

Quidditch through the illustrations

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WELCOME

We can finally say that 2020 is almost over. The year that gave us a pandemic, made us stay home for months, and completely changed the world's hygienic habits is coming to an end. But 2020 also gave us two brand new J.K. Rowling stories. And not only that: a marvellous re-edition of one of the author's least-known books, but on a personal note, one of my favourites.

And speaking of books, in the issue we discuss the upcoming release of Alan Rickman's personal diaries as one book. We also prepared a section on some books to read during the holidays, and Oliver has an extraordinary piece on Vernon Dursley. Beatrice Groves continues with the second part of her essay on Cormoran Strike, and Alan tells us all about Horace Slughorn's wand.

We hope to see you next year and luckily, it will be better than this one!

Happy Holidays!

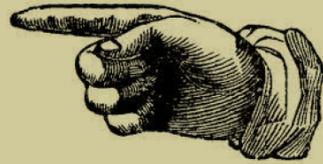
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TROUBLED DOUBLES: DOPPELGÄNGERS IN STRIKE PART 2

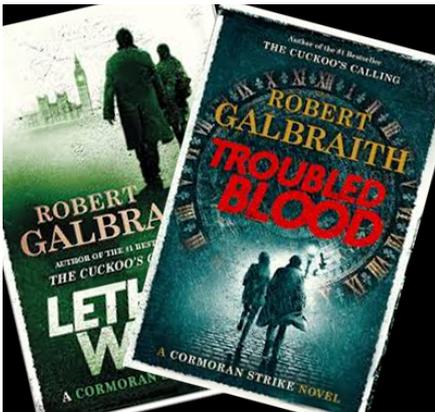
BY BEATRICE GROVES
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The first part of this article
was published in the
November 2020 issue of
The Rowling Library Magazine



If Hogwarts Professor is right that Strike (like Harry Potter) is organised around a seven-novel plan, then *Lethal White* (as the fourth novel) is a pivot. This idea pairs up the novels before and after *Lethal White*, for we can

expect that in this series – as in Harry Potter – will be organised in a ‘chiastic’ form: which means that the first and last novels, the second and sixth novel, and the third and fifth novels are paired. If we are correct in the theory that Strike follows this pattern, then *Troubled Blood* should be paired with *Career of Evil* – and it is. These two novels link decisively for, of the series so far, as they are the only two novels to feature extreme, and repeated, violence against women and serial killers. (There are also many minor plot parallels, such as Robin pursuing her own line of enquiry behind Strike’s back). The most important link, however, is that in each novel the murderer is a kind of doppelgänger. In both the



murderer presents as two people within the story: a 'good' person with a false name, seemingly kind and concerned, behind whom stands a sociopathic serial killer.

In [March Rowling changed her Twitter header](#) to the character of Florimell from Edmund Spenser's epic poem, *The Faerie Queene* (1590/96). This was a hint as the source of both *Troubled Blood*'s title and its epigraphs, but it also marked that Rowling's interest in 'Jekyll & Hyde' characters would continue in this novel. For the most famous aspect of Florimell's story is that she is replaced by her shadow-twin, False Florimell, who dupes everyone into thinking she is her namesake. It was also a pointer to the most famous doppelgängers within Spenser's poem - Una and Duessa. Una (whose name tells us she personifies unity and truth) is the heroine of the opening

book of *The Faerie Queene*, while Duessa (whose name points to her duplicity and doubleness) is her shadow twin. Duessa is created by the enchanter Archimago in order to trick the Redcrosse Knight, who is the hero of Book 1. While the Redcrosse knight should be pursuing holiness by questing with Una, he dallies instead with Duessa.

Duessa is the most famous malevolent figure in Spenser's poem and ([as Nick Jeffery noticed prior to publication](#)) the title of *Troubled Blood* is drawn from a passage from Una and Duessa's story. This is when Una rescues Redcrosse from the despair into which falling prey to Duessa's deception has led him:

*...his hand did quake,
And tremble like a leafe of Aspin
greene,*



J.K. ROWLING UPDATED TWITTER IMAGE HEADER - THE FAERIE QUEENE

And **troubled blood** through his pale
face was seene
To come, and goe with tidings from
the heart,
As it a running messenger had
beene.

(Epigraph to Chap 64; *Faerie
Queene*, 1.9.51)

This epigraph is marked as one of the most important of *Troubled Blood*, because it contains the title-phrase. The reader understands, therefore, that the trembling man described (this is the chapter in which Robin and Strike track down and interview Douthwaite) must be central to the plot. [The Janus-faced Janice is the ‘Duessa’ figure within the murder plot](#) - and this chapter marks out Douthwaite (and her desire for him) as the motive for her actions.

But while the shadow-twin pairing of Una and Duessa drops clues about who the murderer is, it also performs another function with the on-going Strike/Robin arc of the novels. For Strike, like Redcrosse, clearly should be in love with the near-perfect Robin (‘Una’) but has been lead astray by the seductive charms of the malevolent Duessa (‘Charlotte’). There is, however, a lovely epigraphical moment which suggests that all will finally work out between Robin and Strike, just as it does between Una and Redcrosse:

His louely words her seemd due
recompence
Of all her passed paines: one louing
howre
For many yeares of sorrow can
dispence:
A dram of sweet is worth a pound
of sowre:
She has forgot, how many a wofull
stowre
For him she late endurd; she speakes
no more
Of past...
Before her stands her knight, for
whom she toyld so sore.

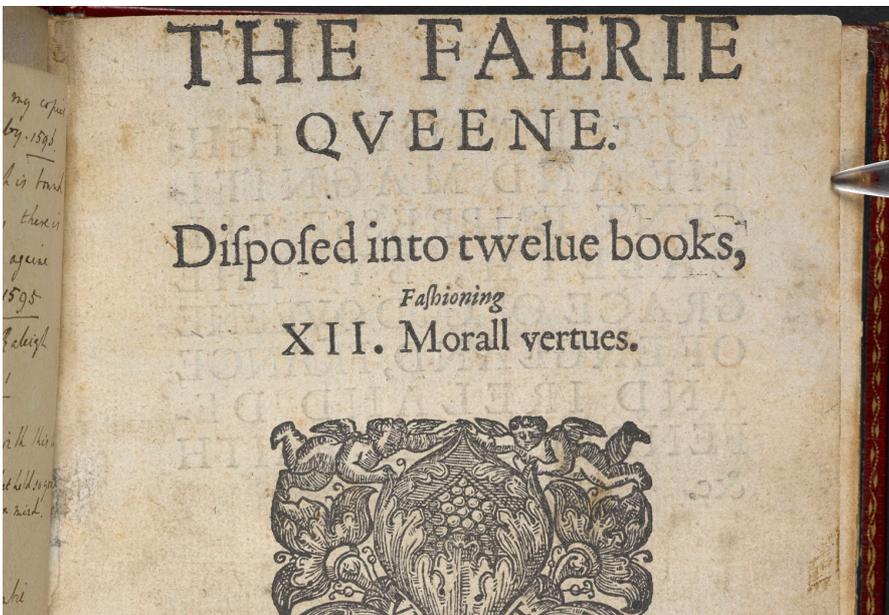
(Epigraph to Chap 58; *Faerie
Queene*, 1.3.30)

This epigraph - which marks the moment in which Una believes herself to be united with Redcrosse - is an evocative choice for what is the crucial chapter in *Troubled Blood* (as far, at least, as Robin and Strike’s relationship is concerned). Una recovering Redcrosse’s love after he has been led astray by false Duessa is a neat parallel to the chapter in which Strike and Robin finally acknowledge what they are to each other. This chapter, and its hopeful epigraph, belong at the heart of the novel in which Strike finally shakes himself free of Charlotte’s cloying and destructive attractions.

Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* has two major plot lines in which a virtuous woman (Una, Florimell) is

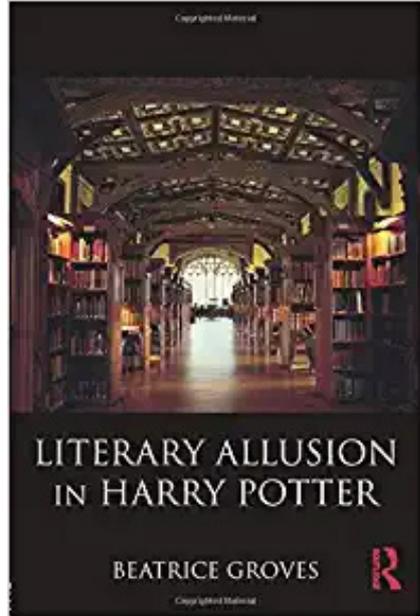
replaced by her evil twin (Duessa, False Florimell). This substitution confuses the knight who loves Una, and the knights who want to save Florimell, and sends them astray. Most of the doubling within *Troubled Blood* works this way, leading our heroes – like the knights of *The Faerie Queene* with whom they are so closely aligned – down false paths. There are, for example, the false sightings of Margot (in which two different women are mistaken for her) and the doubly ‘false’ sighting – in which a woman thinks that she and her mother have been mistaken for

Margot and her murderer when, in fact, that was the sole true sighting of Margot. Then there are the ‘two’ women (Janice Beattie and Clare Spencer) whom Strike mistakenly trusts. The investigation of Margot’s murder is, like the quests of Spenser’s knights, repeatedly led astray by such false pairings. But there is a satisfying twist in the tale. For, at the very end of the novel, it is the hero who uses the device against the villain. These female-doubles, which have so long worked against Strike, are finally used by him to defeat the most evil character in the story.



THE FAERIE QUEENE, BY EDMUND SPENSER, 1590
COPY HELD BY THE BRITISH LIBRARY

In the final section of the book, Margot is twinned with Louise Tucker – both are putative victims of Creed whose families are now desperately searching for the truth. When Strike finally goes to interview Creed, the reader (like Creed) believes that although Strike wants the truth about both women, he is there for information about Margot. Margot is the woman whose murder he has been hired to solve, a murder investigation which the reader has been following for eight hundred and fifty pages by this point: we think that it is a clue about Margot that we are seeking and which Creed withholds. For, believing likewise that Strike wants information about Margot, Creed gives him instead information about Louise. When Strike expresses anger, Creed gloats ‘*don’t be like that, because it’s not the one you came for*’ (*Troubled Blood*, 858). But Creed has been hoodwinked into giving away the clue for which Strike has come. It is a deeply satisfying final twist, as the doubling which has been used, not only throughout *Troubled Blood*, but throughout the whole of *Strike*, by murderers to trick the innocent, is finally used by the hero to trick the evil-doer. The final symmetry of the novel is used as a force for good.



Beatrice Groves is the author of
*Literary Allusion in Harry
Potter*

THE UNFORGIVABLE VERNON DURSLEY

BY OLIVER HORTON
[@OFHORTON ON TWITTER](#)

The Great Muggle

“[The Dursleys] were the last people you’d expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn’t hold with such nonsense.” – Harry Potter and The Philosopher’s Stone

Uncle Vernon is a petty-minded, overbearing, status-obsessed bully, less popular even than mild Voldemort or Dolly Umbridge. The author heaps cruelty on him and in the later books seems to despise the great prune. Arch-villain Tom Riddle gains a sympathetic back story. Mr Dursley stomps from humiliation to humiliation.

The Dursleys define the contrast between Muggledom and the wizarding world. Hagrid dismisses Vernon as a “great Muggle” – which could well be Mr Dursley’s honorary title: the Great Muggle, the Supreme Anti-Magic, Emperor of Normality. “You couldn’t find two people who are less like us,” says Professor McGonagall,

meaning Vernon and Petunia. “A family o’ the biggest Muggles I ever laid eyes on,” observes Hagrid.

Just as Voldemort was created to be the opposite of Harry, Uncle Vernon’s role is to counter-balance the weird, wacky wizard Albus Dumbledore. Everything about the uncle and the headmaster, from wardrobe to temperament, is in opposition. Dumbledore’s “blatant wizardishness” outrages Vernon.

Mr Dursley is allergic to sorcery in any form. Magic drives him berserk. His face turns as puce as a beetroot. Twice he tears out his moustache. “Daddy’s gone mad, hasn’t he?” asks Dudley as the family hurtle off around the country to escape Harry’s Hogwarts letter. Magic exists against Vernon’s very being. Yes he likes a shout but he is essentially a dull man, as boring as his tie, as boring as Grunnings’ drills. Because Vernon’s needs are simple. He wants a good car, a holiday home in Majorca and the best for his wife and son. And

nothing to do with the funny stuff.

Never Take Sides Against The Family

“Owls treating the place like a rest home, puddings exploding, half the lounge destroyed, Dudley’s tail, Marge bobbing around on the ceiling and that flying Ford Anglia... You’re not staying here if some loony’s after you, you’re not endangering my wife and son.” – Vernon Dursley, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

From the series’ very first chapter it’s obvious Vernon has no power. What’s this berk going to do against wizards? He can run but he can’t hide. Book One’s opening chapter trails Vernon for a day: he loves his wife and son, he enjoys shouting at everyone else... and holy hell the wizards are coming! That evening Vernon does his utmost to protect Mrs Dursley from anxiety. “Er, Petunia dear...” She is the one person on his mind for most of the day. This is not a man who takes his secretary for lunchtime quickies. Petunia is the only woman for him. Always.

And Vernon loves the crap out of his son. If Voldemort represents the horror of no love, Dudley is the horror of too much. Dudley is what Dumbledore fears Harry would become if fostered by a wizard family: a great spoiled lump

of a Chosen One. Vernon showers his son in unconditional love. Which nevertheless is a fine thing. His family is cohesive. In spite of Dudley’s whining they do not fight among themselves. Within the trinity everyone is equally favourite.

The books show the Dursleys at their worst. But just beyond their pages is normal-ish family life at Four Privet Drive, including Harry. The family are always there to collect the boy wizard from Kings Cross station at the end of the school year. Petunia, presumably, also takes him to the optician and dentist. In Book Six, Harry refuses meals – someone down there is cooking for him and is somewhat considerate of his wellbeing. In Book One, Harry strangles Vernon to get at his letters. Rough-housing is typical father-son stuff, a sign of familiarity -- their knockabout violence is reminiscent of Bart-Homer fights in *The Simpsons*. In fact, Disney’s *The Sword in the Stone*, based on the King Arthur stories, supplies Vernon’s foundation and shape: beefy, moustachioed Sir Ector likes neither magic nor his ward, the young orphan Arthur, who he calls “boy”.

Harry Potter draws danger to the Dursley family. They didn’t want him, they never get a Galleon for his upkeep and, arms twisted,

they house him all the same. And, inevitably, Harry brings a cornucopia of calamities.

More Sinned Against Than Sinning

[Mr Dursley] hurried to the car and set off home, hoping he was imagining things, which he had

never hoped before, because he didn't approve of imagination. – Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Whenever Harry is punished at Privet Drive he is punished for magic... or the suggestion of magic. Magic upsets Petunia. Nothing makes Vernon angrier.

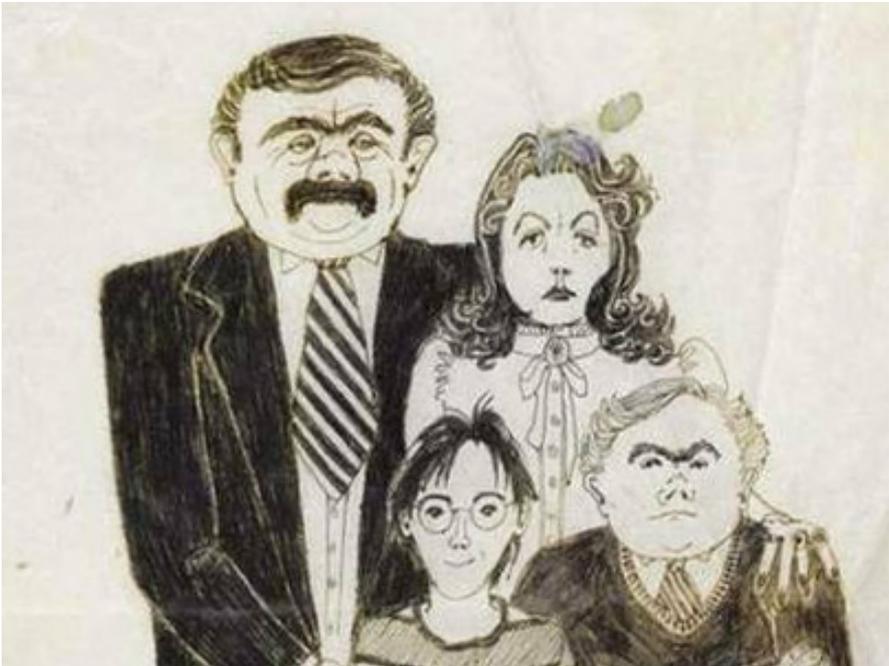


HARRY POTTER IN PRIVET DRIVE - VERNON DURSLEY CAN BE SEEN AT THE BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPHIES. ILLUSTRATION BY J.K. ROWLING

Voldemort killed James and Lily in their own home. And Vernon has invited their wizard son into his, has allowed the threat of murder to live in his family. The magical world is terrifying to an ignorant Muggle. Magic shows Vernon his powerlessness like the Mirror of Erised shows Harry his parents. For the Dursleys, being Harry's legal guardians means being shamed and intimidated every summer.

In Book One Vernon tries to outwit and outrun magic and his 11-year-old son is disfigured. Dudley is tricked into self-harm in Book Four, via the Twins' Ton

Tongue Toffee. In Book Five, Dudley is attacked by Dementors and nearly loses his soul. In Book Seven evil wizards want to torture and kill the Dursleys and they are forced to abandon their home. Back in Book Two, Dobby (and a Ministry owl) ruins Vernon's business dinner with the Masons, which threatens Mr Dursley's professional standing. And, of course, the family are threatened by wizards including Rubeus Hagrid, Arthur Weasley, Mad-Eye Moody, Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter. Even the happy news that Four Privet Drive is a finalist



HARRY POTTER AND THE DURSLEYS
ILLUSTRATION BY J.K. ROWLING

in the All-England Best-Kept Lawn competition turns out to be a hoax by Nymphadora Tonks.

No wonder the Dursleys don't like wizardfolk.

Harry's hard-knock life in Little Whinging, Surrey is not random abuse. Vernon Dursley believes he can inhibit Harry's magical development. He must, for the wellbeing of his family. "Didn't we swear when we took him in we'd stamp out that dangerous nonsense?" he reminds Petunia. And later, to Harry: "Thought we could squash it out of you, thought we could turn you normal." Which is the kind of twisted logic* that emerges, *Professor Dumbledore*, when you leave someone a baby and only a letter to explain!

The Wizard's Pawn

Dumbledore raised his finger for silence, a silence which fell as though he had struck Uncle Vernon dumb. – Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince

Albus Dumbledore chooses Four Privet Drive as orphan Harry's home and chooses the Dursleys to be his legal guardians. The headmaster does not want Harry to be spoiled by a family of wizards and does not want the responsibility himself. He is broadly happy with the result: "Five years ago... you arrived at

Hogwarts... not a pampered little prince, but as normal a boy as I could have hoped under the circumstances."

Dumbledore, knowing James and anticipating the perils of celebrity, wanted the arrogance blown out of Harry. And Vernon was just the man to huff and puff.

Despite himself, Vernon gives Harry a safe home – well, safe from evil wizards.

But the protective magic that Dumbledore invoked to safeguard Harry is not the only sorcery at Four Privet Drive. The school immediately knows Harry's change of bedroom. When, after Dudley gets Dementor-ed, Vernon finally cracks and throws Harry "Out!", Dumbledore's Howler (to Petunia) arrives immediately. Something within the house is monitoring this family, and it's not Squib-spy-neighbour Mrs Figg or one of her clever cats. Wizardfolk have breached the Dursleys' privacy, permanently.

Given all they endure, Vernon and co. require a Muggle Liaison Officer. They deserve better explanations and better information. For the sake of the Statute of Secrecy the family should be listened-to and counselled. Nobody ever tries to see Vernon's point of view. Not even Muggle-lovin' Arthur

Weasley.

Perfectly Normal Thank You Very Much

“Well this is goodbye then boy.”

[Vernon] swung his right arm upwards to shake Harry’s hand, but at the last moment he seemed unable to face it, and merely closed his fist and began swinging his arm like a metronome. – Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

The Dursleys are “reactionary, prejudiced, narrow-minded, ignorant and bigoted; most of my least favourite things,” wrote Jo Rowling. Indeed, Dudley does not have wizard children in the saga’s epilogue, 19 Years Later, because “any latent wizarding genes would never survive contact with Uncle Vernon’s DNA”.

But is this fair? Vernon’s prejudice derives from ignorance. He needed to be educated and not by his nephew. The staunchly Conservative Mr Dursley belongs to a generation that reflexively dismisses the knowledge of youth. If only Harry had a best friend whose parents were middle-class Muggles, who might explain Hogwarts etc to Vernon in terms he can understand!

Two points speak in Mr Dursley’s favour. In Book One, despite limited experience with the funny

stuff, Vernon notices magic. He sees the cat reading the map. He sees the people in cloaks. He registers the owls and shooting stars on the news. He is attuned. And in Book Seven, Vernon finally finds a wizard he respects: Kingsley Shacklebolt, the future Minister for Magic. This is a huge step in the enlightenment of Vernon Dursley.

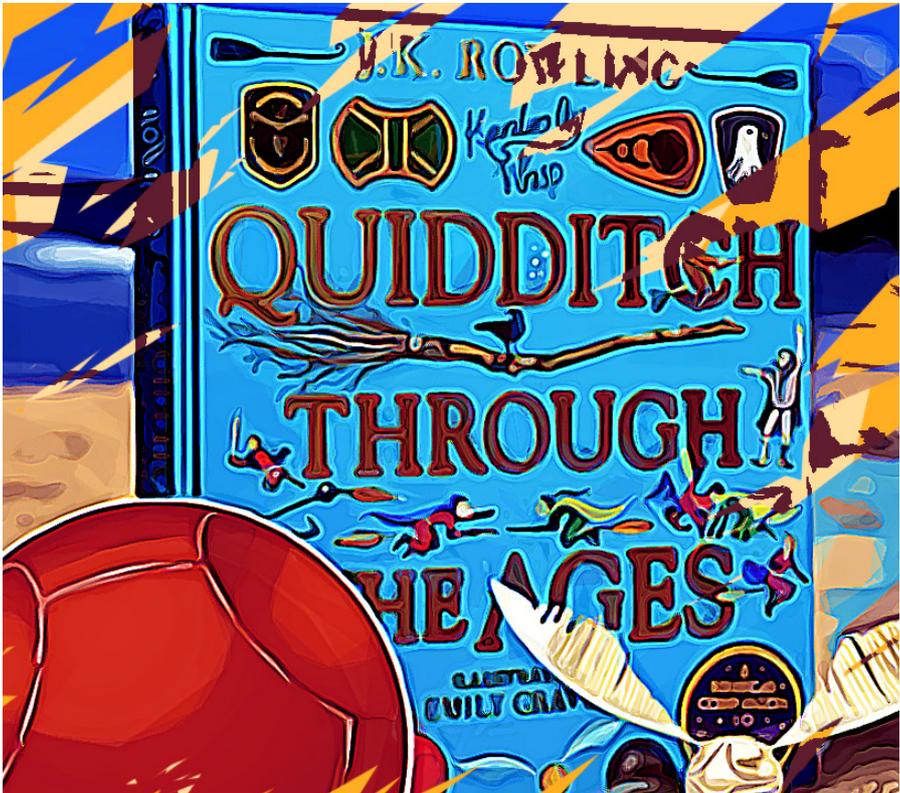
Change comes to the Great Muggle in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. The three Dursleys spend ten months away from home, in hiding, with magicfolk. Can Hestia Jones and Dedalus Diggle seed a new, true idea of Harry Potter? Can time among lively, adult wizards inspire Vernon to re-evaluate magic?

Dudley proves that one Dursley has the capacity to learn and change – given extreme intervention. Petunia softens on her nephew. There’s plenty to learn in those months away and two capable adult wizards to light the way. Does Vernon prove better than Voldemort and try for some remorse? Uncomfortable and overwhelmed and defeated, can the Great Muggle undergo a renaissance?

*Dumbledore knows first-hand that a bullied child can suppress their magic: this is the story of his sister Ariana.

QUIDDITCH THROUGH THE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY PATRICIO TARANTINO



The Harry Potter illustrated editions are well known by most fans of the series, and have been already published in many countries, with their respective translations. Jim Kay's artwork, which is featured throughout the four novels published so far in this format - was not only well-received but also became rapidly one of the favourite set of illustrations of the Wizarding World. What was first looked as another way to fill the Harry Potter publishers pockets with more money, became quickly accepted and now fans wait for the upcoming editions more eager than ever (Jim Kay is already working on *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*).

Of course, the Harry Potter novels were not the only ones that the publishers planned

to release in this format. After seeing the acceptance from the fandom, it was the turn of *Fantastic Beasts and where to find them*, the Hogwarts school text. It was published in 2017 and the different beasts illustrations were done by the English artist Olivia Lomenech Gill. The following year, in 2018, they published *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, with the interesting fact that the British version was illustrated by artist Chris Riddell, while the North American version (published by Scholastic) was by Lisbeth Zwerger. There were minor differences between the British and the North American editions in the previous books, the only significant change was the difference between the *Fantastic Beasts*' covers. However, they had never chosen a different artist for them. It would be the first and



THE FIRST SHARED ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS NEW QUIDDITCH... EDITION

last time so far.

In April 2019 the publishers announced the illustrated edition for the *Quidditch through the ages*, the only J.K. Rowling's spinoff book that was missing a special edition. The artist in charge of this task was Emily Gravett, an English award-winning writer and illustrator. With the announcement of the book and the artist, Bloomsbury (the publishers) also shared three images made by Gravett, showing two players and the emblem of the Holyhead Harpies.

When these images were released, a lot of people complained that they looked very childish. This cartoonish style could have been accepted for *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, for example, a book aimed at children of the Wizarding World, but not for *Quidditch through the ages*. Although it is used at Hogwarts, the text seems to be more for the general public in the Wizarding society, and for us, Muggle readers, it is where we can find one of the funniest J.K. Rowlings.

More previews were published by Bloomsbury and

Scholastic in the following months, until mid October 2020, when the book was finally released (not only in English though, some publishing houses managed to complete their translations on time, like Editorial Salamandra did in Spain and Latin America).

When the copies started being sent and the fans received them (most bookshops were closed, so buying online was one of the main ways to get it) they noticed the true nature of this book. It was totally different from what they were



expecting: it was even better. Personally, I consider the illustrated edition of *Quidditch through the ages* the best illustrated edition of a Harry Potter book so far, and I am going to explain why.

The book tells the story of Quidditch. And to recreate the feeling that Quidditch is a real sport, Emily Gravett did everything she could: and she exceeded in the task. Instead of doing hundreds of illustrations to be a companion of the text, she created real images:

collages of real people flying on broomsticks and real magazines as if they were from the Wizarding World are two of the clearer examples. This style is present from the beginning of the book where the introduction to the author (*About the author* section) shows a photograph of Kennilworthy Whisp, whose portrait is in fact Emily Gravett's dad, Terry Gravett. On the opposite page you will also find photos of fake books covers that show Whisp's titles, such as *He Flew Like a MadMan*, *The Wonder of Wigtown Wanderers* and *Beating the Bludgers*.

Although the book tells the rules of the sport, differences between broomsticks and the current worldwide status (how it is different in countries around the world), its main theme is the history of Quidditch. And that's where Emily Gravett shines. She crafted wood panels, illuminated manuscripts, oil paintings and old notebooks to take photos of them and include them as if they were real objects.

There are two examples that make this point clear: Emily created a real tapestry (by hand!) as if it were a real tapestry from the 12th century, showing a medieval Snidget hunt. She also painted a Japanese plate with a Quidditch theme, simulating a real Japanese plate from the nineteenth century.



Hand icon: Pride of Portree pennant and cover of Quidditch Times, 29th February 1964



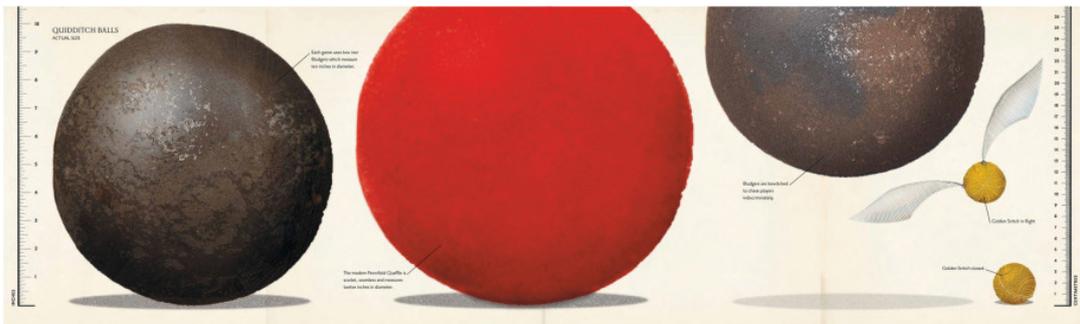
FULL QUIDDITCH TAPESTRY BY EMILY GRAVETT

Emily's touch and skills make this book something different: it does not look like a J.K. Rowling's fiction book anymore, but a real book from a museum or exhibition about a real sport called Quidditch. Gravett takes the book to another level.

The book has also, in their center pages, a fold-out that depicts the three Quidditch balls (the Quaffle, the Bludger and the Snitch) in a 1:1 scale to know how they would look in their actual size. And it is an awesome resource because it shows how big they are, especially the Quaffle, and how Rowling imagined them when she created them more than 20 years ago. But

most importantly, this shows how the films did not respect the sizes that Rowling assigned to them.

Of course, a valid critic is that this new edition does not keep the original drawings made by Rowling for this book. But after seeing that the final result is more than fine, it is more than welcome. This new edition is refreshing, it is a new way to show the Wizarding World to the readers. We know it is not real, we know all the facts never happened, but seeing them this way, as if they were part of a museum (the Quidditch Museum is mentioned in the book by the way) makes it a bit more plausible. And that's great.



FOLD-OUT WITH QUIDDITCH BALLS IN REAL SIZE



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WAVE A WAND

BY ALAN DELL'OSO

HORACE SLUGHORN



Dumbledore recruits Slughorn as a Potions teacher during Harry's 6th year at Hogwarts. At first it seems like a random choice, but then we find out that his presence at Hogwarts is more relevant than we thought, making him one of the most important pieces in Voldemort's story puzzle.

Slughorn is a very classy Slytherin, with many ambitions, but his main one is to collect as many famous and glorious students as he can, and obviously, Harry has to be in that collection.

ABOUT THE MOVIE PROP

Slughorn's wand in the movies is crafted in wood and metal, or

at least that's the conclusion I've reached by watching the prop pictures, the wand replica and reading about it. Some not-so-reliable sources say that the wand is a whole piece of metal, but it doesn't make sense because Ollivander used wood to craft the wands. Some concept art shows a metal wand, but the prop images clearly depict wood and the replica has visible grains.

It has a slug shape, with the horns in the bottom of the handle, and a wavy shape in the shaft, simulating the slug's body or the slime path that they leave behind after crawling.

Adam Brockbank was one of the

concept artists behind this wand, and in the book “Harry Potter Page to Screen” we see three different color choices for this wand, and in my personal opinion, the one with that jade-like green color is amazing. However, none of those color options made it to the final prop.

It is important to highlight that some wands have metal parts (Narcissa M., R. Scrimgeour, Yaxley), but Slughorn’s wand is one of the very few that has the entire handle made of (or at least covered by) metal, and also part of the shaft.

Some areas of the shaft are plated

with metal in some curly, wavy and crazy path shapes. It could be thought of as some kind of inception pattern, like slug paths over a slug body or a path itself, providing an amazing design.

ABOUT THE REPLICA

This wand replica made by The Noble Collection is one of the few wands that is almost completely different in color than the screen prop.

The color of the “slug head” at the bottom of the handle seems to match the original prop, the handle itself is more cooper-like than the silver look that we have



DIFFERENT COLORS FOR SLUGHORN'S WAND, FROM HARRY POTTER PAGE TO SCREEN

on the movie prop. The metal plating of the shaft is painted in silver (more or less matching the prop), and the shaft looks darker, detailing some wood grain on the painting.

In order to feature that wavy shape in the shaft, this is one of the few replicas that doesn't have a metal rode core, making it very fragile in the tip and in the "slug horns" at the bottom of

the handle. So, if you have this replica, handle it with care, and remember that resin is not easy to repair once it breaks.





If he'd once defeated
the greatest sorcerer in the world,
how come Dudley had always
been able to kick him around
like a football?

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
J.K. Rowling



BOOKS TO READ THESE HOLIDAYS

This year has been crazy for everyone and this season it could be a bit hard for some of us, for that reason I thought that instead of reviewing just one book, I could recommend some that will take you away a bit from reality. Let's start!

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE by C.S. Lewis

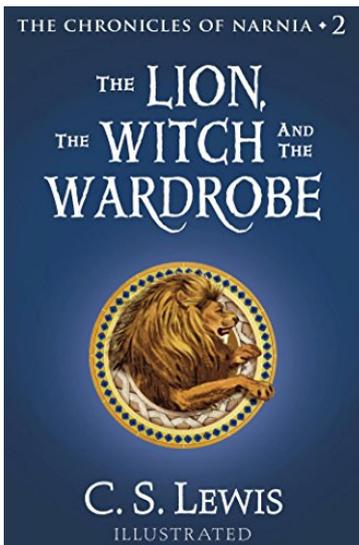
Narnia...the land beyond the wardrobe door, a secret place frozen in eternal winter, a magical country waiting to be set free.

Lucy is the first to find the secret of the wardrobe in the professor's mysterious old house. At first her brothers and sister don't believe her when she tells of her visit to the land of Narnia. But soon Edmund, then Peter and Susan step through the wardrobe themselves. In Narnia they find a country buried under the evil enchantment of the White Witch. When they meet the Lion Aslan, they realize they've been called to a great adventure and bravely join the battle to free Narnia from the Witch's sinister spell.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe is without doubt one of the classics to read this season. The story not only is capable of transporting you to another magical land, but also gives you some good reflections to make about yourself and the strength of love and hope.

The most memorable quote is:

«Wrong will be right, when Aslan

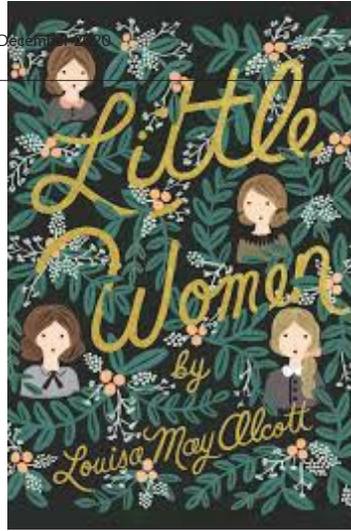


comes in sight, At the sound of
his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter
meets its death, And when he
shakes his mane, we shall have
spring again.»

LITTLE WOMEN by Louisa May Alcott

Generations of readers young and old, male and female, have fallen in love with the March sisters of Louisa May Alcott's most popular and enduring novel, *Little Women*. Here are talented tomboy and author-to-be Jo, tragically frail Beth, beautiful Meg, and romantic, spoiled Amy, united in their devotion to each other and their struggles to survive in New England during the Civil War.

It is no secret that Alcott based *Little Women* on her own early life. While her father, the freethinking reformer and abolitionist Bronson Alcott, hobnobbed with such eminent male authors as Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, Louisa supported herself and her sisters with "woman's work," including sewing, doing laundry, and acting as a domestic servant. But she soon discovered she could make more money writing. *Little Women* brought her lasting fame and fortune, and far from being the "girl's book" her publisher requested,



it explores such timeless themes as love and death, war and peace, the conflict between personal ambition and family responsibilities, and the clash of cultures between Europe and America.

Little Women is that classic coming of age story about four sisters during the Civil War. The story is bittersweet and makes you reflect on your relationships. The best characters are without doubt Jo and Amy, they have many layers and you can either love them or loathe them. It is far from an "only girl's book", as all the topics that it develops are very close to any human being.

The most memorable quote is:

«I want to do something splendid... something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm dead. I don't know what, but I'm on the watch for it and mean to astonish you all someday.»

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens

Generations of readers have been enchanted by Dickens's A Christmas Carol—the most cheerful ghost story ever written, and the unforgettable tale of Ebenezer Scrooge's moral regeneration.

Written in just a few weeks, A Christmas Carol famously recounts the plight of Bob Cratchit, whose family finds joy even in poverty, and the transformation of his miserly boss Scrooge as he is visited by the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future.

From Scrooge's "Bah!" and "Humbug!" to Tiny Tim's "God bless us every one!" A Christmas Carol shines with warmth, decency, kindness, humility, and the value of the holidays. But beneath its sentimental surface, A Christmas Carol offers another of Dickens's sharply critical portraits of a brutal society, and an inspiring celebration of the possibility of spiritual, psychological, and social change.

A Christmas Carol is probably one of the most famous stories about Christmas and the meaning behind the Holiday. Charles Dickens always liked to criticize society and deliver tales to teach morals. *A Christmas Carol* delivers a good tale about a rich man that had to be haunted with visions of

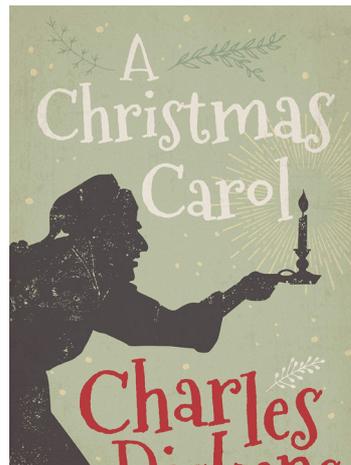
the past, present and future to understand that his selfishness was doing him no good and that if he didn't mend his ways, he could be left to die alone, and he would never be remembered as a good man, if at all.

The most memorable quote is:

«(...) for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.»

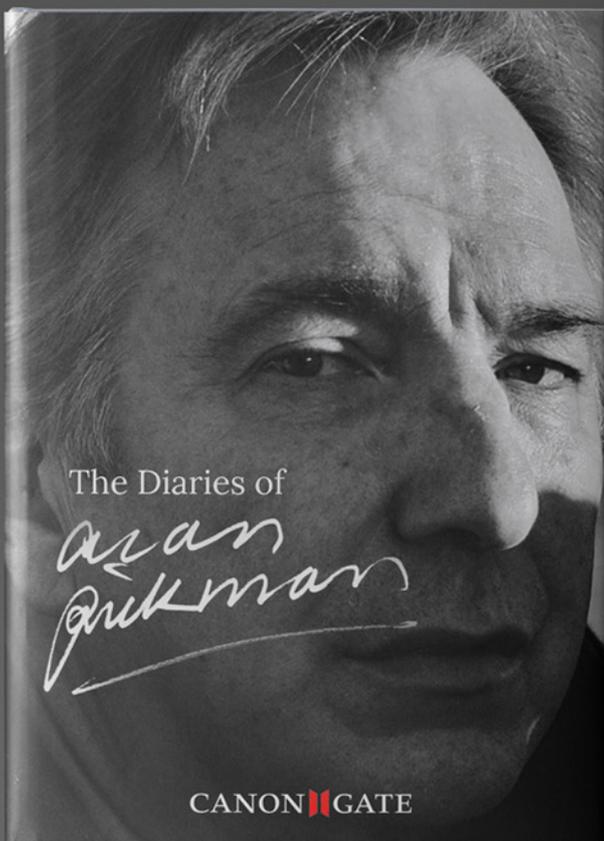
Well, there are my three classics to recommend reading this season.

I hope that either you decide to battle in the lands of Narnia, or try to write a story yourself, or even having contemplation time with your loved ones, you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



ALAN RICKMAN'S PERSONAL DIARIES TO BE PUBLISHED

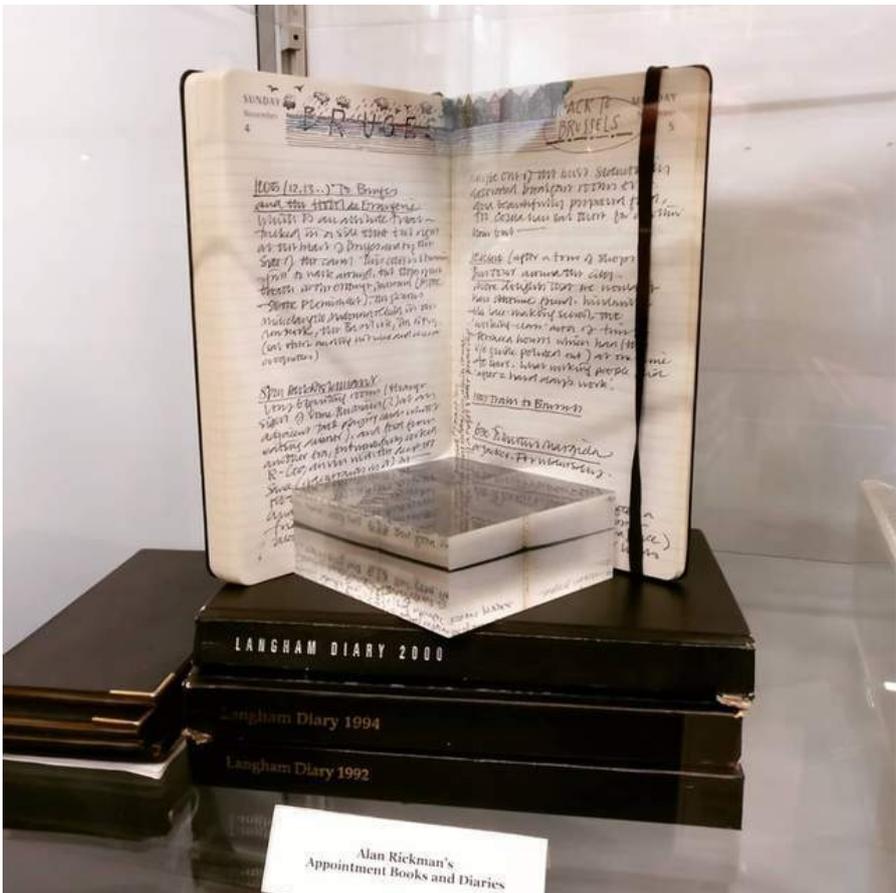
The personal diaries
of the beloved actor
Alan Rickman,
who portrayed
Severus Snape
in the Harry Potter
films are going to be
published in 2022 by
Canongate Books.



It was announced in the past few weeks that Canongate Books, the independent and award-winning publisher, will release *The Diaries of Alan Rickman* in autumn 2022. The diaries of the late British actor – 27 handwritten volumes of his “witty, gossipy and utterly candid” thoughts about his career and life spanning more than 25

years – are going to be edited down into a single book.

Alan Rickman, who portrayed Severus Snape in the eight Harry Potter films, began writing the diaries by hand in the early 1990s, with the intention that they would one day be published. He continued to keep diaries over the next 25 years, and he continued



ALAN RICKMAN'S DIARIES, PART OF THE ALAN RICKMAN ARCHIVES.

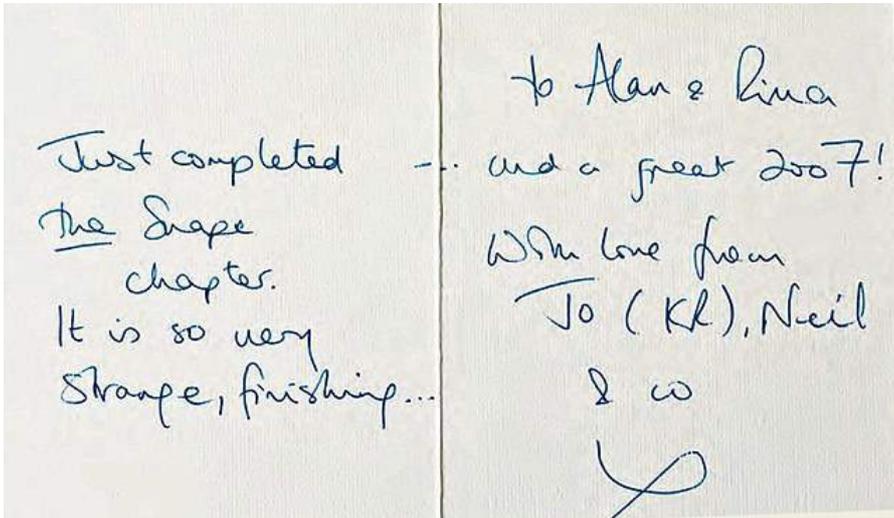
writing right until his death from pancreatic cancer at the age of 69 in 2016.

"I'm delighted that Canongate will be publishing Alan's diaries, and couldn't have wished for a finer appointment of editor than Alan Taylor," said Rima Horton, Rickman's widow, who had been with him since 1965. *"The diaries reveal not just Alan Rickman the actor, but the real Alan – his sense of humour, his sharp observation, his craftsmanship and his devotion to the arts."* Taylor told The Guardian that Rickman's diaries were *"anecdotal, indiscreet, witty, gossipy and utterly candid, they make compulsive reading and offer a peerless insight into the daily life of a remarkable actor who was as beloved in the US as*

he surely was in the UK." Simon Thorogood, editorial director at Canongate, who bought the rights at auction, said that Rickman's *"fans everywhere are in for a rare treat"*.

For the Harry Potter fans, the book will be an incredible read since it will include behind-the-scenes stories of his time on stage and on screen, including tales from the Harry Potter set, where he worked for a decade, between 2001 and 2011.

The Alan Rickman's diaries are part of the Alan Rickman personal archive, which also comprises 38 boxes of material that include correspondence, fan mail, and interview excerpts among other written sources. The entire lot was



J.K. ROWLING POSTCARD TO ALAN RICKMAN (2007), PART OF THE ALAN RICKMAN ARCHIVES.

up for auction in 2018, expecting to fetch almost one million pounds, but it remained unsold.

This personal archive not only shows a glimpse of Alan Rickman's personal life and his approach to work, but also his relationships with other celebrities, and especially with J.K. Rowling. There is plenty of correspondence between the actor who played Snape and the author, as J.K. Rowling wrote to him while she was in the process of writing the Harry Potter books, as the image of the postcard below shows.

When we contacted Neil Pearson Rare Books, who is in hold of the Alan Rickman archives, they told us they were not looking to sell to private collectors, but they were “looking for an institutional buyer so the archive [could] be kept together, to be used and enjoyed by researchers, biographers and the general public alike, in perpetuity.” So there is still the chance that an institution, such as a university, may buy the whole archive and share Alan Rickman's remaining material. This would give a thorough look of his life, to the delight of the actor's and the Harry Potter fans alike.





A QUOTE BY JO

I never told my family that I wanted to be a writer. They would have told me I didn't have a hope. People in my family did not become writers.

(Foreword for *Becoming Myself*, 2006)

RIDDIKULUS!

Erik (@knockturnerik on Instagram) plays with original artwork from the Harry Potter books!

Follow @knockturnthepages on Instagram for more humour!



ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION BY MARY GRANDPRÉ FOR HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE. (SCHOLASTIC, 2005)



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