



The Last Gargoyle

Paul Durham

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Fans of Jonathan Auxier's *The Night Gardener* and Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* will tremble with delight for this haunting tale about a lonely gargoyle who isn't alone at all.

Penhallow is the last of his kind. The stone gargoyle--he'd prefer you call him a grotesque--fearlessly protects his Boston building from the spirits who haunt the night. But even he is outmatched when Hetty, his newest ward, nearly falls victim to the Boneless King, the ruler of the underworld.

Then there's Viola, the mysterious girl who keeps turning up at the most unlikely times. In a world where nightmares come to life, Viola could be just the ally Penhallow needs. But can he trust her when every shadow hides another secret? Can he afford not to?

The Last Gargoyle Details

Date : Published January 9th 2018 by Crown Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9781524700201

Author : Paul Durham

Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Fiction, Juvenile, Horror, Paranormal

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From Reader Review The Last Gargoyle for online ebook

Kavanand (Reading for Two) says

The Last Gargoyle is an entertaining middle grade book with an interesting mythology and a creature that doesn't get much fictional attention, gargoyles. Penhallow is a gargoyle (he prefers to call himself a grotesque) living in Boston. He's one of three remaining gargoyles in the city, and the other two are killed off at the beginning of the book (it's not much of a spoiler when you consider the title). Penhallow soon realizes that the city is facing a terrible threat, and he may be the only hope of defeating this foe.

With his friends gone, Penhallow is the last of the city's gargoyles, and it's a lonely existence until he meets a mysterious girl named Viola. She's cagey about who she is and why she can come and go as she pleases, but Penhallow finds himself warming to her and she's his only companion in a lonely life.

The mythology is an interesting one. Gargoyles were carved by a Maker and they adorn various older structures in Boston. They were responsible for all inhabitants of the buildings they're attached to, but all of the other gargoyles are just empty stones now. Penhallow can leave his gargoyle perch and take other forms to move around the city and to keep any eye on all the people who live in his building. He protects his wards from minor nuisances like imps, and the more serious threat of the netherkin, spirits of the dead who haven't passed on to the next place (what exactly that next place is isn't answered in the book because Penhallow himself doesn't know).

This is a slightly dark middle grade book, since it deals with death and loneliness. Penhallow hasn't been able to save everyone in his care over the years, and he bears the weight of that guilt. The netherkin are very creepy, and they want to steal children's life force (what they're stealing is never named, but the children who lose it are sad and troubled for the rest of their lives). Because of this, I would recommend this book for the older end of the age range.

I received an ARC from Amazon Vine.

Lyrical Librarian says

This was an original story, which can be hard to find in middle grade fantasy. A good mix of humor and horror, I would recommend this to kids who like Riordan, and to fans of the Blackthorn key series by Kevin Sands. The tone is playful, tongue-in-cheek, and a witty sarcasm softens the creepy characters. The villain is spooky for sure, and the hero will win your heart. Meanwhile, you will be transported to Boston where you will learn fascinating things about the city without being pulled from the story - my favorite way to learn! This book should have wide appeal to anyone who likes a little shiver in their story.

Kate says

Penhallow is a Grotesque - NOT a gargoyle, which are just glorified water spouts. As a Grotesque, he must protect his building from the Netherkin, evil spirits that can harm the living. When his two friends are destroyed, he begins to worry that there is something bigger out there with the power to destroy him. With

the help of Viola, a strange girl who can see his wisp form, he investigates one of the families in his building and a mysterious creature called the Boneless King.

I picked this up from the library because I really loved the cover and gargoyles are pretty cool. I loved that these particular gargoyles live in Boston. Some of the scenes were actually super creepy - the Netherkin come in all different forms, including a giant evil black rabbit, and the Boneless King has more than a few similarities to Slender Man. There were a few moments where I had a hard time suspending disbelief, like can wisps - which are the form the gargoyles can take outside of their stone forms - digest and all that? But overall the world-building was solid. I'll definitely be looking at gargoyles a little differently from now on...

Liza says

A book with an interesting premise however I found Viola and Penhallow's relationship to be weird. Maybe cause the idea of a gargoyle that's over a hundred years old being all okay with a human girl and listening to her for no reason to be odd.

Heaven Ashlee says

Cute in it's own way, and also darker than most MG I've read. (Not saying much since I've read a small percentage of juvenile fiction.) Personally drawn to this because of the subject matter: gargoyles coming to life? Heck yes! Childhood 90's nostalgia for that amazing animated show with the very same thing happened has fueled a need to fill this niche corner of my reader heart.

I thoroughly enjoyed the writing, as it was witty and fast paced, as well as mature. It didn't talk down to its readers at all. Obviously you could tell that it was written by a younger audience, but even as an adult I thoroughly enjoyed the writing style. The author's familiarity with the setting (Boston) shown through and made it all feel the more real. From Boston area myself, it was fun to picture this going on there.

The characters were mostly well rounded and exciting. Creatures of countless decades (centuries even) old, makes it interesting. Durham does a great job at writing a creature who isn't human and who is also older than the 12 year old physical description that he holds onto. The villain is definitely creepy. The description of the Boneless King gave me quite the heebie-jeebies.

All in all I really enjoyed this and flew through it quite quickly. I had only one tiny hiccup about the beginning of the book's plot, which is why it has a 4 star rating and not a 5! I'd highly recommend this to anyone who wants a good fright, no matter what age they are.

William Bentrim says

The Last Gargoyle by Paul Durham

This is an upper elementary school book. The plot does have some scary stuff that might not be good for the primary years. However if you consider the Grimm fairy tales, this is pretty tame. Goyle is not a gargoyle, he is a grotesque. His task is to protect his wards.

Goyle takes his job very seriously.

The Boneless King comes into play and threatens Goyle's wards. Goyle is befriended by Viola who can see and hear him even though most mortals can not do either. Goyle's wisp, his disembodied form, is of a young boy in a hoodie who looks moderately disreputable. Goyle's stone form is a typical gargoyle looking form, wings, claws and fangs.

Viola and Goyle work together to defeat the Boneless King and protect Goyle's wards.

I liked the book and will be sharing it with my grandchildren.

Web: <http://pauldurhambooks.com/thelastgar...>

Kristy says

Penhallow is the last Gargolye in Boston--which is to say he is the last spirit that resides within a Gargoyle. Although his main body is the stone gargoyle you usually see perched on the top of wings, stone wings stretched out, grimace on face, he is able to move around the city in his "wisp" form, which can be a boy or a dog. His main job is to guard the "Wards" in his building, to keep them safe from the sinister Netherkin, ghostly evil spirits who seek to kidnap the souls of children. After two of his fellow gargoyle spirits are destroyed, Penhallow starts to worry about a bigger baddie on the loose in Boston. And when he catches sight of a sinister black bunny spirit that has been showing up in his building, interested in one particular family, his worst fears are confirmed. Penhallow must call up everything he's learned in his many years on Earth in order to keep his wards safe.

The whole magical world building felt a little too convenient for the story. Why would Gargoyle's have the souls of children, anyway? And why would the soul be able to change into a wisp form that's a boy invisible to humans, and a dog visible to humans. Doesn't make sense. Despite these quirks, I still enjoyed this story. It has genuinely scary moments and will please young fans who won't notice the world building issues.

Cindy says

Paul Durham quickly moved to the top of my list of favorite children's writers with his debut novel Luck Uglies. Immediately after reading the first book, I couldn't stop talking about it and recommending it to pretty much anyone who would listen to me. When I found out that 2018 promised a new series from him, I was super excited but a little apprehensive as my expectations were pretty high.

Part of my apprehension was because this series strayed from his original series which was traditional fantasy. The Last Gargoyle has a more historical, dark vibe with some mythology thrown in. Luckily, Paul Durham pulled this off nicely. There is a spooky vibe that carries throughout the novel, but Durham knows how to throw in witty one-liners and some warm 'feel good moments' every now and then to give readers a break from all the doom and gloom.

What really shines in The Last Gargoyle is the setting. It takes place in Boston, but not the Boston everyone

is used to. There is this gothic, creepy vibe to this Boston. Readers familiar with the Boston area will definitely be able to picture and imagine the places in the novel, but they will probably see them in a whole new light.

Another element that jumps out is Durham's ability to really flesh out and develop the characters. Durham does an amazing job of creating some characters that have been around for centuries and giving them the ability to appeal to readers. They don't come across as know-it-all or stiff. In fact, there are a number of times where they are still learning and growing which readers don't always encounter in characters who have lived for so long.

The other main character, a young mortal child, in the novel is, at first, a bit harsh and not really likeable. However, as the story goes on and you learn more about what is going on with her, what happened to her, and what she is currently battling, she starts to grow on you. By the end of the story, I really wanted to learn more about her and what happens. I was pleasantly surprised that she grew on me.

I will say the 'big bad' villain is pretty creepy; probably one of the more creepier children's bad guys that I have read recently. Not only are the villain's actions creepy, but his entire description and look is downright frightening. It is this aspect of the novel that moves this story from younger middle grade to a little bit older middle grade. The spooky, creepy bad guy that pretty much preys on children while they sleep and sends things out into the night to capture them is something that the younger age range might not be ready for.

I will warn you though that while the book does wrap up a lot of things, there is still a lot to be explored in future books. It will be fun to see where the series goes from here and what other unique twists and turns Durham can bring to the children's fiction world.

Overall, I loved *The Last Gargoyle*. I felt it was fresh, unique and wasn't bloated like a lot of books try to be as they are competing to see who can make the biggest/fattest book. If you are looking for something that is an original story but not super long, then this is the book for you. I can't recommend this book enough and it is certain to be one of my top reads for 2018.

Hedzer says

This was a great story! I have seen it compared to Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, and it definitely has a similar feel I think. That said, this is an original tale with lots of heart, a memorable hero, and I loved the unique take on gargoyles/grotesques. Boston seems like a perfect setting for this adventure?

Jeana Lawrence says

An interesting new fantasy novel about gargoyles. Penhollow is the last of his kind in Boston after his two gargoyle friends are incinerated by a mysterious creature called the Boneless King. After meeting Viola, a girl who can see his true form, Penhollow begins to investigate the origins of the Boneless King and try to stop him from raising an army of the undead. Penhollow, or Goyle as Viola calls him, is snarky and funny and this is a wonderful new dark fantasy novel for middle grade readers.

Marylou says

Good fantasy

This book is about the adventures of a boyish gargoyle named Penhallow. Pen lives in Boston and does his best to protect his section or domain. It is also a story about friendship. Great characters and a good story

P.M. says

Penhallow, the last Grotesque in Boston, is facing attack from the minions of the Boneless King. He gets help from the mysterious Viola who seems to know a lot about the actions of the Bone Masons - things that Penhallow does not know. All Penhallow knows is that he must defend his wards as he has done for so long. The final battle explodes on Halloween and Penhallow must sacrifice everything to keep his people safe. I really liked this book from Penhallow's name to his cheeky humor and devotion. I really liked the ending when Viola revealed her Netherkin identity and told Penhallow that she would be waiting for him whenever he decided to find out what comes Next.

?Gayatri ? says

Wow. That was rly good. I think i cried at the end.

Nick says

This book was awesome. I totally fell for the characters, and ended up really caring for the adventure and being invested in the relationships. That ending was fantastic. I wanted so much more, but it ended beautifully.

I can't blame it all on the book, but it does start slow. It took me maybe five days to read the first half, and two days to read the second half. It picked up right in the middle and I couldn't put it down.

Not a thinker. His world doesn't always make sense, and the twists were telegraphed a mile away. However, this is perfect for middle school kids, or adults just wanting a light read.

Paul Durham says

Here's my biased 5-star review, which you should ignore--just like the mysterious 1 and 2-star reviews that get posted before books are actually written.

