

FOR a holier-than-thou Twitterati preacher, JK Rowling tries to present herself as a leading light for women in the entertainment industry.

But the author will need to use every trick in Harry Potter's magic book to handle the growing outrage in Hollywood over her decision to stand by the casting of Johnny Depp in the lead role in her precious Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them franchise.

Today I reveal a significant backlash from within the #MeToo and Time's Up movement because the Scot is hellbent on backing her famous pal – despite his clearly inexcusable behaviour towards ex-wife Amber Heard.

Rowling is proving herself to be the worst type of Hollywood Hypocrite here.

Her claim that she is “genuinely happy” to have Depp star as the central character, dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald, in her big-budget film sequel Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald provides him total rehabilitation in the eyes of the movie industry.

She is condoning behaviour that she would be loudly slamming on social media if it was a male executive making the same decision.

So let me be very clear for the benefit of an apparently unaware Ms Rowling: Overwhelming evidence was filed to show Johnny Depp engaged in domestic violence against his wife Amber Heard.

She was granted a restraining order after alleging Depp assaulted her following a drunken argument and submitted photographs to the court showing her bruised face.

Heard – backed up by numerous friends on the record – recounted a detailed history of domestic abuse incidents, some of which had led to her fearing for her life. According to the court documents, there were kicks, punches, shoves and “all-out assault”.

While Depp's many high powered friends accused Heard of simply seeking a pay-out, she proved them wrong by committing to donate ALL of the £5 million she received to charity.

If Rowling is the supporter of women's rights she claims, has she been blinded by a personal friendship with Depp?

After all, she coveted him enough to have spent £22 million buying his old yacht, which he had ironically re-named for Heard.

Rowling is a powerful figure, who likes to slaughter anyone who dares publicly question her morals or decisions.

But today two brave members of Me Too/Time's Up – both victims of Harvey Weinstein – go public to question her decision.

In a message to Rowling, actress Caitlin Dulany says: “We would like to see things change in this industry and not see people who have allegedly victimised women.

“It is not much of a change if you are seeing people rewarded with roles.

“Amber has been through a difficult time with him. But it seems like what happened hasn't really affected Johnny.

“We would like to see things change in this industry and this is an example of that not happening.

“I would hope for different role models than someone who has that kind of history. It is important when you are casting.”

Actress Katherine Kendall adds: "I don't stand behind hitting people or abusing people. It seems that Amber got hurt.

"As someone who has been the victim of sexual abuse and a supporter of Me Too and telling my story to help others, I cannot advocate violence.

"I think it is a confusing message to put people in roles that are aimed at children and young people if there is a suggestion they have done something of that nature."

So today I publish five questions Rowling MUST answer:

1. Do you take domestic violence accusations as seriously as sexual harassment given your support of the Me Too movement?
2. If so, do you believe Amber Heard's detailed 2016 court filing detailing abuse allegations by Johnny Depp, which included pictures showing her injuries and on the record accounts by other witnesses?
3. Why did Depp agree to pay £5 million as a settlement, including a confidentiality agreement, if there was no truth to the allegations?
4. You admitted last year there were "legitimate questions" about Depp's casting. What were these and how did you overcome them?
5. Heard appeared to suggest on Instagram that you had taken her divorce statement "out of context" in order to defend Depp's casting. Have you spoken to her directly?

Warner Bros releases the Depp-fronted film in November.

While Rowling has an inability to ever admit she's made a mistake, it's not too late for a last-minute re-cast. It would cost millions, but Rowling has the money.

I believe it is the only decision that would show she's a woman of true character and principle, even when her famous friends are involved.

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