

New Cyberian Times

Book Review

(International Edition) February 2nd, 2003

Even though the fifth Harry Potter book will be released in June, the *Cyberian Times Book Review* is pleased to provide an exclusive excerpt of *Harry Potter and the Bagels of Brynania*. Available in 2005 but already #3 on Amazon.com...

Ron looked around. "So where are we again?"

Hermione replied before Harry could. "This is the enchanted land of Brynania, on the continent of Cyberia, a realm famous for its beautiful sights, above-average bagels, unconfirmed sightings of corned beef, and constant internal upheavals..."

"That's not all!" Hermione's guidebook petulantly piped up. "You're forgetting the most important fact!"

"Namely," said Harry, "that everything you see, and I do mean everything, is controlled by one person."

"Tosh!" replied Ron. "How in the world can one person control absolutely everything in one realm? No wizard is strong enough to do that!" He looked up, where Hedwig had apparently discovered a snack. She was perched on a high branch above the three friends, munching a bagel with a serene expression on her face, (serene for an owl at any rate).

"It's true!" Hermione insisted. "Everything you see here, from the trees to the people to the social commentaries, is guided by a slightly eccentric wizard who lives far from here in the Island of West. His powers are so extensive that it's said he can control whole populations, the weather, and even political opinion in this realm. Brynania is but one country out of six where he holds sway!"

Ron didn't look convinced. "And you say he does this alone? No help at all from anyone or anything? No talismans, stones, or magical beasts that we always seem to bump into back at Hogwart's just before getting threatened with expulsion?"

"Almost no one." Harry amended. "The stories do say that he does have the odd minion helping him out here and there. Including one who lives in subterranean lab in Halifax surrounded by computer equipment, a blue TIE fighter, coffee mugs, and pizza boxes, and speaks only in HTML. Another minion, a great collector of books, is an economic sorcerer who can manipulate dividends telepathically!"

"Deep!" Ron said.

"Awk!" cried Hedwig. Harry craned his neck upwards to see his messenger owl caught in a tug of war over the rest of her bagel with a smaller, sparrowlike bird. Using his wand, Harry sent a flash of light over the new arrival's head, startling it. Hedwig yanked the bagel free as her nemesis swooped away.

"That's a simsim bird." said Hermione, looking after the departing avian. "They're found all around these parts, usually making sure everything here's running smoothly. I heard they can really be pests to some people, causing accidents and weakening the stock markets..."

Ron looked impatient. "So what are we here for? O! Professor McGonagall wanted us to come to this realm for fieldwork, but surely we can't be here just to stare at the trees and compare poppy with sesame seeds!" "She wanted us to study Muggle problem-solving practices, and said that this place was ideal for doing that.", explained Harry.

"From what I've seen so far here, Muggles usually solve their problems by forming committees, issuing conflicting press releases, and complaining about their Yahoo accounts crashing." Ron mused.

"We'd best be off then," said Hermione. "We need to be in Hamrville before dark and this would be the ideal place for You-Know-Who to show up."

Harry nodded, but Ron looked skeptical. "Oh c'mon, everyone knows he never shows up until near the end of the book, uh, semester..."

Hermione looked at Ron askance, "There's always a first time!"

"So true. After you then?" The three began to walk down the path towards the Brynanian capital, with Hedwig flying overhead. None of them noticed that one of the simsim birds had begun to change shape and glare malevolently after them...