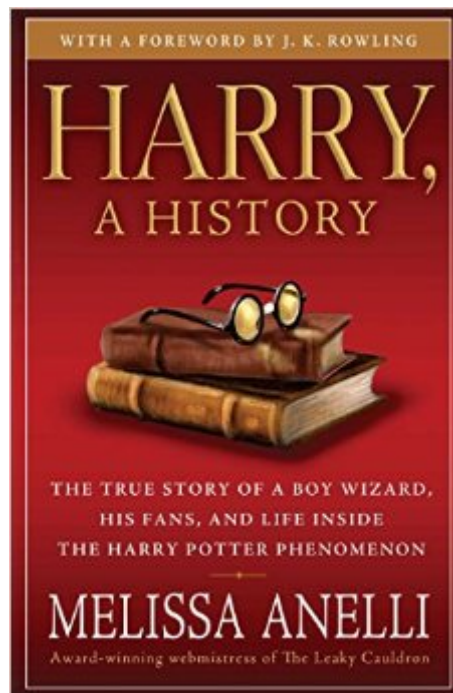


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Harry, A History: The True Story Of A Boy Wizard, His Fans, And Life Inside The Harry Potter Phenomenon



Synopsis

The Harry Potter Books Were Just The Beginning of the Story... During the brief span of just one decade, hundreds of millions of perfectly ordinary people made history: they became the only ones who would remember what it was like when the Harry Potter saga was still unfinished. What it was like to seek out friends, families, online forums, fan fiction, and podcasts to get a fix between novels. When the potential death of a character was a hotter bet than the World Series. When the unfolding story of a boy wizard changed the way books are read for all time. And as webmistress of the Leaky Cauldron, one of the most popular Harry Potter sites on the Internet, Melissa Anelli had a front row seat to it all. Whether it was helping Scholastic stop leaks and track down counterfeiters, hosting live PotterCasts at bookstores across the country, touring with the wizard rock band Harry and the Potters, or traveling to Edinburgh to interview J. K. Rowling personally, Melissa was at the center of the Harry Potter tornado, and nothing about her life would ever be the same. The Harry Potter books are a triumph of the imagination that did far more than break sales records for all time. They restored the world's sense of wonder and took on a magical life of their own. Now the series has ended, but the story is not over. With remembrances from J. K. Rowling's editors, agents, publicists, fans, and Rowling herself, Melissa Anelli takes us on a personal journey through every aspect of the Harry Potter phenomenon -- from his very first spell to his lasting impact on the way we live and dream.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book really should have been called "Melissa, A History" because it is basically a biography of the author Melissa Anelli. I had expected more behind-the-scenes info on Harry Potter, the books, the movies, and JK Rowling. Although there is some of that in this book, there is much more Melissa than Harry. The subtitle of this book is, "The True Story of a Boy Wizard, His Fans, and Life Inside the Harry Potter Phenomenon". The promise of the true story of a boy wizard and life inside the Harry Potter phenomenon were very lacking. "His Fans" (specifically Melissa and her friends) was the bulk of this book. Unfortunately, I was primarily interested in the other two. The book jumps around so unforgivably at times it gets very confusing. A chronological approach would have made more sense. Melissa was actually on the movie sets and presumably spoke with the actors, producers, etc., but there is far too little of that in the book. The author also seems to expect that you are a rabid fan of the Leaky Cauldron web site, which she runs. I say this because she glosses over some blogs and interviews that were apparently posted on the web site, mentioning some fact and then moving on. She actually lists several questions asked of Ms. Rowling that I would have liked to see the answers for, but apparently the reader is already supposed to know the answers. I don't blame Melissa for cashing in on her position - writing a book is the way to go these days. I'm disappointed, because this book could have been something much better: better organized, better information, and, frankly, better writing.

For all the fanfare this book has gotten, I'm not entirely sure all of it is deserved. It is a lovely look back at how the Harry Potter fandom evolved and got to where it is today, but there are some issues I do have with the book. One of the things I noticed was that Melissa told the book like it was a novel, a fictional piece, filled with flowery description that I feel has no place in what is essentially a memoir of sorts. The intent of the book is to retell the HP fandom, from start to finish. Melissa pulls this off artfully, but if her intent was to reach the general public, it was not accomplished. From start to finish, this book is full of name-dropping and in-jokes that just another Harry Potter fan would never understand. In this book, the BNFs (Big Name Fans) rule supreme. The other side of the fandom is never shown. It took 90 pages for the first mention of MuggleNet, and all future mentions (of which there were very few and only when absolutely necessary) were cold and snobby. The HPANA is mentioned only once, in the acknowledgements, the Lexicon once, nothing about the humongous controversy, and no mention at all of Veritasium and other sites out there. The truth is, Melissa fails to mention the side that truly appeals to the general fan. I did not feel, after reading this book, like I was part of the phenomenon, although I know I was, because I read the books, I posted in the communities, I had just as much fun theorizing, but nope, I didn't own a fansite or publish

JKR's books, so I clearly don't matter. Probably about 90% of the Harry Potter fans would fall in my boat, not Melissa's. Where is our story? It was a good read, I will not say I disliked it, but I just wish Melissa had shown us the entirety of the HP world, instead of her secluded, high-and-mighty part of it. Rating: 3.5/5

Since I have never heard a podcast discussing Harry Potter, or engaged in an Internet chat, or written fanfic using Rowling's characters and settings (which just seems wrong to do anyway), this book was a disappointment because it's about this one girl whose interest in the book led to working on the Leaky Cauldron website, dealing with fans, traveling the country doing podcasts, and visiting England for Potter events and interviews with J.K. Rowling. She got very close to the author, and I would have rather read a collection of her interviews with the Rowling than most of this. But for some reason she doesn't include them here, just alludes to them. That's my biggest complaint. I was hoping this was a compendium of interviews done for the website over the years. But it's not. It's a story about one young woman's unusual career path, and now she's getting a book out of it. She is a good writer, but since I don't know her friends or traveling companions (again, because I didn't follow the podcasts), a lot of this was of no interest to me.

I feel as though it was an autobiography of herself. I really didn't feel as though it was a history of Harry Potter. If she wasn't there or experienced it, it wasn't written about. Anyone knows about the long lines at the book releases and midnight showings, but there was nothing new in the book, there was nothing interesting, and there was nothing worth spending the money for. I thought it was basically her bragging that she knows JK Rowling and has met the actors. This book was nothing what the people made it out to be when it was first released. I only made it about half way through and had to stop. I was thoroughly disappointed in the book and expected so much more from the title. If it stuck true to the title and wasn't an "all about me" book, I would have loved it. Unfortunately I wasted my money.

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