



## The Creeping Shadow

*Jonathan Stroud*

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## **The Creeping Shadow** Jonathan Stroud

After leaving Lockwood & Co. at the end of *The Hollow Boy*, Lucy is a freelance operative, hiring herself out to agencies that value her ever-improving skills. One day she is pleasantly surprised by a visit from Lockwood, who tells her he needs a good Listener for a tough assignment. Penelope Fittes, the leader of the giant Fittes Agency wants them--and only them--to locate and remove the Source for the legendary Brixton Cannibal. They succeed in their very dangerous task, but tensions remain high between Lucy and the other agents. Even the skull in the jar talks to her like a jilted lover. What will it take to reunite the team? Black marketeers, an informant ghost, a Spirit Cape that transports the wearer, and mysteries involving Steve Rotwell and Penelope Fittes just may do the trick. But, in a shocking cliffhanger ending, the team learns that someone has been manipulating them all along. . . .

## **The Creeping Shadow Details**

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Author : Jonathan Stroud

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## From Reader Review The Creeping Shadow for online ebook

### Lina Lovegood says

4,5 Sterne. Woah, dieses Ende.

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### Madeline says

The fourth installment in the five-book Lockwood & Co series picks up a few months after the last one left off - Lucy Carlyle, having left the Lockwood agency after realizing that her experiments with her psychic abilities were putting the rest of the team in danger, has been working as a kind independent contractor, teaming up with other agencies for one-time jobs. It's only a matter of time, of course, before Anthony Lockwood shows up and asks Lucy to help her former agency with a job.

Honestly, I almost wish that Stroud had devoted more story space to explore Lucy's new role as an independent ghost hunter - her time as a freelancer is over so quickly, and she goes back to Lockwood & Co so easily, that I don't know why Stroud even bothered having her leave the agency in the first place. Honestly, it just feels like he needed a way to end Book Three on a cliffhanger and "Lucy leaves Lockwood & Co" was the best he could come up with. But at the same time, I'm glad he realized that it was a bad idea, and put her back with the agency as soon as possible - Lucy is best when she's interacting with the whole team (talking skull in a jar included) and even though I think Stroud missed an opportunity when he decided not to give Lucy more time to function solo in the story, I think this series is at its best when we're seeing the whole ensemble cast working together on a job.

With only one more book to go in the Lockwood & Co series, it finally feels like things are picking up steam - just in terms of plot and resolution, this is the best in the series so far, because Jonathan Stroud is finally giving us some concrete answers to the central mystery that's been brewing in the background since Book One. This book follows the basic formula that Stroud has established for the series: we start with a ghost-busting mission right at the beginning, then there's a second minor mission, and one final big setpiece for the climax. But, as in the best installments in this series, all of the cases are connected, and trace back to the central question of the series - how did the Problem start? Like I said, Stroud gives away a few things here (like more answers about what the Orpheus Society is up to) but he's still saving the biggest bombshells for Book Five, and I'm excited to see how he's going to wrap up the series.

Honestly, I really enjoyed this book, but had one major issue - Holly Munro's characterization continues to baffle me, specifically her interactions with Lucy. In my review of the previous book, I joked that Lucy's dislike of Holly seemed to stem more from a subconscious crush, rather than actual animosity. And then in this book, we get stuff like this, where Lucy is trying to make the reader understand why she doesn't like Holly:

"It was her skin that always got to me. It was darkly buttery, with not a pimple to be seen. And her features, too - everything was in the right place. There'd been a time when her easy perfection drove me mad, and I knew that in my disheveled, wildly imperfect way, I'd done the same to her."

Like, seriously. How else am I supposed to interpret that?

It's profoundly confusing, because I honestly can't tell if Stroud is genuinely intending for us to think that Lucy has a crush on Holly. I want to believe that society has advanced far enough for him to casually include a same-sex flirtation subplot in his YA ghost-hunting adventure, but is that really what's going on? If Stroud is doing it intentionally, he's probably just queer-baiting us, since Lucy/Lockwood is pretty obviously his endgame. And if he *doesn't* realize that he's writing the Holly/Lucy scenes with a romantic undercurrent, that's even worse, because it just means that Stroud thinks the only reason girls wouldn't get along is because one is jealous of how pretty the other is, which...sucks.

And it's also confusing, because Lucy/Lockwood shipping seems pretty common among the readers of this series, and I haven't seen any other reviews that mention the Holly/Lucy stuff. So maybe it's all in my head. But on the other hand, Jonathan Stroud wrote this conversation between Holly and Lucy:

"She gave a laugh. Oh, joy - it was the special tinkling one that set my teeth on edge.  
'Someone at Portland Row really missed you, you know,' she said.  
I kept my voice light. 'Well, I missed everyone, too, of course. ...Er, who *was* that?'  
'Who missed you most particularly?' Her laugh again; her big dark eyes smiled at me sidelong. 'Can't you guess?'  
It was hot in that cafe. I did something with the sleeves of my sweater. 'No.'  
'Me.'  
'Oh. What-? *Did you?*"

Okay. I get that Lucy is uncomfortable because she's thinking of Lockwood, and this bit of conversation is Stroud trying to reinforce the idea that Lucy and Lockwood have romantic potential (I remain firmly on the fence about this, but whatever). But if that's the case, then what the hell is Holly doing with this conversation? Because it *really* reads like she's flirting with Lucy, and Lucy doesn't notice. I'm frankly a lot more interested in the idea of an Odd Couple-style romance between Holly and Lucy than a straightforward Lockwood/Lucy romance, and I have a feeling that Stroud is going to let me down in Book Five. But seriously, I really want to know what he's intending with these characters.

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**may ☺ says**

[Full review posted](#)

There are precisely three things in this world that make my heart all fuzzy

1. Hoodies and hot chocolate
2. Reading fricken good books while it's snowing
3. Lucewood

This book was fantastic. This book was beautiful. This book was creepy. This book was literally so great I could scream about it for decades to come.

(s)

So, let's talk about how this book is the greatest book in this series.

1. Lucy is a boss and she doesn't let anyone tell her otherwise ~~like always~~

2. Holly and lucy's friendship my heart

3. ANTHONY LOCKWOOD

4. George is everything good and pure and damn boi he made me tear up in this book. Can you imagine, funny, charming George saved 2017

5. I really liked how the first half of this book was just chill, like how the previous books in the series are and then the second half takes you from your warm, cozy bed and dumps you into a cold lake ~~that was an actual description of what it did to me~~

6. THIS STUFF BE CREEPYING ME OUT BADLY (you need that scary October read, here y'all go)

7. THE SKULL. THE SKULL. THE SKULL.

8. I listened to the audiobook of this (because it's Inktober and I can't draw like a normal person, no MULTITASKING MUST BE DONE) and might I say the narrators are DIVINE. They capture the characters so well and it MAKES EVERYTHING MORE REAL FOR ME  
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA

9. Kipps? Is? A? Real? Person? Who knew

10. The second half of this book was so good its going to get you shivering and hiding behind your momma and screaming from feels and tearing up bc these babies are so precious. So. precious.

(s)

Anyways, I just want two things from the last book

1. Lucewood kiss
2. Skull's story

5 stars!!

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**Tanja Voosen says**

4,5 Sterne!

Lockwood & Co zählt schon seit einer Weile zu meinen Lieblingsreihen und ich habe mich sehr auf den neuen Band gefreut und ihn dann auch gleich verschlungen. Am liebsten würde ich jetzt sagen, dass ich gleich wieder gefesselt war, aber ich hatte anfangs doch ein paar Probleme, die sich auch bis zur Mitte des Romans zogen. Sie lagen vor allen in den endlosen Wiederholungen der Ereignisse vergangener Bände. In jedem Buch gab es bisher kurze Rückblicke, aber hier nahm das besonders auf den ersten 150 echt

Überhand. Zwischen dem Erscheinen der Bücher vergeht natürlich immer etwas Zeit, aber das war schon übertrieben. Am Ende des dritten Bandes verlässt Lucy aus persönlichen Gründen Lockwood & Co und schlägt sich alleine durch. So ist der Beginn des Roman erstmal eine Abfolge von Lucys Gedanken an bereits Erlebtes und Leser mit gutem Erinnerungsvermögen (wie ich) werden doch ein wenig frustriert sein, weil sich die ersten Kapitel ziemlich in die Länge ziehen. Da der Schreibstil des Autors aber wie immer großartig ist und man die ein oder andere Länge von Jonathan Stroud Bücher sowieso gewohnt, kann man auch darüber hinwegsehen, aber es ist doch eine Sache, die mich echt gestört hat.

Ehrlich gesagt war mir die Stimmung in den ersten Parts auch etwas zu melancholisch. Man spürt sehr deutlich, dass Lucy ihre Entscheidung bereut, weil sich danach ihr Leben umgekämpft hat und sie ihre Freunde schrecklich vermisst. Sie tat mir wirklich ziemlich leid und ich war froh, dass der wispernde Schädel da war, um die Story mit lockeren Sprüchen aufzuheitern. Es war schon ein wenig so, als wären alle Charaktere erstmal ein bisschen in ihrem selbst auferlegtem Elend versunken. Ich komme aber nicht umhin zu sagen, dass es auch ganz amüsant war die Figuren mal von solch einer Seite zu sehen.

Was man Jonathan Stroud nämlich nicht vorwerfen kann ist mangelnde Spannung. Gleich die erste Szene ist ein Auftrag bei dem Lucy als externe Beraterin für eine andere Agentur arbeitet und der Fall war ziemlich gruselig und mysteriös beschrieben! Ich bin sowieso ein sehr großer Fan von diesen Episoden-artigen Geschehnissen, die sich durch alle Bücher ziehen. Man fragt sich zuerst, was dahinter steckt und erst zum Ende werden die Zusammenhänge sichtbar. So war das auch hier. Details, die am Anfang unwichtig erscheinen spielen später eine Rolle für neue Entwicklungen und Erkenntnisse. Inzwischen findet man sich in der Welt von Lockwood & Co als Leser bestens zurecht und ich hatte gar nicht mehr damit gerechnet, dass man noch mehr über die Geister, Agenturen und Talente erfährt, aber der Autor konnte mich hier an der ein oder anderen Stelle überraschen. Der Titel des Romans ist mal wieder ein Hinweis auf den roten Faden und so ist "das flammende Phantom" Auslöser für eine Reihe von Dingen, die mich fesseln konnten wie kaum ein Auftrag von Lockwood, George, Holly und Lucy zuvor.

Ich liebe die Figuren einfach alle so sehr, dass der schlechende Anfang rasch vergessen war und ich mich einfach köstlich amüsiert habe, wenn George sich aufführte wie der absolute Klugscheißer, der er nun einmal ist oder Lucy sich mit ihm streitet. Was ich auch super fand war, dass Holly und Lucy hier so eine Art Freundschaft entwickeln und man sieht, dass mehr hinter Hollys hübscher Fassade steckt, als es noch in Band drei den Anschein hatte. Es ist, als habe Lockwood das schon die ganze Zeit gewusst und etwas in ihr gesehen, was der Leser noch herausfinden musste. Überhaupt waren die Charakterentwicklungen in diesem Band meiner Meinung nach am stärksten bisher und auch ein absolutes Highlight für mich! So erhält man mehr Einblicke in Lockwoods Welt, Gefühle und seine Familie, sieht Lucys emotionale Seite und lernt Holly von einer neuen Seite kennen. Wer mir auch wider Willen richtig sympathisch war: Quill Kipps! Dieser stößt nämlich in gewisser Weise zu unserem Team und war eine überraschend gute Ergänzung.

Ab der Mitte war das Buch einfach so spannend, dass ich es nicht mehr weglegen konnte. Vieles ahnt man - genau wie Lucy - schon voraus, aber das der Geschichte keinen Abbruch getan. Ich finde gerade diese ruhige, eindringliche Atmosphäre und die leisen Wellen sind es, die dieser Reihe Tiefgang und Abenteuer-Elemente verleihen und mich immer wieder aufs Neue begeistern können! Und obwohl es in keinem der Bände eine wirklich Liebesgeschichte gibt, so waren hier die Andeutungen zwischen Lockwood und Lucy echt unmissverständlich. Was mir auch wahnsinnig gut gefiel war eben dieser Punkt, denn der Autor deutet mehr an, als das er etwas zeigt und schafft Augenblicke zwischen den beiden, die mich echt an die Seiten gefesselt haben, ohne das sie übereinander herfallen mussten. Liebesgeschichten in Jugendbüchern müssen eben nicht immer die Welt verändern. Ich wünsche mir für den fünften und letzten Band allerdings schon ein bisschen mehr :P

Nach dem Lesen hatte ich jedenfalls ein richtiges "Book-Hangover"! Besonders die Dinge, die im letzten Drittel des Romans passiert sind geben mir immer noch enorm zu Denken übrig und haben meine Neugier so sehr angestachelt, dass ich den nächsten Band sowas von herbeisehne! Ich bin wahnsinnig gespannt, wie der Autor am Ende alles auffädeln.

## Fazit

Das flammende Phantom steht den Vorgängern der Lockwood & Co Reihe in nichts nach. Für mich war es nach Band zwei der beste Band bisher! Ich bin einfach in die sympathischen und außergewöhnlichen Figuren vernarrt, liebe die Episoden-artigen Aufträge in der paranormalen Welt voller Rätsel, Gefahren und Geister, die Stroud erschaffen hat! Zwischen ruhigen und spannenden Momenten gab es viele neue Informationen und Entwicklungen, die mich bestens unterhalten konnten. Schade, dass der fünfte Band wirklich der letzte sein soll. Wie soll mein Leben denn ohne Lockwood & Co weitergehen? :D

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## Rikke says

There's this badge on the cover of the books: *Stroud is a genius*. Obviously, that's 100% true.

And to be honest The Creeping Shadow, isn't even flawless perfection. In fact, it's the most flawed in the series. It's still awesome though. And very much so. Because when it works, it works brilliantly. I really can't recommend it enough. The series that is, because skipping ahead to this book, without reading the first ones, would be cheating yourself. Obviously.

Anyway, if Stroud were to write and release a new chapter in this series, daily for the rest of my life, I wouldn't skip reading a single one. Save maybe if I was too sick to read. Then I might have someone read the chapter to me.

Obviously my expectations for this installment have been massive. But to address its imperfections; the first third or so was slightly disappointing at times, not bad, just somewhat fumbling, or even lacking in smoothness, chapter 6, and 12, especially. I'm nitpicking of course, but it did feel overly repetitive in places, and although it's been a year since I read The Hollow Boy, I certainly didn't need this amount of repetition on say, the founder of The Fittes Agency for instance, really once would have been plenty. Also I had hoped for a higher flow of cases. In that regard I felt a bit let down, at least for a while.

When finally, the story finds itself, it becomes every bit as brilliant as the previous installments, more so even. It's really just an amazingly compelling series. One of the very best. A definite all time favorite.

For lots of reasons, really... The characters are amazing, the story is brilliant, it's witty, it's exciting, it's well plotted. The style is awesome, the alternate Britain is eerie and compelling. Did I say brilliant.. Really, that's a word you cannot use too much in connection with this series.

I'm well aware that I can't make anyone love the series like I do. Obviously, we connect with stories in different ways, and at different times, if ever. To me, this series is as amazing as Harry Potter. In a way more so. Maybe it's not exactly better, but it's definitely no less brilliant either. I like very few books like this. It's one of those rare ones that I'll want to read again and again.

As for the hardback I was awaiting.. It seems the publisher expects to release it after I'm gone. According to

the website in 2098, so while I would much rather receive a copy of it, I'll more likely be refunded my money. Bummer! I could respond it on the U.S. version, but I would much rather read the British version, with all its informal and old British words. Really it's endearing and witty throughout.

-----Prereview, of sorts-----

I ordered two books.. One for my daughter, and one for me. Then today she got hers. Am I envious??? Nooo.. Me, envious.. Never.. Mine haven't even been dispatched yet.. Which means I may receive it some weeks from now... If I'm lucky.. What to do..? I could buy a third copy from iBooks and get to read it soonish, or I can wait.. Should I buy three of any one book this will definitely be the one most deserving..

It's no doubt my most anticipated read this year!!

I might do it..

Really, I can't rave enough about this series..!!

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### **Gabrielle (Wishes she had more time to read) says**

*Something wicked this way comes. Mild spoilers, for instance.*

Confession time: This book was probably my least favorite in the series. Alright, alright, put down those pitchforks and hear me out for a minute.

The Creeping Shadow was flawed. The first half of the book was, much like Lucy's encounters with Lockwood and the gang, awkward. It took a while to find its flow, and was honestly a little repetitive until it found its groove. We didn't need to be reminded of what happened in the previous books that many times, Stroud. Just saying.

This book picks up a few months after the events of the previous book. Lucy's been sticking it out on her own and, it must be said, she's been doing pretty alright. Sure, it gets a little lonely, and sure having to listen to agency supervisors whine and harp during cases gets annoying real fast, but Lucy enjoys her freedom. And, more importantly, she's taking comfort in the fact that she's not leading Lockwood to his death.

But all that changes when she stumbles upon a dangerous secret, and the only people she can turn to are her old friends back at Lockwood & Co. - Holly, George, and Antony Lockwood. They take her back with, mostly, open arms, and the four of them quickly fall into their old groove and move on to solve possibly the biggest mystery in their short careers. One that involves the shady as hell (I've been saying it from the beginning) Penelope Fittes, and the Rotwell Agency.

From thereon out, the pace picks up, and the writing finds its rhythm again. And, without spoiling, lemme tell you, that the mystery in this novel has HUGE repercussions that will impact the rest of the series. Really. I can't wait to see what's in store for the gang in the books to come.

The characters are the same as you remember. Endlessly charming in their individuality, and each witty as hell. I was surprised to find that the character I was most excited to see wasn't Lockwood (Kaz Brekker has officially ruined me) but the skull. Yup. The skull. He's still a sassy, annoying little cretin, but God he was a

delight.

The imagery and the description were also a true delight. Stroud definitely upped his game in that department. Like, this books shows us some of the creepiest ghouls and ghosts in the series. It was all very well done.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable read. I just... I just can't help but feel a tad disappointed by the initial pacing issues, as well as the character growth. Or lack thereof. I felt like there were so many opportunities for these characters to grow and evolve as people - but there really wasn't much evolution. There were few changes, yes, but for the most part, they're all pretty much the same. Which is sad, because considering everything they've been through in the last couple books, there's definitely room for a little, believable, character change.

Oh well, who knows what surprises the next book will bring. I NEED IT NOW.

*PS: Lucy REALLY needs to get over the Holly hate. It's gotten really old.*

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### **Paige Bookdragon says**

I have this huge crush with Lockwood and every time his name pops up, I drool.

This is the 4th book of the series and if you haven't read the other 3 yet, close this tab right now and wash your eyes. The story started six months after Lucy left Lockwood's agency *\*wails\**. There's still some major exorcism in this book but what differs The Creeping Shadow from the 3 books is that, this book reveals some major creepy conspiracy that is happening all over London.

I won't tell you any spoiler because I'm that nice but here are my reasons why this book deserves my four star.

#### **1. Lucy and Lockwood moments.**

Like for real I know that there's no romance in this series but holy snickle snitty snattery shit, I love those short but this-is-warming-my-dead-heart moments between Lucy and Lockwood.

#### **2. The skull.**

That trash talking, super creepy and devilish skull in the jar provides the best jokes. He was awesome since

book 2 and if you're a fan of this little fella, read this book.

### **3. SECRETS REVEALED.**

Color me shocked when someone informs someone about some serious mojojojo that affects the whole story. If you've read the book and know what I'm talking about, call me. We'll fangirl and do discuss about it.

Btw, I need to ask: When will the next book be released?

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### **Missjang1 says**

Dear Mr. Stroud,

I NEED MORE LOCKWOOD/LUCY MOMENTS!!!

Pretty please with cherries on top.

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### **Jesica says**

5/5 stars

I really.. really enjoy this book. It's not spectacular. In fact, I guess the third book, *The Hollow Boy*, remains my favorite of the series but this book has it's own enjoyable feels.

The story began with Lucy working as freelance psychic advisor. She did relatively well with the skull in her side but she longed for a proper team. Suddenly, after not seeing each other for four months, Lockwood came to her office/apartment and asked for her help. The meeting was quite comical. Lucy hadn't expect Lockwood to come and her apartment was super messy that she became embarrassed. Lucy agreed to help Lockwood & co. to solve a case given by Penelope Fittes. One event lead to another, suddenly Lucy was hunted by mysterious killers who stole the whispering skull and killed her friend. Alone and had nowhere to go, Lucy went back to Portland Row 35. With the help of Lockwood & co. (especially Lockwood :p), Lucy tracked down the Skull and found out about a bigger horror going on involving some big agencies, black marketers and lots of visitors.

The book started really creepy. The first two cases were terrifying. Not only they had to fight evil ghosts, but evil ghosts who had been really evil when they were alive. A witch and a cannibal. I really admire the author's writing. There're a lot of cases but each of them had it's own unique element. In the witch case you could only see it through a mirror so when you see it, it would be as the ghost creeping behind you with arms stretch wide ready to give it's deadly ghost-touch. I found the image super creepy. Anyway, not all the cases

was that impressive. The Creeping Shadow, in particular, was a little weird. But what had the most attention was the relationship of Lockwood & co. agents, particularly Lockwood and Lucy's. Seriously, I think they'd be very cute together >.<. I really think that Lucy actually liked Lockwood. Even the Skull was jealous of Lockwood. Lucy always tried to convince herself that she was just helping Lockwood but actually she was just glad to be with her. Even Lockwood's hideous disguise didn't discourage her.

Okay, what with the wig and the makeup, and his blacked-out teeth, he didn't look too great right then; but behind his gappy grin shone the old Lockwood smile, and that smile and those words together swept everything else aside. All guilt and queasiness were gone, and I was conscious of nothing other than the thrill of being there with him.

But still, Lucy did put Lockwood's life in danger to save the Skull. She's so messed up sometimes.. the other member was great too. Holly had become accustomed to Lockwood & co. and had become more efficient. George was.. well, George. He's genius as ever with his researches and experiments. I earned weird stares from people when I read this book in a public place because one of George's theory made me laughed out loud spontaneously.

"I don't get worn patches on the seats of my trousers," Lockwood said. "And I don't have any jeans."

"Well, think of mine, then. I have plenty of old pairs. The fabric gets thin, then stringy, then widens to an actual hole. All of a sudden it's embarrassing when you bend over. It's the same here, except that it's not your underwear showing—something else comes through."

"This metaphor is disturbing in a number of ways," Lockwood said. "Right now I'm actually less worried about the ghosts than about the other images you're conjuring up.

I enjoyed this book to the very end though the ending was very unexpected (does the author have to end it on THAT??). It ended so suddenly that I knew it was over when I flipped one page and instead of next chapter, it's glossary. And I thought I might still had some more pages to go.. -\_-This book also has it's surprises. Lockwood & co. acquired a new agent!! (I won't spoil who.. it's quite surprising :D) a little minor spoiler, though, there's a glimpse of the Skull's true form in this book!! I really can't wait for the next book.

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### **\*Rachelle\* says**

#### **5 stars all over again**

These books are so near and dear to my heart. Lucy, Lockwood, and George are wonderful and I love them so much. They are some of the best written characters I've come across in YA fiction, and they stand with the greats (Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, etc).

And of course the skull. His sass takes on a whole new level here and I can't tell you the number of times I busted out laughing at something he said XD

I don't even know if I can write a full and coherent review for this book because I am currently hugging the book to my chest trying my best to osmosis myself into this world. Can I pretty please be a part of the Lockwood and Co team?

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t-minus 32 days until The Empty Grave and my fingers are crossed for some major Lucewood shipping  
please and thank you =D

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Update 8/7/17: So I'm rereading this because book 5 comes out next month and I am absolutely in love with  
Lockwood, Lucy, and George (Holly is just okay).

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WHAT WAS THAT ENDING?????????????????

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO MAKE IT TILL SEPTEMBER?????????????

IM IN FULL FREAKOUT MODE HERE PEOPLE

RTC ONCE I CAN STOP SHOUTING

-----  
According to the description, this one has "an unexpected cliffhanger ending". Well I guess it's not so  
unexpected now, but the next book doesn't come out till September, which means a tortuous wait through the  
summer \*cries softly\*

Oh well I have to read this NOW

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**Khyati says**

The wait for this is going to kill me. Reading this is going to kill me. Everything about this book will kill me.  
EDIT: There's a blurb and Lucy just left I can't even process this I'm so excited! Personally, I'm hoping for  
lots of Lucewood.

6/8/16: THERE'S A COVER AND I COULDN'T LOVE IT MORE! 3/11/17: Wow. Read this book

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**Dawn (????)?\*:?:?♦ says**

This book is awesome. It has all of the great components one looks for in a young adult book: quick action,  
loveable characters, a great plot, and it manages to both put a smile on my face as well as scare me to the  
point where I have to sleep with the lights on.

Unlike the other Lockwood and Co. books so far, this one focuses more on action and plot, and less so on the  
individual haunts and the team-bonding aspect. And, while refreshing, it does have its downsides... though  
not many.

For starters, Lucy was a little bit annoying in the first half of this book. Not to the point where I disliked her, but to the point where I questioned where the awesome heroine from the other three novels went and why she was replaced with an irritating-at-times and overly-jealous-for-no-reason girl. I understand completely why she acts like this, and to this I can simply say - **Lucy, denial is not only a river in Egypt.** It's obvious you like Lockwood, so why not ACT on it?

But that's the only downside. Otherwise, this book was **FANTASTIC!**

There's action, there's laughter, there are loveable characters and notable moments. I absolutely loved the scenes between Lucy and Lockwood (there's an especially adorable one near the end of the book), and the normal Lucy is back in the second half of this book, which was great.

Of course, I highly recommend!

But then I realize I have to wait another entire year for the finale.

**Also, I need more Skull backstory!!! NOW PLEASE!!**

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**?τ??η? says**

I CAN'T WAITTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT  
I NEED THIS BOOK NOWWWWWWWWWWWWW  
NOWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW

Jonathan Stroud, HURRY!

Better yet, *don't* hurry. I'd rather wait a long time and get another really awesome book, than have a case of the infamous Author On Deadline crappy writing.

Take your time.

But make sure it's awesome.

And whatever you do, please, *please* don't make a love triangle.

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**Sana says**

[lockwood and lucy were looking right into each others eyes and then lucy blushed and george said "awkward" i'm ded goodbye (hide spoiler)]

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### **Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says**

I adore this series. I always look forward to the newest book. And I have to get these on audiobook because the narration is always excellent. I was not disappointed. At the end of "The Hollow Boy", Lucy leaves Lockwood and Co for what seems like good reasons at the time. She becomes an independent contractor ghost hunter and she's good at her job. But she's not happy, even with her glass jar skull for company. She misses the camaraderie of Lockwood and Co.: George, even Holly, and of course, Lockwood. But she left to keep them safe because her newer abilities to communicate with ghosts might cause her to make a mistake and get one of her friends hurt.

Lockwood shows up at her new digs and asks for her help with a case, and she agrees to help them out. It's one of their tougher cases, and Lucy finds her life in jeopardy shortly after, and realizing that she's more safe sticking with Lockwood and Co. until they figure out who's trying to kill her. That's when their biggest case comes their way, a whole haunted village. They end up in a small town with serious ghost problems a conspiracy that will shake the foundations of the ghost hunting community.

I love how Stroud steadily builds on the foundation of the last book and the previous ones. The story just expands beautifully and he doesn't leave any plot elements dangling. While he turns a few things on their heads, it's organic as the reader realizes that things weren't as the characters thought or believed. The characters are very well developed and layered. While the main characters are all teens, they have a maturity that is realistic considering the world they live in and the dangers they face every day. Let's face it. The children are the ones on the frontline, confronting and dealing with the ghost Problem.

These books are delightfully eerie and downright chilling at times. Also, there's plenty of human menace. I mean, grownups trying to kill kids. How sick is that? While the paranormal elements are integral to the story, the heart of it is the characters. Everything is told from Lucy's point of view (it's 1st person), but the characters don't suffer from being seen through the typically narrow 1st person vantage point. Instead, they are richly described, with dialogue and action that shows you everything you need to know about them. Lucy also grows as a character as she faces significant challenges and comes to realizations about what she is and how to deal with the troubles she and her friends face. And that they are stronger together.

As with the last book, this has a nice conclusion but it also leaves the door open for the next book. Things are about to get even more intense, and I'm here for it.

Another book I'd love to see made into movies. And I just checked and it's going to be optioned for a tv series in the UK. This pleases me. Sadly, the next book is the last book. But all good things come to an end.

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Highly recommend!