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The Blazing Star

Imani Josey

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Sixteen-year-old Portia White is used to being overlooked—after all, her twin sister Alex is a *literal* genius.

But when Portia holds an Egyptian scarab beetle during history class, she takes center stage in a way she never expected: she faints. Upon waking, she is stronger, faster, and braver than before. And when she accidentally touches the scarab again?

She wakes up in ancient Egypt—her sister and an unwitting freshman in tow.

Great.

Mysterious and beautiful, Egypt is more than they could have ever imagined from their days in the classroom. History comes alive as the three teens realize that getting back to the present will be the most difficult thing they've ever done. Stalked by vicious monsters called Scorpions, every step in the right direction means a step closer to danger.

As Portia and the girls discover that they're linked to the past by more than just chance, they have to decide what it truly means to be yourself, to love your sister, and to find your way home.

The Blazing Star Details

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Author : Imani Josey

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From Reader Review The Blazing Star for online ebook

Ayah says

I received a review copy in exchange with an honest review.

Very beautiful and descriptive writing was used in this book to describe even the most mundane thoughts. You will be highlighting, like a lot. You might as well take flirting notes from the Pharaoh himself!

Portia always has to go along with whatever her twin sister does because she is a genius! Twinning is her sister's brand, but Portia is tired of being her shadow.

When they visit a museum, Portia touches a Scarab, and suddenly ends up in Ancient Egypt with her twin and a new freshman.

There, she uncovers the truth about who she really is, finds her voice, and learn about her real ancestors.

I have to start by saying " LOOK AT THAT COVER!!!" Doesn't it Diversify the fuck out of you????? An Egyptian, person of color is on it..... I am an Egyptian Person of Color!!!!

I have to say that the plot was very slow at first, that I almost lost interest to finish it. However, Portia's sassiness and non-stop "snarks" , even in the most serious occasions, never ceased to be. That kept me flipping the pages with a wide smile plastered to my face.

By 40% of the book, I was slowly, yet surely enjoying this book. I mean, with an unknown mystery, a coming of age tale, magic , and people of color everywhere, how could I resist??

I have to admit that I ended up staying up till 5 in the morning to finish the book . There was just so much to uncover, and also romance stuff were finally connecting!!!!

Overall, I highly recommend this book. Yes, it was a bit too slow at first, but it is definitely worth it.

I give it 4/5 stars

Sandra (LadyGrey Reads) says

2016 Book Awards

Runner Up: Worst Read 2016

(more information about these awards on my blog)

I received this book as an ARC from Wise Ink Creative Publishing on NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book had potential to me. It held a lot of things that are exactly to my taste, such as ancient civilizations, magic and time travel.

Aaaand then there were things that I didn't like and unfortunately they outweighed the good things.

1, Predictability

I found so much of this story to be incredibly predictable. I felt like I knew exactly who was a good and a bad guy from the start, as well as who was going to live or die and who was going to fall in and out of love. And all of those predictions came true!

2, Teenage-y drama

Yeah, this might have to do with me being 25, but I just can't stand books with a lot of teenage drama/angst/whatever. Come to think of it I couldn't really stand those when I was a teenager either, so maybe it's just a thing I've never enjoyed. But if you don't mind books that fall in this category you shouldn't have a problem with this one.

3, No editor?

I know I received this as an arc, which might mean it's not the finished version and there might be mistakes, but seriously; this many mistakes? I almost wished I had this in print just so I could mark all the faults - and I don't even like marking out all of the faults to my students! I just... it is just very annoying to have both grammar mistakes, misspelled words, sentences where the words have been mixed up as well as words, sentences and even whole paragraphs repeated when you're trying to enjoy the story. And to have at least one of these things happen on every page...

I can see potential for this story, but I don't think I'll continue reading a possible sequel. Sorry.

Kay says

Thank you Netgalley and the publisher for approving my request for a free digital copy in exchange for a review.

The Blazing Star is a strong debut, albeit, as expected, one with flaws. Nevertheless, I would venture to say that this book as "un-put-down-able."

TBS was both character and plot driven, a book that feels like a mishmash of The Mummy and the Kane Chronicles, with hints of Brandy Colbert's style at points- it may just be the Chicago setting. The dynamic of a sibling relationship is very well handled in my opinion (but to be fair I am an only child). However, the repeated use of the word "twinning" was a bit offsetting and I do hope that word doesn't appear as often in upcoming books. I liked the multiple nerd references including Harry Potter and The Lord of the Rings.

The secondary characters were also very interesting but their back stories were inconsistently developed. While there is a particular character appearance in the early part of the book, the details of this are never fully explored and are instead disregarded with a "more on that later" which is not resolved before the end of TBS. One can hope that this will be handled in the sequel.. With regard to the romance, it is age appropriate and not entirely predictable, which is something I did appreciate.

I do believe that the story would have been improved through the inclusion of multiple points of view, and

even a point of view on how their father is adjusting to their disappearance. Speaking of father, I could not get over Portia calling her father Rich or Richard.....just odd. Additionally, the issues of the Scorpions felt a bit clumsy and never felt adequately explained. In that regard, TBS fell short of the required world building.

Despite these drawbacks I would not hesitate to recommend This Blazing Star. One cannot go wrong with a book that has diversity, strong female characters and family dynamics.

Chai (Like Chai Tea) says

It was more than the Serk in the Delta, or three girls swimming the Rivers of Time. This was gods and goddesses, myths and legends, and very old magic.

The Blazing Star has girls with different personalities and strengths, time travel, female friendships, magic good and bad, sisterhood, POC characters, gods and goddesses and a bit of romance which I can see that will develop in the next book. I also didn't know that this is part of a series. Not complaining though because this was fascinating AND MAGICAL to read and I love how it takes you back to ancient Egypt.

And there's also that moment when you say something but the person you're communicating with is from another time and they don't get it:

"You are such a brat. I should have let them steal your money."

"I'm a what?"

"You. Are. A. Brat."

"...?"

That's one of my favorites by the way.

Full and proper review will be posted near the release date.

leenahreads says

«this was gods and goddesses, myths and legends, and very old magic»

This book was filled with adventure and magic and sisterhood and I was caught up in all of it. I liked how every time Portia turned a corner in the temple, something was bound to happen. She just can't stay out of trouble that one.

Let me just say that I **love** prince seti so much, I NEED MORE OF HIM!! I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE SECOND BOOK BECAUSE I AM STARTING TO SHIP A PARTICULAR PAIR SO HARD AND I JUST

WANT MORE ROMANCE BETWEEN THEM. That particular scene at the last chapter had my heart soaring all over the place. (I also think something might happen between Rawer and Selene, but that could be just me).

But putting romance aside, I loved the sisterhood and the conflict between the twins. I am eager to see how they'll work out their issues. Every single girl and woman in this book was amazing, I think I liked Sikara so much, and I loved the priestesses dynamic with the three girls. And other than that, I loved the plot twists, they certainly weren't something I expected.

? Poppy ? says

I love science-fictions and even more when it include time-travelling, so this book is just made for me. :P Plus the synopsis sounds SO good. Can't wait to read it.

Joyce (Completely Booked) says

I have to say that I absolutely loved this book. While I consider myself the farthest thing from an Egyptologist, I will say that ancient Egypt has always been fascinating to me. There have been a lot of YA historical fiction books that take place in time periods that have been fascinating to me and that I only know through books. A lot of these books are not usually written by people of color, unfortunately, and this makes me a bit frustrated since whitewashing of Egypt has been a thing for as long as I can remember. As a kid, I remember my dad telling me that Egyptians are always played by white people which isn't totally accurate given that it's in Africa and that idea has followed me my whole life. The release of Nemesis, which takes place in an Egyptian inspired culture but seems to not really feature a ton of POC characters, as well as Colleen Houck's Reawakened series (whose reviews scream loud and clear that the book is problematic) has left a lot to be desired for me.

The Blazing Star did not disappoint.

I thought that the characters were realistic in their thoughts and motivations within the story, as if I was in the situation that they found themselves in (time traveling to ancient Egypt), I would react in basically the same way. The characters seemed like people I would interact with and people that I probably would meet on the street somewhere or even be related to and known on a personal level. I especially felt connected to Portia, who is presented as an underdog who suddenly finds herself with these abilities she didn't even know she had. She is terrified of them and doesn't know how to handle the responsibility she finds herself with but she adjusts well. What I like about the narrative arc in this book is that there doesn't seem to be an instant acceptance of her chosen one role as if she'd always knew she'd be special. The beginning does paint her in sort of stereotypical, kind of cliché underdog position, but that didn't really stop me from cheering for her. I felt her disappointment, her confusion, her jealousy all as if they were my own. I felt as though I had been that person before at some point in my life.

The story starts out pretty slow, especially since I kept waiting for the time travel to happen, but that's also my fault for completely lacking patience. I was very excited by the premise and it did live up to my

expectations. The first few chapters serve to set up Portia and Alex's relationship, as well as establishing their relationship with Selene, a freshman who appears and is sort of the catalyst for setting things in motion. The fact that she is constantly referred to as "the freshman" will remind you that she is, in fact, a freshman, which kind of irritated me but not enough to ruin the book. Selene essentially becomes another sister to Portia and I really liked the way that that relationship starts to develop. The book is very much about sisterhood, as the synopsis indicates, be it the good parts or the bad. Alex seems to want to control a lot of aspects of the lives of her and her twin sister and it gets to the point where I actively was just hoping Alex went away. Even the way Portia spoke of them "twinning" made it seem like it was miserable for her. It almost seemed as if Alex couldn't have cared less about what her sister wanted and that really bothered me. Maybe I wasn't supposed to dislike Alex as much as I did but I found myself enjoying the book a bit more when she wasn't around. I wanted to see Portia make decisions for herself and Alex never seemed to want to let that happen.

A lot of this book is very much about girl power, which is always a plus in my book, and while I can't vouch for the historical accuracy of Egyptian priestesses who can also slay monsters, if this was true and was left out of my history books, I will be very disappointed. The three high priestesses at the Temple of Isis are complicated, badass women who I loved hearing about with every fiber of my being. They were very important to moving the plot along, explaining where Portia got her powers from and why she was here and they were also complete badasses. I would read a book on just the three of them alone, to be honest, especially Sikara, who is probably my favorite. The three priestesses complemented the three girls very well and helped very much in my immersion into the world of Ancient Egypt.

Speaking of which, Imani Josey does a spectacular job in describing every little thing. I felt as I was reading as if I could see everything that Portia could see. After time traveling, the girls could speak and understand the language, which reminded me of the instant translators in a lot of science fiction novels and some of the words that the Ancient Egyptian characters used seemed more modern than anything else, but I wasn't sure if that was just the way Portia translated them to herself or if it was something else. Once again, that was just a small issue that I glossed over as I found myself engrossed in the novel and wanting to know what happened.

There is romance in the novel, but it isn't super prominent, by which I mean it is there but it's not there to a distracting degree. After losing the guy she has a crush on to her sister (which I'm still upset about) and finding herself in Egypt, she meets a guy and saves his life. There is no insta-love, which is great, because there is so much else going on that that would be kind of irritating. They see each other again, mostly by accident, and you can see that there is something between them but it does seem more gradual than a lot of what I have seen in YA which made me enjoy myself even more.

The main conflict within the novel takes a bit of time to develop even once Portia finds herself in Ancient Egypt and isn't totally resolved by the end which makes me hope that there is going to be another book. There are twists and turns that I'm sure might seem fairly obvious to some people but work very well in this book and that I still liked even if some of them weren't as surprising as they were meant to be.

Overall, I enjoyed this novel very much and would definitely recommend it to anyone, but especially if you enjoy historical fiction with a twist, Ancient Egypt, books written by and about people of color and well-written heroines.

RATING: 4.5/5

Riley says

I really wanted to finish this book but I just couldn't. I've been reading it for almost 2 weeks now and have barely made it to page 40. It is just so slow and I can't force myself to finish anymore

Ceillie Simkiss says

First reaction: OMG

Read the full review here!

Silvana [The Book Voyagers] says

The Blazing Star is Imani Josey's debut novel and it's 1000% magical. There is so much in this novel that you'll feel blessed and loved and this is what you want in your fantasy stories. It has a biracial main character, mythology, a non-western setting (Egypt), time-traveling, sisterhood, characters of color, royalty, magic, etc. (???)?: ??

This was gods and goddesses, myth and legends, and very old magic.

I loved, loved all the characters. There is some serious girl power in this book. The women are fierce and powerful and beautiful and magical. Seriously, check this book out for them if you don't like the other aspects. They are the main characters of this story and they rule. The. World.

There is also a friendship that maybe will turn into romance with an Egyptian prince. This is my SHIP, THIS IS MY SHIP. They really care for each other and will always be there for one another. I'm feeling this romance , guys ~

Kriss says

A few things attracted to me to this book when I saw it go up on Net Galley (yes, I received a free copy, and no, it did not influence my review).

First of all, we have a woman-of-color heroine, and a black one to boot. In fact, this book is basically all non-white characters save maybe two or three minor ones in the beginning and I praise that heavily! I seldom run into YA books in the fantasy genre especially with so much diversity and with the leading point-of-view character being a person of color. Second of all, its plot-line is all about time-traveling back to ancient Egypt (I am, to be blunt, somewhat madly in love with ancient history) and mixes in the fantasy element with magic. Overall, this seemed like it would have a good set up and I was very eagerly hoping it would be something I could love and praise.

So, what did I think of this book? To be direct, this was actually a very good book, and for a debut I'm impressed, and with that ending (it definitely feels like a cliffhanger with a lot left to explore) I'm praying this gets a sequel or two! I loved the setting and characters; Portia was very well written and is relatable. I liked the world building, though I think at times the author relies on the reader having previous knowledge of ancient Egypt since not everything was spelled out. It took me a second to grasp some of the terms. I've read a few books set in ancient times that got really complex really quick once priestesses and magic and royal affairs were introduced, but as a YA this book had a balance between simple enough for the intended audience to enjoy but complex enough to keep readers interested. Overall, I think the plot was interesting and well developed.

As for the language, the author had a nice balance going; she showed that Portia, Alex, and Selene were modern girls, but still wrote things eloquently enough that readers can feel the ancient setting and get a feel for the tone of the story without being dragged down by overtly complex or wordy phrasing. There were even times when the way the author wrote sounded very poetic and beautiful.

I also want to mention that this book has a small dash of romance (which I hope very much develops more in the next book that I assume will exist because I have to know how the rest of the story unfolds) and while it's not a book that seems to focus on romance so much as it does Portia and her role as The Star, I think it was a sweet little addition that made me smile.

I only have two small points of complaint: one is that I felt like we should have gotten some more time to explore Portia and Alex's relationship. The author sets up a good scenario for Portia and Alex to really bear their feelings, the ones they've always kept hidden from each other, and to have a big emotional reconciliation or epiphany. Though I think it was necessary to not put too much focus on this because the book needed time to adequately involve the girls in this world and get the major plot of "evil people are trying to start wars and take the throne so by the goddess's will we must stop it" in motion. If there is a sequel, I'm sure we'll see more interaction between these two since it seems like a situation that is wrought with emotion and character development. My other complaint is that, at times, I had a little trouble following some things. There were instances where names seemed to get lost in the mix or I feel like I'd missed an explanation or something. I think the faster pacing might have been partially responsible or perhaps there just wasn't much exposition. But regardless, these aren't really inherent flaws I can point out as wrong or bad so much as they were just things that rose up that weren't satisfactory for me personally.

Even though this is set in ancient Egypt, the overall tone and themes are tame, making this an appropriate read for someone younger. There's no subject matter that would be disturbing or offensive outside of the swear words used (which weren't very severe or frequent). I didn't note anything that I'd consider problematic in its context, themes, or plot devices. Seal of approval in that department!

Overall, a very nice read. It was pretty quick, but nonetheless an interesting read that's well written and enjoyable. I can't seem to find any information that would suggest there is a sequel, but I am hopeful, and the way the book sets up so much but only resolves a few of the problems makes me think that there has to be more, and if so, I look forward to it! If not, I'll still likely keep an eye on Imani Josey and anticipate more from her writing career in the future.

Simona Bartolotta says

I received this copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

1.5

"You're in Egypt, Portia. Ancient Egypt."

ME: *shocked gasp* *headwall* *some more headwall* *why universe just why*

First of all, let me specify that **I was able to properly read only a little more than half the book, and only skimmed through the rest**. And let me also say that I thought I was going to write a long, ridiculously detailed review, but it's late, I'm tired and, after all, there's really no need for it.

• There were two things about this book that immediately caught my attention. The first one was that the **mc** is a **poc**; in other words, it promised diversity. At the end of the day, though, I didn't feel like it changed things that much, which on the one hand is good, because should that make *such* a difference? But I also think that, since not many young-adults feature black heroes/heroines, one maybe could want to try to make it significant one way or the other.

Anyway, this neither bothered or pleased me. It's a choice the author made, and naturally I am 100% okay with that. Plus, I had bigger problems. Like **where the heck is Egypt**.

• Someone please print a hundred missing person posters for me because honestly, this book could have been set in any other ancient country and in any other ancient era. In the second half there is definitely more rich on the mythology side, but still, in general **I didn't feel the Egyptian vibe. At all**. I was so **disappointed** I wanted to cry. Basically, I picked the novel up because it was supposed to tell about time travel to ancient Egypt, only to find close to no Egypt? Are you kidding me?

• To make up for the missing Egypt, the book provides a shining case of **insta-love** squeezed (ironically) in the last 70%. They meet at the beginning of the book, separate, meet again in the second half of the book, and basically declare their love for each other at their third meeting. Yeah right. Little problem, (view spoiler). Also, (view spoiler).

• At the beginning I was really enjoying the **irony** and the tone of Josey's writing in general, which is not bad at all actually and can even be engaging, but sadly it wasn't enough to keep up a whole book. Also, **I couldn't connect with Portia's character**. She can be snarky and interesting to follow as a mc, but most of the time she's just nagging.

• Sometimes things happen and you can't understand why or what is happening, and, **generally speaking, the storytelling is just not one of the best I've ever seen** (and that's part of the reason why I decided I could just skim. I wasn't invested in the story and had problems following it anyway). Random characters are introduced without an iota of an explanation as to who they are what to they want and why they are even there. The mc provides information which we have absolutely no idea where she's gathered. Plus, a lot of things are simply explained with "I just know", which is to say, not explained at all, which is kind of justified with what we come to know at the end of the book, but in the meanwhile it's frustrating nonetheless.

► Unfortunately, as you may have gathered by now, **I can't recommend the book**. (But I still totally want a good young-adult fantasy set in ancient Egypt.)

Cat (cat-thecatlady) says

there were a few things that made me not like this book as much as I feel I could but it is, nevertheless, a pretty good read.

the time traveling aspect and the egyptian setting totally sold me on this one. although I think the world building could be a little more developed (somethings aren't as clear as I wanted, even if I could still follow the story at all times), I found the images created by Josey so clear. I wasn't in my mind, I was there. the representation seems very respectful but I'm only a baby egyptian civilisation lover. I just wanted to understand the dynamics of the magic and the conflict a bit better.

my absolute favourite thing about this book were the characters. they're mainly women (and of colour) and I loved them all. they're so different and so particular, I just wanted to be with them all all the time. unfortunately the ending was too abrupt and strange but I hope the next book will make it worth it!

full review here: <https://catshelf.wordpress.com/2017/0...>

Bee says

After some deliberation, I will be giving this a score of 3.5 / 5.

When I think of this book as a whole, I really did enjoy it. Josey's writing was vivid and beautiful and pulled me into Portia's story from the start. There were a lot of characters to remember, but they all had different personalities and contributed different things to this book. Their interactions and exchange of words definitely had me laughing.

I think one of my favourite aspects of this book is that there are a lot of powerful Women in it – in fact, most of them are powerful WoC, which is good to see on the page. Huzzah for girl power!

I also enjoyed watching Portia grow into her own powerful woman, though it did not happen right away. Portia is not perfect, and has her own struggles. Her journey through this book is never straight, and there are plenty of twists to throw her off course, but they also helped her character development, to the point where she is not the same person at the end that she was at the beginning.

With all of these positives in mind, I did have a few concerns, as well.

This first part may be a little spoiler-y, but it is evident at the beginning that Portia and her sister don't always get along so well. When I got to the end, I expected there to be some kind of make-up, some kind of banding together as twin sisters. Instead, however, they're even further apart (spoiler: quite literally), and it seems as though the twinning bit will happen in the next book. Maybe I'm much too hopeful, but I kind of wish there had been more reconciliation between Portia and Alex in this book. I love reading stories about family members, and not getting that forgiveness or togetherness by the end was kind of sad.

In addition, sometimes the descriptions and time changes could be a bit confusing. There's a long-winded explanation at one point, and I was pretty confused by it. I guess I could have re-read it, but this explanation spanned a few pages, and I was not up for re-reading that entire passage.

For the time changes, it just felt like they weren't marked well enough, as in at one point Portia would be doing one thing, but immediately after she would be doing something else that, realistically, would take a longer period of time to start doing. Now MY description is confusing. Sorry, it's difficult to put into words. I would just have liked to see better time transitioning.

Oh, and I wish there had been more time spent discussing Portia's training, instead of seeing one lesson and discussing the rest only in passing. I feel like her training was important to her development, and it would have been nice to see it happen.

During Portia's first days in Ancient Egypt, one of her first options for getting out is taken away from her very quickly. Honestly, I feel like the way in which this option was removed was too easy. I don't want to spoil it too much, but I just wish there had been more time spent on option #1 and then having it crash and burn, which would have made losing that option hurt a little more.

And, yes, there was romance, and yes, it was maybe a little too insta-love and complicated. Don't get me wrong, I think the romance was cute (my notes for this book say "awwww romance"), but it maybe happened a little too quickly, with not a lot of information.

At the end of the day, however, I liked this book and never felt the need to put it down. I'm looking forward to seeing where Josey takes the sequel!

Overall: While not perfect, it is a fun, beautifully written story that's full of powerful women and lots of magic!

Aoife says

3.5 stars

I received a free digital copy from the author/publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Portia White has always been in the shadow of her smarter, prettier twin Alex until one day something odd happens and Portia finds herself transported to Ancient Egypt where she finds out she has the magic power of Heka. When Portia realises Alex and another girl Selene have also been transported, they must figure out what's going on and how to get home.

I really enjoyed this and it was pleasant journey for me from going to a book about Ancient Rome (Legacy of Kings by Eleanor Herman) to one about Ancient Egypt. From the get go, I just really liked Portia and I think I really connected with her doubts in her self belief and self worth and her new struggles to connect with her twin and best friend when they suddenly want different things.

I feel like Portia had some really great character development in this book and I really saw her grow as she came into her powers and really became a leader for Alex and Selene in a way she had never been before. I didn't really like Alex and the obsession with 'twinning' and I actually just wanted her to get lost most of the time (would have totally preferred her to have just stayed in the other world). I liked Portia's older sister relationship with Selene and how they protected each other, it was lovely to read and unlike Alex, I liked Selene who also had some great character development throughout.

There were some bits about the Heka and the Star that I think at one point went over my head so at times, I was a bit confused about what was going on but I think it might have been because I was slightly ill when reading so my attention probably wavered a bit at that point.

I really loved Portia's relationship with Merenptah/Seti. I thought they seemed to have a genuine chemistry and especially the second time they meet there is just so much chemistry, I was begging them to kiss!

I thought the second last chapter ended really abruptly and I would have liked it to have been wrapped up a little bit better. I am presuming there's going to be another book coming out in this series/trilogy and will definitely be reading!
