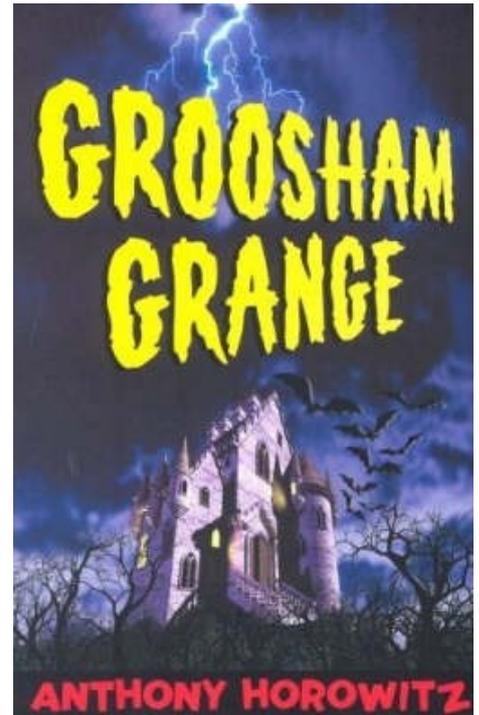


## THE BOOK REVIEW—FEBRUARY MMXII

A boarding school full of black magic, ghosts and sorcery. It all sounds very familiar to readers of the Harry Potter books. However, these books were written by Anthony Horowitz long before JK Rowling created Hogwarts and Quidditch.

Groosham Grange and Return to Groosham Grange are two enjoyable reads and tell the story of a rebellious twelve year old boy, David Eliot, who is sent to Groosham Grange boarding school by his domineering and callous father. At the school, David discovers that as the 7th son of the 7th son he has inherited magical powers. At first, David tries to resist his calling and attempts to escape from school, but eventually succumbs to the ways of the school. In return to Groosham Grange, David has become a model pupil and uses his powers to help save the school. There are some wonderful characters at the School including the 2 Heads.

**Russell rating: \*\*\*\***



*Ruth Rendell who also writes as Barbara Vine*

“Put on by cunning” by Ruth Rendell is one of the series of Inspector Wexford novels. However, unlike many novels in this collection, this tale takes us out of the Sussex countryside where Chief Inspector Reg Wexford feels so comfortable to Los Angeles where he chases shadows as the case becomes a personal obsession.

The story works so successfully because the writer sets the scene of the crime brilliantly. She describes a group of happy people (and a dog) who love and serve the kind, elderly and wealthy Manuel Carmargue. The tragic death by drowning of Manuel a week before his second marriage shatters their lives. When foul play is suspected and Manuel’s heir, Natalie, is challenged as being a fraud, what should be a very simple crime to solve becomes very complicated by the lies, love, greed and jealousy of those most closely involved. Indeed, Wexford is so convinced that Natalie Carmargue is not who she claims to be that he ruins his family holiday in the States looking for the body of the real heiress.

Although the crime is solved by Wexford at the end of the novel, I was left with a sense of emptiness in that nobody gained and everybody had lost something. So, a good read but not a story to uplift your spirits or make you feel better about human nature.

**Russell rating: \*\*\*\***

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