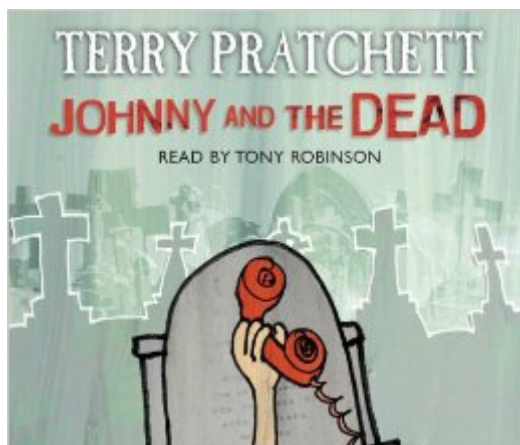


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Johnny And The Dead (Johnny Maxwell)



Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Johnny Maxwell can see the dead. And heâ™s got bad news for them: the council wants to sell their cemetery as a building site. But the dead wonâ™t take it lying downâ |

Book Information

Series: Johnny Maxwell (Book 2)

Audio CD: 3 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (44 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #6,768,170 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 inÂ Books > Books on CD >

Authors, A-Z > (P) > Pratchett, Terry #2212 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction >

Fantasy #2956 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > General

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

For the Terry Pratchett fans out there, nothing more need be said. It's Pratchett, you want to read it, the only reason you've been hesitating is because it's marked as a kids book (juvenile, young adult...) But this one isn't just for kids. As with any Pratchett book, there are layers and layers, and some of them wouldn't be obvious to kids at all. In fact, some of them wouldn't be obvious to adults who haven't taken a college physics course or two, and/or kept up by reading all the science magazines. I'll bet I missed a couple of jokes or two, maybe a pun here and there, because my college physics courses were too long ago. But that's OK, the book's enjoyable even without those - there are enough layers that there is something for everyone. The humor flows from the characters, the story, and the writing style. As with any Pratchett book, the humor also contains some serious ideas, hidden until you suddenly realize you need to pay attention to them. The protagonists are Johnny, and his friends Wobbler (who wobbles), Bigmac (who is large), and Yo-less, who is apparently the only black in Blackbury who doesn't say yo. Each of this team has his own strange store of skills or knowledge, and Johnny's erratic talents turn out to include being able to talk to the

dead, who definitely don't like being referred to as ghosts. The dead are characters too, especially Mr. Einstein - not the famous one, but his distant cousin, who should have been famous too, but was too busy being a butcher. As you're reading, take note of the project on World War II that Johnny is doing for school; it also features in the next book in the series, "Johnny and the Bomb."

Johnny Maxwell is just a normal twelve-year old kid, or at least he tries to be. Things just seem to happen to him that don't happen to anyone else - aliens inside a computer game surrender to him and name him their Chosen One, for example (as told in the first book of this series). Compared to that adventure, seeing dead people almost seems rather prosaic. The Trying Times Johnny has been living in have advanced past his parents' shouting and Being Sensible About Things to Phase 3, which sees him now living with his grandfather. He often takes a short cut to school through a local cemetery, and it is there that he meets the Alderman, the long dead and buried Alderman. His friends Yo-less, Bigmac, and Wobbler can't see dead people the way Johnny suddenly can, but events soon convince them that Johnny isn't just fooling around with them. Johnny meets all of the dead people in the cemetery, all of whom are quite put out when they learn that their cemetery, a place which the rules of being dead say they cannot leave, has been sold by the city (for only five pence) to a corporation planning on building office buildings there. Since Johnny is the only human who can see them (and why Johnny can see them is rather a mystery, although the Alderman thinks it is because he is too lazy not to see them), the dead look to him to save their eternal resting place. Stopping a big corporation from doing something the city has granted them the legal right to do is no easy task, especially for a twelve-year-old boy and his friends, but Johnny is wonderfully resourceful. The ending of this book didn't have much spark to it, but overall Johnny and the Dead is an even better read than the first Johnny Maxwell novel Only You Can Save Mankind.

Johnny and his band of quirky pals are back in "Johnny and the Dead," the second book of Terry Pratchett's "Johnny Maxwell" trilogy. Pratchett was surer this time around, endowing this hilarious sequel with quirkier dialogue and stories, and snappier writing. Johnny Maxwell sees dead people. (Yes, like the little boy in "Sixth Sense.") For whatever reason, he sees the dead in their graveyard -- not really ghosts, but not alive either: a crabby former soldier, a distant relative of Einstein, a sprightly suffragette who died in a freak mishap, and a staunch Communist who STILL doesn't believe in life after death. All in all, they are a fairly harmless bunch. But a massive, mercenary, progress-obsessed corporation has just bought the graveyard for five pence, and it will soon be razed for new construction. The only people more dismayed than the living inhabitants of Blackbury

are the dead ones. So as the dead break their bonds to "unlive," Johnny and his friends will try to save the graveyard from... a fate worse than death? Yes, it's the sort of bizarre, slightly twisted plot that only Terry Pratchett could cook up, and then pull off. And yes, the same could be said of "Only You Can Save Mankind." But by the time he wrote this -- pre-Discworld -- Pratchett had obviously grown into his skills. In particular, the Big Message in this book is more subtle -- that money and progress aren't worth anything if they destroy the past. Despite that heavy moral, the handling of it is light and entertaining, such as when the dead Communist calls up a radio talk show host and speaks frankly about being "vertically challenged."

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