

DASHIELL

GHOST BOYS: A BOOK REVIEW

**A CHARACTER WHO, EVEN AS A GHOST, CHANGED
THE WAY I SEE THE WORLD**

In this short read, Jewell Parker Rhodes looks at racism and, more specifically, the killing of black children. This book uses dual perspectives (both alive and dead) to tell the story of Jerome, a black boy killed by a police officer with no warning, just because he was holding a toy gun. Jerome then goes on to meet Sarah, the daughter of the policeman who killed him, where he realises that only she can see him. Sarah thinks this has something to do with their fate, but Jerome isn't so sure and is unwilling to forgive her for her father's misdeeds.

The book is filled with symbolism, such as the fact that all these dead boys go unseen, both literally and metaphorically, and that only someone with a diverse perspective (Sarah) can see them and truly understand their struggle and story. This indirectly tells the reader that Sarah has the potential to be pivotal but also that she has a very open mind regarding racism and skin colour. This is later shown to be true repeatedly, when she weeps at the sight of Emmett Till's open casket and when she is horrified at how her father killed Jerome without warning.

The characters are all well developed (as shown in the previous paragraph) and the plot is just as well thought out, with a clear progression of the characters from the "dead" perspective and Jerome's slowly revealed backstory in the "alive" sections.

This book also educates the reader about the continued problem of racism and racism in the police force, a very current issue and one about which we should all be more informed.

The only downside of this book for me is its length. It was just too short for me, even though I admit that its length makes it more accessible for those who aren't as invested in reading as I am. To make up for its short length I read it twice, trying to find figurative language and symbolism. Needless to say, I was surprised when I realised just how much of it there was. Other than that, I found this book to be educational, fantastic and gripping.

In conclusion, this is an amazing short story which I highly recommend, though if you are an avid reader, I would certainly take the time to read it again. I'm giving this book (ghost boys) a solid 9 ghosts out of 10.