



***The Silkworm, by Robert Galbraith***  
***Reviewed by Cindy Kennedy, April 2015***

With her successful *Harry Potter* series behind her, J. K. Rowling has branched out to different genres. Her latest work, the cagey mystery *The Silkworm*, written under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, is a crackly read.

Central to all good murder mysteries is a brooding, complicated detective. In *The Silkworm*, private detective Cormoran Strike certainly fits the bill. Resting on his laurels after solving a supermodel murder case, Strike can pick and choose his clients according to whim. He is intrigued, however, when Leonora Quine reports that her husband, the acerbic novelist Owen Quine, is missing. The philandering Owen, it seems, has a habit of disappearing—and making enemies.

Detective Strike calls upon Owen's literary agent, Elizabeth Tassel, who explains that Owen's latest book is bound to cause a ruckus. Before vetting it thoroughly, Elizabeth had sent out the manuscript of *Bombyx Mori* to two publishers. (*Bombyx Mori*, we learn, is Latin for a kind of silkworm. And in the process of silk-making, silkworms are killed to get them out of their cocoons.)

Elizabeth relates that she unsuccessfully tried to retrieve the potentially libelous manuscript back from the publishers. Apparently, Owen's characters in *Bombyx Mori* are thinly disguised—and unflattering—portraits of people in the London publishing world. *Bombyx Mori* exposes the dark, long-kept secrets of Owen's editor, publisher, and rival author Michael Fancourt.

Soon, Detective Strike discovers that Owen is not missing after all—the vengeful author been found dead, murdered in way that was reflected in his slanderous manuscript. The game is on: who murdered Owen and why? *Harry Potter's* creator keeps us guessing.