When in doubt, go to...
WELCOME

Every November issue of The Rowling Library Magazine is special because it is the anniversary of the magazine. We started this digital magazine dedicated to Harry Potter and J.K. Rowling’s work four years ago, in November 2016, and since then a lot of things have changed. Who could have imagined back then than in the middle of a pandemic J.K. Rowling would release her political fairy-tale into the public? Not many people, if anyone at all.

The main topic of this issue is the auctioning of a first edition of Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, which is now being claimed by the public library who owned it many years ago. Also, Beatrice Groves (author of Literary Allusion in Harry Potter) shares with us the first part of ‘Troubled Doubles, looking for doppelgängers in the Cormoran Strike series’ (second part in the December issue), and Rowena Pankhursts tried to be the Sorting Hat with the Narnia characters. Oliver Horton is back with an article about lockdown in the Wizarding World (and a bit of cool advice from the Ministry of Magic), and Erik Krueger shares his humour on the Riddikulus section. Last but not least, Alan shows his knowledge about wands from the Wizarding World, and Ayelén gives us another in-depth book review.

Hope to see you next month,

Patricio.

Troubled Doubles: Dopplegängers in Strike

By Beatrice Groves
@BeatriceGroves1 on Twitter

In Cuckoo’s Calling, the opening book of the Strike series, Robert Galbraith/J.K. Rowling argues that the human brain is drawn to symmetry. Walking past the Queen’s Gate into Hyde Park, Strike notices something that, the narrator implies, others do not: ‘incurably observant, he noted the sculpture of the doe and fawn on one pillar and the stag on the other. Humans often assumed symmetry and equality where none existed. The same, yet profoundly different…’ (Cuckoo’s Calling, 257). It is tempting to read that ‘incurably observant’ as a little nod to the parallels between the author and her detective – after all, both are in the business of dispassionate observation, and both have noticed this little detail. Everything is potential copy for a writer, or a potential clue for a detective, and in a wry nod to the connections between the two professions the murderer quips ‘you ought to give up detecting and try fantasy writing, Strike’ (Cuckoo’s Calling, 522). A knack at observation is likewise something Rowling has spoken of as a connection between herself and her more famous hero:

Harry is often the bystander, the eyes onto the world and that gives him a particular power, he is slightly detached. Detachment isn’t a very lovable quality but often people who have that detachment are rather unusual and are able to do things, and most writers have a degree of detachment. So if I stand right back from those three characters I would say that that is the part of me that is maybe in Harry’

(Scholastic webchat, 11 Oct 2012).
But something slightly odd is going on here. For what Strike has noted, as he watches his surroundings in his ‘incurably observant’ way, is not actually there. It turns out that the deer on top of those pillars that flank the Queen’s Gate are symmetrical – or at least, they are both sculptures of a doe and a fawn. The stag Strike sees is not there.

It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that Rowling was relying on a (faulty) memory when she described this gate. Presumably she noticed these deer on a previous visit to London, or when she lived there in the late 1980s, and – not having time to stake out all her locations on trips down from Edinburgh – she relied on her memory of them as a doe and a stag. It is a pleasing thought as it suggests that Rowling’s faulty memory of what she saw may either have influenced, or been influenced by, the importance of the stag and doe pairing in Harry Potter.

Cuckoo’s Calling notes this stag and doe in order to introduce the idea of false symmetry, and the image is recalled again near the end of the novel: ‘he remembered the sculptures on either side of the Queen’s Gate; not identical at all, in spite of the assumptions made by lazy eyes; one male, one female, the same species, yes, but profoundly different’ (Cuckoo’s Calling, 485). The reader is clearly meant to note this idea as significant, but it is not obvious what false equivalence we are being directed towards. My best guess is the two ‘runners’ from Lula’s murder. ‘Lazy eyes’ make the assumption that both men are black, because they both look black on the CCTV footage; but one of them turns out to be white (he is just wearing gloves). But, in addition to this specific instance, the reader is being guided to pay attention to symmetry more
generally. Indeed, Cuckoo’s Calling creates a number of parallels between the victim and the man who investigates her murder. Primarily this is an issue about the entrapment that comes with fame. Rowling has noted (laughingly - ‘I don’t think we need Freud for this one!’) how interested she is in the effect of fame: ‘but it does interest me: someone who really does want to be undercover, who really does want to be anonymous and the inevitable corollary of their success is that they can’t be entirely that any more. But, like his author, he sometimes does use his celebrity, as you know, because in this book he does find that some people are keener to speak to him because he is famous.’

The plot for Silkworm predated Cuckoo’s Calling but Rowling inverted the first two novels in her series, because she needed to start with a case that would make Cormoran famous: ‘I wanted Strike’s first case to make him, as it were, I wanted him to solve a very high-profile case... setting Strike up as someone who is much more high profile than he expected to be.’ Lula, too, is uneasy with her fame - and there are other links between her and Strike too. Both have taken their mother’s name, both have a startling number of nicknames and both have an odd (metaphorical) link with stories about eggs: cuckoos laying eggs in other bird’s nests and the myth that Leda gives birth to human children within swan’s eggs. Both Lula and Cormoran also have half-siblings – a link which provides a clue to the murderer’s motive. The revelation that Lula had made a will leaving everything to her ‘brother’ comes immediately after
a discussion of Cormoran’s many half-siblings – a reminder that this ‘brother’ need not to be John Bristow, as is assumed. These two brothers, whose names - John and Jonah - are near anagrams, are the central pair of the novel. They are caught on CCTV together running away from the murder and they are mirror images of each other: one good, one evil - one who is ambivalent about Lula’s money, one who murders her for it.

Rowling has a long-running interest in these ‘Jekyll & Hyde’ style doppelgängers - Harry Potter has the false and true Moody, but also the shadow-twin pairing of Harry and Voldemort at its heart. In Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them the gentle Obscurial Credence is the Jekyll to his Obscurus’s ‘Hyde’ – the destructive force which ‘he tries to stop... from rising up within him.’ For most of the first movie Credence fights the darkness within him, although at the end he embraces its destructive power (just as Jekyll becomes progressively more and more identified with Hyde). In Crimes of Grindelwald Rowling goes even further down this gothic-Obscurus route when Dumbledore describes it as the Obscurial’s ‘dark twin:’ ‘an Obscurus grows in the absence of love as a dark twin.’ Interestingly Johnny Depp has also referred to Grindelwald as (metaphorically) ‘twins in one body’

Johnny Depp’s understanding of Grindelwald’s divided nature is expressed through the medium of his mismatched eyes, and may draw on what Rowling has told him about Grindelwald. It certainly links with Rowling’s decision to open the Fantastic Beast’s franchise with a movie in which – just like Barty Crouch, Jr, or the murderer in Career of Evil - he was almost entirely disguised as someone else.

The second Strike novel centres on an unusual variation on the
doppelgänger idea. In Silkworm it is two books which share the same name – Bombyx Mori – and are mistaken for each other. The plot of Silkworm (and the title itself is a translation of Bombyx Mori) revolves around the murderer’s version of Bombyx Mori masquerading as the victim’s version of the book. The Bombyx Mori everyone reads is the evil twin of the true book – parasitic upon it, it is at once a violent parody of Quine’s book (full of hateful caricatures rather than ‘beautiful lost souls’) and a literally ‘murderous’ text.

Rowling marks the importance of the idea of such mirror images within Strike by making the pivotal novel, Lethal White, an obsessively paired text – with the crucial name ‘Odile’ appearing at its climax. In Tchaikovsky’s ballet Swan Lake Odile is the shadow twin of the swan maiden heroine, who tricks the hero into believing that she is really his beloved Odette. The naming of the ‘dark barge, Odile’ (Lethal White, 616), therefore, is a clue that Robin has fallen victim to the murderer impersonating her husband. Something that is particularly satisfying about the ‘Odile/Odette’ pairing is that while, within Swan Lake they are two different characters, they are also usually performed by the same prima ballerina. As such, Odile is a perfect encapsulation of two forms of the doppelgänger idea – she is at once a magically disguised imposter, and her own shadow self.

Beatrice Groves is the author of Literary Allusion in Harry Potter

The second part of this article will be published next month in the December issue of The Rowling Library Magazine
Like drinking unicorn blood, Lockdown is but a half life, a cursed life. In chapter two of Chamber of Secrets, Harry is caged at the Dursleys – just like his owl – until his best friend Ron and the Twins bust him out of the small bedroom at Privet Drive and bring him to the relative liberty of The Burrow. Location matters.

Lockdown is the first line of defence in the wizarding world. Hogwarts locks down, not for the last time, as the Basilisk stalks Muggle-born students and immobilizes a cat and a ghost. Not that Harry gives a Fu... rumunculus Curse [a jinx that causes boils or pimples]. The Chosen One came to school in a flying car and Merlin-be-damned he will follow those spiders.

Book Three introduces a convicted murderer who has Harry in his sights. Sirius Black slashes the portrait of the Fat Lady (being half-starved himself) and, because of him, the pupils are forced to sleep not in their dorm rooms but in the Great Hall. Lockdown! Meanwhile, the school is ring-fenced by the demonic and depressing Dementors. Harry feels the bite of isolation as his friends abandon him to visit Hogsmeade. But, common to many teenagers, Harry doesn’t believe Lockdown applies to him. He’s got friends to see and mischief to manage. And an Invisibility Cloak.

House Arrest

In Goblet of Fire, the now-adored Sirius Black sticks his head
through the Gryffindor fireplace to educate Harry. Which will surely be adopted as a Ministry-approved teaching technique if students are forced to home-school. We can imagine Minerva McGonagall’s head erupting from the Weasleys’ smouldering briquettes to instruct Ron and Ginny how to transform a chicken into a Chihuahua.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Educational Decree No.23 establishes Dolores Umbridge as Hogwarts’ High Inquisitor. Her directives forbid anything Pottersome, such as saying Voldemort murdered Cedric Diggory. Umbridge calls this a lie, which is technically correct since Wormtail did the Avada Kedavra. While the Ministry stooge doesn’t call Lockdown as such, she forbids student gatherings except for classes and mealtimes. She is anti-social.

Harry, ignited by Hermione, sets up his own defiant after-school club of misfits and rebels and they gather in the Room of Requirement. But Harry kisses the wrong girl under the mistletoe, which is a clear infraction of social distancing rules – and the safe space is busted open by the hateful headmistress. Oh well. The Cho must go on.

**Sick as a Puffskein**

In Book Seven the Trio are in Lockdown at Grimmauld Place, having fled the Bill and Fleur wedding. Death really does lurk outside the door. Well, Death Eaters.

Death Eaters fret about Muggle infection. Despite munching on mortality, they are fearful of the things Muggles bring and forbid their offspring from associating with so-called Mudbloods. Also, they wear masks.

Lord Voldemort is among a small group of people exempt from wearing a mask. This is because he has no nose.

Wizards are susceptible to every
sickness known to mankind but can cure themselves instantly with magic. Please note, however, that Floo Powder is an aid for travel, not a wizard cold cure. What magical folks cannot fix easily are magical maladies: Dragon Pox, Spattergroit, Maledictus, Srofungulus, Vanishing Sickness.

Nobody important suffers from these ailments in the timeline of the Harry Potter books, and our hero is an examplar of good health. Supposedly James Potter’s parents, Harry’s grandparents, died of Dragon Pox (in which the afflicted turn green and sneeze sparks). And Ron is diagnosed as having Spattergroit – wizard chicken pox – by a portrait at St Mungo’s Hospital who mistakes freckles for symptoms. In the final instalment, Deathly Hallows, an inspired Ron fakes being home sick with Spattergroit (and not off gallivanting with his best friend and future wife) by styling up the Burrow’s ghoul in his pyjamas. Some people are more at risk. Since Book Four, Ron has been Wheezy. At least, that’s what Dobby calls him.

**A Sirius Problem**

Sirius sucks at Lockdown. He moans about being bored. He criticizes his 15-year-old godson. He sneaks out disguised as a dog. Remus Lupin moves in. Not that there’s anything wrong with that. Sirius, starved of company in Azkaban, needs people. He seriously brightens up when the Weasleys come for Christmas. Pity that Arthur had to be chewed up by a big snake for Mister Black to get his Christmas wish.

Sirius locks down in Book Five because he is wanted by wizard cops for a crime he didn’t commit. Prior to his return to Grimmauld Place he was homeless and dining on rodents, so life markedly improves for the sullen ingrate. Besides, Dumbledore told him to stay (after first making him sit and roll over). At the Noble House of Black even the renegade Hippogriff, Buckbeak, has a room to call his own. Dog, wolf, Hippogriff, elf: the place is a veritable zoo! Hey ho, better in than out. And there are much worse Lockdowns. Luna Lovegood spends half of Book Seven confined to Draco Malfoy’s basement.

Dumbledore is the architect of many a Lockdown. He gets it from his mother, who isolated Albus’s sister Ariana. Having been attacked by Muggle thugs the poor girl was host to an Obscurus, a parasitical magical force derived from suppressed magic. She died after Dumbledore invited notorious bad guy Gellert Grindelwald round for tea. That’s when Albus
truly understood: never break quarantine.

**Grimmauld Place**

Harry learns from Sirius’s mistakes. Be on good terms with the people sharing the house, your life is in their hands. Ron and Hermione are no trouble but Kreacher takes some persuasion to stop sneaking off to visit members of the extended family. In Deathly Hallows, finally, the ornery House-elf is won over by the gift of a locket and transforms the Blacks’ grim old place into a cozy and livable home. Kreacher dedicates himself to the number one ingredient of a good Lockdown – the preparation of food. Molly, hitherto the best cook Harry knows, best not rest on her laurels. The elf makes a mean onion soup, an ambrosial treacle tart and his steak-and-kidney pie is (almost) to-die-for.

At both Grimmauld Place and Shell Cottage, the Trio apply the rule that a good Lockdown must include a fantastic project. (Besides these bolt-holes, the Trio leave every building worse than they find it: the café on Tottenham Court Road, the Ministry, the Bank, the School, Bathilda Bagshot’s, the Lovegoods’ and Malfoy Manor. Track-and-trace nightmare.) Harry, Ron and Hermione’s projects are invariably criminal in nature and involve stealing treasure – Slytherin locket and Hufflepuff cup. But it's all for the greater good.

Ex-Professor Lupin drops in. Sadly, he has a pre-existing condition and Harry, wisely, chucks him out. It’s for Remus’s own well-being. Households aren’t supposed to mix. And Harry swiftly decides the werewolf is not in their support bubble.

Just as the Trio become comfortable in Lockdown, it’s time to go back to work. Like so many of us, they have a job. Theirs is from Dumbledore. Nice job. Pleasant. Easy. Sort of thing you’d expect an unqualified wizard kid to be able to do without overstretching themselves. Just eight Herculean months of camping, hiding and killing the Dark Lord. Lockdown is tough but it’s a big bad world out there.
PUBLIC NOTICE

THE COMMUNITY IS CURRENTLY UNDER THREAT FROM A PANDEMIC. LOCKDOWNS WILL CONTINUE.

BEWARE

OBSEERVE THE FOLLOWING SIMPLE GUIDELINES TO HELP PROTECT YOU, YOUR HOME AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY.


2. Do not upset your House-elf. Give him a gift such as a locket and he may make you treacle tart.

3. Take on a project: Plot how to break in to the Ministry and/or steal from Gringott’s.

4. Request home-schooling. Trained wizards are available to pop their head up in your fireplace.

5. Magic can cure any Muggle sickness. Magical ailments, such as Dragon Pox, remain deadly.

6. Wear a mask... if you’re a Death Eater. Or you will be sent to prison. Just ask Lucius Malfoy.

7. You are exempt from wearing a mask if you have no nose, my Lord Voldemort.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE OR HEALER FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. IF YOU’RE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS, REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO ST MUNGO’S HOSPITAL FOR MAGICAL MALADIES AND INJURIES.

WWW.THEROWLINGLIBRARY.COM
WHEN IN DOUBT....

On October 15, 2020, Heritage Auctions sold a first printing, hardcover, copy of Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone for $55,000. This copy was one of 300 copies initially sent out to schools and libraries, and contained a library stamp from the Portsmouth City Council Library Service, who recently initiated a claim saying the book was stolen.

BY LAURENT GARCÍA
With many Harry Potter book collectors being active all over the world (Instagram accounts are popping up every week), rare copies of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* get auctioned nearly every month: first prints, signed copies or other noticeable ones. However, a very special edition of the first book in the Harry Potter series caught the media’s attention a few weeks ago.

It wasn’t the first time one of the 500 ‘first edition first print’ hardback copies of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* was being auctioned. It wasn’t even signed by J.K. Rowling like some previously auctioned copies were. At the time the auction took place, no one even knew the book was going to catch such attention. Until the Portsmouth’s school library service heard of it.

Here’s what happened: the book, sold by Heritage Auction on behalf of a Californian book collector, featured a stamp on one of the first pages, from the Portsmouth City Council Library Service, with a ‘8–97’ (August 1997) pen marking. That’s not so surprising, as many of the early copies of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* were sold to libraries.

According to the Portsmouth’s school library service, the original owner of the book, this copy was one of three that were purchased back in 1997. The two other ones were auctioned off in 2004 to raise funds for the library service. The third one however, disappeared sometime between 1997 and 2004. As the book wasn’t checked out at the time it was reported missing, it’s fair to say the book was stolen by someone (reader or member of staff) who had probably sensed the early printings were getting more and more valuable.

No one knows how many households this copy of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* visited until it was auctioned last month.

Now the question is: should (and also ‘could’) the Portsmouth City Council Library Service, the original owner of the book from whom it was supposedly stolen, reclaim the copy or the $55,000 it sold for? If you think about it, the book was clearly theirs and it was stolen them from and sold at an auction. If we were talking about the Mona Lisa being stolen from the Louvre Museum and auctioned off the week after, I think we would all agree the museum should get the painting back and the person auctioning it should get charged, or at least investigated. Also if I was the person owning something and it got stolen away from me to be
auctioned off, I would find it fair that I get the item back and that the thief gets investigated.

That said, we are talking about hypothetical cases in which an item gets stolen in order to be auctioned off. Here it doesn’t seem that this copy of *Philosopher’s Stone* was reportedly stolen sometime between 1997 and 2004 in order to be auctioned in October 2020.

Also, we are in 2020 and the book was already missing in 2004. Yet it seems the library didn’t pursue any kind of legal action at all. Who knows how many people have possessed this copy in the last 16 years or so? If the Portsmouth City Council Library Service didn’t investigate the book’s theft years ago when they noticed it was stolen, is it still acceptable for them to request that the book be returned to them so many years later?

If the book had disappeared in 1997 or 1998, before Harry Potter became the worldwide phenomenon it is now, then clearly
the librarians couldn’t have guessed how valuable this Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone copy was going to become. Therefore, it would have made sense that the disappearance of what was ‘just another children’s books’ wouldn’t have been investigated by Portsmouth’s City Council Library Service. Many books get lost and never get returned to libraries. This happens even more when it comes to children’s books.

However, they still didn’t investigate the book’s disappearance back in 2004 when they auctioned off the two other copies that were identified as being valuable.

Obviously it’s no surprise at all that when realizing the stolen book with their stamp on the first page could sell for $55.000 at an auction, they would consider requesting the book to be returned to them, either to sell it themselves and collect the money or possibly exhibit it. I think they would have been wrong not to try it.

Now do I think the person who sold the book at the auction should be charged or even investigated for auctioning a stolen item? Unless they lived in Portsmouth between 1997 and 2004, my answer would be no. Chances are the book has travelled to several households and the person who sold it last month is not the person who initially got it. The Harry Potter book market on eBay is thriving, and many book collectors use it and similar websites to grow their collections. Can someone be held accountable for not checking the complete history of a book they buy on eBay, including all of its former owners? I would say no, as it sounds completely unrealistic.

I checked with Adam, an important collector of Harry Potter books. “The quandary of what to do when offered a rare book which contains a library stamps isn’t a new one for the second hand book trade”, he said. “Typically after a book has survived several years in the public library system the library will then sell it to make room for newly published books coming in. In the normal process the library will apply a deaccession stamp to the book to indicate it has officially been removed from the system”, and he adds “The vast majority of library copies of Philosopher’s Stone were deaccessioned years ago when they weren't particularly valuable books. Now, years later, these books have increased in value significantly and a library isn’t going to be inclined to agree they have sold the book without having a very clear record of going so.” When asked what a collector should do if they’re looking to purchase a library copy of Philosopher’s Stone and it doesn’t contain a deaccession stamp, he
recommends “the collector contact the library in question prior to purchasing the book and request, via email, whether the book was officially deaccessioned. If they say it was then I would advise printing out the official confirmation from the library and keep it with the book so it doesn’t become an issue again in the future. If the library say it wasn’t removed from the system and they claim ownership of it then it would be prudent, particularly following the claim by Portsmouth School Library, which will undoubtedly illuminate this for other library services, to take a pass on the book.”

He also adds that it is not uncommon for copies of Philosopher’s Stone to appear on the market without deaccession marks stamps. “Copies from Rochdale Libraries and West Sussex Libraries have also appeared on the market with any sign they had been deaccessioned.”

One thing is sure: if the Portsmouth School Library service decides to pursue legal action in the upcoming weeks, the outcome might set a precedent in the book collecting community. In fact, if a judge decides that the book was indeed stolen from the library and shall be returned to its first rightful owner, many books might lose a lot of their current value if their owner is unable to track their whole history and list of previous owners. We will sure keep an eye on what happens next regarding this unprecedented event in Harry Potter book auctions.
THE ICKABOG was released!

Watch on our YouTube Channel

The Ickabog - Online launch event (November 10th)

J.K. Rowling with Graham Norton (November 14th)
If you liked this issue of The Rowling Library Magazine, please consider supporting us with a small monthly donation.

For only $2 per month, you can become a Patron - even though for some people $2 may be not much, it means a lot to us.

And all our patrons also receives The Daily Prophet two times a week in their email inbox, with the latest Harry Potter news and commentary, which means that you are paying less than ¢30 per Daily Prophet edition.

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

NARCISSA MALFOY’S

THE CHARACTER

Narcissa Black is Draco Malfoy’s mother, sister of Bellatrix and Andromeda Black and Sirius Black’s cousin. But we cannot forget to mention her husband, the one and only, Lucius Malfoy.

The first time we see Narcissa in the movies is quite at the beginning of “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” when she makes the unbreakable bow with Severus Snape, but in fact, she’s present since the first Harry Potter book. Draco doesn’t name her in Madame Malkin’s store, but he says: “My mother’s up the street looking at wands”... that’s our first approach to her at least. Harry’s first description of Narcissa is in “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire” book when the Malfoy family attends the Quidditch World Cup. The first impression that Harry has of her is pretty nasty... so who would have said that Narcissa’s decision at the end of the series was going to be critical to save Harry’s life?

ABOUT THE WAND

As Narcissa is a secondary (not to say tertiary) character in the Harry Potter saga, we don’t really have information about her wand in the Wizarding World, but on the other hand, the movie prop has many things to tell us.
This wand is one of the few that we can access through blueprints or at least the blueprints that the production allows us to see. In the book “Harry Potter: The Wand Collection” we have Narcissa’s wand blueprint that has been drawn by the junior draughtsman Amanda Dazely (signing as Amanda Leggatt) dated 06/09/2007.

In the descriptions of the materials for the props department, we see that the main wood for the wand is black ebony wood, the shiny details of the wand are in silver, and the total length of the wand is 14”.

The blueprint shows a wand with the look of the replica we can actually buy at The Noble Collection nowadays, but it seems that this wand had some slight differences between movies (or props used to shoot). There are some versions of the wand that have been introduced, including the one featured in the “Harry Potter: The Wand Collection” book that has a much straighter handle, with only one of the gear-like silver details that shows where the shaft starts. At Pierre Bohanna’s website, we can also find pictures showing a bunch of Narcissa’s wands made for the 6th movie that look exactly like the one in the blueprint, but these could be the stunt props (as we all know, there were many kinds of wands delivered for shooting the movies, only one or two made with the expensive materials, and the rest were made of resin or rubber).

Her wand is a much more simple design compared to her husband’s wand (the fanciest one, with the silver snakehead in the handle,
that pops out of his cane stick). However, both husband and wife a very expensive-looking wand, while their son Draco has one of the simplest wands in all the saga, with no luxury details at all.

The shapes in Narcissa’s wand are not friendly at all for the hand. The handle is full of teeny tiny sharp silver spheres, not to mention the gear-like wheels full of peaks, and the pointy pyramid at the bottom. Remember that these things are made out of silver, metal, which result in many aggressive pointy shapes.

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**New Slovak Harry Potter box set launched for 20th anniversary**

As the series celebrates twenty years since it was first released in Slovakia, publishing house IKAR have commissioned a new set of Harry Potter covers in an exclusive box set.

The artist in charge was Adrián Macho, who describes himself as a Harry Potter fan.

Hogwarts was inspired by the castles and chateaux of Slovakia itself: ‘I found it fun to connect the world of fantasy with the real places which we all know so well,’ says Adrián.

More info on WizardingWorld.com
“You're a little scary sometimes, you know that? Brilliant... but scary.”

Ron Weasley

Harry Potter and the Philosopher’ Stone

J.K. Rowling
From its cover to the plot, this book by Marie Lu is one of the best historical fiction that I’ve read this year. And if you by chance were a fan of Jim Henson’s Labyrinth (1986) film, this book is totally for you.

**THE KINGDOM OF BACK**

**MARIE LUE**

**G.P. PUTNAM’S SONS BOOKS - 2020**

From its cover to the plot, this book by Marie Lu is one of the best historical fiction that I’ve read this year. And if you by chance were a fan of Jim Henson’s Labyrinth (1986) film, this book is totally for you.

**THE KINGDOM OF BACK**

Born with a gift for music, Nannerl Mozart has just one wish: to be remembered forever. But even as she delights audiences with her masterful playing, she has little hope she’ll ever become the acclaimed composer she longs to be. She is a young woman in eighteenth-century Europe, and that means composing is forbidden to her. She will perform only until she reaches a marriageable age—her tyrannical
father has made that much clear.

As Nannerl’s hope grows dimmer with each passing year, the talents of her beloved younger brother, Wolfgang, only seem to shine brighter. His brilliance begins to eclipse her own, until one day a mysterious stranger from a magical land appears with an irresistible offer. He has the power to make her wish come true—but his help may cost her everything.

As a historical fiction, ‘The Kingdom of Back’ by Marie Lu is based on the life of the Mozart siblings, specifically Maria Anna or Nannerl the eldest sister of the very well known prodigy of music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart aka Woferl. The book has a lot of research done by the author to portray it as accurately as possible following real events in the life of the Mozarts, adding it a bit of magic and fantasy. So much so that reading these made me want to pause and try to find more about Nannerl, the forgotten sister that was also a music prodigy, but that the society of that time silenced forever.

In Marie Lu’s book it is said that Nannerl could play and compose almost at the same level of her little brother, but it was the rules of the society that put an expiration date to her musical career, as it was that as soon as a girl became a woman she could never pursue on a career in music or any other type of Art, for she and her family could be shunned from society as these careers were the ones for libertine girls. To be respected girls should marry or take habits. These ideologies were firmly believed by the Mozarts, especially their father. So, as Nannerl knew that time with her music was coming to an end, she needed to perform her best to always be remembered, because her biggest fear was that someday she would be forgotten.

Lu’s research on the Mozart siblings was so exhaustive that she took notice how close they were since kids and that they loved to play games on their touring travels, creating fantasy worlds and languages only known to them. In one of the letters that were found from Wolfgang to his sister he mentions this magical world that they named “The Kingdom of Back”, so it was a beautiful nod from the author to take that information and add it to her story transforming it into something full of teachings and morals from that time when women couldn’t have the same rights as men. There’s no doubt that the real Nannerl’s music talent could have been similar or greater than her brother’s — there were letters from Wolfgang where he asserted that she had a better ear for music and at composing
it, although to date sheet music written by her had not been found.

It’s plot even when a bit cliché is pretty awesome, it reminded me in a way about the plots of the films ‘Labyrinth’ by Jim Henson, and ‘Pan’s Labyrinth’ by Guillermo del Toro, both mixed up with the innocence and morals taught by J. M. Barrie’s ‘Peter Pan and Wendy’ and the twisted world of Wonderland from Lewis Carrol’s ‘Alice Through The Mirror’. There are even some nods to all these fantasy worlds.

The Mozart siblings are very likeable, it’s easy to connect with Nannerl and her desires, even her jealousy to her brother’s music, as the setting is very well described. As the main character you can actually follow her growing up, imagining exactly how she is feeling in some moments. Woferl is such a lovable character, he loves his sister and is full of innocence and wonder, even when it’s understandable that his “character time” is not as big as Nannerl’s he could actually steal some scenes.

The character Hyacinth reminds me a lot of Jared, the King of Goblins in Jim Hensons’ ‘Labyrinth’, not only he presents himself as the lost Prince of the Kingdom of Back, but he is also full of mystery and sometimes you don’t know if he is lying or saying the truth. He speaks in riddles and has fun setting tasks for Nannerl as if she helps him, he in exchange will make her wish come true, and she will never be forgotten.

There’s some darkness in this story, I will not spoil anything, but nothing is quite as it seems in the Kingdom of the Back.

Not long ago I had the opportunity to read some of Marie Lu’s previous work, she usually writes about dystopian worlds so it was a marvellous surprise to find her in a fantasy world. She created an impressive story and I really hope to read something from her like this again in the future.

The most memorable quote is:

«I am going to tell you a story you already know. But listen carefully, because within it is one you have never heard before.»

Without further ado... Mischief Managed!
What’s very important for me is when Dumbledore says that you have to choose between what is right and what is easy. This is the setup for the next three books.

(Entertainment Weekly, 2000)
If the characters of Narnia went to Hogwarts

The Chronicles of Narnia was—and still is, actually, in spite of what C.S. Lewis did to Queen Susan—one of my favourite series. Harry Potter is also a series in which I take great interest and therefore I wondered what would happen if the characters of Narnia went to Hogwarts. In no particular order (with the exception of the siblings):

Peter Pevensie: Hufflepuff
He is extremely loyal to his family and the Kingdom of Narnia. Yes, he is brave, but this bravery stems from loyalty towards those he cares about. I never saw Peter as unnecessarily impulsive, rash or daring. He had the bravery needed to fulfil his duties.

Susan Pevensie: Ravenclaw
Susan is my favourite character from the series, even though (as I cannot emphasise enough) she was treated very unfairly at the end. Susan is somebody who places high value on knowledge and logic. She is a practical and sensible
person and, like many Ravenclaws, could fit into Slytherin as a second choice. I do not think she would make a good Slytherin, though, as she is more practical and logical than she is cunning. In fact, she is not really shrewd or cunning at all.

Susan is somebody who likes to act based on facts. Even though she is judged for this often throughout the series, Susan does not like to impulsively involve herself in a situation. She is the type of person who likes to be certain about things. She is noticeably slower to believe many aspects of Narnian existence than her siblings are. When she tries to bring a mature view into the situation, she is mocked for trying to be “grown-up”.

Susan does not fit into any of the other houses. She is not a brave person by nature. She is no hard-working Hufflepuff. She is not ambitious or cunning. But she is clever and values wisdom and sense above bravery.

**Edmund Pevensie: Slytherin**

I am not arguing this because he did something bad. Slytherin is one of my favourite Hogwarts Houses actually.

Edmund is somebody who is not notably brave, kind or loyal. He is clever, but does not place as much importance on intelligence as Susan does. Edmund is somebody who, in the first book at least, covets power (ambition). He is a cunning person, even if this manifested as his being willing to trade his siblings for Turkish Delight. However, even after his redemption Edmund is still a Slytherin. He still is no Gryffindor, Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw. I would argue that he still does what is necessary to achieve his goals.

**Lucy Pevensie: Gryffindor**

Many people seem to think Lucy is a Hufflepuff, but I disagree. She is a kind and loyal person, but she does not have the other traits of Hufflepuff to a large degree. She is not particularly patient or hard-working. In contrast, she possesses all of the Gryffindor traits: bravery, daring, nerve etc. After all she is Lucy the Valiant, a Gryffindor through and through.

**Polly Plummer: Gryffindor**

Polly loves adventures, but as The Magician’s Nephew explains, she has no real interest in books or learning, unlike her friend, Digory. The defining characteristic of Polly is bravery. She certainly has a lot of nerve and daring, more so than her friend Digory does. Unfortunately, Polly exhibits some of the negative characteristics of Gryffindor House: a black-and-white approach to life and a self-righteous attitude. Her criticism of Susan in The Last Battle was unnecessarily harsh.
**Digory Kirke: Ravenclaw**

The answer to this should be clear at first glance. Professor Kirke is a Ravenclaw. From The Magician's Nephew, it is clear that Digory loves to learn and discover new things, unlike his friend, Polly. When he grow up, he continues his pursuit of knowledge and becomes a Professor. He would make a good Hogwarts teacher.

**Eustace Scrubb: Ravenclaw**

Eustace is a very intelligent person who, like his cousin Susan, places high value on knowledge and logic. Eustace is not particularly cunning, brave or kind, but he is intelligent. He can show bravery, but is not a courageous person by instinct. He collects insects and shows keen interest in scientific advances.

**Jill Pole: Gryffindor**

Jill does have fears, but she faces them. She is in many ways a standard Gryffindor.

**Caspian X: Ravenclaw**

Yes, Caspian is in many ways a brave person (but he is actually often afraid), but I think that at heart he is one of us. From an early age, he shows a keen interest in history and folklore. He is a daydreamer by nature who learns to overcome his doubts. The films may try to portray him as a Gryffindor, but this is not the case. He is not motivated by ambition, nor does he rush into danger purely for the thrill of it. He does have a sense of justice and loyalty,
but these are not necessarily what drives him. Caspian is a quiet and thoughtful person who is thrust into adventure. He shows that Ravenclaws can be just as brave as Gryffindors, but smarter.

**Trumpkin: Slytherin**

Trumpkin is shown to be a very sceptical creature, which leaves him in either Ravenclaw and Slytherin (I am not implying that members of other houses are not sceptical). However, I instantly knew he was a Slytherin. Trumpkin is a resourceful and cunning character. He is intelligent, it seems, but intelligence is not his focus. He is concerned with cleverness and practicality. Trumpkin has always been one of my favourite characters.

**Aslan: Slytherin**

I thought he would be a Ravenclaw because he is wise and all-knowing.

On reflection he could be a Slytherin, because he cares very much about power. In fact, he reminds me a little too much of Dumbledore. You may be shocked. Aslan doesn’t care about power; he cares about people. Really? The entire series is a power-struggle between him and the bad characters. As intelligent as Aslan undoubtedly is, I do not see his placing any remarkable high value on logic and knowledge, as opposed to loyalty in his cause.

He really does remind me of Dumbledore. I do not hate Dumbledore (he is one of my favourite characters), but one cannot deny that Dumbledore is a little obsessed with the concept of power, even if he does not want it for himself, and is quite controlling— in the sense that he controls the conflict, even from afar, and the “good people” generally do what he wants or what they think he would want. Aslan also does not share all of the information with the Pevensie children and is often cryptic, like our dear Headmaster.

He would be the Headmaster of Narnian Hogwarts, if such a place existed..

**The White Witch: Slytherin**

This is not because she is bad, but because she is very cunning, ambitious, shrewd and a powerful leader. She has goals and she is willing to do anything to achieve them. Is she the Voldemort of Narnia?

You can read more articles by Rowena on her website:

www.the45girl.com

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RIDDIKULUS!

Erik (@knockturnerik on Instagram) plays with original artwork from the Harry Potter books!
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ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION BY MARY GRANDPRÉ FOR HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE. (SCHOLASTIC, 2005)