

‘Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince’ Discovers the Wizard of Awe

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 14, 2009 - 9:20am

- [Daniel Radcliffe](#) [2]
- [Dumbledore](#) [3]
- [Emma Watson](#) [4]
- [Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince](#) [5]
- [Hogwarts](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [J.K. Rowling](#) [8]
- [Jim Broadbent](#) [9]
- [Michael Gambon](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Rupert Grint](#) [13]



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The Harry Potter phenomenon, born from the pen of J.K. Rowling and nurtured through the utter magic of modern filmmaking, has reached a monumental creative peak with the film “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.”

Combining the darker elements of Harry’s wizardly battles with the timeless struggle of adolescence, Half-Blood Prince succeeds by further humanizing its legendary characters and produces a spectacle that is a feast for both their legion of admirers and more importantly those not as familiar with the books.



The Wizardly Three – Rupert Grint (Ron), Emma Watson (Hermione) and Daniel Radcliffe (Harry) in ‘Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince’
Photo credit: Jaap Buitendijk for © 2008 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

In this installment, Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) has been “outed” by the press as a possible “chosen one” within the good vs. evil battle with the dark Lord Voldemort. Directly paralleling the real world paparazzi, Harry looks to escape from the limelight between terms at the Hogwarts School, only to be pulled into another chapter of the conflict by his headmaster and mentor, Professor Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon).

Dumbledore has stumbled onto a secret about former student Tom Riddle, and needs Harry's help during the new school year in convincing a professor of potions, Horace Slugworth (Jim Broadbent), in giving up a memory that could hold the key to the the soul of the evil Lord Voldemort.

In the midst of all this circumstance, the students of Hogwarts have also got that "certain feeling" in the throes of their pubescence. Harry's pals, Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson) seem to be pining for each other, but Ron's squealing admirer, Lavender Brown, gets in the way. The feeling that Harry has for Ron's sister Ginny is deepening, but a errant magic potions manual – property of the Half-Blood Prince – proves to be a bad timing separator.

It is up to Harry and the elderly Dumbledore to team up for the great adventure that could prove to be their undoing, but at the same time may provide the fuel that motors Harry toward the concluding lesson of his wizard education.



Michael Gambon as Professor Dumbledore in 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince'
Photo credit: Jaap Buitendijk for © 2008 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

Given the long set-up of five books and five films, this is the Potter film where all the actors could relax naturally into their alter-egos and have a little fun, despite the dark subject matter. Conversations and motivations are as natural as the expectant relationships portrayed and garners quite a few laughs.

Radcliffe as Potter deserves special mention as he holds the iconic character within his skin and defines him emotionally through a nuanced and notable performance. Whether having some cheeky fun with a good luck potion – channeling John Lennon from "Hard Day's Night" – or setting his jaw heroically as he understands the burden of his destiny, Daniel Radcliffe gives nothing but artistry to his character, as important to his generation as Superman was to previous ones.

The proficiency continues through the veteran cast of both child and adult actors. Jim Broadbent crashes the Potter party and nearly steals the whole universe with his what-is-he-about Professor Slughorn. The rest of the prime adult cast, led with amazing energy and absolution by Gambon's Dumbledore, fulfills the excitement of the novel brought to life.



Frank Dillane as teenage Tom Riddle in 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince'
Photo credit: Jaap Buitendijk for © 2008 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

Grint's Ron and Watson's Hermione get their moments as well, and both deliver with the aplomb of seasoned actors. Grint in particular does a deft comic turn that ends with a surprising conclusion, and handles it in a way that would rival a performer with twice the experience.

The look and feel of the film was special as well. Director David Yates has made an epic with a scope worthy of David Lean, and instills the spookier scenes with a decided Stanley Kubrick vibe, as Dumbledore and Slughorn flash back to their encounters with the enigmatic Tom Riddle. Steve Klove's screenplay is briskly alive and respects the characters by imbuing them with an accessible mortality.

In short, this is the classic Harry Potter film that brings it all together – the magic, emotion, camaraderie, joy and sorrow. We've watched the young wizards grow up, now we grow with them.

'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince' opens everywhere July 15, 2009, with special midnight shows. Check local listings for showtimes and details. Starring Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Michael Gambon, Jim Broadbent, Alan Rickman, Robbie Coltrane and Maggie Smith, directed by David Yates.



[14]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [15]
Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [14]

© 2009 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 12:25am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/8156/harry-potter-and-the-half-blood-prince-discovers-the-wizard-of-awe>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/daniel-radcliffe>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/dumbledore>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/emma-watson>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-half-blood-prince>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/hogwarts>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jk-rowling>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jim-broadbent>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/michael-gambon>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rupert-grint>
- [14] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>