

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

The Bone Houses

Written by Emily Lloyd-Jones

Published by kctv7

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The Bone Houses

By Emily Lloyd-Jones

The Bone Houses Excerpt

Seventeen-year-old Aderyn ("Ryn") only cares about two things: her family, and her family's graveyard. And right now, both are in dire straits. Since the death of their parents, Ryn and her siblings have been scraping together a meager existence as gravediggers in the remote village of Colbren, which sits at the foot of a harsh and deadly mountain range that was once home to the fae. The problem with being a gravedigger in Colbren, though, is that the dead don't always stay dead.

The Temporal Bone Houses

The risen corpses are known as "bone houses," and legend says that they're the result of a decades-old curse. When Ellis, an apprentice mapmaker with a mysterious past, arrives in town, the bone houses attack with new ferocity. What is it that draws them near? And more importantly, how can they be stopped for good?

The Bone That Houses Hearing Mechanism

Together, Ellis and Ryn embark on a journey that will take them deep into the heart of the mountains, where they will have to face both the curse and the long-hidden truths about themselves.

I never thought a book about zombies could be so elegantly told. But I should have expected to be swayed by Emily Lloyd-Jones, the same author who wrote *The Hearts We Sold* which, despite the less-than-pretty-topic, sold me with its beautiful neat writing.

It's not easy to turn a fantasy story, with zombies of all things, into a fairytale complete with a moral message and universal themes of family, love and acceptance. Yet this author succeeded. She most certainly improved upon her previous release. I never thought a book about zombies could be so elegantly told. But I should have expected to be swayed by Emily Lloyd-Jones, the same author who wrote *The Hearts We Sold* which, despite the less-than-pretty-topic, sold me with its beautiful neat writing.

It's not easy to turn a fantasy story, with zombies of all things, into a fairytale complete with a moral message and universal themes of family, love and acceptance. Yet this author succeeded. She most certainly improved upon her previous release and I would even go as far as to say she went above and beyond what I expected.

This is about two young people who set on a journey into a dangerous forest. Ryn is trying to stop a deadly curse from destroying her family and Ellis is a mapmaker with huge ambition who decides to map a place no one dares explore – the forest. Together they face obstacles and become stronger on the inside and the outside.

My only issue with this book, and this author it seems, is that while her characters are not one-dimensional per se, they never do turn into real beings that could jump off the page. It very much feels like we are reading someone's story as opposed to someone telling us their story.

But this book remains a lovely and surprising experience. Normally I do not read about horror-ish elements but the un-dead and the violence did not shock me one bit, possibly because the writing enchanted me too much. Or maybe I'm changing. Regardless, I can't wait to see what Emily comes up with next and I am pleased to recommend this book to you.

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Bone Houses The Inner Ear

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THE BONE HOUSES is amazing, but I don't really think I agree with the comparisons to Buffy the Vampire Slayer and SKY IN THE DEEP-- if anything, it's like a cross between SABRIEL and THE BLACK CAULDRON. THE BONE HOUSES is a fantasy set in a place that seems to be based off Wales. Aderyn is a grave-digger who lives with her sister, Cerridwen, and her brother, Gareth. Their mother is dead, and their father and uncle have both disappeared my

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Aderyn goes into the forest to forage, but is mindful of her father's warnings that dangerous things rove in the trees after nightfall, including the "bone houses": or, the animated dead. They only stay in the forest and they only come after dark, but lately, Aderyn has been noticing that they have been venturing closer and closer to the edges--until one day, they're out.

In the meantime, their village has been graced with the presence of an unusual boy: a map-maker with chronic pain, who won't tell them his surname or why he's come to their village. Aderyn meets him when she saves his life and they end up forging an unusual alliance. Both of them need to go into the forest to find a legendary castle in the lands of the faerie, and a cauldron rumored to give life.

So, this was fifteen different kinds of amazing. The writing was lush and gorgeous, and it set the scenery of the village and the forest perfectly. I was very impressed by how richly-imagined this world was, considering that it was relatively simple. It does for Welsh folklore what Naomi Novik did with Eastern European folklore in SPINNING SILVER and UPROOTED. The faerie legends and the nod to The Black Cauldron made me so happy, and the Medieval village setting was so well done.

Other things I liked about this book were the chronic pain rep (understated, but rare in fantasy), especially since Ellis was never painted as weak or as a victim. Aderyn is a strong female character who doesn't need to be brash or throw her weight around (just her axe, heh heh) to be respected. I loved her close relationship with her siblings and the family goat, and her slow-burn attraction to Ellis. The way she fought back against the injustice of the village lord who wanted to ruin her family in his greed, and the hero's journey she goes upon to find the reason the dead are rising, were both really empowering for the character and instilled her with agency. She was never passive or bland.

Anyone who likes strong female fantasy characters and Welsh settings should pick up THE BONE HOUSES when it comes out, especially if, as I mentioned before, you enjoy Naomi Novik's work, or enjoyed SABRIEL and UPROOTED. It has that same fun, folkloric fantasy vibe, with a gloomy, Gothic edge to keep things interesting. Apparently it's a standalone too, so no need to commit. ;)

Thanks to the publisher for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review!Â

4.5 stars ...more

Eeeek. Iâ€™m so excited to share this book with everyone. There are folktales and magic and undead corpses shambling around. There is a teenage gravedigger with a (slightly) dysfunctional family. There is a mapmaker who can never find his way. And my favorite character is a goat.

EDIT: For more information about the bookâ€™s release and some preorder fun, check out my website!

Bone Houses The Pituitary Gland

Would definitely classify this as dark fantasy, what with the rotting corpses and reanimated dead and all, yet it's strangely funny at the most unexpected times. Reads like a YA version of *The Black Cauldron* and features a cast of fully-realized characters, including a fierce, axe-wielding female protagonist, a gallant map maker, and a loveable goat. A gruesome delight!

I was confused here because the book felt middle grade for me but I guess it's YA? Sometimes it felt too wordy when I just wanted it to get some action. The world building is neat, though, just wish it was a little more fast paced.

Bone Houses The Ear

ARC received in exchange for an honest review - thank you!

This story is like a fairy-tale : it's fantastical, eerie, and gorgeously written. But also like a fairy-tale, the magic vanishes if you think too deeply about it.

Seventeen-year-old Aderyn verch Gwyn is the eldest daughter of the gravedigger in the village of Colbren. Ever since her father disappeared into the forest one day, it's been her responsibility to put food on the table by burying Colbren's dead. She and her younger siblings - ARC received in exchange for an honest review - thank you!

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Seventeen-year-old Aderyn verch Gwyn is the eldest daughter of the gravedigger in the village of Colbren. Ever since her father disappeared into the forest one day, it's been her responsibility to put food on the table by burying Colbren's dead. She and her younger siblings - brother Gareth and sister Ceridwen - are heavily in debt to Lord Eymon and risk eviction at any moment.

After years of digging graves, Ryn had little fear of death. Death was quiet and stillness. It was fresh earth and wildflowers. It was coin in her purse and a hole in the ground.

The problem is that enough people just aren't dying. And even the ones who do die prefer cremation over burial, in order to avoid coming back as a bone house. The bone houses are basically zombies, walking skeletons, and if you wander into the forest next to Colbren you risk running into them. An eighteen-year-old mapmaker named Ellis discovers this the hard way: trying to spend the night in the forest, he's narrowly saved from being carried off by the bone houses when Ryn bursts into his life and destroys the skeletons. Luckily for them, bone houses aren't able to go beyond the forest's edges. Until suddenly, they are - bone houses attack Colbren, leaving destruction in their wake.

Ryn and Ellis soon strike a deal. Ryn needs coin, and Ellis (who's somehow mysteriously connected to the prince's castle at Caer Aberhen) has plenty of it. He'll give it to her if she can take him into the forest, deeper than anyone dares to go, and through to the mountains of Annwyl on the other side. The land there used to be the domain of Arawn Otherking, lord of the fae; though he's long gone, Ellis is determined to map the area to win fame and glory. Ryn also wants to find a way to destroy the bone houses, so she's more than happy to follow him into the land of Arawn.

What follows is a lushly described tale heavily based on Welsh mythology.

Now, while I don't know much about Welsh mythology, I LOVED how atmospheric it made the novel.

The Bone Houses

There's an old Celtic saying I read once - long is the day, and long is the night, and long is the waiting of Arawn. I don't precisely know what it means, but it sounds beautiful, and it's always hovered at the back of my mind. This novel was like that: hauntingly beautiful, but not much is explained. So if you try to actually dissect it, it stops being enjoyable. I'm talking about all the questions you're left with at the end of the book. I can't actually articulate them because of spoilers, but be aware that The Bone Houses doesn't try very hard to explain most of what happens.

You really do just have to think of it as a fairy-tale. Like, the village of Colbren seems to exist mostly in a void; there are no mentions of any other places except Caer Aberhen, let alone other countries in this fantasy world. Considering she encountered bone houses in the forest literally every day, I also found it weird that Ryn couldn't make any other villagers believe her about their existence until they attacked. Nor do we get much knowledge of what the main characters look like until well over halfway through the story.

But the writing helped me forget any deficiencies the book had. It's evocative without being purple or flowery, and the descriptions of the forest in particular are BRILLIANT. There's also a near-drowning scene which is described so well that I actually felt like I was in the water myself.

The romance is also lovely. It's extremely, extremely slow-burn: nothing happens until 85% of the way through, and even then it's more the hint of romance than anything else. But that was perfect. We get to see pages and pages of build-up as Ryn and Ellis, two very lonely people, learn how to trust and be attracted to each other's strength.

OVERALL

Beautiful prose and the kind of story perfect for autumn nights, but don't look too deep.

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...more

Book: rising corpses and deep mystery and curses and mountains.

Me: HmMMM ok ok keep going.

Book: '....standalone.'

Me: FUCKING STOP! WHAT. SAY NO MORE!

adds book to TBR