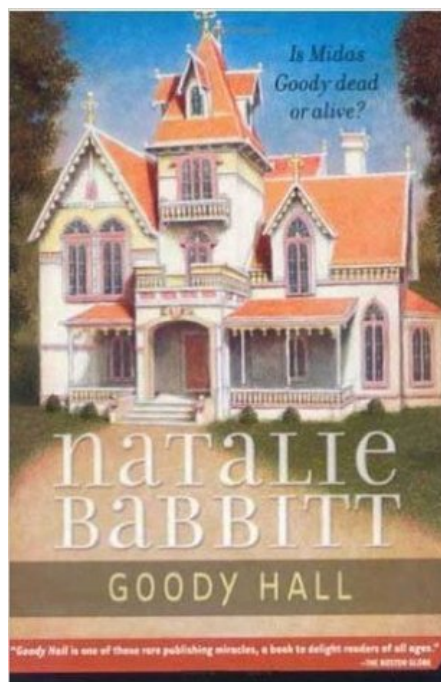




Goody Hall

Natalie Babbitt

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An out-of-work actor, Hercules Feltwright, stumbles into a job tutoring Willet Goody, the only child of a widow living in a large, lonely house. Willet quickly involves his tutor in the search to discover the truth surrounding his father. The mystery unfolds with the discovery of hidden treasure, a gypsy seance, and the frightening exploration of the tomb of Midas Goody.

Goody Hall Details

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Author : Natalie Babbitt

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From Reader Review Goody Hall for online ebook

Ann says

Another gem from Natalie Babbitt. This one is about an actor-turned-teacher (he liked playing the role!) named Hercules Feltwright who lands his first job tutoring Willet Goody in his impressive but lonely family home. Hercules misquotations of Shakespeare and herculean (pun intended) feats are most enjoyable, and Willet's longing for the father he doesn't believe is dead is most touching. This is literal cloak and dagger stuff. Adult readers will see what's coming up next, but it's a good read for boys who like bandits and hidden treasures.

Books Kids Like says

When Hercules Feltwright comes to Goody Hall to tutor Willet Goody, he learns of some mysterious events that happened five years before. Mott Snave stole jewels and a Cerberus statue from the church bishop, and John Constant, a local farmer, rode off to catch him. Neither man was ever seen again. During this time, Willet's father, Midas Goody, died when he fell from his horse. Willet tells Hercules that he doesn't believe that his father is dead, because he heard something clank inside the coffin as it was carried to the tomb. Hercules and Willet set out to solve the mystery. First, Willet finds jewels hidden in his mother's stool. Then, Hercules attends a seance and is told that Midas Goody isn't "on the other side." Dressed as Mott Snave, Hercules goes to the Goody tomb, opens the coffin, and finds the Cerberus statue inside. That night, on the way back to Goody Hall, he meets the real Mott Snave. If Midas Goody and Mott Snave are not dead, where is John Constant? What is the connection between these men and the Cerberus statue?

Marné Yates says

Another charming, clever story from Natalie Babbitt. Unexpected, yet simple twists lead you to uncover a mystery and a happy ending.

Suzanne Fournier says

A charming and delightful little story. The blacksmith knows something is going to happen, he can feel it. It could be any number of things but when his sister, housekeeper at Goody Hall reports that Mrs. Goody is planning on hiring a tutor for her son a series of events are put in motion.

Jess says

I decided to read this because A) I found it on sale and B) I loved Babbitt's Tuck Everlasting. While not on the same level, this is still a fun and easy read.

Hercules Feltwright is an actor-turned-teacher (or tutor) who lands a job mentoring and tutoring Willet

Goody. Willet lives in an impressive sized home without a father so his energy has previously been channeled into crazy actions - actions that are soon tamed by Hercules. Willet doesn't believe his father is dead (or buried "down below" for that matter) so soon an adventure embarks where Hercules tries to prove whether Mr. Goody is in fact dead or alive.

The plot is not complex in the least, so dive in knowing this. It's still an interesting read but it is written so children can enjoy it as well. I love how everything comes full circle in the end (even though it's a bit unbelievable, literally) and we finally come to understand why everyone is the way they are.

I do believe Natalie Babbitt was aiming for satirical moments - moments in which I found myself smiling or laughing. The humor is on point and not overdone. Character development is not really present here but it's also not needed. Each character has their own place in the story and they all fit within their words.

If you're an adult looking to branch out and read more Babbitt/children's books, then this is a good place to start. Nothing will ever top Tuck Everlasting (I am sure of it!) but sometimes a lighthearted read is just as appreciated. To say that I wasn't mildly disappointed that this wasn't up to par with Tuck Everlasting would be a lie. I went in with huge expectations and most of those weren't met, yet I still had a delightfully entertaining time going on the mini-adventures of Goody and Feltwright.

Chris Popp says

I really enjoyed this book. It's the third Natalie Babbitt I've read, after Tuck Everlasting and The Search for Delicious. Her writing is extraordinary. It elevates relatively simple stories into polished gemstones of magical prose. The characters here are quite good too. Witness Hercules Feltwright, who misquotes Shakespeare with impunity and is a young-but-wise tutor. Witness the Goody family, who are not so happy in their beautiful house. Witness Alfreida and Alfresco Rom, and Dora Tidings and her brother the blacksmith. All these characters spring to life and enrich a mysterious, surprising, and ultimately very moving plot about family and identity.

Emily says

I found this book to be tremendously clever when I read it as a child. I particularly liked the parallels between the life-stories of itinerant hat-maker/actor/tutor Hercules Feltwright, and his mythological namesake. For this reason, I chose to read it aloud to my son immediately after finishing D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths, to prove to him that knowing mythology *would* enrich his life by opening his eyes to allusions, just like I said it would, darn it. Unfortunately Goody Hall just wasn't as intricate as I'd recalled -- in my fond memory, each and every one of Hercules' twelve labors had a slightly silly counterpart in this book, but actually only a scant four or five were referenced. The main thread of the story (which I'd largely forgotten) didn't hold my interest enough to make up for this disenchantment.

Caitlin says

When I was twelve years old, during our English class's fortnightly quiet reading sessions in the library, I plucked this off the shelf because of its clunky, vintage cover, and was captivated. Being incredibly shy and awkward, I would wait two weeks to find it again and read it in class, instead of talking to the librarian.

Eventually I got the nerve to borrow it out.

I had read a lot when I was younger, but for some reason I had fallen out of love. Goody Hall is what got me back into reading. I devoured all of Natalie Babbitt's books that I could find (all three of them that were in the library, as most of her stuff was out of print at that point) and after that I moved on to other authors. I don't know if I would have re-discovered how much I loved reading if I hadn't picked up this book. Probably. There are plenty of great children's books out there. But I do know that this is the one that shaped who I am.

As a child, I thought it was so clever. The story is interesting, the atmosphere charming. I've re-read it a few times as an adult, but there's no way I could ever be objective. Babbitt's prose has come to shape what the inside of my head sounds like, and the way that I write. Reading her stuff now is almost eerie.

Natalie Babbitt died last year. I've been meaning to write to her for years, but never got around to it. I always assumed I would have more time.

Emily says

I picked this up because I am a big fan of one of the author's other works, *Tuck Everlasting*. I was mildly disappointed that this didn't rise to the same caliber, but it was still an entertaining tale. *Goody Hall* is a "long ago tale" involving the residents of a mansion and the inhabitants of a nearby village. Young Willet Goody is convinced his father did not die five years ago as he has been told and enlists the help of his new tutor, Hercules Feltwright, to investigate the matter.

Each character has a very fitting name: Mrs. Tidings is the local gossip, Alfreida Rom is a gypsy, and Hercules Feltwright is the son of a hatter who has had some experiences that seem to mirror the mythical Hercules. The mystery of Willet's father's death/non-death is investigated and resolved rather quickly, and seems to be more of a device by which the characters learn who they really are and what they truly desire out of life. It's a nice parable.

Eden says

Hercules Feltwright was an actor, but decided to leave his acting troupe in exchange for the career of a tutor. And a tutor is needed at Goody Hall, where he is headed.

There he begins to tutor Willet Goody, who is the only child of the widow Mrs. Goody.

Willet's father is supposed to be dead, but he doesn't believe that is so. Soon he involves Hercules and together they search for the truth about Willet's father.

This book was a little slow to start, but it turns out to be quite good. There is a bit of mystery, which I definitely liked. The characters, I think, are all a bit strange in their own ways, but that makes them interesting.

I found this to be a very enjoyable read. I love Natalie Babbitt's style of writing. Her stories are just so. . . I'm not sure I can find a word for them. But they are imaginative and this one was just as good as others I've by her. I found that I really loved Goody Hall and it's cast of characters. It's a rather charming book that I would definitely read again.

Lauren says

A quick, easy read and a cute story. The plot was interesting and I didn't want to put the book down, but it wasn't too deep or philosophical like *Tuck Everlasting*. Check it out.

Lillian Elliott says

I love Natalie Babbitt, which is why I only gave this book 4 stars. That doesn't make much sense at first probably, but here's the thing: I have very high expectations for any book by Babbitt, so if this were by another author it would get five stars but it just isn't as good as Babbitt's other books. *Goody Hall* was a mystery about a boy and his new tutor trying to figure out what was so odd about the story of Midas Goody's, the boy's father, death. Young Willet Goody and his tutor, Hercules Feltwright, piece together many bizarre clues to discover the truth.

The premise of the story was interesting, and all the characters were weird and bizarre and enthralling, but the book was just a bit slow. When a book is less than 200 pages, there's hardly an opportunity to get bored, but I found myself in that situation. Usually I can finish a book by Babbitt in one sitting, but this one took me a few days. I loved the ending, how it all came together, but getting through it was not as fun as it usually is when I read one of Babbitt's books.

I would still recommend this book to people, but I wouldn't tell them to put it too high on their list. They can read this after they've exhausted the supply of downright amazing books by Babbitt: *The Search for Delicious*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *The Eyes of the Amaryllis*, and *The Devil's Storybook* should all be read first. My favorite thing about *Goody Hall* was that the ending made sense with all the clues given, but I did not predict it until a few pages before, and even then there were some parts I couldn't predict. There was nothing cliché about this book, I just wish some parts had moved a bit faster.

Ashly Lynn says

4/5 Stars

Hercules Feltright is a tutor that has recently come to *Goody Hall* to tutor the woman of the house's child, Willet Goody. Willet is a very curious child, but the thing he is most curious about is the disappearance of his father. Hercules, with a few allusions made in the text to Greek Mythology, is not a very good tutor. He used to be an actor until he decided he was going to be a tutor. Hercules also notices there is something strange going on. Will the two be able to solve the disappearance of Willet's father? Will there be a happy ending to this mystery? Read this, slightly satirical, book to find out.

I really enjoyed this children's book. I checked this out from the Library because, like so many other people, I enjoyed Babbitt's most-known work, *Tuck Everlasting*, when I was younger. It's about time I read

more of her work.

Now, before I say anything else, keep in mind that this is a Children's book if you are going to pick this one up. I say this because the plot is not very complex. That does not mean it isn't exciting or interesting; it just means that this is written so that children will think it's clever but are still able to understand it.

Still, I thought the plot was fun and filled with plenty of adventure. I enjoyed Babbitt's story and was actually unable to predict the ending. I did guess a few other things along the way, but the ending? Nope. It was really interesting how the mystery wrapped up in the end. Far fetched? Yes. But fun? Also yes. There's plenty going on to keep you on your toes and immersed in the story.

There is also a good deal of humor in this book. I found myself laughing out loud a few times at the ridiculousness of everything. I honestly think that Babbitt was going for satire in this book and maybe that's why I found myself to enjoy it more than others.

I didn't read this book as a child, so I also didn't have any, *thank god*, disillusionment from my memory deceiving me.

I enjoyed the characters and following their story, even as an adult. There isn't a ton of character development, but there is enough to distinguish each character from the next and to keep the plot moving. **Each character has their own personality, and each is fitting for the story.**

I found them believable, even if ridiculous, which is another reason I suspect satire. The characters are right on the cusp of being too ridiculous and being just ridiculous enough.

Overall, this is a fun story and I recommend it to anyone looking for a light, cozy-ish mystery or a good children's book. I also recommend it for kids ages 8-11. (That's just a rough estimate based on reading level. It's a great read for all ages.) I'm glad I finally scooped up another Babbitt book to read. This book also made me less nervous to re-read *Tuck Everlasting* – something I haven't done since Childhood!

Review originally published on my Wordpress blog Dreaming Through Literature.

Judy says

This has to be set in a rural area somewhere in England, although a place is never specified. Introduces kids to the mythological Hercules, which is the tutor's name.

Jim Sibigtroth says

A great mystery story with a great message about what is really important. Fun and interesting with many surprising twists and surprises. I recommend it highly for any reader from third grade through adult. So far all of Natalie Babbitt's books I have read have been good, but a few like this one are much better than just good.

There is a light sense of humor running through the story that is a refreshing change from mysteries where the author seems to be working too hard to create a dark sinister atmosphere and setup clues and surprises. In this story the pace is friendly and comfortable as if the author is just having a good time as she writes.

