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Signed First Editions See High Prices at Swann Galleries' November Literature Auction

New York—Signed first editions dominated the scene at **Swann Galleries'** auction of **19th & 20th Century Literature** on **Thursday, November 10**. The biannual sale broke several auction records.

Each offered book by father of science fiction H.G. Wells was purchased, led by *The Invisible Man*, 1897. This book, which sold for \$7,500*, was one of several from a collection of fine first edition association copies inscribed by the author to his friend W.E. Henley, to whom Wells dedicated *The Time Machine*. Other highlights from the collection included *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, 1896, and *The First Men in the Moon*, 1901, which sold for \$7,000 and \$5,750, respectively. Another first edition of *The Invisible Man* sold to an institution for \$5,000.

The top lot of the sale was the first issue of the first edition of L. Frank Baum's classic, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 1900, which brought \$23,750, more than tripling its high estimate. Other children's literature also performed well, including a signed limited first edition of *Le Petit Prince*, 1943, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, which tied its previous auction record at \$9,750. Additionally, signed presentation copies of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* by Lewis Carroll sold for \$15,000, while a complete set of first editions of the Christopher Robin books by A.A. Milne garnered \$7,500.

In its auction debut, a first edition signed in the year of publication of *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran sold for \$5,750. The book has been continuously in print since 1923 and has sold over 100 million copies, but is rarely seen at auction. This was also the first time at auction for a limited issue of a set of ten leather-bound volumes of *The Complete Works* of Walt Whitman, 1902, which sold for \$5,000.

Other auction records set in the sale include that of a signed first edition of Hugo Gernsback's *Ralph 124C 41+ . A Romance of the Year 2660*, 1925, which sold to a collector for \$8,125. The first American edition of *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy, 1886, sold for a record-breaking price of \$8,125, while Fyodor Dostoyevsky's first English edition of *The Brother Karamazov*, 1912, sold to a collector for \$11,250.

Further highlights include an inscribed first edition of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, 1900, which achieved \$16,250, and the true first edition of Anne Frank's diary, printed in Amsterdam in the original Dutch in 1947, which sold after heated bidding to a collector for \$12,500. The first American edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876, by Mark Twain also did well, selling for \$13,750.

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