



**ISBN (HC):** 978-0997958034

**ISBN (PB):** 978-0997958041

**Publisher:** Blue Bronco Books

**Page Count:** 188



# Bone Tree

## ABOUT THE BOOK:

Elsie battles a terrifying ghost to keep her best friend around forever. But does forever have too much of a cost? Elsie's best friend, Roman, is dying. But Roman has a plan to escape death. He wants to be resurrected through the powers of the Bone Tree and the curse of the Woman in White, Mary Simon, whose body lies beneath the tree. Terrified, yet determined not to lose him, Elsie promises Roman to summon Mary's ghost and the powers of the Bone Tree to bring him back when he dies.

When the Bone Tree's magic works and Roman resurrects, Elsie vows to do anything to keep him around, even if that means battling an angry, screeching banshee, with talons for fingers. But what Elsie doesn't realize is that the cost of keeping Roman around may be too high. When the Woman in White kidnaps Roman's brother, Jake, and threatens to take his life as revenge, Elsie must choose between saving the lives of many from the deadly grasp of Mary Simon, the Woman in White, or keeping her best friend.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR:

Jenna Lehne is a tea-sipping, horror-loving mom of two boys, and a kitten named Lemons, in Calgary, Alberta. She's a fourth-year Pitch Wars mentor and contributor on the blog MidnightSocietyTales.com. Her short story was published in the horror anthology, Betty Bites Back. Bone Tree is her debut middle-grade novel.



## PRE-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

### Observe the illustration on the front cover.

Look at the front cover, what do you notice? Consider the color choices that the cover artist uses for the different characters you see. Why do you think some characters are dark and some are light?

### Read the back cover.

What predictions do you have after reading the back cover?  
What decision do you think the main characters are going to make?

## READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

***Roman takes off his glasses and gives me a sad little smile.  
"Because I'm dying".***

### **Chapters 1-3**

- Have you ever heard of any myths or legends? Do you believe in myths or legends?
- How is Roman reacting to the news of his illness? Compare it to the way Elsie is reacting. Why do you think they have such different reactions?

### **Chapters 4-6**

- What do Elsie and Roman do to find out more information about the Bone Tree?
- Why does Elsie agree to bring Roman back from the dead? Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

***No one ever calls after  
midnight with good news.***

### **Chapters 7-9**

- Describe the relationship between Elsie and Roman. Do you have a best friend like that?
- Many people handle death and grief differently. Describe some ways you see people grieving in this book?

***Romeo Oxford,  
this is Echo Lima,  
over and out.***



***Are more ghosts like you  
suffering?***

### **Chapters 10-12**

- Did the Bone Tree work? What clues did Roman leave for Elsie at the end of chapter 10?
- Why does Roman want to know what his funeral was like?
- Explain what happens when a token is buried?
  - How might that create a problem?
- Are you surprised that Jake goes to the cemetery in the middle of the night like Elsie? Why or why not?

### **Chapters 13-15**

- What information does Mrs. Young provide?
  - How is she an important secondary character?
- Explain how the mood changes in chapter 14.
- Describe the ghost, Mary.
  - Why do you think she is like that?

***That's the last thing I hear  
before everything goes black.***

### **Chapters 16-19**

- Analyze the climax of the story.
- How do Mary's powers work?

### **Chapter 20-22**

- How do Jake and Elsie use their problem solving skills? Have you ever had to be creative or think outside the box to solve a problem?
- Why do you think Elsie decides to go home?

### **Chapters 23-26**

- Compare and contrast the plans of Elsie and Jake to Roman's.
- Why can't Roman's parents see him?
- Explain Roman's decision to cross over.
  - In your opinion, was that the right choice?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- Consider how Jake and Elsie's relationship changed throughout the story. Have you ever had a relationship with someone that changed?
  - Describe that relationship.
- Research a myth or legend from your hometown. Do you believe in it? Why or why not?
- Who would you bring back from the dead and why?



Write about a relationship.

Myth or legend.

Who would you bring back?



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