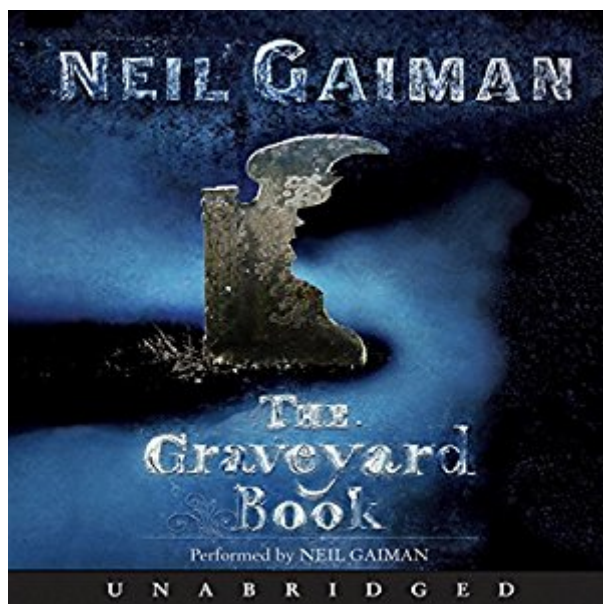


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The Graveyard Book



Synopsis

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Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 47 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperChildren's

Audible.com Release Date: September 30, 2008

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B001H44FP4

Best Sellers Rank: #83 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy #111 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Fiction #196 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy

Customer Reviews

What a fun read. It kept me up 'til 7 in the morning yesterday, and I do not regret it a bit. The story of Nobody Owens--his adopted name, as this is a wee human child spared the murderous spree of a dreadful assassin, then taken in by a cemetery full of ghosts from assorted centuries, and guarded by them because the assassin has not given up the quest to kill him--is unputdownable. Every adventure as he grows from toddler to teenager mixes wonders and frights and humor. It's just such fun to see him learn ghostly ways and interact with humans and nonhumans. There's so much to recommend in the story (and my fellow reviewers cover plenty, so I need not repeat it), but I agree that the trip into the world of the ghouls was a wild ride. I have to give props to Gaiman for the total magic that he infused into the chapter on the Danse Macabre. It would have been a terrific short story--that strange, strange day--but it worked wonderfully in the tale, showing us clearly a thing or two about Nobody and his mysterious, powerful Guardian, Silas. (His particular fantasy niche, while never said specifically in so many words is, nevertheless, no great riddle.) The near-end brings Nobody into confrontation with the horrible killer, and Nobody comes into his own, but it costs him. It's a well-crafted ending that is inevitable given all Nobody's learned as the story progressed. If you

don't figure it out pretty well in advance, you weren't paying attention. The bittersweet--but natural and fitting--ending made me sad as I closed the book. It feels complete, yes, but I so want to see more written on Nobody Owens. I have no idea if Mr.

I've noticed that there's been an increased interest in the macabre in children's literature lately. Sometimes when I've had a glass or two of wine and I'm in a contemplative mood I try weaving together a postulation that ties the current love of violent movies into this rise in children's literary darkness. Is the violence of the world today trickling down into our entertainment? Hogwash and poppycock and other words of scoff and denial, says sober I. But I've certainly seen a distinct rise in the Gothic and otherworldly over the last few years, and one wonders if it's because kids want more of that kind of stuff or publishers are merely getting less squeamish. All that aside, generally I'll read a May Bird book or an Everlost title and they'll be fun examinations of the hereafter, but not the kind of things that touch my heart. Great writing doesn't have to transcend its genre. It just has to be emotionally honest with the reader. And *The Graveyard Book* is one of the most emotionally honest books I've yet to have read this year. Smart and focused, touching and wry, it takes the story of a boy raised by ghosts and extends it beyond the restrictive borders of the setting. Great stuff. It starts with three murders. There were supposed to be four. The man Jack was one of the best, maybe THE best, and how hard is it to kill a toddler anyway? But on that particular night the little boy went for a midnight toddle out the front door while the murderer was busy and straight into the nearby graveyard.

Gaiman's latest finds the popular author channeling Rudyard Kipling's 1894 story collection *The Jungle Book*, particularly the story of the boy, Mowgli, who was raised in the jungle by animals, specifically by his mentors, Baloo the bear, Kaa the snake, and Bagheera, the panther. As indicated by its title, Gaiman's take on the story involves a boy who is raised by the denizens of a graveyard. Like many ideas he's developed, it is one that occurred to Gaiman a long way back, and stayed with him over the years. In the author's own words: "Around 1985 or 1986, we lived in a house with no garden, but we had a graveyard just over the run, so that was where my son Michael (three or four at the time) rode his little tricycle. And I remember watching him, and thinking it would be fun to do *The Jungle Book*, only set in a graveyard instead of a jungle, and that was the start of it. Because I tend to be fairly slow about these things, it's taken me...twenty-two years to get to it." The first half of Chapter One (which I was fortunate enough to hear Gaiman read aloud at a November, 2007 gathering at the University of Minnesota) describes how a man named Jack enters

a house and kills its occupants, except for an infant, a boy, who manages to escape the killing zone and ends up in a nearby graveyard. There, the denizens of the graveyard reach a momentous decision, deciding to raise the toddler as a member of their extended family. After much humorous and heated debate, they name him Nobody, because he's like nobody else in the cemetery. Bod, as he comes to be known, is still in danger, however, as Jack (like the lethal and murderous tiger Shere Khan in The Jungle Book) is still looking for him, hoping to finish his task of eliminating the members of Bod's family.

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