

## Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince Book Review by Sarina

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, the sixth installment in J.K. Rowling's beloved series, follows Harry's sixth year at Hogwarts (shocker!) as the Wizarding World faces increasing dangers from Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters. This book was so much for me that, when I read this series for the first time, I had to resume reading a year later.

The story begins with the Muggle Prime Minister meeting Cornelius Fudge and the new Minister for Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour. They inform him about the recent wizarding events affecting the non-magical world, signaling the growing threat of Voldemort's return. Meanwhile, Harry is spending another miserable summer with the Dursleys, still grieving the loss of his godfather, Sirius Black. Unexpectedly, Albus Dumbledore arrives to escort Harry to the Weasleys' home. On the way, they make a detour to visit Horace Slughorn, a retired Hogwarts professor. Dumbledore convinces Slughorn to return to Hogwarts, partly by introducing him to the famous Harry Potter.

As the new school year begins, Harry learns that Slughorn will be teaching Potions, while Severus Snape has finally achieved his long-desired position as Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor. In Potions class, Harry is given a used textbook that once belonged to someone calling themselves the "Half-Blood Prince." The book contains handwritten tips and spells that help Harry excel in the subject, making Hermione a little bit sad since this was technically the first prep book for a class in the Wizarding World.

Throughout the year, Dumbledore gives Harry private lessons, showing him memories related to Voldemort's past. These sessions reveal crucial information about Voldemort's history and his path to becoming the Dark Lord. Harry learns about Horcruxes, objects in which Voldemort has hidden pieces of his soul to achieve immortality. Meanwhile, Harry becomes increasingly suspicious of Draco Malfoy, believing him to be a Death Eater working on a secret mission within Hogwarts. Harry's friends are skeptical of his concerns, but Harry remains convinced and begins to obsessively track Malfoy's movements.

There's also a little bit of romance here among all of the conflict. Harry develops feelings for Ginny Weasley, Ron's younger sister, while Ron and Hermione begin to fall for each other as well. Spoiler alert: they really all do become family.

As the year progresses, strange and dangerous events occur at Hogwarts, and Harry suspects Malfoy's involvement in these incidents but lacks concrete proof. Harry continues to use the Half-Blood Prince's book to his advantage, even learning new spells like "Sectumsempra." However, when he uses this spell on Malfoy without knowing its effects, he seriously injures him, leading to feelings of guilt and having the book taken away.

Towards the end of the school year, Dumbledore believes he has located one of Voldemort's Horcruxes. He takes Harry along on a dangerous mission to retrieve it from a seaside cave. They face numerous magical obstacles, including a potion that severely weakens Dumbledore. They successfully obtain the locket they believe to be the Horcrux and return to Hogwarts.

Upon their arrival, they find the Dark Mark hovering over the school. Racing to the Astronomy Tower, they encounter Draco Malfoy, who disarms Dumbledore. It's revealed that Draco has been working all year on a plan to assassinate Dumbledore, but he hesitates to perform the killing curse. Snape arrives and, to Harry's horror, kills Dumbledore instead. (I stopped reading here my first time.) Harry pursues Snape and the fleeing Death Eaters. During a confrontation, Snape reveals that he is the Half-Blood Prince, the former owner of Harry's Potions textbook. Snape escapes with Draco, leaving Harry devastated by Dumbledore's death and the betrayal.

In the aftermath, Harry discovers that the locket they retrieved is a fake, containing a note from someone with the initials R.A.B. The book ends with Dumbledore's funeral, attended by a vast array of wizards, magical creatures, and even Merpeople from the lake. Harry, now

more determined than ever, decides not to return to Hogwarts for his seventh year. Instead, he commits to finding and destroying the remaining Horcruxes, the key to Voldemort's defeat. Ron and Hermione plan to join him.

This book, as you can probably tell, was a lot. I rate it a 7/10!