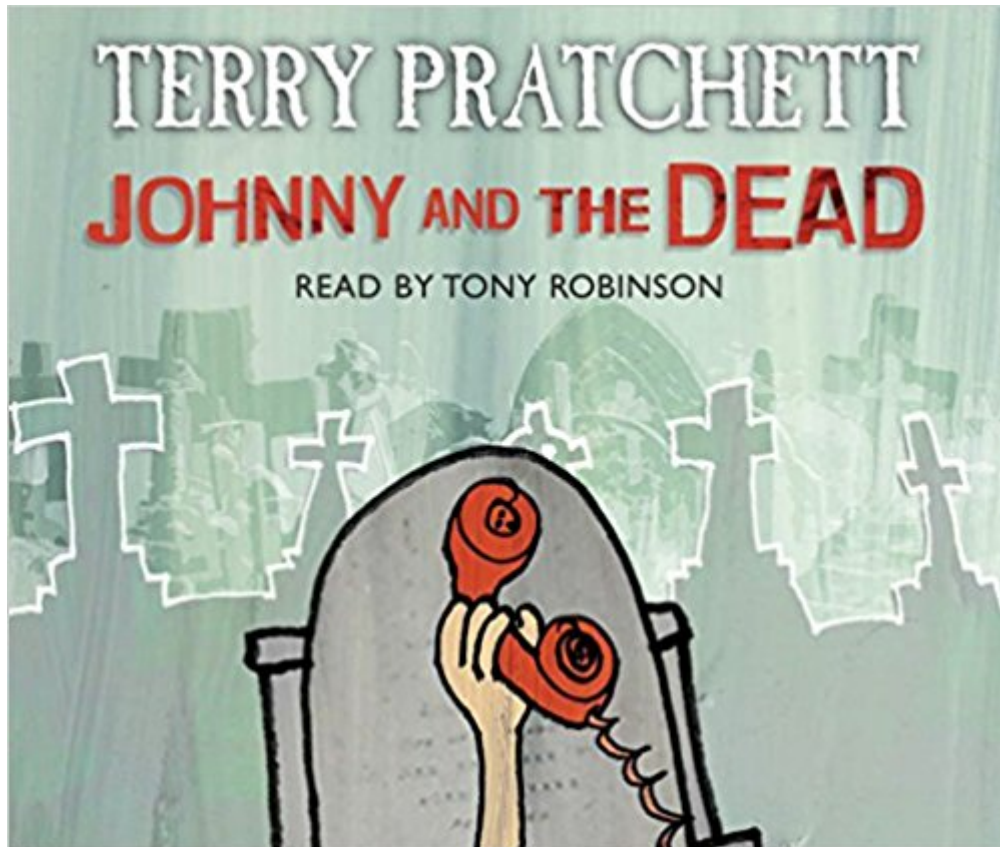




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Johnny And The Dead



Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Johnny Maxwell can see the dead. And he's got bad news for them: the council wants to sell their cemetery as a building site. But the dead won't take it lying down.

Book Information

Audio CD

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

In this sequel to *Only You Can Save Mankind* (HarperCollins, 2005), 12-year-old Johnny discovers that he can see, hear, and communicate with spirits in the town cemetery. The cemetery, the only spot of unblighted land in the town, is about to be bulldozed and developed by a large corporation, so Johnny and his friends set about trying to save it (and its denizens) from destruction. Unfortunately, no one particularly famous was ever buried there, so the boys' publicity plan seems doomed until the dead take things into their own innovative and rebellious hands, and Johnny finds the courage to take a stand against all odds. Fans of Gregory Maguire's books will appreciate the tongue-in-cheek tone and wry humor, and the quarrelsome yet friendly chatter among the dead spirits is reminiscent of Eva Ibbotson's titles. The plot (kids versus big corporation, à la Carl Hiaassen) is tied up rather too neatly, but that's beside the point. Readers will take immense pleasure in the jokes, some broad and some subtle and dry, that come sailing at them from all sides. This book stands alone easily, but after reading it, kids will want the first one. Eva Mitnick, Los Angeles Public Library Copyright © Reed Business

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Gr. 5-8. In the previous volume of the Johnny Maxwell trilogy, *Only You Can Save Mankind* (2005), aliens solicited Johnny's help. Here Johnny is buttonholed by dead people worried about a developer's plans to bulldoze their cemetery. Assisted by three skeptical but loyal sidekicks, Johnny delves into city history and mounts an eloquent plea for preservation, while the ghosts revel in modern technology and pop culture. Aspects of the telling are imperfectly blended, especially the thread involving Johnny's ineffable sense of connection to a local battalion decimated in World War I. Nonetheless, Pratchett's fans will revel in the idiosyncratic touches, such as the quirky euphemisms for dead ("breathily challenged," "post-senior citizens"), and his thematic juggling act, which incorporates wit and slapstick, philosophies of the afterlife, and a gritty view of a struggling, working-class community ("The point about being dead in this town is that it's probably hard to tell the difference"). First published in England in the early 1990s, which accounts for some dated references, the trilogy was previously available to U.S. readers only in a book-club edition. Jennifer MattsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a die hard fan of Pratchett I was not in the least deterred by the fact that this was marked as a Juvenile/Young Adult book. I know from experience that there are nuances to Pratchett's writing that would appeal to people of all ages. Johnny has discovered a new and largely unwanted talent - he can talk to the dead who are not best pleased that the council want to bulldoze down their cemetery to create more housing for the living. They have paid their dues, they say, go and bug someone else. Johnny doesn't know whether to be pleased or dismayed that he can talk to the dead and that they expect him to represent him. Why couldn't he have talents like his friend Wobbler, Bigmac or Yo0less (because he never says 'yo'). This is part of a trilogy so parts of this will continue into the next book, but each one is a stand alone book. My one daughter has read this book and is now hooked on Pratchett. I have created another fan, and I am thrilled.

Johnny sees dead people, who turn out to be the livelier characters in the story. Johnny and his friends (living) help the town make a stand against a big corporation. A pretty mundane plot around which the real story revolves. There's a few of Pratchetts more profound passages towards the end. Life is like a pinball machine is worth looking at. You also get a glimpse of a character that may be

the beginnings of Nanny Ogg. And I think this is the earliest work with a brief cameo of a character who SPEAKS ENTIRELY IN CAPS. The humor that characterizes his mature work, though, is just developing.

Terry Pratchett's "Johnny and the Dead" is the 2nd in his Johnny Maxwell series (Only You Can Save Mankind (Johnny Maxwell Trilogy), Johnny and the Dead (Johnny Maxwell Trilogy), Johnny and the Bomb (The Johnny Maxwell Trilogy)). The anti-war and social-injustice preachiness that marred "Only You Can Save Mankind" is gone, but the story is not as good. I'm nowhere near the target audience for this book, so I wasn't very happy with it. But, I'll guess that for the Pre-Teen or Young Adult crowd, it might be OK. So, that's what I'm rating it at: an OK 3 stars out of 5.

As an adult reader with grandkids, I read the books I recommend before I pass them on. Johnny Maxwell exceeds my expectations. These young men are strong, caring, kind and willing to help each other to solve problems and try to make their environment a better place to be for everyone. Fearlessly (well, not exactly) however, they do what's right! They show all of us how important taking part in the world around them for the good of all can be. Johnny shows us that you don't need to be "cool" or "popular" to help make the world a better place.

Early Pratchett shows his wit and wisdom. Enjoyable for adults who are just tired of all the mayhem, and want to settle back with some sensible folk, even if they are 'vertically challenged'.

Another great Johnny Maxwell story. Johnny has some gifts for communication--with aliens in an earlier story and with the dead in this one. The story is very interesting and Johnny grows a lot throughout the story. As usual, Terry, another great read! :-)

Just when I thought I knew where this story was going, I was happily surprised by the direction it took. Terry Pratchett explores what might happen after we die in the most warm and amusing way. For his sake I hope it's true!

Before I go into my review, I will say I am a 23 year-old kid in an "adult suit". I grew up playing in the graveyard across from my grandmother's house, and always felt like the residents there were not quite gone. So, this book was right up my ally. I enjoyed it, though it's not my favorite Pratchett book--but if you need some distracting summer reading for your kid-self or your 10 year and up kid, I

think this is good.

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