Play Review

Title: Harry Potter and the Cursed Child  
Author: J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne, John Tiffany
Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books
Publication Year: 2016
Number of Pages: 308
Production Requirements: Extensive and elaborate sets, in-depth and complicated special effects, elaborate lighting and sound needs, extensive costuming, props that appear magical
Estimated Run Time: 5 hours
Number of Acts: 4
Number of Characters: 36
Cast Requirements: 15+ male, 11+ female
Time Period: present day
Reading/Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Excellent

Review

For those who have grown up reading the Harry Potter series and have always yearned for more, this is nostalgia at its finest. Harry, Ron, and Hermione return along with cameos from almost all other major characters. Harry Potter’s youngest son, Albus, has arrived for his first year at Hogwarts. He is placed in Slytherin house, much to the chagrin of his father. As the years progress, father and son grow apart while Albus worries about living up to his famous father’s reputation. When Albus and his best friend Scorpius, son of Draco Malfoy, learn that a time-turner exists they decide to try to change the past in order to improve their current circumstances. But tampering with time leads to endless trouble. After each of their attempts to change the past, they return to a present that is a completely new and increasingly worse. When Harry and Albus at last begin to resolve their differences and come together they are able to work together to set things right again. And that is the crux of this play: relationships and healing.

As aforementioned, this performance is suitable for those who grew up reading the books, not the children currently reading them. The play is most suitable for older teens and adults due to the mature themes and intense situations. The script is published together as parts one and two and is indeed two full length plays which are meant to be viewed back to back. Due to the amount of exposition and set-up needed for the story, part two is stronger and more action packed while part one is a bit slow and depressing at times. Many characters are well-developed and most plot points are revealed as the surprises they are intended to be. Some surprises may dash previously held happy perceptions; one major character is suspicious early on and might be guessed at earlier than intended by the authors. The play is currently not licensed for theatrical production and is published as a book for at-home enjoyment. Due to the intense and fantastic production requirements, production by a non-professional theater would be quite difficult.