



## Phoenix Child

*Alica McKenna-Johnson*

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## **Phoenix Child** Alica McKenna-Johnson

There should be a law, a Universal Rule, as to how much weirdness can happen to a person.

Fifteen-year-old Sara walks into the San Francisco Center for the Circus Arts determined to ignore the freaky things happening to her. As powers she doesn't want and can't control overwhelm her, Sara must decide if she can trust the strangers who say they are her family... descended from a common ancestor four thousand years ago.

Sara clings to her contented and well-planned life as a foster kid, successfully working the system, as dreams, powers, and magical creatures drag her towards her destiny.

When the ancient evil that killed her parents comes to San Francisco, Sara is forced to choose between her fears and her desire to protect those she loves.

Sometimes great things are thrust upon us. Sara wishes this supposed 'greatness' didn't include a new name, unicorns, and catching on fire.

*Librarian Note: this is an alternate cover edition for ASIN B007AK6DRW.*

## **Phoenix Child Details**

Date : Published February 19th 2015 by AMJ Publishing LLC (first published February 1st 2012)

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Author : Alica McKenna-Johnson

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## From Reader Review Phoenix Child for online ebook

### Danielle Urban says

Phoenix Child by Alicia McKenna - Johnson is a phenomenal and brilliant read. This science fiction fantasy novel, is one that readers will love instantly. Alicia McKenna - Johnson takes readers on a deep journey following a young female teenage. Here, we see and feel what all teens go through but there is much more to explore and experience inside this stunning story. Phoenix Child is very easy to read and is very addictive. There's magic, adventure, and suspense. Readers will have no trouble finishing this novel in one sitting. I enjoyed reading this masterpiece, and I highly recommend it to readers everywhere. This is one story that will drag you head first right into the plot and leave you breathless. A well-written plot that will make you both cry and laugh along as you follow Sara on her journey. Overall, a perfect read for all.

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### Laurie Saunders says

I've got a bit of a phoenix thing going at the moment and I grabbed Phoenix Child when it was on special offer on Amazon.

What really bothered me was the fact that the book has an editor's name in it when, quite frankly, it could do with a real edit. I only hope the author didn't have to pay the 'editor' because, otherwise, she's been mugged.

The most obvious sign that the editing wasn't good - assuming it was done - is that then is constantly used instead of than. A basic mistake any good editor would spot. The tenses were also all over the place. Other things would be a tendency to repeat the same thing and a clear slump in the second half of the book. Those structural issues should have been looked at at editing stage.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not having a go at the author. It's the editing or lack thereof that bothers me, especially when an editor gets credited in the book.

You can tell the author has researched her subject and you can see the influence of the Harry Potter series and Twilight on the basic story and the plot twists. Her use of the characters is clever: somebody apparently unrelated to the story will turn out to be essential later on. There's only one character who doesn't crop up to do anything meaningful again but I suspect he's been saved for later.

This is a YA book and it has all the ingredients for a good YA story but it needs editing and revising. One thing I particularly felt needed a bit of work was the budding romance between the main character and Taliesin. Here I'm not sure there is quite enough detail and subtlety to suit the appetite of a young readership. Equally, I found the book to be a tad too moralizing and the extracts from the mother's diary sounded like lectures. They also slow the pace down in the second half of the book. Reworking them might be a good way to build up the suspense and getting more action in.

In a word, I'd say it's a good idea that needs a lot of polishing. Even though I liked Sara, I wouldn't read the second volume when it's out unless the first one was rewritten. I read this as if it was a first draft, not a fully formed novel and I overlooked some of the flaws because of this. I would encourage the author to rework it with a real editor.

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### **Buffy Kennedy says**

This was a pretty neat read. I loved the characters! The magic and everything was cool. There was no romance that I could detect, though maybe a hint of possibility in the future near the end, which was refreshing. I liked the lessons from Sara's mom, but they started to get pretty tedious in the second half of the book. I'll admit that I can't really comment much on the few times we get the villain's POV because I skip them – I've always kind of hated them in any book. The ending is no cliffhanger, but something does happen to pique your interest for book 2. There were a few minor gaps and plot holes, but nothing major enough to detract from the overall enjoyment of the story.

Phoenix Child is a compelling coming of age read. Don't miss out on this magical and emotional start to a new YA paranormal series!

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### **Samantha (Book Lover's Cozy Cafe) says**

I was given this book in place for an honest review.

Synopsis:

There should be a law, a Universal Rule, as to how much weirdness can happen to a person.

Fifteen-year-old Sara walks into the San Francisco Center for the Circus Arts determined to ignore the freaky things happening to her. As powers she doesn't want and can't control overwhelm her, Sara must decide if she can trust the strangers who say they are her family... descended from a common ancestor four thousand years ago.

Sara clings to her contented and well-planned life as a foster kid, successfully working the system, as dreams, powers, and magical creatures drag her towards her destiny.

When the ancient evil that killed her parents comes to San Francisco, Sara is forced to choose between her fears and her desire to protect those she loves.

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Review:

Once again, I apologize to the author for taking so long to get this read. But now that I have I'm glad I did. When I first picked up this book I really didn't want to put it down, it was very intriguing. However, somewhere in the middle it felt to me really slow and I was having a hard time actually sitting down and reading this. But once again I'm so glad I did. Here's why.... ok first it's a new and interesting story and even though it felt slow at some points is only because it needed to build the foundation of the series itself. Finally though once you get near the 3/4 mark of the book things really start to pick up. And that's where the

book/series hooks you. And BAM! Now I have all these questions running through my head. Like will Sapphire/Sara ever feel comfortable with her uncle and her new family? What is up with Taliesin? Is he the possible live interest or what? And a few others. All in all this was a good book, deserving of a 4 star rating. Now I cannot wait to get my hands on the next book on the series.

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### **Apryl says**

This is a great first book in the series. It gives the reader enough information and definitely leaves them wanting more. The voice of the main character, Sarah, is spunky and entertaining. Her supporting characters are compelling and seem to have a wealth of backstories all their own. I can't wait to see where this series goes!

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### **Paige (*Illegal in 3 Countries*) says**

\*sighs\*

Look, I started reviewing books five years ago (or five and a half depending if the two I wrote on Amazon pre-blog count), I'm constantly behind on review books, and I have basic standards. I expect that any professional, finalized, and published work that comes before me has been thoroughly edited, but it seems *Phoenix Child* hasn't gotten that treatment.

I expect to see sentences like "I felt a flash of jealousy" in fanfiction that someone writes for fun and doesn't expect people to pay for. If I pay for a book or (if I received the book free for review) know someone is expected to pay for the pleasure of reading a book, I shouldn't see lines like that, especially not a book first published in 2012 and re-published in 2015 like *Phoenix Child*. A good editor would have caught that, cut down on the walk-you-through-every-step inner monologue that removes all subtlety from Sara's character, and the sheer number of times the phrase "This is crazy!" is used in just 30 pages.

I can see this being the *Jupiter Ascending* of YA novels, but I'm not willing to keep going knowing this is a finalized book people are expected to pay for and it hasn't even been copyedited, let alone properly edited.

If you expect me to be lenient because the novel is self-published, you're insulting all the self-published authors who worked their asses off to make sure their novel was of the same quality as any novel spat out by a Big Five publisher.

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### **Emily says**

I am not sure I could list all the reasons I love this book! So I'll highlight a few.

It is clean and without swearing! Hooray. It's becoming increasingly difficult to find modern literature that doesn't flood my mind with language and images I don't want there.

The story is original - with cohesive ideas and believable characters.

I LOVE the inspirational quotes riddled throughout the book, and the insights that come with it. One of my favorite thoughts of the book was the idea that Sapphire understood that behaving nicely meant you get privileges. It was something I understood as a teenager, but so many don't!

I simply cannot wait to get my hands on the next book in the series. I won this book on a goodreads giveaway, and let's face it - not all of them are wonderful. This is probably my favorite one I've won so far. Go Alica McKenna Johnson - you rock.

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### **Stacy A says**

#### **Really interesting**

This was my first book by this author. Well it did have some slow moments it was actually very well written. The characters were well fleshed-out and very easy to imagine. I look forward to reading the rest of the series.

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### **Paulann says**

loved it

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### **T.M. B.A. Corbett says**

Have you seen the cover of this book? It is beautiful and one of the reasons why I wanted to read this story. The originality of the mythical creatures and magic in it was great. I thought the books pace slowed to much in the second half and could have been improved with an edit of the protagonists' letters from her mother. Also the grammar is not great in this book, so if you are a grammar nazi beware. Other than those two things I really enjoyed this book. The characters created were unique and also vital to the story, which doesn't happen a lot in YA books. There is the opportunity for more captivating romance later on in the series that i can not wait to read. This is like an origin story type first book. You learn what the protagonist is along with her and I found that enjoyable. If you love YA, science fiction, and series then this is the book for you! Go get it now!!

Win a signed copy of this book!!

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### **Judy Clifton says**

#### **Uplifting, Thoughtful, Amazing!!!**

Sara, who is in the foster care system because her mother gave her up to protect her, just wants to finish school and live an ordinary life. When she joins a school to learn to be a circus performer, she finds her uncle and begins the journey that will last a lifetime. She's not ordinary at all, she's the granddaughter of a thousands year old magical king and queen and possesses gifts, she very reluctantly must master, to save

others of her kind.

Her mother has left her a journal of love and lessons that teach Sara, and us the wisdom of love, loss, failure, tenacity and the wonder of love, family and especially self love. Join her. You'll be a better person by the end!

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### **Gail Gibbs says**

Phoenix Child is a YA novel, following the story of Sara Fokine, growing up in a group home in San Francisco. She is looking forward to graduation and a normal life, until she comes of age and her fantastic destiny comes looking for her.

I enjoyed how Sara is not especially thrilled to receive magical powers. She had finally found the stability so rare among foster children, and life in the supernatural realm will be dangerous and uncertain. Anything but stable. An interesting counter-point to the Harry Potter trope.

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### **Rikudou En says**

Sarah really did go through some tough ordeal. and underwent some interesting challenges. She makes a good character for debate in fiction group, if it arises. I have to leave it to the author and let myself be driven by the timeline. The character of a young girl was explicitly detailed here. a nice work all in all.

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### **Readsandeats says**

I really enjoyed this book and will definitely be carrying on with the series.

Sara is in the social care system as she has no family or so she thinks. Weird things happen when she turns 15 and she gains all these powers etc.

I really liked the premise of the book, the characters and the setting.

A book for adults and children a like.

Would recommend it.

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### **Sue Davis says**

#### **Terrific Book For All Ages Over 10, I'd Say**

This book has many quotes with them explained as messages her mother left her. Sara is raised in a group home after her mothers death at five years old. She wakes up on her fifteenth birthday knowing something has happened but not what or why. She knows her skin has changed color and so has her hair which she

covers up. She is allowed to go to a school teaching circus stunts . She will discover many things there besides the training. Dream memories will lead her to gifts and a messages from her mother, one telling her who to go to and hoping it is before her fifteenth birthday which it is not but she has actually ended up meeting who she was to go to just ten years later. She finds her family,learns her real name is Sapphire and she is The Jewel with a very special job ahead of her. With the help of family and friends all Children of Fire descendant of Shamash and Aya the King and Queen of Phoenix . With her Uncle Gavin and his wife Anal friends Kayin , Taliesin they will prepare to travel with the Cirque du Magique Feu to hide while completing their job to safe all the magical beings and return them to Akasha, protecting them from the Sons of Belial. A job that could not be done without The Jewel (Sapphire,Sara). This is really, really good and very interesting combined with being so well written. I know the stories will continue. We are so lucky.

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