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FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2005

## "Harry Potter" -- The Americablog Review

by Michael in New York on [7/22/2005 01:45:00 PM](#)

"HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE"

By J.K. Rowling

\*\*\*\* (out of 4)

By Michael Giltz

NO SPOILERS!!

Okay, I won't discuss the novel at length, to avoid spoiling it for fans who haven't finished it yet. Suffice to say, I think it's a big improvement on the last two (which felt a bit self-indulgent). Briefly, the first book was an unexpected delight. The second and third were good, but felt like Rowling was slipping into formula. The fourth and fifth ended that formula, but you got the impression an editor didn't come within a mile of those doorstoppers -- if Rowling thought of it, she put it in.

"Half-Blood Prince" is much more focused and streamlined. Plus, Harry isn't so teen angst-y anymore, so he doesn't speak IN CAPITAL LETTERS any more, which is quite a relief. It's restored my faith in the series and made me painfully eager for the final book.

But why are we discussing this at Americablog? As a number of people have pointed out, it's very much a post 9-11 (and sadly, post 7-7) book, with the government clamping down on rights, people suspicious of one another and fear everywhere.

There's a rather clueless prime minister seen in the very first chapter who is informed by the real powers behind the country about what is going on. It's easy to see him as a mild dig at Bush.

But one element -- that doesn't spoil the plot at all -- involves people thrown into jail by the wizards in power. As Dumbledore and Harry discuss it, some of those people are completely innocent AND THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS IT. But they leave those people to rot in jail because they're desperate to be seen as doing SOMETHING to fight the terrorists...pardon me, I mean the Death Eaters. Harry knows this is wrong and says so.

So think about that. Millions of kids around the world have been reading and respecting Harry Potter. They probably can't imagine anyone in the real world would ever do something like leaving people they KNOW are innocent to rot in jail. And when these young people realize it's actually being done this very moment by their own government, they'll say, quite simply, "That's not right!"

No wonder the far right radicals try to ban "Harry Potter" from school libraries. No wonder Pope Benedict thinks it's dangerous

JOHN'S PHOTOS



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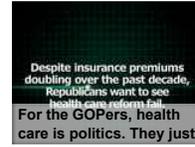
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