

Compare and Contrast the *Sorcerer's Stone* and the *Goblet of Fire* for Age Differences

By Liza Stanaland

There are several differences between *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and *The Goblet of Fire*. As the characters aged in the movies, a lot of the viewers were aging along with them. However, now my youngest child is watching them, and he binge watches. There is no age difference over twenty-four hours. I was trying to dig deeper and not just consider the obvious, so in order to do that I watched them with my eight-year-old. He cannot stay quiet during a movie, but this time I took advantage of it.

This kid... he teaches me so much more than I would have ever imagined.

Lukie's ideas and my take on them

- Lukie: I want to be like Harry Potter... but I don't want to live with those kinds of people or sleep in a closet. I want to live with you.

Here's the thing... Kids want to be like Harry Potter because of the magic. Hell, I want to be like Harry Potter because of the magic! Lukie wants to be like him because he's a hero. Not the kind of hero that saves the day, but the kind that treats everyone with acceptance and respect. In the *Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry is just coming into himself. He is still very much a submissive child who follows direction and doesn't question his aunt and uncle. At least until he finds out who he really is.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione are very young, and look very young, which makes it easier for younger audiences to relate to them. They're at a new school with new people and are away from their families. Kids understand the fear and the excitement they are going through.

The level of intensity in the *Sorcerer's Stone* is nothing like what it is in *Goblet of Fire*. For the most part, we're meeting new people, ghosts, and learning about basic spells and Quidditch. Harry is new to the magical aspect of his life and viewers are learning as he learns. The characters are still coddled a bit which creates a sense of security for viewers as well.

- Lukie: Why does Voldemort look like a creepy baby and why are they putting him in a pot?

By the time Harry grows into the young adult in *Goblet of Fire*, he is more experienced, isn't afraid to stand up for what he believes in and has gone through trials and situations that are just too intense for an eleven-year-old to handle. Contrary to what has happened in the *Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry is dealing with being in Voldemort's head, having to go through the very mature tests of the Triwizard Tournament, fighting with his best friend, going through his first crush, and watching his Cedric die. After everything he goes through, he then witnesses, and is an unwilling part of Voldemort returning to a complete body and then has to fight him.

Lukie had a difficult time understanding how Voldemort was able to do that. I think the concept of magically becoming whole again is something that is hard for any child to grasp. It's one thing to be a part of Professor Quirrell's body and another to see someone throw this creature into a pot, cut off his own hand, and cut up Harry's arm. Then to see Voldemort's creepy snake face... that's scary for me and I'm grown.

The *Goblet of Fire* is a much darker film with deeper emotions and a more in-depth understanding of good vs evil. Younger children can't process those emotions like older kids can.

- Lukie: Why is Professor Moody's eye like that?

The visuals in *Goblet of fire* are definitely intended for older audiences. Let's face it... We've all wondered how Mad Eye's eye works. He lost his real eye during the First Wizarding War from an attack by a Death Eater. That creepy eye just swirls all around and he can see pretty much everything. Lukie, like me, has an issue with anything eye related. Watching Barty Crouch, Jr remove that eye when he runs out of Polyjuice potion is a bit much. No matter how I explain it to him, he never quite gets the crazy eye situation. This may be an isolated feeling because of our eye perversion, but I doubt it.

- Lukie: I want a three-headed dog. I could train him to be nice.

The creatures in the two movies are completely different. We have Fluffy in the *Sorcerer's Stone* and other than his crazy growling and disgusting saliva-covered teeth, he's a pretty cute pup. Then, Hagrid gets a cute baby dragon that burps fire and burns some of his beard. Sure, the dragon will grow into a mama dragon and Fluffy could tear you apart with one snap of his jaws, but all in all they're pretty innocent.

In the *Goblet of Fire*, you have four insane dragons, one of which breaks her massive chain and chases Harry all around the Hogwarts grounds trying to kill him. Then we have creepy mer-people and Grindylows, both of which have razor sharp teeth and attempt to hurt and/or kill Harry. Those guys, alone, are enough to give younger audiences nightmares.

- Lukie: I like Harry Potter, Mama. I'm glad you like watching it with me, too. Meeya and Dominic don't care about it like we do.

Even with all the differences in the two films, one thing is always the same: be a good person, fight for what you know is right, and overcome all obstacles. Harry is just a kid in a bad situation that decides to be a good person and do what's right no matter how scary it may seem. He has emotions and feelings just like anyone else. He doesn't have parents, but he has many people that love him and although it doesn't take away the sting of losing his real mom and dad, those people are a great substitute family.

Harry learns that death is a part of life, courage is something everyone should have, and that loving the people around you is more important than dwelling on the ones you've lost.

I'm proud to be a die-hard Harry Potter fan. I have an entire arm full of tattoos to prove it. Contrary to what some people believe and have said in the past, the movies don't teach children about witchcraft, they teach a child that no matter what your upbringing has been like, YOU make the choice to rise above the past or stay on the same road to nowhere.