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Escaping from Houdini

Maggie Mason Smith
Clemson University, mason5@clemson.edu

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Montgomery, Candice. Home and Away. 384p. Page Street. Oct. 2018. tr $17.99. ISBN 9781624145957. Gr 10 Up—Tasia Quirk is a young Black woman who has everything that she could possibly want. A wealthy family, supportive friends, and a spot as the only girl on her football team at a private high school. Nothing could go wrong, until she catches her mom putting away a box that contains newspaper clippings, copies of her birth certificate, and a Polaroid of her mom and a white man. Her mom confesses that Tasia is biracial and her biological father is white. The teen realizes that everything she knew about her childhood is a lie. She goes on a quest to find out the truth about the mysterious box and where she fits. Montgomery explores the challenges of being biracial. Throughout, readers will cheer for Tasia as she faces difficult situations and realizes how they don’t determine her end result. The consistently strong writing and overall story arc will engage teens.

**VERDICT** Fans of *Everything*,

DRAWLING, Kerri. Escaping from Houdini. 416p. Little, Brown/Jimmy Patterson. Sept. 2018. tr $18.99. ISBN 9780316551700. POP Gr 9 Up—Fresh from attending a forensics school housed in the castle once home to Vlad the Impaler, Audrey Rose Wadsworth and her soon-to-be betrothed, Thomas Cresswell, have set sail on a luxury cruise to America. The ship’s entertainment, the Moonlight Carnival, boasts illusions, acrobatics, fire-eating, swordplay, and more, and is led by a promising young escape artist. But when a pattern of deaths begins to emerge, each with a tarot card left at the scene, Audrey Rose and Cresswell start to wonder if the Ringmaster of the Carnival may be involved. The pair launches into an investigation, but the Ringmaster’s obvious interest in Audrey Rose, coupled with a midnight bargain, complicates that plan. Unlike the previous two works of the series, the cruise ship *Etruria* offers a more intimate setting. Period images of carnival life set the scene at the beginning of each chapter and vivid descriptions of the various parts of the vessel allow readers to easily imagine the different locations onboard. Displaying her usual fierce determination and progressive ideals, Audrey Rose is once again a compelling protagonist; her lingering distress over the previous cases of Jack the Ripper and Vlad the Impaler, along with her relationship with the Ringmaster muddling her formerly solid bond with Cresswell, serves to successfully develop her character arc across the three works of the series even further. **VERDICT** Another delightfully mysterious addition to the series. A strong choice for YA shelves.—*Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University, SC*

**VERDICT** A gory thriller that moves at breakneck speed, this book will be hard to put down for older teens with a penchant for horror.—Shannon O’Connor, Unami Middle School, Chalfont, PA

MANISCALCO, Kerri. Escaping from Houdini. 416p. Little, Brown/Jimmy Patterson. Sept. 2018. tr $18.99. ISBN 9780316551700. POP Gr 9 Up—Fresh from attending a forensics school housed in the castle once home to Vlad the Impaler, Audrey Rose Wadsworth and her soon-to-be betrothed, Thomas Cresswell, have set sail on a luxury cruise to America. The ship’s entertainment, the Moonlight Carnival, boasts illusions, acrobatics, fire-eating, swordplay, and more, and is led by a promising young escape artist. But when a pattern of deaths begins to emerge, each with a tarot card left at the scene, Audrey Rose and Cresswell start to wonder if the Ringmaster of the Carnival may be involved. The pair launches into an investigation, but the Ringmaster’s obvious interest in Audrey Rose, coupled with a midnight bargain, complicates that plan. Unlike the previous two works of the series, the cruise ship *Etruria* offers a more intimate setting. Period images of carnival life set the scene at the beginning of each chapter and vivid descriptions of the various parts of the vessel allow readers to easily imagine the different locations onboard. Displaying her usual fierce determination and progressive ideals, Audrey Rose is once again a compelling protagonist; her lingering distress over the previous cases of Jack the Ripper and Vlad the Impaler, along with her relationship with the Ringmaster muddling her formerly solid bond with Cresswell, serves to successfully develop her character arc across the three works of the series even further. **VERDICT** Another delightfully mysterious addition to the series. A strong choice for YA shelves.—*Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University, SC*
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