journey.

A patronus is an expression of my character,
a powerful emotion from within.

Otter of sharp mind and wit brings clarity
and devotion to Harry's quest.

Terrier, dedicated, devoted, flawed,
loyal to the end, a true human spirit.



Phoenix, I am the ancient man of the tower
who shows the path to transfiguration.
I am a child of moonlight, emotion,
intuition, and eternal good.
I am happiness,
Friend of giants, dragons, and spiders.
I am a protector and comrade.
I am Erised, a reflection of desire,
a tool for good or personal gain.
Horcrux, a split in my soul,
shows my weakness in cutting corners to the truth.
Possess my ring, read my diary, drink from my cup,
wear my locket, don a tarnished tiara.
Nagini, companion of the unnamed.
Body annihilated in magical combat.

The soul only survives by integration,
it is destroyed by division.
I battle the darkness within my soul
to reclaim my faithful followers and myself.
I walk the path of Merlin,
I am the wounded king,
I am a reintegration of the Self.
I am sacrificed by Voldemort in order to redeem
those who believe in me.
I always was there and in the end I am redeemed,
once my treachery is understood.
Where the Riddle fails utterly in his efforts
to control and dominate the material world,
the chosen one, a boy, overcomes and succeeds
through love, sacrifice, and selflessness.

Coming Of Age

Growing Up with Harry Potter

By Wesley Hutchins (alias Earl Chatham)

It has been twenty years since the first Harry Potter book was published, and though I only got into it three years later, the extraordinary Harry Potter books and films have been a significant part of my life for almost two decades, and it's a bit of an understatement to say that I don't know where I would be without them and their immeasurable literary and cinematic value.

*For me, it all started on the first day back to school in the new millennium following the Christmas break in the old one. At the age of nine and in the fourth grade, I was in a combined fourth-through-sixth grade class under our teacher, Mrs. Ann, and during that first day back, she gathered us around for a book reading. To this day, I cannot remember if we had any previous such reading in class, or during any other part of that year. If memory serves, I believe that we students chose grade-appropriate books to read throughout the year and were tested on them via a program called Accelerated Reader, so it may well be that this experience was exceptional. Whatever the circumstances, we pulled our chairs up around her and she announced that she would be reading a book entitled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Philosopher's Stone in the United Kingdom). cover, I felt underwhelmed and probably rolled my eyes, because I wasn't really interested in fantasy and fiction, and this sounded like the worst kind. "Harry Potter" sounded like something from out of a fairy tale; it smacked of being too whimsical and not grounded in reality. Perhaps this harsh assessment was also due to me being heavily interested in history, reference, and other factually-based books, especially ones about ocean liners, and particularly the *Titanic*. Probably the only fiction that I liked were ones attached in some way to a historical narrative or otherwise grounded in some reality, such as the *American Girl* series*

and *Huckleberry Finn*. Almost every day, I brought in such books, which I preferred to read during lunch and whatever free time I may have had. Now, here I was, about to go through a book which in some way, I felt was beneath me.

Nevertheless, I sat in my chair and listened as best I could, because we had to take notes. I believe that the first three chapters were read that day and it was such a bore.

Thankfully, I did not fall asleep, but I remember that I struggled to get into the book,

and then again, maybe it was me resenting having to go

through with this exercise.

Perhaps it was

both boredom and

being resentful to the point

of just not paying attention. I heard

Mrs. Ann speaking words as she read through

the narrative, but it just wasn't leaving enough of

an impression on me, for whatever reason.

Regardless of what that reason was, I found myself with little in the way of notes or a good memory of what had been read to us, and now I had to write a summary for homework due the next day. Oops.

That evening, my mom - who had a similar reaction to the book - and I went to Books-A-Million to purchase a copy of the book, and I took time to read it for myself and at my own pace, in order to do my homework. Mom helped me get through that assignment, showing me how to identify and extract key moments, so that I wasn't just rewriting the book almost word for word. It was a tough night, but the summary got done and I could sleep well.

The next day, I brought my copy of the book into class, along with that wretched homework assignment. To help stay focused so I would have an easier time doing what would likely be another summary, I read along with the teacher, but even then, it still felt forced - like pulling teeth - as I struggled to picture and make sense of what was going on.

Then, at some point, I started to catch on to the book. Where that point was, I cannot remember, and indeed, it may have been a gradual process which took place as I came to understand that this was not an excessively fairy-dusted and whimsical fantasy. I started to appreciate that this was becoming an interesting and exciting adventure story featuring an orphaned boy who was the same age as I and was finding himself in a magical world he had hitherto not known, and attending a school for studying magic. Furthermore, I believe I was

to the book because of how, despite being in a medieval castle and in a world seemingly hung over from the 19th Century at the latest, it was set in our time and had a modern and relatively realistic feel to it, which likely had to do with the coexistence of, and relationship between the magical and non-magical (Muggle) worlds. In addition, the young characters were very much like most of us Muggles, encountering and experiencing the same things as we do - homework assignments, tough teachers (looking at you, Snape), making friends (and enemies), playing sports (albeit on broomsticks in the air), having crushes and going out on dates, and so much more - which did not have magical solutions, at least not easy ones, just like there was no magical solution for getting through that first reading and summary.

As best as I can remember, we spent around two weeks reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and as we progressed, the homework assignments became less arduous and increasingly effortless. If anything, I was becoming more engaged with the story to the point that the summary writing became trivial and I even went ahead of the class with what I read at home. By the time we had finished the book, I had really grown to like it, and though I cannot now remember if we had an Accelerated Reader test or full-scale book report on it, I would like to believe that I aced one or the other.

While reading *Sorcerer's Stone*, we understood that it was part of a series, and soon afterward my parents purchased the other two books available at that time - *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* - and I read them in a matter of weeks. In fact, instead of bringing in my *Titanic* books, I was bringing the HP books to school for reading, even though they were not required reading like the first one. Upon finishing them, I was hooked on Harry Potter and eagerly anticipated the release of the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* over that summer, and by then there was talk about the first book being adapted into a film.

However, I only appreciated just how big and how much of a global phenomenon Harry Potter had become when *Goblet of Fire* was released on July 8, 2000. Leading up to it, we asked our local Barnes and Noble if they would be carrying it and they said that they would, and further recommended that we go ahead and buy it ahead of time so it would be reserved and we could just pick it up on the big day. It was a good thing we did, because on the eve of the release, we saw other kids (some in wizarding costume) on the news with their parents lined up inside and outside of the book stores in our city and in cities across the world, ready

to get their hands on the new book because these stores were staying open for special midnight releases.

As planned, we picked it up later during the daytime, and I began reading almost immediately. With it being so large, it took me about a month to read – whilst recording my readings aloud on tape for future reference – and when I had finished, I was ready for the next thing, which would be the film adaptation of *Sorcerer's Stone*.

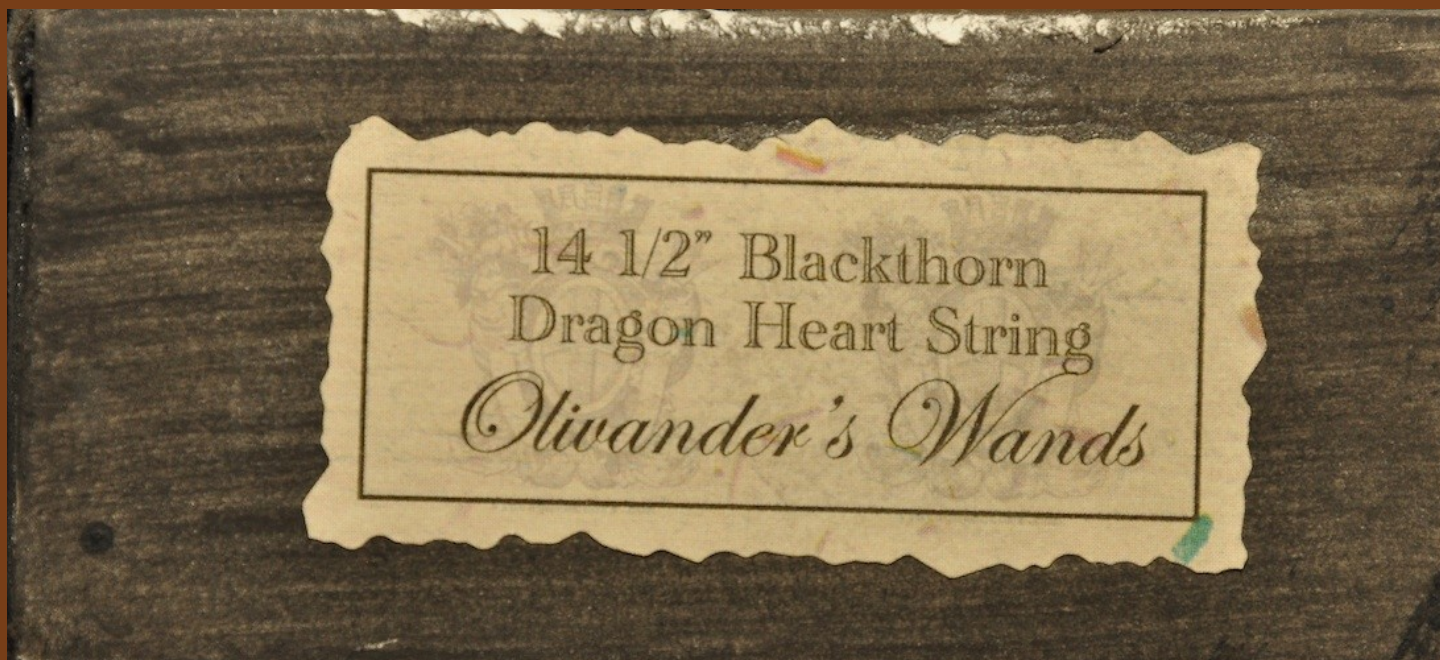
The result was that my interest in Harry Potter had well and truly kicked off. Over the next several years, there would be the release of the remaining books, which collectively became the bestselling book series of all time, with over 500 million copies sold. They were followed by the corresponding films, which were beautifully made and cinematically pleasing to the eye, and went on to become the second highest grossing film series of all time. There has also been the merchandizing – including toys, apparel, memorabilia, video games, and other items (of which I have had a watch, socks, scarves, film soundtracks, video games, books, and calendars). In the age of the Internet and social media, there was an explosion of HP-oriented websites, forums, message boards, fan fiction, and much more for those of us who wanted more and couldn't just sit and wait for the next books and films. Indeed, I feel privileged to be of the generation which knew what it was like to wait for each book and film, so that we all “grew up” with Harry, the other characters, and the actors who portrayed them over the years.

Therefore, I am thankful to have had a part in all this, along with hundreds of millions of others as it unfolded from the mind of J.K. Rowling, who has become inarguably one of the greatest authors of all time. While waiting between the fourth book and the first film, I learned about her and how she fell on hard times as a single mother living on welfare while writing the first book, and I became enlightened and inspired by how she overcame all of that to share the story and the world she had created. Indeed, it was Rowling's engaging writing which made the series successful, along with themes such as the struggle between good and evil, coming of age, friendship and adversity, dealing with political corruption, facing Nazi-like supremacist ideologies and prejudice against others, along with elements of fantasy, mystery, adventure, and romance.

Also appealing was the British setting of the books and the British cultural elements, with the books and films presenting a view of life in modern Britain, especially with regard to the diversity of the British population via the Home Nations – England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (and with Hogwarts students and Ministry officials hailing from the Republic

of Ireland) – and the UK's various minority ethnic groups descended from throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, which was a bit of an eye-opener. There were also elements of the culture surrounding pubs, sports (in the form of Quidditch), and of course, school life – including the rivalries between students and the houses into which they belonged. The result was that Harry Potter contributed to my interest in the UK alongside the *Titanic* and other ships, and I have been heavily interested in the culture, society, history, and politics of the United Kingdom since then.

On a more personal level, I am thankful for JK Rowling and her books, which helped me to become a better reader and to appreciate reading more than just nonfiction history and reference books. Fiction is still not my favorite genre, but when possible, I do enjoy a novel from time to time so that I have had more and varied reading experiences over the years. However, to the present, the Harry Potter series and most of what spawned from them remain my favorites after all these years, from that day in January over seventeen years ago, and I look forward to hopefully passing them down to children of my own.



Purgatory was the right place for him. He'd had a little trouble in Pride, and had had way too much fun in Wrath, but so far none of it was any worse than he'd had in life. Angels actually explained what was going on before running him through their paces, and nobody was allowed to hurt him. In fact, Sloth had been quite a bit of fun, since the angel in charge of him had finally figured out that Snape barely knew what the word meant. The portion of eternity where he'd learned how glorious leisure could be had been quite pleasant. Those around him were generally taken up with their own concerns, and had little time to bother him. To top things off, he didn't see anyone from his own life here. The angel supervising him admitted that Regulus Black had passed through some years before, but was now working on his final. Neither Death Eaters nor Order members seemed to be anywhere around. He realized why, fairly quickly. Coming to this place required admitting that one had done wrong, and wished to atone for it. Both sides in the war that he had not survived seemed to have trouble with that. Snape thought he wouldn't mind if



By Excessively Perky

this place became his afterlife; there was always something interesting going on, he didn't hurt, and finding out that his angel agreed with him that his grievances in life had been real was quite a nice change. It was annoying to see how badly he'd screwed up, of course; that was the one pain allowed here. However, it was a familiar one, and the angel's guidance was helpful.

He had quite lost track of time when his personal angel appeared with a modest cake floating behind him. "It's been 14 years since you died," the glowing being of light announced. "Happy 50th birthday!"

Snape braced himself for a wave of sorrow and fury, only to be pleasantly surprised when it didn't arrive. The trials of Purgatory were real enough, with some modern variations that Dante had not written about, but they brought about change. Plus, after that hellish final year as Headmaster, some of them were a bit of a lark, really. He blew out the candle, tasted the cake (after a short spell in Gluttony, he appreciated food far more than he ever had before), and even allowed himself a smile when some spirits with nothing better to do sang to him. Oh, he still had bad days; but this wasn't one of them.

"Thank you," he said gruffly. Yes, he was much better off here than in Azkaban, or worse yet, Hogwarts. He still obsessed at times over old hurts and old wrongs, including those he'd dealt out. Yet here he had eternity. No more bells, no more essays, no timetables...only angelic time.

Fifty?

Why, he was barely started here.

Snow. The first thing he remembered was snow encompassing his sight. Those tiny flakes freezing the world in a moment in time when everything felt innocent and whole.

He used to believe in good. In a way he still did, but wasn't it all changed now? Wasn't peace itself burdened with sorrow and pain since *his* return? Wasn't anything whole and pure now twisted by the bleakness death inspired?

She would tell him no. His beautiful wife, the one who loved him for his scars, his demons, his monster. She would smile and tell him life was worth fighting for.

He looked over at her, at her kind face now pale, her beautiful eyes now empty and devoid of any warmth. She was no longer here to tell him that there was hope...so why would he stay to find out? She was his goodness in the world and now he would have to find her in the next.

He reached out his hand. He would hold her one last time before he went away. Reaching, grasping, his fingers inches away from hers, struggling, even in death, to reach back. He pushed himself forward.

With this movement, life spun away in swirling echoes until it fell out of sight.

Ash. The last thing he remembered was ash falling down, covering his home, his son's future home in its darkness. He was quite sure that would be the very last thing he would know, until a nudge in his ribs told him otherwise.

"What's with the beard?" a voice said, barking out a laugh. "You look too old."

He sat up, the faces of his oldest friends staring back.

One of them adjusted his glasses with a wry smile. "Nope, it's not the glasses. You *do* look old. Maybe a little wiser, though."

His other comrade grinned. "You always were the smartest. Lucky for you, we'll need that now."

"Where's—" he searched the whiteness of wherever he was for her.

"You'll find her soon." His friend patted him on the shoulder, giving him that smile he had passed down to his own son. "But we have work to do."

"What?"

"We aren't dead yet." His other friend brushed back black curls and helped him to his feet. "Well...we *are*, but we've got a mission to do first."

"What mission?" he asked, one friend on either side now.

"You'll see." The father of the child chosen to save the world winked. "It'll be just like the old days."

"I think we're past that, my friend."

His two companions grinned, one winking, the other barking a laugh, before patting him on the shoulder.

"Never are we finished. We're Marauders," one said.

"Besides," the other nudged him. "Someone needs to lighten this place up a bit. Who better than the best troublemakers in all of Hogwarts? I'm telling you, we should've gotten an award."

"We don't need a reward," Moony smiled at his friends. "This is quite enough of one, if I do say so myself."

moon's end

by rachel atterholt

The Magic and the Memories:

A Nostalgic Fan's Harry Potter Timeline

By Isabella Summitt

...A girl saw an ad in a Lego catalogue that came in the mail. She loved Lego but knew nothing about this new Lego set line. When she showed it to her mother she was told not to have anything to do with it. Who was the ugly looking professor snap with the glow in the dark head? Her-me-oh-my-oh-me Granger? She couldn't figure out how to pronounce that.

...While she was out shopping at the mall with Dad, they visited a bookstore that's not there today. She saw a display of books in the Harry Potter series. She didn't know anything about it except that her friends' parents at church said bad things about it. The girl stuck her tongue out at the books; her father rebuked her.

...An ad on a box of coke cans that dad drinks in the garage as he worked on some models. Later, she saw a coke commercial depicting a boy and girl on a magical train. Again, the parents advised caution. The mother has read the second book and didn't like the rule breaking habits of the main character.

... The girl requested a Lego set with a man with a purple turban as a reward for catechism homework. The parents had a long discussion behind closed doors. The dad agreed. The girl loved the little plastic red jewel. She didn't know why the purple turbaned man had a face on the back of his head.



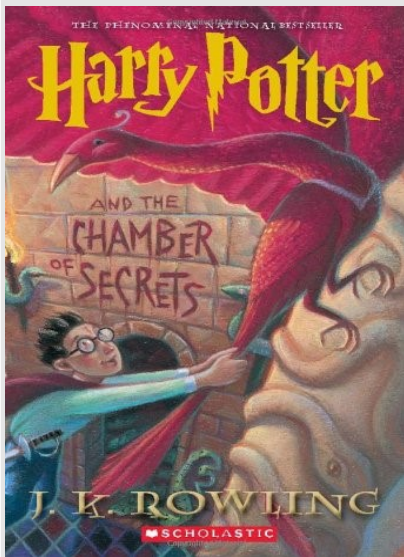
...The girl sat in the waiting room of the center where her brother had a therapy appointment. There was a little castle playset on the shelf that she wasn't allowed to touch but she wanted to. A woman noticed the mini-figure of the purple turbaned man. The girl said it's her favorite character. The woman said he's the villain. The girl was shocked and became further resolved to see the movie.

...At a birthday party for her best friend, she and the guests retired to the rec room to watch a VHS of Charlie and the Chocolate factory that had been a present. A trailer for the film played before the movie. The girl thought it looks cool, especially the creepy man in the long black robe.

...She asked her parents if she can see the movie. They had another long discussion. Finally the dad agreed to take her and to see it with her. It was a frigid afternoon in January, the rain had washed the air clean. The film had been out for a month and the film was a bit scratched and dusty. They left the theater that is not there anymore both with a different opinion of Harry Potter.

...Somewhere the dad bought her a paperback of the book the movie was based on. She read it while eating out with him at a Chinese buffet that is still there but isn't as good anymore. She still has the paperback. Her father also bought her the second book. And the third, but these have all fallen apart now.

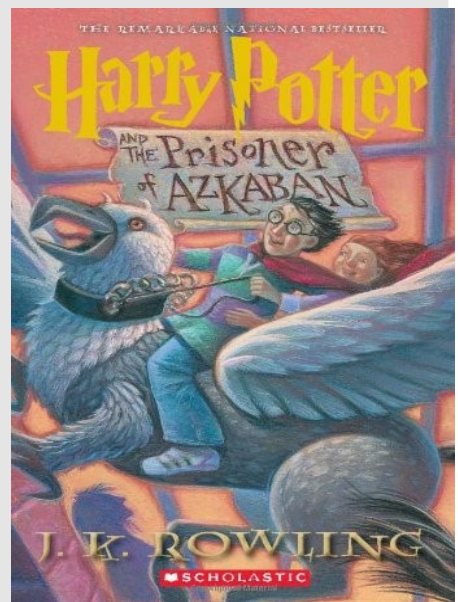
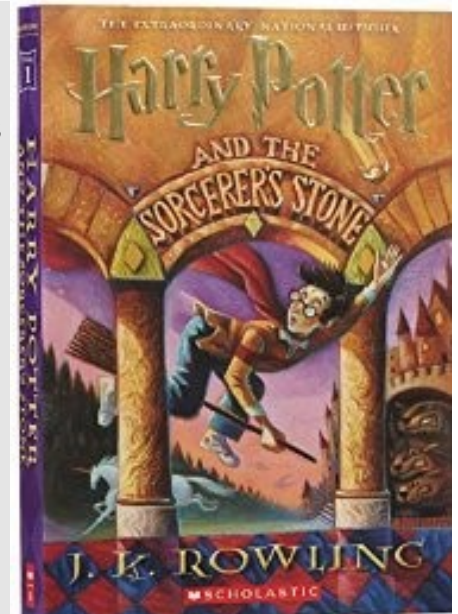
...In the hot summer months she made little dolls of the characters in the books out of Popsicle sticks. She picked up a magazine in the supermarket about the second film. She read the second book already and knows what to expect but was still awed and terrified of the snake. The ending made her cry, the music was so beautiful. She asked Dad for the soundtrack when they shopped at a record store. She was sad to hear of the death of the actor who played Dumbledore.

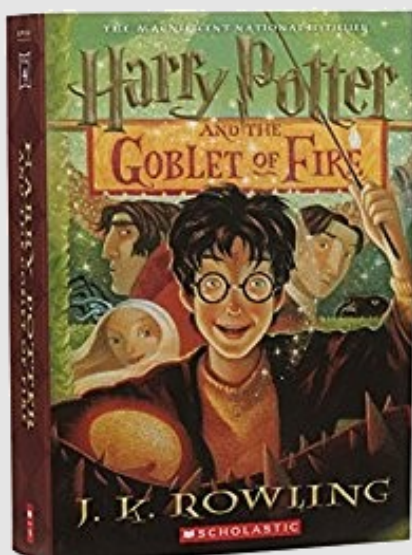


...When Dad got her the third book she read it sitting up in the old mountain ash tree in the backyard. She sat in the tree telling him about what she just read as he barbecued outside on the lawn. He figured out the nature of one character just by his name, the girl is amazed and learned something new. She filled him in with the other details as she read the book aloud to him. She read the good part at the end while they were camped out, just the two of them, out by a calm riverbank at a small motel in Montana. She was proud with how interested he became in the story.

...She read the rest between her swimming lessons at a recreation center which now has been remodeled and is unrecognizable. She and her fellow swimming students gossiped about it among themselves. Her father had trouble finding the fourth book in paperback so she asked her fellow students about what will happen in that one.

...She loved the fourth book but there was a long break between that and the next one. She read her favorite parts lying down, camped out under the Christmas tree, illuminated by the multi colored lights. She got new Lego sets, collecting as many of the Harry Potter ones that she dared to ask her parents for. She built the castle, she played with the PC creator video game of it, got the cloth dolls of Harry and Hermione and lamented that there isn't one of Ron Weasley. Later she got a calendar of illustrations from the second book; it was only her third calendar ever. Her dad pointed out some toys





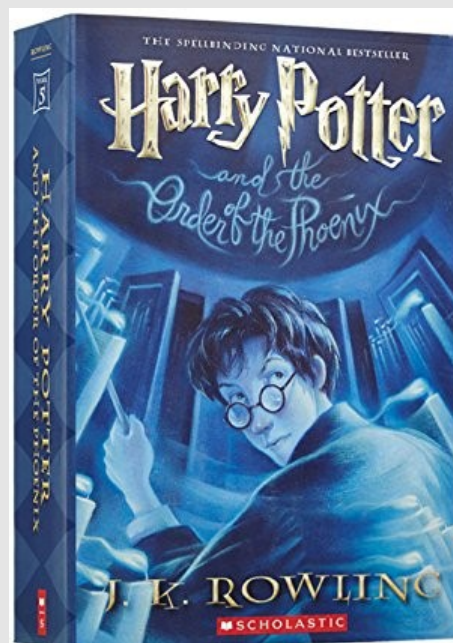
of a werewolf from the third film in the front window of a toy store that is gone, replaced by a Best Buy.

...For many Halloweens to come she dressed as Hermione Granger as her hair was perfect for it. She got a wooden wand at a curiosity shop to complete her costume. It was a shop in a railroad town on a field trip with a co-op of homeschooled kids like her. The friend at whose birthday party the Harry Potter trailer was shown is with her. She loved Harry Potter too. They loved sharing their thoughts on it.

...At a church summer camp she was disliked by the other girls in her cabin. She let slip that she liked Harry Potter and they bothered her about it. She made graffiti of playing card suits on the wood of her bunk bed. Playing cards was one of her only pastimes in this lonely summer camp. When she had to switch bunks, one cabin mate found it and called it 'nude Harry Potter symbols'. She spent most of summer camp crying.

...On an otherwise boring road trip her parents stopped at an acquaintance' house. They had a whole drawer full of Legos. She entertained herself and a group of their children with a Harry Potter trivia board game.

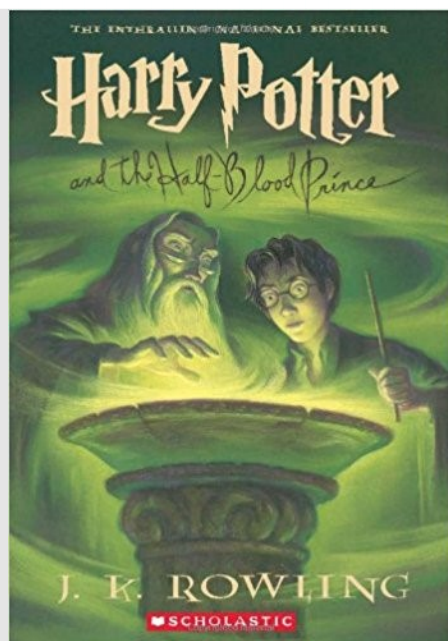
...She was excited when the fifth book finally came out but was quickly exasperated. The summer afternoon when she first opened it was just as hot as Private Drive in the first chapter. In the second chapter, as she read it out loud to her parents, Harry got a letter saying he was expelled from Hogwarts. She couldn't read any further and ran to her bedroom and cried. Her dad read on and assured her that it wasn't permanent.



...Mom took a turn reading the book aloud on a road trip to California, down long highways with nothing to look at but fields of corn. They took turns reading because both of them get motion sick riding and reading in the car. This book has so many layers, so many parallels to real life events. This new teacher is loathsome.

...Dad read some more of it aloud and got ticked when he found out the girl has read ahead. She read ahead some more while sitting in the waiting room at the emergency room for another bladder infection. She learned of the death of a main character.

...She thought ahead and preordered the sixth book. She went for one last time to that bookstore in the mall where she had first seen the cover of a Harry Potter book. She was shy about going up to



to the front desk and requesting it. Her parents told her not to be shy. She read it in the car as Mom stopped on the way home to get new glasses. More deaths were revealed as she read through the book at the airport waiting to board a plane to California with her dad.

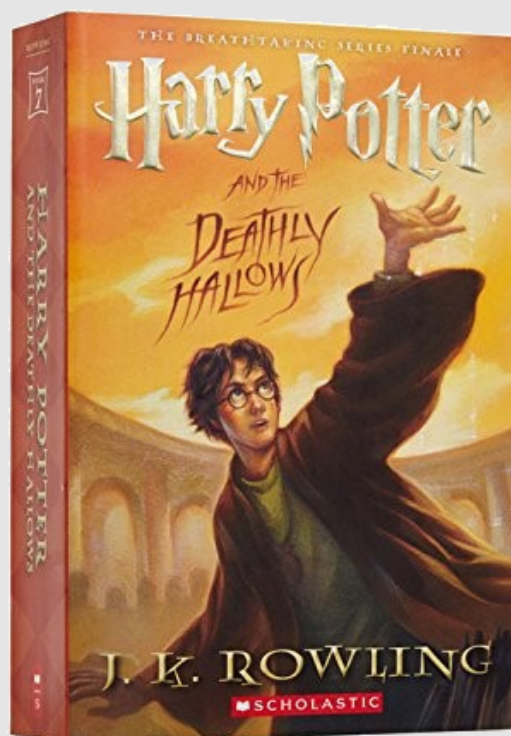
...She went with her dad to an island meeting about public speaking. He was catching up on the sixth book himself. He read to the end of it in his old van on a cloudy winter day after a long wait for the ferry to the island. He came to his own conclusion about the main death in the book, one which had not occurred to her but totally made sense.

...The hype for the seventh and final book was building around her. She preordered this one again and this time she convinced her dad to go to the midnight party at the mall bookstore. It was a different bookstore from the last one, but this one too is gone. The police had locked down the mall after a drive by shooting. The girl and her dad jokingly suspected fanatical fans. They ate at a Teppan restaurant while they waited for it to reopen.

...They were not the first ones there; a pair of girls cosplaying greeted them. The girl guessed who they are supposed to be; one had long straight blond hair, the other had dark curly hair. She got a long way in the trivia contest and got free stickers based on the theory her dad explained to her. She met her old friend from the birthday party whom she had to thank for bringing her all the way here to the end of the series. She touched the covers of the books at midnight when they were wheeled in on a cart. Everyone was tired. Once she got home with her book, glow stick and stickers, she was too tired to read.

...She sped through to the end, passed all the deaths and cried a good deal. She put on music in her room in memory of those characters that died. She was still kind of in shock when her dad asked her how it went but she learned to deal with it.

5 years have passed since she first was enthralled, but they feel like a lifetime. Characters and stories she knows as if they were her classmates. Books with the back streaked with white lines from frequent use. The books are on her back shelves now...but they will be part of her library forever.





G.K. Chesterton

something MORE

BY T.K. WILSON

“If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.”

— C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

How many of us, on a bad day, have wanted to travel to our favorite fantasy world? How many of us have said those most magical of words “I Wish...?” How many of us feel that our favorite characters are our friends?

Who wouldn’t want heroes like Aragorn, Frodo, Robin Hood, Gawain, Aladdin, Martin the Warrior, Harry Potter, and the rest on their side? What girl can read about or watch Arwen, Eowyn, Jasmine, Belle, Hermione, Laterose, and Marian, and not want to be brave and resourceful like them? Who wouldn’t want to be an Elf-Friend, or find a fairy mound on a ramble in the woods?

Most fantasy enthusiasts will respond in the affirmative to all these questions, more than likely with a good natured jab at their own geekiness. When things seem messed up, the stories we love provide a world where stuff’s not so bad. We know who the bad guy is, and we know he’ll be beaten in the end. It’s the ultimate safe space, where peace and friendship reign. How much we would love to bring a little bit of the peace and safety and that happy ending feeling to the real world!

G.K. Chesterton wrote in *Orthodoxy*’s most famous chapter, “The Ethics of Elfland”:

“The things I believed most then, the things I believe most now, are the things called fairy tales. They seem to me to be the entirely reasonable things. They are not fantasies: compared with them other things are fantastic. Compared with them religion and rationalism are both abnormal, though religion is abnormally right and rationalism abnormally wrong. Fairyland is nothing but the sunny country of common sense. It is not earth that judges heaven, but heaven that judges earth; so for me at least it was not earth that criticised elfland, but elfland that criticised the earth.”

Chesterton goes on to say fantasy shows us the abnormal rationality of Christianity in a way that is simpler to understand for the most part. We can understand why Cinderella is able to marry the Prince and the Stepsisters

are not - she is rewarded for her goodness by a higher power. We understand why the Beast demands a sacrifice in exchange for his rose - his priorities are messed up.



The bottom line is that we as humans want to and must believe in something better and more wonderful than ourselves. But like the Beast, our priorities are messed up. Many people look to the fantastic to show them some form of greater power than themselves, and the natural bent of man takes this to extremes. For most fans, the only extreme they would venture to would be a vast collection of merchandise (not that there's anything wrong with buying enjoyable things!), but other fans seek something different.

There exists a small minority of people called "otherkin", people who believe that they are born with the soul of a different creature. As I read on a website belonging to a woman who calls herself "Memory", many of these people feel as if they are alienated from their true home. They feel like this planet and humanity are not where they are supposed to be, so they come to the conclusion that they must be something else. Many times, this manifests as believing they are an animal or a fantasy creature. Most of us would agree this is really strange and kind of scary, but yet, understandable if you look at it from a certain angle.

What drives the otherkin and those seeking "real" occultic magic to do this? It is because of two interconnected reasons: they for the most part have been raised in the secular world and they desire some control over their lives that secularism cannot give them (and thirdly, humans can be horrible sometimes). Because they have been taught that God is not there, they must seek out something else to give them some modicum of control over their environment, these being "real magic" and identifying as some other creature than human gives them the control they crave.

What is to be done here? First, we as Christian fantasy fans must realize that most of the time, these people are hurting. They have turned to these extremes because at some point in the past they've been hurt badly enough that fantasy is the only thing that makes sense. They can't live in the real world, so they hide out in a fantasy one. Secondly, while we cannot and should not endorse their lifestyle choices or delusions, we should treat the people engaged in these and other sorts of traps with kindness and dignity. Thirdly, we should be on the lookout for opportunities to share the Good News with them, perhaps using their favorite fandoms as springboards, like St. Paul on Mars Hill did with Greek poetry in Acts 17.

Fantasy fiction of all sorts contains pale reflections of the truths of the Gospel. We cannot help but see them as we read and watch, something about them resonates within us deeper than simple adventure and escape. It leaves only one conclusion: "He has planted eternity (i.e. another world) in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We just have to help others find the real other world of Heaven, and their true guide, Jesus.

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The Pottermore™ Problem

Why J.K. Rowling Should Leave Well Enough Alone

By Kat Coffin

It's been good couple of years for Harry Potter fans—or so the media tells me. What with the film release of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the semi-canon stage production of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, and the information about the Harry Potter world released from the website Pottermore and J.K. Rowling respectively, Harry Potter fans should be utterly thrilled. And many are, in all fairness. It often feels that I am the only one who gets progressively more upset with every new Harry Potter related news release.

I am a fan. I know this is hard to believe, given how cranky I've been towards Rowling lately, but I really and truly am a fan of Harry Potter. I have fond memories playing Harry Potter with my friends in elementary school. I had a Ravenclaw pennant hanging on my bedroom door, growing up. I attended book release parties in costume and was a proud member of the Harry Potter club in high school. I even wrote a very detailed fanfiction that took place in the wizarding world.

So why is it that with every Tweet, Pottermore update, and Warner Brothers announcement, I want to scream at J.K. Rowling, "JUST LEAVE IT ALONE ALREADY!"

I fully acknowledge that I do not own the Harry Potter series. She can do what she wants with it. She's the writer, after all. But the books ended in 2007. She doesn't seem that interested in adding to her body of work through more books—just tweets and Pottermore information. And of course, *Cursed Child*, which read like bad fanfiction, and a movie.

But part of this is because with every new reveal about a character, I feel like part of the Harry Potter world is taken away from me. I don't want to know what house James Potter (the son of Harry, not his father) was sorted into. I *really* don't want to know that George Weasley married Angelina (a nonsensical, disrespectful character choice that I'll never forgive Rowling for). I don't want to know where Scorpius ended up. I don't want to know about the other schools that exist, and I don't want to believe the American word for muggle is No-Maj. I don't want to hear a white-washed history of Iivermorney, the American magic school. Could she please stop?

Why do I want her to stop? As an avid Harry Potter fan, should I be thrilled with all of this information about the Harry Potter world?

When C.S. Lewis finished "The Chronicles of Narnia", several children wrote him letters asking for more Narnia stories. His answer was, "I am delighted to hear that you liked the Narnian books. There is a map at the end of some of them in some editions. But why not do one yourself! And why not write stories for yourself to fill up the gaps in Narnian history? I've left you plenty of hints—especially where Lucy and the Unicorn are talking...I feel I have done all I can!"

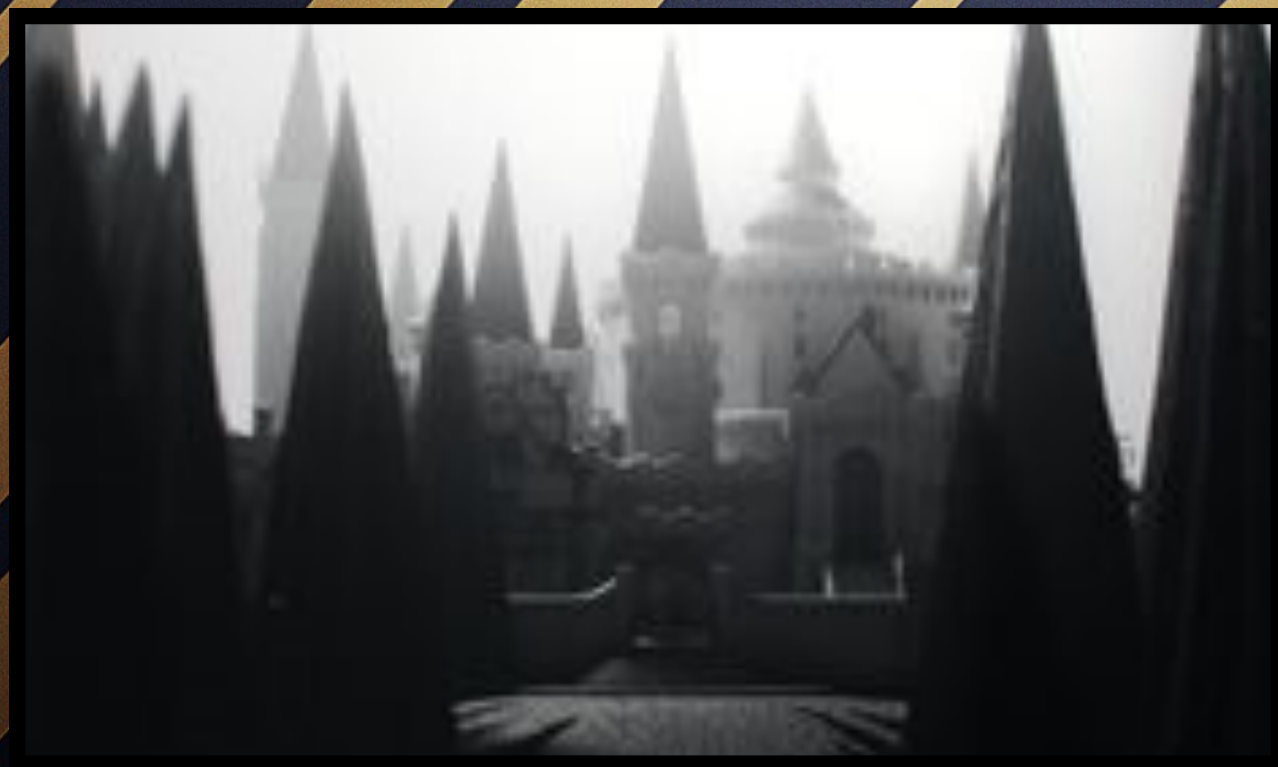
I think this adorable anecdote of Lewis explains why I'm becoming so frustrated and upset with J.K. Rowling. When she finished *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, it closed the book on a beautiful and inviting world, while still allowing the readers to come up with their own ideas and stories. I had my own idea on what the American wizarding schools (because OBVIOUSLY there would be more than one) looked like, what American wizarding *culture* was like. I had my own stories about Harry and Ginny's kids, my own fanfictions about who George married (definitely not Angelina, Angelina was *Fred's* girlfriend. George and Fred are not interchangeable and I am bitter). I know of people who had their own headcanons about different wizarding schools around the world (Africa is not a country, there cannot possibly be only ONE wizarding school on such a giant

continent).

I know I'm not the only one who feels this way.

The fact of it is, I am a fanfiction writer. I don't own the Harry Potter series—it has and always will belong to J.K. Rowling. But it sort of felt like she gave it to us readers ten years ago and now, slowly and surely, she's taking the gift back. It's probably unfair of me to expect Rowling to do the same as Lewis and allow her readers to come up with their own ideas of the Harry Potter world. But I can't help but wish she'd leave us alone to our imaginings. Or at least take a basic U.S. History course to gain an understanding of American culture and how you might intertwine your fantasy wizarding world with it.

In the end though, my cranky bitterness about *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the mess that is IJvermorney, and all of this doesn't come from a hatred of the series. It comes from the love of a fan.



What Remains Unspoken

by Carolina Hobot

Percival Graves wasn't a cruel man, but he believed in his job and part of that was upholding Rappaport's Law even when it seemed terribly cruel.

Miss Goldstein's actions had been noble, yet they could have exposed the magical world to the bigotry of the No-Majes. Unlike that fanatic Grindelwald, Graves had no desire to ignite a war with the No-Majes.

Thankfully, a team of Aurors and Obliviators had succeeded in burying the incident. Graves still wondered why she had risked her entire career to throw a spell at that odious Barebone woman, the very lady who was attempting to lead a renewed hunt against witches and wizards, thereby not the wisest choice if deciding to reveal magic to a No-Maj!

Miss Goldstein's breach of magical secrecy had been an act of absolute madness, in Graves' opinion. Or at least that is what he used to wonder, because right at this moment Graves was committing a breach of Rappaport's Law that was far worse.

Apparating into a quiet alleyway, he cast a furtive look around his surroundings. As ever, the alley remained deserted unless you counted the rats. Graves was such a man who wouldn't be surprised if any of those rats scuttling away from the intruder to their alley happened to be Animagi, registered or not.

Pushing aside his paranoia, justified or not, Graves cast a Notice-Me-Not spell and strode from the alley. The main street was poorly lit, and close by, Graves saw the New Salem Philanthropic Society church. The windows were nearly all black, apart from one at the top and one at the bottom where Graves knew the kitchen was

located. A yellow glow spilled from them, and occasionally he glimpsed a figure moving inside. Cautious despite his charm of concealment, Graves checked the road and glanced to the other side.

Good, he was there.

Seeing no cars coming, Graves hastily crossed the road, ice forming as the temperature dropped. Reaching the curb, he removed his concealment



charm before entering the alley. Narrow and filthy like all alleys, it served their purpose well enough. No one who cared to keep their life would glance too long into an alley they had no business going down.

This alley was close to the Salem church, only one over and surrounded by buildings where people had closed their curtains against the darkness and cold of the night. Very little light escaped the curtains, and what did formed tiny tendrils that did nothing to dispel the inky blackness of the alley.

The street lights helped illuminate the mouth of the alley, and just outside the orange glow stood the cause of Graves' own brand of madness.

Credence Barebone, the same boy that Tina Goldstein had thrown away her career for and endangered their society, now awaited the next person to risk their career over him.

"Credence?" whispered Graves.

The hunched-over young man glanced up, expression hopeful at the worry evident in Graves' voice. It twisted Graves' heart to see how broken he was, lapping up any sign of *positive* attention or affection, no matter how measly.

"Yes, Mr. Graves?"

"No one saw you leave?"

"No, Mr. Graves, Ma is busy with her meeting and Chastity is helping. My sister Modesty is on duty in the kitchen tonight."

"Excellent. How are you, Credence?"

As Graves walked up, Credence

ducked his head again. Sighing, Graves took the boy's hand, feeling the rough bandage wrapped around the calloused palms. He did not miss the hastily stifled gasp. Turning Credence's hands so the streetlights could illuminate them, Graves saw red seeping through the sloppily bound rags, and gently unwound them.

He hissed at the angry welts. The wounds had ruptured the skin, the marks from a belt - Credence's own, Graves knew - deep and cruel. Blood sluggishly escaped them, turning Graves' questioning fingers sticky and red.

"What for, this time?" Graves winced at the anger that he couldn't control.

Credence flinched in response and swallowed heavily. "I am sorry, Mr. Graves, but Ma said I hadn't handed out enough leaflets. I swear I did not tell her of you." Earnest eyes now met his, tears gathering at the corners.

How broken and terrified this young man was, transformed by his sadistic mother into nothing more than a child who expected only violence from others, and when offered kindness was scared of losing it.

Why did she hate Credence so? He was a kind man despite his upbringing, lacking the devout hatred of his mother's crusade against witchcraft. Graves could not understand, and Credence had been unable to tell him satisfactorily, so far.

"I know you have not informed your mother of us, Credence. Please do not be afraid. I am not angry at you, but at your mother. She should not have

done this."

Credence nodded, still unsure. Graves sighed at the sight while he debated his options. He couldn't heal Credence without giving away what he was, yet how could he leave Credence to suffer?

Unless he didn't heal Credence and merely helped him on the way? Yes, of course. It was a clear violation of Rappaport's Law, but... Graves smiled wryly, for he had broken the law already. He might as well trample over the shards and hopefully bury them before anyone noticed - wizard, witch, or No-Maj alike.

Raising one stained hand, Graves cradled Credence's neck and pulled the young man close, into a tight hug. Credence stiffened then relaxed, desperately huddling into the odd embrace. His lean body shuddered, his breath coming in quick huffs against Graves' shoulder where the lad had lain his cheek.

Rage filled Graves at the desperate manner Credence sought this paltry affection. He was starving for the loving touch of a family member so much that he accepted Graves' awkward embrace with no questions. For a few heartbeats, Graves understood Grindelwald's crazed desire to bring war between the No-Majes and them.

If Grindelwald had at that instant suggested they seek vengeance against this vile woman who beat her adopted son mercilessly, then Graves would have gladly done so with a song in his heart. Credence's hands were still cradled by one of Graves', in-between the tight clasp of their bodies, and it took a whimper of pain to stop Graves' insane desire to watch Mrs. Barebone burn for her crime.

"Credence, do not be afraid, your suffering shall soon be over. Keep your palms turned upwards and don't move them."

"Yes, Mr. Graves," murmured the young man obediently.

Graves shifted so his right hand now covered Credence's left. Focusing on his power, Graves thought of healing, of light and warmth, of knitting torn insides, stopping blood from seeping from rent flesh, and mending broken skin. His breathing was steady, a

slow inhale and exhale, his hate-fuelled desire to dispense pain and death turned to a yearning to be gentle and to heal.

Graves moved his hand over Credence's. It tingled with power, and he felt so calm that Graves' left hand loosened on Credence's neck, still restraining, but gentler. As he trailed over the terrible welts, Graves' power trickled out of him like a steady stream. Graves heard Credence sigh and



relax more against him.

"Mr. Graves?"

"Just once more, Credence, then it shall be over."

"Oh." His disappointment was obvious at losing these shared sensations of peace.

Graves repeated his actions on Credence's right hand, and stepped away. Credence followed him briefly before stopping. Graves' heart ached and he wished he could comfort Credence more.

Credence's mournful expression changed when he examined his hands. His sharp inhale tore the fragile fabric of the night.

"Mr Graves?" Awe and fear mingled together as he showed his hands to Graves.

Graves swallowed thickly as he witnessed his handiwork. He had only meant to prevent infection from setting in, and encourage the healing process. However, in his attempt to heal Credence and show the boy some kindness, he had let his powers run amok.

The ruined skin on both of Credence's palms was fully mended, and even the bloodstains were gone, removed by Graves' nonverbal command.

There was no No-Maj explanation for this.

Credence was staring at him yet... while there was a little fear, there was also wonder.

"Sir... Mr. Graves, are you an angel?"

Credence's faith was admirable in light of all his suffering, or perhaps strengthened by it? Graves was uncertain. His own faith had been eroded by the criminals he chased, by the sometimes petty, oftentimes grey or evil injustices he had witnessed through his years as an Auror and now as Head of Magical Law Enforcement. Thus, it was refreshing to see Credence's hope in the face of all the suffering he had endured. Even when Graves caught flashes of great anger (justifiable in his opinion) inside the boy, as if he was struggling to contain the rage under his thin and ill-fitting suit, Graves deemed it nothing to be worried overmuch by. It surely was a natural expression of Credence's suffering.

"No, Credence, I am not. I suspect you know what I am, but we must not speak it aloud. There are those who would use the knowledge for great harm."

Your mother for one, my enemies for another, and the Government I serve as the final addition to the party.

Credence nodded, his eyes shining with tears of wonder in the street-lights.

"Why help me, Mr. Graves?"

Why am I helping you? mused Graves. Because I thought I could simply walk away after checking if you had indeed forgotten Tina's foolish use of magic, but since my initial visit I have only wished to help. You were beaten and cold when I saw you, and nothing has changed.

I have, though.

My selfish interest in protecting my people devolved into caring for an abused No-Maj, who for the first time in years burrowed past my better judgement - or cold indifference.

I never questioned the full ramification or even morality of Rappaport's Law, until my visits with you. The No-Majes have done nothing to help you because they don't know or do not care. I do know, yet I am supposed to not care. However, I do care, but am not allowed to do anything. How is that just? Your God would judge it unjust and demand I act to rectify the situation.

Graves nearly laughed at the ridiculousness of the thought. That he would follow Credence's Holy Book more than his fellow No-Majes was a surprise, to say the least. Graves pinched the

bridge of his nose to shake the thought to leave. Soon." and gain more time. He saw Credence shift, but stay quiet as he waited for a response, eyes still wide.

Credence's awe over every kindness shown to him, along with his earnest gratefulness, filled Graves with a renewed determination to repay with more kindness. He wanted Credence to know some untainted happiness, and that gentleness existed even for him. Somehow Credence had whittled away at the hard shell Graves had formed over the years of being an Auror.

For an instant, Graves wondered if this was how it would feel to have a son.

Graves did not confess his introspections, for it was too much for him to cope with yet, let alone divulge to the boy.

"Because you do not deserve to be beaten, Credence; no one does," replied Graves finally, with a heavy sigh.

Credence blinked in surprise at such a statement and the sentiment behind it. He looked hopeful then, similar to when Graves smuggled him

food bought from a street vendor.

"Can I go with you?" he asked. Tentatively he added, "And Modesty?"

"No, but..." Graves added hurriedly as he made another hasty decision, "you will be able



Credence's fallen expression transformed again into hope tinged with wariness. Graves would lead the No-Maj police here, he would *find* evidence that would bring Mrs. Barebone down and then he would discreetly assist Credence and his sister in escaping.

No one need ever know the truth—President Picquery or the No-Majes.

"Just wait a little longer, Credence. I need to go away on important business, but upon my return we shall discuss your future. Can you

trust me?"

Credence nodded. "Yes, Mr. Graves, you always keep your word."

Graves smiled, happiness sliding into his breast. "Then return quietly to your mother, but say nothing to anybody, not even your sister."

"Yes, Mr. Graves."

"Goodnight, Credence." Watching Credence return to his abusive home was not so painful this time. Graves would save Credence and his sister - and coincidentally all those children under Mrs Barebone's thumb. That it would benefit his society, as well, was a blessing.

First, however, he had to deal with Gellert Grindelwald.



The Road to Always:

A Harry Potter Fan Meets an Anti-Harry Potter Fan-Fiction Writer

By Wesley Hutchins (alias Earl Chatham)

Ever since 2000, I have been a fan of the Harry Potter book and film series. Like many people of my generation, I "grew up" with Harry as his adventures unfolded through the release of each book and subsequent film. They have become much appreciated throughout the world for their literary and cinematic value.

However, over the past several months, I have had to reckon with an "anti-HP fan" in form of my very good and blessed friend, Avellina Balestri. She has deeply engaged herself into the art of writing Harry Potter fan fiction, but instead of merely writing additional sequences within the known canon of the books, she has gone about offering completely alternate stories which not only deviate from the books, but also go quite far in providing a new take on the characters.

As a person who is not much into fan fiction and has preferred fan fiction of a more limited type within what's known in the books and films, her approach has made me a bit uneasy, and perhaps more so because I appreciate the series for what it is with very few gripes. In contrast, she has little reverence for the books as written and has not been afraid to upbraid convention and various elements to forge her own angle.

The irony of this is that I am responsible for getting her into Harry Potter in the first place.

It was in the fall of 2014, the year of the Scottish independence referendum, which had brought us together as American supporters of maintaining the United Kingdom – an effort which had been successful, with Scotland rejecting independence. During the referendum and afterward, as we got to know each other better, we talked about what made Britain important and special to us, and one of the things I cited – likely more than once – was Harry Potter, and when she informed me that she had not read the books nor watched the films, I was gobsmacked since I had taken it for granted that the vast majority of people in our generation had had at least some encounter with the books and/or films. At that point, I believe I told her about what I liked in HP, particularly with regard to its portrayal of British culture and making me appreciate the UK for what it is today, and subsequently gave a strong recommendation to experience HP for herself.

Nearly two years passed before Avellina got around to watching Harry Potter in August 2016, and even then she only watched the first three films and a couple of scenes from the others on YouTube – including the scene in which Professor Severus Snape meets his fate toward the end of the final movie, which seems to have made a lasting impression on her.

The death of Alan Rickman, the actor who portrayed Snape, earlier that year may have added to the impact. A lot of people associated Rickman with the character and so his passing was like Snape dying a second time, which brought about a profusion of memes, videos, and other tributes to the potions master, whose end revealed him to be a much more complex character than previously thought. After all, for most of the series, Snape had been seen in simple terms as the man who detested Harry, hated his father, betrayed and killed Hogwarts Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, favored Slytherin students (and acted petty toward non-Slytherins), associated with the Dark Arts, and was in league with Lord Voldemort.

However, we learn through his memories that Snape was close friends with Harry's mother Lily. In fact, she was his only true friend (calling him "Sev") and he loved her, but had to contend with Harry's father James, who bullied Snape for much of their time at Hogwarts. Snape eventually got deeper into the Dark Arts, which caused dismay on Lily's part, and they fell out over him calling her a "Mudblood". Despite that and her ending up with James, Snape never stopped loving Lily, and when it became clear that Voldemort was going to murder her, James, and baby Harry on information he had provided to Voldemort as one of his Death Eaters, he became a spy for Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix, working against Voldemort in exchange for protection for the Potter family. When that failed at the death of Lily and James, Snape dedicated the rest of his life to protecting Harry under the auspices of Dumbledore, to whom he had pledged his loyalty. After Voldemort's return many years later, Snape rejoined the Death Eaters to become a double agent and it was in this position that he killed Professor Dumbledore and learned of what was likely to be Harry's ultimate fate. It was then that he revealed to Dumbledore that he had actually come to care for Harry and that he still loved Lily, by casting a patronus charm in the form of a doe, like Lily's had been. "After all this time?" asked the headmaster. "Always", said Snape.

This revelation at the end of the series turned Snape overnight into a hero, and that one word alone had probably captured that degree to which Snape was a tortured soul who masked his personal anguish and emotions with a sarcastic and cold exterior, and went on to inspire Avellina, who found Snape to be an interesting and complex character and wanted to write about him.

After watching that scene, she began writing what would become “Legend of the Lost”, an alternative timeline of events following Snape’s death scene. Here, Snape does not die instantly following the attack by Voldemort and his pet snake Nagini, but lives for a period of time, albeit immobilized. As far as everyone else is concerned, Snape is dead, but Harry returns just about every day to the Shrieking Shack with food and supplies, and during these last days for the professor, they have a heart-to-heart as Harry attempts to get to the bottom of who Snape really is. Their conversations run the gamut of emotions and they come to blows several times, but by talking things out and getting to know each other on a personal level for the first time, they do come to an understanding. Furthermore, we see Snape’s flashbacks of moments with Lily, including a time when she stopped him from cutting himself, when she invited him over for her Christmas party, and when her father deemed him a risk to her and cut her off from him, which led to a downward spiral of sorts and eventually resulted in the breakdown of their friendship. At the end of it, Harry comes to appreciate and respect Snape not as a wizard or spy or teacher, but simply as a human being. Snarky, petty, embittered, and tough, yes, but with goodness at the core.

It was from this basis that Avellina wrote not only this, but several Snape-centered fan fiction stories, each of them focusing on aspects of his personality and putting him in settings outside of Hogwarts. One is a comedy which features Harry running away from the Dursleys’ and going to Snape’s house, from which they embark on a road trip through the UK to get to Hogwarts. Another is a more poignant look at Snape’s later life in a wheelchair, living with Harry and Hermione, where he forms a bond with their young daughter, who looks like Lily, with red hair and green eyes. Still another focuses on pre-teen Harry spending the Christmas holiday season with Snape at his house, and again understanding Snape’s deeper nature.

As stated before, being a fan of the books and films as they are, Avellina’s wholesale changes and additions to the story were not... entirely welcome. With almost every draft she shared with me, I was chagrined and took issue with the various scenarios, such as Snape driving a car and Dumbledore communicating via cell phone from the Bahamas, having Harry and Hermione as a couple, and generally deviating greatly from the known series canon. There were also the comedic and spoof material which I found blasphemous for Harry Potter, but in all of these things, she would tell me that the point of fan fiction is to be creative and explore new takes on the stories and characters, sometimes putting them in situations and circumstances contrasting from the actual story.

Perhaps these things would not have been so concerning were it not for how some of the characters were characterized, such as Dumbledore appearing to be portrayed as an aloof and insincere hippie, not wanting to be bothered while sunbathing in the Bahamas. Her defense of such characterizations was that they were based on the characters and simply brought out underlying features and took them to their full, logical extent. I disagreed with this, and in particular reference to Dumbledore, we have had long debates over his actions and the core of his character. Her portrayal of the headmaster as coldly Machiavellian, controlling, manipulative, and only concerned about his personal agenda rather than the wellbeing and needs of others was quite disconcerting. She has spoken of Dumbledore as essentially using Snape as a slave and manipulating him to not veer away from the cause of eventually defeating Voldemort, which in her story included not becoming too attached to Harry because of his eventual fate. I countered that Dumbledore, whilst far from perfect (as he himself admitted), was a good and decent man who understood the pain of losing a loved one and feeling at

least partially responsible for it, as well as having briefly fallen to the sway of dark forces. As such, he could likely empathize with Snape, which is why he saw it fit to give Snape a second chance in order to redeem himself and his life following Lily's death. Did he want something in return? Yes, but the agenda he pursued was not for his personal and selfish benefit, but to save humanity from potential enslavement under Voldemort. By doing his part, Snape could have helped to create a safer world in which he could have had a better relationship with Harry at the conclusion of the war.

Avellina and I also had numerous conversations about the wizarding world, with her inquiring about its ins and outs, its relation to the Muggle world, the purpose of Hogwarts, what kind of careers people have, and how they function after Hogwarts. For her, as a person who likes to go deep in writing, the wizarding world seemed to be nonsensical and pointless, and as much as I tried to explain why things were the way they were – such as people being born with magical abilities, and having to refine those abilities at Hogwarts – she always came to the conclusion that it didn't add up and that along with the series as a whole, it seemed filled with holes and insufficiently developed. The very existence of that world was an issue to her, and I became increasingly consternated as she questioned its morals and felt as though the lines between good and evil weren't all that clear cut.

It was for this reason that she decided to place Snape and the other characters in some situations outside of Hogwarts, and for that matter, outside the wizarding world in general, with its use of magic. The reasoning for that was so they could be seen as normal human beings in normal circumstances, discovering things about themselves and solving problems in the way most people do. It was also for this reason that she gave Snape a more extensive background story rooted in her extensive study and understanding of British and Irish cultural history. Given his working class background in the mill town of Cokeworth, England, and his mother having the Irish name Eileen, she put those together with the knowledge of Irish migration to British industrial towns and so gave Snape an Irish-Catholic heritage. As a baptized Catholic with knowledge of Catholic teaching and ceremony, as well as a natural thirst for learning which leads him to culturally relevant literature, Snape is able to recall and even recite these things to Harry, which offers him and the reader some insight into Snape's depth of character once his tough edge is peeled away.

That tough edge, according to her, also partly has its roots in the culture of the British Isles in the form of boarding schools, which had a reputation for tough teachers with a militaristic touch. Indeed, with Hogwarts being a boarding school, she explained Snape's personality as being little more than a tough teacher. When I tried to counter that Professor McGonagall was also tough (i.e., the head of Gryffindor House, who didn't shy from taking points and meting out detentions for students of her house), Avellina insisted that she was not a teacher in the old-school style like Snape. Furthermore, she argued that his personality was also forged in his anti-social behavior, which in turn stemmed from the bullying by James Potter and his miserable upbringing. While I argued that he was mean and cruel to Harry, she insisted that yes, he was known to be bitter, snarky, petty, and such, but he would have been the same without his dislike for Harry; his teaching style and personality would not have changed, because there was already a foundation for it elsewhere. That was simply who he was, but he was not cruel and no more strict than other old school British boarding school teachers.

For that matter, she found that he was not much different than one of her homeschool teachers, now known to us as Madame Snape. Avellina's teacher has therefore figured prominently into our recurring discussions on

Harry Potter and other things; according to Avellina, this teacher was very demanding and had a rough edge to her, but as she came to know her on a personal level, she discovered that her teacher was a decent person with a good heart covered by a toughness forged from years of bitterness. She believed that her teacher was simply misunderstood by people who didn't know her or didn't care to know her, also like Snape, and she has regaled me with tales of "the Madame", which have included bonding time between them featuring moments both zany and serious (and said teacher giving Avellina her turtlenecks from time to time). The point was that having that personal touch can help bring down a person's defenses and open them up to others, even if only a select few. In the case of Snape and Harry in Avellina's Christmas story, their bonding over the holiday results in Harry becoming more empathetic toward Snape, and Snape beginning to warm to Harry as he is reminded of Lily's kindness and begins to view Harry separately from his father.

As Snape recites historic literature, poetry, and religious material in Avellina's stories, as well as saving a deer and recounting his past, he reveals his underlying humanity. For me, a lot of this is a bit deep and philosophical, especially the Catholic-inspired material (what can I say, I'm Methodist!), but it is interesting once the time is taken to read it and one gets a sense of who Snape is, through Avellina's interpretation, based on history and her former teacher. Many of her readers commented on how emotional they became – some to the point of crying – as these stories unfolded and Snape emerged as a more sympathetic figure than in the books. The result has been me mocking those readers and (somewhat jokingly) dismissing them as snowflakes, which isn't that far from her calling them her fan-babies or bunnies.

Nevertheless, throughout all of this, I have provided consultation to Avellina as she has written her stories. As her Harry Potter "guru", I have offered suggestions such as having Harry bring Snape a potion to prolong his life as well as Snape and Harry being visited by Lily to get them talking to each other after they have a blow-up, which according to her really started to get the ball rolling on "Legend of the Lost." I have also consulted with her on various aspects of Harry Potter and his world, so what is written makes sense within the context of what is known in the books. For example, in her latest story featuring Snape as being in charge of a stage production at Hogwarts, she originally had him meeting Hermione (as the student leader) in the Gryffindor Common Room, and I had to explain how the common areas and dormitories of each house was protected by passwords or riddles only known to the members of that house and that it was therefore unlikely for Snape to enter the Gryffindor Common Room. After some discussion, she took up my suggestion that the meeting take place in the Great Hall where people of all houses could hang out.

In the end, I have always supported Avellina in her Potter fan fiction, even if I don't always appreciate the unorthodox take on the series (and strongly disagree with her assessments of JK Rowling). What she writes is usually interesting, and the numerous conversations we've had are rather stimulating and have likely had some influence on that writing (just as this writing is also influenced by what we've discussed). Still, I will continue to insist on her reading all the books and watching all the movies in full. She doesn't have to become a fan like me, but I do believe that there's much more that can be helpful in understanding Harry Potter and writing better fan fiction.

Then again, with her material already pretty popular and well-received, I somehow don't believe that will happen, at least while she's still writing.

an EXCEPTION

to EVERY rule

by avellina ballestri

Warning:

This is a merciless farce upon all that is sacred in the Harry Potter world! No one is spared! So if you can handle it, pray continue, if not...well, I warned you! Basically, it's all about chemistry teachers, story inconsistencies, and literary wizards who get wonkers over death scenes *raises hand*.

Fondly dedicated to an outspoken pony protester, Byrnwiga, who inspired some of the colorful dialogue in our little vignette :P

The time had come for the dreadful scene in which everyone's favorite least favorite teacher, the long misunderstood and personality repressed Professor Severus Snape of dungeonian fame, had to die in the most gruesome and overblown fashion possible just to get across to the loving and un-loving fans how dead he really was going to be.

So first he received a potent zap with an electronically charged glow stick, proffered by the melted-cheese-faced arch-nemesis of the universe, that should have spelled the end of him instantaneously.

But this time, electrocution was far too commonplace and painless to be considered fitting and proper. After all, we had to watch his scowling face for far too many movies (even a double-header flick dividing the last literary womper into two parts!), and we had come to relate him to far too many of our own most deeply despised toughie teachers from past school days. He simply had to suffer more for all those point-slashes he inflicted on his students, and by extension, empathetic us.

So it was time for blood and gore, and a slash right across the neck...

Then he is thrown against a glass wall...not the softest landing...

Then...oh...oh, wow...

So, he's going to be brutalized by a python?

Yikes, okay...like, one bite should suffice, right?

Or...two...

Uh...three...

Okay, we get the idea; he's toast...no butter, no jam, just plain burnt toast! Okay, I said, we get it!!! The author has it in for this guy! Screenplay crew, cut the scene, cut the...Eeeeeeh....

viewer faints from fake blood overload

fast-forward

"So...you're technically one of the good guys?" Harry queried.

"Technically," Snape rasped.

"Huh...I mean, I guess that explains a lot of stuff," the boy admitted. "Like the broom stick thing..."

"Yessss."

"And the little snake I talked with in second year..."

"Yessss."

"And the werewolf..."

"OBVIOUSLY."

"Okay, okay, no need to meet your heroic fate with a lousy attitude! This has great redemption moment capacity, here! The fans will love it!"

"Look, this doesn't have to be my fate," Snape panted. "We reside in a universe with magic wands, and antidote potions, and time-turners, and resurrection stones..."

"Yes, but...it only works if there is some emotional attachment," Harry noted. "And you know, the chemistry just ain't there for us."

"Heh, chemistry!" Ron picked up on the pun not intended. "Good one, mate!"

"We hate each other; sparks fly whenever we're around," Snape noted. "That's emotional!"

"Well, I'm not exactly sure it's the right type of emotion, sir," Hermione noted, flipping through the Encyclopedia of Magic she always carried with her for smarty-pants notations. "No, I'm afraid not... it has to simulate something more warm and fuzzy..."

"Can't you just... fake it, you damned useless, brainless scurvy worm of a brat?"

"That... really wouldn't be ethical."

Snape groaned.

"Sorry, buddy," Ron tossed in, tilting his head towards Harry sympathetically, then looking back at Snape dismally. "He's just not the endearing type."

"You cried for an hour on a beach over a CGI house elf!" the professor lamented. "And he didn't even have a long-lost-last-minute love saga with your deceased mother!"

"Thank heavens," Harry sighed, wiping his forehead. "I mean, Dobby was a lot of things, but not really the Casanova type..."

"I just said: I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOUR MOTHER!"

"Actually, Harry, Dobby may have been dealing with various forms of psycho-sexual repression," Hermione offered, pulling out her on-hand copy of Freud, "thus explaining his insistence upon being called a 'free elf.' He may have been expressing a yearning to explore the various aspects of free love..."

"Whoa, 'Mione, I think that's taking things a bit far..."

"Did you hear what I just revealed?!" Snape bellowed. "It's a major plot twist, here! Miscreants will be driving around with vans shouting it out of bull horns sooner or later!"

"Oh, yeah, I heard a fan theory about that," Ron offered. "Everyone was either crying or creeped out, and asking why no one else in our universe seemed to know about this until your death scene."

"Regardless," the teacher huffed. "Potter, doesn't that make you feel...even vaguely emotional?"

"Well...I mean, I'm kind of where they are," he admitted. "That weird tingly feeling between crying and creeped out...I could kind of take it or leave it..."

"Alright, fine," Snape exhaled. "If you can't help me with magic, can you not at least go in search of some sort of antidote in my lab?"

"Uh, sorry, Professor, I've sworn off of going down there," he explained. "Allergic to the mold."

"Oh, I know exactly what you mean," Hermione agreed. "That mold used to clog my sinuses for ages when he used to give us detention sessions! It was hellish!" She turned back to Snape. "Besides, I really think it's more like you're dying from blood-letting issues, not venom per say. He was just the producer's pet gardener snake, really, and was demanding a cameo appearance lest he slither away from home."

"Wait, you mean, I'm NOT dying from poison?! But from...blood loss??"

"That does seem to be the case," Hermione noted, opening up her coffee table home preventative care book. "Yes, you are DEFINITELY displaying all the signs of anemia...he is really quite chalky looking, isn't he?"

"Yeah, he really is," Harry and Ron agreed.

"Then I suppose it cannot be avoided," he remarked dismally. "It is time to summon the last of the elixir of unicorn blood, the most precious commodity in the wizarding world..."



"Oh, I forgot to tell you guys," Ron exclaimed with a snap of his fingers. "I used the last of that stuff in hopes of reviving my hamster Binky, who was in a similar state to the professor here. Tough decisions had to be made."

The shock on Snape's face rivaled his expression during the reptilian attack itself, as he realized that Ron's rodent-loving sympathies (which had not abated since his days as tender care-taker of the Pettigrew rat-fink) had outweighed the gravity of the current humanitarian crisis.

"Oh, poor Binky," Hermione lamented sympathetically. "We should all observe a moment of silence..."

"Well," the ginger-haired lad chirped, "it turns out, he was just going into hibernation, but the elixir kind of gave him a new burst of energy and really boosted his speed on the hamster wheel. I'm sure he's broken some sort of record by now."

"Nevertheless, the distress you experienced over his potential demise must have been an intense emotional strain for you!" she commiserated, pulling both Harry and Ron into a three-way therapeutic group hug.

Snape rolled his eyes in speechless despair, realizing his efforts at toughening the future generation through the school of hard knocks and common sense had failed in totality. "Have any of you miserable mites even learned about tourniquets?" he queried in exasperation.

"Hmm...oh, yes, something about it should be in here..." Hermione started flipping through the *Healthy Helper's Guide* again. "Now what page was it on...?"

"Try 394," he suggested.

"Ah, thanks," she responded, with an overly bright Gryffindor grin.

"Please don't mention it..."

Just then, who should break in upon the scene, high heels clacking a staccato beat, but the One They (usually) Could Not (fully) Name...but Snape did anyway...

"JOANNE?!" he exclaimed, eyes wide as saucers. "But...but we had a contract!!!"

She smiled down glibly, holding aloft her diamond-studded Smartphone. "Sorry, Snape, you and all bullying chemistry teachers of your ilk are going doooowwn! Booh-haha!"

"Right, so we're all part of your revenge fantasy for your grade school teacher who made you clean out test tubes during recess? Is that it?"

But she was far too gleeful, dancing in an impromptu Flamenco style, akin to Wellington after defeating Napoleon.

"Now I'm starting to feel a little guilty," Hermione sighed. "I mean, surely we can provide him with some succor in his hour of need, right? He has saved our lives a few hundred times, remember?"

"Yeah, but it was always followed by extra homework we had to do that made us miss out on Quidditch," Ron pouted.

"All that having been said...perhaps we might make an appeal to the Powers That Be?"

She turned with pleading eyes towards the authoress, whose sympathetic heart was moved by the empathy of her brainiac-child.

"Alright," she relented, a crocodile tear in her eye, and started to fiddle with the tumblers of her 24 carat gold combination lock brand name purse. She then produced a bright pink boo-boo bunny, which she had used ever and anon to soothe her bruised ego during her school-girl tantrums, and a matching My Little Pony mini Band-Aid.





"Madam, you are a sadist," Snape noted glumly.

"Yes, but a sadist with a heart," she corrected him, proceeding to bend over with the intent of pasting the pediatrician-approved puny pony plug over a measly fraction of his grievous wound.

The good professor, however, would have none of it. "No! Nae! Never!" he bellowed defiantly, thrusting his hand out like a police officer stopping traffic to hold her at bay. "I refuse to suffer the indignity of being assaulted by such cringe-worthy pampered princess paraphernalia!"

Joanne squinted seethingly. "Now you've done it; my empathy has run its course! You are infringing on my sense of wellbeing!" She stuffed the tender care items back into her purse and took out a tin of Tylenol, hastily popping a couple in her mouth as the pain-wracked professor looked on in disbelief. "I've gone above and beyond my natural inclinations, and all you've done is increase my stress levels, give me a terrible headache, and disrupt my selfie-taking schedule!"

Not one to lose time, she zippered shut her purse with definitive finality, tossed back her bottle blonde locks, struck a

photogenic pose, and started snapping away with her phone to share with her goddess-worshipping minions, just as her ring-tone began to jingle in unison with her self-satisfied teathy grin: "Pack up your troubles in an old kit bag and smile, smile, smile!"

Snape exhaled in frustration, realizing that his doom had been sealed. "Potter, I just want to say... well, you have your mother's eyes."

"Umm...actually, no. My mum had green eyes, and mine are...blue. I tried wearing green contacts a few times, but they kinda hurt..."

"You're splitting hairs. I'm trying to be nice in my last moments so that the fandom can finally sympathize with me, alright? Do you have to be such a sniveling little wretch and deprive me even of that?"

"Oh, okay...well, it's the thought that counts, y'know?"

"Right. Actually, I've got something for you..." He dug into his cloak and produced a key ring, which had a variety of odds and ends attached, including a cute glow-in-the-dark bulging eye snake key-chain, that looked very much like it came from the Hogwarts tourist center half-price-off trinket shelf.

"Oh, a Slytherin keychain," Harry noted. "Just what I always wanted."

"I meant for you to look at the other keychain, with the religious gift store price tag on it."

Harry squinted and read the inscription: "*If I am dying, call a priest.*"

"Wait a sec...so you're like, Catholic?"

Snape raised an eyebrow.

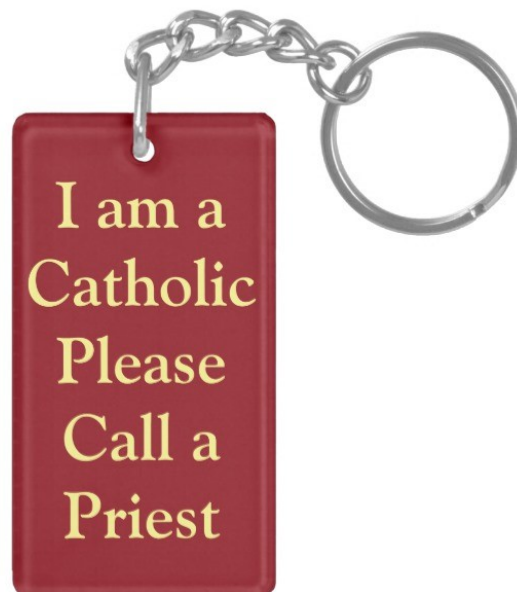
"Whoa, dude, that is like the last thing I'd guess! Who threw in this plot twist?"

"I don't know; they must have gotten some Papist interloper to fill in this bit," Snape offered. "Besides...let's face it, why are Exorcist films so popular? Catholics can do the ceremonial stuff like nobody's business..."

"Yeah, good point," Hermione agreed, snatching up a history of cinematography and flipping to the section on *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. "They can really plug into the whole special effects racket."

"The films don't include their fund committees," Snape noted dismally.

"Funds! Money! I'm rich! I'm rich! Yoweeeeee!" Joanne squealed in delight, juggling her Smartphone



in ecstasy.

"So is someone going to call a priest, or what?"

"Uh...Hermione, do you have a phone book?"

"No, sorry, they did away with phones in the magical world; too archaic. Owls are so much more majestic and mystical..."

"Then...why is *she* allowed a phone on set?" He jutted his chin towards the gleeful authoress.

"Well...duh, she's special!" Harry stated with a shrug. "But hey, don't let it get to you; maybe she'll give you a grand Twitter send off, or even apologize over you a few years down the line! Maybe she'll even have me name my futuristic kid after you or something, and he'll be sorted into Slytherin, and get a screenplay all his own..."

"Oh, whatever! Let's just get this death scene over with already," Snape growled, making a very Irish (as in, faster-than-you-should-but-better-that-you-did-than-not -right?) Sign of the Cross, realizing Last Rites were assuredly lost in translation. "I've probably already drained more blood than I had to start with, and I'm really getting tired of looking at Potter's stupid fake shell-shocked expression."

"Hey, I'm just trying to helpful, okay?" Harry grumbled, proceeding to unhelpfully prod Snape's neck wound.

"Ouch! WHY are you doing that?!"

"I have to! Otherwise I'll look uncaring!"

"You...you're just like your fa...100 points from Gryf...oh, d—n it all to bloody hell, CUT!"

cut to narration

With that, everyone's favorite anti-hero passed into his well-deserved reward...which we never really get to experience, due to the tender ministrations of the All-Powerful Jo of the Be-Jeweled Cell, who prevented him from paying us a visit courtesy the rainbow rock akin to that utilized by Emmy and Max from *Dragon Tales* to ferry them to even more fantastical dimensions...


But he does get a painting. Even though it doesn't talk. Oh, whatever. He'd just be snatching more points anyway...



Legend of the

Sword Bearer

By Ian Wilson



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saw? There's more where that came from! And Harry Potter is just one of the
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ust Publications and on Twitter (@FandFMagazine).

Dear Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings and Felicitations!

Our next issue of Ink & Fairydust will be dedicated to period dramas, with a broad timeline of 16th-19th centuries. If it pleases you, we would be delighted to publish your works on the subject either in our next issue or on our blog. We are looking for people to...

**Review and explore aspects of your favorite (or even least favorite) films and series, including Jane Austen adaptations, *Poldark*, *Hornblower*, *Sharpe's Rifles*, *Downton Abbey*, Masterpiece Theatre Productions, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, etc.*

**Compose poetry inspired by the Romantic poets such as John Keats, Sir Walter Scott, etc., or based on the wealth of folk ballads from past ages. You can also analyze the original poetry and songs.*

**Create your own original historical fictions or period drama fan-fiction involving characters from history, classic literature, film, and television.*

**Write essays on a real or fictional character or on a section of history that fascinates you. Talk about how people lived, cooked, dressed, fought, and dealt with the big questions of life in days of yore.*

**Make fan-art, historical imagery collages, or historically themed photography displays.*

These are just some of the wider ideas you can choose from! Please send your articles, stories, artwork and more to Avellina at championsbrag@aol.com on or before August 18th.

Sincerely,

Avellina Balestri & Sarah Levesque

