

Harry Potter 8: The Last Battle

Category : Reviews

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Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 2
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Harry Potter 8: The Last Battle

Harry Potter, lower incisors eternally bared in heroic determination, strides out to save the world in this engrossing, rather than involving, finale to the series. Danger, courage and sacrifice dominate an action tale where loose ends are tied up and there is a sense of the author's relief that it is all over. At least for now.

The most engaging scene has the assembled cast on the side of Right preparing Hogwarts for battle, uniting to create a forcefield, magically mine the bridge and raise the very stones in defense of the castle. The sense of the not-all-that strong protecting the weak and the last symbol of resistance, surely making victory theatrically inevitable was, for me, the emotional high point of the 2 hrs and 10 minutes.

This is the place to look for visual thrills rather than character development. However, Alan Rickman comes into his own as the truth of Snape's role is revealed. Supreme moments: Mrs Weasley versus the 'Bitch' (her word not mine), Neville's finest hour and the great fire which is hilariously kindled by one of Malfoy's inept heavies.

There were three or four intervals where a couple of seconds could, with benefit, have found the cutting room floor and the question of precisely how Ralph Fiennes' make-up had made his nose disappear distracted me periodically.

Under the stress of the onslaught of Evil the Three appear to forget some of the elementary spells most of us could probably manage now given a wand and some minor wizardliness, which could usefully have been deployed in a tight spot. For example, since when has a locked gate impeded our Hermione? And surely the odd 'Stupify!' could have made their journey through the attacked castle a little less fraught. Rupert Grint and Emma Watson look uncomfortable as a couple probably because their characters' status as an item is as incomprehensible to them as it was to me. Perhaps this is what distracted them. But then I haven't Read the Book where, no doubt, all such anomalies are satisfactorily explained.

There are the inevitable casualties of war to remind us that it's all serious stuff but the characters dispatched to their graves by JK Rowling's pen seemed dispensable. I can't say I was moved, as I was by the last film, perhaps because it would soon be *exeunt omnes* with the final curtain anyway. I would like to have felt and understood so much more and I think some narrative about post-war reconstruction could have taught us a great deal about how the events affected and shaped the futures of those who had participated in them. However, the author had likely had enough and preferred to leave the characters to our own imaginary devices.

All in all, the conclusion to a ripping cinematic yarn. Worth the entry price to the IMAX; yes, worth

the cost of the DVD when it comes out. Not great cinema perhaps but great visual entertainment.