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Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings

Janetta Rebold Benton

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Multitudes of gargoyles haunt the medieval buildings of western Europe, peering down from churches and cathedrals, houses and town halls. *Holy Terrors* offers a fresh and irresistible history of these wildly varied characters — a society of stone creatures perched high above the workaday world.
The true gargoyle is a waterspout, an architectural necessity that medieval artisans transformed into functional fantasies. The informative introduction to *Holy Terrors* explains everything that is known or conjectured about the history, the construction, the purposes, and the mysterious meanings of these often rude and rowdy characters. The three chapters that follow are devoted to the gargoyles themselves, imaginatively carved of stone in the form of people, real animals, and fantastic beasts. In clear, lively language, Janetta Rebold Benton puts these personality-filled sculptures into the context of medieval life and art and captures their quirky diversity in her engaging color photographs.
Concluding the book is an invaluable guide to gargoyle sites throughout western Europe, as well as suggestions for further reading. This is the first book for adults to provide an intelligent and entertaining overview of medieval gargoyles, and it is bound to increase the already abundant legions of gargoyle admirers.

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