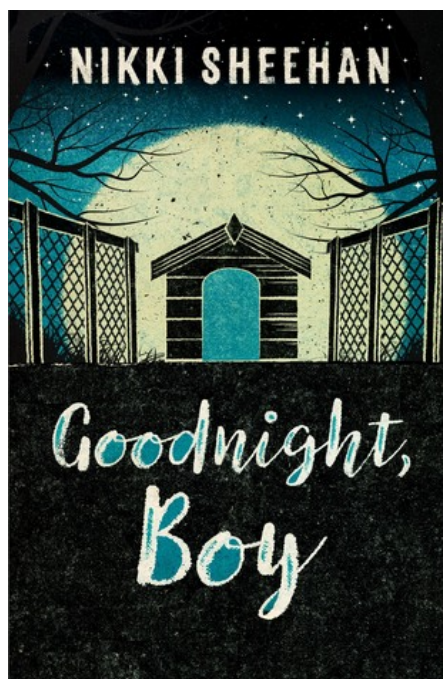




Goodnight, Boy

Nikki Sheehan

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A tale of two very different worlds, both shattered by the loss of loved ones. Tragic, comic and full of hope, thanks to a dog called Boy.

The kennel has been JC's home ever since his new adoptive father locked him inside. For hours on end, JC sits and tells his dog Boy how he came to this country: his family; the orphanage and the Haitian earthquake that swept everything away.

When his adoptive mother Melanie rescues him, life starts to feel normal again. Until JC does something bad, something that upset his new father so much that he and Boy are banished to the kennel. But as his new father gets sicker, JC realizes they have to find a way out. And so begins a stunning story of a boy, a dog and their journey to freedom.

Goodnight, Boy Details

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From Reader Review Goodnight, Boy for online ebook

Suze Lavender says

The teenager JC lives in the United States now. He moved there when Melanie decided to adopt him. However, Melanie needs to go back to JC's homecountry to finalize legally making him her son and leaves JC with his adoptive father and their dog Boy. JC's new father isn't happy at all with the arrival of a boy he doesn't know. According to Melanie he should treat him as a son, but he doesn't want to and is constantly angry. Instead of letting JC stay in the house he throws him out and makes him live in the doghouse together with Boy.

After a terrible incident JC is no longer welcome in the house that doesn't even feel like home yet. Boy is his only friend and to pass the time JC tells Boy about his life before Melanie took him in. He talks about his country, the terrible earthquake he survived, illnesses and his friends and family. JC has been through a lot and he's strong, but staying with a dog in a small wooden kennel without any regular food or water is tough and Melanie doesn't seem to come back any time soon. Will JC eventually find a way out of the doghouse and the terrible situation he and Boy are in?

Goodnight Boy is a fantastic moving story. I was shocked when I started reading it, because of the appalling conditions JC and Boy are living in. Their story moved me to tears many times, as what's happening to them is heartbreaking. Goodnight Boy is sad and emotional, but it's also beautiful and hopeful at the same time. It is a bittersweet story with a special main character and the writing is gorgeous. I couldn't put the book down, it mesmerized me and I had to keep reading. Goodnight Boy impressed me in many different ways, because of the amount of depth, the originality, the gorgeous one-way dialogue and the comfort a boy and a dog can offer each other.

Nikki Sheehan has written a stunning book about a teenage boy being unpleasantly surprised by life over and over again. JC never gets depressed, he does everything he can to make something of every situation he finds himself in and his resilience keeps getting him far. He's talking about his awful past in a matter-of-fact way and never feels any self pity. That made a difficult story light enough to keep reading. It's a strange contrast and Nikki Sheehan makes it work really well. Goodnight Boy is a story about bad luck, good and evil and everything in between. It shows how an unlucky situation can sometimes turn into a chance. It's about abuse, deep emotional wounds and the craziness that many unexpected twists and turns in life can bring. I absolutely loved this brilliant story and highly recommend it.

Ally says

Wow. This book was so good, that I read it in less than a day! I loved the writing style of the book, at first I was pessimistic, thinking oh no this looks strange. This also isn't the usual genre of book I go for. However, I found it so hard to put down! JC'S story is so heartbreaking and gives you so many different feels. It even left me in suspense at times, wondering what was going to be on the next page. The relationship with him and "Boy" was refreshing yet saddening. Parts of the story you are going "awwwwww" and parts you are in tears. It makes you feel happy then angry then sad. Happy that he finds a person that truly loves him and wants to be his family. Sad that because of a kind-hearted person he also must suffer for a short period because of a terrible person. Angry because you realize there are kids out there that do suffer like this boy if not worse. The positive message is there though, that in the end he does find sanctuary and happiness. In the end he actually has two families that love him very much. He also has a dog that loves him very much. Someone that young shouldn't have to go through such horrible events and feel so alone. He is forced to

grow up way too quickly. But, he finds happiness and I am so glad it has a positive ending and message. I give this one five stars, it had such great emotions.

?Tara Sheehan? says

I confess. I agreed to review this for a purely superficial reason. We share the same last name.

I have no idea if it's HER name or she married into it (mine came via DNA and a father who ensures I know the history). I've never met her and as far as I know we're not related but then my father once told me all the Sheehans are related in one way or another because there really isn't that many of us. That's why I said Yes because out of 'family name' loyalty.

THANKFULLY her book doesn't suck so I don't have to lie out of that same loyalty or this could have been awkward.

I've always adopted shelter pets because I can't stand to see the animals in cages as if they're criminals locked up waiting for a pardon or a death sentence in some cases and with Clear the Shelter coming up in a couple of days this book brings on even more meaning and emotions. I already have 2 labs and a black cat but now I feel the need to add to our family.

She really knows how to hit you in the gut, and your conscience, with this beautiful but sad story about adoption, love, family dynamics and most importantly the relationship between a boy and a dog.

Be prepared to have the Kleenex ready and consider checking out the schedule for your local shelter event.

Despite the emotional turmoil you'll go through reading this JC is such a strong, amazing character you want to stay glued to the pages as if your mere presence will somehow seep through and give him hope, let him know there are caring people in this world.

The writing style is easy to get through, great for a younger audience and the pace is on point with no big areas that drag making you regret picking this up. Despite the obvious sadness I've referenced repeatedly there are bright moments with humor and hope that help keep this from falling over a cliff of pure depression.

I could easily see this being made into one of those emotionally powerful movies Hollywood needs since it is a unique story with a great voice.

Amber says

Thanks to the #kidlitexchange network for the free review copy of his book – all opinions are my own.

•

Wow. This one was an emotional ride. I'll be honest and admit that I didn't catch on right away to the fact that JC and Boy were both living in the kennel. When that realization hit, the story blew wide open for me. JC's voice, his internal dialogue, language, and storytelling, were all vital to the feeling of this story. Not only did it help to add to the ambiance, but it also, I think, will help younger readers, the readers for whom this book is targeted, relate to him. Or if not relate, at least understand and empathize. It's a voice they can recognize.

The layout of the text on the pages also helps in relaying the feeling of the story to the reader as it progresses. There are no chapters in the book, symbolic, I thought, of the never-ending feeling JC experienced as he waited for Melanie to come back home and let them out. Some of the pages had only two or three lines of text on them, seemingly placed haphazardly on the page. Again, it felt symbolic of JC's emotional experiences at that point in the story.

The resilience of JC and Boy was really incredible. Despite the levity of the story, this survival attitude and refusal to give up makes the story a page-turner. This is a book that I'd recommend to young adult and adult readers alike. I believe it could be suitable for some middle grade readers as well.

Allie says

Goodnight, Boy is a powerful read. It's a story of the sustaining power of friendship in the hardest of times, of finding that rescue can be anything but, that sometimes the path we tread is twisted. This book will have you on the edge of your seat throughout. And if you've ever loved a dog, this one is definitely for you!

Juliet Bryant says

A stunningly beautiful book about friendship and freedom. Both heartbreaking and uplifting, it is written in an addictive poetic rhythm that draws you in.

Catherine ? says

This was a poignant and beautiful story - definitely not what I was expecting. The topics talked about are serious, but the voice - that of a child - has such a unique touch of innocence that really makes the book that much more heart-wrenching and powerful. Because of the writing style, I am still a bit confused about the plot itself, but overall this was a very special book, and I'm sure it would touch both adults and children alike.

Nikki says

This is a well written and moving story about a boy trying to make sense of his world. The trauma he has lived through and his youth really come across well. However I do have an issue with not really knowing enough for the story to work for me - it's never quite clear what Melanie thought was going on, what the man's motivations were etc. I know that's because it's all from the perspective of JC but it would be nice to have an adult explain things occasionally. And I sort of wanted a reaction to the last thing that happens in the book. An interesting and sad read but nothing too stellar for me.

Roger Hyttinen says

I was browsing the Young Adult section at my local library the other day and the book "Goodnight, Boy" by Nikki Sheehan caught my eye. I knew nothing about this book, but the description on the back cover peaked

my interest so I picked it up.

Living in the Kennel

The entire story takes place in a kennel where a teenage boy named JC has been locked in along with his dog (Boy) by his stepfather. The entire story revolves around JC's storytelling as he recounts his life story to his dog, Boy. The author's use of internal dialog was expertly done and really added a distinctive element to the story.

We learn bit by bit that JC is an immigrant boy from Haiti who has gone through one horrendous experience after another: abuse at orphanages, surviving an earthquake and living on the streets to name a few. We learn through JC's dialog what a tough, resilient and brave kid he really is, and it's these qualities that allowed him to overcome every difficulty he's had to face.

Enter Melanie and The Stepfather

JC's tells Boy about how he ended up in the United States with Melanie and her boyfriend or husband (I don't believe their marital status is ever mentioned). We figure out pretty quickly that the "adoption" wasn't an entirely legal one, meaning Melanie and her partner pretty much snuck the boy into the United States.

?

JC depicts Melanie in a positive light, and we can tell that he is quite fond of her. Not so much with the stepfather, however; though JC's dialog, we get the impression that the stepfather resented the boy and made everyday life more difficult for him because of that resentment.

I did a bad thing

We eventually learn the reason how JC and Boy ended up in their current predicament. According to JC, he did ****a bad thing**** that upset his stepfather so much at the locked JC and Boy away in a Kennel (we do learn what the bad thing is - but I'm not telling!).?

Melanie is away during this time so she's unaware of what's going on at home. JC's stepfather visits the kennel with less and less frequency, and JC realizes that he has to somehow get him and Boy to freedom, as their life may very well depend on it.

The Verdict

I wasn't sure at first whether this was the kind of story I wanted to read. It sounded heartbreaking and indeed, in places it was. But it was also so much more. Though the reader experiences a rollercoaster of emotions as we move through the story, it is also hopeful. No matter what horrors JC experiences, he never seems to get depressed or wallows in despair or self-pity.?

It's interesting to note that there was almost no dialog throughout the entire story — all of it was portrayed through JC's thoughts and one-way discourse to Boy. In this way, the author did an amazing job of portraying JC's excellent character voice.?

The lack of two-way dialog didn't mean that the book was difficult to read. On the contrary, the author's clever use of white space (some pages only contained a couple of sentences) made the book not only readable but added extra intrigue and emotion that kept you turning the page.

Yes, as a reader you are shocked at the beginning by the horrifying conditions that the boy and his dog are living in, and you certainly can't help but tear up many times throughout the book. It's sad. It'll tear your

heart out in places.

But Goodnight, Boy is also a beautiful, moving and hopeful story of an abused boy, his dog and their journey towards freedom. It's a deep, engaging and original book that kept me interested all the way through, and I'm so glad I read it. Recommended!

Trigger warning: This book contains scenes of child and animal abuse and neglect.

Paige Green says

Rating: 4/5

Genre: Upper Middle Grade/YA Contemporary

Recommended Age: 12+ (trigger warning: abuse)

I received a free copy of this book courtesy of KidLitExchange and the publisher/author. If you're interested in joining KidLitExchange follow the hyperlink!

A tale of two very different worlds, both shattered by the loss of loved ones. Tragic, comic and full of hope, thanks to a dog called Boy.

The kennel has been JC's home ever since his new adoptive father locked him inside. For hours on end, JC sits and tells his dog Boy how he came to this country: his family; the orphanage and the Haitian earthquake that swept everything away.

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While I love my fantasy novels, I have a special place in my heart for books that discuss touchy topics that effect children. Maybe it's because of my background in criminal justice and my past in working with the juvenile justice system. Anyways, I feel that there aren't a lot of books out there that explore abuse in children. While many children use books as an escape, they also look up to characters that go through the same situations as they do and who are like them in some way. This is why it's important to have realistic elements in books and it's a reason why I think this book is absolutely amazing.

Everything in the book is described through the eyes of a teen who is being abused. The teen is alone in this situation except for his companion, a dog named Boy. Although we are subject to what can only be seen through JC, I feel that the character development was very well done, the plot development was superb, and the pacing was not forced or too slow. I thought that while we are forced to accept what JC says and sees as true that he is not a misleading narrator.

The only thing that bugged me about this book was that I thought the ending was a bit of a cop-out. It felt that too many things fell into place and there was a bit of a plot hole in the book at the end as well.

Verdict: Overall the book was absolutely beautiful and very empowering. JC is an inspiration to everyone who finds themselves in hard or even impossible situations as JC never gives up hope, whether through

childhood ignorance or sheer power to will the things he wants to come true. This book is a must read for anyone who wants to explore how children might deal or cope with abuse or for someone who just wants a good cry.

Zanereads says

Recently I received an advanced copy of *Goodnight, Boy* by Nikki Sheehan. I was intrigued by the synopsis, but I put off reading it because I had other books that I was excited about. Plus I had a feeling that this one would be sad and dare I say it, the dog might even die. So I was hesitant. Animals own my heart, there is no doubt about it. They're my soft spot. I finally picked up this book a few days ago, because I was waiting on a book to arrive from Amazon and I figured I could read it to fill those waiting days. It was so good. So. Good.

Goodnight, Boy is about a Haitian boy named JC who gets adopted by an American couple. When the story starts we find out that JC is living outside in a kennel with his dog named Boy. We don't know why he's in the kennel, or why he's being so abused. He laments that it feels deserved. He thinks he did something wrong. We don't find out exactly what happened until the end of the book though. The book is basically a one sided conversation between JC and Boy. JC fills his time by recounting stories from his home country. He tells Boy about the earthquake and being adopted. His stories are insightful and heart-wrenching, balanced out by the snarky banter (although, one sided) between himself and Boy. The next paragraphs will go into book spoilers, so be warned. If you want to go into this book with spoilers, stop here. (And thanks for reading! I hope you give this book a try, it comes out in August.)

JC is kidnapped from his family in Haiti and sold to an adoption agency. The earthquake happens and he finds himself on the streets, learning to survive on very little. Melanie is a Doctor from America who takes care of him from time to time. After a while she decides that she wants to give him a home. She adopts him from the agency in Haiti, but has trouble legalizing it in America. Eventually she gives in and smuggles him home with her. Melanie and her husband had a son who has passed away, and he and JC look a lot alike, which is probably why she had such a soft spot for him. JC uses his passport and goes to live in America. But because he's a illegal immigrant, they only tell a select few people about him. So after a while of hiding out in their home, someone finds out and threatens to turn in them unless they pay them. Melanie is distraught and goes back to Haiti, leaving JC home with her husband, while she tries to find his true family.

His adoptive dad hates him, he hates the danger that they're in for bringing him into their home and he hates that JC isn't his son. (Who we learn was killed in a car accident because of his wreckless driving.) He only really adopted him in the first place to appease his wife. One day when he catches JC in his son's room, playing with his video games, he gets enraged and starts to yell, Boy comes to his rescue growling and showing teeth. The dad is so mad that he starts to kick Boy, and fearing for the life of his pet, JC launches at him and bites a chunk out of his calf. Well deserved I think, because this guy is the worst.

This is what gets JC and Boy locked up outside, where they're lucky if they get food or water. Weeks pass and JC and Boy are wasting away. The Dad is limping, his leg is infected. He can't go to the hospital for his wounds because they came from an illegal immigrant he's been harboring. He gets worse and worse and one day he collapses in the yard and doesn't move. JC knows that Boy is really sick and that if he doesn't break them out soon, they'll both die. No one is coming to help them, because Melanie still isn't home. How does a weak, near starvation boy break out of a heavy duty kennel? He doesn't know and he begins to panic.

That's all I'll give you because you really are missing out if you don't read this book. It's such a sweet story

about family and love. You'll be on the edge of your seat with fear for these two characters. You'll laugh at the goofy things JC says to Boy. You'll probably want to punch some people in the face, but it's worth it. This book is worth reading.

Lisa Heathfield says

'Goodnight, Boy' is a stunning, stunning book. With a unique voice, Nikki Sheehan creates a story that is both dark, yet filled with hope. It's one of those books that you want to re-read again and again. Brilliant, beautifully written and unforgettable.

Brandi Nyborg says

I received this book through librarythings' giveaways. I was really looking to reading a book from the viewpoint of a Haitian orphan and his dog. I enjoyed JC's character, and hearing his backstory. For me the book dragged a little in places, and the ending was wrapped up a little too quickly. Overall this book was a good look at a child moving from one nightmare to the next, and I would be willing to check out more by this author.

Bruce Gargoyle says

I received a copy of this title from the publisher via Netgalley.

Ten Second Synopsis:

JC has been adopted by an American family from his native Haiti. When his adoptive mother leaves, JC and his dog Boy find themselves at the mercy of Melanie's abusive husband.

I've got two separate warring opinions on this book which is making it a little difficult to come to a cohesive overall feeling about it. Goodnight, Boy is narrated by JC, a teen boy who has been adopted from Haiti by an American couple. The story is revealed as JC talks to his dog, Boy, with whom JC is imprisoned in a kennel in the backyard of his suburban home. As the story unfolds, the reader finds out that JC's adoptive mother, Melanie is missing, gone away or otherwise absent, for reasons that are also unclear, and that JC's angry adoptive father is responsible for JC and Boy's captivity.

If you are hoping, as you read, that the reasons behind JC's imprisonment will be revealed in a timely fashion, you will be sorely disappointed. The reasons are not revealed until the very end of the story and by that time I was a bit baffled as to why Melanie thought leaving JC alone with her obviously abusive partner, who had expressed no liking for JC, was a good idea in the first place.

But I digress.

The main things I enjoyed about this book were the easily readable narrative voice and JC's descriptions about his childhood in Haiti. The book has a conversational tone and it is easy to fall into the flow of the words and get caught up in the story, despite the constant interruptions in which JC takes issue with Boy's doggyish behaviour. Similarly, although often sad, JC's recounting of his childhood I found to be absorbing and fascinating and revealed much about the factors that have moulded his personality.

The thing that I found difficult about the book was that it didn't have the shock factor of a book like Room by Emma Donoghue, which dealt with a similar situation, and I felt that without this, something was lacking.

From the beginning of the story it was obvious that something seriously bad was going to happen - or possibly was already happening - but this didn't pan out in the way I expected and I felt that the ending was a bit of an anti-climax. Not that I'm unhappy that there was a satisfactory ending for JC and Boy - far from it - but I was hoping for a bit more suspense and emotional turmoil than was delivered.

I think I would have preferred it had the book had a second story thread, narrated by Melanie or her husband, to flesh out some of the issues and heighten the suspense.

Overall I found this to be an interesting read with some original qualities, but it didn't quite stand out as a stellar story for the reasons I've mentioned.

Isilda says

Goodnight boy awakens the child in all of us, when we have been scared, hopeful, longing for the future with the same excitement and trepidation we long for Christmas. We were all that child, one way or another and we have all been those adults too when we have hidden, craddled, punished or ignored loss. Goodnight boy is touching and very human. A very well told story. These lives stayed with me for a long long time after I finished the book.
