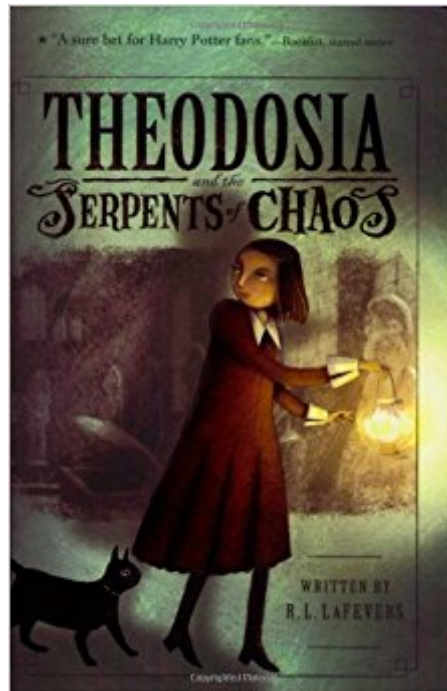




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Theodosia And The Serpents Of Chaos



Synopsis

Theodosia Throckmorton has her hands full at the Museum of Legends and Antiquities in London. Her father may be head curator, but it is Theo who is able to see all the black magic and ancient curses that still cling to the artifacts in the museum. When Theo's mother returns from her latest archaeological dig bearing the Heart of Egypt, a legendary amulet belonging to an ancient tomb, Theo learns that it comes inscribed with a curse so black and vile that it threatens to crumble the British Empire from within and start a war too terrible to imagine. Intent on returning the malevolent artifact to its rightful place, Theo devises a daring plan to put things right. But even with the help of her younger brother, a wily street urchin, and the secret society known as the Brotherhood of the Chosen Keepers, it won't be easy . . . she quickly finds herself pursued down dark alleys, across an ocean, through the bustling crowds of Cairo, and straight into the heart of an ancient mystery. Theo will have to call upon everything she's ever learned in order to prevent the rising chaos from destroying her country and herself!

Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

Customer Reviews

Grade 4
A combination of Nancy Drew and Indiana Jones, Theo Throckmorton is in big trouble. The 11-year-old lives in London in 1906 and spends most of her time in an antiquities museum headed by her father and filled with objects from her mother's archaeological expeditions to Egypt. Bossy, clever, and learned in the lore of ancient Egypt, the girl constantly worries that the work-obsessed parents who ignore and neglect her will be destroyed by virulent ancient curses that only she can detect. When her mother returns from her latest trip with an amulet inscribed with curses so powerful they could unleash the Serpents of Chaos and destroy the British Empire, Theo finds herself caught up in a web of intrigue and danger. It pits her, along with some unexpected allies, against German operatives trying to use the scarab as a weapon in their political and economic rivalry with England. Theo must draw on all her resources when she confronts her enemies alone, deep in an Egyptian tomb. There, she makes some surprising discoveries, both personal and archaeological. Vivid descriptions of fog-shrouded London and hot, dusty Cairo enhance the palpable gothic atmosphere, while page-turning action and a plucky, determined heroine add to the book's appeal. Unfortunately, Theo's narrative voice lurches between the diction of an Edwardian child and that of a modern teen. The ambiguous ending, with its hints at the approaching World War, seems to promise a sequel. A fine bet for a booktalk to classes studying ancient Egypt.

•Margaret A. Chang, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams

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Starred Review "You'd be surprised by how many things come into the museum loaded with curses--bad ones," says 11-year-old Theodosia, whose parents run London's Museum of Legends and Antiquities. The twentieth century has just begun, and Theodosia's mum, an archaeologist, has recently returned from Egypt with crates of artifacts. Only Theodosia can feel the objects' dark magic, which, after consulting ancient texts, she has learned to remove. Then a sacred amulet disappears, and during her search, Theodosia stumbles into a terrifying battle between international secret societies. Readers won't look to this thrilling adventure for subtle characterizations (most fit squarely into good and evil camps) or neat end-knots in the sprawling plot's many threads. It's the delicious, precise, and atmospheric details (nicely extended in Tanaka's few, stylized illustrations) that will capture and hold readers, from the contents of Theodosia's curse-removing kit to descriptions of the museum after hours, when Theodosia sleeps in a sarcophagus to ward off the curses of "disgruntled dead things." Kids who feel overlooked by their own distracted parents may feel a tug of recognition as Theodosia yearns for attention, and those interested in archaeology will

be drawn to the story's questions about the ownership and responsible treatment of ancient artifacts. A sure bet for Harry Potter fans as well as Joan Aiken's and Eva Ibbotson's readers. This imaginative, supernatural mystery will find word-of-mouth popularity. Gillian EngbergCopyright
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Theodosia Throckmorton is not your average eleven-year-old girl. Gifted with intelligence well beyond her years, Theo practically lives at the Museum of Legends and Antiquities, run by her parents and used as the venue for displaying their archaeological discoveries. But what her parents don't realize - and what only Theodosia can see - are the ancient curses swirling around the finds that her parents bring back to London. Theo determines to educate herself about the ancient magic so she can neutralize the threats her parents unwittingly awaken when the artifacts are removed from their Egyptian tombs. It's a thankless job, since her parents - indeed, every adult she encounters - constantly make the mistake of underestimating her capabilities. When her mother returns from her latest expedition with the legendary Heart of Egypt - her most priceless (and dangerous) find yet - Theodosia is thrust into the middle of a web of international conspiracy, warring secret societies, and ancient curses bent on destroying England and unleashing worldwide chaos. I've always loved stories involving Egypt and archaeological digs set during the first half of the 20th century - what can I say, blame Agatha Christie and Indiana Jones. Between Indy's adventures (and I'm recalling the Young Indiana Jones made-for-TV films) and Christie's Egyptian-set mysteries, tales about ancient discoveries have never failed to intrigue me. I decided to check out this series when I noticed a friend reading one of the books on GoodReads - with a delightfully named heroine, I knew I had to investigate the series. *The Serpents of Chaos* is a rollicking, fast-paced introduction to Theodosia's dangerous, magic-filled world. There's some merit to likening Theo to Harry Potter - both start out as eleven-year-olds with abilities no one in their families understand. However, Rowling does a better job of fleshing out Potter's universe in my view. LaFevers dives right into the action and doesn't let up until the final pages, which makes for a quick read. The pace is only occasionally slowed by a few rather longish descriptions of Egyptian magic or curse "antidotes." I would've liked a little more context to Theo's life, more of an introduction to her unique skill set and how she came to know so much about magic at such a young age. Theo's voice is definitely the highlight of the novel. Impossibly worldly-wise, mature, and funny, Theodosia is an engaging heroine. LaFevers is careful to balance Theo's extraordinary knowledge with a relatable, heartfelt desire for her to be affirmed and valued by her parents. Theo's

efforts to impress her parents and the scenes between her and her younger brother, Henry, were some of my favorite sections of the book. She's also a cat lover, which I deeply appreciated. I also loved how Theodosia manages to impress the clandestine organization tasked with protecting England. I can easily see Theo and company playing an important role in magical world events, perhaps leading up to the outbreak of World War I. This novel is sure to appeal to fans of Indiana Jones or the Mummy films, and to anyone who's ever been enthralled by a museum exhibit. I am curious to see how Theodosia juggles appearing to be an average girl with the responsibility of protecting the nation from dark magic threats. It should be a fun ride.

The year is 1906 and Theodosia Throckmorton is up to her ears in Egyptian curses in this fast-paced and humorous fantasy book for middle school readers. Theo's father is the Head Curator of the Museum of Legends and Antiquities in London and the eleven-year-old girl spends a lot of time there. Her mother is an archeologist and, as the story opens, she arrives from Egypt with crates of artifacts from the Valley of the Kings. Her most valuable find is a large jeweled scarab called the Heart of Egypt. Even though Theo's parents and the two assistant curators work with ancient Egyptian pieces all the time, only Theo can feel the evil magic oozing out of them. Powerful curses arrive at the museum with every crate of antiquities. She has learned to cope with them from books about how to combat Egyptian magic. But her parents don't believe her when she tells them about the dreadful spells--they just think she has a vivid imagination. Then, almost as soon as it arrives, the Heart of Egypt is stolen! That very day a bigwig from the British Museum comes by asking to see it. Theo thinks that's too much of a coincidence and when he leaves, she follows him. After some exciting twists and turns, she meets the head of a mysterious organization called the Brotherhood of the Chosen Keepers. He tells her that because her mother took the Heart of Egypt, a massive curse will be unleashed on all of England. He and the other members of the Brotherhood can't go directly after the artifact because they are well known to the thieves, so he asks her to recover it. But even if she could, how would it ever be returned to the tomb in Egypt? Theo is a plucky and resourceful heroine and she tells her tale in a lively voice with many humorous asides. The spooky curses and nefarious doings that swirl around her make the story fun and exciting. This is R. L. LaFevers first book about Theodosia. She's written two other Theodosia books, as well as other series. The marvelous cover is by Yoko Tanaka.

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