



## Lockwood & Co., Book 2 The Whispering Skull

By Jonathan Stroud

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In the six months since Anthony, Lucy, and George survived a night in the most haunted house in England, Lockwood & Co. hasn't made much progress. Quill Kipps and his team of Fittes agents keep swooping in on Lockwood's investigations. Finally, in a fit of anger, Anthony challenges his rival to a contest: the next time the two agencies compete on a job, the losing side will have to admit defeat in the *Times* newspaper.

Things look up when a new client, Mr. Saunders, hires Lockwood & Co. to be present at the excavation of Edmund Bickerstaff, a Victorian doctor who reportedly tried to communicate with the dead. Saunders needs the coffin sealed with silver to prevent any supernatural trouble. All goes well-until George's curiosity attracts a horrible phantom.

Back home at Portland Row, Lockwood accuses George of making too many careless mistakes. Lucy is distracted by urgent whispers coming from the skull in the ghost jar. Then the team is summoned to DEPRAC headquarters. Kipps is there too, much to Lockwood's annoyance. Bickerstaff's coffin was raided and a strange glass object buried with the corpse has vanished. Inspector Barnes believes the relic to be highly dangerous, and he wants it found.

The author of the blockbuster *Bartimaeus* series delivers another amusing, chilling, and ingeniously plotted entry in the critically acclaimed Lockwood & Co. series.

#### Praise for *The Screaming Staircase*

"This story will keep you reading late into the night, but you'll want to leave the lights on. Stroud is a genius at inventing an utterly believable world which is very much like ours, but so creepily different. Put *The Screaming Staircase* on your 'need to read' list!" -Rick Riordan

"A pleasure from tip to tail, this is the book you hand the advanced readers that claim they'd rather read *Paradise Lost* than *Harry Potter*. Smart as a whip, funny, witty, and honestly frightening at times, Stroud lets loose and gives readers exactly what they want. Ghosts, kids on their own without adult supervision, and

loads of delicious cookies." -Elizabeth Bird, *School Library Journal*

"Stroud shows his customary flair for blending deadpan humor with thrilling action, and the fiery interplay among the three agents of Lockwood & Co. invigorates the story (along with no shortage of creepy moments)." -*Publishers Weekly*

**Praise for *The Whispering Skull***

\*"An occult portal and its spectral guardian nearly cut short the careers of three rising young ghost hunters in this madcap sequel to *The Screaming Staircase* (2013). For all their internecine squabbling, the three protagonists make a redoubtable team-and their supporting cast, led by the sneering titular skull in a jar, adds color and complications aplenty. Rousing adventures for young tomb robbers and delvers into realms better left to the dead."

-*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

\*"Stroud writes with a fine ear for dialog, a wry sense of humor, and a knack for describing haunted places. Creating tension that ebbs and flows, he slowly builds the dramatic narrative to a resounding crescendo, and he makes the quieter scenes that follow just as compelling."

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### **Lockwood & Co., Book 2 The Whispering Skull By Jonathan Stroud Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5–8—In this spine-chilling sequel to *The Screaming Staircase* (Hyperion, 2013), Stroud again demonstrates his ease in the world of the macabre and truly frightening. Lucy works for Lockwood & Co., one of many agencies dealing with The Problem. Fifty years ago, for no apparent reason, the dead rose and began to walk among the living. Agencies employ psychic children to help dispatch the dead permanently. In this second installment, the group (Lucy, leader Anthony Lockwood, and bumbling researcher George) finds themselves drawn deeper into the mystery of The Problem. A supposedly simple job dispatching an unruly cemetery ghost leads to the discovery of black markets, obsessive cults, mysterious collectors, and a bone mirror that drives anyone who looks into it completely mad. As in the first novel, the descriptions of the different types of spirits are nightmarishly frightening (one episode with rat-ghosts is especially gruesome.) Lucy's growing abilities to communicate with the dead, especially the nasty spirit attached to a skull in Lockwood's home, add an additional layer of menace to an already creepy tale; Lockwood's secrets add intrigue and suspicion. The plot gallops along at a breakneck pace, giving little respite from the horrors within. For fans of scary fare, this page-turner is a dream (or nightmare) come true.—Elisabeth Gattullo Marrocolla, Darien Library, CT

Review

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"This story will keep you reading late into the night, but you'll want to leave the lights on. Stroud is a genius at inventing an utterly believable world which is very much like ours, but so creepily different. Put *The Screaming Staircase* on your 'need to read' list!"

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### PRAISE FOR THE WHISPERING SKULL

\*"In this sequel to *The Screaming Staircase* (2013), Stroud delivers another riveting narrative in which the three young psychic investigators deal with malevolent supernatural forces in an alternate London. Stroud writes with a fine ear for dialog, a wry sense of humor, and a knack for describing haunted places. Creating tension that ebbs and flows, he slowly builds the dramatic narrative to a resounding crescendo, and he makes the quieter scenes that follow just as compelling. The second entry in the Lockwood & Company series, this imaginative adventure features one of the most hair-raising chase scenes in children's fiction. At the book's end, when the enigmatic Anthony Lockwood reveals a chilling secret, readers can only hope that more sequels are in the offing."?*Booklist (starred review)*

### PRAISE FOR THE SCREAMING STAIRCASE

"Three young ghost trappers take on deadly wraiths and solve an old murder case in the bargain to kick off Stroud's new post-Bartimaeus series. The work is fraught with peril, not only because a ghost's merest touch is generally fatal, but also, as it turns out, none of the three is particularly good at careful planning and preparation. A heartily satisfying string of entertaining near-catastrophes, replete with narrow squeaks and spectral howls."

?*Kirkus Reviews*

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"Stroud shows his customary flair for blending deadpan humor with thrilling action, and the fiery interplay among the three agents of Lockwood & Co. invigorates the story (along with no shortage of creepy moments)."

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"...Stroud writes for a younger audience in book one of the Lockwood & Co. series and delivers some chilling scenes along the way."

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### **About the Author**

Jonathan Stroud ([www.jonathanstroud.com](http://www.jonathanstroud.com)) is the author of two other books in the Lockwood & Co. series, the *New York Times* best-selling Bartimaeus books, as well as *Heroes of the Valley*, *The Leap*, *The Last Siege*, and *Buried Fire*. He lives in England with his family.

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Beverly McKeever:**

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**Jessie Henricks:**

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