

## Cuckoo's Calling Discussion Questions

by Robert Galbraith

### Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & Galbraith's website)

Robert Galbraith is a pseudonym for J.K. Rowling, bestselling author of the Harry Potter series and *The Casual Vacancy*. The first Robert Galbraith novel, **The Cuckoo's Calling**, was published in 2013 to critical acclaim. The books have been adapted as a major new television series for BBC One, produced by Brontë Film and Television.



Why a pseudonym? J.K. Rowling wanted to begin a new writing career in a new genre and to release her crime novels to a neutral audience, free of expectation or hype. Although the author's true identity was unexpectedly revealed, J.K. Rowling continues to write the Cormoran Strike series under the name of Robert Galbraith to maintain the distinction from her other writing. (Per Galbraith's Website)

### Characters:

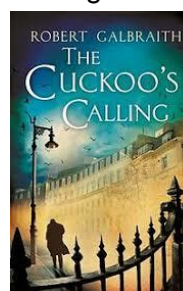
- **Robin Ellacott** – 25 years old. Secretarial temp working for private investigator CD Strike. New to London. Fiancé is Matthew, an accountant.
- **Cormoran (CB) Strike** – 35 years old. Private investigator. Former military investigator. Has a prosthetic leg. Just broke up with his girlfriend, Charlotte. Has a sister, Lucy.
- **Lula Landry** – Famous Model. Adopted at 4 years of age. Has a brother John Bristow. Died of an apparent suicide. Has bipolar disorder. Boyfriend is Evan Duffield.
- **John Bristow** – Lawyer. Hires Strike to look into his sister's, Lula Landry's, death. His deceased little brother, Charlie, knew Strike as a child. His girlfriend & secretary is Alison.
- **Lieutenant Jonah Agyeman** – Sapper in the British army. Currently serving in Afghanistan.
- **Richard Anstis** – Former Army buddy of Strike's. Currently works for the Police.
- **Freddie Bestigui** – Movie producer/director. Married to Tandy. Lives 2 floors below Lula.
- **Tandy Bestigui** – Neighbor who heard an argument at Lula's the night she died. But her evidence was dismissed due to drug use. Married to Freddie Bestigui. Lives 2 floors below Lula.
- **Yvette Bristow** – Lula and John's mother. Has cancer.
- **Detective Inspector Roy Carver** – Detective working the initial Lula Landry death.
- **Charlotte** – Cormoran Strike's ex fiancé. Pathological liar. Rich and beautiful.
- **Evan Duffield** – Actor and musician. Lula's boyfriend. Drug addict.
- **Marlene Higson** – Lula's birth mother.
- **Kieran Kolova-Jones** – Lula's favorite driver. Aspiring actor.

- **Tony Landry** – Lula’s uncle. Yvette’s brother. Managing Partner in the law firm Bristow works for.
- **Deebee Macc (Daryl Brandon “DB” Macdonald)**– Rapper who was supposed to stay (but never made it) at Lula’s building the night she died.
- **Cyprian May** – Ursula’s husband and Tandy’s brother-in-law. Managing Partner in the law firm Bristow works for.
- **Ciara Porter** – Model. Lula’s friend and coworker. Had dinner and went clubbing with Lula the night she died.
- **Rochelle Onifade** – Lula’s homeless friend
- **Guy Some** – Clothing designer who worked with Lula Landry.
- **Detective Sargent Eric Wardle** – Detective working the initial Lula Landry death.
- **Derrick Wilson** – Doorman on duty at Lula’s building night of her death.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Much of the book is devoted to interviews and conversation; as a result, some readers have critiqued lack of action. How did you respond to the dialogue-intensive construction of the book?
3. What makes Lula Landry's apparent suicide suspicious? Lula's character is gradually revealed and the story progresses. What kind of person was she?
4. How does Strike’s disability affect his investigation? How does it affect how he relates to others? Why is his prosthesis pain / discomfort frequently mentioned? Why doesn’t Strike tell Robin about his leg?
5. Robin's search for a career is what preoccupied much of her thoughts, and she was torn between what she saw as two options: job satisfaction and job stability. Which is more important to you, satisfaction or stability? Do you think Robin made the right choice?
6. Why do you think Robin continues working with Strike after he is rude to her? Especially since Matthew (her fiancé) doesn’t like him?
7. Did you figure out the ending? When did you know who the killer was? What clues helped you? As the plot began to unfold, which revelations surprised you the most? What truth was buried beneath the layers of deception?
8. Why do you think Barlow hired Strike? What did Barlow hope to accomplish? If John Barlow had not hired Strike, what do you think would have happened to Lula’s money/inheritance?

9. There is a lot of commentary by character about other characters. How much of our opinion of some of these characters is shaped by how others view them? How do the poor women perceive the rich ones? And vice versa?
10. The book's prologue opens with a quote that translated from Latin reads, "Unhappy is he whose fame makes his misfortunes famous." How does **The Cuckoo's Calling** express this?
11. What do you think the author thinks of our culture's contemporary obsession with celebrities?
12. What do you think of the title? What do you think "calling" means? Why isn't Lula's character referred to as Cuckoo very often in the book?
13. There are some familiar P.I. tropes (suicide being investigated as murder, P.I. is down on his luck, has a crappy office, little work coming in, eager assistant / sidekick) here. Do they feel like clichés, or merely recognizable features of a classic mystery? Does it seem like a typical mystery to you? Anything that makes it stand out among others?
14. The U.S. paperback cover shows the back of a model while she looks out at a sea of cameras while the U.K. version, which is more colorful, shows a man walking under a light post in front of a large building. What do you think of the two different covers? Which do you prefer?
15. What do you think of J.K. Rowling's decision to publish under a pseudonym? Would you have read the book if you didn't know Rowling wrote it? Did knowing the author change your assessment?
16. Rowling has written 2 additional books under the pseudonym Galbraith. Will you read any of them?



## References:

- Johnson County Library – [https://jocolibrary.bibliocommons.com/list/share/75828291\\_whatcomadulibrarians/361320589\\_if\\_you\\_liked\\_the\\_cuckoos\\_calling](https://jocolibrary.bibliocommons.com/list/share/75828291_whatcomadulibrarians/361320589_if_you_liked_the_cuckoos_calling)
- Robert Galbraith website – <http://robert-galbraith.com/>
- Lit Lovers – <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/9361-cuckoos-calling-galbraithrowling?start=3>
- Mount Prospect Public Library – [https://mopl.org/check\\_it\\_out/23860/](https://mopl.org/check_it_out/23860/)
- NNEDV – [http://nnedv.org/downloads/Other/Goodreads/The\\_Cuckoos\\_Calling\\_Sept-Oct2013.pdf](http://nnedv.org/downloads/Other/Goodreads/The_Cuckoos_Calling_Sept-Oct2013.pdf)
- ThoughtCo – <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-cuckoos-calling-discussion-questions-362050>

## Robert Galbraith's Books

*Cormoran Strike Series*

1. *The Cuckoo's Calling* (2013)
2. *The Silkworm* (2014)
3. *Career of Evil* (2015)

---

### If you liked Cuckoo's Calling, try...

- Body Work – Sara Paretsky
  - Wink of an Eye – Lynn Chander-Willis
  - Hope to Die – Lawrence Block
  - The Cut – George Pelecanos
  - Buried Prey – John Sandford
-