



Blood Colony

Tananarive Due

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Acclaimed for seven novels, ranging from supernatural thrillers to historical fiction, which have garnered her a multitude of fans and awards, Tananarive Due now imagines the story of an ancient group of immortals - a hidden African clan that has survived for more than a thousand years - facing one of the most challenging issues of our time: the AIDS/HIV pandemic.

There's a new drug on the street: Glow. Said to heal almost any illness, it is distributed by an Underground Railroad of drug peddlers. But what gives Glow its power? Its main ingredient is blood - the blood of immortals. A small but powerful colony of immortals is distributing the blood, slowly wiping out the AIDS epidemic and other diseases around the world.

Meet Fana Wolde, seventeen years old, the only immortal born with the Living Blood. She can read minds, and her injuries heal immediately. When her best friend, a mortal, is imprisoned by Fana's family, Fana helps her escape and together they run away from Fana's protected home in Washington State to join the Underground Railroad.

But Fana has more than her parents to worry about. Glow peddlers are being murdered by a violent, hundred-year-old sect with ties to the Vatican. Now, when Fana is most vulnerable, she is being hunted to fulfill an ancient blood prophecy that could lead to countless deaths.

While her people search for Fana and race to unravel the unknown sect's mysterious origins, Fana must learn to confront the deadly forces - or she and everyone she loves will die.

Blood Colony Details

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From Reader Review Blood Colony for online ebook

Thomas says

MAN, it took me a long time to finish this book. I like Due's style, and her plots have been interesting, but somehow Blood Colony took me about three weeks to finish. Even other, drier books haven't taken that long. Somehow I just couldn't stay engaged with this story like I did with her other two books (though The Living Blood took me about two weeks).

I do like how Due shifts her themes around from book to book. Each one has been a look at immortality, but where My Soul to Keep was a personal look, and The Living Blood looked at it from a more epic perspective, Blood Colony is a mixture of the two, since Due introduces us to a competing group of immortals while showing us Fana as she attempts to become her own person. As the two groups intersect, we see that the blood reveals a new power, and what it suggests is chilling. It's reminiscent of Carrion Comfort, in the way that the immortals can control other people, but it's not a carbon copy thriller.

I like where the book takes us, but I felt like it was a lot of story for not a lot of payoff. Part of it, I think, is how much ground Due has to cover. Not only does she have to give us the history of the new group of immortals, but she also has to show us what's happened with Fana over the last fifteen years or so. Since both stories take us to the same conclusion, we need them both to get the whole story, but it can sometimes feel long-winded.

The characterization feels weaker here, too. It may be due to Due bringing in so many characters, but I didn't feel the kind of connection with Fana and Jessica like I did in the first two books. I expected it to be the other way around, since by now I should be familiar with them, and Due wouldn't need to spend as much time developing them, but somehow I felt the distance. The book forces them apart, so the distance there is physical, but I didn't expect that to be true of them in the story, too.

Due gives the story a good depth, showing Jessica and Fana having started up a commune to disperse the blood for its healing effects, but the story doesn't have the same OOMPH as the first two books. There's one more book left in the series (so far; apparently, readers thought this would be the final book in the series, which would have been a disappointment), and I'm hoping Due can bring it back with that book. I'm eager to be finished with the series so I can move on to other books on my list.

Vanessa says

Ms. Due as always your books are simply wonderful! Please make us proud with the next book in the series.

Madlyn says

This book was crazy.

Jennifer says

I wasn't as impressed with this final book in Ms. Due's My Soul to Keep trilogy. There was too many unnecessary scenes included in the story. The originality of the storyline was there, but other storyline did not interest me. The end of the second book should have been it. It was just an okay read.

J.N. McGhee says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. It was a required read for one of my English courses. I loved it. I loved the plots, backdrops, etc! I was hooked on the story when I picked up the book! Everyone else in the class thought it was scary and didn't like it. I was the only one that loved the reading! After I read this book, I decided to read the prequels to this. Awesome job, Ms. Due!

Mocha Girl says

Based on the positive reception and number of raving reviews for Tananarive Due's latest novel, Blood Colony, it is quite evident that my commentary will be in the minority based on my "3-star," middle of the road rating for the book. It is the first time I have ever applied an average rating to one of her novels, especially when I am a fan of the Immortal series. Like others, I pre-ordered my copy to ensure I would have it as soon as it dropped. While I LOVED My Soul To Keep and liked The Living Blood, I found Blood Colony to be just "OK" -- a good novel, but not of exceptional caliber.

The novel opens with an alert 17-year-old Fana fully emerged from the seemingly self-induced years-long trance finally participating in the "world" as secluded as it may be. The Wolde clan, along with selected friends and life brother supporters, have sequestered themselves within the Washington forest and secretly share the "living" blood with third world, remote countries under the guise of it being an experimental pharmaceutical drug. However, there is evidence that an underground distribution network exists in North America. With the blood as its catalyst, an illegal drug called Glow, is in demand with a high street value making it the target of governmental crackdowns with harsh penalties and punishments to those involved with its manufacture and distribution. It does not take long to figure out that Fana (without her parent's permission or knowledge) is the primary source of the blood that fuels Glow's production. Without divulging too much of the plot, Fana runs away from the safety of the complex with good guys, bad guys, and the government hot on her tail. The chase is afoot and we follow along and watch the body count increase at nearly every turn.

It is difficult for me to explain what did not quite work for me with this otherwise well-written and well-conceived novel. Perhaps it is the shift to Fana and away from one of my favorite characters, Dawit, who, in this episode, was relegated to a seemingly perfunctory role of neutered husband. It might have been the continued emphasis on Fana. I suppose it was time for her light to shine (no pun intended) and there is no doubt that everyone (including the reader) is supposed to love Fana as the enlightened one with extraordinary skills who holds the future of mankind in her veins. I "got" that this novel showed her as less monster, more human: she is a vulnerable, typical, confused, misguided teenager who throws caution to the wind and lives dangerously with no clue regarding the life-threatening consequences of her actions. In the span of one novel, she zooms through first crush, first kiss, to a ten-year engagement rooted in a questionable, antediluvian prophecy. Unfortunately, I failed to be enamored or empathetic with her in The Living Blood

and still did not really connect with her or her friends (do-gooders to a fault) in this novel. Maybe it was the familiarity of themes used in other novels: the telepathic, humanitarian aspects elicited vibes from Octavia Butler's Patternmaster series, the evil Sanctus Cruor seemed akin to the misunderstood Opus Dei of The DaVinci Code fame.

Another annoyance is Jessica's (and now Fana's) overbearing, blinding insistence to share the blood (regardless of the ramifications to their friends and family) comes off as near fanaticism. Following the "like mother, like daughter" mantra, it is now both the Jessica and Fana's decisions that continue to endanger everyone around them while trying to save the innocent masses from disease, suffering, and death. I know that the light and goodness will prevail (or at least I hope so), but in order to pull it off, this hodgepodge family/team really needs to get it together because throughout this novel, it was more than apparent that they could barely save themselves let alone humanity. Last, buried in the pages, there is the banter and discussions from previous novels surrounding the social and philosophical arguments that continue to buoy the plot: Who does the blood really belong to? Who should benefit from it? Who decides who gets it? Should it be rationed? What is the cost of immortality? Is it really worth it? Where did it really come from?

Despite the shortcomings I have with the novel, I am still a fan of the author and will no doubt purchase and read anything she releases, however I am not nearly as anxious for the next installment of the Immortal Series as I was for previous releases - especially if Fana and Michel are at the center of it. YAWN! Here is hoping the trek back to Lalibela will focus more on the Life Brothers and their collective and individual histories, maybe a reappearance of Khaldun, or other supporting characters that seem to have fallen off the pages during this latest episode.

Reviewed by Phyllis
APOOO BookClub
July 26, 2008

Titilayo says

you can't go wrong with a book dedicated to octavia butler. i'm in love. thank you public library book list for suggesting i read this author. it was like reading octavia butler without the melancholy. not only was it expertly written. everything was so neat. it encompassed so many of the things i love about science fiction and spirituality. you through a little afrocentricity and strong baptist women its like ambrosia for the mind. second favorite science fiction author of all time!!!!!!

Amanda Morgan says

A small colony hidden in a dense forest in Washington state, USA, is home to a group of humans and immortals co-existing towards a common goal: to bring life-saving blood to anyone in the world who needs it. "Blood Colony" features a 17-year-old immortal named Fana whose parents and their friends are leading the charge to eradicate AIDS in Africa.

Hundreds of years ago, Fana's mother Jessica and father Dawit lived in Africa and were fighting illnesses by working with a scientist whose ideas would bring an end to disease and death. Dawit, an immortal mated with Jessica, a mortal whom Dawit turned immortal, and their union created Fana, whose unprecedented strength and abilities have made her The Chosen One.

Even the tiniest drop of Fana's blood no matter how diluted can reverse sickness, death, and even AIDS. Their mission is to bring the blood to all people who are sick in the world. They use the means of an underground railroad that runs worldwide to carry Fana's blood, called "Glow," to anyone who needs it. They keep Fana behind the colony walls so she is safe, with no one outside Colony walls knowing she is the source of Glow.

However, one day Fana's best friend, a mortal named Caitlin, is taken hostage by Dawit and his friends The Life Brothers, and is in danger of losing her life or her memories because she has been caught selling Glow. Fana breaks Caitlin free and they go on the run to save Caitlin's life.

While Dawit and The Life Brothers are trailing Fana, they realize there is a rogue group of immortals called Sanctus Cruor, who are working against their cause. Sanctus Cruor wants to use the blood to preserve only the fittest in the world through a process called "The Cleansing," and they are following Fana to try to have her for their own mission.

A fight over Fana, and her blood, turns into a fight between good and evil with much death and loss. The Life Brothers can perform many tricks including mind and body control, yet they try to use their gifts for the good of the world. Sanctus Cruor, and their leader Michel, who believes he is Fana's soulmate, only care about one thing and don't care who gets hurt as long as they get what they want.

Due's science fiction story of good versus evil has the main characters feeling human emotions even though many are not human, and ends up being an interesting and compelling tale.

A. Rose says

Shelved for now. Having a difficult time getting through this one. It feels a little drier than the first two books.

R.G. Richards says

I bought this book sometime last year but got so busy that it set on my shelf until I decided I would read it over the weekend. I did and will not give out any spoilers, it is worth a read.

I was happy Ms. Due included backstory, I had forgotten most of it. David and Jessica were never a main focus for me, it was always the story of the Life Brothers and Fana. Overall, I loved the story. Like many books, the end was tied up quickly by proclaiming Fana as saviour of the world. My only complaint is the start of the book which gives the impression that Fana is five years old. Later in the chapter she is taking driving lessons and then it is made obvious that she is seventeen. I would recommend the book to others and look forward to getting some free time to read the next in the series. I can't wait to see how she gets out of a ten year engagement.

Jerry Daniels says

In **Blood Colony**, Tananarive Due plops a mysterious sect into the latest drama surrounding involving the blood of Jesus and jumps 14 years into the not-too-distant future 17-year-old Fana -- introduced in as a 3-years-old in **The Living Blood** -- is part of an underground movement to heal the sick.

As the story unfolds to reveal the origin of the mysterious sect and the basis for its existence, it seems that

Due draws parallels -- once again -- to the splintering of Christianity as she did in **My Soul to Keep**, the first book of this trilogy. The difference, however, is that the splintering occurs because of the sect's interpretation of a letter, just as differing interpretations of biblical scripture have resulted in different Christian religions. The sect's interpretation leads them to view the Blood's purpose contrary to the purpose determined by Jessica and continued by Fana and creates the source of conflict for the novel.

Readers of the both the predecessors to **Blood Colony** will certainly agree that this book is much more stronger in delivering a theme.

David Anderson says

This is the third installment in Tananarive Due's African Immortals series, preceded "My Soul to Keep" and "The Living Blood." I liked it slightly less than the first two (hence 4 stars instead of 5); the ending was somewhat anti-climatic, a bit of a let-down after all the wild intensity that preceded it. But then it does set things up nicely for the fourth and final novel. This series should have been adapted for big screen instead of the lame Twilight. Highly recommended!

Cherrelle Shelton says

I literally could not put this book down for at least 3 hours straight. I enjoyed this book from beginning to end. At this point I expect nothing but the best from Tananarive Due! And this series of books has definitely moved to my top 5 favorite. I can't wait to read the next book in the series.

Beverly says

I have enjoyed the Immortals series and the concept very much. I ma sad to say this is my least fav of the books in the series. I read this book so that I could read the new release in the series. I am not a big fan of a teenager being the narrator of an adult series. I wanted to read more about Dawit and the Life Brothers.

Cecily Walker says

This book suffers because of the amount of time that passed between the last volume in the Life Brother's saga (2001's "The Living Blood") and the publication of this volume. 7 years is a long time to try to carry the threads of a story forward, and Due has aged the central character at least 10 years. A great deal of Fana's development is glossed over and treated as little more than a convenient plot device. I also found the speed with I discovered Fana's true adversary disappointing. Once I solved that mystery, I lost interest in the novel. I knew I would finish it, but I wasn't excited about it any more.

Due is a good novelist; her "Joplin's Ghost" is one of the most imaginative books I've read in recent memory,

but Blood Colony falls flat. I hope it doesn't take another 7 years for the next volume, and I hope the next novel rekindles the interest I've had and the relationships I've built with these characters across three novels.

Wilhelmina Jenkins says

The third in an excellent series. Due is a superb writer. I liked this one marginally less than the first two, only because I'm a bit weary of the DaVinci-Code-like, Catholic Church, conspiracy connections. Nevertheless, the book was an excellent read.

Rashida says

You know what I hate (besides reviews that get lost and make you try to retype verbatim, revealing how fickle your memory has become)? Plots that are propelled by nothing more than otherwise smart people making one series of stupid decisions after another. And not just stupid decisions, but truly, literally ignorant decisions. As in, the person/people you love most in the world and are closest to (physically and spiritually) have all the information to be able to piece together the answers to your queries. But instead of asking the questions, you decide to go run off all half-cocked and do your damndest to actively avoid asking those questions. Due is better than this. The first two installments in this series, *The Living Blood* in particular, are works of near genius that plumb the depths of the human experience, let you intimately know these individual characters, and scare the crap out of you. Where before we got meditations on the legacy of racism, war, religion, parenting, love, and death; we now get a reflection on stupid teenagers in puppy love who are mad at mommy and daddy. Fantastic. The new wrinkle in the backstory that is introduced makes little sense and seems nakedly deployed to make the existence of a fourth book possible. It is a testament to Due's writing skill that this book still gets three stars, because the squandering of her talent makes me angry.

Lily Java says

The third book in Ms. Due's African Immortal saga is the first one where I felt that the story was not standalone; that a new story would come from the old as well as a reckoning. It was also in my opinion the most politically motivated of all of the books in the series and I don't just mean because of Ms. Due's memorable words in her afterward. The implications of what something like *Glow* would mean for the world and the few who would try to control its distribution are complicated, far reaching, and worthy of examination as it is in this book. However I occasionally felt as if the message drove the story instead of the other way around. Tying the dissemination of the *Living Blood* to the Underground Railroad was ingenious and interesting but it also felt at times like clunky intrigue in the story. I don't think I would have it changed though because it resonated perfectly with the also intriguing and symbolic use of conventional Christianity and other interpretations of the Word or "the Letter" in the book. Frankly these are exactly the kind of heady topics you should expect from a story like this one it just meant that I enjoyed the beginning and the latter parts of the book much more than the middle. Three characters fascinated me in this book Fana who is now a grown woman but still innocent and only half done for much of the story. Jimmy who seems in his humanity, his mortality, and his prayers to be the only character the reader can identify with completely. And lastly Jessica who in her struggles and faith gives us all lessons in how to "follow God." Again the Immortals both African and Italian remain the most wild and fascinating creatures to me. Weirdly their arrogant rhetoric only makes them all the more arresting. On to book 4 happily.

jo says

added later. i would discourage people from reading this book without having first read at least The Living Blood, but optimally My Soul to Keep too. i think 2/3 or its meaning would be lost.

this is the third in tananarive due's *living blood* trilogy, a brilliant investigation of life, death, race, slavery, parenting, faith, aging, destiny, grief, love and some other seventy-three topics, woven seamlessly in masterful page turners. you could read all three books and think they are nothing but adventure. or you could have your world turned upside down.

me, i had my world turned upside down by the realization that there are story-tellers who can go extremely deep and extremely wide while barely breaking the surface of the water. i have read my milan kundera, my franz kafka, my flannery o'connor. they deal in portentous metaphors and soul-stirring narratives. tananarive due is no lesser scholar of the human condition, but her probings can be easily consumed on the beach. this, to me, is brilliance.

major spoilers ahead

in *Blood Colony* fana, whom we had left catatonic at the end of *The Living Blood*, is a regular if extraordinarily gifted teenager, eager to escape the protection and worship of the colony that was built for and around her and, well, save the world.

her otherworldly gifts have vastly diminished. the little kid who could kill with a thought and cause hurricanes with a mood needed to be retrained in the mind arts because her most lethal and devastating gifts were left on the other side of her many years of catatonic trance.

this is a narrative whose key comes at the very end. TD's genius consists, among other things, in keeping the key to the narrative deeply cloaked, or, in the novel's terms, masked. the key is that a certain kind of power comes only from evil. goodness is powerful too, but its power is slower, less flashy, more gentle, meeker. so, fana's confusion, her teen-age clumsiness, her desire for escape inside herself, her weakness, are simply the result of a choice that was made for her by her parents, in particular her mother (that jessica, what a character!). whereas little fana of *The Living Blood* is a force to be reckoned to, 17-year-old fana of *Blood Colony* has been brought up right by two generations of women who put god (not his blood or his magic, but his imperative to love and be decent) at the core of their lives and is a much more fragile (human?) kid. the fact that beatrice refuses the blood with such desperate conviction (she's terrified her wishes will be disregarded, and they almost are), speaks louder than just about anything else in this novel. who knows if what runs in fana's, dawit's, and jessica's veins in christ's own blood? what this woman who's lived her life with integrity since day one knows is that you don't mess with human life (or lives).

it is wondrous to me how TD can write a novel about good immortals, can even endow her heroes with immortality, while consistently presenting immortality in such an ambiguous, equally tragic and glorious, light. the balancing act impresses me deeply. i imagine this woman sitting at her computer in the morning and i wonder how she managed to keep her many compasses so steadily and unwaveringly focused in the direction of moral and emotional complexity. there are no easy solutions or easy choice in these novels. it is the constant act of choosing what *seems* right that is always at the front of the page. what seems right, though, is never *clearly* right. righteousness and goodness are always cloaked in a gentle mist and we can

discern them only in silhouettes and hues. also, they invariably come with a toll of pain. TD is a writer who understand that goodness, love, pain, and death always come in unbreakable company.

it is only at the end, when fana meets michel, that we realize that fana could have easily been wiser, smarter, less fumbling, and incredibly more powerful. this, however, would have come at the price we all pay when we act with hubris, overstepping the boundaries of our finitude and humanity: the death of her soul. what saves fana and her family are not the gimmicks of a powerful blood, but the wisdom of sacrifice in the service of others.

Lisa says

Frankly, I am annoyed the ending was so anti-climatic and vague it made reading the whole series seem pointless to me. Newsflash to all authors - If you don't know how to end a story, don't bother to write it! When I read a book, particularly if it is a series I expect a concrete and satisfying ending. Not this horse-crap. What a waste of time.
