

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince Study Guide

**Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince by J. K.
Rowling**

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Introduction

J. K. Rowling continues her enormously popular series about a young, orphaned wizard with her sixth novel, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005). Once again breaking sales records on both sides of the Atlantic, Rowling's second-to-last *Harry Potter* book keeps readers on the edge of their seats by killing a beloved character at the end, as she warned she would.

Harry, now sixteen years old, nears maturity in the wizarding community and begins to experience the complexities of adult life. He tackles much more difficult lessons at school, matures in his understanding of evil in the world, and even finds love during this eventful year at Hogwarts. Rowling delves deeply into Voldemort's past, and examines the path that takes a young, orphaned Tom Riddle and turns him into the most evil wizard in history. Harry studies this path under the guidance of a more forthcoming Albus Dumbledore, and he learns how long and difficult his journey will be to defeat the Dark Lord. Despite the growing complexity and darkness of the series, Rowling nevertheless includes her trademark humor and whimsy within its more than six hundred pages. Readers continue to delight in the many fantastic creatures and marvelous mysteries of her magical world.

As with each previous novel, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* caused a frenzy of anticipation. With only the final story remaining, Harry Potter fans show no indication of losing interest; in fact, the movie adaptations and series merchandise, in addition to numerous language translations of the series, continue soar in popularity. Rowling satisfies her readers' expectations with this tale of an action-packed year of young Harry Potter's schooling, and leaves them with a shocking cliffhanger, thirsty for the series finale.

Author Biography

J. K. Rowling was born Joanne Rowling on July 31, 1965, in Chipping Sodbury, England. After a thorough education in the classics, including a degree from Exeter University, Rowling worked various jobs before becoming a full-time writer. She was married in 1992 and had a daughter in 1993, but she divorced her husband that year. As a single mother, she often struggled to make ends meet, even going on public assistance at one point.

During this period, Rowling wrote *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which was published in England in 1997. The book was published as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the United States in 1998. The novel, about a young wizard's coming of age, was a huge hit in both Britain and the United States, and Rowling has since become one of the most successful novelists of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. She followed up on the success of the first *Harry Potter* books by writing five more installments of her planned seven-book series: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005).

The *Harry Potter* series has earned Rowling worldwide fame and a substantial fortune; some estimates value her net worth as greater than the Queen of England's. Each new installment in the series has broken sales records. In 2005, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* sold 13.5 million copies in the United States alone. The film versions of Rowling's books have also met with enormous success. In addition to popular approval, Rowling's work has garnered much critical acclaim, earning the British Book Award, the Nestlé's Smarties Gold Award, the Whitbread Prize for Children's Literature, and the New York Public Library Best Book of the Year award. Rowling spends much of her time corresponding with fans across the world, communicating a deep concern for the readers, many of whom are children. Rowling remarried in 2001 and had another child in 2005. As of 2006, she lives with her family in Scotland.



Plot Summary

Before the Prime Minister of Muggles met the new Minister of Magic, he learned that the disaster the media had attributed to a hurricane was actually caused by Death Eaters, possibly accompanied by giants. The war was escalating. Voldemort had tasked Narcissa Malfoy's son Draco with killing Dumbledore (and Professor Snape vowed to help). Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts, personally explained to the Dursleys of Privet Drive that the protective spell he had cast over the now 16-year-old Harry Potter would lose its power in a year, when he came of age. The informal games of 2-on-2 Quidditch at the Weasley's home gave way to school preparations: off to London's Diagon Alley to purchase supplies; such as, books, robes, wands, owls and the usual. Harry and his friends found everything changed: the Leaky Cauldron was almost empty; many shops had closed and were covered with posters containing warnings with black-and-white photographs of Death Eaters like Bellatrix Lestrange, from the Ministry of Magic. There was extra security everywhere, especially for Harry Potter, whom the newspaper "The Daily Prophet" now called "the chosen one," because of a prophecy Voldemort interpreted as meaning that either he or Harry Potter, not both, would survive.

During his sixth school year, Dumbledore tutored Harry privately: Dumbledore and Harry entered different memories to learn what they could about Voldemort's youth. In one lesson, Harry learned that Voldemort's father abandoned his witch wife and unborn son and that his mother had named him Tom Marvolo Riddle, after his father and hers. She then died. In another lesson, Dumbledore is seen inviting the 11-year-old Riddle, who had grown up in an orphanage, to attend Hogwarts. He did and searched the library archives for his family history. In another lesson, they saw a room go dark after Morfin damned his sister, Riddle's mother, for having dishonored the family name. It was perhaps then that Riddle became Voldemort. "Tom Marvolo Riddle" is a cryptogram of "I am Lord Voldemort." Voldemort killed his father and grandparents, made his uncle think he'd committed the crime and then returned to Hogwarts and asked Slughorn about Horcruxes. Voldemort made six Horcruxes; two had been destroyed; a seventh part of Voldemort's soul existed in the body he regenerated after the long years of exile.

Dumbledore also helped Harry realize that the prophecy was irrelevant and self-fulfilling. He understood the difference between being coerced into battle and fighting for his beliefs and fear was making the prophecy come true. In addition to his private lessons, Harry took Defense Against the Dark Arts from Snape and Advanced Potions from Slughorn. Harry discovered that Draco Malfoy had been spending a lot of time in the Room of Requirement, which he tried, unsuccessfully, to enter. Harry expected both Malfoy and Snape of being Death Eaters, but no one believed him.

Dumbledore and Harry went after the third Horcrux: They apparated to a cave on a high cliff and found, in its main chamber, a lake in whose middle was an island. On the island, Dumbledore thought they'd find the Horcrux. He drank most of the potion protecting the Horcrux before collapsing. Harry got the greatly-weakened Dumbledore out of the cave and back to Hogsmeade. Seeing the Dark Mark looming over the



Astronomy Tower at Hogwart's invigorated Dumbledore, who ordered Harry to fetch brooms and don his Invisibility Cloak. When they landed in the Astronomy Tower, Dumbledore immobilized Harry and reasoned with Draco Malfoy, who wavered. Snape appeared, aimed his wand and uttered a curse that blew Dumbledore's body off the Astronomy Tower. Harry, released from the immobilizing spell, joined the fighting against the Death Eaters. The Order of the Phoenix, Ginny, Professor McGonagall, Remus Lupin and Tonks were all fighting. Harry tries several times, unsuccessfully, to curse Snape. After returning to the Astronomy Tower, Harry learned that the Horcrux from the cave was not real.

This school year concluded early, immediately after Dumbledore's funeral, which was attended by many from many lands. As Dumbledore's pyre ignited, Harry thought he saw a phoenix flying off into the blue sky. After the funeral, Harry told his friends that he would not be returning to Hogwart's. He would, as Dumbledore had wished, spend a little time on Privet Drive, after which he would visit his parents' graves and begin the search for the remaining Horcruxes. Hermione said that, wherever he went, she and Ron would go, too.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The Prime Minister of Muggles had been having a bad week: The weather, the people, everything was grimmer than it had been. The media shouldn't fault him for what his Junior Ministers were doing. He was waiting for a call from the President, when he heard a soft cough. He turned anxiously towards the portrait, trying to look braver than he felt. A voice responded as though reading from a script. The President's memory could be changed to not remember to place the call. The Prime Minister resigned himself to seeing Cornelious Fudge again. He remembered his first night as Prime Minister, when Fudge had introduced himself, explaining that there really were witches and wizards living secretly all around him, but that he needn't worry since the Ministry of Magic assumed full responsibility for the entire wizarding community.

The Prime Minister remembered other bad news Fudge had brought over the years. This time, he learned that the wizarding world had had a week as bad as his own, perhaps worse. The death and destruction the press had attributed to a hurricane was really caused by Death Eaters, possibly accompanied by giants. The grim mood he observed everywhere was probably due to the Dementors having deserted Azkaban. They were breeding. Fudge concluded that the purpose of this visit was to bring the Prime Minister up-to-date on the facts and to introduce him to his successor as Minister of Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour. After being introduced, the Prime Minister also learned why his Junior Minister had been acting like a duck in public. He had been placed under a poorly executed Imperius Curse. He also learns why his new secretary seemed to be doing the work of three. He was, in fact, a wizard. The Prime Minister hopelessly insisted that they should be able to fix everything since they did magic. The problem, Scrimgeour said kindly, was that the other side did magic, too. At that, Fudge and Scrimgeour disappeared from his office into the bright green flames as abruptly as they had arrived.

Chapter 1 Analysis

This Harry Potter novel begins with Muggles caught in the crossfire of Voldemort's war. Magic made the Prime Minister of Muggles uneasy. He was a politician, but it was magic that explained the unease he had observed in his own world. As to keeping wizarding secrets secret from the Muggle public-at-large, what politician would admit to being visited by wizards?



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Two Death Eaters appeared, seemingly out of nowhere and headed down a cobbled street with dilapidated buildings and broken streetlights. "Wait, Cissy," appealed Bellatrix; "No, Bella," her sister Narcissa's resolve was unshakable. They moved through a "Muggle dunghill" towards the home of another Death Eater, Severus Snape, who, of course, welcomed them and instructed Wormtail to fetch drinks. They toasted the Dark Lord and, while Bellatrix glared at Snape. Narcissa, sobbing, appealed for his assistance. Snape first asked Bellatrix why she distrusted him: where, she asked, had he been when, earlier, the Dark Lord had fallen; why wouldn't he reveal the location of the Order of the Phoenix; why, most of all, since he was a professor at Hogwarts, was Harry Potter, who had been at his mercy for five years, still alive?

Snape replied smoothly that he didn't go straight back to Voldemort's side when he felt the Dark Mark burn, because he was under Voldemort's orders to stay where he was. He was spying on Dumbledore, convincing him that he had abandoned the Dark Side. Surely his service, the information he provided was something. He toasted Bellatrix, who was far more useful to the Dark Lord than had been her loyalty, surely she must understand how enchantments worked. He was not Secret Keeper and so could not speak the name the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix.

Snape then turned to Narcissa: since he already knew of Voldemort's plan, her telling him about it was not treasonous to the Dark Lord, whose word was Law. Her tears fell unrestrained: her only son, Draco, was excited about the challenge of being given a mission so dangerous that none had yet succeeded, but she feared that the task was a way to punish her now imprisoned husband Lucius. Snape replied that the Dark Lord was indeed angry at Lucius for allowing himself to be captured and not retrieving the prophecy. Narcissa sobs that the Dark Lord did not want her son to succeed; he only wanted him killed. Snape sternly reminded her that he could not and would not dare propose a change in plans: Narcissa, desperate, asked whether he would be willing to perform the Unbreakable Vow. Snape agreed and the astonished Bellatrix, who remained contemptuous of Snape, used her wand to act as their Bonder. The tongue of flame wrapped around their clasped hands, making Snape's vow to Narcissa to help Draco and perform the deed himself if Draco failed, now an unbreakable one.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The "Order of the Phoenix" refers the reader back to the time and place of another book in the series. Times are darker now: the Death Eaters and their Dark Lord are making plans. Voldemort has demanded a difficult task of Narcissa's son and she begged for Snape's assistance. Allegiance to the Dark Lord aside, Bellatrix and Narcissa spoke to

each others as sisters, the former trying to reason with and restrain the latter, who appealed to Snape as would any desperate mother.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Harry was snoring loudly, his face pressed against the window, his room strewn with apple cores, owl feathers and spell books, all of which were obscured by the large bird cage containing Hedwig his owl. His trunk was open and unpacked on the floor. His gaze again turned to the note from Dumbledore that he would be calling on Privet Drive tomorrow: he knew it was useless to read the letter again and he knew it by heart. It seemed too good to be true, to be rescued from the Dursleys so early in the summer. He woke up with a start, saw the streetlight go out and then Dumbledore walking towards the house. He bounded down the stairs and saw his uncle's veins bulging, recognizing Dumbledore was someone he couldn't bully. Dumbledore's appearance was a surprise to the Dursleys: it had, after all, been 15 years since he had delivered Harry to them. Dudley was a month or two old at the time.

Professor Dumbledore explained, mainly to Harry, that they had found Sirius Black's will: Sirius, Harry's godfather, had named him his sole beneficiary. Now, all that had belonged to Sirius belonged to Harry, including Kreacher and Number 12 Grimmauld Place. To confirm that this was so, Harry gave Kreacher a command to be quiet: He obeyed. Professor Dumbledore then explained, mainly to the Dursleys, that the spell he had performed to protect Harry would last another year, i. ., until he came of age. Aunt Petunia argued, saying people didn't come of age until 18. Dumbledore patiently explained that witches and wizards come of age a year earlier than Muggles. Dumbledore chastised the Dursleys for their cruel treatment of Harry, blaming him for everything and crediting him with nothing. He then informed them there would be one last time, the next summer. At that, he and Harry, who had packed in 10 minutes, left Privet Drive.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Harry, now 16, makes his first appearance in the novel, rescued by Dumbledore from the petty cruelty of Privet Drive, the burden of being a strange unwanted kid: The Dursleys treated the wizardry part of his essence, as a dirty and shameful secret. He has though been a Hogwart's student for the past five years, the first five books in the series and so only had to deal with the Dursleys when Hogwart's was closed during summer vacation.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

After they left Privet Drive, Harry, with Dumbledore's assistance, appeared near the home of Horace Slughorn. On the way up the walk, Harry asked about the new Minister of Magic and the Inferi, corpses bewitched by a dark wizard. They prepared to knock on the door, as apparating into a wizard's house would be rude, but saw that it hung open, a scene of chaos inside: it was Slughorn's attempt at disguise, to set the Death Eaters, whom he'd been running from for the last year, off track. While Dumbledore momentarily left the room, Harry convinced him, just by talking, to come out of retirement and teach at Hogwart's. Later, Dumbledore told Harry some things he needed to know about Slughorn, to put him on his guard as a precautionary measure. Before they arrived at the Burrow, Dumbledore told Harry he would be taking private lessons from him during the coming school term.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Harry is able, without using special powers, to convince Horace Slughorn to come out of retirement and teach at Hogwart's. Harry is also to receive private tutoring from Dumbledore. Although the clouds of war with Voldemort were gathering on the horizon, the further away Harry gets from Privet Drive, the more normal his world becomes.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

After they knocked, the nervous voice of Mrs. Molly Weasley asked them to declare their intent: Dumbledore responded and she, recognizing his voice, opened the door instantly. Inside, they saw a young and pale witch, Tonks, seated at the table (she looked drawn and Mrs. Weasley, troubled). After Tonks and Dumbledore had vanished at the same spot, Mrs. Weasley asked Harry if he was hungry. She then fed him. As Harry sat at the table, a ginger cat with a squashed face hopped onto his knees, purring and he asked Mrs. Weasley when Hermione had arrived. Mrs. Weasley discussed Slughorn as she cooked: she and Mr. Weasley had been his students at Hogwarts and now, just recently, Arthur had been promoted to a position Scrimgeour had created in response to the escalating war.

The new office was for the Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects: Every day Mr. Weasley dealt with the numerous fake protective spells and objects that were propagating along with the actual fear of war. Mrs. Weasley looked at her clock with its 9 hands—one for each member of her family, all of which now were set at "mortal peril" and had been since Voldemort's return. She turned and sighed with relief, noticing Mr. Weasley's hand was now set at the clock's "traveling" position: he was late coming home from work. Molly Weasley rushed to open the door for him, but he told her wearily, sternly, to ask the questions. She acquiesced to their code sequence, his answers to questions ranging from "What is your dearest ambition?" to "What do you like to call me when we're alone together?." He and Harry shook hands and, at Harry's stifled yawn, Mrs. Weasley sent him up the stairs to the old room of her twin sons, Fred and George. When Harry reached the room, Hedwig, his owl, who had been waiting his arrival, hooted and flew off to hunt. Harry smiled as he found a candy, a Puking Pastille, in his pillowcase, turned over and slept deeply. He woke, seemingly seconds later, to bright light and, groping for his glasses, his friend Ron hitting him on the head and his friend Hermione telling him to stop. Ron's younger sister Ginny, the first Weasley daughter in several generations, wandered into the room, griping about her mother. She was followed by Fleur, a newcomer to the household and Ron's older brother Bill's fiancée. She brought up the tray that Mrs. Weasley had prepared and planned to bring Harry herself: When Fleur spoke, Harry noticed that the other women in the room avoided each other's gazes.

Harry asked Ron about Fred and George. They were doing well. Percy still wasn't speaking to his parents, although Mr. Weasley had been right about Voldemort being back. Harry mentioned what Dumbledore had once said it was easier to forgive people for being wrong than right: Ron nodded agreement and said that that was the kind of "mental" thing Dumbledore would say. When Harry mentioned his private lessons, Ron choked on his toast and Hermione gasped. Harry explained that he did not know Dumbledore's reasoning but expected it had to do with the prophecy, that neither he nor Voldemort could live while the other survived. Hermione surmised that Dumbledore



would be teaching Harry really advanced defensive magic. Harry, for his part, could not think of words that expressed what he felt, his two friends sitting on the bed beside him, not shrinking away from him as if he were contaminated. At his mention that Dumbledore had told him that their O. . . (report cards) would be arriving that day, Hermione ran out of the room to see if they'd arrived. Their O. . . arrived by owls, one for each student: Hermione's grades were, of course, the best; she had the most Os (100%) and was the best student in their year. Harry's grades weren't bad, although his Potions grade quashed his goal of becoming an Auror. Harry, looking over, saw Ron had no Os. Mrs. Weasley nevertheless congratulated him for doing better than had Fred and George combined.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The owl that departed the minute Harry arrived in his room at the Burrow was Hedwig: she departed knowing Harry was safe and had no need for messages. The ginger cat with a squashed face that hopped onto Harry's knees was Hermione's cat, Crookshanks. The arriving O. . . were report cards from the previous school year. Harry has moved from what wasn't really his home on Privet Drive to the Burrow, which was hospitable even in troubling times. Harry's perceptions, of belonging, having a home that both accepted and wanted him, are all real.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny played 2-on-2 Quidditch during their last weeks of summer vacation: bad news came daily from Bill and Mr. Weasley, sometimes even before it was published in the wizarding world's newspaper, The Daily Prophet: even Harry's birthday was marred by bad news, this time from Remus Lupin, who had arrived at the Burrow looking more gaunt than usual, carrying news of more Dementor attacks. The next day, the forthcoming school year supply lists arrived. Also arriving was a surprise letter, congratulating Harry on being Gryffindor's new Quidditch captain. The 9 hands of Mrs. Weasley's clock remained set at "mortal peril." Even the goblins that guarded the gold had set up extra security measures. Although the Ministry of Magic had insisted on sending bodyguards and Aurors when the Weasleys, Harry and Hermione went shopping, Dumbledore had overruled them, thinking Hagrid would be enough security. They found Diagon Alley changed; most of its former glitter replaced with the Ministry's warnings accompanied by black-and-white photographs of Death Eaters known loose, like Bellatrix Lestrange.

They found the Leaky Caldron empty, although not boarded up like a number of other businesses. Book and robe purchases made, after an unpleasant encounter with Draco and Narcissa Malfoy in Madam Malkin's robe shop, they headed towards Fred and George Weasley's popular new Diagon Alley joke business, Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. Molly Weasley paled, seeing a sign in the store front window mocking "You-Know-Who" (Voldemort) with "U-No-Poo—the constipation sensation that's gripping the nation," fearing her children would surely be murdered in their sleep. Harry laughed. After Fred and George gave them the grand tour, which ended in the back room, the three friends slipped out and, under Harry's Invisibility Cloak, begin following Draco Malfoy, whose errand, they knew, could not be innocent. Hagrid and Mrs. Weasley noticed their absence, but, after their return, all three claimed to have been in the back room all the time and that Hagrid and Mrs. Weasley just hadn't looked hard enough.

Chapter 6 Analysis

News from the outside, often even before being published in The Daily Prophet, came daily from Mr. Weasley and his son, Bill. However, at the Burrow, Voldemort's shadow is experienced only as words read and news overheard. The three friends find that Diagon Alley has changed: businesses have been boarded up; warning signs and wanted posters are everywhere: Mrs. Weasley, perhaps, didn't chastise her sons for "U-No-Poo" since they were already in "mortal peril" according to her clock. The closest the three friends come to danger is when they begin following Draco, who is their age but a Slytherin.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Harry, Ron and Hermione discussed what they had seen and Harry realized that Draco Malfoy had become a Death Eater. At the robe shop, when Draco had yanked off his robe, his left arm had been exposed and it was branded with the Dark Mark. Harry pulled Mr. Weasley aside to state his concerns, but, before he could speak, Mr. Weasley said that, since he had raised Fred and George, he expected that Harry had something to say about where he, Ron and Hermione had been when they said they were in the store's back room: Harry, surprised that he knew, told him about Malfoy. As he boarded the train, Mrs. Weasley told him he would be spending Christmas at the Burrow.

After boarding the train at platform nine and three-quarters, Harry found a seat with Neville and Luna. Later, along with Neville, Harry was invited to one of Professor Slughorn's lunches. After his guests were seated, Slughorn had them introduce themselves: this was hard for Neville since his parents had been had been tortured to death by Bellatrix Lestrange. Slughorn introduced Harry as the person the Daily Prophet had taken to calling "the chosen one." There had, he continued, been rumors for years that Harry had great powers, because he had survived Voldemort's attack. Ginny and Neville, who had been with Harry, said there had been no prophecy. The newspaper was just mucking around.

After the lunch, Harry, instead of returning to seat, slipped on his Invisibility Cloak, curious to find out what happened in a cabin that had Draco Malfoy in it: invisible in his perch on a luggage rack, he overheard Draco interrogate the Slytherin who had been at Professor Slughorn's lunch: it had been for "well connected" students, whom Malfoy dismissed contemptuously, announcing, to collective surprise, that he might have better things to do than being a student at Hogwart's come next school year, over his mother's objections. After the train came to a stop, Draco Malfoy let the other Slytherins leave the car and then turned directly to where Harry stood, raised his wand and said "Petrificus Totalus," which had the desired effect of leaving Harry paralyzed. Before leaving the train, Malfoy stomped on Harry's face. That one, he said, was for his father, Lucius. He covered Harry with his own Invisibility Cloak, making sure to step on his fingers as he left.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Here, Harry's own Invisibility Cloak is used against him. No one can see anyone invisible, whether they need medical attention or not. Draco Malfoy acts in the shadows of his parents: He might find better things to do than be a Hogwart's student although his mother wanted him to continue his education; he stomps on the temporarily paralyzed Harry's face to retaliate for his own father, Lucius, being imprisoned in Azkaban. Voldemort's shadow is now being felt in the phenomenal or personally

experienced physical world: Harry's broken nose is in a different, an empirical realm that exists independently of the world of words about it.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Hating Draco Malfoy more than ever, Harry feared that no one would notice he was missing—but, in a flash of red light, Tonks appeared and yanked off his Invisibility Cloak. The train was beginning to move; they left quickly; Harry followed her, feeling both angry and embarrassed. Tonks fixed up Harry's nose: "Episkey" she said and his nose felt hot, then cold, then better. She sent a message ahead to Hagrid and suggested that she and Harry slip under his Invisibility Cloak and walk to Hogwart's. Tonks explained that she found him, because she knew he had the cloak and had not seen him leave the train. Although Tonks had sent a message to Hagrid, it was Snape who met them at Hogwart's: As Harry headed inside, hating Snape for, perhaps most of all, being glad that Sirius was dead. Snape, in a typical fit of pettiness, took 50 points from Gryffindor.

At the banquet held at the beginning of every school year, the three friends were surprised to hear that it would be Slughorn teaching Potions. Snape would teach Defense Against the Dark Arts. On their way to Gryffindor Tower, Harry explained to Ron and Hermione why he had been late. Then, all three found out why Hagrid had been late. He'd been visiting his half-brother, Grawp.

Chapter 8 Analysis

This is the night before the first day of the school year. Harry arrived in time for the traditional feast and Dumbledore's opening speech but late enough that Snape penalized Gryffindor, which was home to Harry and his friends during the school year. Harry took sardonic pleasure in Snape being the one to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts. Snape, the reader learned in the first chapter, is a Death Eater. He is also, the reader learns here, a petty man.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

After breakfast on the first day of the new school term, Professor McGonagall gave all the Gryffindors their new schedules: Their first class was Defense Against the Dark Arts: Professor Snape began by noting that "defense" against the "Dark Arts" was an ever-evolving field, because the Dark Arts were constantly changing. Snape had the students pair off: one would try to mentally (nonverbally) jinx his or her partner, who would try to repel the jinx. Professor Snape paired with Harry, who did repel him, but received detention nevertheless. Their second class was Potions: Professor Slughorn had them attempt to make the Draught of Living Death, noting that whoever did best would win enough Felix Felicis to last 12 hours. Harry won, following the instructions in the copy of the Advanced Potion Making textbook Professor Slughorn had assigned him. After winning, he looked at the book more closely; he read its inscription: "This Book is the Property of the Half-Blood Prince." He later received a note that his first lesson with Dumbledore would be Saturday.

Chapter 9 Analysis

"Half-Blood Prince" refers both to part of what's written on the textbook Harry was holding and to part of the title of the book the reader is holding. In the second chapter, Snape had stated he wasn't the Secret Keeper of the Order of the Phoenix, referring both to his own behavior and to the title of a previous book in the series. The background of this chapter is a familiar one, the first day of school: new schedules, courses, professors, assignments and homework. This is the sixth book in the series: Harry, Ron and Hermione are sixth-year students.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Harry went to his first private lesson with Dumbledore, wondering why and what. Upon his arrival, Dumbledore took out his Pensieve and explained that they needed to learn about Voldemort's childhood. They used Bob Ogden's memory to begin: they saw Bob Ogden talking to a mean man, Marvolo Gount, who was next to last of Salazaar Slytherin's line, about his son Morfin having broken the law by performing magic in front of Muggles. Marvolo's response was to berate his daughter, Merope, who, Dumbledore explained, later used a love potion on a Muggle named Tom Riddle and, after she became pregnant, she either quit giving it to him or it stopped working. Tom Riddle left Merope and never asked about their child.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Harry had experienced two kinds of homes, the cold and banal one of the Privet Drive Dursleys and the warmth of the Weasleys' home. The Burrow, the home in which Voldemort's mother and uncle were raised, was filthy. Their father was cruel.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Gryffindor had its Quidditch team tryouts: This year, the team consisted of Harry, who was the captain; Ron, Ginny, Katie Bell, Demelza Robins, Jimmy Peaks; and Ritchie Coote. After tryouts, Harry, Ron and Hermione walked down to visit Hagrid. He wasn't very happy when they arrived. Aragog, the gigantic talking spider who now lived in the Forbidden Forest, was ailing. By the time they left, he was considerably more cheerful. Back in Gryffindor, Demelza relayed the message to Harry that Snape wanted him to report to his office at 8:30 for detention, sorting out rotten from good flobberworms without protective gloves.

Chapter 11 Analysis

It doesn't take rocket science to realize that sorting out rotten from good flobberworms without protective gloves is a disgusting task. That Harry's successfully repelling Snape during the year's first course in Defense Against the Dark Arts resulted in such a task shows Snape, again, as, in addition to being a Death Eater, an unfair teacher.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Harry couldn't stop wondering where Dumbledore was. He had only seen him twice in the last few weeks. Hermione thought that his rarely appearing at meals any more meant he was leaving the school for whole days at a time; Harry was sure she was right. Harry wasn't sure whether the trips to Hogsmeade would be allowed anymore because of the increased security. He was glad when he learned that the trip had been scheduled for mid October.

He passed the time before breakfast one morning reading the Prince's annotated Advanced Potion Making textbook: He had tried some of the Prince's spells. Some were amusing and one he had found useful. Hermione alone questioned the source. Reading that morning, Harry came across a spell called "Levicorpus." He thought it as hard as he could and Ron ended up upside-down in midair. Harry paged through the book frantically, found the counter spell and thought "Liberacorpus" with all his might and Ron fell in a heap on his mattress. By the time Hermione arrived for breakfast, Ron thought it great fun. Ginny stopped by their table to give Harry a scroll from Dumbledore about his next lesson. When the three friends arrived at Hogsmeade, they saw Mundungus selling things that had belonged to Sirius: Harry was angry, but, before he became too angry, Tonks appeared, as usual, out of nowhere. The three friends later went into Three Broomsticks to dry off.

While there, they saw Katie Bell cursed: Harry sprinted to Hagrid for help and, after what could be done had been done, they went back to the castle, where Professor McGonagall asked what happened: Harry suspected Draco Malfoy. Ron and Hermione didn't believe him and Professor McGonagall noted that she had had Malfoy in detention at the time for not turning in homework two times in a row.

Chapter 12 Analysis

"Levicorpus" was an amusing spell Harry learned from the Prince. He had tried the spell on Ron without knowing its effect or "antidote." Hermione alone seemed concerned about safety. Harry had reasoned that security threats resulting from the war with Voldemort might preclude the annual trip to Hogsmeade and was glad to be shown wrong. Harry also reasoned that Draco Malfoy was responsible for Katie Bell being cursed. Whether he was or not, Katie Bell is the first student casualty of the school year, bringing the war with Voldemort closer to Hogwart's.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Katie was moved to St. Mungo's Hospital Magical Maladies and Injuries the next day. The whole school knew she had been cursed, although only a few thought she had been an accidental victim. Not knowing whether Dumbledore had returned to Hogwarts, Harry headed up to his office at the scheduled time.

After Harry talked about Sirius, Katie and Draco, Dumbledore reviewed the previous lesson: The handsome Muggle, Tom Riddle, had abandoned Merope, his witch wife, in London. Pregnant and in rags she sold Slytherin's necklace for a fraction of its value. Dumbledore then continued: This time, they entered Dumbledore's memory. They followed the younger Dumbledore; he met Mrs. Cole, the matron of an orphanage. They saw the younger Dumbledore asking Mrs. Cole about Tom Riddle: She remembered that Merope had stumbled in a few hours before his birth and died a few hours after, saying that her son should be named Tom Marvolo Riddle. Mrs. Cole, after Dumbledore had assured her he had reserved a spot for Tom at Hogwarts, mentioned that the other children were afraid of him, that there had been a number of incidents, some very nasty, over the years.

Dumbledore, after Mrs. Cole had introduced them and departed, noted that Tom Riddle was a handsome 11-year-old: Things immediately got off to a bad start, Riddle thinking Dumbledore had come to take him to an insane asylum. Tom was though quick to agree that he had special powers. He'd always known he was different, because he'd already used them to hurt other children at the orphanage. Dumbledore did not though know then that he was talking to the one who would become the greatest Dark Lord of all times.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Harry attributed Katie's being cursed to Draco Malfoy, whom he thinks has become a Death Eater. This underscores the pedagogical relevance of the subject matter of Dumbledore's lessons: Their goal was practical. Dumbledore's spell could only protect Harry until he came of age; Harry had need of learning how to better protect himself: The means to that end was knowledge, understanding of Voldemort's childhood. Dumbledore does not present those kinds of lessons that lead everyone to the same correct answer; his approach was to use reason and such clues as were available. He wanted, as does any teacher, to pass on what he knew to Harry. The previous lesson had introduced Voldemort's father, the handsome Muggle named Tom Riddle and one of his grandfathers, Marvolo Gount.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Harry told Ron and Hermione about his last lesson with Dumbledore while they were heading down to their Herbology class. Once inside the greenhouse, Hermione told them about Professor Slughorn's Christmas party, after which she and Ron began arguing. After Quidditch practice, heading back to Gryffindor Tower, Harry and Ron saw Dean Thomas, who had replaced Katie Bell on the Quidditch team and Ginny kissing. That made Ron angry. Ginny responded with an equally angry retort, that Ron's problem was he'd never kissed anyone.

At the next practice, Harry had to break up a fight between Ron and Jimmy Peakes. The next day, the day of the match with Slytherin, he made it look like he had spiked Ron's pumpkin juice with Felix Felicis. Ron played superbly and, with much of the other team gone, including the Slytherin captain, Draco Malfoy, Gryffindor won the match. After the game, Ron began seeing and being seen, kissing Lavender Brown. That made Hermione angry.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The human person is infinite in her and his capacity for love: The first time around is, though, often volatile, evidently as much for witches and wizards as for ordinary Muggles. Just so, we're always quick to defend those we love, even when it's only in our imaginations that they need help.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Harry was again the bridge between Ron and Hermione. Even talking to the two individually was difficult: Almost everywhere Ron went, Lavender went; the only place Harry could properly talk to Hermione was in the library in the evenings. One evening, Hermione warned him to be careful, because she had overheard girls in the bathroom talking about how to slip him a love potion. Harry later asked Luna if she wanted to go to the Christmas party with him as a friend. She, of course, said yes. Hermione asked Cormac McLaggon, just to annoy Ron. At the party, Harry noticed that Snape took Malfoy off to the side. He followed them sneakily and could scarcely believe what he heard. Snape was offering to help Malfoy and Malfoy refused that help.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The festive party atmosphere ended when Harry saw the two Death Eaters, Snape and Malfoy, go off together. The reader already knew that Snape, whom Harry detested, was a Death Eater. Now, midway through the book, Harry is no longer in the dark.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Ron and Harry were at the Burrow. It's Christmas break and they're talking about what Harry overheard as they sliced food by hand. They'll be able to use their wands when they turn 17. After presents and after Christmas lunch—they set in the living room, listening or ignoring the music, then talking: Remus Lupin assured Harry that the Prince's potion book was not his father's. Harry later discovered that the book was 50 years old, older than the cohort of Hogwarts's students that included his father and Lupin.

Lupin mentioned that he'd been working as a spy for Dumbledore, amongst the werewolves, who had sided with Voldemort. He blended in easily. His father had offended Fenrir Greyback and he had been bitten as a child. No one believed Harry that Snape was a Death Eater. Later, Percy and Rufus Scrimgeour, the Minister of Magic, arrived together. After being introduced, Harry and the new Minister had a private conversation. Harry had disagreed with Scrimgeour's predecessor, Cornelius Fudge. Fudge had acted like everything was under control even when people were being murdered under his nose. Scrimgeour, however, he thought, had imprisoned the wrong people. Although Harry thought Scrimgeour more clever than Fudge, he refused the suggestion that he make it appear like he was working for the Ministry.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Harry was consulted by the new Minister of Magic; Harry refused the Minister's request, turned his back on him and walked away. Harry, although only 16, chose not to be used by adults with whom he disagreed.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Harry, Ron and Ginny returned to Hogwart's by the Floo Network (the arrangements were made by the Ministry, to get the students back to Hogwart's, quickly and safely). Lavender Brown rushed up to see her "Won-Won;" while the two embraced, Harry told Hermione of his suspicions: She reminded him that they had earlier overheard Malfoy threaten another student by mentioning Greyback. Harry said this proved his point, that Malfoy was a Death Eater.

After the Apparition Lessons announcement was posted, the other sixth year students pestered Harry with questions about what it was like to Apparate. He had earlier participated in the "Side-Along Apparition." Harry escaped their questions to Dumbledore's third lesson, which further examined Voldemort's childhood. This time Dumbledore used two memories, not just one, as before: The first showed Morfin—Voldemort's uncle, brother to Merope Gount, his mother, living in the filthiest house Harry had ever seen. Harry also noticed that Morfin was wearing Marvolo's black-stoned ring.

Morfin had first mistaken his nephew for the Muggle, Tom Riddle, who now lived up the road. Realizing his mistake, Morfin damned his sister for having shamed the Gount family name, after which the room turned unnaturally dark. Dumbledore explained that, the next morning, Morfin had woken up lying on the floor of his hovel; the Muggle Tom Riddle and his parents were found dead from mysterious causes (the "Avada Kedavara" curse usually left no outward marks, an exception being the scar on Harry's forehead). Dumbledore then explained that Voldemort had stolen Morfin's wand, killed the Muggle Riddles, returned to the hovel and planted the evidence of Morfin's wand and a memory of the murders in Morfin's mind (Morfin died in Azkaban).

Dumbledore then went back to when the young Tom Marvolo Riddle had first arrived at Hogwart's. He was assigned to Slytherin in the Sorting and, as the years passed, he developed a following of other students. While he was still at Hogwart's, there were several nasty incidents without satisfactory explanation. In one, when the Chamber of Secrets was opened, a girl died and Hagrid was falsely accused. When Tom Marvolo Riddle realized that his father had not attended Hogwart's, that his powers came from the mother he despised for having shown Muggle weakness of dying, he painstakingly researched her family line: When he was 16, he had set off in search of his Gount relatives. The second memory, which showed Voldemort asking Slughorn about Horcruxes, had, Dumbledore told Harry, been modified by Professor Slughorn. For the first time ever, Dumbledore gave Harry homework, retrieving the rest of Slughorn's memory.



Chapter 17 Analysis

It was appropriate that young Tom Marvolo Riddle was assigned to Slytherin, because he was the last of Slytherin's line. Although Dumbledore's lessons have not concluded, it is obvious that Voldemort's childhood was, at best, a bitter experience. Voldemort's motivation is perhaps more comprehensible than those of the Death Eaters who flocked to his side: Dumbledore explained that they consisted of the weak seeking protection, the ambitious seeking glory and the cruel seeking more refined methods. Readers can't help comparing what they now know about Harry's and Voldemort's childhood: Neither was raised by his own parents. Harry's parents died when he was an infant, protecting him, because they loved him. Voldemort's father abandoned him and he could not forgive his mother for having died: He murdered his father and grandparents and gave his uncle the memory of the murders. After Morfin died imprisoned in Azkaban, Voldemort had no living relatives, making him the last of his line, a perverse immortality. "Tom Marvolo Riddle" is a cryptogram for "I am Lord Voldemort."



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Harry told both Ron and Hermione what Dumbledore wanted him to do. He used the Marauder's Map, unsuccessfully, to track Draco Malfoy. Neither Ron, Hermione, Mr. Weasley, nor Dumbledore believed his suspicions. After Potions, Harry asked Professor Slughorn about Horcruxes, with disastrous consequences. Hermione used the library, unsuccessfully, to search for information on Horcruxes. The sixth years had their first Apparition lessons, with some disasters like partially Apparated bodies. Ron, on his birthday, accidentally ate chocolate containing a love potion Romilda Vane had meant for Harry; Harry took Ron to Professor Slughorn, who, accidentally, poisoned him with a glass of mead: Harry saved him with a bezoar, or poison antidote.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Harry's first attempt at completing his homework assignment only angered Professor Slughorn, who took to avoiding Harry.. Hermione looked vainly for information about Horcruxes in the library. Harry took Ron to Slughorn for an antidote to Romilda Vane's love potion but ended up saving Ron himself.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Harry, the Weasley twins, Hagrid, Hermione, Hagrid and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley visited Ron in the hospital. Harry told Mr. Weasley what he knew about how Ron was poisoned. Hagrid mentioned having overheard Dumbledore and Snape arguing. Cormac McLaggon volunteered to be temporary Keeper until Ron got better: During the match against Hufflepuff, however, the two began arguing and Harry fell, cracking his skull and ending up in a hospital bed beside Ron, who was pleased that McLaggon had messed up so badly that Gryffindor lost the Quidditch match to Hufflepuff. From his hospital bedside, Harry summoned Kreacher, who showed up with Dobby, a free house-elf. Harry instructed them to follow Malfoy without letting him know he was being followed and not to make any contact with him. They do it.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Not even Harry Potter gets everything right. Or, perhaps, it is the nature of magic not to be able to prevent a free house-elf like Dobby from accompanying Kreacher.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

After he recovered from having been poisoned, Ron and Hermione became, once again, friends, even better ones than before. Harry had another lesson with Dumbledore, this time promising to concentrate harder on getting the true memory from Professor Slughorn. Harry summarized the last lesson, that Voldemort had killed his father and grandparents, made it look as though his uncle had committed the crime; and returned to Hogwart's and asked Slughorn about Horcruxes. The first memory they examined this time was that of a house-elf who worked for a rich witch named Hepzibah Smith: Tom Marvolo Riddle, wearing the black-stone ring, visited her on business. She showed him two treasures. The first, a cup, had belonged to Helga Hufflepuff. The second, a locket, had belonged to Slytherin. It was the locket Voldemort's mother, then pregnant, abandoned and penniless, had sold for a fraction of its value. After leaving the memory, Dumbledore explained that Hepzibah had died a few days after showing off her treasures: her house-elf was accused of poisoning her and her relatives discovered that her two biggest treasures were missing, as was Tom Marvolo Riddle. Dumbledore and Harry next saw Voldemort two years later, through Dumbledore's own memory, asking Dumbledore for a position at Hogwart's. Dumbledore turned him down and Voldemort left in a rage.

Chapter 20 Analysis

In addition to the series of nasty, unexplained incidents at both the orphanage and Hogwart's, Voldemort had already committed two sets of murders: In both cases, he planted false memories to make it look as though, first, his uncle and, second, Hepzibah's house-elf, were responsible. Dumbledore told Harry that he thought it important that Voldemort's motive for the first murders was revenge and for the second, greed; touched, perhaps, by Voldemort's feelings, what was left of them, about his mother and about Hogwart's.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Kreacher and Dobby reported back to Harry: Draco Malfoy had not broken any rules that Dobby could see; he had been spending a lot of time on the seventh floor, in the Room of Requirement. From Kreacher and Dobby, Harry also learned that Crabbe and Goyle were performing their customary lookout roles, this time though disguised as girls. Although Hermione urged Harry to focus on recovering Slughorn's memory, Harry was determined to get into the Room of Requirement, to see what it was like when Malfoy was in it.

After Ron and Hermione, along with the other sixth years who were or were nearly 17, went to Hogsmeade to practice Apparitions, Harry opened his pack, pulled out the Marauder's Map and put on his Invisibility Cloak. He sprinted up the stairs, "past the tapestry of Barnabus the Barny teaching trolls to do ballet," to the seventh floor and scared away Gregory Goyle by appearing unexpectedly behind him and telling him how lovely he looked. He was not able, however, to penetrate the room. On his way down the stairs, he saw Tonks, who had come to see Dumbledore. Both Ron and Hermione thought Tonks was acting strangely.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Both Kreacher and Dobby are elves. Harry inherited Kreacher from his godfather, Sirius Black. Harry, in an earlier book, had freed Dobby. Kreacher obeys Harry, because he must; Dobby obeys him, because he wants to do so.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Hedwig delivered a tearstained letter Hagrid had written to Harry, Ron and Hermione, telling them about Aragog's death, asking them to come to his burial. Hagrid had had Aragog since he was an egg. Hermione suggested that Harry try to get the memory from Professor Slughorn and Ron, that he use his lucky potion, or Felix Felicis. Hermione, of course, passed the Apparition test, but Ron failed. It was, Hermione said, a technicality: he had Apparated all but one eyebrow).

Professor Slughorn told Harry, Draco and Ernie to surprise him with a potion of their choice: Harry made a Euphoria potion, following directions in the Prince's book. After Potions, Harry took a mouthful of Felix Felicis and headed down to Hagrid's and, on his way, he saw Professor Slughorn: He suggested that Slughorn accompany him and Hagrid to the burial. Hagrid had already dug a pit beyond his pumpkin patch (he didn't dare have the funeral in the forest since it had only been Aragog who prevented the other giant spiders from eating him. After Aragog's funeral, Hagrid and Slughorn drank round after round, toasting everything from elf-made wine to Aragog's descendants. After Hagrid passed out, Harry convinced Slughorn to give him the part of his memory that was absent from the altered memory of Tom Marvolo Riddle asking Slughorn about Horcruxes. It was the one he had promised Dumbledore he would recover. Slughorn pulled out his wand, extracted and bottled the memory, gave it to Harry and then joined Hagrid in sleep.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Although not yet of age, Harry is becoming a name in the wizarding world: In one of the earliest chapters, Harry had persuaded Professor Slughorn to come out of retirement to teach; in another, the new Minister of Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour, had asked for his support; here Harry recommended that Professor Slughorn accompany them to Aragog's funeral and, after the funeral, finally persuaded Slughorn to give him the missing memory. Although Harry persuaded Slughorn to relinquish the memory, he used his judicious consumption of Felix Felicis, only a mouthful and Slughorn's consumption of elf-made wine to his advantage. Harry is obviously flourishing in the wizarding community, as Privet Drive offered him no opportunities, no recognition and no hope. He is also nearing the age when Dumbledore's spell can no longer protect him from Voldemort. Although he has himself only been beaten up, others of his fellow students have been cursed or killed by the Death Eaters. Not even Hogwarts is completely safe anymore. Harry Potter will come of age in troubling times.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

After making his way back to Gryffindor, Harry learned that Dumbledore had returned. He sprinted up the stairs to bring him the bottle containing the missing memory. They went into it and again saw the younger Slughorn sitting in a room surrounded by Hogwarts's students. Tom Marvolo Riddle asked whether one of the other professors was retiring; they heard Slughorn complementing Riddle on being more knowledgeable than most of the staff; they saw that, although not the oldest, the other students looked up to Tom Riddle; they then, again, heard Riddle ask Slughorn about Horcruxes. This time, they heard the part that had been missing, or Slughorn's response. They heard Slughorn say that Horcruxes were "very Dark stuff, very Dark indeed" and that the only way to create one was by splitting the soul (which was unnatural, evil): Riddle responded by asking "But how do you do it?" and Slughorn responded, by murder. Riddle next asked whether it would make one stronger if split into seven pieces: Dumbledore and Harry saw Slughorn trembling, as if regretting what he'd already said and seeing Riddle through new eyes. Dumbledore thanked Harry and noted that it confirmed a theory he'd been working on: At approximately the same age as Harry, Voldemort was thinking of ways to make himself immortal. No wizard before Voldemort had even conceived of doing more than tearing his soul in half.

Dumbledore continued that the diary in the Chamber of Secrets had itself been a Horcrux and was used as much as a weapon as it was as a safeguard: Voldemort wanted all to know he was Slytherin's heir and that he was careless about that part of his soul, because it was already preserved in a number of other Horcruxes. Dumbledore added that the increasingly inhuman form Voldemort took on over the years could only be explained by his soul having been mutilated far beyond what is ordinarily thought of as evil. Harry exclaimed that Voldemort must have made seven Horcruxes, but Dumbledore corrected him: The seventh part of his soul existed in the body he had regenerated after the long years of exile.

Dumbledore then reminded Harry that he had himself destroyed the first Horcrux. He then informed him, pointing to his blackened hand, that he had destroyed the second, or Marvolo's ring, leaving four. Two of these were undoubtedly Salazar Slytherin's locket and Helga Hufflepuff's cup; the other two, Dumbledore speculated, probably had something to do with Gryffindor and Ravenclaw (reasoning that four objects representing Hogwarts' four founding figures would appeal to Voldemort). Dumbledore did not think that Voldemort was capable of experiencing loss, as when the diary was destroyed, although his fury at Lucius Malfoy for its loss was such that Lucius was probably glad to have the security of Azkaban between himself and his master's wrath. Dumbledore explained to Harry that he had been leaving Hogwarts to search for Horcruxes and believed he was getting close to the third. Harry felt more than proud when Dumbledore said he'd earned the privilege of going with him to destroy the third of Voldemort's Horcruxes. As to the prophecy, Harry felt let down when Dumbledore



reminded him that it had only said that he had a power the Dark Lord did not. He had the capacity for love.

Chapter 23 Analysis

The prophecy was not true in the ways Harry had thought. It was self-fulfilling since it was something that Voldemort believed and was, as a result, making happen: Harry would feel the same about Voldemort, with or without a prophecy and, although he was free to turn away, he could not because Voldemort was hunting him. It was Voldemort's fear that was making the prophecy come true.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Hermione and Ron were, Harry thought, properly impressed when he described his most recent lesson with Dumbledore the following morning. Later, using the Marauder's Map, he discovered Malfoy in a restroom—which Moaning Myrtle was currently haunting—crying that he could not do it and that, if he did not do it soon, he would be killed, as would his parents. When Malfoy looked up, he saw Harry staring. The two immediately pulled their wands and the curses and hexes began ricocheting off the bathroom walls. Harry used "Sectumsempra" against Malfoy, who fell, bleeding heavily, to the floor.

Snape came to his rescue and, ten minutes later, returned for Harry, whom he'd commanded to wait. After Snape demanded to see all of Harry's textbooks, Harry sprinted back to Gryffindor and asked Ron for his copy of the potions textbook. On the way back to Snape, Harry wondered where he could hide the Prince's book, the Room of Requirement, which he was finally able to enter. Harry found an enormous room full of confiscated items; such as, thousands of books and spoiled potions by the ton. He hid the book inside a cabinet, which he carefully marked. He presented Ron's textbook to Snape, who noticed "Roonil Wazlib" written inside it. Harry said that was his nickname. One consequence was that Harry was to have detention every Saturday with Snape until the end of the term. That meant he could not play in the last Quidditch match of the year: Nevertheless, Gryffindor beat Ravenclaw by 310 points, after which Ginny hugged Harry and he kissed her.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Here, it is Harry who, while provoked, erred by, as he had done earlier with Ron, performing a spell whose effects he did not understand. Other than that, school spirits ran high. Gryffindor won the championship and Harry, seemingly with Ron's blessing, embraced Ginny. The author said they'd talk about Quidditch if they found the time.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Ginny, reading about the mounting war casualties in *The Daily Prophet*, told Harry, Ron and Hermione that Romilda Vane had so little to do that she'd asked her whether it was true that Harry had a hippogriff tattooed on his chest. She'd answered, no, that it was a Hungarian Horntail. Hermione showed Harry a picture of a witch named Eileen Prince, whom she suspected was the "Half-Blood Prince." On his way to Dumbledore's office, Harry heard Professor Trelawney scream. He sprinted to her and asked if she had been trying to get into the Room of Requirement. After he learned that a now jubilant Malfoy had repelled her from the room, after she had entered to dispose of some empty sherry bottles, he thought she should tell Dumbledore.

On their way to his office, she mentioned that it was Snape who had overheard the prophecy she had uttered so long ago. Harry reeled, knowing now how Voldemort had heard of the prophecy. He ran the rest of the way to Dumbledore, who told him, yes, he had promised and Harry could come (but only if he wished). It took Harry a few minutes to understand that Dumbledore thought he'd located the third Horcrux. Harry wanted to vent his anger at Dumbledore for allowing Snape, who had been responsible for his mother's and father's deaths, to teach at Hogwarts. He also wanted to destroy the Horcrux.

In the end he agreed to obey all of Dumbledore's commands. Before leaving, he ran back to Gryffindor, grabbed his Invisibility Cloak and gave the Marauder's Map and his Felix Felicis to Ron and Hermione, whom he told to watch out for Draco. Dumbledore had Harry put on his Invisibility Cloak and the two apparate to the seaside (this time, Harry's feeling of being squeezed out a tube was followed by deep breaths of salty air).

Chapter 25 Analysis

Albus Dumbledore tells Harry Potter that he completely trusts Severus Snape. Harry could not disagree with Headmaster Dumbledore more: It was Professor Snape who had overheard Professor Trelawney's prophecy and informed the Dark Lord, which resulted in his parents being murdered.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Harry and Dumbledore reached a cliff far above the waves, far too remote for any but the best muggle mountaineers to reach. Harry and Dumbledore slowly climbed up the steep cliff. They followed a narrow tunnel and found the antechamber to a deep cave. Dumbledore knew it was the one they sought, because it had, he said "known magic." He gave the door blood to gain entrance to the main cave (Dumbledore was surprised by this primitive touch). Within the cave, they found a lake; within the lake was an island, which was where Dumbledore thought they would find the Horcrux. Dumbledore found them a boat and reassured Harry, who was frightened by the bodies of the Inferi floating in the lake.

When they reached the island, he reminded Harry not to touch the water. He then saw something which troubled him more than blood and bodies. They had found the Horcrux but could not get to it through the potion protecting it, which Dumbledore finally concluded, he must drink to dispose of. Although Harry feared drinking the potion would kill Dumbledore, he was reassured that Lord Voldemort would not want someone who had penetrated so deeply into his defenses to die immediately and Voldemort believed he alone knows about the Horcruxes. Dumbledore instructed Harry to make sure that he, Dumbledore, drank the entire potion; he also said that he anticipated that the potion would in some way incapacitate him, so the rest would be up to Harry.

By the fourth goblet, Dumbledore was doubled over, begging not to be made to drink more. Harry, although grimacing and hating himself, made him drink more. Dumbledore had downed the tenth goblet and Harry prepared to retrieve another, when he collapsed. Harry threw him over his shoulders and was reassured by a small moan from Dumbledore, who needed water. The only way Harry could get him water was, however, by dipping the goblet into the icy lake water: He could only splash some water on Dumbledore, because one of the Inferi had taken hold of his hand and others were climbing onto the rock: "Petrificus Totalus!," "Impedimenta! Incarcerous!," "Sectumsempra! SPECTRUMSEMPRA!" yelled Harry. Nothing worked and he felt the cold hands dragging him into the water from which he would not return.

Suddenly, Dumbledore was on his feet, pale as any of the bodies but, with fire in his eyes, he built a ring of fire around the Inferi, who dropped Harry. Dumbledore grabbed the locket and the two made it back to shore, Dumbledore considerably weakened. The two fled, Dumbledore leaning on Harry, making it back around the lake and finally onto the outside surface of the cliff. Harry, although not old enough to Apparate with a license, got them back to Hogsmeade.



Chapter 26 Analysis

This is a cave that the young orphan Tom Marvolo Riddle had visited before Dumbledore told him he was wizard. If Riddle shared the cave with anyone, it was only to terrorize them. Dumbledore thought the third Horcrux was in the cave.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Harry, although not yet 17 and not able to Apparate legally, got Dumbledore back to Hogsmeade: Seeing the Dark Mark in the sky above Hogwart's, a green skull with a serpent tongue, invigorated Dumbledore. Since the Dark Mark loomed directly over the Astronomy Tower, that is where they landed. Harry, as ordered, was under his Invisibility Cloak. Malfoy greeted Dumbledore, but he couldn't see Harry, who, besides being invisible, had been immobilized by Dumbledore when they landed. Dumbledore reasoned with Draco to come back to the good side; Draco vacillated. Several Death Eaters, including Greyback, who made it past the fighting below, urged the still unmoving Draco forward. Snape appeared and, as Dumbledore said "please, Severus," Snape aimed his wand at Dumbledore's chest. He uttered "Avada Kedevera!," and blew Dumbledore into midair, then backwards and then off the Tower. Harry screamed.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The Death Eaters have breached Hogwart's, leaving their signature mark: Dumbledore, greatly weakened by drinking the potion protecting the Horcrux in the cave, is revived by the sight. He had the prescience or foresight to order Harry under his Invisibility Cloak. Dumbledore also immobilized him immediately after they landed in the Astronomy Tower. Harry's screams were though audible, although Dumbledore could not hear them.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Everybody is fighting the Death Eaters. The Order of the Phoenix is there fighting; Ginny is fighting; Harry, no longer under Dumbledore's paralysis spell, is there, fighting, along with Professor McGonagall, Remus Lupin and Tonks. Harry stops Greyback and pursues Malfoy and the other Death Eaters, trying repeatedly, unsuccessfully, to curse Snape, who mocks him. Along with Draco Malfoy, Snape gets away. After losing the chase, Harry helps Hagrid put out the fire that is burning his cabin and tells him about Dumbledore: Hagrid does not believe him.

As they walked up the grounds, they passed many Hogwart's students walking up to the Astronomy Tower, then Hagrid believed him. It was there that Harry realized, after reading a letter to Voldemort, that Dumbledore had needlessly weakened himself. The locket they had found, for which they had paid such a steep price, was not a real Horcrux. The real one had been taken and a fake one put in its place by someone whose initials appeared to be "R. . ." He was an enemy of Voldemort's who, although in his final days, looked forward to Voldemort again becoming mortal.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Neither Ron, Hermione, Mr. Weasley nor Dumbledore had believed Harry that Snape and Draco were Death Eaters. Here, Hagrid does not, initially, believe him that Dumbledore was dead. Harry alone realizes that Dumbledore died, seemingly for nothing.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

Ginny lead Harry to the hospital wing, where the others had gathered. He told them that Dumbledore was dead and found out that Bill had been maimed by Greyback, whom Harry had killed in the fight. Mrs. Weasley arrived, sobbing over her son's mutilated face, applying ointment, which Fleur took from her. What did Mrs. Weasley think; that she, Fleur, had loved Bill for his appearance? Fleur said his scars would only make people know her husband a brave man. Tonks pointed out that the situation between Fleur and Bill was similar to that between her and Lupin. McGonagall took Harry to Dumbledore's office, or, rather, McGonagall's office. She is now headmistress of Hogwart's. It was decided that the heads of Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin would be sent for to discuss closing the school. Harry and Hagrid insisted that Dumbledore's wishes, of being buried on the school grounds, be honored and that the students all be allowed to attend his funeral to pay their respects. McGonagall gave Harry permission to leave hastily, because the Ministry was on its way. Harry went back to Gryffindor Tower to update Ron and Hermione.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Fleur surprised the Weasleys by showing she truly loved Bill. Professor McGonagall is now headmistress of Hogwart's. In her office, along with the other portraits of previous headmasters and headmistresses was a new one, Dumbledore's.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Hermione told Harry that Snape was the son of a witch named Eileen Prince, whom she had earlier discovered in the library archives and the Muggle she married. Snape was, in two ways, a "Half-Blood Prince." Many people attended Dumbledore's funeral: witches and wizards, humans—although not the Prime Minister of the Muggles—Grawp, the merpeople and centaurs, all come to pay tribute. Many cried. All are devastated. During the funeral, Harry remembered that Dumbledore had repeatedly insisted that it was essential to always keep on fighting. As Dumbledore's funeral pyre ignited, Harry thought he saw a phoenix flying off into the blue sky.

Before the train arrived to take them from Hogwart's, Harry broke up with Ginny. She understood the struggle ahead and that he was doing it because he cared about her.. Harry decided to stay at Privet Drive for a little while, because Dumbledore had wanted him to. After that, he'd go to Godric's Hollow and his parents' graves. After that comes the quest; finding and destroying the remainder of Voldemort's Horcruxes. He will not be returning to Hogwart's. Hermione tells Harry that wherever he goes, she and Ron will also go.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Perhaps Dumbledore wanted Harry to stay with the Dursleys for a little while longer so he could compare his own experiences growing up with those of Voldemort: It may be that only self-insight will enable Harry Potter to conquer Voldemort. It may be that Harry can use the little time he has remaining under Dumbledore's protective spell to strengthen himself. It may be that Harry wanted to go back there, because he knew it was a place where he could be alone to mourn Dumbledore (and, it may be that, although he now plans to go back to Privet Drive, that's not what's really going to happen). What is clear is that Harry has lost, or soon will loose, such protection as he had. His parents, his godfather and Dumbledore are dead. His three friends, though, have become his comrades-in-arms.



Characters

Prime Minister of Muggles

The Prime Minister was an anonymous politician who was disquieted when, his first night in office, Cornelius Fudge, then the Minister of Magic, had appeared in a sparkle of green fire. He is informed that he shouldn't worry, because the Ministry took complete jurisdiction for the entire wizarding community.

Harry Potter

The wizarding world's newspaper, The Daily Prophet, had taken to calling this 16-year-old wizard "the chosen one," because of a prophecy made long ago and carried by Snape to his master, that either he or Voldemort would survive. Harry's parents had died saving him from Voldemort's first attack; Dumbledore had placed Harry under a protective spell, which would last until he came of age at 17, involving the blood of a mother's sister and placed Harry in a basket on the Dursley's front porch.

As the novel begins, Harry is on summer vacation before his sixth year at Hogwart's. Dumbledore arrived to personally escort him to the Burrow, the Weasley's home, where he was wanted and welcomed. Harry was named captain of Gryffindor's Quidditch team, although he only played in the first game, against Slytherin.

Although not yet able to do so legally, Harry could and did Apparate, or move from one geographical coordinate to another, without a license. He even got the weakened Dumbledore back to Hogsmeade.

Academically, on his O. . . or school report cards, Harry got an "O" for "outstanding" last year's course in Defense Against the Dark Arts, but a low grade in the History of Magic. This school year, he took private lessons with Dumbledore. The lessons used different memories to learn what they could about Voldemort's childhood. By chance, Harry was assigned a used copy of the Advanced Potions Making textbook that had belonged to the "Half Blood Prince." Although Professor Slughorn attributed the many excellent potions Harry brewed during the school year to his mother's genes, Harry's success came from following the instructions the Prince had written in the textbook's margins. Harry does not, as the novel concludes, plan on returning to Hogwart's to complete his education: He will begin the search for the rest of Voldemort's Horcruxes. Hermione tells him that, wherever he is, she and Ron will also be.

Ron Weasley

Ron is Harry's best friend and also on Gryffindor's Quidditch team. Ron has many older brothers and one younger sister, Ginny is the first Weasley daughter in generations. Perhaps because he is overprotective, or perhaps because, as she retorts, he's never



kissed anyone himself, Ron makes a scene when he sees Ginny kissing another boy. After his subsequent relationship with Lavender Brown, he gives his blessing for Harry to go out with Ginny. On his birthday, Ron accidentally ate the love potion Romilda Vane had intended for Harry. After recovering and breaking up with Lavender, he and Hermione became special friends.

Ron was usually good humored. He is not the best student: He did not pass his Apparition test. Hermione said it was a technicality: He'd only left an eyebrow behind. He also received no "O"s on his previous year's report card, but his mother congratulated him for doing better than his older brothers Fred and George combined. They had dropped out of Hogwart's in an earlier novel and established their own Diagon Alley amusement business, Weasleys' Wizards Wheezes.

Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Molly Weasley

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley are Ron and Ginny's parents. Mr. Weasley works for the Ministry of Magic and was recently appointed to a position created in response to the escalating war, head of the new Office for the Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects; Mrs. Weasley has a clock with 9 hands, one for each member of her family, all of which have been set on "mortal peril" since Voldemort's return. Their family includes, in addition to Ron and Ginny and Fred and George; Percy, who followed his father's path into the Ministry and was scarcely on speaking terms with his parents; and Bill, who was engaged to marry Fleur, who said, after he was maimed and forever scarred by Greyback, that her husband's scars showed how brave he was.

Hermione Granger

Hermione and Harry remain good friends throughout. She and Ron are initially good friends, then not speaking to each other and then more than just friends. She also is also a Gryffindor sixth year student. She would rather do homework than be joking around and, although she played informal backyard 2-on-2 Quidditch, she does not understand the formal Quidditch rules. She knows a lot from reading books and is the smartest student of their age group. It is not surprising that she has more "O"s on her O. . . than any other student. Draco Malfoy calls her a "mudblood," because she is the daughter of two dentists. It is perhaps because of this that she tries harder. She passed her Apparition test, but Ron does not.

In this novel, for the very first time, the Hogwart's Library failed to answer one of her questions. She could not the information about Horcruxes that she sought. She does, though, find a school record about an Eileen Prince, a witch who married a Muggle and became the mother of the "Half-Blood Prince," or Snape). As the novel concludes, she proclaims herself and Ron as Harry's comrades-in-arms.



Draco Malfoy

Draco is Harry's age, a pale youth with white-blond hair and a pointed face. He is a pure blood from an arrogant family. One of Harry's archenemies, he is intelligent but mean. He is also a Death Eater charged by Voldemort to kill Dumbledore. He is the son of two Death Eaters, Narcissa and Lucius and the nephew of another, Bellatrix Lestrange. Narcissa fears that the Dark Lord wants her son dead.

Draco is a Slytherin and captain of its Quidditch team. His allies include Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle. Draco thinks Snape wants to take away his glory and so refuses his offers and, on his own, figures out a way for other Death Eaters to enter Hogwarts through a cabinet in the Room of Requirement. When Draco confronts the disarmed and weakened Dumbledore, he waivers, cannot bring himself to kill Dumbledore. Snape, who later came rushing up the stairs of the Astronomy Tower, lost no time in raising his wand and blasting Dumbledore off the tower. Draco escapes with Snape and most of the other Death Eaters.

Professor Albus Dumbledore

Professor Dumbledore is and has been headmaster of Hogwarts for many years, even before Voldemort's birth. He is one of the greatest wizards of his time. He's very fond of Harry and had delivered him, as an infant, to the Privet Drive Dursleys. He had protected Harry with a spell that could only last until he came of age at 17. When Harry was 16, he personally returned to take him back to his rightful place in the wizarding world. During this book's school year, he gave Harry private lessons, using different memories to investigate Voldemort's childhood.

Dumbledore dies, at the hand of someone he said he trusted, Severus Snape. His funeral is attended by many from many lands, including the merpeople and the centaurs. During the funeral, Harry remembers that Dumbledore repeatedly said it was essential to keep trying and, as his funeral pyre ignites, Harry thinks he sees a Phoenix flying away across the blue sky. After Dumbledore's death, his portrait is added to those of earlier Hogwarts headmasters and headmistresses.

Professor Sybill Trelawney

Professor Trelawney made the prophecy that Voldemort interpreted as meaning that either he or Harry Potter alone would survive.

Professor McGonagall

Professor McGonagall is the head of the Gryffindor household. She fights when the Death Eaters invade Hogwarts. After Dumbledore's death, she became headmistress of Hogwarts.



Professor Horace Slughorn

Professor Slughorn is an old colleague of Dumbledore's whom Harry persuaded to teach at Hogwart's. The used Advanced Potions textbook he assigned to Harry had belonged to someone who called himself the Half-Blood Prince. Harry, following the Prince's handwritten directions, makes one excellent potion after another, Slughorn attributes to his mother's genes. Professor Slughorn enjoyed good elf-made wine, candied pineapple and the soirees he held for special students, which included in the current novel, Harry; and had earlier included his mother, Lily and, before that, Tom Marvolo Riddle. After Aragog's funeral, Harry retrieved the missing memory, which showed Slughorn telling Riddle that Horcruxes were a dark and unnatural magic that involved splitting the soul.

Rufus Scrimgeour

Scrimgeour is the new Minister of Magic. Harry disagrees with some of the recent positions taken by the Ministry. In particular, he imprisons the wrong people.

Rubeus Hagrid

Hagrid was once a student at Hogwart's. He is now both one of its teachers and its gamekeeper. Hagrid was in touch with the nonacademic parts of the wizarding community, both higher life forms like centaurs and lower ones like flobberworms. Hagrid was devastated when Aragog, the giant talking spider he had raised since it was an egg, died: He had the burial just beyond his pumpkin patch (he didn't dare have it in the Forbidden Forest, because it had only been Aragog who prevented the other giant talking spiders from eating him). He was consoled by Slughorn's silver-tongued graveside eulogy and lots of elf-made wine.

Sirius Black

Sirius Black was Harry's godfather. The lives of both Sirius and his brother, Regulus, were sucked out by Death Eaters. Harry, Sirius' sole beneficiary, inherited Number 12 Grimmauld Place and its house-elf, Kreacher, who must obey Harry's commands.

Nymphadora Tonks

Tonks blames herself for her cousin Sirius' death. If she had killed Bellatrix, she could not have killed Sirius. Since Tonks can change many outward aspects of her appearance, it is natural that she was working security out of Hogsmeade. She joins the fight against the Death Eaters after Dumbledore's death.



Professor Severus Snape

Professor Snape taught Defense Against the Dark Arts at Hogwart's and was trusted by Dumbledore. He is really a Death Eater. In addition to being evil, he is mean and unfair in ordinary ways, capriciously subtracting points from Gryffindor and arbitrarily placing Harry under detention. Snape, the son of a witch named Prince and a Muggle, is the Half-Blood Prince. Snape killed Dumbledore and escaped, along with Draco Malfoy: Snape mocks Harry's repeated attempts to curse him.

Voldemort

When the novel begins, some are still in denial that Voldemort has returned: They refer to him as "You Know Who" and "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named." There is though no point in prohibiting the speaking of his name after increasing numbers of casualties made the Ministry of Magic conclude it needed to implement a public education program: After many years of exile, Voldemort has returned in his regenerated body. Others, like the Death Eaters and werewolves, including Fenrir Greyback, who had a taste for children, are joining his side. Voldemort had interpreted the prophecy to mean that not both he and Harry Potter could live. He fears it and tried to kill Harry as an infant. Harry's parents died saving him.

There are only two sides in the wizarding world: for or against Voldemort. Voldemort has tasked Draco Malfoy with killing Dumbledore, who has been teaching Harry what he knew about Voldemort's childhood. His witch mother, Merop Gount, who died shortly after his birth, named him Tom Marvolo Riddle; his father, a handsome Muggle, abandoned his mother before he was born. Tom Riddle grew up in an orphanage and, although he didn't know he was a wizard until Dumbledore invited him to attend Hogwart's, he had already used magic to steal and terrorize his fellow orphans.

When he arrived at Hogwart's, the Sorting assigned him to Slytherin. It was fitting, since, on his mother's side, he was one of the last of Slytherin's line. Although there were a few nasty unexplained events, Riddle did well academically and was looked up to by other students: Riddle was eager to learn what Hogwart's had to offer. He discovered that he had inherited his special powers from his mother, whom he could not forgive for dying.

In one of their private lessons, Dumbledore and Harry examine a memory which showed a 16-year-old Riddle arriving to visit his mother's brother, Morfin. After Morfin damned his dead sister for dishonoring the family name, the room turned unnaturally dark (it was perhaps then that Riddle became Voldemort: "Tom Marvolo Riddle" is a cryptogram for "I am Lord Voldemort." The next morning, Morfin awoke, his wand placed by his side, with a memory of having murdered the Riddles. It was Voldemort who killed them and placed the memory in his uncle's mind. After Morfin died in Azkaban, Voldemort became the last of Slytherin's line).



At Harry's age, Voldemort was thinking about immortality. He had made six Horcruxes and the seventh part of his soul resided in his regenerated body. Two had already been destroyed and Dumbledore suspected, based on the evidence, that the other four had something to do with Hogwart's' four schools. Dumbledore thought that a piece of Voldemort's soul lay in a cave on a cliff by the sea. What Dumbledore and Harry found, however, was a fake locket, not Slytherin's. Inside the locket was a note from someone whose initials appeared to be "R. . .," who wanted Voldemort to know that he had stolen and destroyed the Horcrux and, although himself in his final days, looked forward to the day when Voldemort again became mortal.



Objects/Places

Azkaban

Azkaban is the wizarding world's prison. One of its current inmates is Lucius Malfoy, Draco's father.

Privet Drive

Privet Drive is where Dumbledore brought the infant Harry after Voldemort had killed his parents. Part of the protective spell under which Dumbledore had placed Harry involved the blood of a mother's sister. The Dursleys do not treat Harry well. Their home is a respectable but hollow home, where Harry is blamed for everything and given credit for nothing). Privet Drive is more like a prison with a respectable face than a home to Harry. It has, nevertheless, protected him from Voldemort these many years. When Dumbledore drops by to escort Harry back to the wizarding world, he tells the Dursleys that Harry will stay with them one last time.

The Burrow.

The Burrow is the home of the Weasleys. Even with much stricter security, it is a place where children play. The Burrow is distinguished less by its and physical features and more by its inhabitants. Dumbledore dropped Harry off at the Burrow to spend the end of his summer vacation among friends.

Diagon Alley

Diagon Alley is in London, a place for purchasing school supplies; such as, books, robes, wands and the usual. Diagon Alley also contains public establishments like the Leaky Cauldron, whose atmosphere is much more subdued than it had been the previous year, another reflection of the war with Voldemort. Diagon Alley is also home to Fred and George Weasleys' business: Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. Mrs. Weasley thinks her sons have gone too far with their ad for "U-No-Poo—the constipation sensation that's gripping the nation." Romilda Vane probably purchased the love potion she intended for Harry here.

Hogsmeade

Hogsmeade is one of the few European wizarding communities. Hogsmeade is also where Hogwart's students got on and off the Hogwart's train. Hogsmeade was also the school break destination of choice for Hogwart's students (third year students and older were allowed to go, provided they had the necessary permissions): during this school



year's first outing, Quidditch team member Katie Bell was cursed. After Apparating from the Cave back to Hogsmeade, Harry and Dumbledore saw the Dark Mark, a green skull with a serpent tongue left by Death Eaters after they had entered a building or made a kill, over Hogwarts.

Hogwart's Academy for Witchcraft and Wizardry

Hogwart's is the academic side of the wizarding world, a place where the young learn how to apply their special powers. Hogwart's is open during the standard school year and closed during the summer. It has been under Dumbledore's leadership since before Voldemort was born. The students and faculty lived in four different houses: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin: both Gryffindor and Ravenclaw are towers. The highest part of the castle was the Astronomy Tower.

Gryffindor and Slytherin were named after legendary heroes and Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw, after legendary heroines. Students and faculty share the great dining hall—from which Dumbledore is conspicuously absent in this novel—classrooms and the surrounding grounds, including the Quidditch pitch. Harry, Ron and Hermione are Gryffindors; Draco Malfoy is a Slytherin, as had been Tom Riddle. The heads of Gryffindor and Slytherin are McGonagall and Snape.

Dumbledore's Office

The entrance to his office was blocked by a single Gargoyle, beyond which was a moving stone spiral staircase. The door to his office had a brass knocker. On the walls were portraits of former Hogwart's headmasters and headmistresses (who advised Dumbledore, whether he wanted them to or not). His office was circular and, on his perch behind the door, stood Dumbledore's Phoenix, Fawkes. The room was filled with delicate silver instruments. Inside one of its cabinets was a shallow bowl with strange markings around its rim: the Pensieve (which Dumbledore used to examine different memories shedding light on Voldemort's youth).

The Room of Requirement

Draco Malfoy devised a way for other Death Eaters to enter Hogwart's through a cabinet in this room. Harry was unable to penetrate the room until he was looking for a place to hide the Prince's annotated potions textbook from Snape.

Hogwart's Grounds

The Hogwart's grounds consist of the area around Hogwart's, between the castle and the Forbidden Forest. Hagrid's cabin is on the edge of the grounds.



Snape's House

Snape lives on a cobble stoned, dilapidated looking street in a brick house, which Death Eater Bellatrix Lestrange contemptuously called a "Muggle dunghole."

The Cave

The cave is by the sea, on a cliff—where a piece of Voldemort's soul was supposed to lay. Although Dumbledore had no more trouble Apparating there than any other place on the planet, the elevation of the cave was such that only the most skilled Muggle mountaineers could reach it. Entrance to the main chamber in the cave was blocked by a door which only opened when given blood.

Within the cave, Dumbledore and Harry found a lake and an island, which is where Dumbledore thought they would find the third Horcrux. They find it, but it is protected by a potion, which Dumbledore concludes he must drink. He collapsed after the tenth goblet. Harry later realizes that they had not retrieved the real Horcrux: Someone else had already stolen it. Harry found a note signed only with the initials "R. . .," which said he planned to destroy the Horcrux, wanted Voldemort to know who had stolen it and, most of all, hoped for Voldemort's again becoming mortal.

Horcruxes

A Horcrux is the product of an evil, unnatural deed, like murder, that results in the soul being split, although no wizard had ever done more than split his soul in half, Dumbledore thinks Voldemort created six Horcruxes (the seventh part of his soul resides in the body he regenerated after returning from exile). The first two are the diary and Marvolo's ring. Both have already been destroyed. Dumbledore thinks the remaining four each have something to do with Hogwart's: Harry won't return to Hogwart's for his seventh year but will instead begin looking for the other Horcruxes.



Themes

Home, Family

The author invites comparisons between five different homes or families: the Malfoys, the Dursleys, the Potters (Harry's parents, now dead), the Weasleys—and Voldemort's parents, also now dead, the Gounts and the Riddles.

The Malfoys are an old aristocratic wizarding family, although the wizarding world does not have formal royalty. Although they are all Death Eaters, they act like a family. Infamous Death Eater, Bellatrix Lestrange fears for her sister Narcissa when she speaks aloud what Voldemort wants kept private. Narcissa will not be silent, because she fears for her son Draco's life. Similarly, he fears for his parents' lives, should he fail. Narcissa also wants her son to finish his education.

The Dursleys of Privet Drive did give Harry a room and enough food not to starve; however, unlike Narcissa Malfoy, one cannot imagine Harry's Aunt Petunia interceding for him under any circumstances. Harry was not physically abused by the Dursleys, but he was emotionally abused.

Harry's parents died trying to save their son. Harry knows that his mother Lily—her husband already dead—had known she could escape by abandoning him, but she chose not to. Although she was a well-versed witch, one of Slughorn's best students, she knew she was no match for Voldemort.

The Weasley's home is called the Burrow. It is a nurturing place where children grow and thrive. The Weasleys are a functional family. The Weasleys are a two-parent household. Only a few of their children; including Ginny, Ron, Fred, George, Percy and Bill, are in this novel. Hogwarts itself is also a home environment, providing its students with routine in the form of the familiar rhythms of any school year anywhere: buying school supplies, being with peers and friends, attending classes, doing homework and turning in assignments.

Dumbledore wonders whether Hogwarts was the closest to a true home that the young Voldemort ever experienced. Voldemort's mother, the witch Merope Gount, had an unhappy childhood in the home of her father, Marvolo. She used a love potion on a handsome Muggle named Tom Riddle, who, whether she stopped administering the potion or it ceased being effective—abandoned her and never inquired about their child. Merope named her son Tom Marvolo Riddle and died shortly after his birth. The orphaned child grew up terrorizing his fellow orphans.

After he began attending Hogwarts, there were no outward signs of trouble; however, when he was 16—after hearing his uncle, Morfin, damn his mother for dishonoring the family name, Tom Marvolo Riddle murdered his father and grandparents and gave his



uncle the memory of the crime. When Morfin died in Azkaban, Voldemort became the last of his line, Slytherin's heir.

The author invites comparisons between these families, in particular Harry's and Voldemort's childhood: their parents both died when they were infants; one grew up in a loveless home and the other in an orphanage; neither knew they were wizards until they were invited to attend Hogwart's. Dumbledore himself tells Harry that it is his capacity for love that distinguishes him from Voldemort.

Good, Bad, and Evil

Good comes in different forms, one being knowledge. Hogwart's is an academic institution whose goal is to teach successive generations of students. Additionally, Dumbledore knows that Harry needs information: His protective spell will soon lose its effectiveness. Good also comes in the form of companionship—the friendship between Harry, Ron and Hermione and from having a home to return to during school breaks and summer vacations, like the Weasleys' home, the aptly named Burrow.

Good also comes from love, which the author mocks by having Ron accidentally eat the chocolate containing the love potion that Romilda Vane had meant for Harry. The capacity for love though, Dumbledore says, is what marks Harry special. Love is, although a word, something that can only be actualized behaviorally, by deed. Harry's mother Lily, for example, knew she could have saved herself, but instead chose to die protecting her son. Love though does not always lead to good, at least in the short term. The teenage characters in the book: Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny; all have their awkward and occasionally furious moments. Love is also often the most mundane of behaviors, like Mrs. Weasley whipping up some onion soup for Harry when he arrived early and hungry.

Bad, too, comes in mundane forms: Unfair teachers are something all students experience somewhere along the way. Snape, for example, arbitrarily and capriciously penalizes Gryffindor time after time. He is completely unfair in the context of the power relationship always existing between professors and their students. Mundane bad often happens unexpectedly, as the separate fights Harry and Ron had with two other members of the Gryffindor Quidditch team. Additionally, although an Invisibility Cloak is hardly mundane, it was Harry's curiosity that got him into trouble: Curiosity is a very mundane Muggle cognitive behavior, evidently true in the wizarding world as well. There is no denying that, in particular, the cumulative effects of mundane bad can be devastating: The reader is invited to wonder what would have happened to Harry Potter had he not attended Hogwart's and was not given opportunity and rewarded for his endeavors and continued being dismissed and berated no matter what he did.

Evil, at least in the wizarding world, centers around a single figure: Voldemort. Snape makes an Unbreakable Vow to assist Narcissa Malfoy's son Draco, whom Voldemort had charged with killing Dumbledore. Harry suspects Draco and Snape of being Death Eaters, but no one believes him. Evil and its nature are explored most fully in



Dumbledore's private lessons with Harry, where they use different memories to learn what can be learned about Voldemort's early years. In one memory, Dumbledore and Harry see Voldemort's mother, Merope Gount, being beaten by her father, Marvolo. In another, they see her, long after her death, being damned for soiling the family name by her brother, Morfin, after which an unnatural darkness enveloped the whole room, obliterating everything. Dumbledore explained to Harry that Voldemort killed his father and grandparents and returned to Morfin's hovel to plant evidence. After these murders, Voldemort returns to Hogwarts and asks Slughorn about Horcruxes. Slughorn explains that these matters are "very Dark stuff, very Dark indeed."

Words in the Wizarding World

Just by talking, Harry persuaded Professor Slughorn to come out of retirement to teach at Hogwarts and later to give him the missing memory. He also uses words, sometimes thought instead of spoken, to cast spells: Harry thought "Levicorpus," which left Ron hanging in mid air above his bed and "Liberacorpus" to free him. Malfoy broke Harry's nose and said "Petrificus Totalus" to paralyze him. After rescuing him, Tonks said "Episkey," after which Harry's nose felt hot, then cold, then better. Harry used "Sectumsempra" against Malfoy, who fell, bleeding heavily, to the floor. Harry yelled "Impedimenta! Incarcerous!" and "Sectumsempra! SPECTRUMSEMPRA!" as he felt cold Inferi hands dragging him into the water from which he would not return. The meanings of most of these spells are obvious: "Impedimenta! Incarcerous!," for example, reminds the reader of the words "impediment" and "incarcerate." It's easy to see "cadaver" in "Avada Kedavra," which Snape used to kill Dumbledore. It usually left no outward marks, an exception being the lightning-shaped scar on Harry's forehead, left from when Voldemort first tried to kill him. Spells though can be tricky: Fudge expects that it was a poorly executed Imperius Curse that made one of the Muggle Prime Minister's ministers act like a duck. There are also fake spells.

Academic Life

Hogwarts was a fully accredited institution that offered a complete curriculum: Herbology, Care of Magical Creatures, Charms, Transfigurations, Arithmancy, Ancient Runes, Divination, Potions, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Astronomy and Apparitions. In addition to the regular curriculum, this year, Harry took private lessons from Dumbledore, whose lesson plans consisted of examining different memories to gain insight into Voldemort's young personality. In the best pedagogical tradition, each of Dumbledore's lessons began with a summary of the previous lesson.

Slughorn's first assignment in Potions was to make the Draught of Living Death. Harry won the prize for making the best potion. Snape's first lesson in their Defense Against the Dark Arts class was to have the students pair off and try jinxing and repelling each other non verbally. Snape paired himself with Harry; Harry repelled him and got detention. The novel follows the standard rhythm of any school year anywhere. Students attend classes, complete homework, take tests and get report cards (O . . .):



Harry got a "D" for "Dreadful" in the History of Magic and an "O" for "Outstanding" in Defense Against the Dark Arts; Hermione got "O"s in everything; although Ron got "O"s in nothing. His mother still complimented him for doing better than his older brothers, Fred and George, combined. The first novel in the series followed Harry's first year at Hogwart's; this novel, the sixth, follows Harry in his sixth year: Harry does not plan on returning to Hogwart's to complete his education, suggesting that the last novel in the series may not center on the academic side of the wizarding world.

Good Versus Evil

The main conflict in Rowling's seven-book series seems to be a clear-cut battle between the evil Lord Voldemort and the good Harry Potter. But each successive novel complicates this simple equation, and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* is no exception. Between her depiction of the Ministry of Magic as inept and her vague characterizations of Professor Snape's loyalties, Rowling leaves the reader to question uncontextualized notions of good and evil.

Harry Potter clearly represents good in his quest to eliminate evil from the wizarding community. His motivation, as Dumbledore explains, comes from his love for his parents, and thus keeps him innocent. And certainly Voldemort represents evil; his actions cause fear and panic in the wizarding community, and his goals revolve around immortality and selfish power. But many other characters do not fit so neatly into a category. The minister of magic, for example, makes questionable decisions in his effort to catch Voldemort and his followers. He orders false arrests, and he attempt to use Harry as a smokescreen for the Ministry's actions. Although these decisions do not seem exactly ethical, they cannot be deemed evil, either. As in real life, good and evil do not present themselves unambiguously to Harry Potter, and he must make the best decision he can in each situation.

Professor Snape presents the most complicated representation of good and evil. He claims to be both an agent for Dumbledore and for Voldemort. After leaving the Death Eaters many years ago, Snape returned to Hogwarts and pledged loyalty to Dumbledore. He maintains to Voldemort, however, that his loyalties remain with the Dark Lord and that he will be a spy in the castle. Despite many instances in which Snape clashes with Harry, Dumbledore continues to trust him. But Snape's final actions in the sixth book cause this trust to seem misplaced. Rowling leaves Snape's true allegiance a mystery for now.

Individual Responsibility

Harry approaches manhood this year, and he begins to realize the responsibilities he will face as an adult. For such a young man, he has faced much loss in his life. First, Voldemort killed his parents in an attempt to kill Harry as a baby. Then, he spent eleven years with his aunt and uncle, who neglected him. Soon after finding some respite from his loneliness with his godfather Sirius Black, Harry loses Sirius, who was killed fighting



Voldemort. Finally, Dumbledore protects Harry during their quest for a horcrux, and as a result, faces death at the hands of the Death Eaters. These many people defend the young Harry throughout his early years, but the sixth book indicates a change is coming.

Throughout his penultimate year at school, Harry studies Voldemort's youth to learn how to defeat him. As he watches all the cruelty Voldemort inflicted upon the world over the years, Harry begins to understand how important his task will be. But when Dumbledore gives up his life, Harry has an epiphany. He realizes that no one else can sacrifice themselves for him and that he must face Voldemort on his own, as a man. Harry's talent and life experiences make him uniquely qualified to challenge Voldemort. Although he is scared, he accepts the responsibility now facing him. He finds courage and confidence in those who have gone before him, and he becomes mature enough to take on the task alone.



Style

Point of View

This novel is written in the third person, primarily from Harry Potter's perspective.

Setting

The setting for the novel cannot, for the most part, be found on any map: Hogsmeade is though one of Europe's oldest wizarding communities and Hogwarts, a school for generations of witches and wizards, appears as a shabby building to ordinary Muggles.

Language and Meaning

This novel was initially published in English and is being translated into other languages.

Structure

The book is divided into 30 chapters: The Other Minister, Spinner's End, Will and Won't, Horace Slughorn, An Excess of Phlegm, Draco's Detour, The Slug Club, Snape Victorious, The Half-Blood Prince, The House of Gount, Hermione's Helping Hand, Silver and Opals, The Secret Riddle, Felix Felicis, The Unbreakable Vow, A Very Frosty Christmas, A Sluggish Memory, Birthday Surprises, Elf Tails, Lord Voldemort's Request, The Unknowable Room, After the Burial, Horcruxes, Sectumsempra, The Seer Overhead, The Cave, The Lightning-Struck Tower, Flight of the Prince, The Phoenix Lament and The White Tomb. The story is told in a linear fashion, with the action of the story unfolding in a traditional "beginning, middle, end" format.

Series

From the beginning, Rowling envisioned the *Harry Potter* series as consisting of seven books, one for each year of Harry's schooling at Hogwarts. The series follows the lives of the same main characters—Harry, Ron, and Hermione—through each novel and continues the narrative from one book to the next. Although each of the *Harry Potter* books can stand independently, there are several plotlines and thematic threads that link the series together, and each successive novel moves the characters and the plot forward. The opening chapters of each book include a brief summary of events that have transpired in the previous books, keeping the reader informed of earlier plot action and acting as an introduction to the series for first-time readers. The books open with Harry eagerly anticipating the beginning of a new year at Hogwarts. By the middle of each book, which usually coincides with the Hogwarts Christmas break, some conflict or



mystery has arisen at Hogwarts. Each book comes to a climax, usually some kind of confrontation between Harry and Lord Voldemort or Voldemort's followers, near the end of the school year. As the series draws to a close, major plot points and themes begin to move toward the final culminating battle between Harry and Voldemort. Rowling uses foreshadowing to hook the reader's interest in the climax and resolutions to be revealed in the remaining books in the series.

Limited Omniscient Third-person Point of View

In spite of the fact that the novel is written from a third-person point of view, throughout much of the book Rowling unfolds the action through Harry's perspective. Using third-person limited omniscient point of view, an author presents the events from an outside perspective, but reveals the perceptions of one or more characters. Rowling sometimes chooses simply to present conversations and actions and let the reader draw whatever conclusions they want about a character's motivations. She does this with Snape quite frequently, as in the scene early in the novel when Snape makes an Unbreakable Vow to Narcissa Malfoy or, later, when he kills Albus Dumbledore. The reader does not know what thoughts pass through Snape's mind in these moments, which creates considerable dramatic tension. Readers do, however, frequently have access to Harry's thoughts, hopes, and fears. In fact, much of the final chapter of the novel, "The White Tomb," centers on Harry's thoughts and emotions as he struggles to come to terms with Dumbledore's death and what it means to him.

Children's Fantasy Literature

The *Harry Potter* series fits generally in both the categories of children's literature and fantasy literature. As children's literature, the books repeat schoolyard themes of friendship, interpersonal conflict, and coming of age. The first several books in the series in particular reflect this tradition, as they show Harry becoming close friends with Ron and Hermione, managing his dislike of Draco, and balancing schoolwork and personal interests. As many children's books do, Rowling's texts also present a mystery within each year; Harry and his friends spend the school year unraveling that mystery and finding solutions that the adults around them cannot manage. During Harry's sixth year, he focuses on studying Voldemort's past. He learns the characteristics that help turn an orphan into an evil wizard in the hopes that this knowledge will empower him in his final battle. Harry also trails Draco throughout the novel, despite the disapproval of friends and faculty. As opposed to other years when Harry's instincts about Draco prove misguided, this time he is correct in suspecting the young Malfoy of working for Voldemort. His efforts save the school from further damage at the hands of the Death Eaters. Rowling includes many typical elements of children's literature in her series, although they evolve as Harry begins to enter adulthood in the later texts.

Also considered fantasy novels, the *Harry Potter* novels weave magic into the characters' everyday lives. Throughout normal daily activities such as attending classes and eating meals, the students at Hogwarts experience fantastic details such as moving



staircases, mischievous ghosts, and levitating candles. These elements align Rowling's work with other popular fantasy series about imaginary worlds, such as C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* series and J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The distinguishing feature of this genre is the creation of a separate world for the reader, one which stands on its own, apart from the reader's world. Many of Rowling's fans cite this feature as their favorite element of the novels; that is, they admire the series's ability to transport them to a different place and delight their senses with the many charming magical elements of Harry Potter's world.

Historical Context

Literary Sensation

Published as the sixth of a seven-book series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* was greatly anticipated by readers worldwide. Rowling's novels continue to attract vast numbers of fans, young and old alike, and thus each text's publication is a cultural event in itself. Midnight book launches as well as enormous speculation regarding plot turns accompanied this book's debut. Criminal allegations were even made in cases of content leaks and premature book distributions. The frenzy over Harry Potter's future only grows with his sixth year at Hogwarts, and especially so as a key figure dies in this second-to-last book. Anticipation for the final book rises to new heights as readers grasp the cliff-hanger surrounding book six: Does Snape betray Dumbledore's trust in him?

The War on Terror

Politically, the sixth book in the series takes place in a divisive and chaotic fictional environment. The Ministry of Magic tries to protect the muggle community because Voldemort expands his cruelty to include devastation outside of the magical world. Rowling presents a world with many similarities to the political environment of the early twenty-first century. In Great Britain and America especially, involvement in the Iraq War and the War on Terrorism continue to dominate the political landscape. One may interpret the Ministry of Magic's inept response to Voldemort as a commentary on Prime Minister Tony Blair's and President George Bush's attempts to quell global terrorism through a Middle Eastern war. Critics of the war all over the world question how involvement in Iraq can stem the flow of terrorism globally. In a most eerie similarity, London faced a terrorist attack in its subway system much like the attack presented in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* within days of the book's publication. The second half of Rowling's series illustrates a well-meaning government ill equipped to deal with the ever-changing threat of Voldemort; similarly, the twenty-first century western world struggles to adapt to the evolving challenges terrorists present after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.



Critical Overview

Rowling's writing has garnered so much praise from adoring fans that most early negative criticism has dissipated. Whereas some critics of the series cite Rowling's childlike approach in her early novels, the later novels' growing complexity in character development and plot seem to impress most readers. Further, the novels' continuing entertainment value, through six long installments, has garnered Rowling much more praise than criticism. Her fanciful presentation of magical creatures, charms, and curses often delights the most cynical reader.

Academic scholarship began surrounding Rowling's work as the series progressed. Critics and literary scholars continue to generate serious literary analyses of the writing. *Topic: The Washington and Jefferson College Review* published a special edition focused on the *Harry Potter* books in 2004. A collection of scholarly essays on the *Harry Potter* series titled *Scholarly Studies in Harry Potter: Applying Academic Methods to a Popular Text*, edited by Cynthia Hallet, was published in 2005. Further, international academic conferences gather every year to discuss the famous works. Students need not venture far to find considerations of literary technique, symbolism, or genre of Rowling's popular writing.

The last holdouts of negative commentary about *Harry Potter* come from two camps: the staunchly religious and the extremely intellectual. Some religious leaders as well as small communities continue to renounce *Harry Potter* books as promoting satanic expressions of magic. From vague concerns to serious book bannings, these critics call Rowling's positive presentation of magic problematic. The Ontario Consultants for Religious Tolerance maintain a thorough website, www.religioustolerance.org, which chronicles the many different responses to *Harry Potter* from religious groups. Alternately, well-respected intellectuals such as William Safire and A. S. Byatt also target Rowling's work, deeming it insubstantial. They say that popularity alone does not vault the books to the status of instant classics; instead, they contend that Rowling's works exist in the realm of entertaining, but not serious, reading.

Fans' enthusiasm for the *Potter* books has made criticism largely irrelevant, as Ross G. Douthat noted in the *National Review* (London): "Reviewing a *Harry Potter* book is the ultimate superfluous act." By the time the sixth book in the series had arrived, most critics acknowledged the author's shortcomings while endorsing the book and the series nonetheless. "Sadly, the latest *Potter* book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, suffers from all the usual faults of the series," remarked Douthat, as he prepared to describe Rowling's reliance on clichés, uppercase type, and adverbs. "Yet for all these weaknesses," he continued, "the *Potter* saga succeeds as few fictions do, and proves, in the process, that there's more to writing than felicitous prose or perfect psychological realism." In a review for Canada's *Globe & Mail* Andre Alexis reached the same conclusion. He wrote, "First, to be kind, [Rowling] hasn't got the finest ear," but concluded, "Children are unlikely to notice, or care about, Rowling's shortcomings. And that's the truest testament to her talent."



Looking at the overall arc of the series, some critics were disappointed in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, charging that it does not stand on its own as well as it should. "[Rowling] has become so fixed on the overall sequence of her novels, that the narrative shape of this one book is no longer a concern," observed John Mullan of London's *The Guardian*. Rosalind Casey, of the *Houston Chronicle*, felt similarly: "Rowling seems to have rushed the ending, just so she finally could heave a sigh of relief and say, 'OK, now I'm ready for the last book.'"

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3



Critical Essay #1

Shearer is a professor of American literature. In this essay, Shearer examines the ways in which Severus Snape's actions bear out Rowling's philosophy of love and redemption.

Severus Snape's role in the *Harry Potter* series has been controversial from his first appearance. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Snape singles Harry out in his first Potions class, calling him pompous and humiliating him in front of the class. Harry comes to dislike him intensely; readers usually agree with Harry. In later books in the Potter series, readers learn of Snape's conflict with Harry's father in their school days, and it seems even clearer that Snape has bad intentions when it comes to Harry Potter. But Albus Dumbledore's continued trust in Professor Snape makes all these assumptions questionable. When the most powerful wizard on the side of good insists on trusting Snape so thoroughly, eventually placing his life in his hands, readers start to second-guess their own judgments concerning the distasteful potions master.

A careful reading of the first five books of the Potter series shows that those who would label Snape as evil may have rushed to judgment. By the end of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, author J. K. Rowling herself seems to indicate that we should not be fooled by surface indications. Rowling has provided underlying evidence throughout all of the Potter books that Professor Snape, however unpleasant he may seem, does in fact work on the side of good. His loyalty to Dumbledore is part of Rowling's overarching theme of the redemptive power of love.

Snape does give readers a powerful reason for doubting his loyalty in the final pages of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. At the climax of the story, a weakened Dumbledore begs for Snape's help as the headmaster lies, unable to move, against the wall of the castle tower. In fact, Dumbledore requests Snape's assistance alone during his last hours. When Snape arrives at the tower before Harry can help him, Dumbledore whispers, "Severus ... please." After this vague plea, Snape, with "revulsion and hatred etched in the harsh lines of his face," uses the death curse on Dumbledore. "A jet of green light shot from the end of Snape's wand," Rowling writes, "and hit Dumbledore squarely in the chest." All of the characters, from Harry to Professor McGonagall, believe that Snape killed Dumbledore in cold blood. All believe that Dumbledore's trust was misplaced, and that Snape is in league with Lord Voldemort. But Snape's apparent betrayal only masks a larger truth about love and redemption in Rowling's novels as a whole. While Snape may not be friendly or pleasant, he is Dumbledore's man, and thus a powerful supporter of the redemptive power of love.

Rowling focuses on the power of love from the beginning in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Dumbledore often reminds Harry that his mother sacrificed her life for him when Voldemort attacked, and that her sacrifice covered him in a love completely alien to the evil Lord Voldemort. In many ways, that love protects Harry throughout his adventures at Hogwarts. First, Professor Quirrell cannot stand to touch Harry because of the love surrounding him. Evil literally crumbles when it comes in contact with love,



and thus Harry overcomes Voldemort in their first encounter at Hogwarts. In book six, Dumbledore clarifies the extent to which love gives Harry remarkable power. "Voldemort himself created his worst enemy," Dumbledore explains to Harry, "By attempting to kill you, Voldemort himself singled [you] out ... and gave [you] the tools for the job!" Harry will never be tempted to join Voldemort, continues Dumbledore, because he killed Harry's parents, and thus the orphaned son will always feel a deep hatred toward the evil lord. "You are protected, in short," says Dumbledore, "by your ability to love!"

It is within the context of the theme of love's power that readers can come to look past appearances and see that Snape may not be evil after all. Dumbledore, the character who develops and expresses the theory of the redemptive power of love, consistently expresses his faith in Snape, stating without question, "I trust Severus Snape completely." Dumbledore's unwavering trust in Snape remains the clearest indication that readers should second-guess their assumptions about him. Remus Lupin sums up the problem succinctly: "It comes down to whether or not you trust Dumbledore's judgment." And, Rowling implies, the smart reader does. As Dumbledore has explained to Harry, something powerful has passed between the two men, something akin to a conversion experience, and Dumbledore believes without a doubt that Snape is worthy of his confidence. In Snape's actions through the Potter series, readers see evidence of Snape's loyalty to Dumbledore and of Dumbledore's loving desire to protect Harry. For example, though Snape appears to be attacking Harry during a Quidditch match in book one, he is, in fact, protecting him from his worst enemy. Despite his obvious dislike of Harry during their private lessons in book five, Snape is still attempting to protect Harry from Voldemort. He may have few kind words for young Harry Potter, but he acts consistently throughout the first five books of the Potter series to keep the boy wizard out of the clutches of Lord Voldemort.

In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Snape's actions are more ambiguous. They have to be: Lord Voldemort, only a shadowy threat until the end of book four, has regained human form, reassembled his band of Death Eaters, and reestablished his power. Snape is under Dumbledore's orders to establish a relationship with his former master, a wizard renowned for his ability to read minds. Snape must be convincing in his support of Voldemort. But for characters such as Harry, who are predisposed to believe the worst of Snape, his actions are often plainly evil. Harry believes the worst when Hagrid describes overhearing a fight between Dumbledore and Snape, in which Snape appears to want out of a previous arrangement. Hagrid describes overhearing the two arguing. "I jus' heard Snape sayin' Dumbledore took too much fer granted an' maybe he—Snape—didn' wan' ter do it anymore," Hagrid reports. Although this scene seems to mean that Snape does not want to remain loyal to Dumbledore, it may alternately indicate that Dumbledore has asked a task too difficult for Snape to bear. That task, most likely, is Dumbledore's murder. To maintain the trust of Lord Voldemort's followers, Snape is compelled to make an unbreakable vow to Draco Malfoy's mother in which he binds himself in an agreement to kill Dumbledore if the need arises. Harry and Hagrid know nothing of this vow, but the reader does. The reader then can see that Snape's argument with Dumbledore most likely centers on his reluctance to kill the headmaster.



Events directly preceding Dumbledore's murder lend further support to the argument that both Snape and Dumbledore are motivated by the power of love. Just prior to Snape's arrival at the castle tower, Dumbledore orchestrates a long conversation with a scared Draco. Although Draco purports to be on the verge of murdering Dumbledore, the headmaster remains calm. "Draco, Draco, you are not a killer," Dumbledore says soothingly. Obviously, Dumbledore is stalling. Is he merely hoping to buy time until he can be rescued? Possibly. But he is also trying to spare Draco from the irreparable damage his soul will suffer if he actually manages to commit murder. He continues by offering Draco protection if he will renounce Voldemort. He is stalling not only for his own sake, but also for Draco's. Dumbledore knows that if the Order of the Phoenix does not arrive in time to save him, then at least Snape will arrive in time to save Draco from making a huge mistake. Dumbledore knows Snape will murder him in Draco's stead. If, for argument's sake, one assumes Snape kills Dumbledore only at Dumbledore's request ("Severus ... please"), one may then expect Snape to whisk Draco away to keep him safe. Snape does this very thing, immediately leaving castle grounds and disappearing with Draco. If Draco does eventually switch loyalties and abandon Voldemort, Dumbledore's loving sacrifice will be doubly redemptive. Not only will he have saved Harry Potter's life to allow him to go on and defeat Voldemort, but Dumbledore will have also died in the conversion of Draco Malfoy. This kind of sacrifice, in which one of the most notoriously evil wizarding families might turn good, would be the crowning victory for Dumbledore and his philosophy.

The transformation of evil into good would underscore Rowling's larger philosophy of redemption throughout her writing. "There are things much worse than death," Dumbledore explains to Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*; in fact, he says at the end of the first book, "After all, to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure." As Dumbledore's alter-ego has always been Fawkes, the phoenix, readers might expect that a "resurrection" of sorts is not too far a field. Indeed, "Harry thought, for one heart-stopping moment, that he saw a phoenix fly joyfully into the blue," during Dumbledore's funeral. Love and redemption are worth dying for, Rowling illustrates, and Snape's actions may just be the key to that positive, life-affirming message.

Source: Laura Baker Shearer, Critical Essay on *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, in *Literary Newsmakers*, Thomson Gale, 2007.

Critical Essay #2

In the following review, Douthat discusses the success of the Harry Potter books, despite the author's stylistic shortcomings and religious critics.

Reviewing a Harry Potter book is the ultimate superfluous act. No critic can hope to lay a glove on J. K. Rowling's series, which long ago passed into the realm of universal approbation reserved for mothers, flags, and balanced budgets. The only remaining Harry-skeptics—Christian fundamentalists on one hand and literary scholars like Harold Bloom and A. S. Byatt on the other—have been banished beyond the pale of civilized discourse, and everyone else has given in: We all love Harry, and Voldemort take anyone who doesn't.

It's not that the anti-Potter types don't have a certain point. Judged purely on her literary style, the world's bestselling authoress isn't in nearly the same league as the canonical greats of children's literature—the C.S. Lewises and Kenneth Grahames and Frances Hodgson Burnetts. Not that Rowling is untalented, precisely, but her craft gives the impression of having been stunted by success, as if her development as a writer stalled (or her editors began taking long vacations) when the royalties started rolling in.

Sadly, the latest Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, suffers from all the usual faults of the series. The protagonist's interior life hasn't moved beyond the realm of cliché: Harry's stomach lurches, his heart sinks, his mind races, and you can tell when he loses his temper because he tends to BELLOW IN CAPITAL LETTERS! (Though less frequently, thank God, than in *The Order of the Phoenix*, the last Potter installment, which sometimes felt as if it were written on a laptop with a broken Caps Lock key.) Nor has Rowling managed to shed her addiction to adverbs: Nothing can be said, but it must be said grimly, or coldly, or quickly, or slowly, or scornfully, or hastily, or worst of all, succinctly—all of this in the space of just four pages. And of her tedious magical shootouts—all flying spells and ducking wizards and shouts of "come on!" and "look out!"—the less said the better.

Yet for all these weaknesses, the Potter saga succeeds as few fictions do, and proves, in the process, that there's more to writing than felicitous prose or perfect psychological realism. As with James Fenimore Cooper, or H. P. Lovecraft, or any of the host of novelists whose stories linger long after their stylistic blunderings are forgotten, it's in that mysterious more that Harry Potter's success resides: not in the telling, but in the tale.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is the first book in Rowling's series and appeared in England under the title *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997. Harry Potter learns he is a wizard when he is eleven years old and finds that there is a place where he fits in: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He helps keep the Sorcerer's Stone safely out of Voldemort's reach by the end of the year, with the help of new friends, Ron and Hermione.



Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (1998) represents the second year of schooling for Harry. He learns how Voldemort opened the Chamber of Secrets at Hogwarts fifty years earlier, and he must figure out how to close it again before it kills another muggle-born student.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (1999) takes place during Harry's third year of school. He learns about a godfather he never knew he had during this eventful year, and he also discovers how a friend betrayed his father many years before.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2000) takes a significantly darker tone than the previous three novels. In it, Harry enters the Tri-Wizard tournament at Hogwarts, but he faces his most difficult challenge in a graveyard with Voldemort. When Harry's friend is murdered, he knows that Voldemort has regained full strength at last.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2003) chronicles how a small band of witches and wizards attempt to quell Voldemort's return to power. Harry continues in his fifth year of schooling, but he finds it difficult not to help the Order in their fight. Another friend dies at the end of Harry's fifth year.

The Chronicles of Narnia, published between 1950 and 1956, has become a beloved children's classic. The seven stories detail four brothers and sisters and their entry into a magical world called Narnia, where they lead a magical and epic battle between good and evil.

That the tale succeeds so well, across so many books, can be credited in large part to Rowling's genius for plotting. Though the Potter books are a casserole of genres—a dash of Tom Brown's *Schooldays*, a helping of Narnia and the Arthurian legends, a serving of Sweet Valley High (the little wizards have grown up fast)—it's the spirit of Agatha Christie, or perhaps even John le Carre, that broods heaviest over Hogwarts. Each volume follows the structure of a suspense novel: Something nefarious is afoot, and Harry & Co. attempt to ferret it out, usually succeeding just in time for summer vacation. And only in the most carefully crafted whodunits and thrillers do you see the kind of intricate narrative webs, thick with plot and counterplot, dropped hints and hidden clues, that Rowling seems to spin with ease.

The success of her spinning is evident in *The Half-Blood Prince*, which until its shocking conclusion is a surprisingly uneventful book, packed more with information than with action. Voldemort, Harry's nemesis, has returned from the half-dead, gathered his allies, and launched what might be best described as a terrorist campaign against the magical establishment. The contemporary echoes are obvious, as are the political swipes. In previous books, as Voldemort's power grew, Rowling delivered a cutting portrait of a craven bureaucracy unwilling to face up to the threat. But now that her war has begun in earnest she offers thinly veiled jabs at Guantanamo and the Patriot Act, depicting innocent wizards being locked up by a hysterical Ministry of Magic—a poorly timed message, one suspects, in the author's native Britain.



Amid this gathering storm, calm prevails at Hogwarts, and much of the novel is taken up by the efforts of Albus Dumbledore, the school's aging headmaster and Harry's mentor, to unpack the riddles of Voldemort's past and prepare Harry for the confrontation that awaits, inevitably, in the seventh book. This unpacking takes us deep into the Dark Lord's childhood, and the various revelations demonstrate how cleverly and carefully Rowling has constructed her sub-creation. Her wizarding world isn't quite a secondary landscape on the scale of Tolkien's Middle-Earth: Rather, it's a cracked-mirror view of our own world, with more raffish charm than donnish depth. But it's still a marvelously complex place, thick with tangled family trees, buried secrets, parallel pasts, and double agents. It's a place where plotlines that seemed to have been dropped books ago bear unexpected fruit, where tossed-off comments must be scrutinized carefully—and where everything is seen through Harry's teenage eyes, which suggests that readers should always be wary of leaping to conclusions.

But even the most dexterous plot needs characters, and here, too, Rowling excels—not in plumbing the depths of the self, but in dancing nimbly on the surface of personalities, relying on archetype and caricature in ways that call to mind the best of Dickens. Like a Copperfield, Pip, or Twist, Harry is an appealing everyman surrounded by an astonishingly vivid supporting cast; and just as the Heeps, Micawbers, Fagins, and Havishams are often more memorable than Dickens's protagonists, so too is it the old familiars like Dumbledore and Rubeus Hagrid, Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape who keep readers returning, book after book, to the Potter series.

This genius for character and caricature, though, isn't the only quality that Rowling shares with Dickens. There's also her talent for moralizing without polarizing, a rare gift and a necessity for an author with so wide a following. (The conclusion of *The Half-Blood Prince*, I suspect, will provoke more tears worldwide than the passing of *Little Nell*.) Dickens played to a wide audience by mixing a liberal zeal for social reform with a conservative ardor for domestic virtue. Rowling, similarly, ditches the traditional fantasy novel's hints of racism and chauvinism in favor of a liberal-minded multiculturalism—the villains lust after the kind of racial purity that an author like Tolkien granted only to his most heroic characters—while keeping the genre's conservative, good-and-evil core intact. Dark is Dark and Light is Light, and though the twain may meet in some conflicted characters—the fascinating figure of Snape, for instance, Voldemort's-lackey-turned-Dumbledore's-man (or is he?)—there's never a sense that they can coexist for long, or that any George Lucas-style "balance" is possible between them.

It's true that Rowling hasn't written a Narnia-style religious allegory. (Though I wonder if even an Aslan cameo—or a seventh book titled *Harry Potter and the Passion of the Christ*—would mollify her more zealous Christian critics.) But again, as with Dickens, it doesn't take much special pleading to find a strong religious subtext to her story. The Potter books are heavily medieval, for one thing, stuffed with elements and humors and alchemy and Latinate spells, and stuffed as well with Christ-symbols—phoenixes and stags and unicorns, all associated with the forces of light, and arrayed against the serpent-sign of Voldemort and his Death Eater acolytes (whose name suggests a grisly parody of the Eucharist).



Then there's the central role that death plays in the novels, and the contrast drawn between Harry's companions' willingness to lay down their lives—by the end of *The Half-Blood Prince*, the hero has lost parents, godparents, classmates, and dear friends to the struggle—and Voldemort's all-too-familiar fear of his own mortality. The Dark Lord's name means "flight-from-death" for a reason, and Rowling is unstinting in developing this theme: More than anything, what distinguishes good from evil in the Potter books is whether a character accepts the admonition, Whoever would save his life must lose it.

Which leads to the inevitable question, whose answer awaits us in the seventh book: not whether good will triumph over evil, but at what cost? The Potter saga began with a sacrificial death: Harry's parents giving their lives to save him, and with him the whole world. If Rowling remains true to her theme, it will take another such sacrifice to complete her achievement, and bring this great, dark fairy tale full circle, and to an end.

Source: Ross D. Douthat, "Redemption at Hogwarts," in the *National Review*, Vol. 57, No. 16, September 12, 2005, p. 48.



Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Kakutani examines evolution and maturation of the main character through the sixth book in the Harry Potter series.

[Text Not Available]

Source: Michiko Kakutani, "Harry Potter Works His Magic Again in a Far Darker Tale," in the *New York Times*, July 16, 2005, p. B7.



Quotes

"'You're like Ron,' she sighed, looking him up and down. 'Both of you look as though you've had Stretching Jinxes put on you Are you hungry, Harry?' 'Yeah I am,' said Harry, suddenly realizing just how hungry he was. 'Sit down, dear, I'll knock something up.' As Harry sat down Mrs. Weasley, rapp[ed] a large iron pot with her wand. It bounced onto the stove with a loud clang and began to bubble at once. 'Here you are —' She tapped the pot again; it rose into the air, flew toward Harry and tipped over; Mrs. Weasley slid a bowl neatly beneath it just in time to catch the stream of thick, steaming onion soup. 'Bread, dear?' 'Thanks, Mrs. Weasley.' She waved her wand over her shoulder; a loaf of bread and a knife soared gracefully onto the table; as the loaf sliced itself and and the soup pot dropped back onto the stove, Mrs. Weasley sat down opposite him." Chapter 5, pg. 83

"Narcissa Malfoy strolled out from behind the clothes rack. 'Put those away,' she said coldly to Harry and Ron. 'If you attack my son again, I shall ensure that it is the last thing you ever do.' 'Really,' said Harry, taking a step forward and gazing into the smoothly arrogant face that, for all its pallor, still resembled her sister's. He was as tall as she was now. 'Going to get a few Death Eater pals to do us in, are you?' Madame Malkin squealed and clutched at her heart. 'Really, you shouldn't accuse—dangerous thing to say—wands away, please!' But Harry did not lower his wand. Narcissa Malfoy smiled unpleasantly. 'I see that being Dumbledore's favorite has given you a false sense of security, Harry Potter. But Dumbledore won't always be there to protect you.' Harry looked mockingly all around the shop. 'Wow ... look at that ... he's not here now! So why not have a go? They might get you a double cell in Azkaban with your loser of a husband.'" Chapter 6, pg. 113

"'Patented Daydream Charms.' Hermione ... was reading the information on the back of a box bearing a highly colored picture of a handsome youth and a girl who were standing on the deck of a pirate ship. 'One simple incantation and you will enter a top-quality, highly realistic, thirty-minute daydream, easy to fit into the average school lesson and virtually undetectable (side effects include vacant expression and minor drooling). Not for sale to under-sixteens.' 'You know,' said Hermione ... 'that really is extraordinary magic!'" Chapter 6, pg. 117

"This Book is the Property of the Half-Blood Prince." Chapter 9, pg. 193

"Voldemort did not answer. Morfin was working himself into a rage again; he brandished his knife and shouted, 'Dishonored us she did, that little slut!' He looked away, staggering slightly and Voldemort moved forward. As he did so, an unnatural darkness fell, extinguishing Voldemort's lamp and Morfin's candle, extinguishing everything." Chapter 17, pg. 365

"'A Horcrux is the word used for an object in which a person has concealed part of their soul.' 'I don't quite understand how that works, though, sir,' said Riddle. His voice was carefully controlled, but Harry could sense his excitement." Chapter 23, pg. 497



Topics for Discussion

The first quotation describes Mrs. Weasley making Harry feel at home. Why is Harry happy to be at the Burrow?

The second quotation describes a scene between Harry and Draco Malfoy's mother, Narcissa. Who is the more threatening, Harry or Narcissa? Does Harry have a problem with authority figures?

The third quotation describes one of the gizmos available for sale at Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. Why does Hermione say that it's special magic?

The fourth quotation is the inscription on the used copy of the Advanced Potions textbook Slughorn assigned to Harry. Who is the Prince? What else did he write in the textbook?

The fifth quotation describes the scene after 16-year-old Tom Marvolo Riddle had tracked down his mother's brother, Morfin. Why does the room go dark?

The sixth quotation is from the missing memory that Harry retrieved: in it, Slughorn defines "Horcrux" for Riddle. Why did Riddle want to know how to make one? Did he only make one?

Harry Potter doesn't enter the novel until the third chapter. What external forces are shaping his world? Why does Dumbledore chastise the Dursleys?

Harry had persuaded Horace Slughorn to teach at Hogwart's; and Harry thought "Liberacopus" to free Ron from the spell that had landed him in midair. Is there a difference between using words to persuade and words to cast spells? What is the difference between a verbal and nonverbal spell?

How is Molly Weasley different from Petunia Dursley and Narcissa Malfoy? How does Harry's childhood with the Dursleys compare to what is known about Voldemort's childhood?

How did Harry first come to suspect that Draco Malfoy was a Death Eater? When does he learn about Snape's Unbreakable Vow?

- Of Rowling's main characters, who can be considered "good" and who can be considered "evil"? What defines a character as good or evil? Does Rowling rely mainly on actions to determine a character's morality, or does she focus on a character's motivation? Or does she use a combination of both? Use specific examples to illustrate actions and motivations that illustrate good or evil. How many of Rowling's characters seem to be neutral (Horace Slughorn, perhaps)? What is Rowling's overall perspective on good and evil? How does it compare to other pieces of literature about good and evil?



- Albus Dumbledore lives by the philosophy that love is stronger than evil and more powerful than magic. What kind of love does Dumbledore mean? For what purpose? Cite examples from the novel where non-magic solutions are as effective as magic ones. Find examples where magic is, in fact, more effective than non-magic. What can you predict about the events in the final book in the *Harry Potter* series based on Rowling's emphasis on love in the first six novels?
- Research the role of the sidekick in literature. How do Ron and Hermione play the role of sidekick? How have their roles changed or stayed the same by Harry's sixth year? Are they truly sidekicks, or do they have fully developed characters on their own? How do they influence Harry? What specific kinds of support do they each provide for him? Would Harry's life be substantially different without them? How will Harry's ultimate quest to kill Voldemort be changed by having Ron and Hermione by his side?
- Watch the *Harry Potter* movie adaptations. Which characters in the books are represented as the books present them, and which characters seem different? Cite examples from the texts to show discrepancies between the books and the movies. Why would there be differences in characterization between these two types of presentation? Which characters seem more interesting in the books than in the movies? Which are more interesting in the movies? Research other popular books that have been turned into movies. What problems does movie adaptation present, and how do the *Harry Potter* movies rate in terms of adaptation success?

Further Study

Scholarly Studies in Harry Potter: Applying Academic Methods to a Popular Text, edited by Cynthia Whitney Hallett, Edwin Mellen Press, 2005.

This collection of essays analyzes the Harry Potter series using a variety of traditional academic approaches. It treats Rowling's texts as serious adult literature rather than strictly children's literature.

J. K. Rowling Official Site, www.jkrowling.com (July 1, 2006).

Rowling uses this website to correspond with her fans worldwide. She answers readers' questions and gives updates on upcoming books.

Kirk, Connie Ann, *J. K. Rowling: A Biography*, Greenwood Press, 2003.

Kirk makes connections between Rowling's life and her writing, showing what details in her books may correspond to experiences in her life.

Neal, C. W., *The Gospel According to Harry Potter: Spirituality in the Stories of the World's Most Famous Seeker*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Neal challenges religious groups who target the Harry Potter series. She uses evidence from the books to forward an argument that Rowling creates a positive spiritual atmosphere in her books.



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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's "For Students" Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently



studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel; and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals—helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized



Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- **Introduction:** a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- **Author Biography:** this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- **Plot Summary:** a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- **Characters:** an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in *Invisible Man*—the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- **Themes:** a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- **Style:** this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- **Historical Context:** This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- **Critical Overview:** this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
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- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes “The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,” a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children’s Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.



Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

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“Night.” Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the “Criticism” subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on “Winesburg, Ohio.” Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. “Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,” Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. “Richard Wright: “Wearing the Mask,” in *Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

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The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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