



Songs of Insurrection

J.C. Kang

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Only the lost art of evoking magic through music can prevent Cathay from descending into chaos.

Blessed with an unrivaled voice, Kaiya dreams of a time when a song liberated enslaved humans from their orc masters. Maybe then, the imperial court would see the awkward, gangly princess as more than a singing fool.

When members of the emperor's elite spy clan uncover a brewing rebellion, the court hopes to appease the ringleader by offering Kaiya as a bride.

Obediently wedding the depraved rebel leader means giving up her music. Confronting him with the growing power of her voice could kill her.

Songs of Insurrection is a re-release of The Dragon Scale Lute

Songs of Insurrection Details

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From Reader Review Songs of Insurrection for online ebook

Dianne says

There is beauty in song. There is also magic and strength if the right songs are sung by the right voice. The realm of Cathay will need that magic to survive, but the art of the Dragon Songs has been left unsung forever, until finally, a voice of unparalleled beauty has been born and she dreams of the past and the lost songs.

Kaiya dreams of the magic of music and the powers it can hold. If she could unleash the magic, perhaps her heartbreaking existence as the forgettable princess would end forever.

With a rumored insurrection coming from powerful enemies, young Kaiya is offered as the sacrificial bride, but marrying the brutal warlord would quench her fire for music and kill her very soul as the Dragon Song would be lost forever...and she would lose her love interest, Prince Hardeep.

Will Kaiya find that magic that calls the dragons? Caught on the cusp of womanhood, this determined, yet sheltered girl will risk everything to bring the magic to life.

J.C. Kang's **SONGS OF INSURRECTION** brings Asian fantasy to life, settings of great beauty, scenes filled with dark despair and moments when young Kaiya shines brilliantly. Told in 3 POVs, this tale becomes well-rounded and for those unfamiliar with Asian culture and fantasy, we are treated to a different atmosphere, a different feel and world.

Follow the magic, the danger and witness the intertwining plight of these characters as they tell their version of the events that unfold.

J.C. Kang has a gift for writing that shines through in his debut fantasy and is certainly an author to watch as he puts his own signature and imprints his own style on this remarkable fantasy.

I received this copy from J.C. Kang in exchange for my honest review.

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For Reviews & More: <http://tometender.blogspot.com>

Shenwei says

received free copy from the author in exchange for honest review

3.5??? mixed feelings about this one. enjoyed it enough to want to continue the series, though.

Liked:

worldbuilding

political intrigue

music as magic

2/3 leads/viewpoint characters were women

Disliked:

gender essentialism/alloscisheteronormativity

romance felt really forced/corny

full review to come on my blog

Ian Miller says

A fantasy story, written in Chinese style. The Chinese culture comes up with somewhat unusual (to westerner's eyes) approaches, and in this case a major weapon is the ability to sing, which, if done properly, might put the audience to sleep, or might have them running around in a totally disoriented state. Another unusual aspect of this book is that while JC Kang is a man, the two major characters are girls, one of which is approaching womanhood. It is a little difficult to be sure, but I felt the characterization and the associated culture was rich and authentic for this sort of story. The setting is in a country that looks a bit like a mirror EW reflection of China. It has a Great Wall in the north, and while the country has been at peace for some time, two lords are murdered in full daylight, and it appears that there has been a considerable amount of smuggling relating to firepowder. Kaiya is a princess, about to be married off for political reasons, but she wants to learn the art of magic singing. Jie is a young female elf, only in her mid-twenties, and so definitely not a woman, but she has the ability to smuggle herself into places where she is not wanted. Overall a charming story.

Maya Daniels says

From the first page the author managed to draw me into a wonderful world of magic and dragons. I can compare it to few popular books in the genre but I don't think that will give the story justice. It's unique in its own right. Kiaya is a young woman suffering the circumstances of her birth as an imperial princess. At only 16 she is required to meet suitors. Her entire life takes a new and dangerous spin when a foreign prince visits the palace. Internal plots, betrayals and power hungry officials try to push her into being a pawn for the crown but her heart leads her on an unforgettable adventure. Learning the Dragon Song and the magic that comes with it, Kiaya follows her heart. I can't wait to continue reading the series. The characters are three dimensional, the storytelling is masterful and the plots keep you on the edge of your seat! Definitely a must read!

~Dani~ LazyTurtle's Books says

Read this review and more at Book Geeks Uncompromised!

1.5 stars

I really expected more out of this. As of writing this review, it has been almost 2 weeks since I read it and honestly, all I can remember is how much the MC and the love interest irked me.

Kaiya is a 16 year old princess in this Asian-inspired fantasy world where rebellion and insurrection are brewing on all sides. After meeting Hardeep, a prince from a neighboring kingdom, and hearing the plight of his people and how it has been perpetuated by her own nation, Kaiya sets about writing the wrongs that her country has been doing.

In two side POVs we see the story of Tian, former childhood friend the princess now exiled and turned spy, and Jie, a half elf who works alongside Tian in covert operations. These POVs made the book readable for me. Their story and backstories were interesting and fun to read.

Kaiya's....not so much.

I really kind of hated her for the first half of the book. She meets Prince Hardeep in pretty much the first chapter and basically turns into a simpering moron.

I had actually convinced myself that he was using some sort of mind magic on her because she was just not thinking at all. Funnily enough, when he disappears for a few chapters, she actually makes (mostly) intelligent decisions and comments and I kinda liked her. Then Hardeep shows back up and she goes back to being his slave. All because he's hot and likes music.

Beyond all that, I didn't even think that Hardeep had much character development at all. No personality whatsoever. His function seemed to be eye candy and plot device and acting cheesy.

The story itself was okay, especially toward the end where it got a lot better. But again, characters that I could not stand ruined the whole thing for me. I love the idea of Asian-inspired fantasy and it seems like we are seeing more and more of it lately so I was excited about this one.

Like I said, the Tian and Jie chapters were great. I could read a whole book just about them and very likely love it. They are both intelligent, capable, and fully crafted characters that I would love to see more of. And if Kaiya would get away from Hardeep and show off more of the strength that was displayed when he is not around, I would read more. Unfortunately, I don't see that being the case and so I don't think I will be continuing the series.

Ian Kelly says

[The 'surprise' betrayal at the end was seen from a mile away, but maybe that's because I read too much fiction. The bigger mystery, not really touched on in this novel is *who* is Avarax (who I pre

Joshua Grant says

I used to love playing Dungeons and Dragons back in the day, but one thing I always forgot to include in the game was the dragons ironically. Fortunately for me, J.C. Kang has just the remedy with his Songs of Insurrection, the first in the Dragon Songs series.

This series is instantly fresh as it creates a unique fantasy world based more on Eastern philosophy and traditions. I also really enjoyed Songs of Insurrection's system of magic. Magic is drawn from music, and using it comes with a price. It drains its user and signals other magic users at the same time. Our main character Princess Kaiya must contend with this as she faces off with the dreadful dragon Avarax and stop an impending attack on her kingdom. In addition to having a kick butt female main character, all of Kang's characters are well rounded and relatable, and the action is gripping and well paced. All around a solid read if you're looking for your healthy dose of dragons for your fantasy.

Bonmedo Tambunan says

I received free copy of this book for an honest review of mine.

First, I would like to congratulate JC Kang for the fabulous story.

It is epic, fast pace, and is narrated in such beautiful way that it grips me from the very start. It combines magic with Chinese art and literature, that made it a very interesting read. The type of magic that the author brings forth in his story are also the one that I don't find very often in fantasy books. Magic through music and calligraphy, and the way the magic is being used in fighting skills and techniques, brings unique color to the fantasy genre.

If there is anything I dislike, I found the sequence of events in the beginning of the story, about the very early adventure of Princess Kaiya and Prince Hardeep, are a bit rushed. Without giving any spoiler, I think that in the early part of the book, both of them keep finding things that are important for the development of music magic, too easy. But other than that, I truly enjoy this story.

Hibah Shabkhez says

The Dragon Scale Lute is one of the most engaging novels I have read so far and seems likely to be the first of a great series. Kaiya's exploration of music and her budding understanding of her own strength has the potential to become really fascinating. It was refreshingly unusual to come across a fantasy in an Asian setting, and the characters - especially Jie, Tian and Kai-Long with his shocking transformation at the end of the book - are genuinely interesting people; it should be fun to see how they turn out. All in all, this is a book that will keep you turning the pages until the very end. Highly recommended for all fantasy fans and for everyone else looking for a riveting read, for a tale of brave adventure spiced with dragons and magic music.

Hannah West says

This book follows the journey of Kaiya, an awkward sixteen-year-old princess who is trying to find her place in the world. Groomed from birth to be everything her culture perceives as the 'Perfect Princess', Kaiya struggles to meet that ideal. Especially when everyone around her is waiting with baited breath for her to blossom into womanhood. Then she will be eligible to marry one of the hand-picked suitors her father has chosen for her.

She is merely a political tool in a land where power means everything.

But in a world steeped in magic, Kaiya soon discovers that she is more than just a foolish girl or a piece on the political chessboard. Through her music, she can wield ancient magic that the world believed lost. The same magic legend claims can tame the dragon.

But is she brave enough to learn the power her talents can wield? Will she defy convention and everything she has been taught to be, to risk herself prove she is more than what people say she should be?

Alongside Princess Kaiya's story, we are introduced to Tian - her banished childhood friend and Jie, a half-elf female who wishes Tian would see her as more than a sister. Through these characters, we see the world J.C. King has created through a different perspective to that of the naive princess. We see the underbelly of an ancient oriental society and are introduced to magic and charms, the likes only a fantasy such as this can bring to life. Yet, the magic is so well meshed with the 'realistic' style world that you feel it could be real.

I felt a close tie to the female characters, and felt restrained alongside with them. Although, the males were curtailed the same, only in different ways. Everyone in this society seems to be stuck to a strict set of rules about how they should behave. Even the Tianzi can only rule based on the laws laid out - having to present himself as a just and honourable ruler, even if it means the death of his daughter.

I liked the way Kaiya was written. She's awkward, plain, naive and trapped by the circumstance of her birth. I like the fact that the last person to play the lute was a slave, in direct contrast to Kaiya's position in society, yet they share a common power. It spoke to me as a metaphor that if Kaiya could just see past the constraints of the role she'd been bred into then she could wield the power to change the world. It was such a pretty irony, yet because she's so well written she doesn't see her true potential.

So we go through all of the murder, plotting, wars, traitor and all of the brilliant creatures and beings in between and we find ourselves at the end. And I did not see it coming.

I won't spoil it for you, but I will say that everything sort of slid into place when you find out who the bad guy is. And then you smack yourself on the forehead for not seeing it sooner. I did.

Needless to say, I can't wait to see where this goes!

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Denae Christine says

DNF at 12%

I tried several times, but I just didn't care. There were stakes (that kingdom is at war, these people are spies, the princess can sing but nobody cares), but they didn't feel personal. The princess traipses around the palace to different royal archives, hoping her schedule manager doesn't catch up to her before she can find a magical song to sing. And she doesn't want to marry the old general guy and finds this visiting prince rather handsome (yeah, but what's new?).

The titles and many many maannnyyyy new words bogged down the story. And they were all italicized. I think the culture is supposed to be Oriental of some sort. Maybe some of the unfamiliar words (Tianzi? Dian-Xia? Huang-Shang?) will be recognized by other readers.

Calvin Park says

Songs of Insurrection has a great deal to like. It is one part thriller spy novel with hints of a larger mystery

looming in the background, one part naïve princess romance, one part coming-of-age story, and one part epic fantasy all set within a beautifully crafted world filled with the sort of detail that fans of intricate world building will love.

JC Kang has crafted a story that is fun and engaging. Whether it is the spy/mystery that we see playing out in the chapters from Tian and Jie's perspectives or the hints of court intrigue we see from Kaiya's perspective the pages keep turning. I particularly enjoyed the world building that Kang weaves so expertly. There is a history to this world, a richness, the hint of things happening off screen both in terms of empires and kingdoms, but also in terms of the everyday lives of people. If you're looking for your next fantasy read in a non-western setting, you should absolutely consider *Songs of Insurrection*. The various magic systems are also intriguing, and I'm very interested to know more about how the magic of the world works. The idea of art of various kinds (calligraphy, music, etc) being a channel for magical energy is fascinating. Add to this that this magic appears to work by influencing the emotions of others and I'm intrigued. There are enticing mysteries here, especially when combined with the hints of martial magic mentioned several times throughout the book. I absolutely loved both Tian and Jie as I felt they were well rounded characters who weren't super-powered.

There is one exception, at least for me, to the generally well-crafted characters in *Songs of Insurrection*. Kaiya, the main character in the novel, is incredibly gullible and naïve. And this naivete and gullibility *does not change*. At the end of the book she appears to be every bit as naïve and gullible as she was on page one. I quickly found myself wishing fewer chapters were devoted to Kaiya and more to Tian and Jie. Throughout the novel she makes poor decision after poor decision, endangering the lives and livelihoods of dozens. Yet she continues making those poor decisions. It was incredibly frustrating to me that she didn't grow or develop concerning this obvious character flaw. It is a testament to Kang's writing and to how engaging the other perspectives and the larger world is that I kept reading. But I'm glad I did.

Everyone has their preferences about characters. There is tremendous world building, an engaging and mystery filled story, and a ton of fun to be had here. *Songs of Insurrection* belongs on your TBR pile. I'm hoping that Kaiya's gullibility is something she grows out of, very quickly, in book two. 3.7/5 stars.

5 – I loved this, couldn't put it down, move it to the top of your TBR pile

4 – I really enjoyed this, add it to the TBR pile

3 – I liked it, depending on your preferences it may be worth your time

2 – I didn't like this book, it has significant flaws and I can't recommend it

1 – I loathe this book with a most loathsome loathing

The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says

Everything about this heady fantasy pushed my happy fangirl buttons. It was diverse, with a refreshingly predominately Asian cast. There was plenty of political power plays and immersion in Chinese culture. There were spies, elves, magic, danger and yes...romance.

Hence lies the BIG problem.

By all rights and means this should have easily rated the full five stars. Unfortunately, the heroine, Princess Kaiya violated one of The Fountain Pen Diva's cardinal rules: thou must like the heroine as much as I do the hero. Frankly, Kaiya annoyed me throughout the entire novel. Between the endless hair twirling and her

obsession over the handsome Prince Hardeep, I struggled to get through the chapters she was in. I got it, she was the typical plain Jane princess. I got it that she saw her only value in providing a marriage despite her talent for music. I got the whole idea of love at first sight, but that's also where it ran off the rails. Everything she does, as heroic, daring and dangerous, is all dependent upon what Prince Hardeep will think of her. It's like her bravery means nothing unless it's validated by a man.

The irony being, Kaiya is quite capable and has a strong sense of justice. Hardeep (who is an interesting character in his own right) should have served as the catalyst, not the *raison d'être*.

With that said, I enjoyed *Songs of Insurrection* and most definitely plan to read the next book in the series. I can only hope Kaiya finds her own voice, independent of the love interest.

Angel Haze says

Loved this one! I've always loved ancient Chinese lore. Their ingenuity, their weapons and unorthodox battle strategies . . . just amazing. In Kang's book, Jie and Tian were my favorites--kind of the underground characters who really just rake in the excitement! The magic in the book was unique and the conspiracies....ohhhh....don't get me started! I don't want to spoil anything! The race to the book's climatic end just revs up the excitement! If you haven't read this yet, it's an adventure you don't want to miss!

Shomeret says

What attracted me to the fantasy *Dragon Scale Lute* by J.C. Kang was the word "lute". I was drawn to the musical aspect of the novel. I was also interested in the fact that the book takes place in an alternate version of China. I received a free copy from the author in return for this review.

Based on the cover you'd think this was a romance. The female character is carrying a musical instrument, but she looks insipid and is dressed in faded pastels which implies timidity. I'm delighted to say that the protagonist, Princess Kaiya, is anything but timid. She's unpredictable, bold, incredibly stubborn and a very talented singer/musician. There is a romantic hero and a strong romantic element, but anyone who thinks that this is a romance is likely to be disappointed. The handsome prince is from alternate India, and he's got the invasion of his country on his mind. There's a connection between him and Princess Kaiya, but he has other priorities and readers would think that she's a bit young at fourteen for a committed relationship.

I enjoyed reading this book. It was quite suspenseful because I never knew how Princess Kaiya would survive her latest adventure. *Dragon Scale Lute* may not be the best fantasy of the year, but it was a good read.

Update 2/29/16--I was reading the ARC version. J.C. Kang informed me that he has raised Princess Kaiya's age to sixteen based on feedback on the ARC.

For my complete review see <http://shomeretmasked.blogspot.com/20...>
