



The Heavenly Fox

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Lymee had always been a bit of a recluse preferring to spend time reading and playing strategy games when she is not at the Dojo hitting things. Everything changes when she wakes up wounded and in the middle of an ongoing battle that seems to be set in ancient China. Not sure how she got there or what is happening Lymee ends up saving a woman from being killed who turns out to be the ruler of the land she is in. From there Lymee gets caught up in wars, political intrigue, and lesbian love.

The Heavenly Fox is the first full length novel in the Dynasty Saga of approximately 80,000 words.

The Heavenly Fox Details

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From Reader Review The Heavenly Fox for online ebook

Mandy says

Interesting

This story intrigued me and definitely left me wanting more. I can not wait to see what happens next in the saga.

Lexxi Kitty says

This is one of those books that kind of defy genres, or labels. It's a displaced in time story, something of a time travel story. But no scientific explanation is given, and time travel stories in and of themselves, by their very nature, unless heavily loaded down with science fictiony elements, stretch the science fiction label. So this book isn't science fiction.

There is a long tradition of displacement in time, of people displaced in time, I mean. The guy who had a nap and woke up ages later (Rip van Winkle), the guy who suddenly found himself back in King Arthur's time (A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court), etc. Somewhat by definition those have a fantasy element by their very existence, but still, it's not exactly what is normally thought of as "fantasy."

Well, this one does have very very minor touches of fantasy in the story itself, beyond the displacement in time element, so a certain "light fantasy" label could be applied.

It's supposedly set back in time, though the oddly knowledgeable 17 year old does not recognize the place by looking on maps, and does not recognize the people. Who appear to be have a mix of Asian traits. Nor does she recognize, it appears, the concept of the seven kingdoms. Though I did. There was a period in ancient Chinese history when seven kingdoms competed against each other.

Even so, there is no specific reason to believe that mention of Seven Kingdoms in the book, refers to the seven kingdoms that were conquered to create China. Especially with men having no authority at the top levels in the book. There were some rather powerful warrior women back then, though, in real life - well, at least one springs to mind. Pre-China wasn't ruled by women, though (a counter to that, I guess, is that history got rewritten a lot in ancient China, to the point that the first Emperor literally destroyed every history that existed before him. Basically saying - history begins now; so it's vaguely possible history was rewritten and that there actually was a time of female rule in ancient China, however unlikely that might seem today).

People go in and out of fashion. I've no idea if Sun Tzu would have been known in 200 B.C. China, though I suspect he would have been. Though that was 300 years after he was around. Still, it's vaguely possible he was in a low point in 'popularity' at the time and so it is not, in and of itself, a clue that this isn't ancient China simply because several teenagers didn't recognize the name Sun Tzu (most of the women in the book, it is easy to forget, especially as they are groping and more each other, are actually younger than the main character's 17 years of age).

All the above just means - I do not even know if I could call this historical fiction. As elements suggest someone traveled back in time to the warring period in ancient China, but that person could easily enough

been thrust far enough forward into a post-apocalyptic world to confront a mixed-Asian culture that's about at the level of the warring period in ancient China. So this might even be a post-apocalyptic book for all I know (though there is even less evidence of that being the case).

Well. That was a lot on how I can't really figure out how to place this book on the shelves. Probably too much.

Story-wise: there are points here and there wherein things kind of dragged, and or events seemed to oddly jump, but otherwise it was a quite interesting and good story.

Character-wise: The characters . . . hmms . . seemed, on somewhat vague recollection, to be mostly well-rounded. I liked Lymee, and Alia, and all the rest. The poly-sexual nature of the time was an interesting thing to confront, especially from the view point of a "modern" woman falling in love with someone but being unable to act on it because the person they loved, couldn't have a monogamous relationship. And that "modern" woman wouldn't allow herself to be in a position of being in anything but a monogamous relationship.

Sex wise - it was somewhat oddly injected. Somewhat naturally, but still oddly. There was a layer of eroticism spread throughout. Scenes of bathing, scenes of groping, etc. While at the same time someone looking specifically for that, for graphic sex, would probably be disappointed. I guess. At some point I kind of suspected that part of the fantasy element of the story was some kind of . . hmms . . . spell/pheromones/something that was impacting that woman from the future (Lymee), because she just kept getting more and more aroused as the book unfolded, but that was just a stray thought as I read.

A strange book. A good book. So interesting that I got the sequel before I'd even completed 25% of this book. And yet, not a five star level book. Just . . . something kept it from getting there. Probably not even a 4.5 book, if we had 1/2 stars here, but a good solid 4 star book.

Steve Going says

Great story

Like able characters, but author needs an editor. Too many grammatical errors. It made the book hard to read. At least use a standard grammar checker.

Frank Van Meer says

I'm going to echo what Lex Kent said in their review: I'm surprised I enjoyed this.

To get it out of the way: the writing is in many places cringeworthy. Spelling, punctuation, the lack of compound sentences, sentences that don't make any sense at all; this book has it all in spades. The most mind-boggling issue, however, are the many. many places where homonyms are being used. Sentences like: a sharp pain shot threw her head, followed up with: the woman through her head back in laughter. Piece, where it should read peace. Heals when it should be heels, and so on. What baffles me is that homonyms are mis-used so consistently, it's almost like it was done on purpose.

(I do have a theory, based on what Lyme discusses with Alia later on, but I don't want to presume anything).

That said, the story was quite engaging and fun, even if one has to wonder about how Lyme acquired her strategic skills (see P. Industry's review). In fact, I liked it so much, I immediately bought the second book and finished that one in one go as well (the perks of insomnia).

If you can get past all the errors, it's a great story, but I can understand if someone is so put off with the complete lack of editing they can't get past the prologue. According to the author, there has been an editing pass a few weeks ago and a revised version has been published, but I just have to wonder what the first version looked like.

I honestly can't recommend it, but I did like the story, the world and the characters.

Lunatic says

This is not a historical story. This is about traveling to another dimension of the past, not the past of our world but a different world. This is a fictional novel that have no real explanation to the unknown, such as Lyme being transported to another dimension out of nowhere with no clarification or explanation about it.

I have my doubt whether this book have any romance or not. After all, I am skeptical about the romance development. There are feelings of love, but whether it is romantic love or not, the author didn't make any confirmation.

(view spoiler)

Forgot to add, all the characters in the story are too young for my taste, especially with their sexual natures and their killing in war. They are mostly around 15-17 years old, I must say, I am a bit uncomfortable with that. Possibly because most of the books I read, the characters are usually at mid-30 or above.

As you can see, my grammars are not the best, it is atrocious actually. However, even I noticed a lot of spelling problems in the story. Spellings such as warrior, not worrior, clothes, not closes, compliment, not complement, greet, not great and etc. Did I mentioned that I found two repeated typos for worrior and closes? Move on to the commas, sometimes the author forgot to put commas in certain sentence that it interfered with the reading, then there's the run-on sentences from time to time. I think these are simply careless mistakes, the author just need to pay more attention when re-read his work, or better yet, a good editor.

The story is very compelling (even when it's kinda cheesy at time), it makes me looking forward to the second book. The writing style is pretty simple as well. There is no overly descriptive flowery words, nor there are any complicate sentence with complex words usage and fancy vocabulary. For someone who is not a native English speaker like me, it's actually make it easier to read (without the typos that is). I am hoping the second book can clarify most or some of the unexplained from the first one.

(view spoiler)

lov2laf says

I tried. I really did. I made it to about 30% before I finally scrapped the notion of reading every word and started skimming. From what I could tell, the book never got better, continuing in the same vein that it started.

The concept of the book is interesting. Lymee, a modern day university student suddenly finds herself in a completely different world where women are the ones in leadership and military power and men are considered the inferior sex. Lymee unknowingly arrives in the middle of a brawl between an injured woman and a small posse of men and, due to her martial arts training, is able to fend off the attackers, later to find the woman she saved is none other than the highest ranking person in that province. As a result, she's granted a high esteem herself in this new world and eventually becomes a military strategist and adopted family member for that woman.

For diversity, Lymee is half Japanese and half white as well as lesbian. All of the other lead characters in the book are also lesbian or perhaps bi and have an Asian vibe. I can't say "Asian" specifically since the world is different but they have Asian features. Also, if you're pro-polyamory or looking for that representation, it's in this book. Lymee keeps her chastity but other characters are happy to indulge in poly relationships.

Everything else in the book is really problematic. P. Industry's review is much more eloquent than what I'm able to note and nails my own impression of the book.

Personally, my main gripe about the book is the creepy male gaze that is present throughout. My first clue was when Lymee, upon seeing the injured woman she's about to protect says, "Always was a sucker for a nice rack." Nope. As a woman who's been around for at least four decades now, that thought has never crossed my mind least of all if I found that woman to be in distress.

There are women out there who objectify other women just as much, but regardless of gender, in my opinion, that places that person squarely in the jerk category.

Lymee also goes on to refer to this woman as "princess" in a derogatory way saying, "I never said I wasn't a coward, princess." Another nope. It's just not something a woman would say to another *especially* when that woman is being attacked by men.

And, that's just the beginning. For the rest of the book, Lymee is looking up skirts or down dresses because none of the women wear panties or bras and they constantly flaunt themselves in front of her. "breasts" or "racks" or watching chests bounce up and down are mentioned upwards of at least 40 times in the book.

When many of the women in the book try to seduce Lymee, it actually is more along the lines of assault and Trump's "grab 'em by the pussy" strategy. I think the author was truly trying to go for seduction here but, again, just no.

Then, once we get to know this "princess" more, as well as her top general, and advisor (all female) and all poly together, we learn their ages are sixteen. Nooooope. Nope, nope.

And, the first kiss ever in Lymee's life happens immediately after she saves this princess (her name is Alia,

actually), a deep throat kiss that occurs seconds after Lymee has vomited. The author at least acknowledges the gross factor there but, yeah, that happened.

None of the lead characters are likable, at least not enough to redeem the story. And there are strange plot holes and non-explanations along the way. Ex, when Lymee first meets "princess", Alia's arm is injured to the point of non-use. Later that night, she's fine. Lymee is just accepted as being from another world and time without so much as a blink of an eye because Alia wished for something to come "from the heavens", that vomit kiss Alia gave to Lymee was to impart some kind of babel magic into Lymee so she could speak and understand their language but magic is nonexistent for the rest of the story, and on and on.

And then to top it all off, the book has serious editing issues. I'm in no way a grammar or editing nazi and, in fact, two books on my Favorites shelf are pretty flawed in that area themselves. If the story or characters are strong, my mind will happily fill in the gaps and autocorrect the issues. This book does not have that luxury. Words are misspelled, missing, or just wrong, and then you have gems like this:

"That was all Lymee noticed before the woman smashed both knees into Lymee's chest, taking her to the ground. With a thud, Lymee landed on the ground, the wind getting knocked out of her. The woman landing on top of her chest put her full body weight into Lymee, pinning her to the ground."

So, just a big no from me. Can't recommend this one.

Wolgan says

I really did enjoy this book, despite the few flaws it had. I'm not sure if I'll continue the series yet, I'm truly undecided. That is more of a personal issue though, not a reflection of the quality of the writing. On one hand, it's a unique plot with interesting characters and a lot of potential, but on the other hand, the end of this book left me feeling melancholy, not happy. That is actually a nod to the talented author, as I'm certain that was the emotion they were trying to invoke. I've just got more than enough melancholy already, I'm full up on my quota.

Technically speaking, there were a handful of grammar and spelling errors here and there, but nothing glaring, probably less than a dozen through the entire book. Those tend to be a pet peeve, but I didn't feel that they took away from my enjoyment of the story.

The main character is a remarkably adaptable and resilient person, almost unbelievably so. If you can look past that though, and past some of the subtle time travelling hero tropes, this is well worth the read. The plot is interesting, and beyond a few situations early on I didn't find it predictable at all. There were some excellent twists at the end that really tugged at my emotions.

Overall very well written, and if the genre appeals to you, worth taking the time to read.

Lex Kent says

I am bit surprised how much I really enjoyed this. While the writing could be a bit rough, and the wording sometimes crude, I found myself fully immersed in this book. I was sucked into the world building the

author has created. Yes some things you, as a reader, need to take with a grain of salt. The time travel is not to explained and the main character has more knowledge than she should. However, if you just let yourself accept these little things, you will find yourself enjoying a page-turning adventure. I am looking forward to reading book 2.

Jennifer Black says

Couldn't stand the writing after merely a few pages. That was enough of a glimpse into the author's talent for me.

Laurie says

rate this one 3.5 Loved the story, but the editing left something to be desired. Spelling errors and incorrectly used words at times detracted and distracted from the overall enjoyment of reading this tale.

Sascha Broich says

It's a nice story even if it's a little naive.
But the author should let someone proofread it. There are so many typos it lets the reader stumble from paragraph to paragraph.

Iori says

Best buy of the week!

I am happy that my Gambit into buying this book brought me, the main female character is a awesome girl but she got issues that in time we see she should resolve before jumping in a relationship. I like the thrown into another world and make it better tropes. There is love, there is war and bad nobles;those aristocrats cannot stop the future.

I will definitely buy the second book.

Grazzit says

It's light fun read. I liked the 2nd book better but its a good start.

P. Industry says

This book has ambitions which far outreach its grasp.

Our main character is Lymee; your average bog-standard Asian-American lesbian. Her major characteristic as the story progresses is a combination of condescension and confusion, so to discuss her it's best to think of her as a collection of all-American things. She's stunningly beautiful (with a huge rack which is constantly remarked on), she's a black-belt in some unspecified martial art which seems to be basically fantasy MMA, and she's a brilliant strategist because of all those times she read Sun Tzu and played Total War games on her computer. (-No, seriously, that is a plot point in the book.)*

Lymee finds herself in a foreign, feudal, generically Asian land which has been torn apart by war. Accidentally running across, and then saving the female Lord of one side of this conflict, she is abruptly (and I really do mean abruptly) elevated to Strategist, wins an operational campaign, and is then adopted royal family member.

There are multiple problems with this book, which seem almost redundant to point out considering the premise. But let's indulge ourselves anyway.

Firstly; this book does not write its female characters well. Quite the opposite. Under the auspices of foreign culture (and the presumed straight male gaze) the supporting cast grope, sexually assault, and otherwise make aggressive sexual advances on, the main female character. A significant amount of attention is paid at one point to the way Lymee is not wearing underwear. Breasts are lingered on in a way which is genuinely oily. These things act like constant crotch-shots do in cartoons, breaking the flow of the text and generally making the author appear both incompetent and sleezy.

Secondly; the book has ambitions towards accurate military science. It achieves this to a limited extent - my guess would be that the author was at a one-year army Officer course, or is someone attempting diligent but self-directed study. Not a bad start, but fundamentally only a start. More of this discussion under the cut. (view spoiler) Completely ridiculous is the assertion that strategy video games like "Total War" could teach anyone anything about any military strategy beyond rock-paper-scissors plus "holding the high ground is good." But there needed to be an explanation of Lymee's magic strategy powers I suppose, as this is as good an explanation as any. (view spoiler)

Speaking of magic - the rules for such things seem very inconsistently applied in fantasy Asia. Lymee can't speak the language on arrival so the plot-point Lord "gives her a part of her spirit" (ie makes out with her) and suddenly she totally can speak the language. More ranting under the cut. (view spoiler)

Lymee is very condescending, alas. Yes - American tourists can be like that sometimes. The vast majority, however, are careful, cautious travellers. Lymee lectures her host on Hobbs, swerves a little into Blade Runner (seriously?), and is otherwise a bit of a dickhead.

Arrrgh, why have I bothered? Look, this book is pap. Critiquing the military science aspects held my interest for a wee while but I genuinely don't believe anyone but me would find that entertaining.

I have no idea why the book is rated so highly.**

Two stars (one above the floor for the author's attempt at actual military science).

*To his credit, the author sheepishly excuses himself in the author's notes at the end of the book. Geesh bro, why didn't you just have her go to Annapolis for a little while?

****Goodreads removed the author's comments to this review after he took passionate exception to many of the points raised in this review. He has also responded to every review on Amazon in a similar fashion. Perhaps other reviewers who were tempted to write honestly about their reading experience were put-off or scared away. However this is only speculation.**
