

## READERS REVIEW HARRY POTTER

Originally published in *The Blade* on Sunday, July 29, 2007

BY RYAN E. SMITH  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

They came. They read. They reviewed.

It's been more than a week since anxious Harry Potter fans were able to get their hands on the final installment in the popular series about the boy wizard. That's been more than enough time for many to draw their own conclusions about the story and particularly its ending.

An especially dedicated group sacrificed their sleep and social lives to speed through *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* right away. Within 60 hours of the book's release, *The Blade* already had received a dozen reviews from area readers via e-mail. Here are a few reviews, some edited for length and to remove spoilers; the full reviews and others that were sent in can be found on [www.toledoblade.com](http://www.toledoblade.com).

(Warning to those who go on-line: Those who don't want to know what happens to whom — and particularly how the saga ends — should wait until they've read the book to check it out).

— Ryan E. Smith

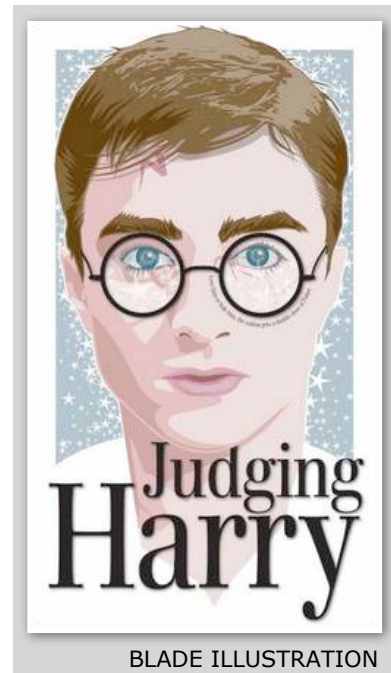
Might I just say before I begin, J.K. Rowling amazes me. Instead of her old books in which the real action started halfway through, this book was instantaneously in suspense mode. Killing two people before page 70 and more throughout the book it was more of a horror story than anything. There were so many surprises and so many twists I had to re-read it three times to understand it. ... Everything seemed more cunning and dark, important characters gone in a blink of an eye. Plus the ending was PERFECT. JKR pulled so many, what we thought to be, insignificant details from the previous books and made them all matter. ... I think people will be happy with the way things turned out.

— Annie Gibbons, 14, South Toledo

It definitely lived up to the hype. I think what makes me love these books so much is JK Rowling really could make me believe that this world was real and the characters were real. You felt the anger, despair, and confusion this young man was feeling. That he had so much pressure on him to defeat the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters. That he loved his friends and his now extended family so much that he didn't want to bring them pain. But the people around him believed in the cause and what he was trying to do, they rallied around him and fought: Dumbledore's Army, The Order of the Phoenix, and Hogwarts School itself. Unfortunately, there were lives lost in this book. She warned us, but I wasn't expecting there to be so many and being so emotional about it. In the end, she was able to answer all my questions I had about his past and how it was going to end. I actually am going to read all seven again to make sure I picked up everything she was trying to convey to us. It was a great ending to an awesome ride! Thanks to Joann K. Rowling for bringing me along!

— Melissa Britt, 37, West Toledo

I began reading Harry Potter starting around fourth grade. ... Immediately I was a fan. The original three books traveled to every class ... What struck me about those books, was the complete mystery everything was shrouded in. Normally, I find suspense nothing more than a filler, a way to take up space and increase volume. But for once I was enjoying it in Rowling's work. The final book, has plenty of suspense, I am happy to say. The book clips along at a steady pace, rarely ever slowing down to try and get a dramatized emotional scene, better left to a medium such as film. Emotion is in the actions of the characters, and the dialogs. The facial expressions, shifts in attitude, and eye winks are all deciphered by Rowling. More importantly, all the questions are finally answered, fates decided, and relationships developed. This is no *Soprano's* ending, there is nothing left to the imagination. That much alone should get you to read the book. The question is did Rowling create a stellar novel in the process of answering all our questions about Harry? The answer is not so clear. As I review this book I realize that my opinion is horribly biased for one enormous reason, I guessed right. Not on one account, but on many, and



most of the theories and ideas I had going into the book were not my own. So, I can only give one word of advice, let her surprise you. Don't come up with plot twists and turns in your mind trying to beat her to the conclusion. I can tell you that I did, and instead of a yelp of joy that I was right, I realized that I had missed the point of why I enjoyed reading Harry Potter in the first place, to be enchanted like a fourth grader. It's the final book, enjoy it while it lasts.

— Zak Krone, 17, Ottawa Hills

I was sort of disappointed that it wasn't nearly as warm or funny as the last six books. There seemed to be a lot of waiting around for things to happen. These sections were punctuated by some action but I felt like some of them got us nowhere except to show how Harry was maturing or beginning to accept his fate. ... I'm still a little blurry on some plot points but it did all seem to come together in the end in a way that seemed as though she'd been planning it for a really long time. ... The worst part was the continuing bickering relationship between Ron and Hermione (come on, you guys love each other just get it over with) which has been dragged out way too long and the epilogue....

— Katie Bingman, 30, Old West End

Follow-up note: Ok, ... I've been thinking that I was a little too harsh in my previous e-mail. I want to clarify that I loved the book. I really enjoyed the ending and felt it was a satisfying way to end the book. I realize that to effectively end the story it couldn't be warm or fuzzy, or even all that funny as the subject matter was pretty dark. But ultimately I really enjoyed it and am now thoroughly depressed that I have no more books to look forward to!

As it was revealed at the end of book six, Harry, Ron, and Hermione will not be returning to Hogwarts for their final year of school, but instead set off on their own to attempt to destroy Lord Voldemort. While much of the action follows the three of them, Ms. Rowling does take time, in flashbacks or found newspaper clippings, to tell the reader what is happening with their other favorite characters. Especially interesting in this book is discovering more about the mysterious pasts of Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape. By the end of the book a surprising number of important characters have died. Some are given pages devoted to mourning their loss, but an awful lot of them are simply mentioned in passing. Fortunately, along with the loss of some great characters, the readers also have all their questions answered. Ms. Rowling makes a great deal of effort to ensure that at the end of this book, there are no lingering doubts about what will happen next. ... Unlike the other books in the series, it seems to be intended for more mature audiences. The overall feel of the book is much darker. One of the major themes in the book is the finality of death and the lengths people will go to hide from it. The Harry Potter series has certainly grown up since the first book. This is not a children's book. With all that said, I loved this book. It was by far my favorite of the series.

— Jerry Flowers, 26, West Toledo

Unlike the final episode of the *The Sopranos*, the final book of the Harry Potter series was very satisfying. Ms. Rowling expertly ties facts from the first book to the last book to make everything come together in a neat package. The author's descriptions of locations and action are long enough to allow the reader to see the place or the action in their mind's eye but not so long that the reader wants to skip ahead of a boring excerpt. In this book, Harry Potter is the complete hero, possessing all the great qualities a true hero should have. Only two things seemed to detract from the enjoyment of the story. The first is that the story tends to lag when Harry, Hermione, and Ron search for the Horcruxes that contain parts of Voldemort's soul. While Rowling uses this part of the book to develop the heroic natures of Potter and companions, it does tend to ramble on with very little action for about 100 pages. The second point may only bother female readers. The problem was that Hermione thought to pack in her magical bag everything including the kitchen sink and yet she didn't think to pack a supply of food. These magical characters were foraging for food in the forest instead of generating it out of thin air. While this book will be very difficult to present as a movie, it is a most enjoyable finale to the series.

— Margaret Hastings, 60, Fostoria

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: [ryansmith@theblade.com](mailto:ryansmith@theblade.com) or 419-724-6103.

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