

GHOSTS AND RUINS BY BEN CATMULL



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From Publishers Weekly

Just because Ben Catmull (Monster Parade) tweaks his gothic drawings and paired narratives for humor doesn't mean there aren't shivery chills aplenty in this gloriously nightmarish collection. The book trawls through several haunted houses, with each of the textured, full-page drawings facing a block of spooky or sarcastic story text. The first piece, Drowned Shelley, is the best, describing a house haunted by the ghost of a girl drowned by her drunken stepfather. It starts in sad horror (Say her name 13 times while looking in the pond, and she will drown you in your sleep) and works its way toward the comic (Mispronounce her name... and she will kick you somewhere delicate at the stroke of midnight). The effect of combining trancelike portent and giggles is reminiscent of both Edward Gorey and Chris Van Allsburg's *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Catmull's pieces are worth savoring, his dark-etched, black-and-white scratchboard-on-Masonite drawings so richly layered they almost seem to be in color. Elegantly evil, and a surefire bet for an early Halloween. (Aug.)

Review

"...[F]ar and away some of the most creeping, haunting, regal spook strata released by a comics publisher. ... The plain-spoken descriptions pave a path to the gorgeous visuals where the reader's mind fills in the horrifying gaps. ... Unfortunately, we can't help ourselves from venturing into each and every hellish residence in this book." (Sean Edgar - Paste)

"The illustrations in this book alone are enough to scare any camper, but the stories that go along with them are sure to keep you up at night." (Geek Girl Pen Pals)

About the Author

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This is a coffee-table book of drawings of imagined haunted houses accompanied by stories about who haunts them and why.

Who doesn't love a good ghost story? This gorgeous, coffee-table art book is a compendium of old, forgotten haunted houses imagined by artist Ben Catmull, along with the stories and rumors of who haunts them, and why. Each spread features a different haunted house, lovingly and exquisitely rendered in scratchboard on masonite, with a short, nightmare-inducing description of each scene. In "Drowned Shelley," for example: A chorus of frogs surrounds the house where young Shelley was drowned headfirst in the bathtub by her drunken stepfather. Say her name 13 times while looking in the pond and she will drown you in your sleep. Say her name the wrong number of times while looking in the pond, and she will leave hair in your breakfast dishes. Say her name 13 times while not looking in the pond, and she will watch you when you clip your toenails. Mispronounce her name 13 times while looking anywhere near the pond, and she will kick you somewhere delicate at the stroke of midnight. Catmull's images are evocative, haunting masterpieces that never tread in graphic imagery, choosing instead to suggest horrors far more frightening than what they explicitly depict. With just the right touch of humor to balance the terror, *Ghosts and Ruins* is sure to attract fans of Edward Gorey or Tim Burton, and makes a perfect gift book for the ghost story fan in your house. Black and white

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Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Short, but entertaining

By J. Brooks

I have been awaiting the next book by Ben Catmull ever since "Monster Parade" caught my eye in 2006. His follow up, a collection of pictures and stories about haunted houses, is a welcome edition to his small collection of output, but it is entirely too short for the price.

Though the page count is listed as 88, only half of those contain drawing. The format of the book contains a short (usually just a sentence) story on the left page and a drawing of the haunted house in question on the right. It is very entertaining, and the artwork is fantastic, but the price is quite high compared to the time invested in reading it.

I can imagine myself revisiting it again, though not too frequently. The content, while macabre, would not be too terribly inappropriate to read to a child. Though nightmares could result.

I liked it. I waited almost 7 years for it. I just wish there was more here.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Beautiful, in a style all its own...

By Ryan T

This a beautiful book - Catmull has a style all his own.

Like his creatures in previous works, the spaces he creates here are enchantingly beautiful as well as amusing and creepy.

This book lives in our living room and friends always notice the cover and find themselves drawn to pick it up, so we find ourselves enjoying it over and over as we watch our friends discover it.

This is another great piece of work from Ben Catmull.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

it is a perfect addition to my coffee table reads

By Jasmine Wyrick

Gorgeous book, it is a perfect addition to my coffee table reads. Thank you!

See all 3 customer reviews...

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