

Watch this fantastic Harry Potter fan film, Voldemort: Origins of the Heir

One of the biggest attractions to J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is the immense backstory and history of her wizarding world. While Warner Bros. has begun to explore some of that lore in its *Fantastic Beasts* franchise, one group of fans have filmed their own version, one that explores the rise of the dark wizard Voldemort. After a crowdfunding campaign and months of work, Tryangle Films has finally released their own story, *Voldemort: Origins of the Heir*, and it's an impressive fan film that fits nicely alongside the official entries of the franchise.

In 2016 the film's creators had been re-reading the sixth installment of the *Harry Potter* series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, which left them with a question: what drove the character Tom Riddle to become the most hated and feared wizard in the world? They set up a Kickstarter campaign to fund their fan film, only to run into problems with Warner Bros., the studio behind the *Harry Potter* films, which issued a takedown notice. Tryangle Films eventually reached an agreement with the studio, and has finally released its film, clearly marked as an unofficial fan project.

The 52 minute *Voldemort: Origins of the Heir* is a sleek affair, with quite a few digital effects, elaborate sets, and impeccable costumes, but which gets at the heart of an important part of Harry Potter lore. The film follows an original character, Grisha Mac Laggen, the heir of one of the four Hogwarts founders, Godric Gryffindor. The film plays out in flashbacks: Mac Laggen is captured and interrogated at the beginning of the film, and as she's questioned, we get bits and pieces of the mystery that she's trying to solve. It turns

out that she's on the hunt for Tom Riddle, who she knew as a student at Hogwarts, and whom she suspects is involved with the death of a wizard named Hepzibah Smith, a descendant of the Hufflepuff family. Even though she knows Riddle's hunger for power, she tells her interrogators that she believes that he can be redeemed. The story is a gripping one, and it comes to an end with an unexpected twist.

For fans of the the franchise's books and films, there's a lot to like here. Pezzato did his homework, digging into the history of Rowling's world to piece together Riddle's story as he gained power to become Voldemort. It's a nice addition to Harry Potter's world, but it presents a solid story in its own right, even as it sits aesthetically alongside the official films. With the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise expected to number five films, and covering the decades before the *Harry Potter* franchise, it seems likely that we'll likely see some of this backstory in an official film. In the meantime, however, *Voldemort: Origins of the Heir* is a nice diversion to check out while we wait for this year's *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*.

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