

# [Book Review] 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' by J.K. Rowling

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J.K. Rowling needs no introduction. She is, of course, the author of the famous Harry Potter series. She was born on July 31, 1965 at Yate General Hospital near Bristol, and grew up in Gloucestershire in England and in Chepstow, Gwent, in south-east Wales. Rowling conceived the idea of Harry Potter in 1990 while sitting on a delayed train from Manchester to London King's Cross. Over the next five years, she began to map out all seven books of the series. She wrote mostly in longhand and gradually built up a mass of notes, many of which were scribbled on odd scraps of paper. The result is known to us all – a series of unparalleled fame and popularity that we all enjoy. Under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, J.K. Rowling also writes crime novels, featuring private detective Cormoran Strike.

## REVIEW

*"The truth." Dumbledore sighed. "It is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution."*

Harry Potter books tell the story of orphan Harry James Potter, the discovery of his secret magical powers and the role he plays in the safety of the hidden world of witchcraft and wizards.

After being raised in the miserably unfair home of his Uncle Vernon Dursley, Harry practically begins life anew when he discovers that he is a wizard and is invited to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Among Harry's first-year adventures are making new friends (Hagrid, Ron and Hermione), standing up to the torments of school bully Draco Malfoy, and becoming the star player of his Quidditch team (the favored sport in the magical world). Harry's life as a Hogwarts "first-year" is more interesting than that of most attendees, because he is already famous for surviving the attack of the evil Lord Voldemort, who tried to kill him as an infant. Everyone in the wizard world knows more about Harry's family and his story than he himself does.

This first book – Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone – introduces you to this magical world for the first time, and it does so in a smooth and comfortable fashion, introducing both you and Harry to strange wonders never yet experienced. This makes the transition into the world of magic an easy and pleasant experience. Rowling has built a strong and multi-layered world with immense amounts of detail, yet it is written in such a way that it doesn't feel tedious

or as though you are being fed all the information at once, as is the case with many fantasy novels. Through Harry's eyes, you encounter wands, monsters and spells with their magical properties, purposes and history laid out in small, easily consumable chunks. This means that the book never ceases to envelope you in its world or characters, whereas many epic fantasies have a habit of pulling you aside in a rather obvious fashion and indulging in the rather fruitless exercise of explaining every newly encountered item.

All the characters, teachers, students and bad guys alike have truly believable personalities, eccentricities and flaws, which, more often than not, helps to make them the truly lovable and long-standing characters that they have gone on to become. These friendships and relationships drive the book forward, providing comical respite and emotional engagement along the way.

It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.

There are characters in this book that will remind us of all the people we have met. All of us have known a spoilt, overweight boy like Dudley, or a bossy and interfering (yet kind-hearted) girl like Hermione. A large number of the younger readers will also be able to easily identify with Harry, especially with his initial feelings of isolation and a sense of not belonging, and then through to his excitement at finally leaving that life behind in favor of one where he does belong and will be happy.

Hogwarts is a truly magical place, not only in the most obvious way but also in all the sheer detail that the author has gone to describe it. It is the place that everybody wishes they could have been to when they were eleven, for that's where many adventures befall the trio (Harry, Ron and Hermione), and the stone in the book's title is center to all the events that unfold as the plot progresses. The story builds toward the exciting conclusion that has the ultimate feel-good factor.

**Rating: 4/5**

In conclusion, this epic journey out of the Muggle world and into the school and world of witchcraft and wizardry bags 4 out of 5 stars. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is a must-read for anyone within the age-group of 8 to 600 years, who want to be mesmerized by an enigmatic world.