



The Ocean at the End of the Lane

Neil Gaiman

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The Ocean at the End of the Lane Neil Gaiman
UK National Book Awards 2013 "Book of the Year"

“Fantasy of the very best.” *Wall Street Journal*

A middle-aged man returns to his childhood home to attend a funeral. Although the house he lived in is long gone, he is drawn to the farm at the end of the road, where, when he was seven, he encountered a most remarkable girl, Lettie Hempstock, and her mother and grandmother. He hasn't thought of Lettie in decades, and yet as he sits by the pond (a pond that she'd claimed was an ocean) behind the ramshackle old farmhouse where she once lived, the unremembered past comes flooding back. And it is a past too strange, too frightening, too dangerous to have happened to anyone, let alone a small boy.

A groundbreaking work as delicate as a butterfly's wing and as menacing as a knife in the dark, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is told with a rare understanding of all that makes us human, and shows the power of stories to reveal and shelter us from the darkness inside and out.

“[Gaiman's] mind is a dark fathomless ocean, and every time I sink into it, this world fades, replaced by one far more terrible and beautiful in which I will happily drown.” *New York Times* Book Review

The Ocean at the End of the Lane Details

Date : Published June 28th 2016 by William Morrow (first published June 18th 2013)

ISBN : 9780062459367

Author : Neil Gaiman

Format : Paperback 241 pages

Genre : Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, Magical Realism, Adult

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From Reader Review The Ocean at the End of the Lane for online ebook

Patrick says

Sitting down to write a review of this book, I don't quite know where to start.

I was going to quote a passage that I particularly loved. But no good can come of that. Once I opened that door, where would I stop quoting?

So let me say this. I genuinely loved this book. I look forward to reading it again. I will buy copies for my family as gifts. I will listen to the audio and lament my own lack of narrative skill. I will gush about it to strangers.

In short, it is a Neil Gaiman novel.

There is truth here, and beauty, and joy, and a sad, sweet melancholy that moves through my chest like distant thunder.

I realize that what I am writing here is not really a review in any conventional sense. It is a paen. A panegyric. It is the textual equivalent of a huge, happy, gormless grin.

And you know what? I'm fine with that. Let the professionals write their reviews. Let them get all jargony about it. Let them try to pin this book to the page, not realizing that a pinned butterfly holds no delight. A pinned butterfly is nothing like a butterfly at all.

I make no claims to impartiality in regard to Gaiman's work. Sandman changed how I thought about stories. Neverwhere was a talisman for me. Stardust is a golden bell hung in my heart. And American Gods taught me that there was a *name* for the sort of book I was struggling to write. It was a picaresque.

So if you're looking for impartiality, this is not the review for you. Look elsewhere.

Me? I will enjoy The Ocean at the End of the Lane without dissection. It made me happy. It made me feel less alone. It made me love Neil Gaiman a little more than I already did, and that's something I didn't think was possible.

Do I hope to someday write a book like this? No. I never could. He's done something odd and strange and lovely here. I couldn't hope to replicate it.

Instead, this is what I hope.

In the future, when Joss Whedon and I are best friends and hanging out together in my tree fort, I hope Neil Gaiman comes over too. Because then the three of us will all play Settlers of Catan together. And I will win, because I'm really great at Settlers of Catan. But I will also be very gracious about it, and apologize for putting the bandit on Gaiman's wheat twice in a row.

Then we will make smores, and I will toast a marshmallow with such deftness and perfection that they will be amazed and realize I am kinda cool. Then we will talk about Battlestar Galactica, and which Doctor is our favorite, and we will tell ghost stories late into the night.

God I'm tired. I should really go to sleep. I have no idea what I'm saying anymore.

I hope I don't regret this in the morning.

Maciek says

In the acknowledgments section of his latest novel, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, Neil Gaiman admits that the project was initially meant to be a short story, which grew to be a novel - not a very long novel, but a novel nonetheless. For fans it was big news, as it would be his first novel for adults since 2005's *Anansi Boys*.

I was never really into Gaiman's work - I wasn't crazy about *American Gods* or *Neverwhere* and *Coraline*, all of which are routinely mentioned as fan favorites. I loved *Stardust*, though - his short fantasy which I thought was beautiful and had to read in one sitting. *The Ocean* sounded like a a welcome return to the familiar field, and I was compelled to give it a try.

Gaiman's narrator is an unnamed English man in his forties, who returns to his childhood home located in the English countryside of Sussex. There he is drawn to familiar places which he has not seen for ages, and which evoke memories long buried. He ends up by the house of his childhood friend, Lettie Hempstock, and remembers when he was seven years old and how Lettie used to call the pond beside her house an ocean.

Ultimately, this is a lazy book - for several reasons. The first one is an enormously flat and dull narrative voice. The narrator is obviously remembering his youth from an adult perspective, but the end effect is reduced to sentences in vein of "I did this and that" "And then this happened". There's absolutely no childish joy or fear, or even the adult's surprise at a sudden recollection of a forgotten memory of youth. The language is lackluster, flavorless and as flat as the steppes of Kazakhstan, to the point of becoming downright dull and distracting because of its dullness. How are the readers supposed to give a damn if we can barely muster the strength to turn the page?

Perhaps it's my own recent personal experience of spending a week in an English village while visiting my friends, but I thought that the setting of this book was another lost opportunity. The countryside is beautiful, but all the the reader will get from it in this book is the fact that people live on farms and sometimes have small ponds near their houses. There's no sense of place specific to Sussex or England in this book at all; it could as well have taken place in the suburbs of Chicago.

Not that long ago I read and reviewed *The Land of Laughs*, the debut novel of Jonathan Carroll, a fan favorite considered to be classic of fantasy - which I found to be a bland play on fantasy tropes without much originality, I have the same complaints about *The Ocean* - which really is nothing more than an overly stretched short story, employing all the well known staples of the genre and made up to resemble a short novel. The protagonist is an obvious stand-in for the author, but besides waxing nostalgia and melancholy the novel doesn't seem to have any real goal or accomplish anything in particular. It reads almost like Neil Gaiman's rushed assignment for a creative writing class he took ages ago - full of pretension of powerful statements about human beings, deep as the ocean, but in reality being little else than the well-known drizzle deep no more than an ordinary puddle, which evaporates after a few days and leaves absolutely no mark.

Patrick says

It's kinda ridiculous how much I want to read this book.

I'm seriously considering abusing my small amount of power to see if I can wangle an ARC out of somebody....

Scarlet says

*"All monsters are scared.
That's why they're monsters."*

48 hours ago, when I read the last page for the first time, I had this strange, sad feeling. Like I had come to the end of something beautiful without really comprehending the beauty of it until the last minute.

Which is why it took me a re-read to realize how brilliant this book is.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane is childhood in 181 pages.

Short. Sweet. Magical. Scary. Real.

There is a reason this book is labelled as "adult" and it has nothing to do with sexual content or violence or gore. To be an adult by age is meaningless because, to truly appreciate this book, you must be an adult by experience. **You must be adult enough to miss childhood.**

Me, I'm not there yet. I don't miss being a child because I remember being a child. I can still see it when I turn back.

So right now, no. This is not my favorite Gaiman book.

But in 20-odd years, it probably will be.

Because *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is one of those books.

It can only grow in appeal the older you get.

*"And did I pass?"
The face of the old woman on my right was unreadable in the gathering dusk.
On my left the younger woman said,
"You don't pass or fail at being a person, dear."*

Nataliya says

Lettie shrugged. "Nobody actually looks like what they really are on the inside. You don't. I

don't. People are much more complicated than that. It's true of everybody."

This story is an amalgam of helplessness and innocent ignorance of childhood with universe-old wisdom, **with mystery and wonder and unexplainable and unfathomable and things that lurk around the corners of reality and seep through the cracks in the world.** There's friendship and love, and cruelty and resentment. And there are monsters - and, in the true fashion of the tradition I love, the real monsters come from the people's wishes, the people's own selves, the deep down dark that lives inside us.

"Monsters come in all shapes and sizes, Some of them are things people are scared of. Some of them are things that look like things people used to be scared of a long time ago. Sometimes monsters are things people should be scared of, but they aren't."

Maybe once upon a time you were seven, and bookish, and lonely, and sometimes a stranger to your own parents. Maybe your first experience with deaths brought into your world a strange family of three living just down the lane in a little farmhouse - the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone of the fairytales.

Maybe your first ever friend, eleven-year-old (*or maybe infinities-old, who knows?*) **Lettie Hempstock, the girl for whom in your seven-year-old's sense of own immortality you nevertheless are 'perfectly willing to die' because - of course! - she is your friend,** will take you on an unexpectedly sinister journey culminating somewhere and somewhen under the haunting orange sky.

And maybe after that nothing will ever be the same.

"I'm going to tell you something important. Grown-ups don't look like grown-ups on the inside either. Outside, they're big and thoughtless and they always know what they're doing. Inside, they look just like they always have. Like they did when they were your age. The truth is, there aren't any grown-ups. Not one, in the whole wide world."

And maybe something from underneath that sinister sky will choose you as a way to break through reality into your little secure world of a child. And maybe because of that you will come to a terrifying realization that the world is not safe, that adults may not be there to protect you, that world has teeth and is ready to bite you with them any time it wants to. **And you realize that nothing is as it seems - and that there's no reason why the pond cannot be Lettie Hempstock's ocean, after all.**

"I saw the world I had walked since my birth and I understood how fragile it was, that the reality I knew was a thin layer of icing on a great dark birthday cake writhing with grubs and nightmares and hunger. I saw the world from above and below. I saw that there were patterns and gates and paths beyond the real. I saw all these things and understood them and they filled me, just as the waters of the ocean filled me. Everything whispered inside me. Everything spoke to everything, and I knew it all."

There are certain authors that in my mind have become a genre of their own. Neil Gaiman is one of them. When I read his books, I don't read fantasy, or urban fantasy, or any other such label. What I read is **"a Gaiman"**, a unique blend of humor and dry wit and a strong narrative voice making the strangest leaps of imagination seem like nothing out of ordinary.

And every time when I put down the book of his I've been reading into the wee hours of the night, unable to stop, I find myself with a haunting sense of longing and missing the world he created, the world into which

he so effortlessly immerses his readers, the world of his storytelling that you never want to leave.

It's like Lettie Hempstock's ocean, the waters of which you wish you never had to leave, but where you cannot stay forever, no matter how badly you would want to.

"I found myself thinking of an ocean running beneath the whole universe, like the dark seawater that laps beneath the wooden boards of an old pier: an ocean that stretches from forever to forever and is still small enough to fit inside a bucket, if you have Old Mrs. Hempstock to help you get it in there, and you ask nicely."

Neil Gaiman again is at his best, which for him is, I guess, just ordinary. This book will join my personal favorites by him - especially 'The Graveyard Book' to which it's a soul cousin.

And I will revisit it in the future, probably more than once, just to hang out with Lettie and Old Mrs. Hempstock, and maybe to catch the hint of a wave on an ancient world-ocean in the back yard.

4.5 stars.

*"And did I pass?"
The face of the old woman on my right was unreadable in the gathering dusk. On my left the younger woman said, "You don't pass or fail at a being a person, dear."*

Mohammed Arabey says

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parents and sister when he was a young boy of seven. He visits his old house before wandering down to the farm at the end of the lane, a place that starts to bring back a strange sequence of memories as seen through the eyes of a young boy. How real are the magic and monsters of our childhood? When we look back and see ignorant youths believing in the impossible, are we enlightened adults? Or are we the ignorant ones, blinded by years dedicated to being sensible and not believing? Are the villains we remember monsters from another world? Or is that just how children make sense of the people who brought upheaval into their lives?

I found it truly fascinating.

The creepy yet beautiful setting in the English countryside was fantastic. A little lonely, somewhat isolated... like a world entirely of its own in which anything could be possible. This book held all the charm and beauty of the world portrayed in *Cider With Rosie*, but was ten times more compelling and addictive. And there were the characters, of course. Lettie Hempstock, an eleven year old who might just have been eleven for a very long time, and her quirky mother and grandmother. Also, the narrator had my sympathy throughout; his seven year old lack of understanding and fear of the adult world that he saw as separate from his own was easily believable, for me. I think we do create a world of our own when we're kids, one that adults aren't a part of, that's how we're able to believe in things like magic and wizards and Santa.

To put it plainly, I really enjoyed my first trip into the world of Gaiman. The ending is perfect. A little sad. But mostly perfect.

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Will Byrnes says

Monsters come in all shapes and sizes. Some of them are things people are scared of. Some of them are things that look like things people used to be scared of a long time ago. Sometimes monsters are things people should be scared of, but aren't.

I turned 7 early in third grade. It was a memorable school year because I had for a teacher a nun with a reputation. Sister Evangelista was about 5 foot nuthin', and symmetrical. If the *what's black and white, black and white, black and white – a nun rolling down a hill* joke were applied to her you would have needed a lot more black-and-whites, as her spherical shape would have kept her rolling a long time. It earned her the nickname Cannonball. She was notorious, not only for her distinctive dimensions, but for having a particularly foul temper. Her starched garb also pinched her face into a state of permanent floridity and pursed her lips into a particularly fish-like shape. It was not a happy year for me at school. There would be more than one instance of raised voices, and more than one rap across the hands with yardsticks. I was even banned from the classroom for a spell, to wander the halls for hours, unaccompanied. But I somehow knew that eventually I would be a third grader no longer and would escape the sharpened claws and flapping habit of this creature. She was unpleasant, for sure, but she did not present an existential threat.

Neil on a drainpipe as a lad – from his FB page

When the unnamed narrator of Neil Gaiman's book, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, turns 7, he has troubles of his own. It begins with zero attendance at his birthday party. The family comes on some hard times and must take in boarders. The boy is given a kitten, Fluffy, to ease the loss of his room, but the pet falls victim to a cab, arriving with a South African opal miner, the latest paying resident. Not long after, the miner takes the family car. It is found soon after, at the end of a nearby lane, with a body in the back seat,

and a hose running from the tail pipe to the driver's window. At the scene, the boy meets an eleven-year-old girl, Lettie Hempstock, who takes charge of him, and brings him to her family's farm, which borders the lane. And so begins a beautiful friendship. (Members of the extended Hempstock family, btw, turn up in several other Gaiman books)

Lettie lives with her mother and grandmother. When strange events begin to erupt in the area--the boy's sister is assaulted by flung coins, the boy wakes up choking on a coin, and other strangeness afflicts neighbors--Lettie seems to know what is causing them. She is sent to take care of it and brings the boy, her little friend, along. They travel across the Hempstock property and into what seems another world, (mentions of Narnia and Alice in Wonderland, among others, let us know that lines will be crossed) a place that has some threatening inhabitants. Lettie confronts the troublemaker, but the boy reacts to an event instead of thinking and disobeys her lone order, to keep hold of her hand. That is when the real trouble begins.

Image taken from abc.net.au

The boy is far too young for this to be a coming of age tale, but a central element of horror, whether of the Freddie Krueger, Nurse Ratched (or Sister Evangelista) variety, or the flapping beast central to Gaiman's tale, is one's helplessness before a greater, and ill-intentioned power. Although he doesn't characterize *his* intentions as horror-mongering, Gaiman has laid out what he *was* up to in writing the book.

It was meant to be just about looking out at the world through the kind of eyes that I had when I was 7, from the kind of landscape that I lived in when I was 7. And then it just didn't quite stop. I kept writing it, and it wasn't until I got to the end that I realized I'd actually written a novel. ... I thought — it's really not a kids' story — and one of the biggest reasons it's not a kids' story is, I feel that good kids' stories are all about hope. In the case of *Ocean at the End of the Lane*, it's a book about helplessness. It's a book about family, it's a book about being 7 in a world of people who are bigger than you, and more dangerous, and stepping into territory that you don't entirely understand.

Gaiman was aware that his work might appeal to young readers for whom it *not* intended. He said that he deliberately made the first few chapters of the book dull as a way to dissuade younger readers, who would be put off by that and disinclined to continue on to the juicy bits.

The world the young boy faces may not *be* understandable. There is just too much to take in and Gaiman captures that element of childhood quite well.

Changes for the boy at home include the antithesis of *Mary Poppins*, in the form of one Ursula Monkton, who seems to have arrived on an ill wind, with the added bonus of her having designs on the boy's father. Adults overall seem pretty careless. But there is some balance in this universe. Lettie's family seems beyond time itself, a bright light in the darkness, welcoming, comforting, nurturing. And then there's the ocean. Looks like a pond to you or me, but it has qualities quite unlike other bodies of water. As in his earlier *American Gods*, there are things that have been brought to this newer world from the place its residents once occupied. You may not be able to go home again, but what if you could take it with you? (Also a theme in *American Gods*)

Gaiman says he usually writes for himself. One thing that was different about this book was that he was writing for someone else. His wife, musician Amanda Palmer, was off in Australia making an album. Where you or I might send along daily, or weekly notes of what was going on, Gaiman sent something else

I will tell my wife, by making stuff up, kind of what it was like to be me when I was seven, from the inside of my head, not in the real world, then put it in the actual landscape that I grew up in.

There really had been a boarder who killed himself in the family ride. Like his young hero, Gaiman climbed drainpipes. There really was a farm down the lane that had been recorded in the DomesDay Book.

And as with such enterprises he did not have a large framework constructed. It was "like driving at night through the fog" – he knew "three or five pages ahead what would happen", but no further.

There is some material here that rankled a bit. The substitute parent trope had been used to good effect in *Coraline* and manifests in many of the Disney animated classics, evil stepmothers in *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and the like. Ditto here. Maybe going to that well one time too many? And is dad really that dim? But there is also a nice diversity of conceptual toys at work. The flapping baddie was fun. The magical *ocean* and ageless Hemplocks are also very engaging. The nothingness created by the creatures referred to, among other things, as *hunger birds*, reminded me of Stephen King's *Langoliers*, also the *Nothing of the Never-Ending Story* and the *Dark Thing of a Wrinkle in Time*. Might the three Hemplocks serve as a sort of feminine Holy Trinity? There is a wormhole that involves an actual...you know...worm, which made me smile for a long time. And any time there is a dip into water, one must ponder things baptismal, rebirth, either literal or spiritual.

Letting go is what so much of growing up is about. It is the very thing that must be done in order to be able to grow, to live one's own life. But sometimes letting go has the opposite effect, and can place you in peril, particularly when you are only 7 and not ready for the consequences. There is a lot in this short book on holding on, and letting go, and the price of both. There is a lot on doing what is right, on personal sacrifice, on permanence and the ephemeral, on remembering and forgetting.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane is a short novel. But do not let go of the notion that this is a book for adults. The ocean in question may look to be a pond, but do not be deceived. Jump in. The water's fine, and deep.

Posted 8/19/13

This review is cross-posted at Coot's Reviews

=====EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author's personal, Twitter, FB and Tumblr pages

A wonderful article on Gaiman in the January 25, 2010 issue of *The New Yorker*

An excellent audio interview by Jian Ghomeshi of Canadian Broadcasting

I also reviewed Gaiman's

-----*Stardust*, briefly, a few years back

-----*The Graveyard Book* more fully in October 2012.

-----*Trigger Warning* in March 2015

-----*The View from the Cheap Seats* in June 2016

12/3/13 - The results are in and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* was voted the Goodreads Choice Award winner for fantasy

12/16/13 - *The Ocean...* was named one of the best fiction books of 2013 by Kirkus

2/25/14 - *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is nominated for a Nebula Award

David Monroe says

I want to read this book so much.

Inge says

Whoopsie daisy, it's unpopular opinion time again. As I scroll through the Goodreads page of this book, I only find raving reviews. Four and five stars aplenty, a rare three stars at the least. And here I am, positively convinced that Neil Gaiman is a terrific author, yet the two books I've read of him were completely underwhelming.

Thing is, I have no idea what the hell I just read. It was bizarre and weird and, quite frankly, not in a good way.

But I am not giving up. I *will* find a Neil Gaiman book to love. I *will*.

emma says

"I remember my own childhood vividly...I knew terrible things. But I knew I mustn't let adults know I knew. It would scare them." -Maurice Sendak

Considering how obsessed we are with the idea of childhood as a culture, it's pretty wild that no one can capture it quite like Neil Gaiman.

<https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co...>

There are a lot of movies about boring white-straight-male aspiring writers in their 30s being taught how to LIVE WHIMSICALLY by a manic pixie dream girl. There are books about the beautiful wonder of a child's perspective. There are millions and millions and millions of TV shows depicting the dramatic trials and tribulations of the high school experience (as lived by gorgeous twenty-three year olds).

But none of it feels true. Maybe only Neil Gaiman can remember what it's like to be a child.

It is wondrous, and beautiful, and whimsical, and even dramatic. But it's also dark and scary sometimes. Inexplicable things happen, and the world seems uncontrollable, which is magical and horrifying. That's childhood.

That's also this book.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane is actually terrifying.

It's magical, but probably not in the way typically associated with fantasy novels narrated by children. It's magical in the way that I felt the world was when I *was* a child. As it turns out, that's much more magical. And much more amazing to read about.

This book is so, so short, and so devastatingly lovely. It's beautifully written and emotional. It made me scared and it made my heart hurt and it made me smile.

I want to quote more of it, but really I want to quote everything. Maybe I'll just excerpt ever-longer passages until I trick you into reading it?

So, better idea, just read it yourself.

Bottom line: It's 181 pages. What would it hurt to read it read it read it read it read it?

PRE REVIEW

things this book has in common with the graveyard book:

- a) by neil gaiman
- b) first 5 star rating of the year
- c) totally f*cking rad

review to come b

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

\$3.99 on kindle US. Today only! 2-4-18

This was a magical story both happy and dark. I loved it so much! And Neil Gaiman did a wonderful job of reading his own book ♥?

Once a boy befriended a girl named Lettie Hempstock, her mother and grandmother and nothing was ever the same again.....

There are beautiful and horrible things in this world and we find these things inside this book

A boy that is coming of age in a world we know nothing about and everything about....

It did make me sad but you have to read the book to understand it. I'm going to be adding this to my

collection as I got this audio from the library Overdrive. I highly recommend it!

Adults follow paths. Children explore. Adults are content to walk the same way, hundreds of times, thousands; perhaps it never occurs to adults to step off the paths, to creep beneath rhododendrons, and find the spaces between fences.

I'm glad I still haven't grown up!

Mel ♥?

MY BLOG: Melissa Martin's Reading List

Dan Schwent says

While in his home town for a funeral, a middle aged man drives to the site of his parents' former home and visits visits the farm at the end of the road, where he remembers some curious events from when he was seven...

First off, I'll get the gripes out of the way. The Ocean at the End of the Lane is marketed as Gaiman's first adult novel since Anansi Boys. It feels a lot more like a young adult novel, more akin to the Graveyard Book or Coraline than American Gods. Secondly, it's only 175 pages long. In and of itself, that's fine, but with a whopping 25.99 price tag, it's kind of a gouge.

Gripes aside, The Ocean at the End of the Lane is a pretty cool book. Gaiman does a masterful job at portraying the nameless lead character, a seven year old boy who befriends at odd eleven-year old girl named Lettie, who may or may not be as old as the universe, and her mother and grand mother. Maiden, mother, and crone remember the Old Country, which sank, or the really Old Country, which blew up.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane, like a lot of Neil Gaimain work, deals with dreams, the effect of belief on reality, and forgotten things, like things that every kid knows and every adult has forgotten.

There's not a lot I can say without giving away the best bits. Gaiman has a way of making his young adult books way scarier than his adult ones and this one falls into that category. Urusula and the hunger birds were both pretty creepy, as was what happened with the boy's foot.

That's about all I can say. The Ocean at the End of the Lane is a really quick read but full of interesting ideas and great moments. Four out of five. I may elevate it to a five on a reread.

Alejandro says

Can a pond being an ocean? Sure! Why not?

DON'T THINK IN LIMITATIONS BUT POSIBILITIES

Nobody actually looks like what they really are on the inside.

Once you can get to accept that a pond likely can be a whole ocean, you will then enjoy this wonderful book.

I think that Neil Gaiman, the author, was a genius even deciding the length of the book.

Sure, the initial intention was to make a short story that ended in being a novel, but at 181 pages of length, it's most likely a novella.

However, that's the beauty of the concept.

Can a book being a library? Mmh...

Since, in these 181 pages, you have a fairy tale, a horror story, a family drama, even adventure, humor, philosophy, etc...

A THICK BOOK ISN'T GUARANTEE OF ANYTHING GOOD

A story only matters, I suspect, to the extent that the people in the story change.

Neil Gaiman can accomplish so much more in just 181 pages than other authors in 700 plus pages.

A big book isn't a guarantee of being any good.

A short book can be as much fantastic, if not more.

Even it's more respectful being able to create a so rich story in so few pages than having 700 plus pages and not resolving anything.

Sometimes people can think that only thick books deserve respect and don't get me wrong, there are many thick books indeed worthy of respect, but the quantity of written pages isn't a certification that any book is indeed really good.

And certainly there are also bad small books too.

But I can tell you that...

...this is a small book **AND** it's really good!

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING

Nobody actually looks like what they really are on the inside.

This is a story where I can assure you that I was so scared at some moments than in other books clearly labeled as horror, and I was so astounded with the magic here than in other books clearly labeled as fantasy.

Even if you know some of Neil Gaiman's influences when he was a kid, you will be glad to see them here in a way or other.

Even if you read really carefully you will get to know about where certain other writers got some ideas for their own insanely famous books, letting clear that sometimes author's originality is just a matter of reader's ignorance.

Highly recommended!

Bookdragon Sean says

“I went away in my head, into a book. That was where I went whenever real life was too hard or too inflexible.”

This is a book that teaches us that we should never stop dreaming, that we should never stop seeing oceans in ponds and that we should never, ever, stop seeing better worlds in the things we read.

The pond that was an ocean bespeaks the level of optimism that is inherent with childhood dreams. Everything seems better. Everything seems bigger and grander. Imagination makes the ordinary seem extraordinary and fantastic. I have no idea what elements were fantasy within the novel. It could even be magical realism or a child's interpretation and exaggeration of real life events. Part of me felt like it was based on real things but distorted and twisted to evoke the sense of unfamiliarity a child has in an adult world.

But to perpetually see the world through child eyes would be a boon:

“I do not miss childhood, but I miss the way I took pleasure in small things, even as greater things crumbled. I could not control the world I was in, could not walk away from things or people or moments that hurt, but I took joy in the things that made me happy.”

It's a book for the lost, for the social pariahs who do not fit in with normal society. It is a book for those who would rather spend their days reading than interacting with the human race. Humans are always disappointing, books are not. And our little hero knows this so he concocts his own friends and draws upon the lessons he learnt through reading. In this regard it reminded me of *Coraline*. It's a book about an odd child who dreams of something a little bit better than the reality they experience.

The friend he meets becomes his guardian against the forces that would destroy him and his family. She becomes a doorway into understanding an entirely new world. In this I saw a lonely child longing for something he didn't have, a connection with someone who would hold him up when the days become their darkest. In *The Ocean at the End of Lane* anything is possible as a child's dreams and memories propel the narrative forward.

***The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a truly fantastic book in every regard. I absolutely loved it.**

