



Ghost of a Hanged Man

Vivian Vande Velde

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When the notorious outlaw Jake Barnette is sentenced to hang by the neck until dead, he threatens to come back to wreak revenge on those who captured him. This makes the town sheriff's 11-year-old son, Ben, more than a little nervous, and when the outlaw's coffin washes out of its grave in a flood the next spring, strange things begin to happen.

Ghost of a Hanged Man Details

Date : Published September 1st 2003 by Cavendish Square Publishing (first published September 1st 1998)

ISBN : 9780761451549

Author : Vivian Vande Velde

Format : Paperback 95 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Horror, Paranormal, Young Adult, Supernatural

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From Reader Review Ghost of a Hanged Man for online ebook

Emily Michelle says

I picked this up because I love Vande Velde, and I wasn't disappointed. The story tells of a small, Old West town where a famous outlaw is caught and hanged. At his trial, he promises to come back and get his revenge on those who are condemning him and their families. The next spring, torrential rainfall washes the outlaw's coffin out of the cemetery, and those he cursed start dying mysteriously. It's up to the sheriff's two children to stop the ghost.

This is a short, fast read, but a fun one. The addition of the gypsy girl seems like an odd choice for a Western, but her ominous fortune telling adds to the creepy atmosphere. And it was definitely creepy, I have to admit; I'm 24 years old and I still got a little freaked out by the book (although I freak out easily). I was a little surprised at how many people died, given the age group the book is targeted at. I'd recommend it for children, but only those who like being scared.

Shelby Bretschneider says

I liked this book! This book is about a guy named Jake and he was a bad guy and he was going to be hanged because of what he did. The day of his hanging Ben and Annabelle thought of what he said in court the day he was sentenced to be hanged. Jake turned around and said that he was going to come back and kill the people that he pointed at. So one day the river flooded at their town and it made the coffins come up from the ground and Jake started to kill the people he said he was going to. So when he got to Ben, Annabelle, and their dad, their mom (who died already) saved their lives from Jake.

Beth says

Ben, his sister, his father and other townspeople are threatened by a murderer who is about to be hanged. Months later, when a flood forces coffins are out of the ground, and people begin to die, it looks as if the murderer is staying true to his word.

The setting is a village in 1877. There are some tensions within the community between the townspeople and the "tinkers" who pass through. Some townspeople even think that the tinkers cursed the town with their fortune telling. Ben and Annabelle's father, the town sheriff, is rather Atticus Finch like in his tolerance and calm demeanor.

There aren't many surprises or twists. The description of what happens when someone is hanged is about as graphic as it gets and that just explains that either your neck breaks immediately or you strangle. Pretty tame compared to most of the other "scary books" I've been reading.

Candida Silva says

A good old ghost story that the family can enjoy together.

Erin says

This was just okay. It's a tidy little ghost story about a hanging gone wrong. Two young kids figure out that the ghost of Jake Barnett is coming after those who prosecuted him, and they are able, by the skin of their teeth, to rid the townsfolk of the ghost's presence. It was short, and had a nice little western justice flavor with a hint of superstition.

This would probably be very appropriate for the tween age group, those who are into ghosts and the supernatural, or even those interested in the broader fantasy genre or historical fiction.

Hanging. Ghosts. Murder. Death.

Rebecca McNutt says

Ghost of a Hanged Man is a simple short ghost story that anyone could enjoy, and it manages to build up an atmosphere of the western world and eerie olden days very quickly. It's one of those that you'd definitely want to bring along on a camping trip. I did think it wasn't entirely original or deep as stories go, but it doesn't really have to be all things considered.

robyn says

Very short. Probably a good story for the Goosebumps! crowd.

Cheryl says

Very short. Good for young reluctant readers. Includes tinkers (Gypsies) in the old American West.

Jasmine Hatch says

this is scary but AWESOME

Sarah Crawford says

The story opens in 1877 when an outlaw named Jake Barnette, who had killed 16 people, is put on trial, found guilty, and then hung. During the trial he threatened almost everyone, saying he would return.

The two main children in the story are Annabelle, who is 8, and Ben, who is 11. Their father is the town

sheriff. There's an incident in a general story involving "tinkers," another word for gypsies, which shows people's attitude towards gypsies at the time.

During spring of the following year there are major rainstorms and the situation gets so bad that the coffins people were buried in are uncovered in the cemetery.

Zandra is the name of a young gypsy girl who reads tarot cards. Ben's fortune is very bleak. Annabelle's fortune is also bleak.

One of the townspeople dies during the night, and people start thinking Jake has come back from the grave for his revenge. The next night another person dies. The townspeople want to rebury Jake and his coffin (his was one of the coffins that were flooded out), but the coffin turns out to be empty.

The situation gets worse when it turns out Jake has, indeed, returned from the dead. What can stop a dead person from killing? Perhaps another dead person.

A very dark story but still well done, as Vivian Velde's stories are.
