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Review of The Cost of Knowing

Written by Brittney Morris

Educator Reviewer: Cameron Stevenson

Student Reviewer: Taylor Weyer



Morris, B. (2021). *The cost of knowing*. Simon Pulse.

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Adult Review:

The Cost of Knowing is a story that leaves its reader with a powerful message while delivering on a gripping yet human story. Morris's message that "joy in the face of oppression is its own kind of bravery" is one that has stuck with me months after my first read. Morris doesn't hold back any emotional punches and does a great job of making her readers feel like they are experiencing every moment in this tear-jerker of a story.

Our protagonist Alex Rufus spends most of the book filled with anxiety and terrified of the future. Plagued with the ability to see the future of every object he touches, he foresees the death of his younger brother, Isaiah. The reader spends a large portion of the novel feeling Alex's anxiety and terror as he battles his brother's future, but, more importantly, the reader gets to experience the love and tenderness of a mending relationship between two brothers who will have the reader loving them, almost as much as they love each other.

Morris's ability to balance the message of racial oppression without her characters losing any of their humanity is powerful. She tells a story that allows her characters to be proudly Black, without that being the extent of their character development. She tells a story that is unapologetically Black, while delivering on story elements that are gripping and unique. She tells a story that breaks our hearts, and by the end of it, has her readers thanking her for it.

More books like, *The Cost of Knowing*, need to be in classrooms. This story tackles topics of racial oppression, anxiety, loss, and trauma while keeping the reader on the edge of their seat. Students want and need to be engaged. Students also need to explore topics that will challenge them as human beings and stretch them to think about facets of life that are difficult. This book does both, and I would recommend any 8-12 teacher to find room for it in their classroom.

Student Review:

The Cost of Knowing by Brittney Morris follows the life of 16 year old Alex Rufus who has the ability to see the future of any person or object he touches. Due to this "curse," as Alex would call it, he suffers from intense anxiety, and when he foresees his brother Isaiah's death, he has to make an impossible decision. Does he try to change the future, or does he accept their inevitable fate? Morris' writing is not only engaging, but informative as she highlights the disparities between white and black children in America while also giving the reader a fascinating story that compels them to keep wanting more.

Throughout the book Morris writes relatable characters. The way that Alex describes the feelings and effects of anxiety such as "sweaty palms" and a "racing heart" beat are universally relatable among all people regardless of race or age. What's interesting about Alex is that his anxiety stems from the fear of what he will see when the palm of his hand touches any object or person and

having to possibly live with the cost of knowing their future. This ability in some ways puts a strain on relationships with the most important people in his life.

In theory, it's important for a book to have some kind of meaning or significance, especially in young adult fiction. Morris is able to illustrate the life of young African Americans who are racially profiled and have to be extra cautious of the way they speak or act for their own safety. Not only does this book shed light on modern day racism, it also deals with other important matters such as denial, grief, and predominantly toxic masculinity. Our main character Alex struggles with understanding his emotions and what it means to be a "real man" in today's society. Alex's visions make him realize how important the little moments and surprises in life are because he has already seen them before they happen. This could leave an important message with the reader and make them reflect on their own life, values, and priorities.

The Cost of Knowing by Brittney Morris is a beautiful yet heartbreaking story that shows two brothers struggling to navigate life while also mending their once broken relationship. In all honesty I will say that this book was a captivating read that I would recommend to anyone, more specifically other high school students.