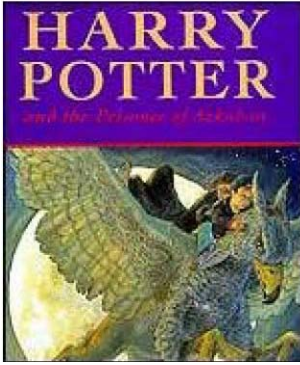




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'Harry Potter' Harmless prose or hidden poison?



(Based upon an article by an unknown author)

In three years the Harry Potter books, by J. K. Rowling, have scooped coveted awards such as 'The British Book Awards', 'The Children's Book of the Year' and 'The Smarties prize'. In 1999 J. K. Rowling became an international literary sensation when her first three books took the top three slots in the New York Times bestsellers list. By Summer 2000 her first three books had sold 35 million copies netting £300 million. For all the hype and popularity of these books they are not without their critics. Some have expressed grave concern that the books promote and encourage Satanic practices. Others, even Christians, see no

harm in children reading these books, applauding the books for the themes of courage, loyalty, justice, honesty and fairness that they portray. Are these great books or a hidden evil?

Who is Harry Potter?

He is the main fictional character in a series created and written by J. K. Rowling. He was orphaned as a boy due to the murder of his parents. His father was a wizard and his mother a witch. His grandparents were pleased that their daughter was a witch and encouraged her in her witchcraft. She met her husband at 'Hogwart's School for witchcraft and wizardry'. However, another wizard at the school turned evil and eventually killed Harry's parents with a deadly curse. He tried to kill Harry but failed, leaving a scar like a lightning symbol on his forehead. This wizard, Voldemort, is seen as being totally evil. Harry, however, is famous as he seemed to have thwarted the power of this evil wizard. Being one year old, he is unaware of this and is taken by other 'good' witches to his nearest relatives. These relatives are known as 'The Dursleys'. They are portrayed as mistreating Harry, not telling him how his parents died and doing all in their power to keep him from discovering about the witchcraft his parents were involved in. Only after his eleventh birthday does Harry discover how his parents died and that he too is a wizard. 'The Dursleys' have kept this secret from him along with many letters written to him from the 'Hogwart's School for witchcraft and wizardry'. Despite trying to keep Harry away from their influence, the School finds them hiding on an Island and eventually forces 'The Dursleys' to bring Harry to the School. Harry's adventures start at this School. The books are like a diary of his learning and adventures at the School, as well as his famous role in fighting the 'darker side of evil'. There are seven years of study in this School and the author intends to have a book for each of these seven years.

The Source of Inspiration

Recently the author has revealed the identities of the people who inspired her to write. One is Ian Potter, who lived four doors away in Winterbourne where J. K. Rowling grew up. Dressing up as wizards and witches, concocting fantasy potions and telling stories were just a few of the games they played. According to Potter, Rowling and her sister loved to



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dress as witches and he would dress as a wizard.

Content of these Books

They contain a world of fantasy, magic, mythical creatures, astrology, astral travel, transfiguration, shapeshifting, communication with the dead, spells, hexes [witches], curses and counter curses, time travel, owls who bring the post, poltergeists, and children who play a game called 'Quidditch' on broomsticks. These books are full of adventure, mystery, fun, excitement, but also evil and fearful happenings. These are books where the characters learn witchcraft and the books are full of studies on witchcraft subjects.

What is a 'Muggle'?

This is what they 'call non-magic folk like them, it's your bad luck you grew up in a family o' the biggest muggles I ever laid eyes on'. So says one of the characters in the books. A 'muggle' is a person who does not practise the 'dark arts' i.e. magic. In the Harry Potter books, the main 'muggles' are 'The Dursleys' who are very cruel to Harry and are continually 'putting him down'. Throughout these books the 'muggles' are portrayed to be, what the word 'muggle' derives from mugs or fools. According to J. K. Rowling this is where she got the word from. Book three, page 21 gives a direct indication of this, where Harry refers to acting like a mug.

The impression given is that if you do not practise magic or witchcraft you are somehow out of the norm and missing out on that which is both unseen and powerful. 'Muggles' are portrayed as using electricity and having difficulty accomplishing tasks, like lifting objects. But the witches and wizards don't have a problem as they can use spells to light up a room or levitate an object. 'Muggles' are depicted as bringing upon themselves an unnecessary dependency on others and on self to get things done. Life for a 'muggle' is burdensome. Book 3 page 53: Hagid, a teacher at Hogwart's, says, 'I don't know how muggles manage without magic'.

If you are a 'muggle' you certainly do not understand anything regarding the world of witchcraft and the dark arts. Therefore the impression given in the books is that any opposition is totally over the top and just plain ignorance on the muggles' part. Is there anything wrong with children reading about these things?

1. It is not in keeping with the Word of God for anyone, especially children, to develop an interest in these matters. Deuteronomy 18:10-13 warns against many of the practices that are highlighted in these books. *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.*

The interest, generated in reading about these things, may well make a child become interested in matter cursed by God. The 'Pagan Federation' has appointed a Youth Officer to deal with the flood of inquiries following the success of the Harry Potter books. According to Berit Kjos: "Harry Potter lures kids to witchcraft". On average there are 100 inquiries a month from children who want to become witches and Kjos claims the federation has occasionally been 'swamped' with calls. Andy Norfolk, the media officer, said: "It is quite proba-



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bly linked to things like Harry Potter, Sabrina the Teenage witch and Buffy the Vampire Slayer..... Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we have a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls”.

The Word of God would have us to *abstain from the appearance of evil*, 1 Thess 5:22. Certainly these books are developing an unhealthy interest in evil things among children.

2. They give children the impression that having magical powers is normal, good and full of fun. The very opposite is the case. Servitude to the devil and his ways always brings ruin. There is nothing ‘good’, whatsoever, about that which comes from the devil. Yet this book conveys the idea that some witches and wizards are good, while others are evil. They are all evil. Evil spirits are not intent on giving people fun but rather they are out to destroy, devour and ruin lives and homes. Practising witch, Phyllis Currott, said in an ABC news internet interview that Harry Potter books show witches in a positive light. In Hogwarts School, subjects for study include: Care of magical creatures, ‘Muggle’ studies, Defence against the dark arts, Curses and counter curses, Herbology i.e. making potions, History of Magic, Divination, Palmistry, Crystal Ball Gazing, Teacup Reading. All these are portrayed as being exciting and fun to learn. This, surely, is not what we want any of our children to think.

3. The books contain a mixture of Greek mythology, witchcraft practices and philosophies of other religions. In Book One, The Elixir of Life, the philosopher’s stone is supposed to bring eternal life. This is found in age old mythology and gives the impression that eternal life exists in a stone, rather than as the gift of God. There are Hindu words, referring to Hindu gods, found in passages. Latin and Aramaic words are used as spell words which translate into the very meaning of what the spell is intended to do. Italian and French words are also contained in the books. Some of these words go back to ancient rites and spells.

4. There is evidence of backward writing within one book. Book One, page 152, has a mirror called ‘The mirror of Erised’. It has an inscription carved around the top: ‘erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on whosi’. This reveals the mystery of the mirror as saying: ‘I show not your face but your heart’s desire’. Although no link may be intended by the author, this is a trait often found in Satanism and witchcraft. Members of Satanism are encouraged to learn how to recite and look at things backwards. Initiation ceremonies of witches include reciting things in this way, often blasphemously.

5. There are occult symbols displayed within the books, the most prominent being the lightning symbol on Harry’s forehead. This has been used, in times past, to denote allegiance to Satan or the mark of Satan on one’s life or work. Many of the most wicked rock bands have used this on record sleeves or books.

6. There is a mixture of that which is imaginary and that which is real in the spirit world. These books are not just harmless imagination. Many of the practices are only too real and decidedly wicked in the real world. It is wrong to set these things before children in a way that makes them believe it is nothing more than harmless fun they are engaging in. Any one caught in the snare of the devil, with respect to these matters, soon learns that they are not harmless. There is surely the danger that children may be tempted to look into the darker side of witchcraft and Satanism. J. K. Rowling has acknowledged that



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she gets letters from children addressed to Professor Dumbledore (Headmaster of Hogwarts's School) wanting to be admitted to the school.

7. It teaches that evil forces are conquered by 'good' witchcraft and counter curses. This encourages the good witch, bad witch idea. In the real spiritual world it is only the power of God that can overcome the demons of hell.

For these and other reasons Harry Potter books should be avoided. They are to become progressively more sinister. J. K. Rowling warns that starting with the fourth book, the series will grow darker, some good characters 'that the reader cares about' will have to die.

Many Christians see no harm in these books. But surely, in the light of these matters, serious concerns have to be awakened in the heart of all parents who want to safeguard their children from sinful and wicked influences. Letting one read these books is hardly training up a child in the way that he should go.