

Book Review by the Committee for Racial Healing

Ghost Boys, Jewell Parker Rhodes, grade 5+

Ghost Boys is a short but powerful read. In this historical fiction, Jerome, a 12-year-old black boy, is shot by a white police officer who mistakenly assumes his toy gun is a real weapon. As a ghost, Jerome observes his family and community as they grieve in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing.

Shortly after his death, Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African American who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, after being accused of offending a white woman in her family's grocery store. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey toward recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions.

Although this book is intended for middle grade readers (grades 5-8), it is an excellent read for young adults and adults as well.