

A BRAND NEW “WORLD”

By Soman Chainani

What I relish most about the old fairy tales is how few of them qualify as “acceptable” children’s entertainment. Heroes die mercilessly if they fail a test or make a fatal mistake. Evil triumphs over Good if a villain proves more disciplined, skilled, and clever than his nemesis. Every new story comes with a true-to-life uncertainty and yet a sense of innate fairness; your favorite character survives only if they *deserve* to. As a result, despite their basis in magic and fantasy, somehow these tales, more than anything else I could find as a child, felt ... *real*.

In recent years, fairy tale mash-ups, retellings, and revisions have exploded, because of how deeply enduring (and perhaps scarring) these stories can be. But as I write *THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL* series, and the upcoming Universal Pictures film adaptation, I have my sights set on something more primal: a new fairy tale, just as unleashed and unruly as the old, that finds the anxieties of today’s children. To acknowledge the past – the alumni of the genre, so to speak – and move on to a new class.

Each of the three books in the trilogy will explore the everlasting tension between two “sides” put at war – Good & Evil in Book 1, Boys & Girls in Book 2, Old & Young in Book 3. Young readers, especially, learn that to be on one side in any of these battles means they cannot be on the other. But one of the great joys of watching audiences of all ages discover *THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL* is to see them awaken to the space between these sides – and the primal thrill of not quite knowing who the hero or villain is.

Now, in the second book in the series, *A WORLD WITHOUT PRINCES*, readers will return to a Woods in upheaval, where heroes and villains are uneasy allies. Only now it isn’t just the divide between Good and Evil that Sophie and Agatha have put in doubt, but also the divide between Boys and Girls...

A battle of the sexes, with both sides convinced they no longer need the other.

A battle of the sexes where nothing is quite what it seems.

Let the mischief begin.

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