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 - [Jump to site navigation \[0\]](#)
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- [Children and teenagers](#)

'I throw away my specs'

Does Voldemort get his comeuppance? Do Ron and Hermione finally get it together? Does Harry end up in the Priory? As the final instalment was released at midnight, we asked Potter fans to predict the fate of the world's favourite wizard ...

- [The Guardian](#), Saturday 21 July 2007
- **A** [larger](#) | [smaller](#)
- [Article history](#)

Fernanda Amis

Age 10

Harry sat up in bed and put on his glasses. He looked at Hedwig's cage. It was empty. Harry wasn't surprised. He got out of bed and started to get dressed. He looked out of the window. Another dull day at Privet Drive, he thought. When he had finished dressing, Hedwig swooped in with a letter in her beak. Harry took it.

Dear Harry, he read. It's Ron. I was wondering if you wanted to come over for the rest of the holidays. If you do want to come, we'll pick you up at the train station tomorrow morning, 10 o'clock sharp. Send an answer back with Hedwig.

Harry read the letter again. He went to his desk and scribbled a note and gave it to Hedwig, who then flew off.

Dear Ron, I would love to come to your house. I'll be at the station by 10. Harry

Early the next morning, Harry packed his bags and crept down to the living room. Uncle Vernon was sitting on a chair, reading the newspaper. Aunt Petunia was preparing breakfast and Dudley was sitting on the floor, munching a chocolate bar. Dudley got up. "What do you want?" he asked rudely.

"I just wanted to say that I'm going to Ron's house."

"Good," was Dudley's answer. Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia didn't look up. So Harry dragged his trunk out of the door. He hadn't had any breakfast. It was only 7.30, but he wanted to be gone.

When he got to the station, there was a note from Ron - in Hedwig's beak. Harry hadn't realised she wasn't in his room that morning. He read the note.

Dear Harry, Something's happened and we can't get you. Take the train at platform 10 and get off at the seventh stop. Sorry about that. Ron

Harry puzzled about the note as he got on the train, dragging his trunk behind him. He wondered what could have happened to Ron and his family. The moment he got down at the seventh stop, he saw a crooked house in the distance. When he reached it, Ron was there, standing outside the door.

"You're early!" he said. "We were just about to come and get you."

"Didn't you send me a note with Hedwig saying I had to get the train?" Harry asked.

"No, I didn't," Ron said quietly. "But whoever did is up to something."

Ed Balls

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

As Hermione tried to cram yet another gold-plated trophy for outstanding wizardry into her trunk, a promising future of academic accolades and, no doubt, a fast-track career at the Ministry of Magic within her grasp, Harry looked on wistfully. Typical, he thought. You can be a national Quidditch champion, you can save the world from impending doom, but if you don't get your five A*-C NEWTS, all that's left is a job behind the bar at the Leaky Cauldron, or stacking shelves at Flourish and Blots.

Morag Campbell

Age 9

I think Voldemort, Harry and Hermione will die, but Ron will escape and become Minister for Magic because Scrimgeour will get sacked for poisoning someone. Ron will escape because his mum and dad will rescue him, but when they come back for Harry and Hermione they will both be dead. Voldemort will think that he has won, but then Fred and George come up behind him and jinx him so he gets killed. Everyone is very happy because Voldemort is dead, but they are also very sad because Harry and Hermione are dead.

Sarah Clarke

Children's buying manager, Waterstone's

If this were purely a book for adults, rather than a children's book that adults will read, then I think JK Rowling might throw caution to the wind and kill off many more than just the two characters she has threatened to, and have previously heroic players turn evil. However, the author knows she has a responsibility to her fans, and she'll stick to her word. I believe Professor Snape will show his true colours and sacrifice himself (uttering a withering put-down as he does so) to give Harry and the others a chance to defeat Voldemort.

Ron will also go to the great Quidditch match in the sky. This will be a great blow to the fans, but JK has warned us the end will be upsetting, and that means one of the young principals must die. Also, Ron's death will leave a Harry/Hermione romance on the cards - come on, it's what we all want. The final scene will see Harry crumbling under a vicious onslaught from Voldemort and his followers, only to be saved as a back-from-the-dead Dumbledore reveals himself by emerging from beneath the invisibility cloak to add his power to Harry's at a crucial moment, destroying the evil one for ever. Or at least until book eight ...

Rahila Hussain

Teacher, Queensbury School, Bradford

Harry, Ron and Hermione find the last horcruxes. Harry uses his broom to fly into the depths of an active volcano to destroy his, Hermione smashes hers in between her hair straighteners, and Ron accidentally destroys his while trying to Apparate away from some Death Eaters. All three return to Hogwarts, where Snape is now headteacher and Death Eaters are patrolling the corridors. The school is being used to teach the dark arts to all, after students sign a home-school agreement to serve only Voldemort. The Order of the Phoenix gather after Dumbledore's Phoenix rises as a vision before them, calling them to Hogwarts for the final battle. Draco Malfoy has a change of heart after Voldemort wipes out his family for not protecting his horcruxes and so making him vulnerable as a mortal. Draco goes after Voldemort and Snape follows him to protect his favourite pupil. But it must be Harry who destroys Voldemort or the prophecy will not be fulfilled, and Snape ends up killing Draco to ensure that Harry is the one to kill Voldemort. Harry stabs him in his non-existent heart with his wand. He goes on to become headteacher at Hogwarts and the school tops the league tables for magic. Ron and Hermione get married and have a child ... born with Ron's red hair, but with Harry's scar on its forehead and needing glasses.

Andrew Marr

Broadcaster

Harry Potter and the Garrick Club. In later life, Sir Harry Potter became a staunch supporter of the Old Hogwartians and a well-known figure on the touchline at the annual Varsity Quidditch Match. His distinguished position on the Scott Trust meant his powerful arguments for repelling women, wraiths and witches from membership of his beloved Garrick was never tainted by any suggestion of sexism. His Goblet of Fire merlot-sauvignon cross was judged one of the finest Northumberland wines of the later 2030s, as global warming expanded the industry. Lady Hermione was appointed Lady Antonia Fraser Professor of Early Medieval Studies before her ill-judged affair with a migrant asylum-seeking phoenix led to her being burned alive in the London Library kebab shop and reading room.

Maud Mullan

Age 9

I think that Voldemort has to die. If he didn't die, everybody would wonder what happens next, so JK Rowling would have to write another book. He's the one who is most evil, and once he's dead everyone can capture all the Death Eaters and everything will be all right. Harry will find the other four horcruxes (including the locket). In each horcrux is a bit of Voldemort's soul and Harry has to destroy them all before he fights Voldemort. The other four horcruxes are the snake, Hufflepuff's cup, Slytherin's locket and something from Ravenclaw or Gryffindor. They find out who RAB is. RAB took one of the horcruxes. I think RAB is Sirius Black's younger brother Regulus.

Harry will leave the Dursleys (he comes of age in the summer when he is 17). I don't think Harry's going to die, but I think Ron or Hermione might. Malfoy will decide he doesn't want to be evil and will try to back out of it, because at the end of the sixth book he's not quite sure which side he should be on. Snape is really involved with the plot, so he has to turn good or die (or both), otherwise there must be more of the plot to come. In the fifth book there is a prophecy saying that the Dark Lord will be vanquished by someone born at the end of July to those who have thrice defied him. Voldemort thought this was Harry, but it might be Neville Longbottom. He's not good at anything except herbology, but he might help Harry defeat Voldemort.

DBC Pierre

Novelist

I'd say Harry's fate would be an early coronary on the courthouse steps after a protracted battle with his local council over new Approved Household Substances legislation.

Ian Rankin

Crime writer

I've always thought that Harry would make a good "paranormal detective". The Harry Potter novels are shaped as traditional whodunnits with plenty of twists, turns, red herrings and suspects. So I can see Harry surviving the last adventure of his school years and heading off to the wizard equivalent of Hendon for training as a cop. This would allow him to continue to track down Voldemort and his cohorts. I can't see Rowling bumping off Harry at the end; I think she cares about him far too much to let that happen. And if Harry stays, so must Voldemort, the two being inextricably linked. I wouldn't mind if Hermione suddenly discovered her "dark side" and joined Voldemort's ranks. Ron would then have to decide between his two best friends and might end up destroying himself in the process.

Michael Rosen

Children's laureate

So this is Godric's Hollow, thought Harry. He had always imagined it to be dark, wet and dreary with overhanging cliffs, broken statues and no one in the street. But it was a bright, happy place with a new coffee shop, a pizza place and people standing about in the street talking. Harry could see the church tower pointing up into the sky above the houses and found that he had to command his legs to take him there.

In the graveyard he scanned the inscriptions - May Stella Johnson, May she sleep in peace. He allowed himself a smile but no more. He wasn't going to be distracted. The brightness he had noticed in the high street had now turned grey. He looked at the trees around the church. Of course trees don't whisper but ... Then, there it was:

James Potter and Lily Potter née Evans ... Harry's eyes rushed over the letters ... d. October 31 1981 ...

why do they always write "d."? Are they afraid of the word "died"? Then the motto: "Cor te reducit".

"Cor?" he said out loud to himself. Cor? Did they say things like "pew!" and "wow" and "cor" in Roman days? Some kind of powerful urge or force made him start figuring out what this motto meant. Come on, come on, he said to himself. Latin lessons ... "te", "amo te" means "I love you" ... so "te" must mean "you". "Reducit?" It looks like "reduce" but ... the word "educated" flashed into his mind. "E ducare", to lead out. So "reducit" must mean ... lead again or lead back. "Cor, you've come back"? Yes, I have come back! Wait a minute. "Cor", ah yes, Richard Coeur de Lion, Richard with the heart of a lion ... heart ... That's it, that's it: "The heart leads you back." And the moment the translation was in his head, there came a cracking, creaking sound that echoed around the churchyard. The stone on the grave sheared in two, the earth beneath his feet heaved, rotting timbers splintered, and out of the ground crawled and stumbled Harry's mother and father.

"Harry! Harry!" they cried out, even as they wiped the earth from their faces and clothes.

Harry felt the tears come into his eyes. All the hurt he had tucked away came rushing to the surface and now burst out in one great shout:

"Mum! Dad!" and he buried himself in their arms.

Meg Rosoff

Children's author

After so many years of battle with the Forces of Evil, Harry has a nervous breakdown and is admitted to the Priory. He undergoes extensive psychoanalysis by Dr Weltschmerz, but his post-traumatic stress proves intractable.

Hermione, pregnant with Ron's baby, gives birth to twins Nigel and Aramintha, and Harry is asked to be godfather. The christening is presided over by the kindly local vicar, Artemis McBurney-Weatherbottom, who turns out to be Lord Voldemort in disguise. Harry, sedated on Mogadon and Prozac, borrows a broomstick from a Priory cleaner, and chugs towards the church for the christening. Despite the urgency of his mission, he stops at the Dog & Duck, using the sacred A Few Years Older spell to order a pint. Through his drug-and-London-Pride-induced haze, Harry notices Voldemort's Dark Mark hanging over the church. A hellish wailing from within convinces Harry that he has, at long last, come to the final showdown with his nemesis. The noise, however, turns out to be the cute twins, whom Harry slays by mistake. Or was it?

Voldemort swears that he's tired of being an Icon of Evil and, to prove it, sends all the Death Eaters to work at Little Chef and takes a job at the local council overseeing roadworks and parking permits. Harry returns to the Priory full of remorse and meets Kate Moss. With the help of aromatherapy, pilates and class A drugs, they live happily ever after.

Ron and Hermione discover that the babies Harry slew by mistake were not real babies, but embodiments of purest evil, and the friends reconcile. Badness is banished from the world, except for a tiny leftover bit in Luton, in case of a sequel. Hogwarts is converted into luxury condominiums, despite being in the green belt. Dumbledore isn't dead after all and gets a spin-off prequel.

Ivan Self

Age 9

I think that Harry will go to his home and see his parents' graves. He may also have a duel with Voldemort. No one knows who will win, but normally the hero does. Snape and Malfoy will be out to get Harry, so watch out Harry! I think he's going to survive because the hero always wins. He will become an Auror.

Ron will have to go home because his brother Charlie is getting married. I think Ron will go with Harry to help fight Voldemort. Ron is Harry's best friend, so he will be the ideal person to put the imperious curse on, because Harry trusts him: in other words, I think Voldemort will try and control Ron. After that, Ron will definitely become an Auror and try to rise to great heights, maybe even become a professional Quidditch player.

Hermione will be angry that they are leaving Hogwarts because she loves work, but she will go with Harry to help him and be their "brains". She will also find some useful spells along the way. She will help Harry prepare to fight Voldemort, she will make a few of her own calculations.

Harry and Hermione will not end up as boyfriend and girlfriend because there is not that kind of love between them. Also Hermione is already in love with Victor Crumb and Harry is already in love with Ron's sister Ginny.

I think they will all become Aurors to hunt down the last Death Eaters, and stop them bringing back Voldemort again.

Sue Townsend

Novelist

Harry said, "So it was a psychotic episode brought on by my excessive and protracted skunk habit?"

"Mostly," said the psychiatrist, "though you also had issues relating to parental dysfunction."

"So I have parents?" checked Harry.

"Yes, Daphne and Derek Potter. Lovely people, they came to see you every Sunday afternoon."

Harry looked out of the office window at the real world beyond the secure unit. It looked grey and

dreary, and the apparently sane people on the pavements had the dislocated look of robots. If that's the real world, they can stick it up their arses, thought Harry. Then he shook the psychiatrist's hand, trousered his discharge papers and hurried away.

He managed to evade his parents, who were waiting for him in the blue Mondeo in the car park, and headed for the town in search of excitement and a couple of ounces of serious skunk.

Sue Upton

Senior editor, The Leaky Cauldron.org (leakynews.com)

"Mystery, Mayhem and Magical Mischief all due in an exciting memoir this fall!" Hermione sighed as she put down her copy of the Daily Prophet, which had yet another special issue on the events at Godric's Hollow (Boy Who Lived Relives His Triumph over You Know Who: Special Ten Year Commemorative Edition!) She turned to check on her husband Ron, who was snoring gently in a chair, holding a sleeping baby Luna. The others were playing a game of Quidditch at the Burrow. Dean and Seamus went swooping by on their brooms, followed by peals of laughter from Fleur and Ginny who were poring over a Muggle bridal magazine, as Ginny was furiously taking notes. Over in the garden, Neville was deep in concentration studying a curious snapping plant as he prepared his herbology lectures for the upcoming session at Hogwarts. As Hermione picked up her quill to resume writing, she winced as yet another bludger went hurling through the upstairs window, which was promptly met with howls of "Fred, George come here this instant!" from Molly Weasley. Chuckling to herself as some things never change, her smile faded as she unrolled the parchment before her and began the most difficult task of her revision of Hogwarts, a History: the chapter on the death of Lord Voldemort at the hands of her friend Harry Potter.

Marina Warner

Cultural critic

It was Speech Day, the last day of term, and the Great Hall was packed to the rafters, the temperature and excitement mounting furiously. The choir had sung a medley, and some young Slytherins had staged "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (Lupin Minor amazingly convincing in the title role). It was Hermione's turn to do her best for Gryffindor. She'd always been a dab hand at dead ringers; her rendering of Dame Helen Mirren as the Queen was pitch-perfect. Everyone was in stitches when suddenly, before the applause for Hermione's act had died away, Harry was there. The promised moment had come: Harry was to speak!

He was clutching one of the cups he had won in one hand and his Quidditch broom in the other, and from his shoulders hung a strange cloak of many colours. But otherwise he looked different - or at least everyone said so afterwards, when it all turned out as it did.

Without even half a smile to acknowledge the vast and rapt assembly, Harry began, in his best old luvvy quaver:

"Old chums of Hogwarts playing fields and spires,
You tripping Quidditch gamesters of the skies,
Who chased the speeding snitch on flying brooms,
Battled with Dementors, Muggles, Hallows, and ghouls,
And got all tangled up in Voldemort's sticky webs,
I have voyaged to the edge of the abyss and felt his venom
Leak inside my brain.

[here his voice grew stronger, sterner]

All this strong magic

I here abjure; but for my last enchantment,

I've tweaked my DNA, had my eyes lasered,

and worked a charm of surgeon's craft on my scar.

So I now set you free, my loyal Owl,

bag up my gear, toss cups, badges, certificates, and prizes all,

For Oxfam to collect. I'll break my trusty stick

[here he broke his broom, snap, across his knee]

Cast off my cloak, and throw away my specs

[here he flung them both to the stage]

And declare like the wise Achilles who when asked

What life he most desired if given a second chance,

Replied, 'Oh! To be an ordinary man!'

So now I quit the stage to hide among you all."

Everyone was laughing at first, though when he broke the broom, many groaned, the illusion was so perfect. Some were even admiring his new look - contacts suited him, they thought. But how wrong they were, and the laughter soon faded, because they realised the solemn truth that Harry, Harry Potter, the Harry everyone knew, had melted among them and was no longer anywhere to be found.

After Harry ...

For wizard fantasy

Ursula K Le Guin's A Wizard of Earthsea series. For Harry take Ged, arrogant, gifted and ignorant of the huge responsibilities he carries; and instead of Hogwarts, there's the whole of Earthsea with its rational magic to inhabit.

For Gothic lovers

Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast puts Hogwarts in the shade with its labyrinthine edifice, and the characters are every bit as scary. It's as wordy, too.

For science fiction/fantasy

Philip Reeve's Mortal Engines quartet offers fantastic techno-created adventure in cities that roll along the bottom of the dried-up seabed devouring each other.

For historical fantasy

Joan Aiken's The Wolves of Willoughby Chase launches a long sequence of novels set in a Victorianesque but non-industrial Britain already linked to Europe by a Channel tunnel through which wolves roam freely.

For boarding-school fiction

Anthony Buckeridge's Jennings Goes to School introduces Jennings and Darbishire, who stay the same age, in the same form and at the same school through over 25 titles.

For those ready to take the next step

Lian Hearn's Across the Nightingale Floor launches a powerful series of stories that take its characters

through love, war, jealousy and fate among the hidden tribes and warrior classes of Japan.

For adventure addicts

James Bond began his derring-do at Eton in Charlie Higson's *SilverFin* and sequels. A school with as many arcane rituals as Hogwarts, it is a springboard for recognisable but sexed-down 007 adventures.

For the next big thing

Pirates, football and dying teenagers are all vying to replace fantasy. Justin Somper's *Vampirates* books do the first gruesomely, Mal Peet's *Keeper* adds magical realism to the familiar motives of the glorious game, and a dying teenager provides the pivot for Sharon Dogar's *Waves*, a story of love and loss.

For something short and sweet for a change

Frank Cottrell Boyce's *Millions* is charming, original and all about saints.

For something completely different

Meg Rosoff's *How I Live Now* gives a vision of an arcadia and dystopia in one dramatic story.

• *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by JK Rowling is published by Bloomsbury. To order a copy for £15.99 with free UK p&p, call Guardian book service on 0870 836 0875 or go to guardian.co.uk/bookshop

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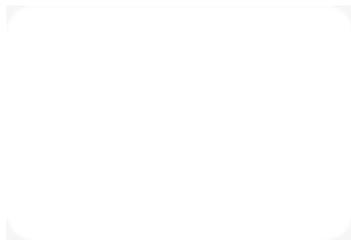
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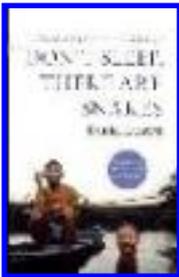
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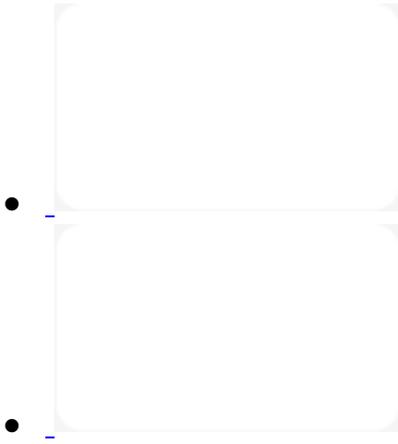
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