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The Chilling Adventures Of Sabrina Review – As Bewitching As Ever



by **Charlene Badasie** — November 6, 2018 in TV

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Studio: **Netflix**

Running Time: **1h per episode**

Cast: **Kiernan Shipka, Ross Lynch, Lucy Davis**

Genre: **Drama , Fantasy , Horror**

Director: **Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa**

Age Restriction: **TV-14**

The character of Sabrina Spellman dates back to 1962 when she started out as minor character in the *Archie Comics* universe, hanging out with Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead and the gang. She supplemented the regular story with her own high school and romantic adventures – with a little sprinkle of witchcraft.

However, it was TV, not the comics, where Sabrina attained icon status. Her story really started with the 1970's Saturday morning cartoon, *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* – a spinoff of *The Archie Comedy Hour*. It wasn't until 1971 that she got her own comic book.

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Every version of Sabrina has been different – the *Archie* comic book, the 1970’s cartoon, the spunky 1990’s sitcom. It’s a story that gets told over and over, because each generation’s Sabrina has a new tale to tell. Speaking about the Netflix reboot, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*’s star Kiernan Shipka said, “This is totally the Sabrina for 2018, in so many ways. She’s a woke witch.”

Showrunner Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa gives 2018’s reimagining of Sabrina a dark and edgy makeover, filled with bloody thrills, spooky moments and scary villains (like the devil himself). With each episode, Sabrina and the entire town of Greendale take a step closer to a chilling finale.



But the earlier iterations of the character from the 60’s and 70’s are still present. Sabrina is still a teenage half witch, half mortal. Her father was a powerful warlock and her mother a regular human. Since their death, Sabrina has been raised by her aunts Hilda and Zelda Spellman. While keeping her magical heritage a secret, she attends Baxter High school with her besties Roz and Susie, and is devoted to her gentle mortal boyfriend, Harvey Kinkle.

Sabrina is as strong-willed as she’s always been, but there is also a darkness to her that is deliciously wicked.

We meet Sabrina Spellman as she carefully crosses off days on her calendar, leading to the date where she’s written “16th Birthday” and just underneath that “Dark Baptism.”

Both her aunts (active in their coven, The Church of Night) are preparing Sabrina for her baptism and encourage her to do right by the Spellman family and transfer from Baxter High to a school for witches, The Academy of the Unseen Arts. The ancient institution is led by the coven’s high priest, Father Faustus but the corridors are ruled by a trio of powerful mean girls, dubbed “The Weird Sisters.”

But Sabrina doesn’t want to submit to the baptism because signing “The Book of The Beast” means signing over her soul to the Dark Lord and relinquishing her mortal life. She wants to stay in the ordinary world with the people she loves. “I want freedom and power,” she pleads.

This is the main theme throughout *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. Sabrina is constantly challenging what the other witches willfully go along with, as they consider them to be the norm. While she does succeed most of the time, there are a few occasions where she fails – thereby gaining a better understanding of the consequences of magic because as Aunt Zelda says, “There’s always a price”.



The story does provide some simple, satisfying problems and resolutions along the way, as Sabrina and her pals confront everything from obnoxious jocks to the dangers of hazing – not to mention an exorcism, resurrection and other witchy stuff too.

The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina has a 1960's retro aesthetic (from the cars to the clothes) but modern sensibilities about feminism, gender expression and the cost of pledging eternal service to Satan.

Kiernan Shipka is brilliant in the role, emphasising Sabrina's intelligence and compassion as she triumphs over bullies, monsters and misogynists, while rallying behind her friends when they need her. The supporting characters are also well cast with Sabrina's aunts, Hilda (Lucy Davis) and Zelda Spellman (Miranda Otto) gaining real character development throughout the show. Harvey (Ross Lynch) is more than just a sweet boyfriend. He's a guy who is struggling with his role in relation to his family. Sabrina's friends Rosalind (Jaz Sinclair) and Susie (Lachlan Watson) also have their own backstories that slowly unravel until they become pivotal to the plotlines of the show. Ambrose (Chance Perdomo), Sabrina's cousin, acts as her confidant and offers up some sage magical advice when she needs it most. He also offers the audience some levity during the show's heaviest moments.



What stands out about *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* is its subtle commentary on people's situational sense of right and wrong. It asks viewers to consider how much of the ideologies they cling to are determined by birth or circumstance.

By the end of *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina's* final episode we see Sabrina start to embrace her magical legacy, steeling herself as she realises that she's going to be fighting her battles well into the

future.



THE REVIEW

The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina

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The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina is more than just a great high-school horror trip. It proudly carries on 50 years of the teenage witch's tradition.

SCORE

REVIEW BREAKDOWN

Verdict



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