New York Boy Gets Brief Look at New 'Harry Potter'

By REUTERS
Published: July 13, 2005

Filed at 4:48 p.m. ET

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A 9-year-old boy in upstate New York got a rare early peek at the new "Harry Potter" book this week after a store accidentally put it on sale before Saturday's launch date, but agreed to give back the copy after reading only a few pages.

But J.K. Rowling's U.S. publisher Scholastic Corp. said the boy's family had quickly reported the breach of the strict sales embargo and returned the copy of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," which is being released around the world on July 16.

"They're a wonderful family; they contacted us and they're sending the book back," Kris Moran, director of publicity at Scholastic in New York, told Reuters.

Millions of copies of the sixth book in the best-selling series about the boy wizard have been shipped to stores around the United States but Moran said this was the first report of a leak in the United States.

Last week a store near Vancouver briefly put the book on sale, but Raincoast Books Ltd., which distributes the books
in Canada, won a court injunction barring buyers from disclosing the plot.

The Poughkeepsie Journal reported that 9-year-old Sylum Mastropaolo from Rosendale and his mother Mandy Muldoon had come across the book while shopping on Monday evening.

``It's pretty amazing,'' the boy was quoted as saying, adding that he had read only a couple of pages. ``Millions and millions of people around the world are waiting for this book.''

Moran said the publisher would send a book and a special package of Harry Potter merchandise to the family to thank them for sending the book back.

Mike Muldoon, Sylum's stepfather, said they had decided to return the book because it was ``the right thing.

``We don't want to ruin it for other kids and take away from the experience of everyone reading it together,'' the Poughkeepsie Journal quoted him as saying.

The store took the books off the shelves within hours but Moran said it was not certain whether any more copies of the book had been sold.

``I think it probably was an honest mistake,'' she said.

More Articles in Arts >

For a limited time, get The Times delivered free for 2 weeks.