

318 words, column #13  
Java Talk  
(for July 19 to July 25, 2007)

## Every Age Is The Best Age

### *Harry and Conrad*

Both Harry Potter, wizard, born in 1980, and Conrad Black, media magnate, 62, have international audiences wondering how their situations are going to turn out this week, especially whether or not the lives of these exceedingly unusual characters are going to come to an untimely end, really. The last Harry Potter book will be released, finally. Meanwhile, Conrad Black will be incarcerated, possibly.

However, vigorous appeals are being made to spare their lives. Conrad, who is on trial in the U.S., is well-known in Canada for all the newspapers he owned, but he also gave up his Canadian citizenship, in order to become a Member of the British House of Lords, too. Meanwhile, over 325 million Harry Potter books, so far, have been sold, (making the author, J. K. Rowling, the highest earning novelist in literary history); and they have been translated into more than 63 languages. Publishers have even announced a record-breaking 12 million copies for the first print run of the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows*, in the U.S. alone.

The stories about Harry and Conrad are going to continue until they are “done to death!” It makes a more intriguing story. “He’s a pretty difficult guy to read,” said a reporter watching Conrad enter the court house to hear the jury’s verdict. For twelve days, although they “had been quite deliberate in their work,” they had been “dead-locked,” too. Rowling didn’t have a particular age group in mind when she started writing her stories, but death is a major theme in the series. She decided the fate of Harry, however, earlier this year, when she made her own deliberate and difficult decisions, in room 652 of the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh.

In any case, whatever the powers of the pen or penitentiary, this week we will hear some of their final sentences and learn how Harry and Conrad’s lives end, for now.

Deidre Hill