



Who will J.K. Rowling kill off next? With the final book in the Harry Potter series — *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* — due for release on July 21, a helpline is to be set up for fans unable to deal with the death of two of its, yet to be revealed, characters.

Helpline plan for distressed fans of Harry Potter

N.S. 9 p. 14 3.2.07

LONDON: Book retailer Waterstone's is hoping to set up a helpline for distressed fans of the popular Harry Potter series because two characters will be killed off in the final instalment, *The Daily Telegraph* reported yesterday.

"This could be a similar moment to when (pop band) Take That split up — there could be a lot of upset teenagers out there," said Debbie Williams, a buyer for the book chain.

"We are looking to set up a helpline for them."

Waterstone's predicts that half a million copies will fly off the shelves when the seventh and final edition of author J.K. Rowling's hugely successful Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, becomes available on July 21.

Rowling has said she is poised to kill off two characters in the final instalment and many fans fear that Harry, in his last year at Hogwarts school, will be one of them.

The Harry Potter books have sold 325 million copies worldwide and have been translated into 64 languages, as well as being converted into a successful film franchise starring Daniel Radcliffe.

The books have made Rowling an estimated US\$1 billion (RM3.5 billion).

The fifth movie in the series is due for release about one week before the final book is released.

The previous book, *Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince*, broke UK records by shifting 2,009,574 copies on its first day of release.

It's been 10 years since Rowling published the first book, *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*.

Online retailer *amazon.co.uk* started taking pre-orders for *Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows* on Dec 22.

Head of books Christopher North said: "At one point, the orders were more than five times higher than those for the rest of the Top 20 selling books combined.

"Now that the publication date has been announced, we expect another surge of pre-orders. July 21 will be Harry Potter Day.

"It may be a long time before we see another book that commands as much anticipation, attention and demand as this final book." — AFP