



Descendant of the Crane

Written by Joan He

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Descendant of the Crane

Descendant of the Crane

By Joan He

Descendant Of The Sun

Tyrants cut out hearts. Rulers sacrifice their own.

Descendant Of The Crane

Princess Hesina of Yan has always been eager to shirk the responsibilities of the crown, but when her beloved father is murdered, she's thrust into power, suddenly the queen of an unstable kingdom. Determined to find her father's killer, Hesina does something desperate: she engages the aid of a soothsayer—a treasonous act, punishable by death... because in Yan, magic was outlawed centuries ago.

Descendant Of The Crane By Joan He

Using the information illicitly provided by the sooth, and uncertain if she can trust even her family, Hesina turns to Akira—a brilliant investigator who’s also a convicted criminal with secrets of his own. With the future of her kingdom at stake, can Hesina find justice for her father? Or will the cost be too high?

Descendant Of The Sun Netflix

In this shimmering Chinese-inspired fantasy, debut author Joan He introduces a determined and vulnerable young heroine struggling to do right in a world brimming with deception.

“Tonight, we fell victim to fear. We let it blind us. We thought we were hunting monsters.”
She stared out into the sea of flame-washed faces. It took all her strength not to look away. But we were monsters.

Descendant of the Crane was a really pleasant surprise. It's actually one of the better, more creative YA fantasies I've read, taking influence from Chinese culture and exploring morally grey areas in a story full of political machinations and twists. I hope this book doesn't get buried under “Tonight, we fell victim to fear. We let it blind us. We thought we were hunting monsters.”

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It's a quieter book than I had first imagined. The promise of a kingdom in turmoil and a ban on the magic once practiced by soothsayers sounds familiar in this genre, not unlike other action-packed fantasies. However, it is much more focused on political maneuvering and a young woman's bildungsroman as she discovers that not everything is black and white, and sometimes you are forced to choose between the lesser of two evils.

Oh, and there's also a compelling murder mystery and courtroom drama.

Joan He avoids dropping characters into "good" or "evil" boxes, allowing the villains (both the obvious ones and the not so obvious) to be multilayered and have realistic motivations for their actions that go beyond "Muahaha, I'm evil". As Hesina adjusts to her new power as queen, she finds herself relating to her enemies and questioning the purely benevolent view she always held of her father. I like how the author doesn't stop at the surface, but instead explores complex emotions.

If you want to understand a person, peer at his heart through the window of his prejudices and assumptions.

The story begins with Hesina illegally visiting a soothsayer for information about her father's - the former king's - death. She knows there was foul play and wants to find out who was responsible. The soothsayer cannot tell her the culprit, but she can point her in the direction of someone who will help her find out. Enter sexy ex-convict-turned-lawyer: Akira.

What follows is Hesina's attempt to get justice for her father and prevent war at the same time. Along the way, she uncovers secrets and betrayals. The murder mystery aspect - plus the thrilling courtroom

scenes - were done so well here. So much better than the recent Four Dead Queens.

I really enjoyed it when Hesina was forced to play a role as queen. Part of her story arc is learning how sometimes, unfortunately, it is necessary to lie or do "bad" for the greater good. It's a hard pill for her to swallow.

I have a couple of minor quibbles. The first is that sometimes the pacing needed work. Overall, I appreciated the slower, more political plot, but there were parts of the book that went on too long and felt dragged out, but truthfully this could be said for about 95% of YA fantasy debuts.

The second is that this is one of those books that I think would have been better as an adult novel. There is something a bit off by all these rulers and military leaders being around 16 or 17 years old. As it is, the novel is mostly chaste, despite the inclusion of such as brothels. It feels almost deliberately cleaned up for a younger audience, and I think it is a shame that a sexy character like Akira is wasted on a romance lacking in steam.

I still enjoyed it a lot, though. I have to point out that this is NOT a standalone and is left set up for a sequel. You can bet I'll be reading it.

Who isn't powerless against the will of the cosmos? But who doesn't try all the same?

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Descendant Of Thieves

I am so honored to be a part of Hesina's Imperial Court, to help boost this beautiful story!

Update: I actually won't be posting my review for this until MAY! But I am very excited to tell you why soon, and I implore you all to pick this beautiful debut up! <3

New Update: The cat is out of the bag! Make sure you're following Books With Friends for updates!

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I've always thought of writing as like gardening.

The words take root, sometimes growing. Sometimes sprouting others and moreâ€”sentences and paragraphs blossoming together.

And sometimes not. Sometimes refusing to break through, through the grit of grammar and barrenness of diction, through the concrete blankness of my mindâ€”as is the case now.

How do I put to words everything that was Descendant of the Crane? I feel as if anything I write would be a disservice to this novel. To all that it encompassed and to all that it brought out.

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How do I put to words everything that was Descendant of the Crane? I feel as if anything I write would be a disservice to this novel. To all that it encompassed and to all that it brought out.

The thing is, I like to nurture what Iâ€™ve written over timeâ€”tending to the words like a gardener tending to the garden. Always trimming. Always refining.

Unforgivingly brutal. Tragically beautiful.

And yet, those words are not enough for Descendant of the Crane.

I admit that after reading, I didn't know what to write. Because the truth is, Descendant of the Crane was not a novel to be contained in words.

In which case, I feel inclined to refrain from what Iâ€™ve always done. No more trimming. No more refining. Let the words nurture themselves. Wild. Untamed. Phrases snarling, sentences tangling.

In Chinese legends, cranes are said to bear the spirits of the departed to heaven. And that was what Descendant of the Crane was for meâ€”the wings to my soul. I was carried aloft on its feathers, flown to transcendent heights.

And how to describe the writing? Perhaps it was a painting and each word a brushstroke, a vibrant dab of colour across the paper; or perhaps it was a tapestry, the words woven into a mosaic of mesmerising

Descendant of the Crane

patternsâ€”I'd like to continue waxing poetic, but what point would there be in that?

Imagine the acrid aromas of incense coiling through the air. The autumn wind as it whispers sweet secrets to the ginkgo leaves. The scarlet haze of paper lanterns smeared around the edges of silhouettes.

Descendant of the Crane was a story about human people in an inhuman worldâ€”it was a story about a kingdom which carried the wounds of centuries past, its hurts unhealed and cutting deep, its bitterness and hate festering together like rot.

It was a story about a queen who sought to stitch her kingdom back together, to sew its wounds shut and soothe its hurtsâ€”a queen who, in the end, rose from the mire of her insecurities and doubts, of her despair and pain, to bloom like a lotus flower from the mud: strong, resilient and beautiful.

It was a story that left me with no words.

And you know what?

To the Ten Courts of Hell with waxing poetic.

I loved it.

Beyond words.

5.0/5

note: this review reflects my honest thoughts! I'd like to thank Albert Whitman Company and Joan He for the ARC! I rarely give out five stars, which goes to show how much I loved this novel :) ...more

Descendant Of The Sun Season 2

Actual Rating: 3.5 stars

full rtc....

This book is giving me trust issues!!

Plot: 5/5 Characters: 5/5 Writing: 5/5

The Descendant of the Crane was an intricate Chinese fantasy full of treachery and about a relentless hunt for the truth. I was constantly in suspense and it kept me guessing until the very last page.

The writing was exquisitely vivid, each word weaving a net that captured my attention and didn't let go. Sometimes, I even felt as if I were a part of the story. The first half of the book was quite slow-paced, gradually building up and setting the scene. However Plot: 5/5 Characters: 5/5 Writing: 5/5

The Descendant of the Crane was an intricate Chinese fantasy full of treachery and about a relentless hunt for the truth. I was constantly in suspense and it kept me guessing until the very last page.

The writing was exquisitely vivid, each word weaving a net that captured my attention and didn't let go. Sometimes, I even felt as if I were a part of the story. The first half of the book was quite slow-paced, gradually building up and setting the scene. However, the second half was a constant stream of mind-shattering revelations and plot twists- my poor heart didn't know what to do with itself!

The characters were all brilliant and multi-faceted. Hesina was the protagonist, a young woman convinced that her father, the king, was murdered despite the fact that everyone else believed it to be a natural death. Determined to deliver justice, she decided to start a trial to find the murderer and become the next queen. Even though she didn't always make the right decisions and she had many misconceptions about her kingdom, it was admirable how she believed in herself and had the courage to pursue the things she thought were right. There were times when she wavered but when she made up her mind to do something, she did it formidably.

I also thought the relationships in the novel were well crafted. There wasn't a heavy emphasis on romance (which I thought was good) but there was a lot about family. Hesina had a brother called Sanjing and although they loved each other they weren't very good at showing it and had a strained relationship. On the other hand, she was very close to Caiyan and Lilian, who were her adopted siblings. I thought the way these relationships were contrasted was very well done. Also, there was Akira, the convict that Hesina asked to help her in the trial. He generally remained shrouded in mystery but we do get to learn small things about him here and there in the novel. I'm interested to see what his role will be in the next book.

Descendant of the Crane

A really important detail of the book was the sooths. They were people with almost magical powers who could do amazing things like seeing into the future. Due to previous historical events, the sooths were generally despised and shunned from society and there were terrible punishments for them and those who sympathised with them. Another reason I liked Hesina was that although everyone was telling her that the sooths were evil and deserved to be punished, she made up her own mind about them and wanted to bring equality to her society. Which is also something that we should all do today.

I adored this book, it's definitely a new favourite. Honestly, it's the kind of book that deserves to be a movie. If you like complex fantasies that constantly keep you guessing, then this book is for you!

Thank you to Albert Whitman Company and Joan He for providing me with an e-ARC via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review!

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Descendant Of The Crane Excerpt

oh my god the cover

• Chinese-inspired Game of Thrones!! oh my god the cover

• Chinese-inspired Game of Thrones!! ...more

why am i crying in the club right now????? how dare you joan (i think this might be one of my favorites of 2019)

instead of a traditional review, here's reasons why you should just read this book

☺, joan's writing is so, so gorgeous and it creeps into your soul

☺, (it kind of reminds me of roshani chokshi's writing? but more practical)

☺, this literally has the most twisty plot ever. listen, I came into this book expecting a murder mystery and came out feeling like I'd walked through a hailstorm

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☺, it's not only a murder mystery!! it has a fantasy plotline and centers on Hesina trying to figure out how to manage ruling her kingdom

☺, I love all of the characters so much.

☺, especially Sanjing. I would die for Sanjing. I love him so much

☺, seriously, I was not kidding. I love Sanjing even though he gets the least page time.

☺, (oh I just realized I superimposed Li Shang onto Sanjing and it's kind of... fitting)

☺, also yeah this novel has some flaws, like certain unnecessary plot twists and Lillian's lacking characterization but I've become too obsessed with this book to rate it objectively

☺, by the way... the romance is kind of lackluster. I said it

☺, I just don't completely see the appeal of Akira as a love interest. I'm sorry, y'all. I really tried. I just kept picturing his brown hair as a rat's nest

☺, I also didn't really see any reception from Akira towards Hesina? he never really demonstrated his affection for her. I had so much hope for their ship but no

☺, Sanjing tho... why was the brother more attractive than the actual love interest

☺, Anyways. more importantly, Hesina's character was so well-done and I could feel her desperation and helplessness seeping through the pages

☺, and her realizations that everyone's not who they appear to be are just... so relatable. I love

Descendant of the Crane

Hesina so much and she Truly Feels Like A Flawed Teen Character to me

ðŸŒŒ, I would categorize this as kind of a coming-of-age fantasy

ðŸŒŒ, I really loved so much about this book. the worldbuilding was honestly flawless and the lore of the empire was one of my favorite things to read

ðŸŒŒ, I mean, this book also tackles institutionalized oppression and how it can be built-in so deep that it can never truly be removed

ðŸŒŒ, also the most wild existential themes are present, yo

ðŸŒŒ, like what the frick I came for an adventure and left with a hole in my soul and inescapable thoughts about legacy

ðŸŒŒ, THIS BOOK SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON THE NYT BESTSELLING LIST. truly the greatest injustice of our time

Trigger and content warnings for death by poison, slavery, drowning, blood, cutting oneself, (institutionalized) oppression, parental neglect, and strangulation.

(view spoiler)[why did lillian die though :((hide spoiler)]

edit: ^^ this is a major spoiler btw

...

hi a physical arc of this appeared on my doorstep and i would like to say that i am a little emotional right now because i've wanted this so badly ...more

Descendant of the Crane

Descendant Of The Crane Book

My smol Asian heart is doing a happy dance, because Iâ€™m a Baroness at Hesinaâ€™s Imperial Court!!

Have you ever seen a book with a cover that so effortlessly transcends all human concepts of beauty, and, moreover, has a synopsis to match its outer beautyâ€™s magnificence with equal brilliance?

// buddy read with Tiffany ðŸŒ°

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5 stars

Donâ€™t forget! Descendant of the Crane is also out on APRIL 9th as the pub date was pushed back a week. Still, very excited for my copy to come!

For the first time ever, I experienced blogger-writerâ€™s block for this review.

I read this in October or November and spent five months writing this. Itâ€™s not super long or anything, I just have no words that will do this book justice.

I could write a one-sentence summary of this review right now, and you can turn around and preorder this book instead 5 stars

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I could write a one-sentence summary of this review right now, and you can turn around and preorder this book instead: Descendant of the Crane is one of my all-time favorite books, and you should buy/request/read it.

Itâ€™s just fantastic, and there are so many things that just make this book work. But still, I will try to give you ~reasons~ why youâ€™ll love this, not just tell you that you will.

The first thing I need to say is

Descendant of the Crane

why I loved this story so much.

Even more than this, the characters have motives. Goals. Desires. I loved reading how He put this on the page and really revealed this through some of their actions. It felt like the characters had agency and weren't being puppeted around, and I really liked that.

(Plus, I have an interview with some of the characters coming this Wednesday so keep an eye out for that!!!)

I love how it examined morality.

One of the biggest themes in Descendant of the Crane, in my opinion, is morality and how it ties into sacrifice. If you're doing a bad thing for a good cause, how far will you go?

I think Descendant of the Crane really portrayed this question well and showed a lot of different paths to achieving something (some of which I cannot spoil). The way the story questioned this really made me think about what I would do in Hesina's position, and I loved how the story sucked you in this way.

Overall, I cried. Descendant of the Crane made me cry. No less than 3 times.

I just adore this book so much and it's one of my favorites of all time! I want to hug the characters to my chest and make sure they're all happy and thriving.

I would wholeheartedly recommend this book to everyone, but especially if you like

- tightly plotted stories
- interesting politics
- murder mystery
- characters who are Stressed But Trying Their Best
- a rich world and a fantastic book and OMG THOSE TWISTS

Thank you so much to Joan He for sending me an advance reader's copy in exchange for an honest review!

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...more

Descendant of the Crane

Descendant Of The Stars

Eventually â€” EVENTUALLY â€” I will defeat this terrible YA fantasy slump and learn how to enjoy life (and my ARCs) again. But... alas, today is not that day. I'll pick this back up ASAP, though.

Sometimes you read a book and you just don't have words to describe it because there was so much happening and just too much to write in a review? Yeah, well Descendant of the Crane is definitely one of those books. I loved this book and I'm just not sure I'm going to be able to write everything I loved in this book without just saying absolutely every single aspect of this book.

I loved it and that's about it.

I received an ARC from the publisher in exchange for my honest review

Descendant Of The Sun Ost

Check out more reviews @ [Perspective of a Writer...](#)

The Buzz

A reluctant princess becomes a queen of a Chinese-inspired kingdom so she can investigate her father's mysterious death. There is politics, a courtroom, outlawed magic and drama with a neighboring nation. SIGN ME UP!! The premise alone sounded dynamite...

And I mean come on... there were 5 star ratings coming out left and right waaaaaaaayyyyyyy before the release date because readers were loving it so much. In fact, I didn't see one negat

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My Experience

I feel like the nicest thing I can say about Descendant of the Crane is that I didn't hate it. GAHHHH that statement totally hurts my heart!! ...Okay, let me try again. For each thing I LOVED about Descendant of the Crane I found an element that either didn't make sense, was contrived or made me roll my eyes. I was so, so disappointed. I want to think that my expectations were too high... but I honestly don't think that's it.

It started quite early in the book... the world didn't make sense. It was made a really big deal that the benevolent group of rebels that took out the corrupt emperors had faded into myth. Very little details about them could be remembered and those were only details mentioned in their book of tenants. It was made to sound like a lot of time had passed. Mention was even made that queens and kings has been allowed to come and go to try to help the people.

Descendant of the Crane

Then I learned only 265 years had passed!! What?!

In that time a negligible number of rulers would have reined. Probably 7 ruling for around 40 years at most each. And if the rebels who SAVED THEM couldn't be remembered well... how did they remember the sooths?! In the same amount of time their saviors had faded from memories these emperors and sooths would have too.[su_spacer]But lets keep moving forward pretending we believe this stuff...

-No one has seen a sooth or their magic in their generation yet the people hate them as if they were the ones who suffered under their hand. (They didn't even know ANYONE who had suffered at the hand of sooths!) I'd hazard to say sooths would have been considered myth at this point.

-There hasn't been war in 265 years despite a neighboring kingdom who struggles to survive and has no problem with war.

-Everyone is and has been educated for hundreds of years yet there are no craftsmen, artists, or people with high skills sets among the common people. There are still brothels and a ton of poor who aren't treated like human beings.

These facts conflict with one another. And the world building is at fault. It should have been an age of enlightenment after the rebels took charge... but it wasn't. And why have a queen at all? Didn't you just get free from power hungry war mongering emperors 265 years ago?! Isn't this history so fresh in their minds?! But you know what I kept reading...

So by this point you probably think that I am totally throwing Descendant of the Crane under the bus and saying don't read it... NOT AT ALL! The premise doesn't really cover what the story is about but I truly liked Hesina. She made a decision and tried to do the best she could to execute her duty to her backwards, nonsensical people. She ran into so many secrets, appearances were totally deceiving and when she learned truth after truth it rocked her world to dust.

Unfortunately I saw most if not all of the twists coming. And I was shocked that Hesina was so flatfooted. She didn't guess a one. And she wasn't that sheltered. She was so educated that when she became queen she knew her options to handle the political climate. You may not see them coming though... so if twists make a book 5 star to you then Descendant of the Crane has what you need.

The Premise

The premise has A TON of promise. There are a lot of elements but the ones that stood out to me were the murder mystery, Akira the investigator and the outlawed sooth magic.

Akira was the most intriguing of everything. You knew that he would become important to Hesina and I was excited to see that develop. Akira kills it in the couple of courtroom scenes there are and it really

Descendant of the Crane

gave me high hopes. And then there is this incredible battle scene! WOW! And then suddenly we learn his secret and they are in love!? WHAT!? WHY?! They didn't even spend that much time together...

The clues for the murder mystery filled the first half of the book and I was curious to learn why the father was killed. It didn't seem like anyone had a motive (except the vague reason of the one who I guessed did it.) Who would want a noob queen on the throne? No one contested Hesina's coronation either! While I enjoyed the conundrum the pacing of this part was slow. Not much else happened except the couple of courtroom scenes, which explains why Akira was so intriguing to me (there wasn't much else going on at this point).

Suddenly the sooth that read like a totally contrived way to start Descendant of the Crane burst back into the story. I admit that this was the part of the story that I most enjoyed. I liked that Hesina struggled to figure out a way to change her people's thinking (even though it made no sense). The events became a lot more action oriented and fun. And I CARED! I finally cared about something that Hesina cared about.

While few of the answers we got were explained in any sort of detail I did appreciate that we got enough clues to piece together what the author was thinking. And even though none of my favorite aspects in the premise were executed well, I did find Descendant of the Crane a read that twisted and turned to try to keep the reader guessing.

Cover & Title grade -> A-

This is without a doubt a gorgeous cover. It's stylistic, historical, fantastical and oh so Asian! I could totally rave about the beauty of the cover art all day long... BUT is it suitable to showcase the story in Descendant of the Crane? I'm not sure. It overwhelmingly says historical to me.

If you've ever studied Chinese history then you know their courts and palaces were full of rules and regulations that forced protocol to be observed. None of this is evident in how Hesina's palace was run. So I feel like the cover design should have been less Asian history and more Asian fantasy.

Why should YOU read Descendant of the Crane?

- It's Chinese-inspired!
- Hesina rocks being a queen!
- Sooths have super neat magic!
- Sibling love and disappointment galore!
- Rivalry with the neighboring kingdom!
- Secrets that will TOTALLY slay you!
- Plus TWISTS that will keep you guessing!

The Writing

We've seen a ton of queen/princess stories in YA to last a lifetime. It isn't that creative, nor was the fact that Hesina was a reluctant ruler. I actually don't know why a vote for a new ruler couldn't have been made instead if she really felt that way. BUT... if she was going to be queen even though she didn't WANT to be queen then I wanted to read about her struggle.

This should have come through as a struggle for freedom against being bound by the palace protocol... Except she had a ton of freedom. Her life was WAY better than the common person. And she was surrounded by siblings who really, really loved her. In other words there was no struggle. She didn't read as reluctant at all. She made an excellent ruler. She even made very political decisions without stressing much.

Yes, she lost her dad... but as she learned about what happened to him there could have been another shift that lead to her emotionally struggling. There wasn't! I can't talk more without spoilers but I would be seething with anger. SEETHING! And nothing. She was more upset at her mom.

I really hope we get to see Hesina struggle more in the next book. The end totally sets us up for some major soul searching and that is what I want to read... This magnificent girl forced to become a queen and doing so with a vengeance no matter what emotional turmoil is thrown her way!!

Descendant of the Crane certainly takes you on a wild ride through a Chinese-inspired kingdom. It's modern and historical smashed together! It's full of siblings in a royal court where there can only be one queen. While this wasn't my highest rated read I did enjoy it enough to check out the next book in the series!! I want to see where things go with the sooths and how Hesina comes to terms with all the secrets that were revealed in Descendant of the Crane...

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ Authenticity

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ Writing Style

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ Plot & Pacing

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ World Building

Thanks to Edelweiss and the publisher for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review. It has not influenced my opinions.

You can find this review and many others on my book blog @ Perspective of a Writer. See my special perspective at the bottom of my reviews under the typewriter...

Descendant of the Crane

Please like this review if you enjoyed it! *bow* *bow* It helps me out a ton!! ...more

dnf @ 53%

when i first started reading descendant of the crane, i was really enjoying it. it starts off with the death of the king and his daughter, hesina, trying to find out who did it. to do so she seeks out a soothsayer, something that is punishable by death.

there are a lot of twist and turns that manage to keep you interested throughout the book, yet i found myself confused most of the time, which in the end took me away from everything that was happening. there are a lot of characters - i dnf @ 53%

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there are a lot of twist and turns that manage to keep you interested throughout the book, yet i found myself confused most of the time, which in the end took me away from everything that was happening. there are a lot of characters - i mean, a lot of characters. and while some were well developed, others weren't fleshed out as well, which led me to get them all confused in my head. every time someone showed up i would have to go back to remember who that person was, since i could never figure out who was who. as you can imagine, this didn't make for a very good reading experience. i felt like so much time was wasted on describing minor and unnecessary details, that the important details were left forgotten. for example, what the fuck is a soothsayer? maybe this is me not having english as my first language and perhaps even being somewhat dumb, but when there were first introduced i couldn't for the life of me picture them in my head; are they monsters? with powers? are they regular people who can do magic? the world may never know.

yet the thing that bothered me the most was the pacing of this book. as i've said, i was really invested when i first started reading this; i was liking the characters, what they were up to and where the story seemed to be headed. but then there were times where the story would draaaaaag and i was bored and then something happened and then hi boredom, nice seeing you again. i like it when a story is consistent and manages to keep my interest until the very last page - this one didn't do that.

if you've been eyeing this book's release, then you know this book has a lot of twists happening. and while one might say that that's a good thing, it got to a point where i was doubting everyone. hesina? guilty. caiyan? electric chair. random person? chair, but make it electric. i didn't trust anyone (except for akira because we might just have to love him), because i was just waiting for the moment when they would reveal their true colours.

i still want to know what happens, so although this is a dnf now, i will surely get back into it in the future. i just have so many other books to read that i don't want to -waste- my time reading

Descendant of the Crane

something that iâ€™m not enjoying 100%.

arc provided by the publisher via edelweiss in exchange for an honest review

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