



HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD

Stage magic



► **OFFICIAL OPENING 30 JULY**

► Venue **Palace Theatre, London**

► Director **John Tiffany**

► Cast **Jamie Parker, Paul Thornley, Noma Dumezweni, Poppy Miller, Alex Price, Anthony Boyle**

STAGE PLAY “The truth is a

beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution,” sighs Dumbledore in *The Philosopher’s Stone*, and it’s a sentiment that *The Cursed*

Child’s writing team of JK Rowling, Jack Thorne and John Tiffany urge people to keep in mind. Arriving with a hashtag that casts Silencio on spoilers (the audience are handed #keepthesecrets pin badges after each show), *The Cursed Child* is an audacious play that will have stunned fans scrolling through PotterPedia, fact-checking every twist and turn of the plot.

Enjoyment of the play doesn’t depend on audiences having a

comprehensive understanding of the wizarding world, though. Set 19 years after the events of *The Deathly Hallows*, *The Cursed Child* explores the struggle of a grown-up Harry Potter trying to understand his youngest son, Albus Severus, who’s buckling under the weight of the family legacy. By spreading the story across generations of Potters, the play skilfully balances the high expectations of fans as well as giving newcomers a relatable entry point.

There are heaps of heartfelt moments, and not all of them rely on danger. Cute interactions and lines draw cherished characters out of the books, making it feel like the audience is really watching fictional icons take to the stage. For the most part, new characters are portrayed with a similar depth and nuance, their personalities more than strong enough to lay the foundation for further adventures and fanfic. Scorpius Malfoy in particular is sure to become the poster boy for, well, the sort of person Scorpius Malfoy is.

“Will leave devotees desperate to watch it again”

Speaking of fanfic, *The Cursed Child* toys with the *Harry Potter* world so much that it starts to veer in that direction. The type of story being told is one that JK Rowling briefly explored in *Azkaban*, but here it’s mined for all it’s worth. This results in an occasionally knotty plot which demands that theatregoers pay extremely close attention. It’s also the sort of story that might not appear characteristically *Harry Potter* at first. However, this sprawling, wild and dark tale is a worthy entry that lives up to the challenge of returning audiences to Rowling’s universe.

The magical world itself is brought to life with inventive set designs, ingenious illusions and stunning special effects, all of which have been crafted with the same care as the work of the actors and writers. The result is a theatrical blockbuster that will leave *Potter* devotees desperate to watch it again, pore over every line, and appreciate every reference until it becomes as familiar as the original seven-part series. **Dom Carter**

i Early previews used real barn owls to deliver a letter. The idea was scrapped after one flew off into the auditorium.