

an extract from:
the blackhope enigma

by Teresa Flavin

978 | 84877 034 8 £6.99 PB July 2010

from *Templar* publishing

This is one cracking debut novel. It's got it all: adventure, drama, history, mystery, a little love and a really loathsome villain. Teresa's style is fresh and original, her plot is instantly gripping and her characters are very real. Imagine if you could walk through a labyrinth and be transported to another world. And imagine if that world was inside a Renaissance painting. Exciting stuff!

As we follow the three youngsters who've found themselves trapped in this strange place, Teresa takes us on an unforgettable journey. Her passion for her subject matter is palpable – she sweeps us into a land of nymphs, dryads, Victorian gents, Arabian pirates and astral magic that can turn a painting into a living talisman. I'm so excited that Templar are working with her to make this book a reality – it deserves to be a big hit.

Emily Hawkins

Senior Editor



The
Blackhope
ENIGMA

They inched through dense, heart-stopping darkness. In the distance was what looked like a bright white door cut out of a black wall. Sunni tiptoed towards it, puzzled by its brilliance.

“Is it snow?” whispered Dean. “A blizzard?”

“I haven’t a clue.”

The door was just wide enough for Sunni to walk through. She and Dean emerged into the light like rabbits from a winter burrow. There was nothing here except whiteness. No objects, no colours, only brilliant whiteness.

“We haven’t got shadows,” said Dean, looking down at his feet.

Sunni took a few steps and bumped into what appeared to be some sort of a wall. There was no edge where it met the ground. She turned round. The door they had come through was now just a black slit.

“This is doing my head in,” Sunni said, feeling around the black shape. “There isn’t a wall. But then there is a wall.” She ran her hand up and down the whiteness. “It feels rough.”

“It’s got streaks in it,” said Dean, sticking his nose up against it. “Like when your dad painted the kitchen table.”

“Dried paint.” She could make out great whorls and swirls, as if a huge paintbrush had sloshed white over everything. She edged sideways along the wall that wasn’t a wall. “This is a bit like an alleyway. Come on, let’s just see where it goes.”

Dean followed her, peering back at the black doorway in case it disappeared, until Sunni pointed and said, “There!”

A misty shadow loomed in the whiteness, shining through as though it was wrapped in lace curtains. For the first time in ages they felt a breeze.

“It looks like the trees in the fog on that day we went to my Gran’s last month. Remember? She called it a pea-souper,” said Dean.

“Yeah. And you know what else it looks like? Like when I did this painting on a canvas and really messed it up, so Mr Bell gave me some white paint to cover it and start again. It didn’t quite hide everything, until I’d done three coats.”

“I don’t get you.”

“Maybe Corvo did the same thing. He painted something and then covered it over with white paint,” said Sunni, heading towards the shadow.

“Because he’d made a mistake?”

“I don’t know.”

As they came closer, they could make out a deep grey tree trunk bleeding through the whiteness, its lower branches framing a patch of bare earth and scrubby bushes below.

“Let’s go,” said Sunni. “This could be the way out. Maybe Corvo was trying to hide it.”

“I dunno,” answered Dean, pulling back.

“Do you want to go back to the frozen zombies instead? Come on, we can find our way back there if we need to. The path only leads one way.” Something struck her. “Just like the labyrinth.”

“I wish I’d never gone on that thing,” Dean muttered.

Together they stepped into the patch of ground beneath the tree. As they moved through, the whiteness thinned out and Sunni and Dean found themselves in a green wood. It rang with birdsong and the leaves rustled in a gentle breeze. The sky was the same blue as the one in the world they had just left, but this time clouds were moving across it. The sun was low and the shadows gave them the feeling that it was afternoon.

“This place is alive,” Sunni said in wonder. “Things are moving. Inside a painting.”

“Maybe we’re out of the painting now. There’s wind and sounds.” Dean looked round for anything he might recognise. “Maybe we’re home, Sun.”

“Not unless we skipped winter. It’s warm here.” Sunni picked a wildflower and stroked its petals. They felt silky, like real petals. Its fragrance was delicate, though like no flower she had ever smelled before.

They moved along on a path lined with ferns, through groves of swaying trees. The sun sank a bit lower, sending even longer shadows across the glade they passed through. The birds grew quiet or fluttered away. Dean looked uneasy and pulled his jacket around him, even though the air was warm.

“What’s up?” asked Sunni in a low voice. Dean had huddled against a tree.

“I’ve got a funny feeling,” he whispered. His eyes were riveted on dark shadows amongst the ferns. “Someone’s over there watching us!”

Sunni was straining to see when a new sound reached their ears and they looked anxiously about them.

“One is one and all alone, and evermore shall be so!” sang a deep voice.

The voice dropped for a moment and then burst out again.

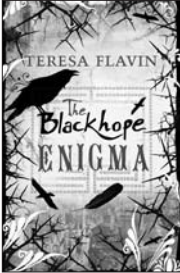
“Five for the symbols at your door, six for the six proud walkers! Seven for the seven stars in the sky, eight for the April rainers!” Now they could see a man in the distance heading towards them.

“Green grow the rushes-o!” the voice boomed as its owner thrashed into the glade. “Oh, I say, Inko, well spotted!”

Before them stood a man wearing slim trousers and a long blue coat, a top hat sitting jauntily on his blond head. He looked like someone from those programmes Dean’s mum loved, where snooty men rode around on horses and women sat in mansions waiting for one of the snooty

men to propose marriage.

The man tipped his hat, careful not to come too close. His eyes were bright with excitement. “Good day to you. Hugo Fox-Farratt at your service.”



the blackhope enigma

by *Teresa Flavin*

978 1 84877 034 8 £6.99 PB

July 2010 Ages 9+

e-book available June 2010

New York-born illustrator Teresa Flavin didn't choose to write her first novel – it chose her. The story idea for *The Blackhope Enigma* sprang to mind one winter's day, inspired by her love of Renaissance paintings and a book about labyrinths given to her by her father.

The former art-school lecturer and amateur radio DJ says that moving from the USA to live in Scotland was a huge creative influence. For Teresa, Scotland's mysterious landscape, rich mythology and dramatic history provide endless fascination and material for stories and artwork.

When she is not writing or illustrating, Teresa leads art workshops in schools, makes paintings and handmade books, travels with her geographer husband, hikes in the Scottish hills and walks every labyrinth she can find.

www.teresافلavin.com