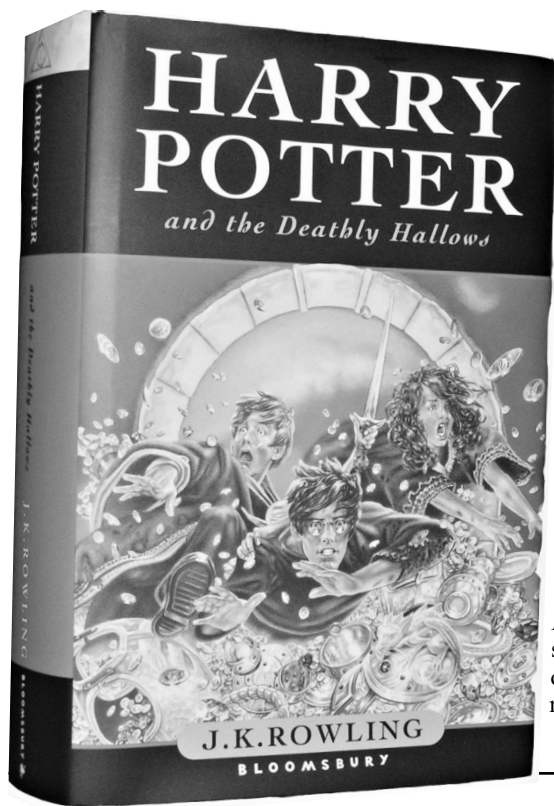


Spellbinding end for Potter saga



Book
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
 JK Rowling
 In stores now
 Reviewed by Joanna Davies

The final instalment of J.K. Rowling's best-selling series promised a number of things before it was released.

The deaths of several characters were hinted at, as were a few surprise twists and an unexpected ending.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows flew off shelves around the world on July 21, breaking records with the volume

of sales and making people cancel social engagements so they could curl up with their copy to find out what happens to Harry.

And what exactly does happen to Harry? Without giving away the ending, Rowling finishes her masterpiece very gracefully.

Many shocks and surprises arise, and at times you may have to refer to the previous books to figure out exactly what is going on.

Sides of characters never seen before appear in unexpected places, but turn the story into something more humane than its predecessors.

I thought that Rowling might struggle with the ending when I first start-

ed reading. With no Hogwarts backdrop for the majority of the book I wondered how consistent this last book would be with the previous six.

A few chapters in though, Rowling's decision to change the scenery was a refreshing alternative to potions lessons.

One of the surprises of this book was its length. At just 607 pages, it seemed that Rowling would struggle to sum up all of the loose ends that were left at the end of *The Half-Blood Prince* and *The Order of the Phoenix*.

She did well. Not many questions were left unanswered and plot-lines that had been bubbling quietly under the surface of Rowling's previous six novels finally made it into the main story this time.

Rowling took us to places significant to characters' history where we had never been before and these filled

in many gaps about Harry's life.

Another surprise was the language. Yes, Harry is now 17, and his people are at war, but whether swear words are necessary in a children's book is a question Rowling has not answered yet.

While they fitted the tone and darkness of the story for older readers, seven-year-olds ask enough questions about these complex stories without including more "big-people" words in them.

All up, J.K. Rowling has completed her series with a powerful ending that will not be forgotten.

Be warned though, if you are reading this book without reading the previous stories, it could be difficult to follow, and the gloom and death throughout does not always make for happy reading. That said, putting it down is very difficult.

Transformers 'perfect' for nerdy males

Movie
Transformers
 Cinemas nationwide
 Directed by Michael Bay
 Reviewed by Niko Kloeten

Anyone who has seen *Armageddon* will know that Michael Bay directing big budget action blockbusters can lead to disaster.

It therefore seemed a bad move when Bay was chosen to direct the movie of cartoon classic *Transformers*. However, he hit the bullseye this time.

What makes *Transformers* a good movie is that it knows what it is and what it isn't, and just as important, who's watching.

The acting probably won't win any Oscars, and the plot is unlikely to be dissected in great depth by media studies classes. But there's plenty to

make teenage boys and 25-year-olds who watched the original series on TV drool.

For starters, it has plenty of cool vehicles driving at high speed.

One of these, a yellow Chevrolet Camaro, turns out to be "more than meets the eye" when nerdy teenager Sam Witwicky buys it from a hapless used car salesman (Bernie Mac), unaware that he is about to find himself in the middle of an ancient war.

The Camaro turns out to be one of the Autobots, a group of good Transformers trying to destroy the Allspark, a powerful and dangerous cube that is somewhere on Earth. However, the evil Decepticons (no, Savage is not one of them) are trying to find the Allspark first, to harness its power and defeat the Autobots once and for all.

Transformers has truckloads of

violence, awe-inspiring special-effects and even Jon Voight, who plays US Secretary of Defence John Keller.

Add to the mix a healthy dose of humour and some bare-midriffed eye candy (Mikaela Banes, played by Megan Fox), and you have a perfect recipe for nerdy hormonal males.

It is not without its flaws though. The main problem is that it is too long. *Lord of the Rings* could get away with being lengthy because it had a detailed and complex plot, but there is no such excuse for *Transformers*.

There is also too much emphasis on the human characters. Optimus Prime, Megatron and their cohorts are the stars of the show, after all.

But these are only minor quibbles that don't greatly detract from a thoroughly enjoyable film. Here's hoping there's a sequel, so we can regress to childhood all over again.



What's on

cinema

The Tattooist
 Cinemas nationwide
 Opens August 30

American tattoo artist Jake steals an ancient Samoan tattooing tool and unleashes a powerful angry spirit that destroys everyone he touches. In his devastating journey into Pacific mysticism, Jake must find a way to save his new love, Sina. Filmed in New Zealand.



Black Snake Moan
 Cinemas nationwide
 From August 2

Southern gal Rae is deeply in love with her Guardsman boyfriend Ronnie. But the moment he's shipped out to Iraq, Rae hits the town in her miniscule Daisy-Duke shorts looking for someone - everyone, as it turns out - to scratch her insatiable itch. Her unlikely saviour is Lazarus, a retired blues guitarist reeling from the blow of his own marriage breakdown. Starring Samuel L Jackson, Christina Ricci.

Sicko
 Cinemas nationwide
 Opens August 16

The latest documentary from shock-tactic guru Michael Moore. This time he targets the American health care industry. Sticking to his tried-and-true one-man approach, Moore sheds light on the complicated medical affairs of individuals and local communities.

theatre

Three Days of Rain
 Silo Theatre, Mayoral Drive
 July 28 - August 25

A brother, sister and childhood friend gather to divide the estate of their late fathers. When they discover their father's diary, the siblings use it to unlock the relationships between the two men and the women in their lives, decades before.

Hatch
 Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre
 August 29 - Sep 1

One man. Three million penguins. And an obsession with the truth. Discover a shocking true story from New Zealand's forgotten past. Hatch or The Plight of the Penguins is a fascinating one-man play that recaptures the spirit of the 1920s and reveals alarming insights into one of the country's worst-kept conservation secrets. Starring Stuart Devenie.

Flip the Script
 Limelight, Aotea Centre
 August 24

The NZ *Idol* of scriptwriting. Young writers get their five-minute script performed with audiences voting each evening. The top two scripts are performed again the next month.

events

New Zealand CoffeeFest
 Alinghi Base, Viaduct Basin
 August 17-19
 There will be something for everyone, from cafe experts to learner coffee drinkers. Latte art competitions, coffee equipment and lots of coffee tasting will be available for all coffee lovers.

exhibitions

Frame by Frame - South Seas Film and TV School Exhibition
 BNZ Foyer, Aotea Centre
 August 2 - 21
 Showcasing work by first and second year students of the South Seas Animation School's Animation Diploma, including storyboards, character design, background drawings and animated sequences.

New Zealand Chinese Art Exhibition
 Aotea Gallery, Aotea Centre
 August 4 - 26

Showcasing combinations of western and eastern styles of painting (oil, watercolour and acrylic), sculpture, pottery and calligraphy.