

Harry Scarey

With 450 million books sold, the Harry Potter series is [the best-selling book series](#) of all time.

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*¹ was rejected by 12 publishers. It has gone on to be [the sixth best-selling single book](#) of all time behind *The Bible*, *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, *Xinhua Zidian* (the Chinese dictionary), *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *The Lord of the Rings*.

J.K Rowling is the [11th best-selling fiction author](#). She has made over \$1 billion through Harry Potter.

The movie, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2*, boasts the highest grossing opening weekend for a movie in the US (at \$169 million) and worldwide (at \$475.6 million).

¹ Published in the US as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

Enchanted

I read *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* at age 10 and finished *The Deathly Hallows* aged 19. With each book I experienced a phenomenon that millions of my peers can relate to: *I wished this was happening to me.*

What is so attractive about Rowling's universe? There is more here than just magic. At Hogwarts friends are good-humored and loyal. Speech is seldom malicious. Cursing is rare and sexuality is innocent. Hogwarts is a near-utopian teen community: fun, fascinating people, adventure and a sense of purpose.

The premiere of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2*, that I attended, was packed with teens in costume – mostly generic costumes not based on a single character, but simply Hogwarts' school uniforms and wizard's robes. The people who dressed up for the premier aren't interested,



for the most part, in *being* Harry, Hermione, or any specific character. They want to be themselves, but themselves in *that world*, a world where strength of character is valued, where good and evil are still seen to exist, and where there is a battle worth the fight.

As one who grew up in Gen-Y, Hogwarts – as much as Middle Earth and Narnia – awakened in me an ideal of nobility. Like Frodo or Peter, Harry is a strong yet clearly flawed young man. Nonetheless, he accepts with courage and growing self-knowledge the fierce challenge placed before him.

Then, as a 19-year-old, I was whisked away into another world – a Christian one. I discovered the excitement of radical discipleship and a difficult mission, and the support of a community of



true friends. But this was in the real world. I was ready to put away the things of a child, to move from fantasy into reality.

As one who now works with youth, I see value in things that inspire magnanimity, that longing to be a hero who serves with a band of brothers to accomplish a great purpose. Millions of *Harry Potter* youth have now had the *noble-ideal* seed sown in them. Let's hope that the Hogwarts Express might carry them from the world of fantasy into the real world of Christian mission and community.

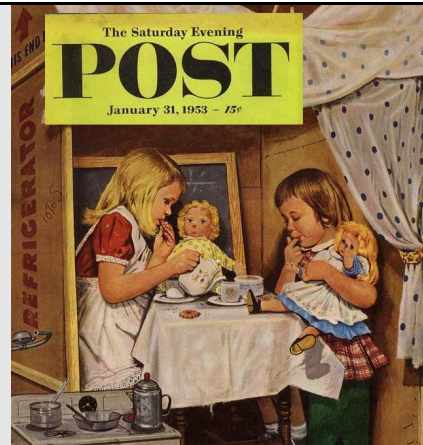
– P.M. Graham

Why Girls Will Be Girls But Boys Won't Be Boys

Boys face a challenge girls don't, and it is in facing that challenge that boys become men.

The young girl has her model for womanhood with her from day one—mom. She will develop over time to resemble her. A girl becomes a woman by uniting with and relating to women.

As with a girl, a boy is first nurtured by his mother, but as he grows up he becomes ever more unlike her sexually and emotionally. He must differentiate from her to become a man. That process itself requires aggression. He separates, destroys, and takes things apart. He knows he must man-up. In some ways he must reject women to become a man. It is one reason why boys don't like mixed events.



Girls naturally want to marry. Boys don't. A boy doesn't want to play house. He knows he must first become a man among men, and playing house with girls doesn't lead to manhood. If a boy doesn't separate from women he won't become a man.

When boys don't become men the marriage rate goes down. Boys aren't becoming men. And women don't want to marry boys.

What's Wrong with Boys?

When asked what's wrong with boys today most people can give you a list. At the top of nearly everyone's list is irresponsibility. Why are young men so irresponsible? Why are boys taking so long to become men? One reason is social change. It is no longer necessary for a young man to be responsible at thirteen, twenty, or even thirty. If it isn't necessary, why bother?

A boy growing up before 1950 often went to school during the day, but every night and all summer there were jobs to do. Jobs that gave him real responsibility and impact. He might feed the chickens (that fed the family) or he milked the cows (milk they drank). Or maybe he was the paperboy. The news was delivered to everyone in the neighborhood, not by the TV or the internet, but by him. He had responsibility and it mattered.



Paperboy

At 18 he probably went away to defend his country from a clear and evil enemy. His life counted. He had to be responsible.

A baby-boom boy didn't have the same need to be responsible. He had chores to do, but many of them were domestic: clean sinks, pull weeds, vacuum and dust. He had

chores, not responsibilities. He might have had a job bagging groceries, stocking shelves or working a till. His job was important if his income was helping him to get set up in life – preparing for responsibility – but not if it was spent on self indulgence.

Many a boy today has no need to be responsible. Nothing (or no one) depends on him, so he stays home and plays video games (boys games – games of war and competition because he wants to be a man, a winner, important.) He is the *man* in fantasy baseball. He makes his trades on time but he still doesn't take out the trash in the real world.

Every boy is a Sherlock Holmes. When needed Sherlock was sharp. The adrenaline flowed. But when he wasn't needed he was full of lassitude and could sit for days doing nothing.

A boy without real responsibility does not become a man. When real



Gameboy

responsibility is delayed until the mid-twenties it should be no surprise that many boys are not becoming men.

There are still ways to make boys carry real responsibility. Parents just need to find them.