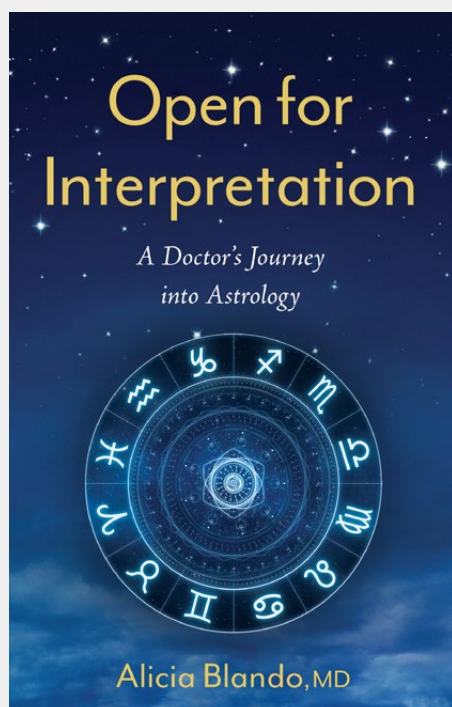


Book Review



OPEN FOR INTERPRETATION A DOCTOR'S JOURNEY INTO ASTROLOGY

This memoir is a fun read by a conventionally trained medical doctor who also finds herself compelled to study divinatory and healing arts, including astrology.

Alicia Blando, MD, has had a lengthy medical career. She trained in New York during the AIDS epidemic. She eventually became a specialist in muscular-skeletal medicine. Her family immigrated to the U.S. from the Philippines when she was a child, and she was raised in a traditionally

Catholic family. Like many astrologers, she calls herself a “perpetual student.”

She writes that she was an “excellent student” because she could memorize easily. But she couldn’t memorize or know everything, and the job of a medical doctor is stressful in large part because it’s so vast. She came up with a concept she calls “informed ignorance,” which she calls “still

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learning but not yet there.” *Doesn't this sound like how it is when one commits to the bottomless pit of studying astrology?*

Blando has long had an interest in what she calls “fortune-telling arts.” She views astrology as one such predictive art. Her medical training was rule-based, and she applied that mind set when she began taking astrology classes with Iris, a New York City psychic and astrologer, who became Blando’s mentor. We don’t learn Iris’ full name, though Blando writes that Iris was a student of a student of Evangeline Adams, the legendary New York-based astrologer of the early 20th century. Blando originally wanted to write a book about Iris, but she realized that she didn’t know much about Iris’ personal life, and Iris told her to “*Just write. It’s going to change anyway.*” Blando signed up for classes on how to write a memoir and connected with the She Writes publishing house, which specializes in women’s creative nonfiction.

All of this jives with Blando’s own horoscope. She’s a Geminian storyteller

with Mercury in Taurus in the 9th House of higher education, religion, and publishing. She has Virgo rising, Mars in Aries in the 8th and Saturn in Capricorn in the creative 5th House.

Despite the book’s subtitle about this being a journey into astrology, it’s really a wider journey. Blando read newspaper horoscopes as a child—*who didn’t?* As an adult and later a doctor, she follows various psychics and mediums, takes a past lives workshop with Roger Woolger, studies Vedic astrology with an unnamed teacher in San Rafael, California. Among a list of her favorite astrologers, she specifically thanks Rick Levine.

Important to Blando as a healer and spiritual seeker is her encounter with curandero Oscar Miro de Quesada, founder of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition of Andean shamanism. Blando travels with Oscar and

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a group to Peru. They meet up with other healers, drink ayahuasca and have harrowing adventures.

I found this book to be relatable—I’m about Blando’s age, have a similar chart and a demanding day job (as a lawyer). Blando demonstrates how she has woven astrology into daily life alongside a very different profession. There are countless ways to be an astrologer.

Review by: Sara R. Diamond

