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WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN
HARRY POTTER
7

Who Lives, Who Dies,
Who Falls in Love
and How Will
the Adventure
Finally End?

Unauthorized
"Deathly Hallows"
Predictions

From the
#1
Harry Potter
Fan Site

An owl is perched on a stack of papers and a notebook. The notebook is open, and a pair of glasses is resting on it. The owl is looking towards the viewer.

Ben Schoen, Emerson Spartz,
Andy Gordon, Gretchen Stull & Jamie Lawrence

"Tackles and heightens the suspense that has been building through the six Potter books" *New York Times*

THE EXPERTS AT MUGGLENET.COM ANALYZE THE FIRST SIX HARRY POTTER BOOKS AND SEARCH FOR HIDDEN CLUES TO PREDICT WHAT THE FINAL BOOK MIGHT REVEAL...

Is Dumbledore really dead?

Will Harry and Ginny get back together?

Who is the mysterious R.A.B.?

Can Ron and Hermione's relationship last?

Whose side is Snape truly on?

Is Harry a Horcrux?

Will Harry defeat Voldemort in the ultimate showdown between good and evil?

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Ulysses
Press

\$13.95

Distributed by
Publishers Group West

ISBN10: 1-56975-588-3
ISBN13: 978-1-56975-583-9



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Schoen
Spartz



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**Who Lives, Who Dies,
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How Will the Adventure Finally End?**

Ben Schoen, Emerson Spartz,
Andy Gordon, Gretchen Stull & Jamie Lawrence
with Laura Thompson



Ulysses Press

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The Story So Far

Let's face it: It's been a *long* journey. No one could have guessed, when *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was published in 1997, that we would still be waiting on tenterhooks for the next book in the series a decade later. J. K. Rowling, who has climbed gracefully into the ranks of great authors, continues to write books that excite and enthrall us long after they have been returned to the shelf. Our own book is primarily concerned with looking forward at what will be, but it seems prudent to step back first and remind ourselves why we are still here.

The idea for Harry Potter came to J. K. Rowling in 1990 when she was on a delayed train from Manchester to London. She had not brought a pen with her, and she was too shy to ask anybody to lend her one, so she simply sat back and let Harry and his world enter her head. She notes on her website that "if I had had to slow down my ideas so that I could capture them on paper I might have stifled

some of them." If she is reading this today, we think we speak for Harry Potter fans worldwide when we thank her sincerely for leaving that pen at home.

That same evening, J.K.R. began pouring her ideas onto paper. Over the next six years, she wrote, rewrote, and edited what was going to be the first of seven Harry Potter books. Finally, in 1996, she handed her completed manuscript to her first agent, who rejected it out of hand. The second agent she tried, Christopher Little, recognized the potential immediately and contacted Bloomsbury, a British publisher.

The rest, as they say, is history. In June 1997, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* tumbled into bookstores worldwide. Many of us were introduced to it indirectly, by friends who swore on their lives it was the best book that they'd ever read. Somewhere, somehow, we read it. We got hooked. Harry Potter became our caffeine, became the reason we read. Across the world, thousands of parents rejoiced as they saw their children genuinely interested in reading for the first time.

But let's be fair: What's *not* to like about it? A boy wizard who attends a magical school, fights trolls, plays sport on broomsticks, learns how to brew potions, meets a three-headed dog, and triumphs over the most feared Dark wizard of all time. It's a story that leaves nothing, yet everything, to the imagination, saturating the senses with imagery while leaving the mind free to explore it all at will. Breath-taking in its originality, it was a harbinger of things to come. Just over a year later, we got our next Potter fix.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets was published in July 1998. This time, we entered the bookstore with a clear purpose in mind. We had met the characters; now we wanted to see them develop. We wanted to know more about the history of Harry and his world. This was, of course, exactly what we got. We learned more about Lord Voldemort's past and Harry's abilities, and we met new and exciting characters.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban appeared in July 1999. Many people have told us that this remains their favorite book, and it's very easy to see why. In it, we were introduced to the tortured soul of Sirius Black, a character dear to many hearts. We also met Remus Lupin, another firm favorite. Azkaban appeared for the first time, as did its spooky guardians, the Dementors.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire was published in July 2000. Bigger than the first three books put together, it marked a turning point in the Potter series, both in terms of content and in terms of its unprecedented worldwide popularity. Although the books had been turning progressively darker, we had not before witnessed what we all dreaded: the death of a good character. In Book 4, Cedric Diggory was murdered before our eyes. This taught us that the Harry Potter world is magical but not Utopian. "It is my belief," said Dumbledore at the end, "...that we are all facing dark and difficult times" [GOF, pp. 723-24]. His words were grimly prophetic; if we finished the fourth book having learned one thing, it was that Lord Voldemort had definitely returned.

A painful three-year hiatus ensued, while we were left with burning questions as to what was happening in Harry's world. Finally, on June 21, 2003, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* hit bookstores. Its release was met with worldwide euphoria, with book parties from New York to New Zealand, from Los Angeles to London. Once again, with the murder of Sirius Black, we experienced death firsthand. Perhaps most significantly, we also saw the truly evil nature of the Dark Side. We witnessed the first major battle between members of the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters down in the depths of the Ministry of Magic. We saw corruption at the highest level. If we thought *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* was dark—well, we hadn't seen anything yet.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, the penultimate book in the series, was released in July 2005 and quickly became the fastest-selling book in history. Borders reported sales of over one million

books in the first 48 hours [E! Online, 2005]. One thing was clear from reading the book: the magical world was now totally at war. And with Dumbledore apparently dead, the safety Harry had once enjoyed at Hogwarts had vanished. Harry's world fell down around him as he battled Voldemort both physically and mentally. At the end of the book he felt alone, distanced from his friends, about to face a new challenge: finding the remaining Horcruxes and destroying the very evil that had shadowed his life for so many years.

And there we have it. Six books down, one to go. It's important to remember, however, that we were not all there from the beginning. Some fans picked up the series much later than others did, perhaps starting with a Christmas present from their parents. Others read *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, wondering what all the hype was about, but were seen back in the bookstore four hours later buying the first, second, and third books with almost unholy enthusiasm.

Whatever drew us into Harry Potter, we are now united as fans. And as fans, we now feel the great uncertainty in the series as a whole. The battle between good and evil has begun. But lest we forget, this is no fairytale. There will be, and have been, losses on both sides, and we cannot sit back and cheerfully assume that the forces of good will win. Yet while we are uncertain as to the outcome of the war, we still cannot wait to get our hands on the final book. We are as eager now as we were the first time we read *Sorcerer's Stone*.

Why are we still so enthralled? First and foremost, because we have come so far. We began by sharing in the wild adventures of a young boy wizard and now we are empathizing with a grief-stricken adolescent as he attempts to conquer evil once and for all. We have seen Harry grow, develop, and mature and form relationships and bonds. How can we not want to know what happens next?

There are also the subtle and clever parallels to the real world. We see Harry coping with the difficulty of fitting in at a new school, the pressure of having to prove himself, having to deal with loss. Is

there a reader out there who has not, at some point, experienced Harry's plight? On the other hand, the books offer a way out of the real world: a place to forget your own problems, troubles, and tribulations.

Finally, the books have united us as fans. To us, you are either a Harry Potter fan or you aren't. We don't care about religion, race, or color, only about what you think will be the outcome of the war, which girls Harry has taken a liking to, what you think Voldemort is up to at this very second. Those outside the fandom don't understand it, but we fans really feel a sense of belonging when we line up at the bookstore at 2 a.m. sharing the latest theories and ideas or simply screaming Harry's name to bewildered passersby, awaiting the release of the next book in the series.

It's impossible to talk about "The Story So Far" without mentioning the internet. A behemoth that now spans thousands of websites, hundreds of forums, and hundreds of thousands of fans, the internet is the main channel we use to get our Potter fix in between book releases, be it with fan fiction, fan art, or good old-fashioned theory discussion. It is the only place where you can chat about Harry Potter to your heart's content with fans who are as passionate as you are.

And let's not forget the Harry Potter movies. They represent a huge part of worldwide "Pottermania." Each movie has a character of its own, sometimes mirroring the character of the books and sometimes taking on a whole new perspective. The movies offer fresh new angles, particularly with the personal spin that is put on them by the frequent rotation of directors.


So that's the story so far. Harry Potter has now spanned sixteen years, six books, and three hundred million copies, yet we think we speak for each and every fan when we say that we are still aching for more. There is no doubt in our minds that Book 7 will be the most explosive, the most exciting, and the most entrancing book of the series. While we race to the release, we are asking ourselves the

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same question that we have been asking for the best part of a decade: "What will happen next?"

From all of us here at MuggleNet.com, we hope we have done this question justice.

Enjoy the book.



Neville's Destiny

Neville Longbottom is a fascinating character. In the series, we've seen him go from playing the role of bumbling comic relief (in his inept attempts to memorize and cast spells) to that of a brave and formidable wizard (when he accompanies Harry to the big showdown at the Department of Mysteries in OOTP and joins the battle when Death Eaters enter Hogwarts in HBP). But through it all, there has always been an intriguing aura of mystery surrounding Neville. Why does Trelawney's prophecy parallel Neville as well as Harry? Why is his memory so suspiciously poor? Why were Neville's parents tortured to the point of insanity, and how did they thrive defeat Voldemort?

In OOTP, an emotional new subplot developed as Neville came face to face with Bellatrix Lestrange, the despicable Death Eater who led the torture of his parents. As we head into the final book,

everyone wants to see the ultimate showdown between Neville and Bellatrix. Neville wants his vengeance, and we want him to get it.

The Importance of the Prophecy

At this point, everyone knows that Trelawney's prophecy could have applied to either Neville or Harry. After all, both boys were born at the end of the seventh month to parents who had thrice defeated Voldemort and survived (OOTP, p. 842). Voldemort's attack on Harry at Godric's Hollow, however, marked Harry as the chosen one, giving Harry the scar and its special ability to see into Voldemort's mind. If Voldemort had chosen Neville instead of Harry that night so long ago, Neville would have been marked, and we all would have been reading about Neville Longbottom, the Boy Who Lived, for the last ten years.

Many readers have concluded that the shared nature of this prophecy has marked Neville for a destiny interwoven with Harry's. J.K.R. has said that this is not the case, however [J.K.R. website, F.A.Q. section]. Neville's history has been set up to show the true nature of prophecies, that there is a measure of free will and choice within any prophecy. We see evidence of this when Voldemort *chooses* Harry at Godric's Hollow (for more on prophecies see Chapter 13). But in no way does this mean that Neville is an unimportant character. In fact, we think there is still much to be revealed about the boy who could have been the Chosen One.

Why Is Neville So Forgetful?

One thing that has never quite made sense about Neville is his magical ability, or apparent lack thereof, in the first few books of the series. Neville is a pure-blood wizard, but for most of the series, can't cast an accurate spell or make an effective potion to save his

life. Even Neville admits his lack of magical talent, saying, "...every-one knows I'm almost a Squib" [COS, p. 185].

Why is the pure-blood son of two talented Aurors so very inept at magic? Well, for starters, everyone's magical ability is different. Just as it is possible for two Muggles to produce a magical child, it is possible for two pure-bloods to produce a Squib, a child with no magical ability whatsoever. This could be the case with Neville, but there may be another possibility.

In the first book, Neville is sent a Remembrall [SS, p. 145], a magical memory device that glows red if the person holding it has forgotten something [SS, p. 145]. At first, it does not seem significant that poor, forgetful Neville has such a device sent to him. Indeed, it glows scarlet the very first time he holds it [SS, p. 145]. At second glance, though, there may be more to Neville's Remembrall than originally meets the eye.

Although we see Neville's Remembrall turn red, indicating that he has forgotten something, we never learn what it is that Neville has forgotten. Perhaps it is something as meaningless as a homework assignment. Or perhaps Neville has forgotten something of extreme importance. Remember, J.K.R. loves to drop seemingly inconsequential hints that come back to play important roles in later books. This is the case with the Brazilian boa constrictor that in SS foreshadows Harry's ability to speak Parseltongue [pp. 27-28], as well as Polyjuice Potion, seemingly introduced for laughs in COS when Hermione is turned into a large cat-human hybrid [pp. 225-26], but is vital to the plot of GOF. The theory here is that maybe Neville has had his memory modified for some reason, a reason we think may have something to do with Neville's parents.

Little is known about Neville's parents. Our main knowledge of them is that they were tortured to the point of insanity by Bellatrix LeStrange and the Death Eaters after Voldemort's original fall from power [GOF, pp. 602-603]. They have been residing in St. Mungo's ever

since. We know that Neville was born around the same time as Harry [OOTP, p. 842], and that Harry, though just a year old when his parents were murdered, can recall certain things about that fateful night [POA, pp. 239-40]. Neville was even older when his parents were tortured, and if he was with them when it happened, it is reasonable to think that he would be able to recall these events as well. It's possible that Neville could have witnessed something that night that someone didn't want him to remember.

This has two implications: First, Neville's memory could have been modified to keep him from remembering something important that either his parents or the Death Eaters said or did that night. This is unlikely because Neville was so young he wouldn't have understood what was happening even if he did witness it. Also, if the Death Eaters were really concerned about what he was seeing, they could have just killed him. The other possibility is that someone cast a Memory Charm on Neville, not to erase anything in particular that he may have witnessed, but to purge the overarching memory of his parents' torture. If this is the case, it is probable that the person was not ill-intentioned in casting a Memory Charm, but instead wanted to save a young child from the horrid images of watching his parents suffer. But owing to Neville's continued forgetfulness, this mysterious person may have made the memory charm a bit too strong. We've seen this happen before in the series, when Barty Crouch Sr. put a strong Memory Charm on Bertha Jorkins, accidentally causing permanent damage [GOF, p. 685].

If Neville is under a strong Memory Charm, it would certainly explain why he has so many problems learning and retaining information and practicing magic. This is just a theory, though, and does not account for the fact that, in the later books, Neville's magical skills begin to develop rapidly. Neville's early lack of skill may be nothing more than the result of meager self-confidence. Nevertheless, the possibility of deliberate tampering with Neville's memory remains.

Neville vs. Bellatrix

While Harry has never known his parents, Neville has grown up visiting two parents who don't know *him*. We all know why Neville has been forced to suffer this terrible fate: The Death Eaters, most notably Bellatrix Lestrange, tortured Neville's parents until they went permanently insane, when poor Neville was just a baby.

Neville is no longer a baby, however. In fact, he's growing into a supremely capable wizard. After Neville hears about ten Death Eaters' escaping from Azkaban, including three responsible for the torture of his parents, he throws himself headlong into Dumbledore's Army and begins practicing magic like mad. The subsequent change in Neville is significant. Harry can't help but notice that Neville "was improving so fast it was quite unnerving" [OOTP, p. 553]. Motivated by the desire to protect his friends and avenge his parents' torture, he rapidly improves.

All of this spells bad news for Bellatrix and good news for fans who want to see Bellatrix get her comeuppance. Neville, with a broken nose, meets Bellatrix for the first time in the Department of Mysteries at the end of OOTP and the mutual hatred between the two is evident:

"Longbottom?" repeated Bellatrix, and a truly evil smile lit her gaunt face. "Why, I have had the pleasure of meeting your parents, boy...."

"IDOE YOU HABI!" roared Neville, and he fought so hard against his captor's encircling grip that the Death Eater shouted, "Someone Stun him!" [OOTP, p. 800]

Bellatrix's sickening taunt, followed by Neville's roar of hatred, shows that this fight has become personal. You can bet that in the seventh and final book, with the ultimate battle between good and evil sure to occur, these two will have ample opportunity to settle the score once and for all. And because of the depth of their hatred for one another, neither will be happy until the other is dead.

We're confident that when the dust from this battle clears, Neville will emerge victorious. He will win because not only is he driven by revenge, but he's also driven by the power of love. He deeply loves his parents as well as his friends. Motivated by this love, he will improve his magical abilities even more than he did in HBP. When that happens, Bellatrix will be no match for Neville. Just as the power of love will give Harry the edge he needs to defeat the Dark Lord, the power of love will allow Neville to rise up and defeat his arch nemesis as well.

slightest bit of difference to the story, but the implications of those that do are enormous.

A Debt between Friends

A life debt is contracted when one wizard saves the life of another, and the magic of the bond ensures that the debt must be repaid. Since Hogwarts and the wizarding world are pretty dangerous places to be, friends end up saving each other's lives all the time. And thus many life debts are created:

Ron is indebted to Harry:

For saving Ron's life when he had drunk poisoned mead in Horace Slughorn's office [HBP, p. 398].

Hermione is indebted to Harry:

For interrupting a Death Eater's Killing Curse in the battle at the Department of Mysteries [OOTP, p. 789].

Dumbledore is indebted to Snape:

For saving his life when he had been critically injured by the ring Horcrux [HBP, p. 503].

The bottom line, however, is that none of these debts is really important. Friends will save a friend's life when it comes down to it anyway, and they don't need a life debt to make them do it. At the end of the day, a debt between enemies is much more fun.

A Debt between Enemies

A debt between enemies is the sort of debt that really makes a difference, the sort of debt that makes people change the way they behave. More life debts have been created between enemies than you might think, and two of them are absolutely vital to the plot of Book 7. The full list looks like this:

Life Debts and Where They Will Lead Wormtail

The concept of a wizarding life debt is introduced at the end of POA, and although it is barely mentioned again, it will become absolutely vital in Book 7. It is really true to say that the entire outcome of the Harry/Voldemort war hinges on a wizarding debt (or two).

It's probably best left to Dumbledore, wise as he was, to describe what a life debt is all about:

"When one wizard saves another wizard's life, it creates a certain bond between them... This is magic at its deepest, its most impenetrable... the time may come when you will be very glad you saved Pettigrew's life." [POA, p. 427]

And that's it. A simple definition and then goodbye. Nobody mentions life debts again for the next three books, although in that time many debts have been created. Some of them won't make the

Snape is indebted to James Potter:

For preventing Snape from being attacked by Remus Lupin in werewolf form after Sirius had tricked him into going to find him [POA, p. 357].

Harry is indebted to Snape:

For saving Harry from being thrown to his death from his broom during his first game of Quidditch for Gryffindor [SS, pp. 190 & 289].

Crouch Jr. is indebted to Crouch Sr.:

For springing Crouch Jr. out of Azkaban, where he was dying [GOF, p. 684].

Pettigrew is indebted to Harry:

For stopping Sirius and Remus from killing him in the Shrieking Shack, in revenge for his betrayal of the Potters [POA, p. 375].

The first of these life debts, between Snape and James Potter, is an interesting one. Snape told Voldemort about Trelawney's prophecy, which led to Voldemort killing James and Lily. This would seem to contradict the life-debt magic since Snape was indirectly responsible for this murder. But Snape did not know to whom the prophecy referred. When he finally realized that it targeted the Potters, he tried to save them by defecting from the Death Eaters and telling Dumbledore all he knew. But it was too late. James and Lily were killed, and he had failed to fulfill his debt. But the important thing is that he *did* try to save them.

The debt that Harry owes to Snape is a vital one. Its effects could have Harry trying to save Snape in Book 7 (see the Snape chapter for more information on this debt). The third debt, the one between Crouch Jr. and Crouch Sr., gives us a surprising insight into the nature of life debts. But the fourth debt, between Pettigrew and Harry, is the big one. It's the debt that Dumbledore was talking about when he explained how the magic works, and the one that has been brushed under the carpet since the end of POA, in the hope

that we'll forget all about it. Not a chance! Wormtail's debt to Harry is big business, and Dumbledore, who was rarely wrong, hit the nail bang on the head during his explanation: "The time may come when you will be very glad you saved Pettigrew's life" [POA, p. 427].

The debt in question hasn't greatly changed Peter's behavior yet, although you can see its subtle effects whenever he encounters Harry: He doesn't even dare to look him in the face [GOF, p. 639]. But the time is coming, and when it comes, the effect it will have on the final outcome of Harry's war with Voldemort will be huge. We even have a promise from J.K.R. on this one:

Will Wormtail ever pay Harry back?

J.K.R.: You'll see... Keep reading! [World Book Day, 2004]

And whenever J.K.R. starts to get evasive like this, you can bet your life that somebody's hitting on a nerve.

Binding?

But before we get into the Wormtail situation, let's take a quick look at the third debt—the one between the two Crouches, father and son. Why? Because it teaches us something very important about the nature of the magic in question.

The thing about Crouch Jr. is that he killed his father [GOF, p. 690]. And he did it after his father had saved his life. He *should* have been bound by a life debt, and so have been quite unable to kill the person he was indebted to. But he wasn't. He murdered his father without a second thought. So how did he do it?

He managed it because a life debt is not created when a wizard saves the life of another. It is created when a wizard *feels indebted to* another for saving his or her life. The magic is set by the feeling of owing one's life to someone, not by the physical act of saving that took place. There is a subtle difference, but it's very important. If you don't feel indebted to the person who saved you, if you gen-

uinely don't care about what they did, if you feel no emotion about it, then no debt is created.

Barty Crouch, Jr. is a special kind of slimeball. He truly loves the acts of torture and murder that he commits in Voldemort's name. He has no remorse, no regret, no feelings for those he kills and maims. And he has no feelings for the man who saved his life, even though that man was his own father. In the very special case of Barty Crouch, Jr. there is no life debt, because he is so cold he is unable to feel anything.

So a life debt is binding, but if you are detached enough to feel nothing, the debt is not created in the first place. On the other side of the fence is Peter Pettigrew. When Harry stepped in to save him, he flung his arms around Harry's knees, muttering "thank you" over and over again.

If he'd been a little more like Barty, he might have avoided creating a debt. But Peter Pettigrew clings to life like a limpet, and the chances are zero that he felt nothing when Harry saved his life. And so he contracted a life debt to Harry, and in the war that's brewing, it will lead not only to his own destruction, but to a whole lot more trouble for his Dark master to boot.

The Wormtail Debt

The way Peter picked up his life debt is pretty well-known, but it's worth quickly going over the major points. Wormtail was, of course, the spy who passed secrets from the Order of the Phoenix to Lord Voldemort, something that he did for over a year [POA, p. 374]. The information he passed on after he was made Secret Keeper for the Potters when they went into hiding led to their murder, for which he successfully managed to frame Sirius Black before faking his own death.

Peter then went into hiding for 12 years, using his animagus form to pose as a rat. Things went all wrong for him, however, when Sirius escaped from Azkaban and tracked him down at Hogwarts. Along with Remus Lupin, he was about to kill Peter for his treach-

ery when Harry intervened and stopped it—not out of pity for Peter, but because he didn't want Sirius and Remus to make themselves murderers just to avenge James's death. Harry intended that Wormtail should be sent to Azkaban, but instead he escaped back to Voldemort, but with his new debt as an unforeseen (and presumably unmentioned) burden [POA, p. 381].

In order to understand how Peter's life debt will play out in Book 7, we need to understand Peter himself. We learn almost nothing new about him in the last two books, however; it is from POA and GOF that we get most of our facts. As things stand at the end of HBP, Peter has turned up, contracted his life debt, taken part in Voldemort's rebirthing ceremony, and disappeared without a trace. (We're ignoring his stint as Scabbers here, because it tells us next to nothing about Peter himself.) Based on what we know about him up to this point, what is Peter really like?

Under the Fur: The Real Rat

Everything we know about Wormtail so far gives us clues to how his life debt will lead him to behave in Book 7. He is weak, cowardly, selfish, surly, and resentful; he seeks out the most powerful people he can find and tries to bask in their reflected glory and take advantage of their protection. Having done so, he spends his time figuring out how he can turn their power to his own advantage.

At school, he somehow managed to worm his way into James's and Sirius's gang, the Marauders. In it he played the part of the adoring idiot, hero-worshipping both James and Sirius, making appreciative noises at all the right times, and laughing at their jokes [OOTP, pp. 644-45]. This kept him going until they graduated, when he followed them into the Order of the Phoenix. And there Voldemort picked him off with ease.

Of course, Peter was being threatened by the Dark Lord, and he was terrified; but still, his behavior was inexcusable. He knew that his information would lead James and Lily to be murdered, and surely he would have assumed that the baby Harry would die as

well, but he prized his own skin more highly than the lives of his friends. It is also clear that he did what he did partly for his own gain. After all, he was in the Order of the Phoenix, under the guard of none other than Albus Dumbledore, and yet he chose to side with the less-powerful Voldemort. If he'd gone to Dumbledore the moment Voldemort threatened him, he would have been protected; end of story. But he took a different path because he saw more benefit in it for himself. He saw an opportunity to be a part of the ruling Dark elite rather than just a mere soldier on the side of good.

Therefore, when Voldemort first threatened him, his actions in passing on Order information were triggered by pure cowardice. However, by the time he betrayed the Potters he had seen the advantages in working for the Dark side, and what he did then was driven by greed. Peter went from seeking out the powerful in order to look good himself, to organizing the murder of his own friends for gain, and he did so pretty quickly.

Voldemort himself knows how unreliable the affections of Wormtail are: "Your devotion is nothing more than cowardice. You would not be here if you had anywhere else to go" [GOF, p. 9]. As such, he treats Peter with the contempt that he deserves, making his life a misery. But Peter does get something he wants out of the arrangement. He has no self-respect, but he does have reflected glory, and he does have the ear of the most powerful wizard in the world to make him feel important.

Peter still does things only for his own gain; it's just that he has little choice left anymore. Voldemort doesn't trust him, and for this reason he does his best not to let Peter in on anything important. To the Dark Lord, Wormtail's usefulness ended when he cut off his hand to add to the regeneration potion [GOF, p. 641], and now he is just a liability.

Peter, however, is cleverer than he is often made out to be. He did, after all, master the exceptionally difficult animagus transformation, with a little help from his friends [POA, p. 354]. He also

performed a faultless Avada Kedavra on Cedric Diggory with someone else's wand [GOF, p. 638]. Avada Kedavra is a complex spell that requires "a powerful bit of magic behind it" [GOF, p. 217], and to perform it so well with the wrong wand is the work of a very competent wizard.

This clever streak makes him dangerous—but dangerous to his master, not to anyone else. Voldemort has tried to get rid of him by banishing him to be Snape's house servant [HBP, p. 23]. But Peter is still there, watching, listening at doors, and trying to pick up on anything that he can use to his own advantage.

It will be no surprise to Voldemort when Peter turns against him in Book 7, for Voldemort never believed he was loyal in the first place. At first, he won't care, either: Peter is dispensable. But Voldemort will change his mind when he sees how much damage Wormtail is able to do with his pieced-together knowledge. The discovery will take him aback, because Peter will do the unthinkable—he will save the life of the boy he once tried to condemn to death.

But the one man who will be most surprised by Peter's sudden urge to help Harry will be none other than Peter himself. He won't be intending to help him because he never does anything unselfish. But he will find himself bound by the impenetrable magic of the life debt. And so, without knowing why, he will save Harry anyway. The Worm is about to turn!

How Will Wormtail Pay Off His Debt?

Now that Dumbledore is dead, Peter has already started to feel braver. His master's worst enemy is gone, and all that remains is to kill Harry Potter. What could be easier? Peter sees his dearest wish coming true—to get the glory without any risk. As Book 7 opens, he will stop skulking around in the background; he'll gain a taste for more action. He thinks he'll be able to show how useful he can be to the cause without actually putting himself in the line of danger.

Voldemort will see this as an opportunity: He can use Peter as cannon fodder. If Peter does something helpful, all well and good;

if he dies, no loss. What Voldemort hasn't considered is that Peter could do serious damage to his cause because Voldemort has always underestimated Peter's intelligence. We believe this mistake will cost Voldemort his victory in the end. That might sound overdramatic, but the truth is that when Wormtail is around, disaster is always just around the corner. You only have to see the way that he let Bartemius Crouch Sr. escape when he was meant to be guarding him (GOF, p. 689), or look at what happened when the Potters trusted him to be their Secret Keeper (POA, pp. 365 & 369) to recognize that.

Feeling safe in the company of Voldemort and Snape, Wormtail will talk his way into Voldemort's inner circle. We may wonder why Voldemort would want him on the team, but remember that Wormtail is no idiot, and most of the Death Eaters are dead, or locked up in Azkaban. Bellatrix Lestrange will be detained by her own conflict with Neville Longbottom, and with quality supporters becoming a little hard to come by, even Wormtail is a better bet than someone as insane and unpredictable as Fenrir Greyback.

But keeping Peter around will have serious consequences for Voldemort. Peter knows too much. After all, he's always in the background, watching and listening for anything that might be useful to him. And surely, after all his time spent in Voldemort's company, he will have learned a thing or two about Horcruxes.

Assuming that Harry is a Horcrux, as discussed in Chapter 12, Peter's insider information will become extremely useful to Harry, who will be faced with a very unpleasant dilemma in Book 7: If Harry is a Horcrux, and all the Horcruxes must be destroyed to defeat Voldemort, doesn't it logically follow that Harry will have to destroy himself? We predict that Harry will be on the verge of killing himself when Wormtail will come to Harry's aid. Forced by the magic of the life debt, Wormtail will quite unwillingly describe to Harry how it is possible to destroy the Horcrux without destroying the vessel that holds it.

In doing so, he will save Harry's life and fulfill his life debt. But his reward will be most severe. Voldemort won't be happy with Peter for his treachery. And since Peter's usefulness was marginal at best to the Dark Lord before, it is quite likely that Voldemort will dispatch him with a cold and swift Killing Curse when he learns what Peter has done.

And so Peter's selfish life will come to an end, as he is cast aside and killed by the master he chose, because he has become a liability to him. What's more, he will be mourned by nobody, least of all by Voldemort.

Back when he was a child, Peter Pettigrew had the chance to be one of the good guys, a chance to be like his idols James and Sirius. But he let cowardice and greed lead him to the Dark side. He decided that his friends and their baby should be sacrificed for his own gain, but never earned the respect of his new master. And ironically, it will be that master who kills him in the end once he has no further use for him. Wormtail was unloved, and in death will be unmissed. His life debt, however, did lead him—against his will—to prevent Harry from killing himself, and for that he will always be a part of the final defeat of the Dark Lord.