



# The Dragon Lantern

*Alan Gratz*

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## **The Dragon Lantern** Alan Gratz

Archie Dent is convinced that he and his friends Hachi and Fergus are the first three members of a new League of Seven: a group of heroes who come together to fight the Mangleborn whenever the monsters arise to destroy humanity. His belief is put to the test when they are forced to undertake separate missions. Archie and his faithful Tik-Tok servant Mr. Rivets pursue a shapeshifting girl who has stolen the Dragon Lantern, an ancient artifact with mysterious powers. And Hachi and Fergus travel to New Orleans to find Madame Blavatsky, the only person who knows the circumstances surrounding the death of Hachi's father.

In the course of their adventures the three heroes meet potential candidates to join their League. At the same time, they learn deep-rooted secrets that could destroy the League forever...

## **The Dragon Lantern Details**

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Author : Alan Gratz

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# From Reader Review The Dragon Lantern for online ebook

## Steven Jones says

Listen here, Alan Gratz has created one of the best new series in ages. The main characters are done so well and the story moves along and is paced just right. When you think that things can't get any worse or can't change, you're surprised with something new. The surprises aren't just to lengthen the story either as everything that happens is for a logical reason. It's actually really hard for me to say how great this book is without feeling like I'm giving away parts to the story.

I will say some of the things that are described to be parallel to how we know some of the important cities are bit laughable, knowing this is a YA novel makes this alright as it's used to be able to both teach lessons and make sure the reader is familiar with the locales. Archie's flaw can also be a bit annoying but at the same time it is still good reading the whole way through.

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## Sean says

This is such a fun series! The book caught me off guard in so many places. With a book centered around young characters, it is easy to feel that the journey will be a lighthearted romp or low risk. However, this book is packed with emotional depth and unbelievable consequences. The story of Archie is brutal and no one makes it out unscathed. With a wonderful blend of alternate history and steampunk, this will be a series I will cherish for some time to come. It is a must own for any junior high/elementary collection.

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## Bill Tillman says

Book 2 The Dragon Lantern continues the tale of Archie Dent and his friends Fergus and Hachi. Archie is asked to find the Dragon Lantern on a huge Ariel Balloon. Phenomena Moffett had ordered them to get it, 20,000 feet does not stop them! But a crazy Fox girl tricks Archie into giving it to her instead.

This is just as heart stopping as book one, the world of streamline and alternate history will keep you hooked from beginning to end.

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## Tessa says

Some voodoo stuff because New Orleans, and one 'H-of-a', but besides that, it was good

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## Andrea says

I love the steampunk world. I love the politics on display as the various nations try to live together. I love the friendships and the way they are tested. Fabulous. And there are so many references to historical and

mythical people that a kid could use this as a jumping off point for lots of studying.

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## **Vanessa says**

In *THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN*, our young heroes Archie, Hachi, and Fergus (along with Archie's trusty Tik Tok man Mr. Rivets) worked together to stop the Mangleborn monster from the Florida swamps. They discovered that these creatures are buried all over the Earth, waiting for the day when they will be freed from their prisons and can take over humanity. It is only a new League of Seven—a tinker, a law-bringer, a scientist, a trickster, a warrior, a strongman, and a hero—who can stop them.

Now, in *THE DRAGON LANTERN*, with the first three members of new League discovered, they are sent on a quest by the Septemberist Society and Mrs. Moffitt to recover the Dragon Lantern. She believes this was the artifact that transformed Archie and may hold the answers to his past.

But immediately upon recovering the lantern it's stolen. At the same time Hachi receives news about a lead that could uncover the mystery behind her father's death. Despite Archie's doubts about breaking up the newly formed League they part ways: Hachi and Fergus to New Orleans and Archie westward to reclaim the lantern. As a result the novel is pulled in two directions as we follow both storylines, which don't really intersect. While I found it somewhat frustrating to have two completely different storylines, it's essential for our young heroes to learn from hard experience that trying to do everything on your own makes it that much harder to find success.

One complaint I had with *LEAGUE* was that Archie turned whiney at the end. In *DRAGON* while he still suffers from self-doubt and struggles with his shadow self, he becomes (somewhat) less self-pitying and more action-oriented as he works to recover the lantern. He learns that he doesn't have it as bad as other people and that he can use his abilities for good. His travels lead to Clyde, the young man who works on Captain Custer's giant traveling robot used to police the wild west. Despite the difficulties they face, Clyde's upbeat attitude buoys Archie. Archie comes to admire Clyde's natural-born leadership and begins to wonder if perhaps his new friend could be the League's hero. Another fun character added in *DRAGON* is the fox girl, the lantern's thief—she can create mirages to fool her pursuers, an ability that throws off Archie more than once.

Meanwhile, Hachi struggles with her desire for revenge when she discovers the evil Madam Blavatsky's role in her father's death. But Hachi can't kill the woman until she tells about the events surrounding not only his death but the 99 other men of their tribe. But New Orleans is unstable: the queen has been hoodwinked by Blavatsky, zombie police the city, dead spirits can ride living people, and a Mangleborn lies sleeping under Lake Pontchartrain...until Blavatsky wakes it. It's all a big mess. Fortunately, Hachi and Fergus find help from Marie Laveau, a Septemberist. Hachi is pretty single-minded, but Fergus proves himself to be a stabilizing influence over the hot-headed girl. Their blossoming romance is sweet as they navigate the complications of working together in dangerous situations and their growing feelings for each other.

Gratz continues to expand on the world we were introduced to in *LEAGUE*. In *DRAGON* we explore a floating city, a city that moves with the railroad that's under construction, Native Americans traveling in strange conveyances across the plains. In New Orleans they discover voodoo magic, zombies, loa. And of course, there seems to be Mangleborn everywhere they go. Only each Mangleborn has different abilities and is imprisoned in different ways. How can these kids ever hope to conquer such powerful creatures?

Like the first book, DRAGON is strong on plot, but this time around we see more character growth—however slow. So many exciting events happen clear up to the end of the book. Unlike the more fantastical Gideon Smith series (which while not Middle Grade they are steampunk with similar themes/setting), the League’s action sequences feel more like an authentic result of events. Along the way in DRAGON the Leaguers discover new members and learn some answers about Hachi’s father and Archie’s origins. I’m looking forward to book 3.

Recommended Age: 8+ but darker themes may bother more sensitive children

Language: None

Violence: Yes, they must fight monsters who want to kill them

Sex: Some kissing

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### **Kenneth says**

I do not understand the undying praise for Alan Gratz’ book. The prose was fairly decent. Not great, but fairly decent. The steampunk world was interesting, (though I’ve read better in the controversial His Dark Materials.) What really annoyed me was the constant overusage of “alternate history,” leaving me feeling disjointed instead of awed. I would have loved to spend more time enjoying the characters, but instead, I was constantly distracted, numerously suspending my disbelief in hodge-podge things wind-up Jesse James robots, voodoo zombies, or words like “lektricity.” All of these magical insertions reduce the “wow” factor of the mystical League of Seven and the much-talked-about-but-rarely-shown Dragon Lantern in which this book is named.

Kitsun (the fox girl,) with her sassy attitude and tendency to lie and create illusions, was the best-developed character in the novel, but readers never get to truly know her until the second half of the book, and even then she is overshadowed by the stupid dog-robot fluff substory. I was offended by the fact that Sings-In-The-Night was mercilessly killed off (but the stupid dog-robot thing survives till the end.) I was offended even more that Mrs. Moffett, (which I predicted from the first chapter would be a typical villain) was exactly that. She starts fine, but then BOOM! Halfway thorough the book, she becomes yet-another countless “Bad Woman” stereotype I am so sick of reading in childrens books nowadays.

Disappointed. The novel’s cover was much more intriguing than the actual book itself.

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### **Amanda says**

It just gets better and more surprising. I love how Gratz twists famous, real-life historical figures throughout this fictional series so that you end up asking yourself, "what if?" Of course, having New Orleans as one of the settings here is an automatic yes! for me.

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### **Mark Buxton says**

My name is Cody. I'm a soldier inside a ten-story mechanical man that is commanded by Captain George Custer. We've been ordered to help Archie, a boy made of stone, capture a fox girl who stole some kind of

lantern. This lantern is mighty powerful; it changes people into hideous monsters! Archie says I'm supposed to be the leader of this League of Seven, but I not sure what that means. Catching this fox girl has been a pain in the butt, since she's able to make us see things that aren't real. This lantern she had was supposed to have something to do with what happened to Archie, but that ain't true. The real truth is unbelievable, and he's pretty upset about how it will affect his friends. Hachi's down in Louisiana trying to find out the names of the people who murdered 100 members of her tribe, but her quest is tangled up with Archie's past. I told Archie it's going to be okay, but I'm not sure what's going to happen when they get back together.

You should read the first book in the series before reading this one. Archie was the first character in that book, and the plots have been focused on him. However, the author has done a nice job of developing subplots, most notably the story about Hachi's need for revenge. This book offers up some surprises, as an important character is uncovered as a main antagonist. Another character seemed to be joining the League of Seven, but that changed before it really got started. I enjoy the twists to real places and events in history, although young readers may not understand them. The book includes some humor, as the spirit of Buster the dog is transferred to the mechanical man/ten-story tank. Imagine a 100-foot tall robot chasing trains and scratching for fleas! I'm anxious to read the next book in the series, *The Monster War*.

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## **Suzanne says**

In the proud tradition of "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," (although without the racier bits), comes *The League of Seven*. There have been various leagues throughout history, as far back as Atlantis. Archie, Hachi, and Fergus are believed to be the first three members of a new league. With guidance from the Septemberist Society, a group dedicated to remembering the leagues and watching for signs that they are needed again, these young people are attempting to find and bring back an artifact known as the Dragon Lantern. The leader of the society believes that the lantern is extremely powerful and also will provide answers to some of the mysteries puzzling the league and society members. Each of the kids has some sort of incredible power that helps them in their endeavors. Archie is nearly indestructible and very strong (picture the Fantastic Four's Thing, but in human form). Hachi is a Seminole girl with incredible athletic powers. Fergus MacFerguson, complete with kilt, is a brilliant inventor and maker of gadgets - I picture a very young, steampunk version of Star Trek's Scottie.

Their world is an alternative version of the 1870s, with the Transcontinental railroad not yet completed, and many steam-driven machines like robotic butlers and even giant steam men armed with heavy artillery and carrying troops inside. Famous people from our world are present in their alternate personas. George Custer commands one of the steam men. Edison is around. So is Robert E. Lee. You get the idea. In their world, terribly dangerous creatures known as the Mangleborn must be defeated and imprisoned to prevent them from enslaving all of humanity. The league's members come from all over the world with their skills to track down and capture Manglespawn.

For fans of steampunk, ensemble hero stories, and fantasy/action adventures, the *League of Seven* is a wonderful recipe for fun. Recommended for readers of *The Glass Sentence* or *The Rithmatist*.

I read a preview excerpt (8 chapters), provided by the publisher through NetGalley. And now I have to go back and read the first book in the series so that I will be ready when this second installment comes out in June.

UPDATE: The publisher was kind enough to send me an advance copy so I could read it in entirety. I most

definitely need to read the whole series. The characters continue to grow and develop, the plot has more twists and revelations, threads from the past twist through the events tangling things in unexpected ways. And the humorous moments, like discovering that Jesse James is a TikTok (mechanical man) or that Andrew Jackson is now a zombie defending the Queen of Louisiana, balance out the danger and betrayals.

If you haven't read *The League of Seven* yet, pick it up now. You'll want to be ready when *The Dragon Lantern* goes on sale.

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### **Josh says**

Archie is one of the league of seven - heroes who can battle the mangleborn - evil monsters who want to kill and destroy. Join Archie as he begins to bring together the rest of the league.

This is a good book - fast paced, fun reading and quick to turn on a dime. The shocker at the end was good - cant wait for the next!

\*I got this book through GoodRead's Giveaways - an excellent source of interesting books!

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### **Chris Berke says**

Just finished *The Dragon Lantern* (book 2 of the *League of Seven* YA trilogy). I really enjoyed the first one, but the second was quite a slog to get through. There were zillions of undeveloped, hard to pronounce characters, and a different location nearly every chapter. There was some good, however. There's a scene in a canyon where a giant monster turns everyone to dust, and the ending brought it all home by making me want to read the third. Chapter 31 was genuinely touching, but the thirty before it were not. It's a quick enough read and I'd say go ahead if you liked the first one.

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### **Dan Shonka says**

You simply can't go wrong with an Alan Gratz book. This is the second in the trilogy. Much like his book, *Fantasy Baseball*, Mr. Gratz blends real life with his fiction. This entire trilogy is about an alternate history, and it maintains just enough reality to help a reader connect. A prevalent steampunk theme leads to many rich descriptions of this alternate history. Also, I especially found Clyde and his cliches engaging. His phrases are right out of the "Mom Handbook." You know, like "Don't run with scissors; you'll put your eye out." For even more layer, Gratz's main character has ties to Jewish folktales. If you haven't started reading this series, get with it. You'll be glad you did, and will be anxiously be awaiting the final volume of the series. By the way, I was impressed and surprised that one of the main characters was KIA. It's a gritty dose of reality, another aspect found in most if not all of Gratz's books.

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### **Patrick says**

It was good. I love alternate history! And this North American continent largely dominated by relatively high

tech, steampunk Native American tribes is awesome. Many teens will not appreciate some of the clever historical twists to persons like George Custer, Jesse James, and Aaron Burr. But they will enjoy the action anyway, and the Easter eggs are great for alert readers. It's such an interesting, creative, dangerous world.

This second book in the series hit the ground running. The characters were fun and the multiple dangers exciting. It is a tad dark at times with people dying, people being experimented on in various ways, and some sad history being revealed. Archie's character arc is very well done and intriguing with small layers of the onion being revealed over time. I liked the larger societal ideas being explored with the glimpse of Japanese culture and some of the resolution in New Orleans--i.e. knowledge vs. safety/security. The Jesse James character was awesome as well. Fun series.

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## **Chris says**

And I thought the first book was good! Dragon Lantern pulls out all the stops and seriously ups the ante in this League of Seven novel. Great action, super suspense, and characters you really care about. Can't wait for book three!

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