Chapter 1

An Ordinary Child

At the end of July in 1965, in a tiny English village north of Bristol, a baby was born. She was an ordinary baby, by all accounts. She had no magic powers to speak of, at least not yet anyway, and she was not regarded widely as special or unique in any way. But the world would come to know her differently in a few decades time.

That child's name was Joanne Rowling, or, as friends and family called her, Jo. And as a kid Jo loved to tell stories. Even at the young ages of four and five she was telling fantasy stories to her younger sister Dianne (who never much wanted to hear them). By the time Jo started Kindergarten, she had already earned herself a reputation in the family for being the storyteller and performer. She loved hearing stories, too—she was a keen reader and would often beg her parents to read her books until she could lock herself away with her favorite titles on her own.

She was always reading, and everyone noticed her nose buried in her books. Her mom also loved books and was delighted by her daughter's interest, nurturing it as much as she could. It was a way the two could connect and find common ground.

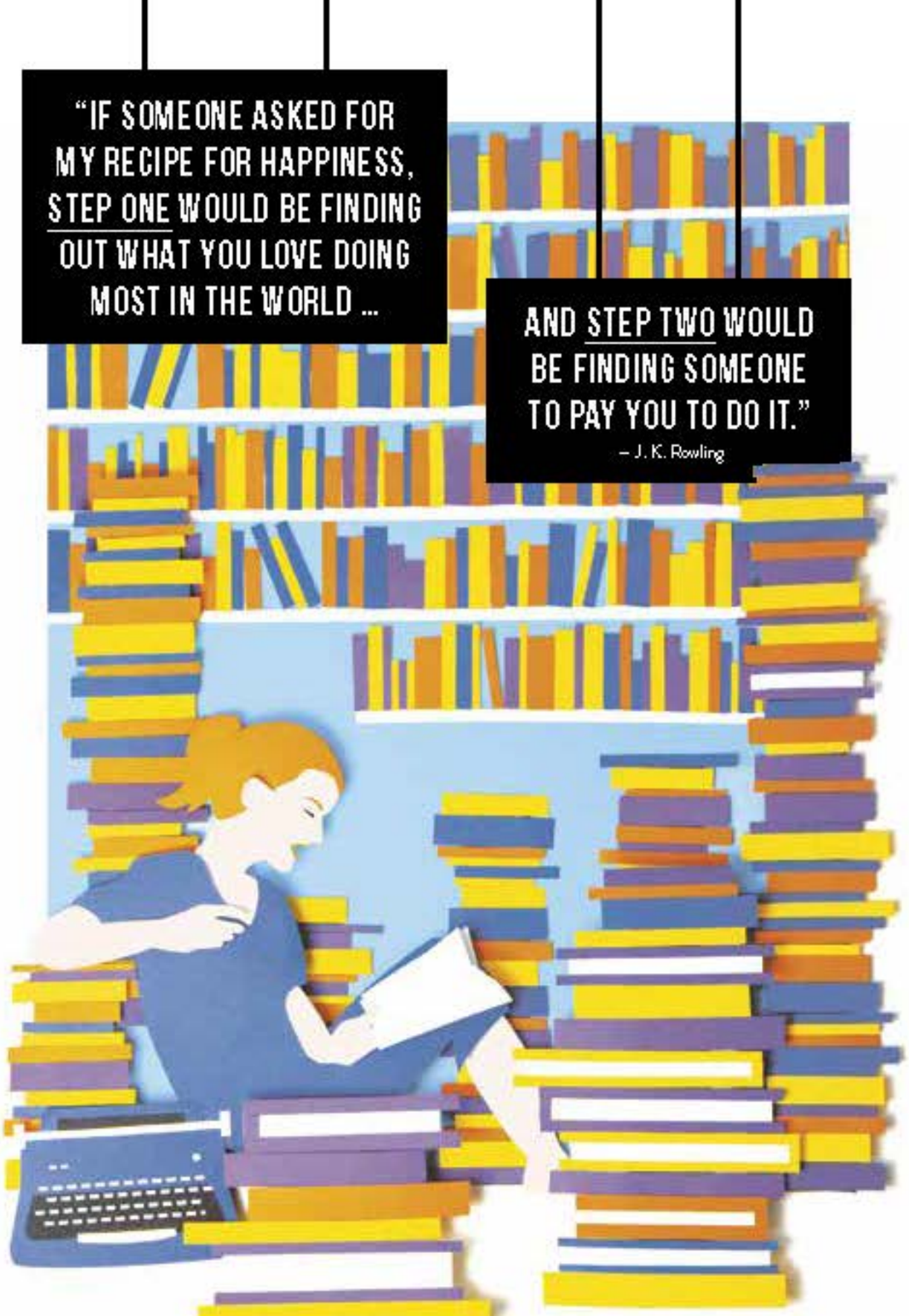
When she was a little older, Jo's great-aunt started to notice her young niece's passion for language arts and gifted her a copy of a book called *Hons and Rebels* by a woman named Jessica Mitford. Jo loved it so much, she became obsessed with all of her books and writing. Not able to get enough of the words and stories jumping out at her from the page, Jessica was her "heroine" and Jo was determined to follow her newest, most real dream: She wanted to write stories people would read. She wanted to be like Jessica Mitford, and inspire others to tell their stories or the ones living in their heads.

Joanne Rowling knew, for sure, that she wanted to become a real-life author.

EVENTUALLY, HER OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS STARTED TO SEE THAT THE YOUNG GIRL HAD CAUGHT A LITERARY BUG OF SORTS.






"IF SOMEONE ASKED FOR MY RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS, STEP ONE WOULD BE FINDING OUT WHAT YOU LOVE DOING MOST IN THE WORLD ...
AND STEP TWO WOULD BE FINDING SOMEONE TO PAY YOU TO DO IT."
– J. K. Rowling