

Doll Bones

Holly Black

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Zach Barlow, Alice Magnaye, and Poppy Bell are close friends who play a game with a creepy porcelain doll and several action figures. The various characters sail the high seas and fight monsters on the *Neptune's Pearl*. They'd played for years, but one day Zach ends the game in as he was frustrated by his dad, who throughout his action figure in anger. After the game ended, Poppy started dreaming of the Great Queen, played by her and the porcelain doll. Poppy believed the doll harbored the ghost of Eleanor Kerchner who needed to return to her grave. She tells Alice and the two bring Zach along on their journey to bury Eleanor Kerchner's ghost. The trio leave by bus on a daring journey where they learn the story of Eleanor on the search for her grave.

I absolutely loved the addition of illustrations throughout the novel. I felt that they really contributed to the dark, sort of creepy mood to the novel. They were also beautiful and kept me engaged through the novel by depicting the characters as they go along in their journey. Another great element of the novel is the character development we see as Zach, Alice, and Poppy go on their adventure. While the situation is a bit creepy and something we may not be able to relate to, we can definitely relate to them as they explore the different themes on their journey. Also, the fairy-tale scenery adds to the story and keeps readers interested. It's very unique to read. In addition, I love the style it's written in. It reads like a story book that's been elevated for middle and high schoolers. It's definitely a contrast to the stream of consciousness that we see in so many modern novels but it was refreshing to read.

Seventh graders and above can handle this book as can sixth graders who have an aptitude for reading and like adventure novels. This book is suitable for people aged 12-15 although it can be a great read for anyone who wants their next adventure novel with a bit of a creepy twist. This would definitely make a great gift, coming from someone who was the recipient of this novel as a gift and loved it!

Recommended Titles

Raven's Gate – Anthony Horowitz

Chasing Vermeer – Blue Balliett

Mosquitoland – David Arnold