*The Graveyard Book*

By Neil Gaiman

Genres: Fiction, Paranormal, Fantasy

Published: 2008

Rating: 4 out of 5 stars

I’ve never much liked horror/paranormal stories, so I sort of judged *The Graveyard Book* by its cover and title at first. However, I’m glad that I looked at the summary and then read the whole book because it’s actually a really fun story.

The main character is a living boy orphaned at infancy when a man named Jack kills his parents and sister. Jack also intends to kill the baby boy, but the boy has already gotten out of his crib and crawled to a nearby cemetery in curiosity. Mr. and Mrs. Owens, a married ghost couple, find the baby and decide to adopt him. As Jack comes into the cemetery looking for the baby, another mysterious man shows up and gets Jack to leave. The ghosts of the cemetery decide to name the baby Nobody Owens, or Bod for short. Bod happily grows up in the graveyard with his ghost parents and his guardian Silas, the mysterious man who made Jack leave the cemetery.

Even though the book’s premise may seem strange at first, the whole story is entertaining and inventive. I loved the wordplay inserted throughout the book—I mean, how Bod gets his name is a prime example:

“…it seemed then as if the whole graveyard was about to join in, each inhabitant offering his or her own comparisons between the infant and someone long forgotten, when Mrs. Owens broke in.

‘He looks like nobody but himself,’ said Mrs. Owens, firmly. “He looks like nobody.’

‘Then Nobody it is,’ said Silas. ‘Nobody Owens.’”

In his adventures in and around the graveyard, Bod meets different characters, both living and dead, not all of them human. The ghosts of the graveyard all have backstories to what they did back when they were alive, possibly making them more interesting than the living people Bod meets. The author also develops Bod’s personality through the lessons he learns in each of his adventures, from going through a ghoul-gate to braving the Sleer in an ancient tomb of the graveyard.

Besides Bod himself, one of the characters that stood out the most to me was Silas, who isn’t quite alive but not dead either. Although Silas is solitary and cold by nature, as Bod’s guardian and mentor, he builds up a close relationship with Bod. I was really curious about Silas’s past and liked being able to discover bits and pieces about him through his interactions with Bod, but in the end I still felt as if the author could have added more to Silas’s backstory. Similarly, I wish that there were a more elaborate relationship between Bod and his ghost parents, Mr. and Mrs. Owens. After all, parents, whether ghosts or not, are usually major figures in a character’s life.

All in all, though, *The Graveyard Book* is a great read that serves to show I should spend more time reading books instead of judging them by their covers/titles. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone, even those scared of ghosts.