

Book Review: The Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling

By Rachel Loveday

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* is the most successful fiction book series in history. It has sold millions of copies worldwide, in several languages and the films that have been made, based on the books have also achieved massive success and fandom.

But what is it about Harry Potter—the character, books and the films that have made it so successful?

It begins with the first novel; *The Philosopher's Stone*, Harry Potter is an eleven year old orphan living with his horrible aunt and uncle, he is like any other boy—that is, until he finds out he is a wizard and is sent off to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry where he learns to master his craft and makes friends for the first time. He also has to fight a battle with Lord Voldemort—the dark wizard who killed his parents.

The series continues with *The Chamber of Secrets* where Harry is forced to fight Lord Voldemort again—this time in memory form, as well as a basilisk and his friends and classmates question his loyalty to Hogwarts.

The Prisoner of Azkaban has readers meeting those who were closest to Harry's parents; Remus Lupin, the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher and Sirius Black, a well known murderer. Readers discover who these two characters really are in the third novel as well as learning that people aren't always who they seem or who they are made out to be.

The Goblet of Fire has Harry's skills and patience tested when he is forced to compete in the Triwizard Tournament and his friends have turned against him. His strength is also tested when he witnesses the murder of fellow competitor, Cedric Diggory at the hand of Lord Voldemort.

The Order of the Phoenix sees Harry's emotional health spiral out of control when no one believes that Cedric Diggory was murdered and Harry is branded a liar. And Harry finally learns his destiny and why Lord Voldemort has been targeting him for his whole life.

Love is in the air at Hogwarts in *The Half-Blood Prince* with Harry and Hermione Granger discovering their feelings for Ginny and Ron Weasley respectively. Harry also discovers similarities between himself and Lord Voldemort and the Horcruxes that he has to find in order to defeat Lord Voldemort.

The Deathly Hallows is the climatic end of the series. Harry, Ron and Hermione flee from their families and Hogwarts in order to find and destroy the Horcruxes and defeat Lord Voldemort once and for all.

So why have the stories of Harry Potter achieved phenomenal success?

I believe it is because Rowling manages to provide important life lessons that make the stories easy to relate to, both for children and adults alike, such as; we never know our full potential until we take that first step, we never really know who our family and ourselves truly are and finally, people are not always who they say they are and this can be both a good and bad thing.

I also believe it is because, despite the stories taking place in a magical world, there are realistic moments that children reading the stories could relate to, such as Harry's reaction to his first day at Hogwarts is reminiscent to every child's first day of school.

Despite the stories revolving around magic as well as the life lessons, the joys, the sorrows as well as what happens within the stories, there is a sense of reality to them. People can relate to the characters and events in their own way.

There is no doubt that Rowling is a talented writer-not only for coming up with the idea of Harry Potter, but for the way she writes. She can easily and neatly tie each book together so readers can easily transition from one book to the next. Rowling also has an ability to create strong, believable and realistic characters as well as an ability to craft exciting mysteries with resolutions that readers don't see coming.

I believe it is all of these reasons that have made the fiction book series such a phenomenal success and I would be a fool not to recommend it for everyone to read.