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# Doll Bones

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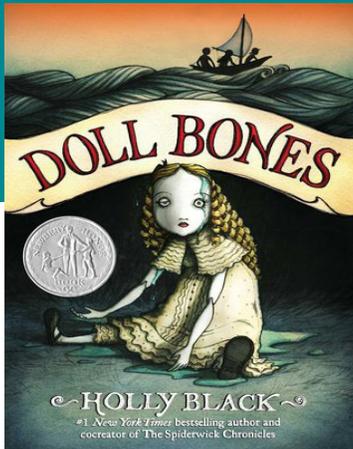
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## Book Review

# Doll Bones

### Author

Holly Black

### Illustrator

### Reviewer

Emily Loveless

### Rating

Excellent

### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

### Pages

256

### Year

2013

### Publisher

Doubleday Children's

### ISBN

9781416963981

Zach, Poppy, and Alice have been playing one continuous game of pretend for almost as long as they've been friends. But when Zach's dad says it's time for Zach to grow up, Zach simply refuses to play with the girls anymore. With their friendship on the brink of crumbling, Poppy claims that she's been dreaming of the Queen—a bone china doll who ruled over all their games—and the ghost of a girl who has tasked them with burying the doll in her empty grave. There's just enough creepy evidence to suggest that Poppy isn't making it all up, so the three set off on an adventure that quickly becomes an epic, and dangerous quest involving ghost-sightings, a stolen sailboat, and breaking into a library. Finally, the friends are able to lay the bone china doll and its ghost to rest.

Doll Bones clearly follows the reputation and tone of Black's previous work, bringing a blend of the fantastical and disturbing that is reminiscent of Neil Gaiman and *Criminal Minds*. She parallels the intense struggles that Zach, Poppy, and Alice face with family and growing up with equally heightened and stressful supernatural circumstances. Zach, Poppy, and Alice are each relatable in their own way, and their problems and emotions feel real without being melodramatic, despite the context of the story. The story behind the bone china doll might, like Gaiman's *Coraline*, be more unsettling for adults than younger readers, but it may bear screening, especially for those on the lower end of the recommended ten- to fourteen-year-old age range.

\*Contains disturbing images and story line.