

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **PURGING PURGATORY**

*A Ghost Story*

Roger Mendoza

\$25.95 hardcover, \$15.95 paperback, \$0.99 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

Mendoza, Roger

### **PURGING PURGATORY: A GHOST STORY**

In Mendoza's (*The E.B. Roberts Chronicles*, 2016, etc.) thriller, a Texas family capable of interacting with lost souls is tormented by something much darker.

Eight-year-old Tommy Danvers' good friend, Thomas, is a ghost, but the boy's ability to see spirits isn't unique to his lineage. Grandmother Dorothy was once a medium to the rich and famous before giving it up, after the tragedy of losing her husband, who died trying to kill someone else, and her son to suicide. She still helps souls in Purgatory when they ask but doesn't want the family trait for daughter Catherine (Tommy's mom), whom Dorothy had institutionalized and whose ghost-seeing is stifled by anti-hallucinogenic drugs. Dorothy's likewise afraid that Tommy is too young to distinguish a Purgatory soul from a demon. When the boy's estranged and terminal billionaire father, Gregory Prescott, wants to see his son, Catherine and Tommy drive to Austin but find evil awaiting them. The two manage to escape, only to end up in an accident, putting Catherine in a facility for mandatory therapy, on account of the apparently addictive drug she's taking and the drinks she'd had before driving with Tommy. The evil, however, may have followed her home, where the Danverses will have to face a darkness bent on their collective demise. Mendoza's muted ghost story has a few spooky turns but primarily centers on the family's tortured history. Catherine, for starters, has a good reason to despise the priest that Dorothy trusts, and the deaths of the Danvers father and son are an essential element to the plot, especially as details gradually come to light. The supernatural parts are certainly absorbing, like teasing Tommy's power, which becomes abundantly clear during the inevitable and riveting confrontation. An impressive pace keeps the book moving, even during Catherine's therapy sessions, thanks to short paragraphs (a few sentences or less) and brief chapters. Sparse particulars regarding Tommy often work — he recognizes evil simply as shadows or black smoke. But Tommy's suggestion that he knows when most people will die is a rather daunting concept unfortunately left unexplored.

Taut tale of people battling ghosts — those from a haunted past as well as the phantom kind.

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Kirkus Indie, Kirkus Media LLC, 6411 Burleson Rd., Austin, TX 78744

[indie@kirkusreviews.com](mailto:indie@kirkusreviews.com)

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