

## Debut Novelist Puts Her Ph.D. to Work for Middle Graders While Celebrating Diversity

*New Middle Grade Time-Travel Novel, Jagger Jones & the Mummy's Ankh,  
to be Released April 30, 2019*

(CHICAGO, IL. 2018) What's a single mom to do when she's spent too many years, and even more dollars, earning a Ph.D. in Egyptology but doesn't actually work in the field? Malayna Evans decided to put her degree to work crafting stories set in ancient Egypt for teens and tweens. Her debut novel, *Jagger Jones and the Mummy's Ankh*, will be published April 30, 2019.

Inspired by her (then) nine-year-old son, who wanted to read a book featuring a biracial American kid like him visiting ancient Egypt, *Jagger Jones and the Mummy's Ankh* combines magic and adventure with real historical people, places and artifacts. "I'm drawn to anything that pulls different cultures together and contrasts the human values we all share with the differences that make us unique," Malayna said. "So, for example, in *Jagger Jones and the Mummy's Ankh*, I've highlighted aspects of ancient life I knew would surprise modern kids, like boys wearing makeup and kids being bald, while also excavating how things we take for granted would shock people of the past--Jagger's smartphone, and his little sister's bubblegum, make quite an impression in ancient Egypt."

Malayna earned her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2011. With two kids to raise, Malayna chose to start her own business rather than pursue a job in academia. But when she got divorced and found herself spending every other weekend alone, she was determined to turn her unexpected status into a win. She turned her attention to her lifelong goal of becoming a published author and is thrilled to be launching her first book.

*Jagger Jones and the Mummy's Ankh*, set to be published in May of 2019 by Month9Books, features Jagger Jones, a whiz kid from Chicago's South Side, who thinks he knows everything there is to know about ancient Egypt. But when he and his precocious little sister Aria fall more than three thousand years back in time to the court of Amarna, Egypt, Jagger discovers a truth that rocks his world: books don't teach you everything there is to know. Jagger knew ancient Egyptians believed in magic, but he didn't expect amulets that altar space and time and giant crocodiles with blood red eyes and teeth like daggers. If Jagger and Aria are to return safely home, they must find nine soul-infested gemstones, defeat an evil general, and save the royal family. Armed only with Jagger's knowledge of history and a few modern objects mined from his pockets and Aria's sparkly purse, the siblings have exactly one week to solve supernatural riddles and get themselves safely home to Chicago.

The book explores modern and ancient notions of life (*ankh*). The three book series was inspired by Malayna's favorite ancient Egyptian blessing: *ankh, wedja, seneb*, which means (may you have) life, prosperity and health. Books two and three, coming in 2020 and 2021, will similarly contrast modern and ancient ideas surrounding "prosperity" and "health."

Malayna loves chatting with journalists and bloggers so reach out for an interview ([malaynaevans22@gmail.com](mailto:malaynaevans22@gmail.com)) or visit her media kit (<http://malaynaevans.com/media-kit/>) for author Q&A, downloadable images, and more info about Malayna and her work.

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