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Alice, Beatrix and Harry: Valuable children's literature collection up for auction

 November 24, 2009 | 7:57 am


A valuable collection of children's literature, including Alice's own copy of "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There," a first edition of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" and Beatrix Potter's personal copy of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" will be presented for auction Dec. 16.

It is the collection of NFL player Pat McNally, a Harvard grad who was a punter and receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals from 1976 to 1985. After completing his turn as a professional football player, he started a successful line of football action figures.

The auction, held by Southern California auctioneer [Profiles in History](#), includes an original drawing by John Tenniel of the Gryphon from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (pictured). Two copies of "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There," the Alice sequel, are for sale: One has a pair of original pencil drawings by Tenniel and is estimated to sell for \$40,000 to \$60,000; the other, expected to sell for at least twice as much, is signed by Alice Liddell, who as a young girl inspired Lewis Carroll to write "Alice."

Other first-edition children's books for auction include "Stuart Little" signed by E.B. White; "The Fellowship of the Ring" by J.R.R. Tolkien; "Watership Down" by Richard Adams; and "Mother Goose in Prose," L. Frank Baum's first book, in which Dorothy makes her debut. A copy of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" is accompanied by a letter about Narnia written and signed by C.S. Lewis. There are also limited editions of "Winnie the Pooh," "The House at Pooh Corner" and "Now We Are Six," all inscribed by author A.A. Milne and illustrator Ernest H. Shepard, as well as a limited edition of the first four Harry Potter books inscribed by J.K. Rowling.

There are a few bookish collectibles for adults too, including a first edition of "The Time Machine" signed by H.G. Wells. James Bond fans should be happy: In addition to a first edition of "Goldfinger" signed by Ian Fleming to William Plomer, to whom the book is dedicated, there are first editions of "Thunderball," "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" and "For Your Eyes Only."

Although bids will be accepted by the old-school methods of mail, fax and in person, online auctioneers [icollector](#) and [LiveAuctioneers](#) also will be taking bids.

-- Carolyn Kellogg

Photo: Original John Tenniel drawing of the Gryphon from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

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