

**“Carry on, Simon.”: A Review of Rainbow Rowell’s *Carry On***  
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**Abstract:** *The Harry Potter series has had a major role in countless childhoods since the release of the first book in 1997 but, with the fandom space no longer considered safe, many fans are struggling to find a way to address the conflicting feelings of nostalgia with the problematic material. Rainbow Rowell’s Carry On offers a healthy substitution, allowing readers the chance to visit worlds that feel familiar enough to fuel their Potter-fix, while also offering a fresh new perspective on a magical landscape that actually addresses themes of classism and self-discovery.*

Carry On by Rainbow Rowell  
2015, St. Martin’s Press  
522 pages, hardcover  
Grades 10+  
ISBN: 978-1-250-1-35025



Simon Snow has never been really good at being the chosen one. It’s his final year at Watford School of Magicks, he’s supposed to defeat this great and powerful evil, and half of the time he can’t get his wand to function properly. His roommate and biggest rival, Baz, likes to remind him of this and Simon expects this year at Watford to be more of the same old thing. But then Baz doesn’t show up to school and it only gets weirder from there. At least he has his best friend, Penelope, to help him figure things out and his mentor, the Mage, if they could only piece together why he’s been ignoring them.

Carry On originated as a story-within-a-story in one of Rowell's other books before inspiration struck and the series developed into its own (Romano, 2015). Originally intended as an homage to one of the most beloved series of all time, Carry On now offers young readers who may not want to support J.K. Rowling, due to the harm she has caused the trans community, but who want to explore a magical world similar to the one that enchanted them in their younger years (Bellemare, Kolbegger, & Vermes, 2021; Romano, 2023). Emphasis on similar. While the world of Simon Snow mirrors that of Harry Potter in a number of ways, Rowell shines a light on the often-overlooked challenges that come with being given an incredible amount of power and responsibility at a young age and how these tropes impact the characters. A combination of a ghost story, a coming-of-age story, a love story, and a mystery, Carry On will have readers excited to watch the love story between a clumsy wizard and mysterious vampire unfold and finish the rest of the series.

### References

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