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The Raven Mysteries, Book 2: Ghosts and Gadgets

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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It's back to spooky Overhand Castle for the second book in this proposed series of six, to find worries plaguing its gothic resident family. Edgar, our cantankerous raven narrator, is preoccupied by thoughts that his beak might be looking a bit wonky. Lord Valevine is trying to save the insolvent Overhands from destitution with his latest harebrained contraption, the Mark One Gold Detecting Gadget; whilst his wife Minty is engrossed in a mad attempt to sew the family's way out of debt.

So when their son Cudweed, and his pet monkey Fellah are scared nearly out of their wits by ghosts in the South Wing, it is left to vampish elder sister Solstice and the faithful Edgar to swallow hard, take out their torches and get to the bottom of the haunting happenings.

There's no denying that Sedgwick's characters have a certain Addams family appeal. But these mysteries are already starting to feel a bit contrived, and this plot in particular has the flimsiness of a castle cobweb. Would the apparition of a mere misty phantom really terrify the inhabitants of a pad we are told is already chock-full of 'oddballs, lunatics and fruitcakes' and 'skeletons in the cupboard', not to mention a cemetery outside whose run-off fertilises the cabbages? Surely ghosts go with the territory. And can ravens really smell processed flour? By this thread in part hangs the plot.

Skeletons notwithstanding, I'd personally like some more meat on the bones of these stories, and a spattering of blood and guts too. Sedgwick is a fine writer, more than capable of providing this. No one wants this age-group to be terror-struck, but children love the frisson of a suitably scary story. Unfortunately they won't find much here to bring on bumps in the night.

Running Order:

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