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The Bone Houses

Maggie Mason Smith

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Arctic Quest, she unsurprisingly accompanies Bamabas on the harsh and dangerous race. Körner writes from her experience as a newcomer who became intrigued with dogsledding and who ran the Quest herself. She also includes Inuktitut words in the story. Emmylou and her prejudiced mother have an antagonistic relationship, and while their conflict is not fully resolved, Emmylou gains confidence, some understanding of her mother, and a feeling of belonging in her new home. **VERDICT** The high adventure of the dogsled race and fascinating background of the Native peoples may be enough to keep readers of adventure stories interested in this coming-of-age tale.—*MaryAnn Karre, Binghamton, NY*

LLOYD-JONES, Emily. *The Bone Houses.* 352p. Little, Brown. Sept. 2019. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780316418416.

Gr 7 Up—Teenager Ryn has been caring for her siblings via her steadily dwindling work as a gravedigger in their remote village. Though more villagers are turning to cremation than burial, the teen's work isn't getting any easier: the dead just won't stay dead. According to legend, a fae curse stirs the corpses, or "bone houses," that emerge from the nearby forest each night, and Ryn often enters the forest alone to stop the dead from reaching the village. On one of her outings, she finds Ellis, an apprentice mapmaker living with chronic pain. But with his arrival comes an attack more vicious than any before. Desperate to end the curse, the two teens travel through the forest to the mountains that once served as the home of the fae. With little backstory and only limited mention of communities outside of Ryn's village, the book focuses on the teens and their mission. Both characters are fully realized, each beginning with a singular goal but ultimately learning that love and loss are their own journeys. Lloyd-Jones turns Ryn's familiar fantasy quest through the woods into a new and magical journey, filled with the best parts of a fairy tale. Monsters, curses, love—both slow-burn and familial—beautiful descriptions of an eerie mythical Welsh setting, and a streak of humor make this stand-alone novel a must-read. **VERDICT** This fresh take on the undead is recommended for YA collections.—*Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University, SC*

MORRIS, Brittney. *SLAY.* 336p. S. & S./Simon Pulse. Sept. 2019. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9781534445420.

Gr 7 Up—Kiera Johnson is a 17-year-old African American girl attending a predominately white high school. She tries to fit in by keeping her head down and her grades up. However, her classmates often see her as a reluctant spokesperson for an entire race of people. Her sister and boyfriend want her to be more combative, and her mother wants her to be

more docile. Kiera's best friend, Harper, often unwittingly adds fuel to the fire by asking pointed race-based questions of her own. The mental gymnastics involved in constantly having to code switch to fit in with everyone else's idea of black womanhood is exhausting for Kiera. In an effort to keep her sanity, she secretly creates an exclusive online role-playing game called Slay. Characters duel using elaborately designed cards that highlight the diversity of the black experience. Kiera and her moderator, Cicada, manage to hide their identities while providing a much-needed respite for the black gaming community. Kiera's carefully constructed facade is threatened when one of the players of Slay is murdered. Now Kiera has to decide how far she's willing to go to protect the oasis she created for her community. **VERDICT** This book adds another layer to the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo narrative. Readers are invited to learn about the black experience in game culture through a compelling new lens. Exploring different versions of the African American experience, this is an important title for public and school libraries.—*Desiree Thomas, Worthington Library, OH*

PARKER, Morgan. *Who Put This Song On?* 336p. Delacorte. Sept. 2019. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9780525707516.

Gr 8 Up—Seventeen-year-old African American teen Morgan lives in the California suburbs and attends a private evangelical Christian high school. Her race makes her stand out in this very homogenous space. She is really into music and sees events in her life through that lens. Her music and clothing choices cause her to be seen as "not really black" by her peers, even though she very much sees herself that way, experiencing common microaggressions in her everyday school life and beyond. She has developed a close crew of outcast friends, but the one thing she isn't comfortable telling them about is her suicide attempt over the summer. Medication is now making her life much easier. This title is based on the lived experiences of the author, a poet, which lends a poignant truth to the narrative. In spite of this, the representation of a suburban African American teen in these specific "outsider" circumstances is needed. In addition, this title will serve to open up conversations about black girls and mental health. **VERDICT** A worthwhile purchase for any collection where teen contemporary realistic fiction is popular. Give to fans of Elizabeth Acevedo's *The Poet X*.—*Kristin Lee Anderson, Jackson County Library Services, OR*

SHIPPEN, Lauren. *The Infinite Noise: A Bright Sessions Novel.* 336p. (Bright Sessions: Bk. 1). Tor Teen. Sept. 2019. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781250297518.

Gr 7 Up—A spin-off of the popular podcast

The Bright Sessions, this touching and emotional novel expands on the story of Dr. Bright's youngest patient, 16-year-old Caleb. High school used to be easy—Caleb was a pretty good student and a star football player. But it got a lot harder when he learned he's an Atypical with an enhanced ability to sense and experience the emotions of those around him. It sounds great to be a superhero, but Caleb's power isn't so super. His trouble controlling negative emotions like anger and fear have led to fights and an inability to concentrate in class. Luckily, he has Dr. Bright, a therapist who works with Atypicals. She encourages Caleb to befriend Adam, a classmate whose emotions fit in with Caleb's rather than overwhelming them. Alternating between Caleb's and Adam's points of view, the narrative approaches mental health, romance, and emotion with vivid language and strong voices. Though Shippen incorporates fantastical elements, she focuses on the inner lives of her characters, giving only the necessary world-building, making this an ideal crossover book to move readers between realistic romance and speculative fiction. Fans of the podcast will revel in this closer look at the lives of the characters, and readers new to the franchise will drop into this world without missing a beat. **VERDICT** Give this to fans of the podcast, as well as readers who enjoy Becky Albertalli's *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, Rainbow Rowell's work, and *Welcome to Night Vale*. A first purchase for libraries that can't keep romance or superpower books on the shelves.—*Heather Waddell, Abbot Public Library, Marblehead, MA*

TERRY, Teri. *Contagion.* 416p. (Dark Matter: Bk. 1). Charlesbridge Teen. Jul. 2019. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 9781580899895.

Gr 7-10—Terry's American debut, the first in the "Dark Matter" trilogy, provides a sinister scientific plot mixed with the supernatural in the form of a contagious epidemic with world-ending consequences. Shay, an older high school student, and 12-year-old Callie are thrown together unexpectedly when Shay experiences a photographic recall of Callie's abduction from the previous year. The trigger for Shay's flashback comes from a missing person flyer she stumbles upon at the supermarket, leading her to call the contact number. This is how she meets Callie's brother Kai. Not realizing how powerful a role her memory will play in the upcoming quest to bring an end to the deadly disease, Shay vows to do whatever she can to help Kai find his younger sister Callie. Little do they know that Callie, who was abducted and experimented on with the deadly disease, is the first to survive its fatal impact. The problem is that her survival caused her to take on a new form, and when she escapes her imprisonment, a wave of destruction is unleashed upon the world. For some mysterious reason,

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