



# Harry Potter And The Half-Priced Hooker

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Let me start out by saying that I haven't read any of the Harry Potter books. It's not an elitist thing. I don't think I'm better than them or anything like that; it's more a case of "so much to read, so little time," particularly when you throw in the fact that there's about three thousand pages of text to deal with there. Still, while I haven't *read* the Harry Potter books, I admire them very much, and when I say I admire them, I mean they've made an obscene amount of money.

When you throw in the video game licensing fees and action figures and movie rights, on top of the millions and millions of books that have been sold in every conceivable language on the planet Earth, the only logical conclusion to come to is this: if we follow the precedent set by O.J. Simpson, J.K. Rowling could murder a waiter a week for the rest of her natural life and still have enough left over for her children's children to carry on her work (the murdering that is, not the writing).

Now, I'm apt to opt for the 10% tip over murder as recourse for poor service, although some of my friends who've waited tables would argue that the former is far worse. Still, I have student loans to pay, so when I see the kind of numbers Ms. Rowling is doing, like every writer out there, I'm trying to think of a good way to rip her off. But it's not easy. I'm sure publishers and agents across the country have had their fill of book proposals about teenagers and magic and funny beasts like Huffletroughs and Doodlegrabbers. It's probably gotten to the point where every player in the business is secretly shopping their own young-adult fantasy around, like accountants heading off to the gold rush.

So I wonder, what can I do to make my story just different enough to sell? What can I add?

The answer's clear: sex. Gratuitous sex. And lots of it.

That's what the kids want. Think about it. That's what everybody wants. After all, it's not Harry Potter that

gets stacked on the shelves next to the magazines at Walgreens. The books that get placed there have women in chains on the cover with the shadow of their not-quite-criminal ravisher looming over them. Throw in some black cats and magic potions as filler between the sex scenes (tastefully done, of course), and you've forged your own mint.

The standards of the romance genre generally demand that the seducer's charms be irresistible, almost supernatural, so that the woman involved isn't entirely responsible for her actions. Why not take the concept to its logical limit—Harry Potter as a likable rogue, possessed with a wand that is truly undeniable? Throw in the boarding school setting's potential for some Sapphic action, and both genders are hooked. Sure, mom might not be buying a copy for junior at Christmas, but as long as she gets one for herself, who cares?

I realize that I might feel a little guilty about writing Anne Rice for adolescents. But if the first book's successful enough, I can just hand the franchise over to a ghostwriter and dedicate myself to doing what I really want to do: cash the checks. And after I've paid my student loans, if there's enough left over, I might even treat J.K. Rowling to lunch, just to make sure there are no hard feelings.

The waiter, however, better be at the top of his game.