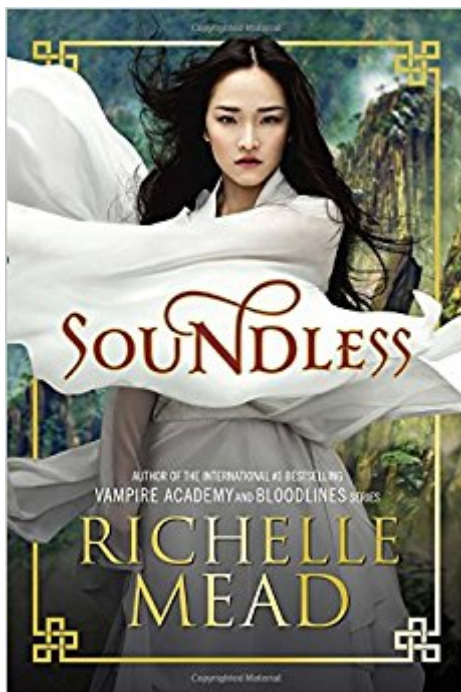


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Soundless



Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER From Richelle Mead, the #1 internationally bestselling author of *Vampire Academy* and *Bloodlines*, comes a breathtaking new fantasy perfect for fans of Leigh Bardugo, Laini Taylor and Sabaa Tahir. "Fans of characters like Rose Hathaway and Sydney Sage will flock to this impressive stand-alone novel."--Booklist For as long as Fei can remember, there has been no sound in her village, where rocky terrain and frequent avalanches prevent residents from self-sustaining. Fei and her people are at the mercy of a zipline that carries food up the treacherous cliffs from Beiguo, a mysterious faraway kingdom. When villagers begin to lose their sight, deliveries from the zipline shrink and many go hungry. Fei's home, the people she loves, and her entire existence is plunged into crisis, under threat of darkness and starvation. But soon Fei is awoken in the night by a searing noise, and sound becomes her weapon. Richelle Mead takes readers on a triumphant journey from the peak of Fei's jagged mountain village to the valley of Beiguo, where a startling truth and an unlikely romance will change her life forever....

Book Information

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in Books > Teens > Romance > Science Fiction & Dystopian

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up Fei and her sister, Zhang Jing, live in a mountain village where everyone is deaf

and has one of three jobs: artist, miner, or supplier. Fei and Zhang are both artists who paint pictures to illustrate the news of the day. Fei knows that her sister is in trouble when she begins to lose her vision, as she will become a miner if she can't continue to convey the news. In fact, others in the village are also losing their vision. Then, Fei suddenly can hear—but why? Knowing that the answer is out there, Fei and her friend Li Wei set out to get help from a forbidden place in the valley Beiguo. While they are there, they discover the surprising truth about their own village and know what they must do to save its members. Inspired by Chinese folklore, Mead has ventured away from "Vampire Academy" (Penguin) and written a stand-alone fantasy. While the story line is a bit predictable and Fei's ability to suddenly hear doesn't seem overly surprising to her, there is plenty of action and intensity after the duo sets out to find the valley, with a light romance between Fei and Li Wei that will please readers. VERDICT Fans of the author won't want to miss this multicultural, folk tale-based tale. —Karen Alexander, Lake Fenton High School, Linden, MI

"Like her heroine, Mead paints with a delicate brush, creating a fablelike story that melds folktale, sacrifice, romance, and the stark realization of humanity's capacity to exploit others for profit."--Publishers Weekly "Mead's original world building really shines here, as it did in her Vampire Academy and Bloodlines series. Fans of characters like Rose Hathaway and Sydney Sage will flock to this impressive stand-alone novel."--Booklist "Reminiscent of Kristen Cashore's novels, this blend of mythology, romance, and suspense will keep readers turning pages." —School Library Connection "A thrilling mix of taut storytelling, majestic Eastern magic and a richly imagined world." --Alison Goodman, New York Times Bestselling author of Eon and Eona "Wholly original--and as every bit as delicately carved as one of Fei's beloved chrysanthemums--Soundless resonates with the sort of love and life that only happens in the hands of a master. That Richelle Mead has perfect pitch shouldn't surprise anyone--yet this story will surprise everyone." --Margaret Stohl, author of Icons and co-author of the internationally bestselling Beautiful Creatures novels "Mead combines adventure, suspense, and romance in this fast moving cliff hanger mythological fantasy." --Voice of Youth Advocates "Mead weaves Chinese folklore, themes of family, courage, and loyalty, plus her signature romance into her first stand-alone fantasy novel." —Kirkus Reviews "Fans of the author won't want to miss this multicultural, folk tale-based tale." —School Library Journal

I keep waiting for Richelle Mead to create a series that rivals "Succubus" but so far she's been a bit

of a let down, Her writing, while catchy and full of punch, seems to be mostly for teenage girls. It's OK, but YA is not really for me, and those series (VA, Bloodline) start off strong, have lots of unique ideas (living vs undead vampires from Eastern European lore) but kind of fade away by the time they end. The Age of X series seems to have promise, grabbing both a dystopic USA and Norse mythology, but RM doesn't really seem too interested in exploring it. Soundless starts off with an unusual, innovative idea, of a society, high on a mountain in China where everyone is deaf. Great idea! But it's soon obvious and predictable. (Spoiler alert) As soon as we know there's a mine, we know where that's going. Black lung, Byssinosis, Asbestosis are no secret, as are cancer-cell centers like Love Canal. From there on, the story gets rather predictable and pedestrian. Still, I was enjoying it until the ridiculous, and weak Deus Ex Machina ending. Fantasy is fine, but it seems slapped on and lifted from JRR Tolkien. If it worked, it would be fine. But it doesn't. The punchy, tongue-in-cheek style of adult humor of the Succubus series was what first attracted me to Richelle Mead's books--from the blurb of a succubus in Seattle with great shoes but no social life, to her crackpot, silly fiendish friends. While that series is done, I keep hoping RM will be inspired to come up with something equally sassy and grown-up.

This review was originally published on herestohappyendings.com Soundless was one of my most anticipated reads for 2015, and after I bought it, I kept putting off reading it, because of a lot of negative reviews. I'm not usually one to read a lot of negative reviews on a book before I read it (especially one that's so high up on my "holy crap I'm super excited for this!" list), but seeing that maybe people's unfavorable opinions on it put me off of reading it for a bit. I've noticed that a lot of people didn't like this book, especially after reading the Vampire Academy and Bloodlines series. I haven't read any of Richelle Mead's other books, so I can't really compare them to this, but I actually kind of enjoyed this. I liked the whole Chinese folklore/mythology thing that this book had going on. I honestly never read anything like this, and I was stunned at how well it was written. "Our village came to terms with silence when our ancestors lost their hearing generations ago for unknown reasons, but plunging into darkness? That's a fate that scares us all. Fei is used to not being able to hear. No one in her village has been able to hear for a very long time her ancestors lost their hearing many years ago. Since the people living in her village have never had their hearing, they don't really miss it or they communicate through signing.

However, when the villagers start going blind, things start to get scary for them. After all, there will not be any jobs available to them if they can no longer see or hear, and they end up as beggars on the street. Fei and her sister both work as artists in the village; they observe the things that go on in the village and then paint the daily news, and for their work, they are rewarded more than the other villagers, such as the miners or servants. However, when Fei's sister begins to lose her sight, and the elders of the village begin to notice, she can't continue to help her. However, one night, Fei wakes up after a strange dream and she is able to hear. At first the experience confused her, but as she began to realize what was going on, things changed for her. In order to figure out what was happening in her village, Fei decided to go off with an old childhood friend, who she no longer gets to talk to because of her status as an artist and his as a miner. When he tells her he is leaving the village to figure out what is going on, she convinces him that she can hear and that she can go along, too. When the two of them set off to figure out the mystery of why the villagers are losing their sight, they find some things that they might not have been ready for, and Fei is determined to get back to her village and save the others. The whole premise for *Soundless* is fantastic, and the way the story is told makes for a nice read. I liked Fei's character, and her determination to save her village; she wasn't the kind of girl who relied on everyone around her to fix things; she takes charge and gets things done. There is a romance between Fei and the guy she goes with to get to the bottom of things, and it's actually pretty sweet. "Once I felt like I had too many senses, now I suddenly feel as though they've all disappeared. I hear nothing. I see nothing. All I'm aware of in the world at that moment is the feel of his lips on mine." Sometimes I feel like romances hinder the plot of the story, but this one didn't really take center stage, and it was a nice little side-thing going on while they were working on fixing their village. I think this book was really well put together, and you can tell a lot of thought and research was put into writing it. I really liked this, so I'm looking forward to other books by Richelle Mead.

I love mythology which is one reason why I may have loved this story so much. When we think of mythology we often think of the old Greek and Roman tales we have learned through study or Hollywood magic; but mythology lies in every culture. Mythology reflects a culture's past, telling us stories filled with tradition, values, beliefs and the human race. There is usually

tension between good and evil forces, a struggle for power and or there is a lesson we can learn from. Richelle Mead picks up a paint brush alongside Fei painting a beautifully illustrated story with Soundless. Fei and her sister, Zhang Jing have grown up in a village that is completely deaf and no one knows why. Suddenly many villagers have started to go blind. Since this village depends highly on the trade of the metals that their miners obtain, for food with King Jianjun, many are now starving and this may be the end of their village. Fei at first finds silence injustice in what she sees but is restrained by her cultural beliefs, when her sister is dropped in status due to her ailing vision; Fei quickly finds the desire to do more. One night she awakes from a dream able to hear and joins Li Wei in an adventure that will lead them to finding out the secret of their village's ailment and freedom from enslavement. Fei finds the strength and courage to take on injustice and the power of an evil greedy King to save her village from doom. This artistically crafted story is narrated by the beautiful voice of Kim Mai Guest who worked hard in pulling us into the canvas painted by Richelle Mead. Guest's performance adds to mental illustrations created by Richelle Mead's writing, a perfect joining. I recommend this story both as an e-book and on audio to people of all ages. I hope one day to see it as an illustrated version or even on screen. This new mythology should never be one lost to time but should be held dearly allowing us to enjoy lessons learned in finding the strength and courage to stand up for our beliefs.

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Soundless

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