



2017

Soundless

Abigail Packard

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Book Review

Title: Soundless
Author: Richelle Mead
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Razorbill
Year: 2015
ISBN: 9781595147639
Pages: 272
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Serious Shortcomings



Review

Fei and her sister, Zhang Jing, are apprentice artists learning how to record the village's history in beautiful calligraphy. Fei is an extremely talented artist, but Zhang Jing's is losing her sight, making her work less refined. Many in their village are also becoming blind in addition to being deaf. The villagers only manage to survive by mining precious minerals and sending them down a zip line that sends up supplies in return. When the village can no longer mine, Fei, now miraculously able to hear, makes a treacherous journey down the mountain to talk to the leaders below. She discovers that there are plenty of goods down in the city, but the king's greed has withheld them. Fei travels back up the mountain and rouses the villagers to act. Against all odds, the villagers triumph against the king's army with the help of magical pixius that scare the army away.

Richelle Mead's writing is often lyrical and intriguing in this story of magic, adventure, and Asian undertones. The overarching plot is interesting, but Mead glosses over many details in an attempt to pack this novel with story rather than building the world, rounding out characters, or satisfying story developments. The ending was so obviously deus ex machina that it leaves little room for closure with the narrative. The characters were unfortunately flat and predictable. The magic between the pixius and the humans was unexplained and left much to be desired. *Soundless* provides an interesting blend of Asian folklore and adventure, but the story itself was riddled with holes that ultimately leave the reader unsatisfied and questioning why they even picked this up in the first place.

*Contains mild violence.