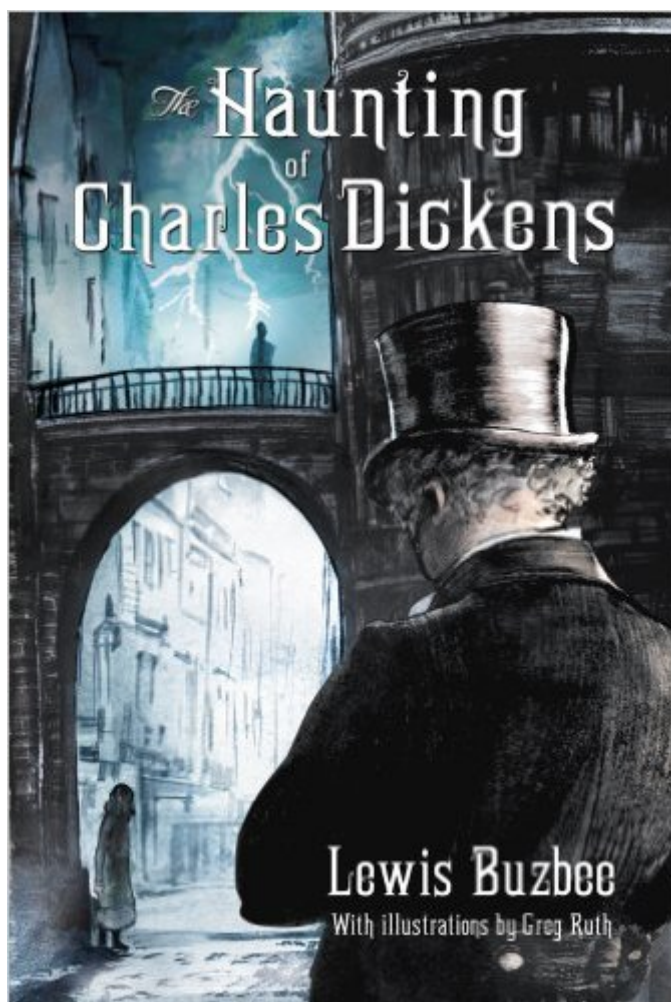


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The Haunting Of Charles Dickens



Synopsis

Meg Pickel's older brother, Orion, has disappeared. One night, she steals out to look for him and makes two surprising discoveries: she stumbles upon a séance that she suspects involves Orion, and she meets the author Charles Dickens, also unable to sleep and roaming the London streets. He is a customer of Meg's father, who owns a print shop, and a family friend. Mr. Dickens fears that the children of London aren't safe and is trying to solve the mystery of so many disappearances. If he can, then perhaps he'll be able to write once again. With stunning black-and-white illustrations by Greg Ruth, *The Haunting of Charles Dickens* by Lewis Buzbee is a literary mystery that celebrates the power of books and brings to life one of the world's best-loved authors.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I greatly enjoyed being swept away into the London of the Dickens era. While the phony seance near the beginning of *The Haunting of Charles Dickens* may have hinted at ghosts and paranormal, it soon becomes apparent it is trickery and unscrupulous business practices that Meg and Mr. Dickens must overcome. Meg, who had gone out in search of her lost brother, Orion, was drawn to the strange green glow emanating from skylights of an empty mansion. There she comes across her old family friend, Charles Dickens, who is also looking in on the seance. Before their secretive viewing of the seance is over, Meg glimpses a young man she believes to be her brother who has been missing for six months. This lifts her heart and resolve to find her brother. In tracking Orion through old London, Meg comes across many signs he left behind. Her sleuthing and work in their family's printing shop leads her to seek more for herself when she's grown, rather than just marriage

into a suitable family. The setting of Dickens era London was vivid for me, including travel by foot and carriage complete with the clomp of horses's hooves on cobblestones. The jingle of the horses's harnesses, the squeaking of the buggies and carts, and the smell of a soot permeated city all add to the intensity of the scenes. The sights, smells and decay of old London remind the reader of that manufacturing era. The haunting in this story comes about three ways: The first apparent haunting is the loss parents experience for their "lost" children who've been forced into labor in those 'underground' sweatshops. The haunting that effects Charles Dickens reflects his state of mind and emotions rather than being about ghosts. Meg is haunted by the loss of her older brother, Orion, yet she refuses to believe he is dead.

Take an unexplained disappearance. Bring in a ghost who points the way. Add Charles Dickens, who knows London's troubled neighborhoods too well. Stir in a plucky, thirteen-year-old girl who will let nothing stop her from tailing a dangerous kidnapping gang, and you have the grand new middle-grade mystery by Lewis Buzbee, *The Haunting of Charles Dickens*. Meg Pickel's older brother, Orion, disappeared six months ago. Her family is still numb with shock. Each night, when everyone is asleep, Meg goes up to the roof-garden to brood. One night, a green glow from the skylight of the Satis House catches her attention and launches Meg on her own personal search for Orion. Part mystery, part ghost story, this intriguing tale leads a reader through twists and turns that parallel the dark streets and hidden alleys of Dickens's London. The Great Man, Dickens, is a regular customer at the Pickel family's printing shop as well as being a close family friend. Orion's disappearance affects him deeply. He and Meg team up as sleuths, accompanied by the family dog, Mulberry. They find clues on walls and dusty floors. Colorful characters offer them leads. Soon it is clear that Orion has been "press-ganged", kidnapped into slave labor. Now it is up to Meg and Dickens to save Orion. But not just Orion: A ghost Meg and Dickens met earlier in the Satis House becomes the metaphor for all the ghosts of London's forgotten children. For forgotten children of any era, really, including our own. Buzbee is an author who, like Dickens, encourages thought even while he entertains. This is a fine adventure story with engaging characters, a complex plot, and writing that is rich and vivid.

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