



# The Enchantress Returns

*Chris Colfer*

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After decades of hiding, the evil Enchantress who cursed Sleeping Beauty is back with a vengeance. Alex and Conner Bailey have not been back to the magical Land of Stories since their adventures in *The Wishing Spell* ended. But one night, they learn the famed Enchantress has kidnapped their mother! Against the will of their grandmother, the twins must find their own way into the Land of Stories to rescue their mother and save the fairy tale world from the greatest threat it's ever faced.

## The Enchantress Returns Details

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Author : Chris Colfer

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# From Reader Review The Enchantress Returns for online ebook

**Zachary Flye (Zach's YA Reviews) says**

Real Rating: 4.5 stars

Originally posted on my blog, Zach's YA Reivews ([zachsyareviews.com](http://zachsyareviews.com))

Review:

**Protagonists:** Alex and Connor Bailey haven't been back to the Land of Stories in nearly a year, and when they get back things aren't quite as they had left them. One of the things I was hoping to get out of this installment was some serious character development in our two protagonist and while we do get that, it happens a lot less gradually than I would have liked. Maybe I missed the subtle hints, but regardless of whether or not there were hints these characters still developed way too quickly. For a large portion of the book they were how they were when we left them at the end of *The Wishing Spell*, however fairly close to the end there's a moment when they change and develop but it happens so fast that I had wished it would be more gradual and less like a spell had been cast upon them that forced them to mature a bit more (just to be clear that was a metaphor and not a spoiler.)

**World-Building:** I love how much more of this world we got to see. With a large focus on the villains of fairy tales we are treated to back stories and twists to the classic tales that we know and love. While some of these villains have nearly redeeming backstories there are others that are evil for the sake of being evil, I appreciated this mix because it's hard to believe that everyone at one point was good, or that no one is evil for evil's sake. While shades of gray exist so do black and white. My only complaint is that with seeing so many villains, it's hard to see who could oppose our heroes in future installments. There are more parallels to the Narnia books, which the characters even comment on, and believe it or not there is an appearance by a Narnian character, but that's all I'm saying for now. Another thing that this book does was take some fan favorite minor characters and give them a larger part in this new journey which makes for the most hilarious group of travelers you could ever think of.

**Predictability:** I was actually surprised with how surprised I could be with the twists of this installment. While there were moments that were fairly predictable there was one moment in particular that I was so utterly shocked, not only by the gravity of the revelation and the impact it had on the story, but also by the fact that the twist could have been fairly easily figured out if the pieces didn't seem so unrelated. There were a few other moments that weren't as shocking but still caught me by surprise, mainly because things never really worked out in the way I would have thought.

**Ending:** It wasn't until the very last sentence that I let out a breath of relief. Up until then I was so convinced that this series was going to be made into a duology, because up until then everything seemed to be ending. Not ending in the way the first book had, where a sequel may or may not happen, but a real, honest to God ending that no one could come back from. So up until the very last line I was scared that this series would end far before it's time. Luckily my fear was all for nothing as the last line delivers a very definitive answer as to whether a sequel would be written.

Rating:

I may have loved this installment a bit more than the first one though I think that may just be my mind playing tricks on me as the first installment to this series was beyond amazing. I would highly, very highly, recommend this series to those who enjoy their favorite childhood stories being twisted and reinterpreted in fun and thought provoking ways.

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### **Connie Tang says**

His writing has definitely tightened considerably since the first novel of this series. The plot arc was way better, and he's learned from his first in such that you don't build up impossible dilemmas and dangers only to have them be saved by luck.

The twins in this story had more agency, and did more things. Helped themselves out more - as opposed to having all these other characters help them. The grandmother is very well-written, in voice, character and personality. She has flaws, but ones that are understandable, acceptable and human.

The princesses are a little too perfect for my taste, but they served their function well and were interesting enough.

His story-telling abilities have not wavered in the least. It is oddly, and unexpectedly compelling to read. For its commentary on ambition and vengeance and pain, but also oddly, and unexpectedly creative. The stakes are higher, the twins find themselves a little more. Was I a little annoyed that it plays on the typical Young Adult trope of: super special snowflake by birthright, but you never knew/realized it until now? Yes. But that's every YA book I've read, and I don't expect it to change.

Colfer does need to learn to balance his characters. There's a lot of unnecessary characters in the novel, and I could've done without them and their incredibly long backstory introductions, because they weren't crucial to the plot and quite replaceable in their functionality. So I don't need three paragraphs of this character's life story. Also, there has to be a better way to present these expositions, because nobody has a quick speech on hand of their life's woes, ready to be recited.

There are things woven into this story, as opposed to plot-by-plot action. Things and characters reoccur, unpredictable things link together. The magical quest for the 'ultimate' spell to solve their problem storyline is repeated, but I didn't mind that so much. I did really like the ending, and it's cliché and stereotypical but also very appropriate and... heartwarming, for lack of a better word. And that's pretty cool and intricate for a novel intended for 9-12 year olds, but read by an 18 year old.

Mostly, I am impressed by the sheer production-productivity of this kid. It's his third novel in a calendar year, and while novels should always be quality over quantity - the book is very, incredibly decent for what it is.

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### **Brad Sells says**

Oh gosh, that was fantastic. Even better than book one. This series has so many incredible elements of fairytales that makes me fall in love with this series harder and harder with each book. So, so, so amazing.

Look for my full review soon!

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## **The Enchanted Library says**

It was so beautiful?

Give me the third book *RIGHT NOW*

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## **Karen says**

While it is helpful to have read the first book in the series, *The Wishing Spell*, the book does a good job of summarizing how 13-year-old twins Alex (a girl) and Connor (a boy) first discovered that their deceased father came from the fairy tale world and that their grandmother is in fact the Fairy Godmother. While they ended up in *The Land of Stories* by accident last time, in this tale they actively seek a portal to the other world to rescue their mother, who has been kidnapped by an enchantress bent on seizing power. Colfer reimagines fairy tale characters from a variety of sources and gives them new personalities, and I enjoyed the way he weaves what we think of as separate stories together. (Would you have imagined there was a rivalry between Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks?) A fun read.

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## **Maud says**

2.5 stars, I had so many issues with this book. Watch my review here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyzRN...>

The beginning of this book was slow in boring. The plot felt like it was just a recycled version of the first book (they need to collect 6 items to complete a spell... doesn't that sound familiar to you?!).

The evil characters tell you right away why they are evil, there is no mystery to them at all. The female characters were horrible.

Snow White, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty... I could not for the life of me keep them apart! Their voices are so much the same, they could have been one and the same character! The only two female characters that had a voice of their own were Goldilocks and Red. And they too were horrible characters! Red is CHOSEN queen, the people picked her out of everyone to be their queen. You would think that they would go with someone who is smart and kind right? Well think again, Red is extremely vain and the only moment when she is not busy with herself is when she is fighting Goldilocks.

And finally the cheesiness in this book was horrible, it made me feel sick!

I'm not sure if I want to pick up the next book in the series, are the twins going to collect things to use a spell AGAIN?!

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## **Panda says**

AHHH WHYYYY. this book was amazing but the ending was truly the stand out... and i think there will be a third one (maybe, hopefully, or else). the real strength in this series is Colfer's ability to create sympathy. his

characters although they may be well known, are given back-stories that change how you see both their fairytale and their character, he adds detail to the fairytale world creating shades of grey between the good and evil that characterizes them. Colfer's use of humor was wonderful and he knows just how to pull on heart strings all in all a beautiful book in a beautiful series.

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### **Alice says**

Ok, so I read this book a LONG time ago, and I am only now getting around to reviewing it, so I apologise for vagueness.

Firstly, I need to say that I am madly in love with Chris Colfer, so anything he does in my opinion is going to be amazing. The Wishing Spell was fantastic, and I was more than excited to read The Enchantress Returns. This book was incredible. It was amazingly written, well thought out and developed, and it had great character development. It also worked really well as a sequel; it had it's own story, but at the same time continued from the first book. Generally, this book was an amazing read and I love being transported into this incredible fairy tale world. And that ending-WOW!

However, this book was incredible long. This isn't a negative, in fact many will see it as a positive, however for me, it took a lot of time and effort to read, which I was willing to give. But if I had to nit pick, it would have helped me if it was shorter! Also, this book follows the same formula as the first; looking for items in the fairy tale world. I did not mind one bit and I was just as enthralled as I was with the wishing spell, but I wonder if this formula will continue throughout the series, and if so, if it will become a bit samey.

However I have utmost confidence in Chris Colfer's abilities and I absolutely adored this book. Any negatives I have was just me trying really hard to find negatives in order to have a balanced review. This book is fantastic and good for all ages. I highly recommend.

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### **Margaret says**

Easily the biggest Middle Reader dud of 2013. True, this book has enjoyed popular success on the NYT Children's list, in part thanks to the author's acting fan following that helped build the fan base for his first TLOS installment. I enjoy Colfer's acting, including his self-penned film debut. But I'm not reviewing Colfer the actor, I'm reviewing Colfer the writer. Given the target audience / genre and other truly good intermediate titles out there, this book suffers from cliché character tropes and a poorly mapped plot arc. It should not take half the book before the main characters undertake the main quest / journey, nor should each 'major' hurdle of that journey be resolved in a single chapter. Given the age range for middle reader fiction, there are numerous language and situational choices in TLOS:TER that are more suited for a YA base. In fact, I can envision this series transformed for the mainstream tween audience; hopefully with more sophisticated character development -- right now it plays like plastic Disney Channel fare. I would not, ex., recommend this book for an above-level reader in the 2nd - 4th grade or even for a 5th - 8th grader who gravitates toward chewier plots. TLOS:TER is 'fast food' reading at best, though that is a kind assessment.

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### **Nariman says**

My 10 years old son is obsessed with this series, and he practically forced me to listen to this book with him - even though he could read it by himself, and we barely had spare time to listen together without interruption - because he enjoys ( a little too much ) discussing every small detail to death with someone who

knows what's going on in the story , and it happened that I just finished the first book when he decided to begin the second , and i am very glad that he forced me , I enjoyed this book far more than the first , it has more adventure in it , the challenge was more complicated and harder , and has heart breaking ending. That Red Riding Hood has a larger appearance in it didn't hurt either , she is my favorite character so far , followed closely by Connor.

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## **Aleri says**

En sencillas palabras no me gusto...

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## **Devon Flaherty says**

The Land of Stories series, by Chris Colfer, published from 2012-2015 by Little Brown. The series consists of four books so far, and Colfer says the series will end with the fifth book, assumed to be published in 2016. I read the series because my daughter—and just about every other kid her age—is in to the series, and there was no way she was waiting until next year to read the first four.

The series is:

The Wishing Spell

The Enchantress Returns

A Grimm Warning

Beyond the Kingdoms

An un-announced fifth book

At least three spin-offs, coming out later this year

I really don't like giving scathing reviews. But I don't know if there is any other way for me to do this. I want to be all nice and give Chris Colfer a pat on his talented back, but for this, I can not. Absolutely. Can. Not.

I'm not exactly sure what it is about this series: the idea, the cover art, the marketing... but you want to like it. In fact, even as you are reading it, you still want to like the story. But there are so many obstacles, so many many obstacles, which begin with predictable and been-done. I knew almost all of the outcomes from near the beginning. I love the GoodReads review from Brett Axel, that asks, "What if C.S. Lewis, instead of honing his writing skills, watched lots of Shrek and Hoodwinked movies?" We are already getting to the point where we've seen way too much fractured fairy tale, and this one takes the been-done cake.

Which in itself would not be terrible. Doing something "old" well justifies itself if you do it well enough. But this one, not even close. Let's just jump right in.

CHRIS COLFERMy daughter mentions frequently that mostly girls are drawn to the series. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that only girls are going to tolerate all the outfit descriptions. Every time we encounter a new character, action pauses and Colfer gives a straight-forward, bland description. Example: "The Snow Queen was a tall woman with a large white fur coat, a snowflake crown, and a cloth wrapped

around her eyes. Her skin was so pale and frostbitten it was practically blue. She had a strong jaw and tiny jagged teeth.” (By the way, where are the serial commas in that?) Mostly what a reader gets from this book series are prompts to imagine the story along with the writer. Mostly girls are going to enjoy this type of visual, especially about skin tone, clothing, and hair, not to mention the castles, throne rooms, and thrones. Then couple all that with the terrible action scenes. No, really terrible, and boys just aren’t going to be quite as interested.

But that’s just the tip of the iceberg, a random introduction to the issues with this series. Here’s a list of some of the many, many things that constantly distracted me from enjoying the books (and yes, I read every word of the available books):

Remedial writing. I just couldn’t get past it. I would swear Colfer wrote this as a teenager, or even a junior-higher.

Distracting and over-used adverbs

Slang. Modern, timely phraseology and expressions

Dangling pronouns

Inconsistencies

Misused words, like “got ahold of” and “dived”

Terrible action scenes (which don’t always make spatial sense)

Abbreviated heightened-tension areas and drawn out other areas

Confusion

Swear words? (Colfer has intimated that this series is for the kid in us grown-ups, but it is clearly written for a middle grades audience)

Geographical issues

Hyperbole! Lots of “always,” “never,” mixed with “almost never,” and “nearly always,” etc.

Telling, not showing: like the worst I’ve seen

Passive verbs

Passive language

Coincidences! not obstacles

Mixed prepositions

Complete lack of flow (writing intuition)

Jarring perspective shifts

Unrealistic reactions

Timing issues (especially while characters are conversing)

Hackneyed conversation

A blatant lack of editing, including obvious spelling and grammar mistakes. Chandler is printed as “chandelier”?!?

If you name a writing rule, it was broken ten ways.

I have to mention it again—and I also want to point out that I have company in this opinion—that I really felt like I was reading the work of a very determined teenager. And while I applaud the effort, I would rather see the content in someone’s more capable hands. Or not at all... I mean, this story has been told before, and it wasn’t nearly as cheesy the first time around.

What I really wonder—and was even distracted by the thought as I read—was if Colfer should have written this series as a screenplay, instead. Especially when you read sentences like this: “Reruns of a dramatic television show set in outer space did nothing to stop his procrastination.” Or, “The Enchantress forced out a theatrical laugh that did little to comfort him.” Dramatic television show? Theatrical laugh? This would be great for



staging direction.

And the thought is furthered by all the telling, instead of showing. Like this: “The Evil Queen looked down at him coldly. She had no sympathy left inside her for anyone.”

By the time I got to the second book, I was hoping the writing had drastically improved with the series’ popularity. Even the first couple paragraphs have you going. But then right there, near the beginning, I was sad to be submitted to a terrible (and slightly insulting), in-no-way-covert attempt at arguing with his critics. Colfer highjacks a character to argue for him that writing does not need to be “high” writing, as long as it has passion. But let’s be honest. Simple writing includes the likes of Ernest Hemingway and William Carlos Williams’ wheelbarrow poem. The distinction between “simple” writing and “high” writing is not one between “good” and “bad,” or even between “passion” and “dispassion,” so Colfer is arguing oranges and apples, and doing it in the wrong place, besides. Passion may be a boon, but it does not make up for other things, like hard work, practice, education, natural talent, quality, etc. It’s like Colfer’s arguing for the participation award. Let’s compare these “simple” sentences:

“so much depends / upon // a red wheel / barrow // glazed with rain / water // beside the white / chickens.” - William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”

“‘They’ll keep out of my way,’ she insisted. ‘It takes two to make an accident’” -F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

“‘Fish,” he said softly, aloud, ‘I’ll stay with you until I’m dead.’” -Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*

“Auntie had a way of declaring What Is Best For The Family, and I suppose her coming to live with us was in that category.” -Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

And I’ll have you know, as beautiful as all this writing is, Colfer has better ratings just about anywhere. Oh. My. Goodness.

I was so frustrated at one point, reading the book, that I stopped on the sentence I was at and asked, how would I re-write this? The sentence then went from “What had once been an imposing structure was just a massive pile of stone bricks and pieces of wood now,” to: What was once a majestic fortress had been reduced to a mountain of broken stone and splintered wood. Do you need me to walk you through the problems with the first sentence? It’s weak, imprecise, choppy, anachronistic (dimension-speaking), and distracting. I could do this to any sentence in the whole series, except for (maybe) the first paragraph of the third book, which Colfer seems to have polished up especially well... that is, until a carriage is shooting “like a cannonball” through a dense forest with a narrow, curvy path.

The real battle here is NOT whether or not Colfer’s style is simple, but whether it’s bad or worse and whether or not that means we should avoid reading it and discourage our children as well. Should we swallow a very popular book and all its bad art with its vaguely intriguing story and color-matching faeries in order to have some entertainment? One of the things that can really drive a person crazy in the arts biz is just this quandary. Because, while people swallow bad art in the name of being entertained (or titillated) every day, there are so many artists out there willing and trying to provide a product that is both beautiful and entertaining. In this sense, it matters more who holds the keys to the kingdom and not who’s making royalty-worthy art.

And why aspire to great, or even good art, anyhow? What if no one wants it? Is the aesthetic a value unto itself? Is it a question of truth? Or reality? Or physicality: symmetry and alliteration? Or a Platonic form or God-ward longing? Are truth and beauty their own rewards? And am I in the position to encourage others to find the gems among the rough and discourage the fool's gold?

Yes, I suppose that is exactly why I write reviews. After all, I don't get paid for telling you if a book series stinks or if a novel deserves a standing ovation. And not that I am always correct in my reading. But while on one hand I want to be gentle and kind, I also feel excited to exalt the worthy or to push the mediocre to rise to the occasion.

So in the end, I find this extremely popular series to be terrible to a fault. My daughter reads it. No, she loves it. She is ten, and she anxiously awaits the next book, which I will buy for her. I would not say that reading bad literature is exactly harmless fun, but I will point out that I survived far worse than Land of Stories, and I expect my daughter to—through a life of reading and conversations with myself and others—eventually see the series for what it really is. She'll probably fall in line with the rest of us, War and Peace under one arm and a battered old copy of The Wishing Spell under the other.

\*\*\*REVIEW WRITTEN FOR THE DEVON TREVARROW FLAHERTY/STARVING ARTIST BLOG\*\*\*

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## **Bookworm007 says**

HOLY MOLY I CAN'T EVEN EXPRESS MY EXCITEMENT RIGHT NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE COVER LOOKS aMAZing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

BUT AUGUST ????? DO THESE PEOPLE HONESTLY THINK I CAN SURVIVE THAT LONG????????!!!!!!#@\*^\$

edit on Oct 11, 2013

Either my reading improved, or Chris Colfer's writing deteriorated, cuz this time I actually noticed his writing style. It was very.....childish.....or rather, I suppose it was because the targeted audience is younger than myself that I felt that some sentences didn't flow well, or were unnecessary. But I was willing to overlook these flaws and still give the book 5 stars, ~~even if it did take Alex and Connor 9 chapters of 126 pages to return to the Land of Stories, and then another 8 chapters of 157 pages to actually begin their quest.~~

Why? Well, first off, *any* book that grabs me and doesn't let go until 1 am in the morning, (not that I wanted to sleep but I really *had* to rest my eyes), deserves a high rating. I LOVED how this book was another item-collecting quest. It's just so exciting to read about! The ending was *sooo* sad that tears actually welled up in my eyes a bit. I felt like I could totally understand (view spoiler)

I'm wondering if the next book will be blue, red, or yellow? Food for thought!

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## **Josie says**

Arrrgh these books frustrate me. The story is really fantastic. The characters are fun and interesting for the most part. Red is hilarious. But the wink wink, nudge nudge quality to the writing makes me crazy. Colfer definitely has a talent for storytelling, but it is so very obvious that he knows this. The entire time reading these books I got the distinct impression that there is a LOT of self flagalting going on. It isn't enough to write a great little bit of dialouge, there has to be a "see what I did there?!" moment immediately following it. Which comes across as pompous and condescending to the reader. I get it, you're clever, you can stop beating me over the head with it. That being said, Colfer is very young and very smart and I have little doubt that his tendency to self congratulate will dissapate as he matures as a writer. And of course none of this is to say I haven't enjoyed these books, I truly have. I'll just enjoy them more once Colfer relaxes and realizes his audience can and will find his cleverness without him having to hand feed it to them.

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## **Cecilia says**

I was crying at the end of this book - so good was it!

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