



The Dragon Warrior

Katie Zhao

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As a member of the Jade Society, twelve-year-old Faryn Liu dreams of honoring her family and the gods by becoming a warrior. But the Society has shunned Faryn and her brother Alex ever since their father disappeared years ago, forcing them to train in secret.

Then, during an errand into San Francisco, Faryn stumbles into a battle with a demon--and helps defeat it. She just might be the fabled Heaven Breaker, a powerful warrior meant to work for the all-mighty deity, the Jade Emperor, by commanding an army of dragons to defeat the demons. That is, if she can prove her worth and find the island of the immortals before the Lunar New Year.

With Alex and other unlikely allies at her side, Faryn sets off on a daring quest across Chinatowns. But becoming the Heaven Breaker will require more sacrifices than she first realized . . . What will Faryn be willing to give up to claim her destiny?

Inspired by Chinese mythology, this richly woven contemporary middle-grade fantasy, full of humor, magic, and heart, will appeal to readers who love Roshani Chokshi and Sayantani DasGupta.

The Dragon Warrior Details

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Author : Katie Zhao

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From Reader Review The Dragon Warrior for online ebook

Francesca Flores says

I had the great pleasure of reading this book earlier this year, and even then, it was fantastic! I can't wait to re-read the final published version of this!

It has EVERYTHING - magic, adventure, strong family dynamics, hilarious jokes, food, a fantastic protagonist, heart-warming passages, and a story that keeps you glued to the page.

Apart from that, it's just extremely unique--a fantasy adventure based on Chinese deities, and spent racing through Chinatowns spread across the US? And with a mixed-race protagonist?! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT

Do yourself a favor and add this to your TBR, and preorder once the links come out! This book is NOT to be missed.

Ryan Bada says

1/8/19 - so i found a post on subtle asian traits (which i reacted to "sad") and the author posted a screenshot of her mom texting her job offerings because of her transition from her old job from accounting to being a full time author and i can't believe that i'm not adding her debut because of that but how i'm actually excited for this book. "percy jackson" meets "grace lin"?!? an instant add for me!

Katie Zhao says

Man am I glad I can count this to my GR challenge! I am so excited to share Faryn Liu's story with the world. Gods and demons and dragons, food and family and fun, all steeped in Chinese mythology and lore. This is a book that I would have devoured as a kid and I hope young Chinese (and non-Chinese!) readers will enjoy reading it and hopefully learning a thing or two about Chinese mythology.

Beyond the mythology, Faryn's story is a story about seeing people for who they are rather than what they look like; it's a story that's near and dear to my heart, about a girl who, at the end of the day, is just trying to find her family, found family and blood family alike, as well as her home. The Chinatown settings are specifically chosen because of my childhood experience. My parents, who are immigrants from China, would always manage to find Chinatowns in every new place we travelled to within the states. They're truly magical places, little pockets of home.

More than anything, I hope that the Chinese readers who pick up this book will feel what I feel when I visit or write about Chinatown - that feeling of belongingness, of home. I hope they feel proud of the rich culture and mythology of China, and of themselves. I hope they feel seen and heard and know that they, too, can be heroes.

Amélie Zhao says

I'm beyond THRILLED for this book to debut. I binged it over a flight and stayed up late into the night at my hotel reading this, and it was a rollercoaster filled with strong Chinese warrior protagonists, Chinese deities/gods and legends and myths and DRAGONS, set in a variety of Manhattan Chinatowns. The characters in it stole my heart with their stubborn and snarky personalities and their banter. And the humor, oh, the humor in this book is to DIE for. Guys, true story -- I literally woke up at 5:07AM (yes I still remember looking at the clock and feeling astounded) the morning after I read it because I had LAUGHED MYSELF AWAKE because I was DREAMING ABOUT THE BOOK and the jokes in it were just so, so funny.

I simply cannot wait for Chinese children all over the world to read these books written by an author of their heritage celebrating their heritage, their roots, their families, and the joys and pains of their diaspora experiences. Oh, and the amazing food descriptions that had me drooling in the middle of the night -- who could forget that?

The world has seen Greek myths and legends explored in Rick Riordan's books. And now, we have a new star on the rise. Guys, get ready for THE DRAGON WARRIOR and its sequel. It's about to shake up the world.

Claire Bartlett says

I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAVE TO WAIT SO LONG FOR A SEQUEL AFTER THAT ENDING.
WHAAAAAAT.

Faryn is a girl who lives with her brother and grandfather in Chinatown. The three of them are ridiculed outcasts, trying to keep their heads down. That becomes hard to do when Faryn is called to be the latest in a long and glorious line of supernatural warriors - and tasked with defending the Gods themselves. As Faryn and her brother race to find the island of the Gods, they get a chance to find out what happened to their missing father. More than that, they get to find out what they're made of as they face the ultimate tests of bravery, loyalty, and inner strength.

This book was super fun, while maintaining a number of serious themes. Family, friendship and rivalry, race, and the bitterness of being the target of constant racism - these were all huge parts of the book, while Faryn and her brother Alex quibble and quip their way across the US. There's a ton of action, too, with great fight scenes in between the one-liners. In that way, it's a lot like a Marvel film. But it's better, because it has dragons.

Oh yeah, and that ending will kill you. Seriously, Katie. I am ded.

Naseem says

A fun book that's the true spirit of a middle grade—you'll want to read THE DRAGON WARRIOR as soon as you can!!!

I'm so glad I got to read this book! The characters are charming, the adventure is fast-paced, and the whole thing was an utter delight to read. This is the beginning of a series that kids will absolutely love and would make a kick-butt Saturday morning cartoon. This is a book that will make even the most reluctant of readers dive straight in.

One thing that makes this book so remarkable is how unapologetically steeped in Chinese culture and lore it is. There's no apology for using Chinese words (I'm assuming Mandarin, but I'm not Chinese, so I don't know!) or stories. It also really speaks to people who are trapped between cultures or who feel like outcasts—I think a lot of first-generation kids feel like "blood traitors," which is the insult hurled at the narrator and her brother. It's something difficult to capture, but *THE DRAGON WARRIOR* did it in a way that will speak to the kids who aren't sure how to put that feeling into words.

I also love the settings in the book, the various Chinatowns. As someone whose culture doesn't have a home-base in many cities like that, I can imagine the feeling of home (and the complications that come with it) that arise when you're in a hub like that. Also shout-out to my home city of Chicago!! I would have been bummed if there wasn't a visit to Chicago Chinatown ;)

I think it's deeply important for marginalized kids to see themselves in book, both the good and the bad. Alex and Faryn grapple with themselves and with what's going on in ways that kids who have been knocked down and bullied will deeply understand. The choices they make are so human and flawed, and I love that.

One note: the book ends on a cliffhanger to end all cliffhangers. If you have to deprive yourself of this book in order to wait until the sequel is also out, I wouldn't blame you. But you would be missing out on a comedic adventure that proves that anyone can be a hero. <3

Divine says

Did you just say Percy Jackson vibes????? And October???? Yup, my birth month will gonna be filled with diverse books that's for sure.

Alyssa says

This is the book for every little girl who read the Percy Jackson series and wanted to see herself as the hero of an amazing world. This is the book for girls with enormous hearts who believe love is more powerful than raw strength and physical attributes. This is the book for girls who have never seen themselves kick butt in middle grade books. This is the book Scholastic Book Fairs need to hand to every single middle grade reader in this country. This. Book.

It makes me laugh until I cry, and then cry until I laugh. Faryn's story touches my heart, and her warrior journey fills me with pure excitement. I could read this book a hundred times and still find places that bring me to tears (both from laughter and feels). Katie's voice is so unique, genuine, and epic. She brings the Chinese deities into an urban fantasy setting without missing a beat. Her plot twists bring you to your knees. And she never hesitates to talk about hard-hitting topics.

A hilarious and big hearted heroine. Killer world building. Complex and heart-wrenching sibling dynamics.

Delicious food descriptions. A laugh out loud cast of deities. And DRAGONS!?!? Honestly, what more could you possibly want?

Maria Hossain says

I was one of the lucky few who got to read an early draft of this book and let's just say, you're not prepared for this.

This book, I began to read in the middle of a boring lecture and immediately, I said immediately, it sucked me inside its world. The description and the world building alone are splendidly done. I could imagine myself in the world. On top of that, Katie is a master of spinning emotions and surprising you with twists and turns just across the corner of the events. Also, she's so good at emotions! My heart was wrung by the time I finished this book.

World??

YOU. ARE. NOT. READY. FOR. THIS. BOOK. AT. ALL!!!

Pragati Chaudhari says

I'm so very glad that this is happening! OMG!!

This book is so very good and I was literally a mess while I was reading it. Such amazing writing, such a phenomenal plot and awesome characters! This book is such a treat and I'm really, really, really happy that this is getting pubbed because Katie deserves this. And so much more!!

julianna 🐉 says

look at that gorgeous cover!! this book is going to own my heart <3

Aneeqah says

I had the pleasure of reading an early draft of this book, and HOLY. WOW. You'll be sucked into this wonderful world from page one, and fall in love with this amazing crew of characters. You'll laugh one page, and cry the next. I love how intricately Katie explores family and Chinese culture, and how rich the mythology this book is. As a die-hard Rick Riordan fan, I don't comp books to him lightly, but seriously: if you grew up reading Rick Riordan books, you'll want to read this book IMMEDIATELY.

A blurb from my 11-year-old sibling: "Wow, this sounds awesome!!!!!" (with that many exclamation points). I think that's proof enough that you need this book.

Becca says

I LOVE THIS BOOK SO MUCH. Omg. Omg. THE DRAGON WARRIOR is such a gorgeous book that dives right into Chinese mythology set in our modern world. Katie is such a masterful writer and some of the big, emotional reveals in this made me audibly gasp. The world is lush, the characters jump off the page, and IT'S SO FUNNY. I'm not a person that laughs easily when I read--getting a snort out of me is pretty impressive. But this book had me laughing every chapter! Like, OUT LOUD! It's the only book I've ever read that had me giggling constantly as I read. Humor is so hard to do but Katie's jokes land perfectly.

This is also a book that's going to change reader's lives. It's upper MG, but the fast pace and rich mythology means that anyone can be sucked in. I can really see this as a go-to book like PERCY JACKSON for teachers and librarians to hand to reluctant readers and ensure they'll be swept away. This book is also so, so vital for the time we're living in. While it's exciting and funny and thrilling, it's also a book about found family, about stepping into your own heroism, and about seeing people for who they are instead of the image the world presses upon them. Katie never punches down with her humor, but only lifts up, and the diverse cast means so many kids will see themselves in this story. I'm so honored I got to read it early, and I can't wait to see THE DRAGON WARRIOR take over the world! <3

Heather says

I was so lucky to be able to read THE DRAGON WARRIOR early! It was this perfect blend of heart and humor, with settings so well-described I could envision myself in each of the different Chinatowns or the center of the Jade Society's compound. The story was rich with truths, showing how friendships crack and mend, how family bonds might be tested, and how doing the right thing isn't always what you think it is. The adventure in this book swept me away in a golden chariot led by flying horses!!

And Faryn, the main character, was both strong and vulnerable, wanting so much to believe in her own strength and her unexpected destiny, but struggling all the same against those who did not think her worthy. (Oh, she was MORE than worthy!)

Katie Zhao had me laughing one moment, gasping in surprise in the next, and even finding hope in the saddest moments in the story. I'm so looking forward to seeing this amazing book out in the world!

☆ **Ashley** ☆ **says**

OMG that cover!!! ? Now I'm even more excited (and I was stoked before!)!! ?
