



# Gap Year in Ghost Town

*Michael Pryor*

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Let's get this straight - ghosts are everywhere. I can see them. You can't. And, see them or not, they're dangerous. This is why my family has hunted ghosts for hundreds of years to protect people like you.

The Marin family are outcasts of the ghost hunting world. They run a two-man operation in inner city Melbourne. Anton has the Ghost-sight, but his father does not.

Rani Cross is supremely skilled in hand-to-hand combat, with enhanced speed and strength thanks to her magical initiation into the Company of the Righteous.

When it comes to ghost-hunting methodology, Anton and Rani don't see eye to eye - Anton likes to 'ease their passage' to the next world, while Rani's all about the slashing.

But Melbourne is under threat; with a massive spike in violent ghost manifestations, Anton and Rani must find a way to work together to keep supernatural forces at bay.

And what with all the blindingly terrifying brushes with death, Anton must decide if he really wants in on the whole ghost hunting biz anyway.

## Gap Year in Ghost Town Details

Date : Published August 2017 by Allen & Unwin

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Author : Michael Pryor

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# From Reader Review Gap Year in Ghost Town for online ebook

**Bec says**

This review first appeared on Readers in Wonderland

## INITIAL REACTION

### 5 THINGS ABOUT GAP YEAR IN GHOST TOWN

#### A different kind of Halloween read

This is a book about ghosts, but it's not a scary haunting thriller type ghost story. It's much lighter and more enjoyable. Which I'm grateful for because ghost stories creep me out.

#### Percy Jackson x Supernatural

I know we hate book comparisons, but this just fits so well! Anton reminds me a lot of Percy in terms of humour and voice. He's sassy and has such a quick wit, it was so entertaining. And how could you not draw the Supernatural comparison when hunting ghosts is the family business? It's most like early seasons supernatural before all the angels and Rapture stuff.

#### LoveOzYA

Not only is this written by an Australian author, it's set in Melbourne! I've never really been to Melbourne city so I didn't have the appreciation of familiar settings. But still, I knew the names of places mentioned and was super excited when they mentioned towns/ suburbs where my family lives.

#### So many pop culture references!

There were so many pop culture references scattered in this book it was amazing. I got most of them (my jaw hit the floor when the Fairy Tail reference popped up) but still there was a lot I didn't get (I fail as a nerd).

#### I'd love to know more

This ghost hunting world is so interesting, I don't want to leave. I want to know more about the Marin family history and the Company of the Righteous. Then there's the evil groups floating around the edges. Also I ship Rani and Anton a lot and almost need a slow burn development over a few books (there's no romance in this one). There is so much potential for a series, I'm actually sad it's only a standalone (for now at least).

#### In Summary

GAP YEAR IN GHOST TOWN such a fun, entertaining read. The plot was alright, but it was the humour and characters that really made the story enjoyable. It's definitely made me want to check out more of Michael Pryor's stuff in the future.

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**J.R. Koop says**

I actually really enjoyed this one. It was a light read and got me fully invested the whole way through ? AND did I mention that one of the main female characters is Assamese/Chinese Malaysian? It is SO NICE to see an adopted character as a lead!

And this book is set in Melbourne. If you want to get a feel for what an Australian city is like, then I definitely recommend this one. The humour was spot on ?

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## Casey says

Gap Year in Ghost Town was an unexpected awesome read for me!

Gap year is set in Melbourne (home town represent xD) Anton our main character is hilarious so straight off the bat this book hooked me. I mean it has Ghosts, A+ Melbourne references, amazing aussie slang AND smartassery could I ask for more?

I didn't exactly love the authors short story in the Anthology and I've never read any of his other books so I went into this with rather low expectations and I'm kinda glad I did because it impressed me just that much more.

Anton has a quick mouth and is fast to deflect with something witty but he's also incredible adorable, kind-hearted, and wants to put on a brave face (he also wears some great jackets but that doesn't really further the plot.)

Basically Anton has just finished school and is taking a Gap year of the supernatural kind, his family has run a ghost hunting business for 200+ years and this year is his turn to test it out, see if this is what he wants to do for his life or if he wants to leave ghost hunting and pursue a different career choice, while doing that he stumbles upon a weird crop of ghosts and a new ghost hunter in town, together they set out to find out what exactly is happening with all the Melbournian ghosts.

Okay lists of what I loved:

Rani and her sword

Rani

A CHARACTERS DAD WHO IS ACTUALLY REALLY INVOLVED WITH HIS SON AND THE STORY

All the ghosts

Anton sass

Rani and her ass kickary

The plot was fast paced and really interesting

Possession

Bec and the best friend level, Becs didn't feature much but I really enjoy her and Antons friendship

Murders

Ghosts

Aussie Slang

4/5 Stars

The reason why this wasn't a 5/5 stars is it just didn't hook me as much as other books had. It was missing a certain spark for me that makes me want to shove it in everyone's faces and make them read it right there and then. Also some of the sentences were a bit stunted BUT I did have an arc so this might have been fixed up in the finished copies.

Overall I really loved the plot, the ghosts, the setting, and all the characters. This works as a standalone but I hope we get some more installments of Anton's adventures.

Bring on more Melbourne Ghosts!

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## **Rachel (The Rest Is Still Unwritten) says**

*Thank you to Allen & Unwin for providing me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review!*

Find this review and more on my blog [The Rest Is Still Unwritten!](#)

Gap Year in Ghost Town by Australian author Michael Pryor is a ghostly tale of adventure and danger set amongst a Melbourne backdrop.

Anton Marin is a member of a long line of descendants capable of seeing ghosts and who have spent their lives hunting them down and helping them move on. Living with his father and running a used book-shop in the heart of Melbourne, Anton spends his nights searching for ghosts and is used to taking the gentle approach with exorcising them. Until he meets sword welding, British expat Rani Cross on assignment from London. Rani's approach to ghost hunting is more slash first, ask questions never. The Marin family are anomalies in the ghost hunting world and the organization Rani works for is sure their way is right, but with a massive spike in ghosts threatening society, Anton and Rani must work together to stop the ghosts from hurting innocent people, even if it means acknowledging that not everything is black and white.

I have to be honest; I really wanted to adore this novel, I did. I went into it looking for something fresh and with an open mind, and although there were parts of Gap Year in Ghost Town I appreciated, it was a struggle for me to read this novel all the way through. While Michael Pryor is clearly a talented writer and has a decent writing style, I feel like Gap Year in Ghost Town could have been condensed with the majority of the dialogue removed and you wouldn't lose anything within the story.

Anton's personality is all sarcasm and sass, but what began as endearing in the beginning of the novel quickly became grating to me. I could totally see what Pryor was going for and it may work for some people, but for me so much of the conversations seemed unnecessary and overly witty that it all fell on deaf ears. It grew tiresome quickly and I just wanted to skip over a lot of the dialogue to get to important parts of the story which seemed far and few in between as it was.

That being said, I enjoyed all the Melbourne and Australian culture thrown into Gap Year in Ghost Town. There was a lot of pop-culture references throughout the story with a detailed and poignant Melbourne setting. Ghosts bring a scary element to the story and a spooky undertone to Anton and Rani's adventures.

Overall, this novel wasn't to my liking, but I can see how Gap Year in Ghost Town would appeal to other readers and would recommend you check it out if you're looking for a witty ghost hunting tale with an

Australian urban twist.

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## C.G. Drews says

**This was absolutely hilarious and endearing and FULL OF GHOSTS.** Aka one of my favourite topics. There's nothing like killing off characters like starting the book with most of them dead. Epic. I also can't flail enough over how FUNNY this book is! Anton is definitely a new favourite narrator because all he does is talk and talk add in a bucket of sass to that and generally nearly get himself killed...and as much as I love a dark broody YA hero, we need more happy talkative ones?! **Plus AUSSIE AUTHOR REPRESENT.**

It felt like Supernatural x Skulduggery Pleasant which is a combination I'm here for exactly now immediately.

### L I K E S:

- **Did I mention GHOSTS?!** It's about Anton and his father's small-home-owned ghost hunting business! But instead of killing ghosts, they put them at rest and send them onto the next life. These are chill Hufflepuff lads and I loved them.
- **Plus the plot stars a lot of action.** Because the ghosts knew very little chill and also bring out like the evil-ghost-controlling villain and some secret organisations and just general Bad News. I really loved that they hunted ghosts with swords too. Like we need more swords in modern literature. I want a sword. I feel validated reading this book.
- **ANTON IS SO FUNNY.** The sheer amount of wit, snappy comebacks, and hilarious anecdotes honestly gave me *life*. At first I thought Anton might be a little tacky, but yet?? No way??? He's cute and charming and thoroughly so so stupid. Perfect.
- **It's also set in Melbourne!** I haven't been, but you can tell it's the author's hometown because the little details made the setting so much more real and tangible.
- **There is like a sheer ton of coffee.** Anton is not a morning person. He's not a person in the morning. He needs coffee or it takes him 29mins to figure out how to say "yes please" tangibly.
- **Also it ticked like SO MANY BOXES of "what YA needs today"...and it just pleased me so so much!** Like there's a platonic girl/boy relationship (Anton's best friends with Bec but 0% romantic feelings) and there's a great and supportive parent. Plus diversity and intense book-lover appreciation and girls who are complex and take no shenanigans.
- **Rani was EPIC.** She's like snarky and sharp and all pointy edges, but she is very very serious about her work and -- best yet -- actually listens to people with other ideas. She's also Chinese/British and she's the one with the sword. #Goals
- **SO MUCH BOOK LOVE TOO.** Anton's family runs a bookstore as a cover for killing ghosts. He literally takes a book to read with him on ghost-hunting trips *in case of boredom*. Was a book boy ever so perfect???
- **Did I mention it's freaking hilarious.** Because this is what gives me life.
- **I also would like to say it has no romance.** Which is like BIZARRE in a YA book and so so refreshing. Ahhhhhh!!! Anton does *like* Rani but he doesn't do more than think briefly on it. And like the book is focused on: actually saving the day. And it just is so pleasing to read a book where boys and girls can be epic together and not always distracted by kissing.
- **And it left me with a TON of questions.** So I'm hoping this is just the start of a series because there are secret organisations to unfurl, missing aunts, unlikely partnerships, and evil bad guys, and obviously tons of ghosts.

## DISLIKES:

- **Okay so I will admit...the stakes felt a bit low.** Not that they WERE low. They *felt* low due to nothing ever escalating to a level of "omg I'm actually worried now." I was never worried or on the edge of my seat. I'm not saying all books should be uber dark (ALTHOUGH I WISH) I'm just saying I wanted to *feel scared* of the ghosts, but I really didn't.
- **And as much as I loved Anton's voice, I think his flippant tone made going deeper really hard.** Not impossible? Because hello please go read *The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue* which features a sassy/flippant narrator who *does* have the book reach a level of deep feels too. But Anton kind of sabotaged that before it got there? So I never felt panicked or worried and I just was left wanting *more* from the characters.
- **I admit the domestic scenes were my favourite, the mystery-solving scenes a little too slow.** Just was left feeling the middle dragged a bit.
- **And there were a surprising amount of typos.** #awkward
- **Also just me or was the finale too "easy"??** Maaaaybe just a little.
- **I also wondered about the age of the characters...** Honestly they read like 15 or 16 year olds, but Anton is 18 and finished school and having his "gap year". (OBVIOUSLY.) But I just felt the book would waaaay more appeal to teens 13+ than teens in their 18s.

**ALL IN ALL: This was such a pleasant, fun and ghostly surprise!** I thoroughly enjoyed myself and I adore Anton and PLEASE LET HIM NEVER CHANGE. He's a dork and totally endearing. It's all about friendship and family and SWORDS AND FIGHTING GHOSTS WHOOO. And can we appreciate the fantastic cover art for a second?!? Because I have much love.

## \*\*\*\* QUOTES \*\*\*\*

I have a phone charger, my pro standard GPS unit, a water bottle, a book and an e-reader just in case I finish my book. Can't be without a book.

All I wanted was a nice simple life where I could hunt ghosts, do a part-time university course, be rich and famous and happy and have a talking alpaca. Was that too much to ask?

"Three: some of the records are likely to drive you insane."

"Oh. Magic stuff that'll eat my brain?"

"No. Just really bad handwriting. Awful. Like a drunk spider fell in an inkwell and staggered across the cards."

Okay, so I'm a flippant, run-off-the-mouth kinda guy because I find it helps me get my brain in order and it sometimes buys me time when I need it. While the tough guy is wondering what

the heck I just said I'm already running away, usually.

Stacey Evans, or the person who had been Stacey Evans before she was transformed into this supernatural serial killer, put her hands together on her lap. "Would you like a biscuit? I have Tim Tams somewhere, I'm sure."  
I hesitated. After all, Tim Tams.

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### **Rania T says**

3.5 stars. Read this to find out what could be lurking in the back lanes, old mansions, creepy greenhouses and sedate suburbia of the world's most liveable city; Melbourne...

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### **Bec says**

I wrote a review of this awesome book! It's spoiler free. :D  
<https://rebeccagough.wordpress.com/20...>

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### **Lucy Rojas says**

Reseña en español debajo del preview!  
English review below the image!!!  
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#### **¡PREVIEW!**

Here's the list of reasons why i need this book like yesterday:

- i beyond love ghosts (this has some lockwood and co vibes so i'm in)
- my mom's family name's marin so i'm in any other way
- this cover looks simply perfect and i love it so i'm in
- i hate so damn much goodread's "new releases" posts cuz they never put this kind of books in there so i never know about not so popular books about kick asses and then i found them in my update feed and that's not fair
- i'm in, that's all

hope to get bacc on tracc with all my ghosts books @anthonyjlockwood i'm coming for you baby, again, soon, sooner than you think, keep your eyes open baby  
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*"Ghosts. They mess themselves up, then they mess you up"*

GYIGT era prometedor. Muy prometedor. El título, la premisa, el cover, el tema, la narración, todo. Todo me encantaba de GYIGT hasta que llegué a la mitad del libro.

Honestamente fue muy hermoso todo hasta la mitad. El principio merecía 4 estrellas sino más, pero después simplemente no me gustó el plot anymore y mi emoción empezó a enfriarse.

Tiene muchas similitudes con Lockwood and Co. Para empezar el protagonista se llama Anton, el de Lockwood and Co se llama Antony. Ves? Ya ahí empezó mal. Aunque no, son personajes diferentes, los amo a los dos.

Una plaga de fantasmas amenaza la ciudad (Melbourne en este caso, Londres, en L&C), y solo un grupo selecto de personas apenas y puede verlos. El protagonista perdió a varios miembros de su familia inmediata y se mantiene en tabú y secreto hasta la mitad del libro. Lo mismo pasa en L&C, no?

Sin embargo, a pesar de la comparación estuvo interesante. No hubieron tantos fantasmas como yo esperaba y mucho menos se llega a comparar con The Hollow Boy que viene a ser el mejor libro sobre fantasmas que he leído so far.

Algo que me gustó mucho es la relación entre Bec (la mejor amiga del protagonista) y Rani (la nueva miembro del equipo del protagonista). Las shippeo muchísimo y algo que pasó al final me hace tener tantas teorías, ay, las amo.

Fue entretenido a pesar de que leí súper lento porque no tuve mucho tiempo este mes.

Gracias, Michael, por darnos fantasmas asombrosos y referencias a The Lord of The Rings.

*"Ghosts. They mess themselves up, then they mess you up"*

GYIGT was promising. Very promising. The title, the premise, the cover, the theme, the narration, everything. I loved everything about GYIGT until I got to the middle of the book.

Honestly, it was very beautiful, everything until the half. The beginning deserved 4 stars maybe more, but afterwards I just didn't like the plot anymore and my emotion started to cool down.

It has many similarities with Lockwood and Co. To start the protagonist is called Anton, the Lockwood and Co one is called Antony. You see? You got me there. But, they are different characters, I love them both.

A plague of ghosts threatens the city (Melbourne in this case, London, in L&C), and only a select group of people can barely see them. The protagonist lost several members of his immediate family and remains taboo and secretly until the middle of the book. The same happens in L&C, right?

However, despite the comparison it was interesting. There were not as many ghosts as I expected, much less come to compare with The Hollow Boy which is the best book about ghosts I've read so far.

Something what I really liked is the relationship between Bec (the protagonist's best friend) and Rani (the new member of the protagonist's team). I ship them very much and something that happened at the end makes me have so many theories, oh, I love them.

It was entertaining even though I read super slow because I didn't have much time this month.

Thank you, Michael, for giving us amazing ghosts and The Lord of The Rings references.

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## **Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says**

Throughout the quiet, darkened streets of Melbourne, eighteen year old Anton Marin searches for ghosts, delicately releasing their spirits from Earth by easing their passage. Anton is a delightfully charming young man who is reluctantly pursuing paranormal investigation to appease his father. The Marin spectre legacy now falls upon Anton, the Sight ability escaping his father who documents each encounter, maintaining the Marin archives from a hidden retreat in the family owned bookstore.

Rani Cross is a graduating member of the Company of The Righteous, a prosperous organisation abundant in tradition, emigrating from London with her foster parents, Company of The Righteous employees. The Company of The Righteous believes in the disposing of spirits through violent methods, disciplined soldiers instructed in weaponed combat and Rani is conflicted by Anton's gentle approach.

Gap Year In Ghost Town is magnificent. Melbourne provides an affluent Victorian landscape of ghostly apparitions, Weepers, Moaners, Lingerers and ghosts who manifest as Ragers. Anton and Rani begin to investigate the increase in spectre apparitions when they discover a slain body and a grieving widow summoning Rogue spirits.

Readers will appreciate Anton and Rani's tentative and platonic friendship, Anton and friend Rebecca and in addendum, Rebecca and Rani. Facile and charming. Anton's relationship with his father was lovely, a wonderful presence who challenged Anton. Anton's father is a fascinating character who continues to mourn his the death of his youngest child, his marriage and his sister's disappearance.

From the city to the suburbs of Melbourne was enchanting and atmospheric. As Anton accompanied Rani throughout the city and her suburbs, I was fascinated by the history of Melbourne folklore. Readers will appreciate the diverse Australian characters and Rani, who although from Britain is of Assamese, Chinese and Malaysian heritage.

Theatrical and charismatic, Gap Year In Ghost Town is wonderfully written with humour and finesse. Simply brilliant.

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## Amy says

I will be honest. When I saw the cover I did not think I would be interested. It looked like a book aimed at a 12-year-old boy. Well I have not been 12 for quite some time now and I have never been a boy, so I was very wrong because I loved it. I will not say it is perfect because nothing ever is, but it does deserve all 5 of those stars I am giving it.

Our main character is male, which is somewhat rare in the books I tend to read but it worked so well in this book that I want to read more male MC books. So Anton Marin, our MC here if that was not clear, has the ability to see ghosts and ease their transition from earth to where ever it is the dead go next. Anton does not really want to be a ghost hunter but has agreed to try it for a year to please his father, Leon, which basically explains the title of the book.

Family history includes:

- The Marin family moving to Australia after parting with the Company of the Righteous, a ghost hunting organisation in London.
- A tragic event occurring in Anton's childhood that tore his family apart.
- A mysteriously missing Aunt Tanja.

I would like to congratulate Michael Pryor on including these in a way that felt natural and only because it made sense to the plot. However, there is one thing that doesn't make as much sense and that is Anton's best friend Bec, or Rebecca as Leon calls her, having only one eye. Sure, this is kind of a cool detail but it doesn't really have a place in the story except for when cosplay is mentioned.

Our other significant character is Rani Cross, a member of the Company of Righteous, a total badass and has a tragic backstory of her own. She has her flaws, just as Anton does, but together the two ghost hunters make an efficient team and an interesting duo to read about.

Now, I mentioned before about the Marin family moving to Australia and this probably influences part of my

love for this book. It is set in Melbourne and surrounding suburbs so I was able to picture some of the locations in my head. Being in Australia means we are also gifted with some very Aussie sayings, my favourites being 'huh', 'thingos', 'whatsits' and 'yeah, nah' - all part of my daily vocabulary. We may sound uneducated but we Aussies generally know what we mean with little words.

All of the above would count for little if the book had a terrible storyline or had been written horribly, but I am happy to say I believe neither is the case. I found the storyline interesting and captivating. I did not want to put the book down until I had read every page. The writing style was somewhat different to many of the books I read in that it didn't feel polished, which is actually a good thing. It felt natural as if Anton was telling me the story of all the crazy ghost things that had been happening around Melbourne.

I am not sure if everyone would agree with me as we all have different opinion and tastes in books, but I really did love this book and I am even adding it to my favourites shelf because I am just that serious about it.

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## **K. says**

Trigger warnings: violence, death of a friend, death of a child, parental abandonment.

4.5 stars.

I've been excited about this book since I first heard about it in November/December of last year. Like...a book about ghost hunting that's set in Melbourne?? OBVIOUSLY I was on board. And I was not disappointed.

This was SO MUCH FUN. Basically, Anton finished high school six months ago, not quite sure what he wanted to do at university. His father talked him into taking a gap year in which he works in the family business - ghost hunting. His family split from the ghost hunting community when they migrated to Australia in the mid-20th century because they believe in easing a ghost's pain and helping them cross over where the rest of the ghost hunting community is all "NO, CHOP THEM TO PIECES UNTIL THEY GO POOF."

And it's all going smoothly until Anton comes into contact with Rani, a member of the Company of the Righteous in England. The two butt heads over the best way to hunt ghosts, but ultimately team up when they find increasing numbers of ghosts around Melbourne and realise that someone has worked out how to control ghosts.

Basically? It was a ton of fun. I laughed out loud multiple times thanks to pop culture references and Melbourne jokes and just incredibly funny one liners. The characters are delightful - I should mention that Rani is Asian and Anton's best friend, Bec, has a prosthetic eye - and the story captures Melbourne perfectly.

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## **Clare Snow says**

Action packed and cleverly plotted. The supernatural dangers really come alive ;-)

I love the cover art (by Craig Phillips) and design (by Ruth Grüner).

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## **Kirsti says**

This book made me laugh, and that's saying a lot. Years of reading in awkward public places has left me emotionally unable to show my feelings when reading most books (always odd when you laugh like a maniac on the bus, or have to start mopping your tears up with napkins at a cafe) But I was home today, and zooming through my to-read pile led me to finally starting and finishing this. It's just so damn AUSTRALIAN! From Tim Tams to possums it just shrieked loud and proud of Australia and I loved that :3 A few years ago I was hard pressed to find Aussie YA in local stores and now we have #LoveOzYA on the back of Aussie books. Love it!

Then there is Anton, just so perfect for this book and this story Anton. His snark, his humour, his personality, everything was a fit and a win for me. If there is no sequel and I never get to read about Anton again, I'll be most unhappy. Oh and Bec of course (again, so Australian, to go with Bec as a best friend haha) she was beyond awesome and I wish I was friends with her too.

Aussie YA lovers, and YA lovers in general, try your hardest to get a copy of this and read it. I've seen a few comments and questions about the availability outside Australia, and this is one of those fun YAs that should be available everywhere! Loved it, Loved it, Loved it! Five stars!

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## **ambreads says**

### **ON HOLD AT @ 26%**

I was feeling it and then it felt like it was trying too hard to be Percy Jackson. I was really shocked when I read the main character was a year younger than me since they read like a 12 year old (similar to Percy Jackson in the first book). I'll pick this up again later.

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## **Yolanda Sfetsos says**

I borrowed this book from the library last week because I'd been hearing some great things about it, and the cover's *so* cool. Besides, I'm a total sucker for ghost stories. I love ghost stories *so much* I've even written a series about a ghost hunter set in Sydney.

So of course this one caught my attention...

But when I picked it up yesterday, there was something about it that just didn't work for me. I pushed on, but by Chapter Four I decided to put it aside. All the things that would usually make me love a story like this--an abundance of ghosts, humour, action, friendship, more ghosts--just annoyed me. I especially couldn't connect with Anton the way I thought I would, and he's the narrator. :/

So sadly, I'm calling this a DNF.

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