

# Back to Basics

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FOUNDER & EDITOR IN CHIEF

PATRICIO TARANTINO

ILLUSTRATOR

FAUSTO GIURESCU

CONTRIBUTORS

BELÉN SALITURI

LAURENT GARCÍA

DEMI SCHWARTZ

OLIVER HORTON

JESSICA MINNECI

# EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Did you like  
The Tales of  
Beedle the Bard  
as much as the  
other Harry Potter  
companion  
books?

The May issue of The Rowling Library Magazine is here, with a great article by Laurent García, an old friend of the Library, who wrote about J.K. Rowling, her writing, and how he misses the old times when everything was simpler.

Demi gives us a great profile on Pomona Sprout, Herbology professor; and Jessica shares with us a fantastic article about Thestrals, those fascinating creatures that Harry encounters in the fifth book. Oliver theorizes about everything that happened in the two decades between the ending of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows and the beginning of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.

We have a few new sections for the upcoming issue of June, but first, let's enjoy this one.

We hope to see you in issue #42 of The Rowling Library Magazine!

# PROFESSOR SPROUT'S HEART BELONGS TO HUFFLEPUFF HOUSE AND HERBOLOGY

BY DEMI SCHWARTZ



What better time to celebrate Professor Pomona Sprout than her birth month of May? She was born on May 15, 1933, and she's a true Hufflepuff to heart. Professor Sprout is a squat little witch with fly-away gray hair. Due to being the Herbology teacher, her robes and fingernails are often earthy, and she also wears a patched hat. Throughout the series she shows her kindness and loyalty as the beloved Head of Hufflepuff House. Let's take a look at some of her most significant moments in the series.

## Professor Sprout Gives Neville the Confidence and Support He Deserves

It's no secret that Neville struggles a bit at Hogwarts. How could anyone expect him to have a lot of confidence when his greatest fear is Professor Snape, one of his teachers? Professor Sprout is the complete opposite of Snape. She builds Neville up instead of tearing him down. After a rough Defense Against the Dark Arts class with Mad-Eye Moody, Neville is understandably shaken over witnessing the Unforgivable Curses, especially the Cruciatus Curse. To cheer him up, Moody gives Neville a book called, *Magical Water Plants of the Mediterranean*. When Neville shows the book to Harry, he says, "Apparently, Professor Sprout told Professor Moody I'm really good at Herbology." The fact that Professor Moody is really Barty Crouch Jr. is beside the point. Neville is rarely told he's good at anything, and Professor Sprout sharing his Herbology abilities with another professor shows how much she cares about her students. It must feel incredible for Neville to know one of his teachers truly believes in him.

Professor Sprout's support makes Neville super excited about a class for the first time. On the Hogwarts Express at the beginning of *Order of the Phoenix*, Neville proudly shows Harry, Ginny, and Luna his *Mimbulus Mimbletonia*. His great-uncle Algie had given it to him for his birthday. Neville says, "It's really, really rare. I don't know if there's one in the greenhouse at Hogwarts, even. I can't wait to show it to Professor Sprout." His love for plants, all thanks to Professor Sprout, leads Neville to become the Herbology teacher himself. Kindness and encouragement really does go a long way, and Professor Sprout, as a

Hufflepuff, is a natural.

## Professor Sprout is There for Cedric's Parents After His Death

The Triwizard Tournament ends in despair during the third task. It's terrible enough that Lord Voldemort is reborn. On top of it, Cedric loses his life because he takes the Triwizard Cup with Harry, and he's murdered once they arrive at the graveyard. This is a horrible truth for everyone at Hogwarts, especially because Cedric was such a caring and loyal person. The Hufflepuffs are affected most deeply, and Professor Sprout's kindness shows when she is with Cedric's parents after his death. When Harry asks Dumbledore where Mr. and Mrs. Diggory are at, he says, "They are with Professor Sprout. She was Head of Cedric's House, and knew him best." Hufflepuff House lost an incredible student, and Professor Sprout would naturally do whatever she can to help those hurting most.

## The Times Professor Sprout Took Being the Herbology Teacher to a Whole New Level

The Hogwarts teachers are truly fantastic at magic and excel in their own subjects. Aside from giving the students a well-rounded education, the teachers also know when to step up and use their skills outside the classroom. Professor Sprout plays a key role in some important moments in the series, which is all thanks to her Herbology expertise.

In *Sorcerer's Stone*, she is one of the teachers who help guard the Sorcerer's Stone. After Harry, Ron, and Hermione get past Fluffy and go through the trap door, they land on Devil's Snare. Ron, who doesn't realize what broke his fall, says, "Lucky this plant thing's here, really." He and Harry don't find it too lucky once the plant starts wrapping itself around them. Hermione says that Devil's Snare likes "the dark and the damp," so Harry tells her to light a fire. It's one unforgettable moment when Hermione says there's no wood, and Ron blurts out, "HAVE YOU GONE MAD? ARE YOU A WITCH OR NOT?" Hermione pulls out her wand and sets a jet of her signature bluebell



flames on the plant. As Harry says, the trio was lucky Hermione pays attention in Herbology. Still, Professor Sprout's Devil's Snare is just the beginning.

Professor Sprout truly becomes a hero in *Chamber of Secrets*. Only a loyal Hufflepuff would take care of a tree that hits back, and that's exactly what Professor Sprout does. Harry and Ron's big entrance to school in the flying car damages the Whomping Willow when they crash into it. On his first day of class, Harry feels bad about the whole situation because "Professor Sprout's arms were full of bandages, and with another twinge of guilt, Harry spotted the Whomping Willow in the distance, several of its branches now in slings." Someone had to tend to the tree, and even though she got whacked by its branches in the process, Professor Sprout did what her Hufflepuff heart believed needed to be done.

More importantly, Professor Sprout plays a key role in reviving those who have been petrified by the basilisk. Harry and his friends learn about Mandrakes in their first Herbology class of the year. Professor Sprout tells the class, "We'll be repotting Mandrakes today. Now, who can tell me the properties of the Mandrake?" Of course, Hermione knows the answer as always. She says, "Mandrake, or Mandragora, is a powerful restorative. It is used to return people who have been transfigured or cursed to their original state." Professor Sprout awards Hermione ten points for her perfect answer. At that moment, no one knows how important the Mandrakes will become. Still, after a long and difficult year, Professor McGonagall makes a very important announcement three days before exams start. She says, "Professor Sprout has

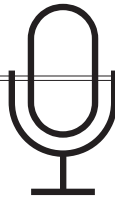
informed me that the Mandrakes are ready for cutting at last. Tonight, we will be able to revive those people who have been petrified." So, Professor Sprout's kind heart, intelligence, and dedication results in the Mandrake juice being given to the victims, and the school year ends on a high note.

Finally, Professor Sprout fights in the Battle of Hogwarts, just like everyone else. After Professor Snape peaces out, the Heads of Houses talk about establishing protections around the school and giving the students who are over age the chance to stay and fight. As Professor Sprout jogs off to get her House, she says, "Tentacula. Devil's Snare. And Snargaluff pods...yes, I'd like to see the Death Eaters fighting those." During the organization of the battle plan in the Great Hall, Professor Sprout is named one of the teachers who will be taking groups of students to fight from one of the highest towers. When the battle starts, Harry spots Professor Sprout leading a group of students, including Neville. They're all wearing earmuffs and carrying large potted plants, which are Mandrakes. The group is going to throw them over the walls at the Death Eaters. Then, Professor Sprout's Snargaluff pods come into good use when Peeves drops them onto the Death Eater's heads. So, Professor Sprout definitely played a significant role in one of the greatest battles in Wizarding history.

Professor Sprout is a kind and loyal Hufflepuff, and she's truly an expert at Herbology. Throughout the series, she's shown her incredible heart and loyalty. Hufflepuffs everywhere should feel proud to call her their Head of House.



Professor Sprout by J.K. Rowling



## A QUOTE BY JO

**"I DREW A LOT OF PICTURES. I DREW THEM FOR NO ONE BUT ME -- I JUST WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE CHARACTERS LOOKED LIKE. [SHOWS SEVERAL DRAWINGS] SO, ANYWAY, THAT WAS ARGUS FILCH; NO PRIZES! SNAPE, OBVIOUSLY; THAT IS HARRY ARRIVING IN PRIVET DRIVE WITH PROFESSOR MCGONAGALL AND HAGRID AND DUMBLEDORE."**



*The Weasleys*

*JKR*

HARRY POTTER AND  
ME,  
BBC SPECIAL,  
DECEMBER 2001



# THE THESTRALS

## MYSTERIOUS AND MEANINGFUL MAGICAL CREATURES

BY JESSICA MINNECI

Perhaps the most fascinating species of magical creatures in the Harry Potter universe are thestrals. Only visible to people who have witnessed death, thestrals are black horses with white shining pupil-less eyes, dragonish faces and necks, leathery bat-like wings, and black manes and tails. Their bodies are skeletal and fleshless, their skin clinging to their bones underneath glistening black coats. Thestrals are known for their fast flying abilities and insanely accurate sense of direction. In Harry's fifth year, Hagrid brings along a carcass for the thestrals to eat during their Care of Magical Creatures class. Attracted to the smell of blood, the creatures come out of the forest to

join the class and eat their fill. Contrary to popular belief, thestrals are not bad omens or bad luck. Rather, they are gentle, useful, and clever creatures who are obedient to those who trust them. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Magic still classifies them as dangerous.

Associated with wizards who descend from the Celtic peoples, thestrals are mainly found in the British Isles and Ireland, but can also be seen in parts of France and the Iberian Peninsula. In the Harry Potter universe, the only domesticated thestrals live in the Forbidden Forest at Hogwarts, tended to by Hagrid with Tenebrus being his favorite. The domesticated thestrals stick to themselves





in their herd and are trained not to harm students or the owls that fly up to the school. In the wild, thestrals often eat birds. The original herd, composed of a male and five females, were believed to have come to Hogwarts as a means of transportation for the students before the construction of the Hogwarts Express. Today, thestrals pull the carriages from the train station up to the school. Witches and wizards who have not seen death assume the carriage is pulled by invisible horses. Dumbledore also uses thestrals to help him travel on long journeys.

In fact, the thestrals' ability to transport the characters comes in handy throughout key moments in the Harry Potter books. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry, Ron, Hermione, Luna, Neville, and Ginny ride thestrals to the Ministry of Magic to rescue Sirius Black. During the Battle of the Department of Mysteries, the first battle in the second wizarding war, eleven Death Eaters are captured and the prophecy about Harry is destroyed. Believing that the prophecy contained the secret on how to destroy Harry, its demise was a huge loss for Voldemort. Most importantly, the minister sees Voldemort, and everyone believes Harry's claim that Voldemort has returned. Unfortunately, Sirius does not survive the battle.

In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the thestrals again play a part in the second wizarding war. Kingsley, Hermione, Bill, and Fleur were four of the seven who disguise themselves as Harry by drinking polyjuice potion. Riding thestrals, they risk their lives to help move Harry from 4 Privet Drive to the Burrow when the blood magic that protects Harry from harm breaks on his seventeenth birthday. Having been informed about the plan by Snape, Voldemort and the Death Eaters give chase. Moody and Hedwig die. George's ear is blown off by Snape's *sectum sempra* curse, which he was originally aiming at a Death

Eater's wand arm. Despite a few lost lives and George's injury, the thestrals again come through, creatures without whom the aftermath could have been much worse. Also, the thestrals participate in the Battle of Hogwarts later in the book.

The circle of life following them wherever they go, it is unsurprising that the sight of and interaction with thestrals has impacted three key characters: Harry Potter, Luna Lovegood, and Neville Longbottom. Thestrals are eerie and otherworldly. Thus, it is only right that those who see them have gotten a glimpse into the afterlife.

"Being able to see thestrals is a sign that the beholder has witnessed death and gained an emotional understanding of what death means," said J. K. Rowling in a *Wizarding World* article. What does death mean? As readers learn from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the most powerful wizard who holds the Deathly Hallows is the Master of Death. To master death is to understand death, to know that death is not only the end of life, but the meaning behind mortality. Human or wizard, people know that their days are numbered. They must be okay with this fact, willing to accept the end when it comes. Those left behind must understand the finality of death, how it relates to their own life, and undergo the grieving process, coming to terms with the loss of their loved one. The length of time it takes for the living to process death varies from person to person. For this reason, seeing a thestral is symbolic. Just as death was the end of the road for their loved one, seeing a thestral is the end of the road of grief and a sign of emotional maturity for the seer.

Harry, Luna, and Neville became emotionally mature at different times. Harry was unable to see the thestrals until his fifth year; he believed the carriages were pulled by



invisible horses. As Harry had watched his parents die in front of him as a baby, in theory, Harry should have been able to see the thestrals. However, Harry had been young, unable to comprehend and understand death. In his fourth year, Cedric Diggory is killed in cold blood at the site of Voldemort's rising. This experience allows Harry to realize the finality and cruelty that comes from such a killing.

Both deaths defined Harry as a character. His parents' passing makes Harry curious, always asking questions and wanting to know more about everything he encounters. Every adventure in the series revolves around Harry's curiosity. What is Fluffy guarding? Why is the Chamber being opened? He and his friends work to find these answers.

His parents' death also makes Harry do good, helping others whenever he has the chance. One character Harry assists often is Hagrid. Harry sneaks Norbert to Charlie's friends so Hagrid wouldn't get in trouble. Harry, Ron, and Hermione also rescue Buckbeak from his execution. The list goes on throughout the series.

After Cedric's death, Harry becomes a brave fighter, his mission to stop Voldemort from coming to power taking the forefront after the end of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Harry fights to protect others from being killed in cold blood. He wishes death upon no one. Harry leads Dumbledore's Army, teaching Hogwarts students how to defend themselves. Harry and others participate in the Battle of the Department of Mysteries, fight Death Eaters on their way from Privet Drive to the Burrow, and challenge their opponents in the Battle of Hogwarts. Harry even sacrifices himself. Knowing that he was a Horcrux and that part of him must die, Harry lets Voldemort kill him so that others may live. Harry emerged victorious so that the deaths he witnessed would not be in vain, so that everyone could live in a better world.

At nine years old, Luna sees her mother die. Luna's mother liked to experiment with magic. Unfortunately, a spell went wrong one day and she died. After that, Luna is able to see thestrals. Unlike Harry, it is believed that Luna does not take a long time after her mother's death to be able to see thestrals. Her willingness to embrace the spiritual world makes Luna much more prepared to face her mom's tragedy. In fact, Luna even believes in the afterlife. After Sirius's death, she tells Harry that they will be able to see their loved ones again as the afterlife was just beyond that veil.

Along with her spirituality, Luna becomes more open to other things in her world. She never closes her mind off from anything, no matter how strange. She believes in her father's crackpot theories about crumpled-horn snorkacks. When Harry tells Luna that Voldemort had risen, she takes Harry's word for it and does not question him. By remaining open to all things, Luna is more intelligent than the rest

because in the magical world, many outlandish theories, like the Deathly Hallows, can be true.

When Neville looks at the thestrals during Hagrid's Care of Magical Creatures lesson, he seems calm and tells Umbridge later that he's not afraid of them. Although no one knows how his granddad passed away, it could be assumed that the death was not as tragic as what Harry and Luna experienced. Like the other characters, Neville understands the finality of death. However, unlike the others, Neville has experienced a different kind of death, the death of the sanity of his parents. When Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Ginny go to visit Mr. Weasley at St. Mungo's, they encounter Neville and his grandmother visiting his parents. Bellatrix used the Cruciatus curse on Frank and Alice Longbottom, two very respected aurors, as she searched for Voldemort after the first wizarding war. Even though Bellatrix was caught, the two were never the same again and went to St. Mungo's.

It is debatable which is worse, the loss of someone's physical body or the loss of their mental capacity. These losses define Neville as a character, making him more equipped to deal with hardship. Like Harry, he uses his losses as fuel to the fire of his desire to help others, standing alongside Harry to fight, even killing Nagini.

It is clear that thestrals have a huge impact in the Harry Potter books. Their flying abilities and sense of direction have aided in saving characters lives while their very presence reminds the characters of past loved ones. After the Battle of Hogwarts, many have been added to the list of characters who can see thestrals. By analyzing why Harry, Luna, and Neville can see thestrals, readers begin to understand how these losses affect the characters and if they have experienced a loss, themselves.



# BACK TO BASICS

STORYTELLING IN THE TIME OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BY LAURENT GARCÍA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FAUSTO GIURESCU



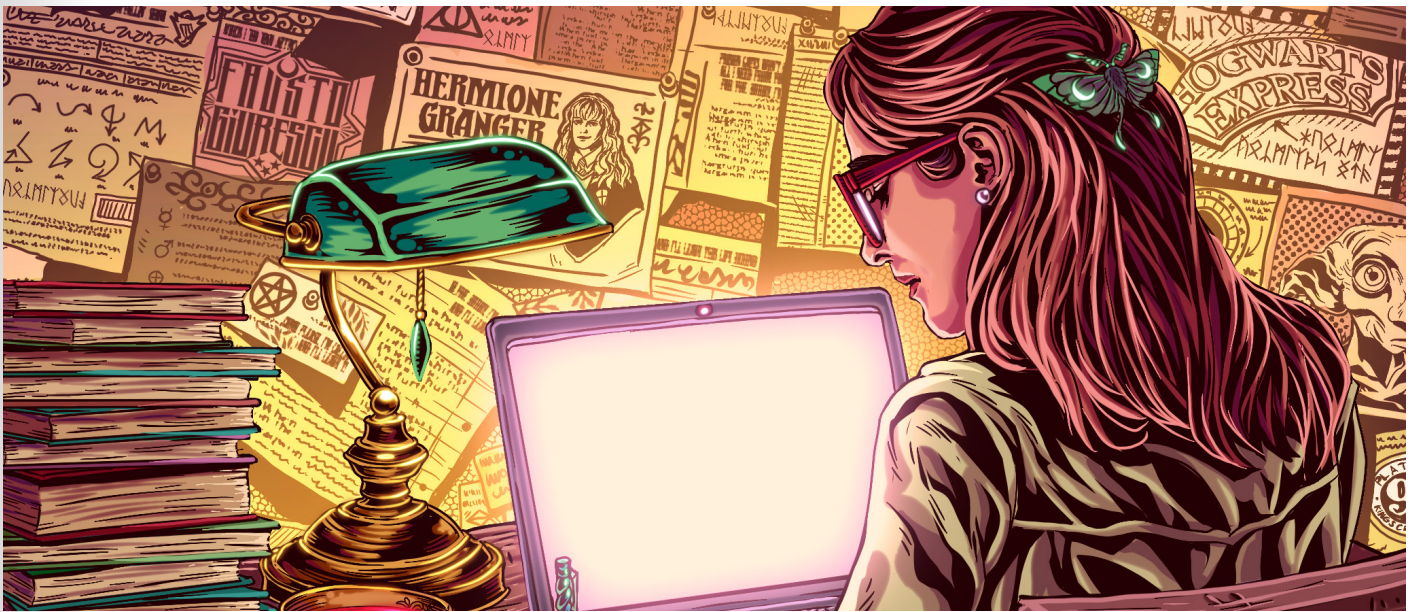
A few nights ago I had a dream in which I was going back home from my favorite bookstore with a newly-released novel in my hand: *The Many Adventures of Bartemius Bott*, written by J.K. Rowling. The book revolved around Bertie Bott's grandson, and his time as the new tenant of Honeydukes. It was part of a series of little stories written by J.K. Rowling, all set in the wizarding world. If I remember correctly, there was also a book about the Chudley Cannons' most memorable games, an anthology of spooky stories about the Hogwarts ghosts, and another one about the house elves' daily life in the Hogwarts kitchens. People were really enjoying these cute books, and fans worldwide were delighted they had

new novels to keep the magic alive. But then I woke up.

Back in July 2007, I remember going to my local bookstore (in real life this time), to pick up the copy of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* I had pre-ordered. I had spent the weeks before (probably even months) browsing wonderful websites like many of us did, reading some very interesting fan theories about what would happen in one of the most awaited books in History.

It took me about a week to finish the book, spending what I thought would be my very last moments with Harry, Hermione and Ron. For the last time I would step inside of Hogwarts with the three of them, and





soon enough I would get to say goodbye to them after spending seven years reading the books over and over again. Or so I thought.

Little did I know that just a few days after I put down *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* with a teary eye, I would turn on my computer to read a great news online: in just a few hours, J.K. Rowling was going to answer fans' questions on a live website hosted by the British publisher Bloomsbury. What an opportunity! I gave it a try and asked my own question to J.K. Rowling knowing fully well it wouldn't get picked, considering how many fans would do the same thing (it turns out I'm no Madam Trelawney and my question actually got picked). Here I was in front of my computer, thinking I had just taken my last bite of the wizarding world, and all of a sudden J.K. Rowling was telling us more about the future of our beloved characters, explaining some parts of the books and giving us interesting insight about her writing.

Less than a year later, J.K. Rowling was publishing an 800-word story set years before the books. Though it might sound ridiculous compared to seven whole novels, back then it felt like an unexpected Christmas gift. The fans would discover a few more details about the wizarding world! *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* got published a few months later, featuring notes from Albus Dumbledore, giving us once again a way to keep ties with Hogwarts, and have another taste of the adventures we had been reading for years.

Back then I was spending quite a lot of time on the Internet. The Harry Potter websites were much more numerous and diversified than what remains of them today. Some were dedicated to publishing fanfictions, others were galleries of fanarts, some were mostly news about the books and movies. J.K. Rowling had her own, on which she even praised some of the fansites. She also

used her website to post exclusive drafts, revelations about the stories and clues about what was going to happen in the upcoming books.

Looking back at what happened since the publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997, we can now say that the Internet played a huge part in making Harry Potter so popular worldwide, as it built a community and filled the gaps between each book in a phenomenal way. By searching Harry Potter on Google back then, you would find lists of local events for fans to gather and talk about the books, amazing artworks (texts, drawings and music) created by talented readers, and forums in which fans could share theories, exchange and debate about them while waiting for the next book to be published. Oh, how sweet was the Internet back then on the Muggle side of the world.

Some day around 2012, J.K. Rowling decided to give up her beautifully designed website (known as the "Desktop website" because of the amazing design created by Lightmaker). For that reason she started using more and more her Twitter account, and used the social network to post new elements about the stories, at times in the middle of tweets about her own political views. So far, Rowling has mentioned Harry Potter in her tweets for a few different reasons: either giving a "neutral" piece of information about the books, giving a piece of information related to social issues (e.g., the presence of a Jewish wizard in Hogwarts), or to react to current events (e.g., comparing Donald Trump and Lord Voldemort). She has also used her Twitter account to express her personal beliefs, sometimes causing controversy.

It is obvious that people's reaction to a tweet about the novels with a political dimension in 2020 won't be the same as people's reaction to a new piece of information

posted on J.K. Rowling's website in 2006. Back then, there was still one book to be published and everybody had expectations and theories to discuss. All the books have now been published years ago and some people rightfully think it is too late to mention diversification among the Hogwarts students.

That said, it seems to me that the Harry Potter books have been attacked more and more on Twitter lately for two very wrong reasons.

The first one is the lack of diversity in the books. Of course, in 2020 people will confront a popular writer on Twitter for not having included enough diversified characters in the books in their opinion. Hogwarts has become such a universal place in people's imaginations that they feel it should include students from every religion, with every skin color, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, ancestry and so on.

Of course, if such character hasn't been mentioned in the books, a Twitter user will have the right to blame Rowling for not making her books diversified enough for all kids to rely to them. Has it prevented kids from said minorities to identify with the books and enjoy them back in the 2000s? I believe not. A book will always have the possibility to be more diverse, as it will always be possible to criticize a book for not being diverse enough,

and that's the beauty of diversity: there are as many diverse people as there are people in the world.

J.K. Rowling, as well as the people criticizing her for the lack of diversity, should not forget how readers' imagination plays a huge part in the reading of a book. In a series of books set in a wizarding school that teaches young wizards coming from the whole country, many secondary characters will never be named or described, leaving that job to the reader's imagination. If I picture these kids as a very diversified bunch of kids, then be it! If not, it's fine too, as this is happening all in my head and won't affect another reader's way to imagine those characters in their head. To expect a book to make every single kid on earth feel included is foolish, but the Harry Potter books were great for me as a kid as they allowed me to picture my own time in Hogwarts. They gave me enough food for imagination to imagine that me, a young gay teen, would probably be able to find a match in my Hufflepuff common room, and that we could have even gone for a date in Hogsmeade. Did I need J.K. Rowling to tweet the extensive list of gay students in Hogwarts to do so? Absolutely not. Even better, by not being named or described, that character could be anyone I wanted. That's the power of imagination, let's not forget kids have that in them.

The second reason is the way J.K. Rowling's personal and sometimes controversial views on social issues somehow get mixed up in people's minds with the books we have read in our childhood years. Again, J.K. Rowling has rightfully expressed several times her views on her Twitter account. She is entitled to do so, as it is what Twitter is for. For some reason I can't explain, many people on Twitter have reacted in a way that astonishes me: by dissing not only the writer but her books also. If you disagree with J.K. Rowling on her views, you have the exact same right to express it as she does! But why attacking the books? Calling for burning the Harry Potter books because their writer has a different opinion on a social issue seems a bit extreme, to say the least. Claiming that your childhood is ruined because your favorite books as a kid have been written by someone who posted a tweet you disagree with doesn't make more sense. The Harry Potter books have appealed (and still do) to so many kids because they are about friendship and bravery, not about 2020 social issues. They have helped a whole generation of children get to read and helped grow the imagination of so many people worldwide. Their author posting something you disagree with on Twitter hasn't turned them evil, they are still the same books you have enjoyed in the 2000s and people still have the right to enjoy them in the 2020s.

Now back to that dream I had a few nights ago. By using





Twitter as her main medium of expression, J.K. Rowling has found herself confronted directly with one of the most unfriendly parts of her readers, a part that can react quite extremely when a different opinion is being expressed, that fights with words rather violently for their own idea of social justice.

After years on Twitter, J.K. Rowling has given the Harry Potter books a very political dimension, and it seems to make my dream of reading *The Many Adventures of Bartemius Bott* very far from possible.

The magic of the Harry Potter books wasn't only in the spells that Harry and his friends used on each other, but in the way that we all shared the same love for a series of novels. Most fans my age spent years eagerly waiting for the next time they could step inside Hogwarts after they finished each of the books. And after it was all over, we kept the books nearby, as reading them again and again was allowing us to go back to Hogwarts once

more, even after we had read them so many times we knew exactly what was going to happen next. We read for the sake of reading, without any political intent, and enjoyed the books for what they were: a series of children fantasy novels.

By criticizing J.K. Rowling's every single word since the day she exposed controversial views, are the fans on Twitter ruining our chances of ever seeing a new wizarding world novel for children? Is it J.K. Rowling's duty to write a book so diverse everybody will feel included, which seems to be absolutely impossible? I'm afraid the wizarding world has been made too political by its own creator for an innocent story to be published in 2020 like *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was in 1997. For now I'll just keep dreaming about Bartemius Bott's sweet adventures in Honeydukes, the Chudley Cannons finally winning the Quidditch World Cup and the Hogwarts house elves many background mischieves.





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AND VICKY MCKINLEY.



By Oliver Horton

# THE LOST YEARS

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE WIZARDING WORLD  
IN THE TWO DECADES BEFORE THE EPILOGUE?

*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* has a 19-year-gap between the defeat of Voldemort and the final pages. The book's epilogue shares a snapshot of 36-year-old Harry Potter's life and concludes: *all was well*. In "19 Years Later" and in her online writings, J.K. Rowling gifted us with clues about her characters' lives. What can we deduce about happenings in the Wizarding World in that near-two-decade interval?

Rewind to the Battle of Hogwarts. The wizarding community has lost many gifted magicians. Voldemort's allies have scattered. Harry heads to bed hoping for a sandwich. What happens next?

## 1. The Desolation of Hogwarts

Hogwarts after the Battle resembles the bewitched illusion seen by Muggles: a mouldering old ruin with a sign over the entrance saying DANGER, DO NOT ENTER, UNSAFE.

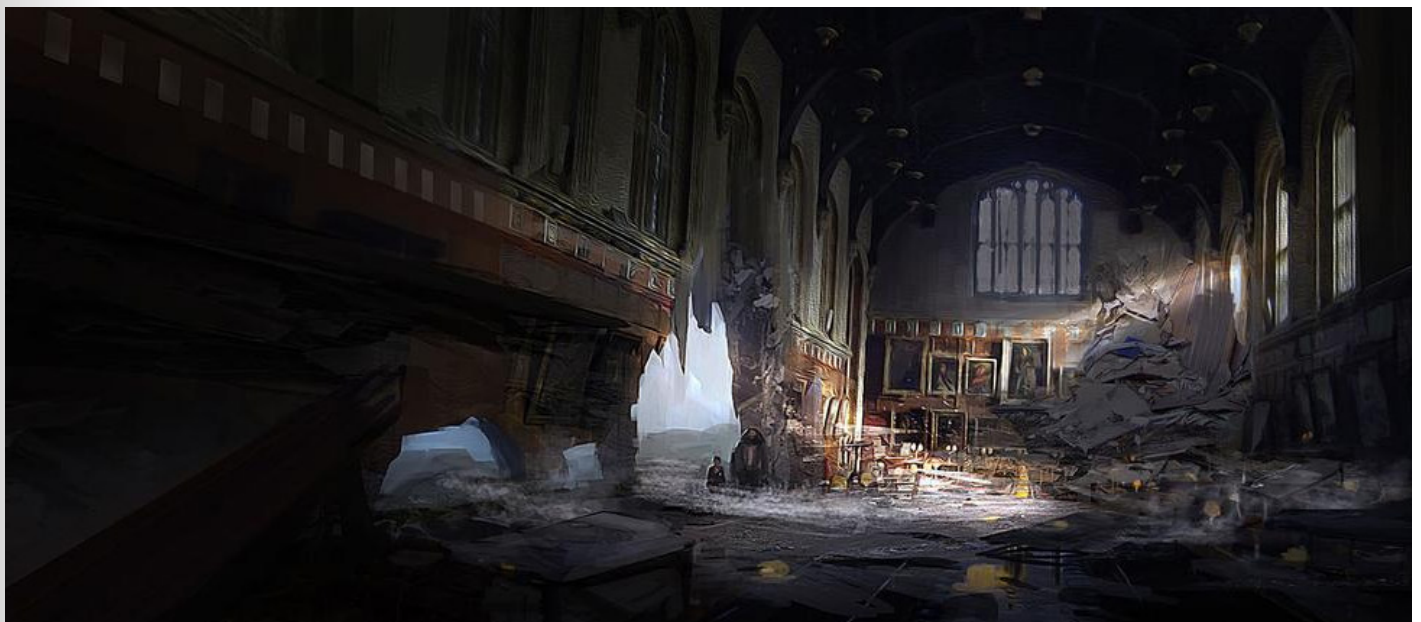
*Great chunks were missing from the marble staircase, part of the balustrade gone, and rubble and bloodstains occurred every few steps... The gargoyle guarding the headmaster's study had been knocked aside; it stood*

*lopsided, looking a little punch-drunk.*

Hogwarts is a massive castle of mindbending geography and magnificent magic. You cannot wave a wand and say "Reparo" and expect the castle to reassemble. You need magical architects and stonemasons and gifted magicians to re-establish the school's wonderful lattice of spells. "Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it." But what if Hogwarts itself requires help? The lofty aim of the Triwizard Tournament was international magical co-operation. Invite alumni from Beauxbatons and Durmstrang and other wizarding schools to help rebuild Hogwarts and the other magical institutions. Their offspring will naturally go to the school. Certain relatives can bolster the Ministry. Others may refresh Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade. British magic in the 2000s grows more cosmopolitan.

## 2. The Temporary Minister

Kingsley Shacklebolt, temporary Minister for Magic, doesn't have a team. Yet he must capture Death Eaters, purge the Ministry of Voldemort supporters and lasso stray magical creatures, including the bank's dragon, the giants and the spiders. Chillingly, the fate of werewolf





wolf-man Fenrir Greyback is unknown. Add a serial killer to Kingsley's list of Villains Most Wanted.

According to writings published online by Rowling, Harry fulfils his wish to become an Auror. And he's joined by bro-friend Ron Weasley. Kingsley must deputise them both as Aurors later that day, along with Dumbledore's Army stalwarts such as Neville Longbottom. The Order of the Phoenix are mostly dead. But the young Hogwarts' heroes are go.

### 3. Banking Crisis

Harry robbed Gringotts Wizarding Bank. Staff were injured. Staff were killed. The bank's dragon was released. The building was badly damaged.

Goblins are not portrayed as forgiving creatures. A wizard war is no excuse in goblin eyes. So next time Harry wants to make a withdrawal... do they seal his vault? Do they charge him for repairs and a replacement dragon? Harry may end his Hogwarts years poorer than when he lived in a cupboard.

If goblins feel shame they may feel shame that their bank was robbed by three wizards who hadn't completed their high school education. Clientele may develop jitters about the bank's security. The Ministry will have something to say about the illegal dragon. Diplomacy is required. Ron's eldest brother Bill Weasley works for the bank. He can smooth tensions and re-establish civil relations. The goblins may find it prudent to forgive heroic Harry. But they will never trust him.

### 4. Can I have my wand back, please?

Snatchers take the Trio to Malfoy Manor. When they escape, Ron and Hermione abandon their wands. For the rest of the story, Ron uses Wormtail's and Hermione has Bellatrix's.

Ron-the-Pureblood's wand is the most attractive replacement for Bellatrix. Molly Weasley takes on Bellatrix and defeats the wicked witch: Ron's wand, even in Bellatrix's hand, cannot kill his mother! Only surrendered, not lost, Ron's wand must remain loyal.

But that leaves Hermione's at Malfoy Manor. Does she go to the Malfoys and ask: "Excuse me, can I have my wand back please?" Does Narcissa Malfoy send it back in an anonymous package? Perhaps Harry swaps Hermione's wand for Draco's.

Ron does okay with Wormtail's. He should inherit the wand of his former pet-imposter. And Harry repairs his original holly wand. But all three deserve reunion with their preferred instruments.

### 5. Hermione Granger: Minister for Magic

"I'm hoping to do some good in the world!" says Hermione early in Deathly Hallows. From Book Four and the campaign for Elf Welfare onwards, Hermione shows a fierce appetite for reform. In Book Five she rallies opposition to Umbridge's rein and launches Dumbledore's Army. As a prefect she makes the most of telling people what to do. At Hogwarts, Hermione is a politician in embryo.

Rowling composed an article for the 2014 Quidditch World Cup, in which wizard world journalist Rita Skeeter snipes at Hermione, the "ruthless careerist" and "femme fatale". Rita explains how Hermione joins the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, and becomes Deputy Head. This Department includes the Aurors, which means – yes! – Harry, Ron and Hermione work together again. Hermione, snarls Rita Skeeter, is tipped to be Minister.

Hermione, Minister for Magic, will fight for her version of justice. The teenage Hermione modified her parents' memories and banished them to Australia: she wants to protect Muggles from wizards (rather than vice-versa)



and will work hard to keep magic secret. Since Hermione's friends are all wizards, her noughties do not include looking up old Muggle pals on FriendsReunited: "I once spent two weeks as a cat. How are you?"

## 5. Neville Longbottom: Headmaster

Everybody loves Neville Longbottom. By the Battle of Hogwarts he is a rockstar. Neville arcs further than any character except Harry (who bounces back from death). In "19 Years Later" we learn that the one-time Worst Wizard is professor of Herbology at Hogwarts.

Why not Defence Against The Dark Arts? The teaching position is no longer cursed. Neville exceeded expectations in his DADA exams, became commander-in-chief of Dumbledore's Army and the Defender of Hogwarts. He looked Dark Arts in the face and said no. He has the scars and the skills. Oh well, perhaps plants are his passion.

The trouble with Harry: he is divisive and unknowable. The horror he endured and the choices he made and the deaths along the way are too big for the wizarding community to judge. Neville stayed at Hogwarts and fought among wizards. He charged at Voldemort by himself – in front of everyone. He's the icon of the struggle, the people's hero. Neville can fill the space left by Gilderoy Lockhart with humility and integrity. Rowling said Minerva McGonagall had retired by "19 Years Later". Arise headmaster Longbottom.

## 6. Muggles in the 21st Century

"19 Years Later" was written in the early 1990s and does not feature the refurbishment to Kings Cross station or smartphones or other shifts in the culture.

Hermione explains in Book Four that magic and technology don't mix well: "Electricity, computers, and radar, and all those things – they all go haywire around Hogwarts, there's too much magic in the air."

Google was founded in 1998, four months after the Battle of Hogwarts. The magical Authorities need to protect Muggle technology from magic ahead of the smartphone boom. And they need to keep magic off the internet. Widespread digital tech is a giant leap for Muggle kind. The Ministry needs a new Department, even if fixing the magic v tech issues takes just a few clever spells.

Health-and-safety culture is another Muggle-world phenomenon that influences the stories. Dolores Umbridge's smothering decrees and magic-free, Ministry-approved school syllabus are only the first attempt to treat students as snowflakes. The wizarding community has seen centaurs and giant spiders and giant half-brothers run riot around school grounds. There can be no return to Dumbledore's laissez-faire liberalism, student death and injuries. Parents will want to purge the school of danger. Polyjuice Potion, Time Turners, Animagi, Unforgivable Curses, Invisibility Cloaks, Bat Bogey Hexes and Liquid Luck will disappear from classes, books and common rooms. No fun. No risks. No basilisks.

## 7. The Dursleys woke

In their final confrontation Harry tells Voldemort: "Try for some remorse." The Dark Lord pulls a face and opts to live the last two minutes of his life business-as-usual. Can uncle Vernon do better?

In Book Seven the Dursleys flee their home. The family is away for ten months in the company of lively, adult wizards, including noted Harry Potter fanboy Dedalus Diggle. In ten months Vernon can learn oodles about magic, and about his nephew. Their escorts are magical folk who are keen to show him the light. Harry's cousin Dudley proves that one Dursley has the capacity to change – given extreme circumstances. And aunt Petunia softens on her nephew. Can Vernon, finally, try for some remorse?

*Note Bene: While written in 2020, all references for this article pre-date the play Harry Potter and the Cursed Child by at least two years.*



# READING FROM THE SCREEN

## THE NEW INITIATIVE FROM HARRY POTTER AT HOME

With people around the world staying at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wizarding World Digital - together with Warner Bros - has decided to give a present to the Harry Potter fans. Under the new program "Harry Potter At Home", they unveiled a new reading project with some friends of the franchise.

Celebrities related to the Harry Potter World (and not so much) have lent their faces and voices to a once-in-a-lifetime read of the first book in the series, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (or Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, if you are from the United States of America). The first chapter, "The Boy Who Lived", has been read by none other than Daniel Radcliffe himself, the face of Harry Potter on the big screen. The announcement, which was made on May 5th, not only came with the video of the actor reading the first chapter, but also with the promise of other

people known in the fandom: Eddie Redmayne, Evanna Lynch, Bonnie Wright, Noma Dumezweni, and even people unrelated to the Wizarding World, such as Dakota Fanning and David Beckham.

The second chapter, shared a few days later, was read by Noma Dumezweni, who played Hermione Granger on the stage play of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (both in London and in New York). The actress not only read it, but also added some acting features, which made it a whole different experience. For the third chapter, it was the turn of Eddie Redmayne, who portrayed Newt Scamander in the Fantastic Beasts series. The fourth one, "The Keeper of the Keys", was read by Stephen Fry, whose connection with the Harry Potter world is through the British audiobooks, since he is the voice of those.







Chapter five was the first one with a few changes: it was read by three actors instead of just one. Two of them belong to the Harry Potter World: Evanna Lynch (Luna Lovegood) and Bonnie Wright (Ginny Weasley). The third one was the famous British actor Simon Callow, which has no relationship with the franchise so far. Some fans theorized he could participate in the next *Fantastic Beasts* films. In fact, this was a question that appeared when Dakota Fanning was announced to be part of the project. We got in contact with Warner Bros., who told us they couldn't do any comments on that, only that Dakota Fanning was a big fan of the series.

The next chapter, "The Journey from the Platform Nine and Three-Quarters", was more of a radio show. Led by Jamie Parker (Harry Potter in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*), the chapter was done by the cast of the stage play, with each actor playing a different character, which was another fun experience brought to us by this project. And at the launch of this issue, that was the last chapter released.

However, WIZARDING WORLD announced that Olivia Colman will be in charge of reading the seventh chapter of the book. Coleman, a British actress famous for portraying Queen Elizabeth on *The Crown*, has won the Academy Award in the Leading Actress category in 2019 for her performance as Queen Anne in Yorgos Lanthimos's critically acclaimed *The Favourite* (she's always playing queens, apparently). She has been awarded the title of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her

services to drama, and a BFI Fellowship. According to the announcement, Olivia will not be alone - special guests will join her during the read, but there hasn't been a mention of who they could be.

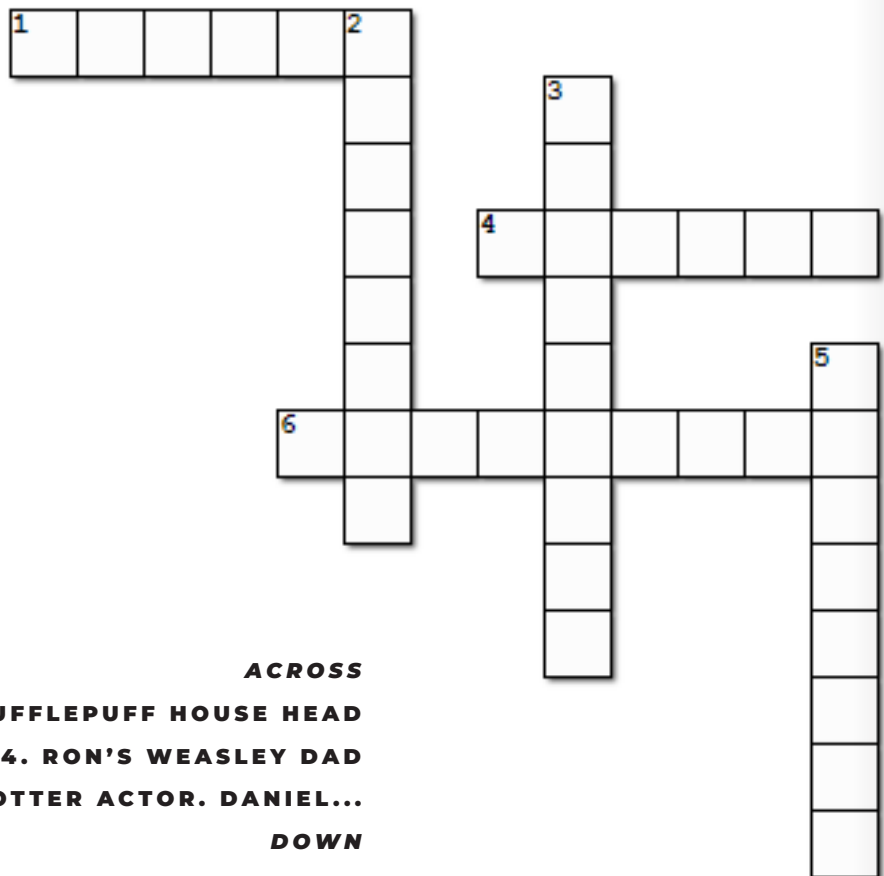
This reading of *Harry Potter* through the eyes and voices of celebrities is an interesting and new way to experience the book that changed it all. During these hard times when we must stay safe in our houses, it was a clever proposal from the official *Harry Potter* hub, and one that we feel grateful for.

If you want to watch the videos or listen to the chapters being read by these celebrities, you can catch them on the WIZARDING WORLD official website and Spotify.



# WIZARDING WORLD CROSSWORD

TEST YOUR HARRY POTTER KNOWLEDGE IN THIS PUZZLE



**ACROSS**

**1. HUFFLEPUFF HOUSE HEAD**

**4. RON'S WEASLEY DAD**

**6. HARRY POTTER ACTOR. DANIEL...**

**DOWN**

**2. WINGED HORSE WITH A SKELETAL BODY**

**3. POMONA SPROUT'S SUBJECT AT HOGWARTS**

**5. MINISTRY OF MAGIC IN CURSED CHILD**







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