



Waterstone's

Press Release

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Harry Potter Prequel to be sold at Waterstone's charity auction

On Tuesday, June 10, 2008, a unique storycard hand-written and signed by JK Rowling will be sold in a charity auction, revealing a never-before-seen prequel to the Harry Potter series.

JK Rowling is just one of thirteen internationally renowned authors who have donated an original, highly-collectable storycard to the *What's Your Story?* auction, which will be held at Waterstone's flagship store on Piccadilly in London, with the assistance of Sotheby's. All proceeds will be donated to English PEN and Dyslexia Action.

JK Rowling's story is around 800 words long and finishes with the handwritten words - "From the prequel I am not working on – but that was fun!" and signed JK Rowling 2008. All thirteen cards will be sold without a reserve price.

The full list of authors writing for *What's Your Story?* includes: **Lisa Appignanesi, Margaret Atwood, Lauren Child, Sebastian Faulks, Richard Ford, Neil Gaiman, Nick Hornby, Doris Lessing, Michael Rosen, JK Rowling, Axel Scheffler, Tom Stoppard** and **Irvine Welsh**.

Gerry Johnson, Managing Director, Waterstone's comments:

"*What's Your Story?* just gets more and more exciting – all these brilliant works by amazing writers and illustrators, every one a small masterpiece, and now this – the prequel to Harry Potter. We never dreamed that JK Rowling would donate something so precious, and we're incredibly grateful. I can't begin to guess how much it will raise at auction – suffice to say I think we will see some impressive sums being bid, and a lot of money raised for English PEN and Dyslexia Action."

Reflecting on recent experience with a 93-word teaser card (sold in 2002 for £26,680), and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* (which sold for £1,950,000 in 2007), Sotheby's specialist Philip Errington said: "Given the enormous interest we have seen in recent times for autograph work by JK Rowling, the prospects for her storycard are good to say the least. There is just no telling how high the bidding might go."

Shortly after the auction, facsimiles of all the cards will be displayed in branches of Waterstone's nationwide and online at Waterstones.com. In August a printed postcard book featuring all thirteen storycards will be available to buy in Waterstone's stores and online. The public can pre-order the book from Thursday 29th May 2008 at Waterstone's branches and at Waterstones.com. All profits from the sale of the book will go to English PEN and Dyslexia Action. Waterstone's National Press Officer Jon Howells said: "We expect this book to sell out within a matter of days – it will be the fastest selling book of the year."

Blank storycards are also available in-store and online at Waterstones.com, and customers and the public are invited to join in and write their own stories – over 1,300 have done so online already. These customer cards will also make their way into the window displays, will be featured in the online gallery at Waterstones.com, and the very best will be published alongside the author storycards in the Postcard Book.

Highlights of the storycards include:

- **Nick Hornby** – Hornby calls on his love of pop-culture for this mixture of collage and text, introducing the newest, oddest superhero on the scene – Nightburner!
- **Michael Rosen** – The Children's laureate delivers an acerbic tale that shows that not only can't you fight City Hall, you can't outbid it either
- **Doris Lessing** – The Nobel laureate's story is one that celebrates the power of reading and will tug at the heartstrings of any booklover
- **Tom Stoppard** – Nothing gets past Inspector Chamberlain in Tom Stoppard's brilliantly theatrical short mystery
- **Axel Scheffler** – In four perfect frames, Scheffler tells a small, but perfectly formed, tale of the Gruffalo, with a brilliant punchline
- **Neil Gaiman** – Gaiman is a master of short fiction, and this story is a great example of his work – spooky, scary and with a killer twist. A great detective mulls over a series of gruesome murders: is the killer on the loose in the woods, or somewhere closer to home...
- **Lisa Appignanesi** – Appignanesi has delivered a clever, poignant tale of all-consuming love and the consequences of desire
- **Richard Ford** – Two strangers, who share similarly tragic reasons for travelling, cross paths on a train, in Ford's typically thoughtful study
- **Margaret Atwood** will be joining the auction live from Paris to write her original storycard via her unique LongPen™ machine, which allows her to sign books remotely using a touch sensitive pad and a computer link-up to guide a robotic arm.
- **Sebastian Faulks** – Desire and obsession lie at the heart of Faulks classically-inspired erotic tale.
- **Irvine Welsh** - This tale of a taciturn oil rig worker at odds with his lot is vintage Welsh and full of earthy language and humour

Waterstones.com/whatsyourstory

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The *What's Your Story?* charity auction will take place at Waterstone's Piccadilly on 10 June. Only invited guests will be allowed to bid at this private auction.
- All thirteen author storycards, as well as selected customer and bookseller cards, will go on sale this August in a *What's Your Story?* Postcard Book with a retail price of £5. -Pre-orders can be placed from Thursday 29th May in Waterstone's branches and at Waterstones.com. All profits will go to English PEN and Dyslexia Action.
- Gerry Johnson, Managing Director at Waterstone's is available for interview at the auction via Colman Getty and Waterstone's can supply a spokesperson at any other time.
- The full list of participating authors is:
 - Lisa Appignanesi
 - Margaret Atwood
 - Lauren Child

- Sebastian Faulks
 - Richard Ford
 - Neil Gaiman
 - Nick Hornby
 - Doris Lessing
 - Michael Rosen
 - J K Rowling
 - Axel Scheffler
 - Tom Stoppard
 - Irvine Welsh
- Waterstone's opened its first bookshop in 1982 and is now the UK's leading specialist bookseller. With a reputation built upon the knowledge and enthusiasm of our 4,500 booksellers, Waterstone's aims to interest and excite its customers, continually inspiring people to read and engage in books. An average sized Waterstone's store merchandises a range of around 30,000 individual books, with 200,000 titles in the largest store
 - Recent auction prices achieved for autograph manuscripts by JK Rowling include:
 - Autograph card (signed) referring to the then forthcoming book, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, sold at Sotheby's London, December 2002, for £26,680
 - One of just seven copies of a new work by JK Rowling - *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* – sold at Sotheby's London, December 2007, for £1,950,000. The price achieved represented an auction record for a modern literary manuscript; an auction record for a work by JK Rowling; and an auction record for a children's book. Proceeds benefited The Children's Voice campaign
 - English PEN is the founding centre of International PEN, a membership association with 144 branches in more than one hundred countries, providing an active and

supportive community for writers and readers around the world. PEN was founded in 1921 by Amy Dawson Scott in order to promote literature as a means of greater understanding between cultures. The President of English PEN is Lisa Appignanesi and the Director is Jonathan Heawood. For more information visit www.englishpen.org. Lisa Appignanesi, President, English PEN says: "Stories are vital in creating bridges between individuals and cultures. They are our life-lines to imaginative understanding. They help to shape our dreams and our inner life. What's more, everyone has at least one. English PEN applauds this wonderful initiative."

- Dyslexia Action is a national charity and the UK's leading provider of services and support for people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. It specialises in assessment teaching and training. It also develops and distributes teaching materials and undertakes research. Dyslexia Action services are available through its 26 centres and 160 teaching locations around the UK. Over half a million people benefit from its work each year. For more information visit www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk. Shirley Cramer, Chief Executive Officer, Dyslexia Action adds: "Campaigns like *What's Your Story?* are vital in raising awareness of dyslexia. Books and stories are often closed to the 10% of the population affected by dyslexia. The money and attention raised will help these adults and children find a new and lasting interest in reading and writing. Please tell us your story."
- The auction will be taken by Sotheby's auctioneer Edward Rising. Edward is one of a host of Sotheby's employees who dedicates much time and energy to assisting with charity auctions for a wide variety of causes. In 2007, Sotheby's UK auctioneers took no fewer than 73 charity auctions at venues throughout the country, raising a total of £27.3 million. Charities that benefited included: The Royal Marsden Hospital; Royal Academy Schools; Marie Curie Cancer Care; The Prince's Trust; and Elton John Aids Foundation.

- *What's Your Story?* forms part of the Waterstone's *Writer's Year* which will see unique projects unveiled each month, celebrating the writer and coinciding with the National Year of Reading 2008. The monthly events included the introduction of *The Bookseller's Bursary* in April, a scheme designed to encourage budding authors within the company by sending two booksellers on an all expenses paid writing course. In May, Sebastian Faulks selected 40 books that shaped his writing for *The Writer's Table*, and October will see the launch of the Waterstone's *Featured Poet*.