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The Raven King (The Raven Cycle, Book 4)



Synopsis

AUDIO - TRADE EDITIONNARRATOR: Will PattonFORMAT: 11 CDs, UnabridgedAll her life, Blue has been warned that she will cause her true love's death. She doesn't believe in true love and never thought this would be a problem, but as her life becomes caught up in the strange and sinister world of the Raven Boys, she's not so sure anymore.

Book Information

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Audio CD

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-The wait is over. The long-anticipated fourth and final volume in the engrossing Raven cycle is here, and it's a doozy. If anything, it is even more steeped in dreams, magic, and possibility than the previous titles and none of the books' ongoing dramas are simply resolved. The masterful Stiefvater juggles multiple plotlines, adds a few new ones, and keeps the pages turning. Most importantly, readers will continue to be invested in her rich and complex characters. The quest for the Welsh king Glendower is completed, but kings aren't always what they're cracked up to be. Gansey and his friends are now desperate to change what they have come to believe is his fate-to die before the end of the year. They also have to cope with the villainous forces of greed and corruption who descend on their town, RoboBees, and a power-hungry demon. And there's that nagging curse that Blue will kiss her true love and he will die, and she's increasingly certain that Gansey is her heart's desire. Strange revelations about Blue's father and the introduction of a new

student, who proves to be a stalwart and trustworthy ally, all help to build to the breathtaking climax. Beyond the imaginative storytelling, the colorful cast of characters, and the looping subplots, Stiefvater has tackled big questions about life and death, power and personal responsibility, dreams and promises, and fate and destiny. VERDICT This is a series that is destined for greatness and The Raven King is a crowning achievement.-Luann Toth, School Library Journal (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Praise for The Raven King * "Patton's extraordinary, masterly performance is a perfect match for this imaginative and compelling series finale." -- Publishers Weekly, starred review * "Patton navigates the shifting points with a comfortable ease; he captures the dialogue of each character, of course, but subtle tonal shifts allow him to slip seamlessly in and out of the third-person narrations as well . . . It is this same frenetic energy that Patton channels as the story hurtles toward its close." -- Booklist Online Exclusive, starred review Praise for The Raven King * "Patton's extraordinary, masterly performance is a perfect match for this imaginative and compelling series finale." -- Publishers Weekly, starred review * "Patton navigates the shifting points with a comfortable ease; he captures the dialogue of each character, of course, but subtle tonal shifts allow him to slip seamlessly in and out of the third-person narrations as well . . . It is this same frenetic energy that Patton channels as the story hurtles toward its close." -- Booklist Online Exclusive, starred review

I'd been waiting for this book all year, and I wanted to love it. Unfortunately, although the prose was as lovely as usual from Stiefvater, the plot and pacing needed work. The ending felt rushed and depended on hastily introduced, new magic rules that should have been established earlier in the series. The ending also involved a major character who was only introduced in this book and suddenly became best friends with Gansey and super-important out of nowhere. He had a corny sidekick, RoboBee, that took me out of the story with its odd name. The stories of some characters were wrapped up to a satisfactory extent, but others, like Maura and Mr. Gray and Noah, felt forgotten. Some of the magic began to feel silly to me, rather than mysterious and otherworldly. I finished the book because I'd invested so much in the series and because the prose at the page-level was still captivating in places. Overall though, the book made me feel like the author didn't plan out the whole series ahead of time and decided to insert certain magic rules and characters belatedly to make the plot work out.

This review contains no major spoilers. I knew what I wanted from *The Raven King*: more magic, more friendship, more Cakeswater. I was worried over who might die and – more importantly – if my precious babies would have a chance at remaining lifelong friends, considering their socioeconomic differences and the different futures they craved. Would Adam make it to college? Would Ronan? Would Gansey die or – also bad – go on to be a grown-up President Cell Phone? If Blue couldn't make it out of Henrietta, would her friends ever come back to visit, or would shame tear them apart? Et cetera. I didn't care much about Glendower, magic wishes, or the caricature villains that have consistently been the weak point in the series. Having finished the book, I feel like Stiefvater had the same focuses that I had, which has triggered mixed results from readers. *The Raven King* is the creepiest of all four books. It deals with literal and metaphorical darkness throughout, and Stiefvater pulls out her best metaphors and similes to create a spine-chilling atmosphere. She paints settings like theater backdrops. In fact, there's one memorable scene that takes place in a literal theater. Adam enters Aglionby, and – instead of returning to one of the academic buildings, he [slides] down the stairs to the theater's side door. As he walks down the hall (underground, alone, dark, creepy), he passes many-legged animals made of stacked old chairs, strange silhouettes of stage-set trees, and depthless oceans of black curtain [that hang] over everything. Nothing's happened so far, but you know it's going to, and it makes a great punch once it does. Then there's the friendship/romantic bits. In one scene, Mr. Gray says, "I've been thinking a lot about Adam Parrish and his band of merry men." Maura responds, "That's a strange way of putting it. I would have said Richard Gansey and his band of merry men." Depending on how you look at the story, different characters become central – which is indicative of how rich the inner lives of these characters are. They all have full arcs, and Stiefvater for the most part balances them beautifully, never shining one character too far in the spotlight and dimming out the others. Just as in previous books, however, the antagonists are underdeveloped and ineffectual. Too many chapters were devoted to villains I didn't care about, and I could have spent more time with the protagonists I've loved for over 1,000 pages. Nevertheless, the book could have been longer. It seems like the best of all complaints. My second reaction to finishing the book – after the immediate adrenaline rush – was disappointment. Disappointment might be inevitable with so many moving pieces of such a long series – especially when many of those moving pieces are so near and dear to my heart. Now, however, I'm three days into my book hangover and I still can't start another novel. The conclusion offered me the best thing it could: Hope. There's somewhere to go at

the end, more things to imagine. The gangsey's futures mattered to Stiefvater in the same way they mattered to me. Ironically, this is not 'all there is.' The gangsey is going to stay in my head for years, and I know I'll reread the entire series to spot how all the different plots parallel and intersect. I think that's the best thing a concluding book can make you want to do.

4.5 So this is it. All the research, all the dreaming, all the tarot readings, all the cave searches have lead to this point. After uncovering Glendower's daughter in Blue Lily, Lily Blue the Raven Boys plus one Blue Sergeant start The Raven King with the mundane task of attending school. It's quickly apparent, though, that all they've worked towards is going to come to a necessary conclusion as their magical forest of Cageswater appears to be infused with a darkness that's consuming everything in its path. As they struggle to figure out what's causing this unmaking, the friends must also acknowledge the undeniable truth: Gansey is foreseen to die within the year. With everything set to come crashing down, one thing is certain: the time to find Glendower is NOW. While it's natural to form ideas about how a series is going to go, and to see the predictability of the end of a series after all the buildup of the other books, The Raven King really didn't proceed in any way that I expected it to. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, I was pretty happy with the fact that I couldn't predict what would happen next because, boring. But I felt like this also left me with more of a sense of incompleteness upon finishing the book. I felt like we were opened up to a whole new possibility of adventures for our characters none of which we'll see on page unless Maggie Stiefvater decides to write a continuation to the series a few years down the line when everyone has grown up some more (hint hint: I'd love to see this happen). When I step back and think about how this book was ended, the culmination of the journey, I felt like there was a big comment being made about the after. So you reach your dreams, what next? Whether or not they find Glendower, all the characters were kind of on that 'what next' train. In some cases they're re-evaluating the plans they thought they wanted to accomplish after Glendower. Most of them realize that things aren't necessarily over after you've obtained the thing(s) you've wanted for so long. If previous books in the series have dealt with secrets, The Raven King deals with truths. The revealing of truths either verbally or through action and the realization that many of your fears can stem from not knowing how others will take your truths. Gansey, Ronan, Adam, Noah, and Blue all have a truth about themselves that is acknowledged in some way. This series really boils down to these relationships. Glendower is a great adventure, but it's made better by being with those who know the true you. As I said earlier, there are a lot of pieces to The Raven King that are

left open-ended. I would have liked a bit more solid closure on some things, but overall, in regards to our main fivesome, I was happy with the possibilities laid out before them. The Raven King is a worthy send-off. The Raven Cycle is definitely a series that needs to be read again and again. Knowing how everything plays out, I look forward to going back and finding all the little clues I may have missed the first time around. For me, this is my favorite series of Maggie Stiefvater's. I cannot recommend it highly enough if you haven't picked it up, please do. Now.

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