

Castle Hangnail

By Ursula Vernon

Annotation

When Molly shows up on Castle Hangnail's doorstep to fill the vacancy for a wicked witch, the castle's minions are understandably dubious. After all, she is twelve years old, barely five feet tall, and quite polite. (The minions are used to tall, demanding evil sorceresses with razor-sharp cheekbones.) But the castle desperately needs a master or else the Board of Magic will decommission it, leaving all the minions without the home they love. So when Molly assures them she is quite wicked indeed (So wicked! REALLY wicked!) and begins completing the tasks required by the Board of Magic for approval, everyone feels hopeful. Unfortunately, it turns out that Molly has quite a few secrets, including the biggest one of all: that she isn't who she says she is. (from the publisher, Penguin Random House -

<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/316109/castle-hangnail-by-ursula-vernon/9780147512734>)

Book Talk

Castle Hangnail is in need of a master or mistress. It does not matter if it is an Evil Sorceress, or Loathsome Hag, the Board of Magic simply can't let the castle remain unguarded. The castle's Minions have been doing the best they can, but they need a new master, fast. Twelve year-old Molly shows up at the door stating that she is a Wicked Witch, it seems too good to be true. To take ownership, Molly has Tasks to complete, including acts of Smiting and Blighting, and winning the hearts and minds of the townsfolk, "however you like," said Majordomo. "The old Vampire Lord like to keep the hearts in jars in the basement, but he was rather old-fashioned. You could just grind them all underfoot and demand tribute if you like." There is so much in this book for readers of all ages - fun, creepy, dark - but not too creepy and dark!

Book Trailers

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2luXcbnuvaU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbFF-LfdLLI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLHasktYPhI>

Author on the Internet

- Website: *not updated in quite some time - <http://www.ursulavernon.com/>
- 2nd website: <http://www.redwombatstudio.com/>
- Twitter: @ursulav (The Wombat Resists)
- Tumblr: Ursula-Vernon (Hamsters & Dragons)
- Instagram: redwombatstudio
- GoodReads: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/36276.Ursula_Vernon

Items to use in a library display

- A castle display theme
- Gargoyles
- Ravens (stuffed)

- Suit of Armor
- Mushrooms
- A "Spell" book and Black Envelope - with a red wax seal
- A Donkey (stuffed of course!)
- Bees, Hives and Honey (for the Clockword Bees in the Boiler Room)
- A garden/gardening books

Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics

- What is Molly's biggest secret?
- Why does Molly want to stay at Castle Hangnail?
- Discussions on friendship and honesty

First Line of the Book:

- "It was a marvelously dark and dour twilight at the castle."

Non-Fiction Companion Title(s)

- *Castle* by David Macaulay
- *Plants and Flowers* by Sally Hewitt

What to Read Next

- *Nine Goblins* by T. Kingfisher
- *One Witch at a Time* by Stacy DeKeyser and Sonia Chaghatzbanian
- *The Power of Poppy Pendle* by Tasha Lowe
- *The Witches* by Roald Dahl
- *The Enchanted Castle* by E. Nesbit

Other Books by this Author:

- Dragonbreath Series
- Hamster Princess Series
- *Nurk*

Additional Resources

- Music: Monster Mash
- Poetry: <http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/my-next-door-neighbor-is-a-witch>
- Art/craft activity: Gardening - herbs
- Minor home improvements (plumbing, etc); could be done with paper, paste/glue pipe cleaners, lincoln logs, Legos, etc.
- Interview with the author:
<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=ursula+vernon+on+castle+hangnail+trailer&&view=detail&mid=F9FD69B65E208E5175F9FD69B65E208E5175&rvsmid=9412EEC1D04183679FC29412EEC1D04183679FC2&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSRV>
- Interview with the author:
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/67721-q-a-with-ursula-vernon.html>
- Interview with the author:
<http://www.readerkidz.com/2015/10/07/an-interview-with-ursula-vernon/>

