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Gabriel's Clock

Tessa McMillan

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Book Review

Title: Gabriel's Clock
Author: Hilton Pashley
Illustrator: August Hall
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Publication Year: 2014
ISBN: 9780544301764
Number of Pages: 290
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Significant Shortcomings



Review

Jonathan is on the run from demons. After escaping these faceless monsters, Jonathan's mother leaves him at Hobbes End—a village created and protected by his fallen-angel grandfather, Gabriel. Jonathan is a unique child being half demon and half angel, but he is unaware of his supernatural heritage. Having this connection to both Heaven and Hell makes Jonathan very desirable to Belial—an archdemon who rules a section of Hell. Belial wants to use Jonathan's angelic roots to invade Heaven. To complete his plans Belial needs entry into Heaven's "backdoor," but only Gabriel knows its location. Belial's demons capture Gabriel and Jonathan's new friend Cay to force Jonathan into finding Heaven's backdoor. But Belial gets a harsh surprise when the townspeople of Hobbes End rescue the captives and Jonathan stops Belial using his newly found supernatural powers. Sadly, Gabriel is killed during the rescue but his legacy and Heaven's backdoor key are built into a wristwatch now owned by Jonathan.

Gabriel's Clock is Pashley's debut series. Each book corresponds with the four angelic siblings—Gabriel, Sammael, Michael, and Raphael—who helped rebuild Heaven after Lucifer was thrust down to Hell. Though an intriguing plot, Pashley kneads together too many weighty backstories, supporting characters, and diverting details which results in a confusing, fragmented book. For example, Pashley creates the unique setting of Hobbes End. Its background of being a living village due to a fallen angel's power seems glossed over. It feels like a prequel should have been written about how Hobbes End came into being, just so readers would have a better grasp of the world Pashley has created in Gabriel's Clock. The same goes for several of Pashley's supporting characters. Their backstories are too unique to just be casually mentioned and then passed over. Because of these problems, reading the book can be a strain because there are so many heavy-hitting details fighting for the reader's attention.

*Contains several bloody fight scenes that could be too graphic for young readers (ages 10 and under).