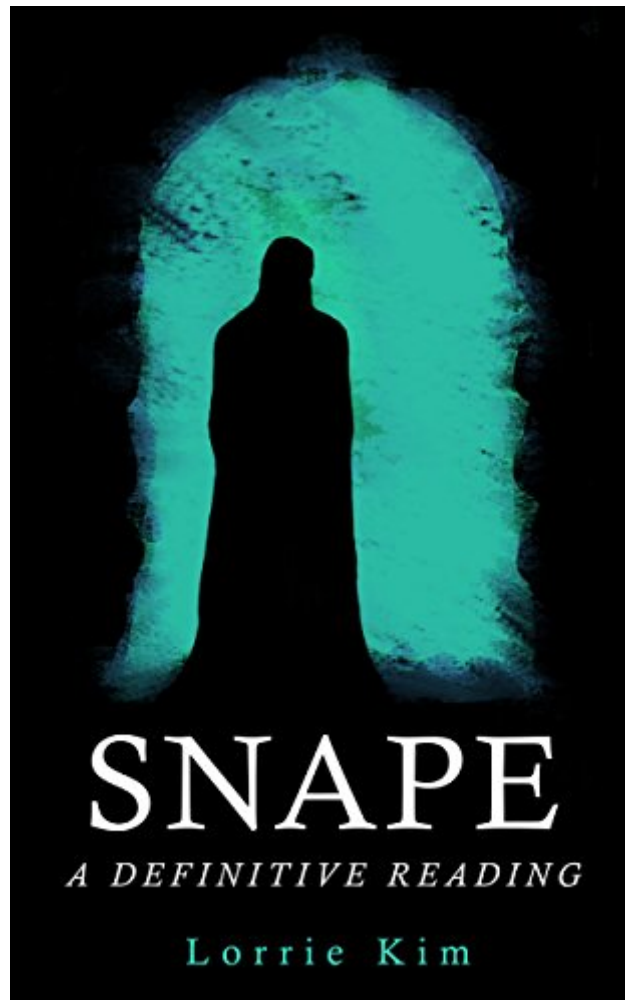


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Snape: A Definitive Reading



Synopsis

The Harry Potter series may be named after the Boy Who Lived, but if you want to know the story, keep your eyes fixed on Severus Snape. This hook-nosed, greasy-haired, grumpy character is one of J.K. Rowling's enduring gifts to English literature. He's the archetypal ill-tempered teacher: acerbic, yet horribly, deliciously funny. When he's in a scene, you can't take your eyes off him. Snape is always the story. - From the Introduction In this examination of J.K. Rowling's most enigmatic character, Lorrie Kim shows us how to sort through the illusions and lies to the man who dared to spy on Voldemort and without whom, Harry's story would have turned out very differently. In his final moments, he asks Harry (and the reader) to "Look at me." This book does just that.

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Customer Reviews

I know of many people who still accept Snape's actions at face-value without stopping to consider why he did the things he did, said what he said, and behaved as he did. Lorrie Kim provides an interpretation of Severus Snape's actions that is precise and accurate. His actions in each book are broken down and explained with highly logical reasoning, and each chapter, just as with the series

itself, builds on the previous one. This sort of precise logic that is worthy of Snape himself. It is gratifying to see that there are others who view Snape in the same or similar light as myself. While one can argue that you cannot still defend Snape's behavior when he went too far in some instances, one cannot find fault that every action had a reason. Nearly everything he did/said or let happen was carefully calculated, with the few exceptions where he lost control of himself or the situation. That being said, Kim clearly explains how he regained control or used the situation to his advantage. It also proves that he's human and that, as readers, we have to learn to look beyond what we see through Harry Potter's eyes. When we step away from the situation and isolate ourselves away from our highly emotional response (typically the same or similar response brought on by Harry), we can see how and why Snape did as he did. That is especially important in hindsight now with the series being complete. Lorrie Kim discusses how there is always more than meets the eye with Snape, and as someone who has always read between the lines where Severus Snape is concerned, it is refreshing to know that there are others who can think and interpret and not just blindly accept JKR's words (wonderful though they may be) as they are without the desire to dig deeper for a proper understanding.

Lorrie Kim asserts that where Severus Snape is, there's the story. She then backs up her proposition with 324 pages of highly detailed analyses of Snape's roles, motivations, actions and relationships to other characters and events throughout the seven book Harry Potter series. Kim essentially retells the plot, following the original order of events, but from Snape's point of view, as we've come to understand him by the end of the series. The result, for the reader, is a much enhanced understanding of Snape and, indeed, all of the main characters, and an increased (if that's even possible) appreciation for J. K. Rowling's story-telling genius. Severus Snape is a highly ambiguous character. He sneers at little children and ignores them or, even worse, mocks them while they seek his approval. He thoroughly dislikes Harry Potter, the hero, and hangs out with the arch-fiend of the story, Voldemort, but he is trusted by the purest of hearts - Hermione and Dumbledore. He is nasty looking, contemptuous and mean, but he holds in his heart, secretly, true love. He is a study in contrasts, once the reader is let in on the secret that he is a double-agent. Even then, the question looms - for which side, really? Undertaking such an enormous task as closely analyzing the dense ambiguity of Snape through seven books occasionally requires Kim to hypothesize about Snape's behavior when there isn't enough textual evidence to directly support her thesis. To overcome such difficulty, Kim points out relevant patterns of action and motivation of the other characters that are supported by the text and then shows how Snape's character parallels

and mirrors the same patterns, thus justifying her hypotheses through syllogism.

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