Few characters achieve the cult status that Harry Potter has achieved, even less so if the book, or books in the case of the Harry Potter series, is classified under the genre of children’s fiction. But the appeal of Harry Potter and his world spreads far and wide, bringing even adults to a state of fan frenzy. The Harry Potter series has been very successful since their publication and the author has received great fame. A series of films based on these books have also been produced, contributing to the series’ popularity significantly. The author of the Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

The fourth book in this series by J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, carries forward the saga of an orphaned adolescent boy thrust into the world of wizardry, unaware of his magical ancestry. The story takes place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft & Wizardry in United Kingdom. Despite the location being non-fiction, these books cover an “alternate universe” because the school is sequestered from human civilization. In the world of Harry Potter, humans are “Muggles”, non-magical people who live oblivious to the fact that wizards exist.

Harry is a 16-year old student of magic at Hogwarts that is holding the annual Triwizard Tournament. This competition is only open for nominated students who are 17 years of age and above, but the Goblet of Fire, a magical cup used for establishing eligibility, chooses Harry as one of its contestants for the year. This unexpected selection leads to the central conflict of the book since only three contestants are allowed to take part in the Triwizard Tournament and Harry is chosen as the much-controversial fourth. The tournament is dangerous, hence its age limit. Dumbledore cast a spell on the Goblet limiting students below the age of 17 to take part in the competition. He says, “I will be drawing an age line around the Goblet of Fire…” (J.K. Rowling p.256). “The fire in the goblet had just turned red again. Sparks were flying out of it. A long flame suddenly shot into the air, and borne was another piece of parchment…and then Dumbledore cleared his throat and read out – Harry Potter.” (J.K. Rowling p.270.271). So who is this mysterious nominator and why does he want Harry to be hurt, or even worse, die? Harry struggles to stay alive throughout the book, dodging death at every level in the game and providing the audience with much thrill.

Also, Harry and his friends are very real and identifiable, even dynamic as they often undergo change and are faced with new difficulties and challenges. Harry’s appeal, especially, lies in developing from just another bullied boy living in the “muggle” world to an extraordinary wizard, well-liked by his friends in the magical realm. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire is a story of coming-of-age. It is a story of unexpected situations transforming a young boy into a man. Harry Potter is someone who does not simply accept his fate, but fights to change it for the better at every possible opportunity, leaving readers in a state of hero-worship. And why not? The author’s fondness of her hero and in fact all her characters is evident by the excited tone she has written the book in. J.K. Rowling weaves a captivating story with just the right ingredients of fantasy, suspense, and adventure.

This book has a variety of themes such as wizardry, magic, good vs. evil, power, friendship, fear and hate. The story is written in third person, the narrator being omniscient, though Harry’s point of view is seemingly preferred because the audience can witness his private thoughts. The narrator also seems to have a detailed overview of what is going on at any place at any time in the story, as well as a deep level of insight into the characters’ thoughts and feelings. However, what sets this book apart from other books even in the same series is the mind-blowing pace with which events unfold. The tempo is beyond incredible, the reader’s heartbeat pulsating erratically with every twist and turn. J.K. Rowling keeps us on the edge of our seat, never allowing the reader to remain disengaged from the story for too long. The audience gets just a moment to breathe a sigh of relief before the next gripping plot element begins.

The story may seem to go in many directions at first with many seemingly unrelated characters and events, but their connection to the main plot line is revealed all in good time. Readers never have to slog through any portion of the book as every word is carefully crafted and fits the story. Hardly a word is wasted with everything finally coming together in a heart-pounding chain of climaxes that are hair-raising and spine-tingling to the last letter. Truth be told, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire cannot be put down once begun and the average reader will willingly burn the midnight oil to know what happens in the next chapter, and in the next, and the next, and the next…

Bibliography

Rowling, J. K., & GrandPré, M. (2000). *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.