



The Entropy of Bones

By Ayize Jama-Everett

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Chabi doesn't realize her martial arts master may not be on the side of the gods. She does know he's changed her from being an almost invisible kid to one that anyone — or at least anyone smart — should pay attention to. But attention from the wrong people can mean more trouble than even she can handle. Chabi might be emotionally stunted. She might have no physical voice. She doesn't communicate well with words, but her body is poetry.

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The Entropy of Bones By Ayize Jama-Everett Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1435360 in Books
- Published on: 2015-09-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .50" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Jama-Everett's book consistently resists easy categorization. Chabi's mixed racial background offers a potentially nuanced look from a perspective that seems underserved. And by setting the book in a weird, if recognizable, Bay Area, Jama-Everett captures something about the way it feels to live so close to so much money and yet so far; he traces the differences between postindustrial East Bay towns, the gray melancholy of an older city, the particular feeling of struggling while surrounded by otherworldly wealth. If the book veers among different approaches — now a philosophical kung fu master story, now a seduction into a rarefied subculture, now an esoteric universe made from liner notes and the journal entries of a brilliantly imaginative teenager — there's nevertheless a vitality to the voice and a weirdness that, while not always controlled or intentional, is highly appealing for just that reason."

— *New York Times Book Review*

"Ayize Jama-Everett's Liminal People novels feel not simply refreshing, but necessary. It's not just that Jama-Everett's superheroes—or, as he dubs them, liminals—are overwhelmingly people of color, from all over the world and drawing on many different cultural traditions and historical backgrounds....What feels almost revolutionary about Jama-Everett's books is that they imagine a world in flux, one that is about to change, and in which that change is intimately linked to racial justice. The central question of these books is what kind of world we will all end up living in, one that embraces nihilism, or one that is driven by creativity—where the latter is inextricably linked to racial, global, and cultural diversity."

— *Strange Horizons*

"Rooted in Chabi's voice, the story is spare, fierce, and rich, and readers will care just as much about the delicate, damaged relationship between Chabi and her mother as the threat of world destruction."

— *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"... a novel of initiation, another tale of a novice trained physically and spiritually in awesome mysteries. Think the Wachowski siblings' *Matrix* movies. Think Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles* comic book series. "When we meet Chabi, she is a teenage girl living on a houseboat in Sausalito, California, and taking martial arts lessons from a mysterious Indian man named Narayana Raj. Disconnected from her alcoholic mother, she is able to speak without opening her mouth (and without, apparently, having anyone remark on that peculiarity). She's also a fearsome adolescent warrior, able to run incredible distances at blazing speed and capable of fighting and killing fearsome opponents, human and otherwise. When her teacher abandons her, she must decide whether she wants to use her skills in the service of the rich and powerful.

"Chabi is . . . in over her head, but she doesn't quite know it. Her inability to see the big picture gives *The Entropy of Bones* a poignancy that is not often found in a genre where the good guys are always expected to win."

— Michael Berry, *LA Review of Books*

"If *The Entropy of Bones* was a sandwich, it would chip your tooth. If it was a drink, it would make you blind for a few panicked seconds before the world returned. The ending is relentless, breathless, and tragic."

— *Nerds of a Feather*

"Chabi would never be like other teens in the Bay Area. Her black-Mongolian heritage, her lack of a father, her mother's alcoholism--those make her unusual but what really sets her apart is that she is liminal, able to

do things that normal humans simply can't. Although mute from birth Chabi can push her thoughts into the minds of others. Trained from a young age to be an unstoppable killer by a man with shady motives, Chabi falls into a dangerous crowd led by the charismatic Rice after her mentor disappears. Before she can fall completely under Rice's sway, a man familiar with liminals tries to tell her the score. VERDICT In this follow-up to "The Liminal People" and "The Liminal War", Jama-Everett focuses on an outsider character who can show us more of the powers at play in his world. When the novel succeeds, it does so mostly on the strength of Chabi's voice."

— *Library Journal*

Reviews of Ayize Jama-Everett's Liminal novels:

"In Ayize Jama-Everett's *The Liminal War*, the family one chooses is just as important as the one a person is born into. Taggart is a "Liminal," a being who can manipulate human molecules and DNA, allowing him to both harm and heal. When his adopted daughter is kidnapped by his psychotic former mentor, Taggart will rent the fabric of time and space to make sure his daughter is found before his former master can twist her mind. While there are forces stronger than Liminals bent on stopping Taggart and his friends — a pot-smoking god and a musician who takes him back to 1970s London — they may be outmatched by Taggart's biological daughter, Tamara, who will risk her own life to save her sister's."

— Nancy Hightower, *Washington Post*

"Like Ursula K. Le Guin and Octavia Butler before him, Jama-Everett has a knack for braiding issues of spirituality and race throughout a compelling fantasy landscape."

— Leilani Clark, KQED

"Slavery and indenture are themes that run through all three books. Taggart's own relationship with his boss is more that of a servant to his master than that of a mentee to his mentor. At one point, Nordeen tells Taggart, "I told you from the beginning we all serve someone." That harsh truth runs throughout these novels, recapitulated in interesting and often heartbreaking ways. No matter how much wealth they possess or what near magical abilities they command, each Liminal is concerned with controlling others and being controlled by someone else. Jama-Everett is skilled at moving beyond simplistic notions of good and evil and presenting the full complexity of master/servant relationships."

— Michael Berry, *LA Review of Books*

"The action sequences are smartly orchestrated, but it is Taggart's quest to retrieve his own soul that gives *The Liminal People* its oomph. Jama-Everett has done a stellar job of creating a setup that promises even greater rewards in future volumes."

— *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Fast-paced and frequently violent, Jama-Everett's engaging and fulfilling debut offers a compelling take on the classic science-fiction convention of the powerful misfit; incorporates an interesting, multiethnic cast of characters; and proves successful as both an action-packed thriller and a careful look at the moral dilemmas of those whose powers transcend humanity."

— *Publishers Weekly*

"A great piece of genre fiction. But picking which genre to place it in isn't easy. The first in a planned series, it's got the twists and taut pacing of a thriller, the world-warping expansiveness of a fantasy yarn, and even the love-as-redemption arc of a romance. Oh yeah, a lot of the characters in it have superhuman powers, too."

— *The Rumpus*

“Ayize Jama-Everett has brewed a voodoo cauldron of Sci-Fi, Romance, Crime, and Superhero Comic, to provide us with a true gestalt of understanding, offering us both a new definition of “family” and a world view on the universality of human conduct. *The Liminal People* — as obviously intended — will draw different reactions from different readers. But none of them will stop reading until its cataclysmic ending.”
—Andrew Vachss

“Ayize’s imagination will mess with yours, and the world won’t ever look quite the same again.”
—Nalo Hopkinson

About the Author

Ayize Jama-Everett: Ayize Jama-Everett was born in 1974 and raised in Harlem, New York. Since then he has traveled extensively in Northern Africa, New Hampshire, and Northern California. He holds a Master's in Clinical Psychology and a Master's in Divinity. He teaches religion and psychology at Starr King School for the Ministry when he's not working as a school therapist at the College Preparatory School. When not educating, studying, or beating himself up for not writing enough, he's usually enjoying aged rums and practicing his aim.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cassandra Tucker:

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Daniel Colon:

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Irma Murray:

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