

ABE LINCOLN BOOK AWARD 2021 NOMINEE

SLAY

By Brittney Morris



By day, seventeen-year-old Kiera Johnson is an honors student, a math tutor, and one of the only Black kids at Jefferson Academy. But at home, she joins hundreds of thousands of Black gamers who duel worldwide as Nubian personas in the secret multiplayer online role-playing card game, SLAY. No one knows Kiera is the game developer, not her friends, her family, not even her boyfriend.

But when a teen in Kansas City is murdered over a dispute in the SLAY world, news of the game reaches mainstream media, and SLAY is labeled a racist, exclusionist, violent hub for thugs and criminals. Even worse, an anonymous troll infiltrates the game, threatening to sue Kiera for “anti-white discrimination.”

Driven to save the only world in which she can be herself, Kiera must preserve her secret identity and harness what it means to be unapologetically Black in a world intimidated by Blackness. But can

she protect her game without losing herself in the process?