



The Poppy War by R.F. Kuang
Reviewed by Devnita



Book 1 in the Poppy War series
Fantasy, Psychological, Historical, Drama

Give a summary without spoilers!

Set in Ancient China, The Poppy War series draws on actual historical events from history and turns them into an exciting fantasy. Our protagonist, Fang Runin, desperately wants to get away from opium ridden small town in the Rooster province. Either she aces the countrywide test called the Keju to join the top military school in the Empire of Nikan and experience glory in battle, or she is sold to an older man in her hometown as a child bride. Only a little can be said without spoiling the book's first half.

What drew you to this book?

I picked up The Poppy War initially because I just wanted to read. I continued reading it because of the complex relationships of the characters and the fact that so many details were hidden until the end. The mystery behind every character and plot had me theorizing 24/7.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

Yes, the protagonist reminds me of Azula from Avatar the Last Airbender. Only she is a morally better character, but who's to say after her conclusion?

To whom would you recommend this book?

The Poppy War is for anyone who likes mythological religions or dissecting history. Both sides of the war have their reasons, and the first book's conclusion will leave everyone sympathizing with both. Since it is a somewhat accurate retelling of Sino-Japanese conflicts, the book is very graphic and dark.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

I loved it. I recommend it to anyone who finds it even slightly interesting because you can't put it back down once you pick it up.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

R.F. Kuang is a highly acclaimed writer, and I was curious as to how she turned such a grim period of history into something entertaining. I was always interested in pre-colonial Asian history, and I think the author does a great job of making the myths and legends truly fantastical.