



WARREN THE 13TH AND THE ALL-SEEING EYE

by Tania del Rio, illustrated by Will Staehle

Age Range: 11 - 13

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As sole remaining worker for the once-grand hotel he eventually stands to inherit, 12-year-old orphan Warren toils to keep up with the destruction his (supposed) aunt Annaconda is wreaking in her search for a legendary All-Seeing Eye that might restore her waning witchly powers.

The fortuitous appearance of a trail of cryptic clues, along with a stranger shrouded in bandages and Annaconda's equally malign sisters Scalene and Isosceles, escalate the hunt to a mad scramble. With help from a tentacled but friendly monster lurking in the boiler room and Petula, a beautifully tattooed witch hunter, Warren ultimately discovers that the real prize is the hotel itself, which turns out to have several unusual capabilities. Page design plays a large role in setting the tone. Initial letters and loud exclamations are printed in red and, often, a variety of antique display types; the double columns of narrative switch to white on black for Annaconda's scenes; calligraphic patterns or esoteric geometric figures appear in many of the dark, wood-engraving-style illustrations. Codes, visual puzzles, and mirror writing also figure prominently. As heroic of heart as he is grotesque of features ("toadlike face, gray skin, crooked teeth"), Warren leads the way to a triumphant resolution that presages further adventures.

Just the ticket for fans of Unfortunate Events in dim corridors and murky subterranean chambers. (*Light horror. 11-13*)