Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (Book 2)

Its hard to fall in love with an earnest, appealing young hero like Harry Potter and then to watch helplessly as he steps into terrible danger! And in J.K. Rowlings Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, the much anticipated sequel to the award-winning Harry Potter and the Sorcerers Stone, he is in terrible danger indeed. As if its not bad enough that after a long summer with the horrid Dursleys he is thwarted in his attempts to hop the train to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to begin his second year. But when his only transportation option is a magical flying car, it is just his luck to crash into a valuable (but clearly vexed) Whomping Willow. Still, all this seems like a day in the park compared to what happens that fall within the haunted halls of Hogwarts. Chilling, malevolent voices whisper from the walls only to Harry, and it seems certain that his classmate Draco Malfoy is out to get him. Soon its not just Harry who is worried about survival, as dreadful things begin to happen at Hogwarts. The mysteriously gleaming, foot-high words on the wall proclaim, The Chamber of Secrets Has Been Opened. Enemies of the Heir, Beware. But what exactly does it mean? Harry, Hermione, and Ron do everything that is wizardly possible—including risking their own lives—to solve this 50-year-old, seemingly deadly mystery. This deliciously suspenseful novel is every bit as gripping, imaginative, and creepy as the first; familiar student concerns--fierce rivalry, blush-inducing crushes, pedantic professors--seamlessly intertwine with the bizarre, horrific, fantastical, or just plain funny. Once again, Rowling writes with a combination of wit, whimsy, and a touch of the macabre that will leave readers young and old desperate for the next installment. (Ages 9 and older) --Karin Snelson

My Personal Review:
The tale of Harry Potters second year at Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry begins with dire warnings of terrible things to come. And indeed, from a series of attacks during the school year to a gruesome final confrontation, this adventure is darker than the first. Fortunately, Rowling
balances the darkness with plenty of levity and light: the charm of the Burrow, flying cars, whomping willows, and a Deathday party, just to name a few.

Through it all, Ron and Hermione help Harry balance schoolwork and Quidditch practices while trying to solve the mystery of the attacks. Along the way, they meet a series of memorable new friends and foes, among them Dobby the subservient house elf, Moaning Myrtle the miserable ghost, and Gilderoy Lockhart, the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher who is his own greatest fan. And as the conclusion nears, Rowling's talent for weaving a tangled web of foreshadowing becomes ever more apparent.

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