

500 Words or Less Reviews: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

After finishing *The Sorcerer's Stone* I felt at loose ends, lost, eternally adrift...Not really, but I did greatly desire to continue the Potter story ASAP. And so, after borrowing [*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*](#) from my niece, I plunged into its magical depths. While possibly not quiiiiite as good to me as SS, CoS didn't disappoint. It introduces us to more fascinating characters, creatures, and a brand-new plot.

As far as the characters, the ghosts stole the show. There's Nearly Headless Nick all downcast after not qualifying for the Headless Hunt because he's not technically headless (only nearly headless); Moaning Myrtle who haunts a girl's bathroom and plays a key role in the primary plot; the always hilariously obnoxious and mischievous, Peeves the Poltegiest; and Cuthbert Binns, the ultra-boring ghost teacher of History of Magic who apparently has never realized he was dead. Every stinking time these ghosts enter the story in whatever guise brings more life to the story than any of the living characters.

This is not at all saying that the living characters in CoS are bad. Nor is this downplaying any of the other many superb aspects of this second triumph in the Harry Potter series. But it is also not saying that it's a perfect book. I'm not referring to the heavy revisiting of the plot of SS in the early chapters of CoS. I understand how this was necessary since at the time of the first release of CoS it had been about a year since the release of the first one. Although I do wish Rowling had done more summarizing, her taking the time to rehash was tolerable because of the excellent original plot and writing surrounding it.

No, that rehashing is not why the book is imperfect. The imperfection is in the dialogue. By pointing out that CoS has an imperfection, I'm not saying this makes it remotely an inferior work. While this flaw is there, it is barely noticeable. The dialogue is mostly very fluid but tended to get stilted as though at these points Rowling was tired and just trying to fulfill her quota for the day so she could go to bed. Although these areas don't take up a lot of space (usually anywhere from a paragraph to half a page), these areas came across as lifeless to me. But like I said, barely noticeable.

And there were most of the same adult logic problems that I referred to in my SS review. Don't get me started on the completely arbitrary point system in which any biased teacher or prefect can add or subtract points on a whim. Despite these minor logic annoyances, despite the periodic mini-wastelands, Rowling has successfully created another children's classic. And it is a children's classic. Remember that. Friends who are familiar with the books say they will become heavier, more adult. I look forward to this, but in the meantime, I am fully enjoying and appreciating extremely well-written children's work.