



Descendant of the Crane

Written by Joan He

Published by ninastrattoria

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Descendant of the Crane

By Joan He

Descendant Of The Sun

Tyrants cut out hearts. Rulers sacrifice their own.

Descendant Of The Crane

Princess Hesina of Yan has always been eager to shirk the responsibilities of the crown, but when her beloved father is murdered, she's thrust into power, suddenly the queen of an unstable kingdom. Determined to find her father's killer, Hesina does something desperate: she engages the aid of a soothsayer—a treasonous act, punishable by death... because in Yan, magic was outlawed centuries ago.

Descendant Of The Crane By Joan He

Using the information illicitly provided by the sooth, and uncertain if she can trust even her family, Hesina turns to Akira—a brilliant investigator who's also a convicted criminal with secrets of his own. With the future of her kingdom at stake, can Hesina find justice for her father? Or will the cost be too high?

Descendant Of The Sun Netflix

In this shimmering Chinese-inspired fantasy, debut author Joan He introduces a determined and vulnerable young heroine struggling to do right in a world brimming with deception.

“Tonight, we fell victim to fear. We let it blind us. We thought we were hunting monsters.”
She stared out into the sea of flame-washed faces. It took all her strength not to look away. But we were monsters.

Descendant of the Crane was a really pleasant surprise. It's actually one of the better, more creative YA fantasies I've read, taking influence from Chinese culture and exploring morally grey areas in a story full of political machinations and twists. I hope this book doesn't get buried under “Tonight, we fell victim to fear. We let it blind us. We thought we were hunting monsters.”

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It's a quieter book than I had first imagined. The promise of a kingdom in turmoil and a ban on the magic once practiced by soothsayers sounds familiar in this genre, not unlike other action-packed fantasies. However, it is much more focused on political maneuvering and a young woman's bildungsroman as she discovers that not everything is black and white, and sometimes you are forced to choose between the lesser of two evils.

Oh, and there's also a compelling murder mystery and courtroom drama.

Joan He avoids dropping characters into "good" or "evil" boxes, allowing the villains (both the obvious ones and the not so obvious) to be multilayered and have realistic motivations for their actions that go beyond "Muahaha, I'm evil". As Hesina adjusts to her new power as queen, she finds herself relating to her enemies and questioning the purely benevolent view she always held of her father. I like how the author doesn't stop at the surface, but instead explores complex emotions.

If you want to understand a person, peer at his heart through the window of his prejudices and assumptions.

The story begins with Hesina illegally visiting a soothsayer for information about her father's - the former king's - death. She knows there was foul play and wants to find out who was responsible. The soothsayer cannot tell her the culprit, but she can point her in the direction of someone who will help her find out. Enter sexy ex-convict-turned-lawyer: Akira.

What follows is Hesina's attempt to get justice for her father and prevent war at the same time. Along the way, she uncovers secrets and betrayals. The murder mystery aspect - plus the thrilling courtroom

scenes - were done so well here. So much better than the recent Four Dead Queens.

I really enjoyed it when Hesina was forced to play a role as queen. Part of her story arc is learning how sometimes, unfortunately, it is necessary to lie or do "bad" for the greater good. It's a hard pill for her to swallow.

I have a couple of minor quibbles. The first is that sometimes the pacing needed work. Overall, I appreciated the slower, more political plot, but there were parts of the book that went on too long and felt dragged out, but truthfully this could be said for about 95% of YA fantasy debuts.

The second is that this is one of those books that I think would have been better as an adult novel. There is something a bit off by all these rulers and military leaders being around 16 or 17 years old. As it is, the novel is mostly chaste, despite the inclusion of such as brothels. It feels almost deliberately cleaned up for a younger audience, and I think it is a shame that a sexy character like Akira is wasted on a romance lacking in steam.

I still enjoyed it a lot, though. I have to point out that this is NOT a standalone and is left set up for a sequel. You can bet I'll be reading it.

Who isn't powerless against the will of the cosmos? But who doesn't try all the same?

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Descendant Of Thieves

I am so honored to be a part of Hesina's Imperial Court, to help boost this beautiful story!

Update: I actually won't be posting my review for this until MAY! But I am very excited to tell you why soon, and I implore you all to pick this beautiful debut up! <3

New Update: The cat is out of the bag! Make sure you're following Books With Friends for updates!

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I've always thought of writing as like gardening.

The words take root, sometimes growing. Sometimes sprouting others and moreâ€”sentences and paragraphs blossoming together.

And sometimes not. Sometimes refusing to break through, through the grit of grammar and barrenness of diction, through the concrete blankness of my mindâ€”as is the case now.

How do I put to words everything that was Descendant of the Crane? I feel as if anything I write would be a disservice to this novel. To all that it encompassed and to all that it brought out.

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The thing is, I like to nurture what Iâ€™ve written over timeâ€”tending to the words like a gardener tending to the garden. Always trimming. Always refining.

Unforgivingly brutal. Tragically beautiful.

And yet, those words are not enough for Descendant of the Crane.

I admit that after reading, I didn't know what to write. Because the truth is, Descendant of the Crane was not a novel to be contained in words.

In which case, I feel inclined to refrain from what Iâ€™ve always done. No more trimming. No more refining. Let the words nurture themselves. Wild. Untamed. Phrases snarling, sentences tangling.

In Chinese legends, cranes are said to bear the spirits of the departed to heaven. And that was what Descendant of the Crane was for meâ€”the wings to my soul. I was carried aloft on its feathers, flown to transcendent heights.

And how to describe the writing? Perhaps it was a painting and each word a brushstroke, a vibrant dab of colour across the paper; or perhaps it was a tapestry, the words woven into a mosaic of mesmerising

Descendant of the Crane

patternsâ€”I'd like to continue waxing poetic, but what point would there be in that?

Imagine the acrid aromas of incense coiling through the air. The autumn wind as it whispers sweet secrets to the ginkgo leaves. The scarlet haze of paper lanterns smeared around the edges of silhouettes.

Descendant of the Crane was a story about human people in an inhuman worldâ€”it was a story about a kingdom which carried the wounds of centuries past, its hurts unhealed and cutting deep, its bitterness and hate festering together like rot.

It was a story about a queen who sought to stitch her kingdom back together, to sew its wounds shut and soothe its hurtsâ€”a queen who, in the end, rose from the mire of her insecurities and doubts, of her despair and pain, to bloom like a lotus flower from the mud: strong, resilient and beautiful. It was a story that left me with no words.

And you know what?

To the Ten Courts of Hell with waxing poetic.

I loved it.

Beyond words.

5.0/5

note: this review reflects my honest thoughts! I'd like to thank Albert Whitman Company and Joan He for the ARC! I rarely give out five stars, which goes to show how much I loved this novel :) ...more

Descendant Of The Sun Season 2

Actual Rating: 3.5 stars

full rtc....

This book is giving me trust issues!!

Plot: 5/5 Characters: 5/5 Writing: 5/5

The Descendant of the Crane was an intricate Chinese fantasy full of treachery and about a relentless hunt for the truth. I was constantly in suspense and it kept me guessing until the very last page.

The writing was exquisitely vivid, each word weaving a net that captured my attention and didn't let go. Sometimes, I even felt as if I were a part of the story. The first half of the book was quite slow-paced, gradually building up and setting the scene. However Plot: 5/5 Characters: 5/5 Writing: 5/5

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The writing was exquisitely vivid, each word weaving a net that captured my attention and didn't let go. Sometimes, I even felt as if I were a part of the story. The first half of the book was quite slow-paced, gradually building up and setting the scene. However, the second half was a constant stream of mind-shattering revelations and plot twists- my poor heart didn't know what to do with itself!

The characters were all brilliant and multi-faceted. Hesina was the protagonist, a young woman convinced that her father, the king, was murdered despite the fact that everyone else believed it to be a natural death. Determined to deliver justice, she decided to start a trial to find the murderer and become the next queen. Even though she didn't always make the right decisions and she had many misconceptions about her kingdom, it was admirable how she believed in herself and had the courage to pursue the things she thought were right. There were times when she wavered but when she made up her mind to do something, she did it formidably.

I also thought the relationships in the novel were well crafted. There wasn't a heavy emphasis on romance (which I thought was good) but there was a lot about family. Hesina had a brother called Sanjing and although they loved each other they weren't very good at showing it and had a strained relationship. On the other hand, she was very close to Caiyan and Lilian, who were her adopted siblings. I thought the way these relationships were contrasted was very well done. Also, there was Akira, the convict that Hesina asked to help her in the trial. He generally remained shrouded in mystery but we do get to learn small things about him here and there in the novel. I'm interested to see what his role will be in the next book.

Descendant of the Crane

A really important detail of the book was the sooths. They were people with almost magical powers who could do amazing things like seeing into the future. Due to previous historical events, the sooths were generally despised and shunned from society and there were terrible punishments for them and those who sympathised with them. Another reason I liked Hesina was that although everyone was telling her that the sooths were evil and deserved to be punished, she made up her own mind about them and wanted to bring equality to her society. Which is also something that we should all do today.

I adored this book, it's definitely a new favourite. Honestly, it's the kind of book that deserves to be a movie. If you like complex fantasies that constantly keep you guessing, then this book is for you!

Thank you to Albert Whitman Company and Joan He for providing me with an e-ARC via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review!

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Descendant Of The Crane Excerpt

oh my god the cover

• Chinese-inspired Game of Thrones!! oh my god the cover

• Chinese-inspired Game of Thrones!! ...more

why am i crying in the club right now????? how dare you joan (i think this might be one of my favorites of 2019)

instead of a traditional review, here's reasons why you should just read this book

☺, joan's writing is so, so gorgeous and it creeps into your soul

☺, (it kind of reminds me of roshani chokshi's writing? but more practical)

☺, this literally has the most twisty plot ever. listen, I came into this book expecting a murder mystery and came out feeling like I'd walked through a hailstorm

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☺, it's not only a murder mystery!! it has a fantasy plotline and centers on Hesina trying to figure out how to manage ruling her kingdom

☺, I love all of the characters so much.

☺, especially Sanjing. I would die for Sanjing. I love him so much

☺, seriously, I was not kidding. I love Sanjing even though he gets the least page time.

☺, (oh I just realized I superimposed Li Shang onto Sanjing and it's kind of... fitting)

☺, also yeah this novel has some flaws, like certain unnecessary plot twists and Lillian's lacking characterization but I've become too obsessed with this book to rate it objectively

☺, by the way... the romance is kind of lackluster. I said it

☺, I just don't completely see the appeal of Akira as a love interest. I'm sorry, y'all. I really tried. I just kept picturing his brown hair as a rat's nest

☺, I also didn't really see any reception from Akira towards Hesina? he never really demonstrated his affection for her. I had so much hope for their ship but no

☺, Sanjing tho... why was the brother more attractive than the actual love interest

☺, Anyways. more importantly, Hesina's character was so well-done and I could feel her desperation and helplessness seeping through the pages

☺, and her realizations that everyone's not who they appear to be are just... so relatable. I love

Descendant of the Crane

Hesina so much and she Truly Feels Like A Flawed Teen Character to me

ðŸŒŒ, I would categorize this as kind of a coming-of-age fantasy

ðŸŒŒ, I really loved so much about this book. the worldbuilding was honestly flawless and the lore of the empire was one of my favorite things to read

ðŸŒŒ, I mean, this book also tackles institutionalized oppression and how it can be built-in so deep that it can never truly be removed

ðŸŒŒ, also the most wild existential themes are present, yo

ðŸŒŒ, like what the frick I came for an adventure and left with a hole in my soul and inescapable thoughts about legacy

ðŸŒŒ, THIS BOOK SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON THE NYT BESTSELLING LIST. truly the greatest injustice of our time

Trigger and content warnings for death by poison, slavery, drowning, blood, cutting oneself, (institutionalized) oppression, parental neglect, and strangulation.

(view spoiler)[why did lillian die though :((hide spoiler)]

edit: ^^ this is a major spoiler btw

...

hi a physical arc of this appeared on my doorstep and i would like to say that i am a little emotional right now because i've wanted this so badly ...more

Descendant Of The Crane Book

Initial Thoughts: Just been approved for an e-arc of one of my most anticipated 2019 releases!! This cover combined with the Chinese-inspired A Game of Thrones comparison has me anticipating great things from this one.

Review: Tyrants cut out hearts. Rulers sacrifice their own. From this very first line of the synopsis I knew this was going to be the book for me.

A well-conceived costume is a new identity. From this very first line of the actual book I knew I was going to be immersed in all the political scheming, court intrigue, and high-stakes action that I had been so highly anticipating. And I was not wrong.

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Fantasy books following the inner-workings of the royal court and with society's ruling members as their central characters are my favourite to read about. What this book did, inside this much-used outline, is deliver the reader something entirely new. The book begun with treason, was followed by murder, and the stakes were only ever raised from there. My trust was tested with each twist added to this deliciously dark tale and even as I bonded with the unforgettable cast of characters I knew I could never trust them, or the author, with what was going to be delivered next.

Joan He made not one fault in this meticulously constructed story-line, this vivid world, and these entirely unique and authentic characters. I was enchanted by her words and immersed inside her world. This book lived up to every one of the crazy high expectations I placed upon it. I was in absolute adoration of the writing, throughout, and in utter denial over how shook the ending had me, as I turned the final page.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to the author, Joan He, and the publisher, AW Teen, for this opportunity. ...more

My smol Asian heart is doing a happy dance, because I'm a Baroness at Hesina's Imperial Court!!

Have you ever seen a book with a cover that so effortlessly transcends all human concepts of beauty, and, moreover, has a synopsis to match its outer beauty's magnificence with equal brilliance?

Descendant of the Crane

// buddy read with Tiffany ðŸŒ°

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Descendant Of The Stars

this cover is prettier than me but im ok with it

also this is game of thrones but with chinese influence and probably will be coming out more reliably than actual got so like ?? whats not to love ????

3.5 stars

Thanks to Netgalley and Albert Whitman & Company for a digital galley in exchange for an honest review

This little gem may have escaped my notice if I hadn't seen a list of highly anticipated YA novels for 2019. Reeling from the death of a beloved father, the teen regent Hessina is hell bent on finding the person or persons who may be responsible. Plenty of twists and lots of back stabbing betrayals ensue and it isn't long before Hessina wonders- who can I trust?

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There is potential left here for a sequel and despite a little bit of a slow start in the beginning, I soon was swept away by this tale. ...more

Descendant Of The Sun Ost

5 stars

Don't forget! Descendant of the Crane is also out on APRIL 9th as the pub date was pushed back a week. Still, very excited for my copy to come!

For the first time ever, I experienced blogger-writer's block for this review.

I read this in October or November and spent five months writing this. It's not super long or anything, I just have no words that will do this book justice.

I could write a one-sentence summary of this review right now, and you can turn around and preorder this book instead 5 stars

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I could write a one-sentence summary of this review right now, and you can turn around and preorder this book instead: Descendant of the Crane is one of my all-time favorite books, and you should buy/request/read it.

It's just fantastic, and there are so many things that just make this book work. But still, I will try to give you ~reasons~ why you'll love this, not just tell you that you will.

The first thing I need to say is

AA

That ending? And then the ending after that? And after that? He really pulls out all the stops with this book, and the sheer number of twists and turns have me screaming. And it's been like 5 months and I still can't stop thinking about them.

They're just so iconic. Throughout the book, He pulls out these twists and in the first second you read it you go "HOLY \$#!@!" and then you think a little bit about it and go "whoa that was set up well how did I miss it?!" (then again, I am generally bad at guessing twists but these really blew

Descendant of the Crane

me away, more than normal!)

I felt like He really set them up well, and this book is so smart? sharp? and really executes the twists in an elegant manner. Wow.

The entire plot is so intricate and tightly put together.

This ties in a little with the last point, but this book is like dominoes in a line. It's one thing after another and everything is so put together and the scenes are all very important. Skip one scene and the dominoes stop. Add too many in, and it doesn't work as smoothly. He did some careful maneuvering to get Descendant of the Crane just right.

Descendant of the Crane features an intricate plot with both a huge murder mystery as well as so much political intrigue. There's court trials for the murder and the politics is mixed in, as the traitor may lie somewhere in the court . . .

Plus, there's also politics with another country (I definitely hope to see more of this in a potential sequel if it happens) and I was devouring it all.

I do think that if you're someone who is very meh about twistiness and politics, you might want to pass on this, but I do want to note how Descendant of the Crane does not sacrifice voice & character development. In fact . . .

I absolutely adore the characters.

Sanjing is 100% my favorite, but Hesina is probably the best out of all of them.

Hesina is a force. She basically has the entire weight of the world on her shoulders and is trying desperately to just stay afloat while everything is coming crashing down around her. She's got so many hard decisions to make (like, where does she draw the line in committing treason?) and it feels very real to the reader (aka why I cried so much. College is a hard decision, hmmm).

I thought the way He portrayed Hesina's sort of tumble and crash built up really nicely, and is part of why I loved this story so much.

Even more than this, the characters have motives. Goals. Desires. I loved reading how He put this on the page and really revealed this through some of their actions. It felt like the characters had agency and weren't being puppeted around, and I really liked that.

(Plus, I have an interview with some of the characters coming this Wednesday so keep an eye out for that!!!)

Descendant of the Crane

I love how it examined morality.

One of the biggest themes in *Descendant of the Crane*, in my opinion, is morality and how it ties into sacrifice. If you're doing a bad thing for a good cause, how far will you go?

I think *Descendant of the Crane* really portrayed this question well and showed a lot of different paths to achieving something (some of which I cannot spoil). The way the story questioned this really made me think about what I would do in Hesina's position, and I loved how the story sucked you in this way.

Overall, I cried. *Descendant of the Crane* made me cry. No less than 3 times.

I just adore this book so much and it's one of my favorites of all time! I want to hug the characters to my chest and make sure they're all happy and thriving.

I would wholeheartedly recommend this book to everyone, but especially if you like

- tightly plotted stories
- interesting politics
- murder mystery
- characters who are Stressed But Trying Their Best
- a rich world and a fantastic book and OMG THOSE TWISTS

Thank you so much to Joan He for sending me an advance reader's copy in exchange for an honest review!

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...more

Eventually "EVENTUALLY" I will defeat this terrible YA fantasy slump and learn how to enjoy life (and my ARCs) again. But... alas, today is not that day. I'll pick this back up ASAP, though.