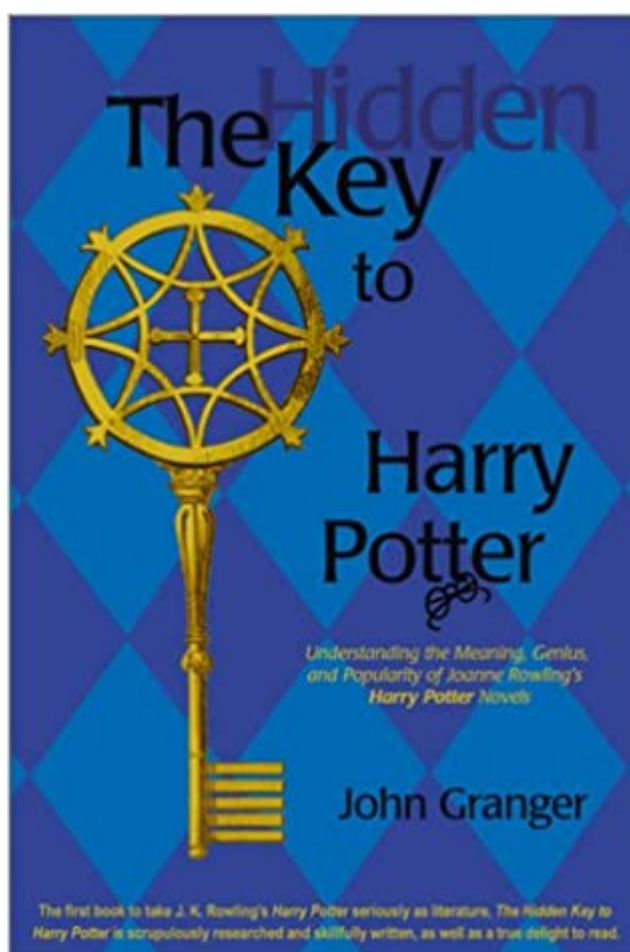


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# The Hidden Key To Harry Potter: Understanding The Meaning, Genius, And Popularity Of Joanne Rowling's Harry Potter Novels



## Synopsis

What you need to know about *The Hidden Key to Harry Potter*: 1) It is the first critical study to unlock the inner meaning of Harry Potter by treating the series seriously as literature along the lines of Charles Dickens and Jane Austen. 2) It is the first exposé to identify Joanne Rowling as a Christian who consciously writes Christian Fantasy in the tradition of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. 3) It is the first full-fledged effort to predict Potter's future course in detail; an audacious and thought-provoking adventure offered to fellow enthusiasts. 4) It is the first Muggle textbook suitable for use at Hogwarts; bringing humor, fun, and WOW! excitement to the "serious" business of Pottermania. Low Road critics have panned the bestselling Harry Potter novels as "the literary equivalent of fast food" and as a gateway to the occult. But no one has explained the worldwide popularity of Ms. Rowling's fiction or read it as one would read Tolkien, Hemingway, or Shakespeare. *The Hidden Key* takes the High Road to understanding Harry Potter's success, through an exploration of the series' structure, themes, and symbolism. The astonishing conclusion of this investigation is that Ms. Rowling, demonized by some Christian critics because of the magical setting of her books, is ironically writing the most charming and challenging Christian fiction for children since Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*. *The Hidden Key* demonstrates that all the Potter books teach Christian doctrines - sometimes with subtlety, often baldly - in their plot, imagery, and character development. Lambasted by critics who have not read her books closely or are unfamiliar with traditional Christian literature, Ms. Rowling's genius has been overlooked despite her books' success. A lover and teacher of the Great Books; including the great children's books he reads his seven children; Mr. Granger applies his knowledge of classical philosophy and Christian traditions to reveal the secret message that explains the magic power of Harry Potter. Find out these secrets inside: \* What is the hidden key to Harry Potter? \* Is Harry's magic dangerous; or quite the opposite? \* What is the evidence that Rowling is a Christian novelist? \* Is the author an "Inkling"? How have we been so bamboozled? \* Who is the real-world model for Gilderoy Lockhart? \* Who is Harry, really? Why does Lord Voldemort want him dead? \* Will Wormtail kill Voldemort as Wormtongue killed Saruman? \* What may happen in the upcoming Potter books? \* How does it all end?; an UNAUTHORIZED prediction.

## Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Zossima Press; 1 edition (November 18, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0972322108

ISBN-13: 978-0972322102

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6.1 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 43 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #832,195 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > History & Criticism #347 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Children's Literature #1711 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > British & Irish

## Customer Reviews

The Hidden Key is "must" reading for Potterites, whatever their religious orientation. -- Prof. Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, Christian Apologist, Barrister, Educator, and Author of "Myth, Allegory, and Gospel"; and "Cross and Crucible"; The Hidden Key is a jazzy, gutsy exposition of the secret Christian symbolism that pervades J.K. Rowling's brilliant series. -- Stratford Caldecott, Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture [Combining] literary and spiritual insight with humor ... Granger proves himself a "Defense Against Dark Arts" master in the truest sense. -- Robert Trexler, Editor of CSL: The Bulletin of the New York C.S. Lewis Society [Delightful and provocative ... Older children and adults who have loved Potter will find The Hidden Key hard to put down. -- Dr. Scott H. Moore, Great Texts Program and Professor of Philosophy, Baylor University

Joanne Rowling's Harry Potter is the media event of the new millennium. Harry's books and movies have hundreds of millions of fans. But whence this popularity? Fans say they love the stories and characters. Ivory Tower pundits and some Churchmen tell us the books are popular because they are so bad. Some Christian apologists have written books saying the books are harmless. Other critics have called the books Disney cartoon literature, Fast Food Reading, even a gateway to the occult! But do any of these approaches answer the question? Could the books be so much more popular than other books because they're much better and more profound than other books? Might readers not love them because they're wise and wonderful? This is the novel approach of The Hidden Key to Harry Potter -- to take Harry Potter seriously as literature and explore the meaning of the series' structure, themes, and symbolism as one would Shakespeare or Dickens. Mr. Granger begins by examining the themes of prejudice, death and

bereavement, choice, and change. Next he guides the reader to an understanding of why conventional interpretations are insufficient, and why these stories (and their power) only make sense when viewed from a symbolist vantage point. Using his Latin and knowledge of the Great Books, he is able to explain convincingly why and how Ms. Rowling (who like Mr. Granger has a university degree in classical languages) has created a story and magical world that rest on Classical Philosophy and Christian Theology. The astonishing conclusion of this exploration is that Ms. Rowling, demonized by some Christian critics because of the magical setting of the books, is writing the most charming and challenging Christian fiction for children since Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia. The Hidden Key demonstrates that each book and the series as a whole teach explicitly Christian doctrines, sometimes with subtlety but often boldly, in their plot, imagery, and character development. Hidden Key includes perceptive reviews of critical comments to date and rich exegesis of the Harry Potter books's formulas, influences and themes. Even fans who have read the books several times will be astonished at the layers of traditional Christian imagery and meaning revealed in Hidden Key: from the Resurrection Journey that Harry takes every year at Hogwarts to the alchemical substances represented by each character, from the symbols of unicorn, phoenix, and philosopher's stone to the psychology of Harry's trials and purification. Hidden Key explains the Christian meaning of Harry's name and is bold enough to predict both his destiny as Heir of Gryffindor and as a modern Christian "Everyman" or Pilgrim. C. S. Lewis fans will be delighted to learn of Ms. Rowling's pointed references to his Narnia series and traditional apologetics. The big surprise here is that Hogwarts's magical milieu, rather than inviting readers to invocational sorcery forbidden by scripture, turns out to be a powerful critique of modernity's materialist and secular ideologies. The magic of Harry Potter is not demonic but only more evidence of his being on the side of the angels (the good angels!). Not only is Ms. Rowling not a Satanist; she is the most literate Christian Fantasy writer this side of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and their circle of Inklings!

I'm so excited about the Hidden Key to Harry Potter. We did not allow our kids to read Harry Potter as they were growing up, but now that they are older we are ready to venture in. I know that when they are adults the majority of the people around them are going to have read these books, so I do want them to have the opportunity to read them and discuss them from a Biblical worldview. From the very first page of the introduction this book has been just what I was looking for. The author addresses all of the arguments against Harry Potter as he discusses the imagery and adventure that makes these books such a draw. He also points out the similarities to Tolkien and Lewis which

also contain plenty of magic in the midst of their allegories. I'm really looking forward to using this with my daughter. It is written such that she will enjoy reading it herself. It is engaging and not text-bookish.

Granger's work is an invaluable lesson not only for Harry Potter fans but for those interested in literature and the use of symbols to bring out greater issues. Focusing not only on Rowling but her predecessors, Tolkien and Lewis, Granger surveys the "world of Potter." He examines major themes, particularly those involving death, rebirth, and transfiguration. After reading Granger's book (and is there something perhaps in the fact that he shares a name with the most intelligent of the Potter characters?), I re-read the entire series. The patterns and rhythms seemed far clearer. Granger uses his knowledge of the whole of classical literature from a myriad of sources to point out the development of the major themes of Rowling's work. It is fascinating. My seventeen year old, who seldom enjoys getting involved in anything involving literature beyond what is required for school, ripped through the book and then devoured Harry 5, declaring that she had found far more meaning in the book than she had previously found in all the others. An amusing highlight were the predictions Granger made about future books. Since his book was written before Phoenix it was easy to check. He was wrong quite a lot, but on the other hand, he was also right in some places. And, as he has written after the last book, some elements he predicted may come to pass in Harry 6. This is a fascinating read for those who enjoy literature as well as for Pottermaniacs.

"Hidden Key" is a book deserving the attention of any Potter fan, and will be especially fascinating to those who are trying to figure out why they are so drawn to these stories. Granger goes beyond Connie Neal to say that not only CAN Rowling's books be read as spiritual texts complementary to Christianity, but that they have been EXPLICITLY created to invite and support personal growth and a connection with God. He offers powerful evidence backing this view -- most strongly in his discussion of Rowling's use of the symbols and themes of medieval alchemy. His explanation that originally alchemy was not about sorcery or making gold, so much as about performing chemical work as a physical counterpart to the purification of your own soul (with Divine aid), sheds considerable light on the "purification of Harry" story arc in each Potter book. Plot points that seem bizarre make a lot more sense if the books are read as steps in an ongoing quest for purification/transformation while the protagonist faces/conquers (or, as in "Phoenix," fails to conquer) obstacles. (And Granger argues that the books are symbolist texts, not "allegories" as alleged by another reviewer. There is a big difference, which Granger does explain. That reviewer

was also pretty derogatory about Granger's classical education at the Univ. of Chicago, which is internationally recognized as a learning institution of the first order. It's not Podunk College by a long shot.) There are some typos that annoy; the editorial organization could be improved; and there are some outright errors (Granger speculates that Lily Evans Potter was a Slytherin, but Rowling said in a 2000 Scholastic interview that she was in Gryffindor -- though this info appears nowhere in the 5-book "canon" that is most readily available to readers & critics). Some of Granger's bold predictions for Book 5 proved to be off the mark, but then ... he predicted that they would be. And I'm not at all convinced that his overall analysis of the probable denouement for future volumes is so wrong--maybe he's just somewhat premature. Books 6 and 7 will necessarily reveal whether Granger's analysis of Rowling's modus operandi is right on the money (which I believe is highly likely) or a gross example of (as Rowling herself has put it) reading into a story whatever you want to find there. We'll have to wait a while for the final answer. Meanwhile, "Hidden Key" is very worthy of the time you'll spend reading it, and highly recommended for all who believe that the Potter books are as much about edification as entertainment.

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