

Race to the Sun Book PDF Download



By:

Rebecca Roanhorse

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What people Say:

Rick Riordan

Changing Woman. Rock Crystal Boy. The Glittering World. The Hero Twins.

If those names don't ring a bell, you've been missing out on some of the coolest mythology anywhere. (And as always, when I use the term myth, I use it in its first and most basic sense: a traditional story about gods and heroes, not in its later, more secondary connotation as something false or made up.) But don't worry. Thanks to Rebecca Roanhorse and Race to the Sun, you're about to plunge headfirst into the fabulous,

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Meet Nizhoni Begay. (Her first name is pronounced Ni-jho-knee. It means "beauty.") In many ways, she's a typical New Mexico seventh grader. She just wants to be good at something, to get some respect at school. Unfortunately, nothing works. Her bid for internet fame is a fail. Her chance to become a sports superstar ends with a basketball in the face. She can barely manage to hang on to her one good friend Davery, who runs the lunchtime Ancestor Club in the library, and try to protect her artsy younger brother Mac from getting beat up by school bullies.

As if that wasn't enough, Nizhoni has another small issue. Recently she's started seeing monsters. Nobody else seems to notice, but Nizhoni is pretty sure that even Mr. Charles, the rich guy who is offering Nizhoni's dad a new job in Oklahoma, is not human. Worse, it seems that Mr. Charles has sought out the Begay family because he considers Nizhoni some kind of threat . . .

I love this story, and not just because it's a page-turning, funny, brilliant read. The point of Rick Riordan Presents is to publish and promote great voices from cultures that have been too often marginalized or erased by mainstream culture. No one has suffered more from this than Native and Indigenous peoples. As Rebecca says in her author's note, it's important for Native kids to be able to see themselves in fiction, but it's equally important for non-Native kids to read about Native characters who aren't just a collection of stereotypes or long-dead figures from the past. Native cultures are alive and well and vibrant. Their stories can tell you about the original American gods and heroes, those who inhabited and embodied this land for thousands of years before the Europeans brought over their interloping Zeuses and Aphrodites and what-have-yous.

I'll tell you something I don't normally share. Piper McLean, the half-Cherokee character in The Heroes of Olympus series, was inspired by conversations I had with Native kids during school visits, of which I did hundreds over the years. They asked me repeatedly whether I could add a Native hero to Percy Jackson's world. They wanted to see themselves reflected at Camp Half-Blood, because they simply never saw themselves in popular kids' books. Piper was my way of saying, "Absolutely! I see you. I value you. You can be part of my world anytime!"

But my perspective is not a Native perspective. It was one thing to include Piper as part of the heroic ensemble, to share Percy Jackson's world with kids from all backgrounds and send a message that heroes can come from all sorts of places. It would be quite another thing to write entirely from a Native protagonist's point-of-view, about the mythology of his or her own culture. That sort of story needed to come from a Native writer, and I yearned to find stories like that and put them into the hands of young readers, Native and non-Native alike. There are so many wonderful Indigenous mythologies. They deserve to be read, shared and spotlighted.

For Native kids, seeing themselves reflected in books is critical. Seeing themselves reflected in the authors who create those books is exponentially more empowering. I am thrilled that Rebecca Roanhorse agreed to write Race to the Sun for Rick Riordan Presents. It is a much-needed addition to children's fiction, and I hope it's the first of many!

megs_bookrack

When Nizhoni Begay notices a mysterious man in the bleachers at her Junior High basketball game, she can't take her eyes off him.

So much so, she misses the game winning shot. The thing is, she knows instinctively that this man is a monster in disguise, a gift she has recently discovered she has.

After the game, she learns the monster is her Dad's new boss, Mr. Charles, and he is very interested in Nizhoni and her little brother, Mac.

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Nizhoni calls out Mr. Charles to her Dad, who doesn't believe her.

In fact, he seems disappointed in her outburst, but when Mr. Begay ends up getting kidnapped by Mr. Charles and his cronies, it is up to Nizhoni to save him!

Nizhoni has always wanted to be a hero and this is her chance.

Bethany

Actual Rating: 4.5 stars

If you are looking for a fun, middle grade fantasy adventure with monsters, mythology, and #ownvoices Native American representation, then look no further! Race to the Sun by Rebecca Roanhorse is solidly written for her target audience, so don't expect this to be subtextually for adults as well. That said, it's fun, fast-paced, and is jam-packed with Navajo mythology. On an entertaining note- the "big bad" of the story is a monster disguised as a businessman who owns an

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Nizhoni Begay is a seventh-grader with the ability to detect monsters. When her dad's potential new boss comes to visit, she can tell that he is actually a monster and learns of his plans to co-opt Nizhoni and her brother for nefarious uses of their power. When their dad is kidnapped, Nizhoni, her brother Mac, and her best friend Davery (a Afro-Native boy with an amazing memory) embark on a quest to become monster hunters, defeat the enemy, and save dad. Along the way, they encounter many characters from mythology including Spider Woman and guardians of four holy mountains.

It is a great blend of ancient mythology with modern technology. The book addresses things like bullying, racism, homophobia, and more. There are some content warnings for instances of those things, plus violence and maternal abandonment. Overall, I really enjoyed this book and think it will be fantastic for young readers. I received an advance copy of this book for review. All opinions are

my own.

Samm | Sassenach the Book Wizard

Okay so full disclosure that I am not an unbiased reviewer.

I literally spend my days trying to find books for unserved Indigenous communities AND OH MY GOD THERE IS LIKE NOTHING OUT THERE! Now I don't live anywhere near a Navajo territory but having a book I can take to the communities I do serve with a power-wielding bad-ass Indigenous girl fighting against some evil dude trying to destroy the environment...is amazing! She's incredibly relatable and I love her family's backstory.

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Brigid

Reviewed at the Alliterates:

Nizhoni is in love with spaghetti, her FrankWalnshirt, and she has an incurable desire to be internet famous.

Roanhorse repeatedly makes it known that she wants books for her daughter to relate to when she grows up. This book is for right now.

Roanhorse is Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, African-American and Diné-in-law. Her daughter is Diné and part of that community. This book is an act of love for her daughter. It encourages

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Roanhorse is Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, African-American and Diné-in-law. Her daughter is Diné and part of that community. This book is an act of love for her daughter. It encourages her daughter to love her culture, her language, beliefs, and values. Having stories where Diné girls get to be heroes in a literary tradition that only ever had magical white kids as heroes is important for both Roanhorse, her daughter, and other native kids.

One of the reasons Roanhorse shows the reader the difference between indigenous ideas and western ones is because she wants native kids, specifically Diné kids, to have an accessible resource. She wants kids to relate to their culture through kids like Nizhoni and Davery so they can love and learn more about their culture. What separates this book from other kids books is Roanhorse makes it entirely about kids and their emotions. She prioritizes how a kid would respond versus how an adult would want a kid to respond. Nizhoni reacts realistically. She's not some fantasized version adults have about kids holding in all their emotions.

Roanhorse encourages truthful experiences for kids rather than ones designed to talk down to children. Her books are always political and this one is no different.