



The Liminal War

Ayize Jama-Everett

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When Taggart's adopted daughter goes missing he suspects the hand of an old enemy. He gathers friends, family, and even those who don't quite trust that he has left his violent past behind. But their search leads them to an unexpected place, the past, and the consequences of their journey have a price that is higher than they can afford. Praise for The Liminal People: "A great piece of genre fiction. But picking which genre to place it in isn't easy. The first in a planned series, it's got the twists and taut pacing of a thriller, the world-warping expansiveness of a fantasy yarn, and even the love-as-redemption arc of a romance. Oh yeah, a lot of the characters in it have superhuman powers, too."-The Rumpus "Ayize's imagination will mess with yours, and the world won't ever look quite the same again."-Nalo Hopkinson "An action-packed thriller and a careful look at the moral dilemmas of those whose powers transcend humanity."-Publishers Weekly The enigmatic quagmire that is Ayize Jama-Everett has been making his presence felt all across this world since 1974. In New York, California, Morocco, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, he has impressed, reviled, and astonished with his amazing feats of mental alacrity and mystical inebriation. Despite being degreed in both divinity and psychology, the forlorn artist stakes his reputation and honor on the calling of author. He is known to be cunning in the ways of the bottle, the pen, and the pistol.

The Liminal War Details

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From Reader Review The Liminal War for online ebook

Sebastian H says

Coming fresh off the first volume, I gotta say this one included much more of everything: more liminals, more enemies, more world building, more traveling and exotic situations.

But somehow (or maybe because of it?) this one did not feel quite as... intimate? Even when infused with a heavy dosage of ganja culture and black culture icons (not naming any to avoid spoiler, though). Even when the stakes were higher than ever. Even when failure was not an option, it did not quite click as much with me as the introduction to this world and the beginning of the healer's journey narrated in *The Liminal People*, one of my favorite books this year. That one lay heavy with emotional choices and burdens to carry; while this one felt more akin to a classical hero's journey to rescue the stolen princess. And maybe that's what I found missing: a battle between good and evil is interesting when good is not as shiny, while evil is not as dark, as they initially appear to be.

This one is all about the impending war between two sides clearly delineated as good vs bad. But I liked it best when the lines were blurry enough to doubt each side's means to their respective ends.

Justin Howe says

This is two-fisted pulpy insanity where super powered humans not quite allied with a sentient fungus god's messiah travel through time to hang out with Bob Marley and play guitar with Robert Johnson while fighting kinda-sorta-not-quite-vampires and an evil drug dealing Professor X type guy. Halfway through there's a scene where the protags are on a ghost ship traveling through time and the villains attack them with prehistoric sharks, while the messiah of the fungus god has to brand himself with the souls of dead Africans lost in the middle passage, and I have no idea what's going on or why, but PREHISTORIC SHARKS!

Think Octavia Butler meets Andrew Vachas with a healthy dose of gonzo thrown in.

Josh says

Unfortunately, *The Liminal War* doesn't hold up as well as its preceding volume. While *The Liminal People* was deeply rooted in a comicbook sensibility, *The Liminal War* kicks that up to 11 and reads like the latest Marvel crossover. That's not a good thing, because ultimately it results in a bunch of disparate elements, many of which feel jarringly out of tone with what we saw in *Liminal People*.

Did I enjoy it? Mostly. Maybe it would have felt a little more coherent if I'd first read *Entropy of Bones* (these two books were random finds while browsing - my local library doesn't have that volume), but as it stands I felt a bit let down by *The Liminal War*.

Stephen Dorneman says

Not as good as Jama-Everett's **THE LIMINAL PEOPLE**, which introduced us to his world of superpowered individuals and Taggart, a healer-turned-assassin-turned-healer-and-hero, but still an amazing romp. Like any good superhero tome, Jama-Everett starts off by throwing you right into the action. It takes longer than it should have for the reader to sort out who is who, what powers they have, and who the bad guys are, but by the time the heroes travel to the past to meet Bob Marley and then bluesman Robert Johnson, the confusion is gone - and the marvels never stop coming. At the end, you find the whole book was basically a set-up for the next book, but that, too, is in the comic book tradition. Recommended.

Ongelique says

loved it. loved how my vocabulary expanded while reading this. loved the character development and the twist and turns. recommended.

Robyn McIntyre says

This second book in a trio started the action from page one. An intriguing world with the titular war breaking out between the protagonist and his sociopathic brother. The characters are well drawn and one of the best things about the book was the diverse group included. I have seldom read a book with so many different types and colours of people. That said, very few of them were anyone I would want to know. The protagonist himself and his daughter are paranoid loners who can barely work together let alone with anyone else. Headstrong, stubborn, and seldom with a kind word for anyone, they did not improve on acquaintance. It was drama, drama, drama, all the time with these folks and their allies and enemies, and that is far from my favourite type of story. Conflict in a story is good and people trying to overcome earlier trauma can be good, but somehow these people could occasionally make it seem tiresome.

It's a thriller and if fast action is your thing and you don't mind main characters who are the act first, plan later types, you may find them worth looking up.

Mike says

The Liminal War blew me away. And I'm not even sure why. I liked The Liminal People; that's a solid first effort. But I'm not overly fond of comics or superheroes, and I like my sci-fi to have more to do with science than mysticism. (Maybe that's not true; I'm generally more interested in fantasy than in torturing science to do things it really can't do. And in that sense, this book is more in line with fantasy.)

But The Liminal War blew me away with a combination of elements that I've never seen combined, at least not in fiction: religious faith taken seriously, the history of the slave trade, and music, from Bob Marley to the Blues (and particularly Robert Johnson). It's fantasy moved into an Afro-American mental topography, and that's something I don't think anyone has accomplished quite so well, not even N. K. Jemisin or Nnedi Okorafor.

Here's an example. In the climatic battle, Jama-Everett writes "Whatever ancient dark powers Kothar taps into, I don't think it can handle the collective suffering of the Middle Passage." That could just be a throwaway line--if you don't know about the Middle Passage, the journey enslaved Africans took across the Atlantic. (If you don't know about the Middle Passage, read Robert Hayden's poem). If you do know about the Middle Passage, you know that it's not a throwaway line, it's possibly the most important sentence in the book. The Liminal War a book inscribed on the pain of one of the most monstrous events in human history. And Jama-Everett does that repeatedly: in addition to the spirits of the dead slaves, other players in the final battle include a black cat stolen from one of Bob Marley's dreams, and the hellhound from Robert Johnson's blues.

And, as so often in the Black America, a local victory leads only to a larger defeat. Though (in true comic book fashion) that defeat sets up a sequel, which I hope Jama-Everett writes. (The Entropy of Bones is related to the Liminal novels, but it's really more of a mid-quel.)

Naomi Bashara says

I really liked the first of this series, so I was really excited to pick this book up. Once I did, I felt like I was thrown into one action sequence after another. I felt like a ton of god-related concepts were thrown at you at once, so between the Altars, the eventual war building between two gods, and the various other non-liminals thrown in I just really wasn't sure what was happening. When the ending happened, I feel like it was expected that you should have put all the pieces together, but instead I just felt lost.

There was a lot less time spent on getting to know the characters which made me care less about what was happening. To me the interesting part about the first book wasn't the villainous group trying to gather liminals. It was the connection with Yasmin and trying to form a relationship with Tamara amidst all the action. It was coming to terms with who he was, and understanding that he wasn't the freak he had feared for so long. And this book sort of lacked that. I feel like you can't hate villains that are just flunkies sent to kill you. You can't love new characters when you don't know if they're funny or smart or loyal. Hopefully the next book will have more of what the first book had.

Erroll says

Actually 3.75 stars, this book had a little more action & adventure with way more people with abilities than The Liminal People but in the middle I got kinda lost but it definitely picked up towards the end and I'm hoping the third part of this trilogy will have me pumping my fist all the way through. Still definitely a good read!

Virginia says

What a ride. I can't wait for more.

I think some of the names and people got mixed up a bit so it could have done with some better editing. But so good.

Can't wait for the next chapter.

Andy Coleman says

A SIMPLE MAN'S REVIEW:

After reading *The Liminal People*, it took one day for me to snag the next book. But considering I'd started with *The Entropy of Bones*, which I thought was the third book, I was a little confused that some of the events/characters seem to take place after "Entropy". For example, Chabi is out looking for Narayana, which definitely happens after "Entropy" ends. Regardless, I enjoyed all three and my mind didn't explode from reading them out of order.

This book continues where *The Liminal People* leaves off. The healer and his two new daughters are trying to live a normal life. Obviously Nordeen and other bad guys don't want this to happen so chaos ensues.

The first half of the book seems a bit scattered, as new characters are introduced and the crew learn about Manna. But once the rescue mission starts, the story feels more like the first book and there's a great fight scene to end it all.

The epilogue turns everything on its head and sets up the next book. I won't spoil it but it could shape up to be a great battle.

Read it!

charlotte says

Super-powered people of color cross the Atlantic ocean with the aid of African ghosts who died in the Middle Passage. And other stuff happens. Maybe there's a god and maybe there are spirits of entropy opposed to the god, and a group of people with superpowers caught in the middle, who are reminiscent of the X-Men, if the X-Men were a grittier, more realistic take on marginalization.

Yes, this book is bananas. Character introductions and plot points fly by so fast, reading it feels a little like standing on a lane divider in the middle of the freeway, especially the first part of the novel. Parts II and III settle down some, with a clearly identified team of protagonists and antagonists, but the pace never slows. Granted, this is the second of a series, so the author can make a few assumptions about what you know already about the characters, their powers, and the world, but I have a feeling that even if I'd started with its precursor, *The Liminal People*, I would still have whiplash. And no real idea how to explain the novel's world and its characters' powers, especially the villains'.

None of that's to imply that the book isn't fun or accessible reading, though. You'll probably enjoy it if you enjoy its references: Bob Marley makes a cameo, and (an even more mythologized musician) Robert Johnson. Our hero acquires a set of knives that, once they cut a person, the wound never stops bleeding. And a Rasta cult lives on an island in the middle of the Thames. It's unique, fun stuff, that you won't read about anywhere else, and for the time and the length of the book, highly worth it.

And if you need more character-development and explanation, well, there are at least two other books in the series.

Wes says

[[review originally appeared on SFRevu at: <http://www.sfrevu.com/php/Review-id.p...>]]

In 2012, Ayize Jama-Everett introduced us to his world of liminals--people with powers like those in movies or graphic novels, though with considerably less spandex. Think more along the lines of Netflix's latest Daredevil series or the movie Push, rather than Superman or Spider-Man. *The Liminal People* was a thrilling, thought provoking and gritty read. If you haven't read it, or if you last read it when it was released, a re-reading is called for before picking up *The Liminal War*, Jama-Everett's much anticipated sequel. [Spoilers for *Liminal People* ahead.]

Chronologically, *The Liminal War* picks up three years after the end of *Liminal People*. But in terms of pacing and feel, it seems as if it picks up right where *Liminal People* left off. Taggart, the central character, has the power to control bodies--not in the sense of making them do things, but in a literal sense where he can alter a body down to a molecular level. He's a healer, though his abilities were perverted and corrupted by Nordeen, an ancient and more powerful liminal to whom he was indentured.

Taggart's daughter, Tamara, is a powerful telekinetic and telepath, and his adoptive daughter, Prentis, has the ability to control animals. After rescuing Tamara and Prentis from the clutches of a powerful liminal named Alia, Taggart told Nordeen that he was done being his slave. Nordeen did not take it well, declaring war on Taggart and his allies.

The Liminal War starts with an abduction that hits close to home for Taggart and Tamara and the rapid introduction of some new characters with entirely different sets of powers, powers not necessarily of the liminal sort. Taggart immediately suspect's Nordeen's hand in this and seeks aid from new acquaintances that are connected with his lover, Samantha. Their search leads them around London, the globe, and ultimately, eternity.

Where *Liminal People* is a quick thrill ride that rarely lets up, *The Liminal War* is a slower, more contemplative book. Jama-Everett introduces concepts and characters that take a bit more processing to get used to and understand. He takes a world that was, if not exactly our world, a close approximation and adds in some elements that might be considered a bit more fantastical and less science fictional. This includes a plant based sentient life-form billions of years old, beings comprised of entropy, and a human representative of the four winds. And surprisingly, within the context of *The Liminal Wars*, it all makes sense.

The Liminal War broadens and expands Jama-Everet's world building and introduces an intriguing variety of new elements. Not all of these happen seamlessly, and perhaps just a bit more explanation would have solved a couple of these issues. But overall, the connection to elements in *Liminal People* that easily could have been overlooked is wonderful. Characters and concepts mentioned in passing play key roles in *The Liminal War*, and it's pretty fun to have those connections revealed.

The Liminal War is a deserving sequel to *Liminal People*, and a unique book in its own right. It will make you look forward to another in the series, hopefully arriving sooner rather than later.

Lisa says

I picked this up at random from my local library without realizing it's a sequel, so I did spend a few muddled pages getting my bearings with the world, the characters, and their unique abilities.

But it's worth it. The voice and pacing are vigorous, and the story surges forward on a tide of action-heavy scenes and heady concepts. With one daughter and a musically inclined frenemy in tow, Taggart goes in search of his other kidnapped daughter. Taken by a powerful enemy from Taggart's past, her suffering is assured.

While the writing sometimes feels a little rough around the edges, and occasionally conflicts end on unclear terms, I found myself preferring the rough-and-ready prose to a more measured or self-consciously literary style. It all felt very *alive*. Jama-Everett has assembled a multicultural cast of non-Pollyanna superheroes who possess a fascinating array of abilities, and he's pitted them against the provocative destructive forces responsible for most of humanity's woes. A fun, thinking novel with plenty of surprising historical twists.

Annie says

Ayize Jama-Everett created a dangerous alternate world of super-powered humans in *The Liminal People*. We rejoin the protagonist of *The Liminal People*, Taggart, some time later. Life has improved for Taggart since he broke free of Nordeen, his twisted mentor and employer. *The Liminal War* begins with a bang. Taggart is healing a woman of terminal cancer when Nordeen makes his move and kidnaps a girl Taggart has adopted as his ward. The truce is over...

Read the rest of my review at A Bookish Type. I received a free copy of this book from Edelweiss for review consideration.
