



Max Helsing and the Thirteenth Curse

Curtis Jobling

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Now the hunter has become the hunted...bummer.

Max is just your average kid growing up in Gallows Hill, a small town outside of Boston—well, except that he lives in a gothic mansion with an old former prizefighter, and his after-school job is carrying on the monster-hunting tradition of his family, the van Helsing.

Despite the bloody legacy he's inherited, Max always tries to be kind and fair to the ghouls, demons, and other creatures he encounters. So he's confused when monsters start attacking him willy-nilly—even those he thought of as friends. Max discovers he's been cursed by an evil Warlock who intends to reclaim the earth for the monsters. To save his life, Max must rely on his gearhead friend Syd, his boy-genius neighbor Wing, and his brand-new puppy for help. But time is running out, and if they can't figure out how to break the Thirteenth Curse, Max—and the world as we know it—will be in deep, deep trouble...

Max Helsing and the Thirteenth Curse Details

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From Reader Review Max Helsing and the Thirteenth Curse for online ebook

Brenda Ayala says

Max Helsing doesn't really do anything of worth to add to his lineage, particularly in the book that all Helsing's inherit. He doesn't seem to be very skilled, which wasn't all that fun to see. If he's been training for thirteen years I expected a little more skill, not just blind luck, compassion and friends helping.

What I did love: all the different monsters! Monsters are always fun, and Max meets a vampire, a ghoul, a warlock, and a half-goblin (among other things). Each of these encounters were the best parts of the book and those were the ones I got excited about.

Overall it was a decent read, albeit nothing that will stick in my head long. I'll pass it on to people more attuned to that reading level.

Elizabeth says

Name that Book 2017-18/Lonestar 2017-18. A little choppy in the writing. Not really that original in the plot. I didn't find the character original enough to make me want to read any more of the series.

P.M. says

It was all right - nothing breath-taking.

Lee Willie says

A real fun page turner

This reminded me of reading the first Percy Jackson novel for the first time, exciting, great characters and a clever twist on old legends.

Really looking forward to going straight onto the next one

Juan V. says

The book was really good but it had too much action. If you don't like too much action don't read it.

Nina says

I truly loved this book and can not recommend it enough! I was a Percy Jackson kid so reading this now as an adult brought me back to the magical world of action middle grade books! I thought the book was perfectly paced as to always keep the plot interesting and had a good balance of plot twists and shifts in characters POV.

The book is funny, exciting, clever, and a new take on the "boy coming of age" story. I would highly recommend getting this book into the hands of middle school readers. The main character Max is the classic cool hero type but does not promote toxic manhood in any way, his best friend Syd is a girl of STEM and very important to the plot of the whole book, (no damsels in distress here!).

I am sad to see that this book has gotten some less than stellar reviews but I think that is because some readers expected this novel to live up to the classic "Van helsing" storeys that have become before it. Storys that were written a hundred years ago for adults. I am sad that this book has gotten poor reviews because some readers are rating based on what they WANTED to read instead of what they DID read.

If you like fun, action-packed, friendship-driven, middle-grade stories that are similar to Percy Jackson, Troll Hunters, or other graphic novels (there are some pictures in it!) I would highly recommend this to you.

I have loved this book as a young adult I can only imagine the joy it will bring to younger readers.

Ms. Yingling says

Since Max's father died, he has been living with the quiet, older Jed who can only cook eggs and clam chowder. The two are both monster hunters, whose daily life involves multiple encounters with ghouls, vampires, and other assorted paranormal nasties. Fortunately, Max has good friend, Syd, who knows the truth, a younger neighbor boy, Wing, who hangs around, and a "puppy", Eightball, given to him when his 13th birthday is nearing. Unfortunately, Eightball is a drooling, pudgy Hellhound, which is not exactly what Max has in mind. When his birthday comes, he does not have a good day-- Eightball acts strangely, he gets caught in the rain, is attacked by a flame monster at school, suspended, and then attacked by more creatures all day! When Udo Vendemeier kidnaps Wing by mistake, Max has to meet with this evil person who has taken over the body of a security guard, and uncover many family secrets in order to get back his young friend, as well as Jed.

Jobling's Wereworld series is a popular one, but Max's story is more accessible and action-packed. While love-dovey vampire stories are on the wane, anything with blood and gore, zombies, and reanimated warlocks from the time of the Salem Witch Trials who want to overthrow the world are always great for readers who like scary books.

This is the start of a series, and I feel like more secrets about Max will surface, and we will see more character development in future books. Where is Max's unmentioned mother? How can Max use his father's notes about monster hunting to good advantage? And will Jed learn to cook anything more? I really enjoyed the character of Syd, who comes to Max's rescue riding her bicycle, but I also feel that there is room for some romance there as well.

Bonus points for diversity on this one-- Jed is African-American, Wing is Asian, and Syd is Hispanic. This is mentioned briefly in various descriptions of the characters, and while integral to who they are, is not why they are in the story.

Readers who enjoy Joseph Delaney's very popular *The Last Apprentice* series (which was made into the movie *The Seventh Son*), will find this to be a good, modern update on what it's like to be in charge of ridding the world of monsters. Hegarty's *Darkmouth* or Lore's *The Nightmare Academy* would also be read-alikes.

For a good dose of midnight graveyard trysts, threatening gargoyles that come to life, and historically based family curses, it doesn't get any better than *Max Helsing* and *the Thirteenth Curse*!

Angela says

Rating 3.5 This was a great action romp with some creative touches to the monster hunting and a nice cast of characters. One thing that stood out immediately was the nod to diversity in casting the characters. Jed, Max's guardian and monster-hunting mentor, is African-American. Friend Syd is actually a girl, hispanic, and a wiz with mechanical and technical things. Younger tag-along, paranormal fan Wing is Chinese-American. The monsters and creatures were quite interesting, most things that the average kid will have heard of before but many having new, original characteristics. One of the most clever things about the book, something sure to appeal to young readers, are the "journal pages" that are featured. These are supposed to be taken from a family book called the *Monstrosi Bestiarum* that details each kind of monster with its strengths, weaknesses, and a drawing, along with notes from several generations of Van Helsing, including hip-sounding notes from Max himself. The story wraps up nicely but is an obvious series starter with the forces of evil defeated for the moment but still threatening to return. The book ends with a little teaser scene of what will be the beginning of that rise. Lots of fun and a series that I plan to continue.

Katherine Lewis says

Like *Buffy the Vampire slayer*, but with a middle school boy protagonist. Plenty of snark and gore. Surprisingly rich and vibrant vocabulary.

Jeff Raymond says

Honestly closer to a 1.5.

I should have loved this book. It's a nice little concept of a monster hunter who, well, goes around and hunts monsters. It borrows heavily from existing tropes, it's part *Buffy* and part *Dresden*, it's like a good bad monster movie.

And yet.

For a book for kids, okay. I can see where there might be some appeal. What I don't get is why it's so poorly

executed. Plotlines are dropped, language use is inconsistent, it tries to be too many things all at once and yet doesn't seem to succeed at any of them at all. On one hand, this should be a winning hand in any regard - the descendant of a great monster hunter dealing with growing up while still having responsibilities and duties to deal with, as well as the expectations that go along with the name and actions. It almost makes me want to try and write it myself. Instead, this just really doesn't work. With mostly action in a medium that lends itself to at least coherent plotting, this just doesn't work on many levels at all.

Be wary.

Rennai says

After just coming from a book where the monster hunter kills monsters without question and has almost a total lack of empathy, it was refreshing to read Max Helsing. Max (who turns 13 near the start of the story), is from a long line of monster hunters. He has been training all his life. He knows that not all monsters are bad (some live in his apartment building) so he gives all he encounters the chance to "go back home". Make no mistake though, he will dispatch those that don't heed his advice. He does this with part skill, part luck and ultimately, with the help of some endearing side kicks and other sympathetic characters. The prologue is quiet spooky and gets you in from the start but the "horror" element is lightened with Max's sense of humour. I think the book finds the right balance of scary monsters, life threatening situations, action, humour and humanity. Very suitable for upper primary and lower secondary students. I'm trying to get my son, who is a Percy Jackson devotee, to read it to give me his verdict. My four stars is based on the potential engagement and suitability for the target audience.

Jenny says

I seriously could not get used to this guy's writing style. He was trying too hard to make it light-hearted but at the same time impress upon the reader the seriousness of his curse or Mark. The storyline was pretty original and he left it open to the possibility of more books in the series, but I did struggle with actually wanting to read this novel to the end. The audience was middle school boys, but the middle school boys that I teach definitely wouldn't understand some of the intended humor.

Heather says

Largely unremarkable. Recommended for middle grades 4-6, and really too young for the Lonestar List.

Jdtolbert2003yahoo.com says

Max is a monster hunter. He tries to keep balance between the monster world and the human world. On his third birthday a curse made generations ago marks him as a monster hunter and causes even the most un-hostile monsters to attack him.

A trip to the undercity (a civilization for monsters) to discover the truth. Three days of running from every

monster in town, good, bad or indifferent to stop a warlock and save the world. With the help of Wing, Syd and the annoying Archer Max might have enough luck to pull it off.

I enjoyed this story very much. Lots of humor. Fast paced. Likable characters. Definitely a must read. I can't wait to start on the next in the series.

Liz Friend says

The story: Max Helsing is the last in the line of (Van) Helsing, famed monster hunters. He feels like he's got things down pretty well...but what Max doesn't realize is that a long-dormant curse is about to fall on the 13th descendant of Liesbeth Van Helsing on his/her 13th birthday. It's the 13th Curse--and it just so happens that Max is the 13th descendant. Oh well. How bad could it be? Max is about to find out.

June Cleaver's ratings: Language PG-13; Violence PG-13; Sexual content G; Nudity G; Substance abuse G; Magic & the occult PG-13; GLBT content G; adult themes (gory monster battles) PG; overall rating PG-13.

Liz's comments: Max is a funny, snarky character, and there's plenty of action here to lure in anyone who likes monsters with a side of butt-kicking. A sure hit with boys!
