**Harry Potter and Death**

It is clear to me now that the whole Harry Potter series is really about death and coming to grips with it. Many of the main characters die through the series and Harry frequently struggles with the death of his parents. Voldemort, the villain, even looks and dresses like the grim reaper.

JK Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter books has admitted in interviews that her mother was diagnosed with [multiple sclerosis](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Healthday/story?id=4507217&page=1" \t "external) in 1980 and this affected her writing. "She had a very virulent form of the illness and at that time there were no drug treatments at all," Rowling said. "I had been writing for six months before she died and, the weird thing is, the essential plot didn't change after my mother died, but everything deepened and darkened," As the books unfold we discover that Voldemort’s motivation for killing people is centered around his desire to prevent his own death. He wants to become immortal and so through dark magic he discovers how to divide his soul into little pieces that can go on living even if he is killed. But this dark process involves killing others. "Harry was always going to lose his parents. And it was always going to be a quest really to avenge them, but to avenge everyone against this, this creature -- this being who believes that he can make himself immortal by killing other people. So that's, that that's something I'd created before she died, but yes, its seeped into every part of the books.”

As the stories unfold we also come to realize that the books are more about Harry’s parents and their contemporaries then it is about Harry and his friends. All of the mystery is hidden in the past. And Harry—only a baby when orphaned—sets out to discover whom his parents really were. According to Ehow.com, “Everyone at some point in their lives wants to know where they came from and their history. Genealogy is the name given to the practice of discovering your ancestry. It has helped millions of people all over the world piece their family history together small bits at a time.” Harry’s ancestry is of course filled with magic and adventure and helps him to defeat the Grim Reaper (Voldemort) before he can do more damage.

Even with all of the magic that abounds in the books—especially at Hogwarts, a mystical school with Dumbledore as its resident Shaman—there still isn’t a way to bring Harry’s parents back from the dead. Yes, through magic he is able to see them a couple of times, and learn about their past, but nothing, just as in JK Rowling’s real life, can bring back the dead.

—Kevin Harris