

Pop Culture

Deep down, Harry's bad

'Awful swimmer' Radcliffe spent 41 hours
underwater filming Goblet of Fire

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CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

LONDON – When Daniel Radcliffe thinks about the scene now, he can scarcely believe he did it. In the course of filming Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, he spent a total of 41 hours and 38 minutes under water – with one dive alone lasting 75 minutes.

"I'm an absolutely awful swimmer!" he confessed. "I'm terrible. I'm one of the worst swimmers in my year at school."

So when he saw the finished film in which he, as Harry, confronts a treacherous underwater world, he felt both astonishment and pride. After all, no stunt doubles were used.

"Oh yes, that was me. I had a fantastic stunt team behind me, but I trained for six months and then I started doing it. It's probably something I never would have done – learning to dive – if it wasn't for this film."

Harry even finds himself growing fins and gills for this sequence – one of the most popular in the J.K. Rowling novel, and one that is already creating high anticipation among the millions of Potter fans awaiting next Friday's premiere of the fourth instalment of the series.

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Despite ratings, only you know if child is ready for Potter

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Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire opens Nov. 18. It is the fourth Harry Potter film. Anyone who has sat through even one Potter film already knows the Goblet of Fire will have its share of intense moments.

So some old-fashioned common sense is in order when deciding whether your child is ready to see Harry's next adventure.

Keep in mind that Harry's getting older – he's a teenager now – and the story arcs are becoming more sophisticated and the magic and fantasy elements more intense. The older the wizard, the bigger the challenges.

But if you can't figure it out on your own, the film's rating might offer some insight.

Goblet of Fire's intense fantasy action has resulted in the toughest ratings ever given a Harry Potter movie.

The British Board of Film Classification gave the film a 12A rating, meaning no child under 12 years old can see the film without a parent present.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) gave the film a PG13 rating and English-Canadian classification boards gave the film a PG (parental guidance) rating.

Quebec's rating is more lenient. La Régie du cinéma has given Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire a G (general audience) rating with the attached advisory – not recommended for children under 8 years old.

In fact, the Régie has given every Potter film a G rating – two with advisories attached

and two without.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001) got a G rating with no advisory.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002) got a G rating with the advisory not recommended for children under 8 years old.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004) got a G rating with no advisory even though it was considered by many critics and parents to be the darkest and most intense Potter film up to that point.

"It all comes down to the perception of the individual classifiers," the Régie's Yves Bédard said.

The Régie has 10 full-time classifiers and there is no guarantee the same people will end up classifying all the Harry Potter movies.

A great number of elements are considered during the rating of each film. Does the intense action unfold in a fantasy setting? Are the children portrayed as heroes capable of rising to the challenge?

"It's not an exact science," Bédard said.

Bédard is the co-ordinator of the Régie's Service du classement and is also responsible for fielding any complaints from the public about a film's classification.

"I can tell you that we have not received one complaint concerning our classification of the Harry Potter films," Bédard said. "The Régie's classification offers parents a guideline, but ultimately it is the parents who know what's best for their children."

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