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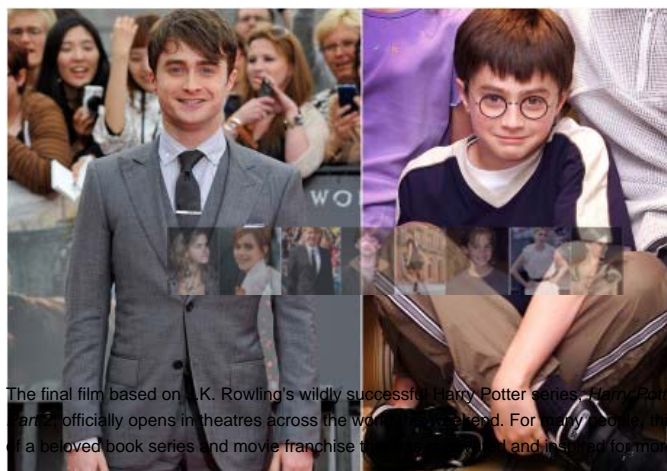
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Harry Potter: Fans share their stories and memories

On July 10, 2011 9:25 AM Comments 2 Recommend 12

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SURVEY: How have the Harry Potter films compared to the books?



The final film based on J.K. Rowling's wildly successful Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, officially opens in theatres across the world this weekend. For many, this represents the conclusion of a beloved book series and movie franchise that has captivated and inspired for more than 10 years.

previous Daniel Radcliffe began as Harry Potter at the age of 11. Seen here from left on the week of his arrival in London to share some good news, messages were received with you. The Potter series may be over, but it's very clear from your emails and comments that "the boy who lived" continues to live in your hearts and minds.
Merlin Reinders, Dave Hogan, Betty

Dermor had always enjoyed reading since childhood, but admits that they needed to warm up to the Potter saga.

"The first time I read Harry Potter was in the late 90s when *Chamber of Secrets* had come out," Dermor wrote. "I was helping teach a child to read and found the book somewhat silly. My mother actually convinced me a few years later to read *Prisoner of Azkaban* which she had picked up at Chapters and I found I couldn't put it down. I've since read them all and over again because I find there's a lot more to the story that you miss the first time around that is so much more apparent when rereading them."

Sarah Allain, from Toronto, was nine years old when *The Philosopher's Stone* came out. She remembers becoming an instant fan and convincing her friends to pick up the book.

"We came to the Potter party early on — I remember telling my friends that they just had to read this book, and being stared at skeptically when I tried to explain how wonderful it was. And with those who had read it, it was like having a fantastic secret, one that you couldn't help but share with everyone."

As a kid growing up with Harry and his friends, the books became a part of our cultural identity, a common experience for so many people, one of those communally binding stories that don't come along as often as they should. I don't read or write fan fiction, I don't dress up when I see the movies (though I do go to the midnight showing!), and I don't collect memorabilia - not that there is anything at all wrong with those pursuits - but I remember, on my eleventh birthday, wishing that an owl would come to my window. For each new book we ordered

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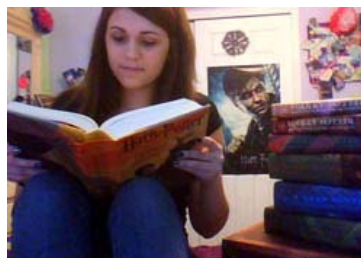
couldn't understand why a book club would want to read a children's novel. But, I did read it and I was immediately hooked and I came to realize that J.K. Rowling hasn't written a kids book but a novel for all ages. What hooked me were the twists presented in the book. J.K. Rowling is brilliant in the fact that not everything in the novel is black and white as you would expect in a children's book.

How Harry Potter changed my life is now I am a reader and a quicker one, too. I devoured the last Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, in 24 hours. But if it wasn't for Harry Potter, I wouldn't have read adult fare like *The Lovely Bones*, *On Beauty*, *The Time Traveler's Wife* ... The list goes on and on. I think over the past ten years, I have read way more books than I did as a child.

So for that reason, I will always love Harry Potter no matter how old I am."

Bri Ozalas, 15, from Mullica Hill, N.J., wrote an impassioned email to CBC Books with this message:

"Growing up with these books definitely shaped my childhood. I wouldn't be who I am today if I did not have these books. The Potter books are not just about Harry's journey to defeat the Dark Lord, Voldemort. Some of the biggest life lessons and very important topics are discussed in these books. Alongside Harry, we learn the true meanings of loyalty, friendship, sacrifice and love. We see the battle of good versus evil. We learn that to find out what a man is like, look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals. We accept that death is the next great adventure. We explore topics such as gender, race, social class and prejudice. We are taught that it is not good to dwell on dreams and forget to live.



No matter what anyone says to me, Harry Potter is not over. It will never be over. The legacy will live on. Harry Potter is a story I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Harry will forever live in my heart and the hearts of children, teenagers and even adults all around the world. J.K. Rowling will continue to be an inspiration. People from all over will continue to read the books and watch the movies.

And I know that Hogwarts will always be there to welcome us home."

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PCKidd wrote:
Posted 2011/07/15
at 8:01 PM ET

When the last book came out, my two sons and I waited beside the front door to intercept the delivery. Thereafter, each of us was allowed precisely half an hour, sequestered with the book. No one else was in the room, lest our facial expressions (or my tears!!!) somehow give away the plot! When we'd each finished it for the first time, the eldest of

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