

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

The Poppy War

Written by R.F. Kuang

Published by kctv7

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The Poppy War

The Poppy War

By R.F. Kuang

The Poppy War Review

A "Best of May" Science Fiction and Fantasy pick by Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Audible, The Verge, SyFy Wire, and Kirkus

The Poppy War Goodreads

â€œI have no doubt this will end up being the best fantasy debut of the year [...] I have absolutely no doubt that [Kuang's] name will be up there with the likes of Robin Hobb and N.K. Jemisin.â€• -- Booknest

The Poppy War Sequel

A brilliantly imaginative talent makes her exciting debut with this epic historical military fantasy, inspired by the bloody history of China's twentieth century and filled with treachery and magic, in the tradition of Ken Liu's *Grace of Kings* and N.K. Jemisin's *Inheritance Trilogy*.

The Poppy War Book 2

When Rin aced the Keju—the Empire-wide test to find the most talented youth to learn at the Academies—it was a shock to everyone: to the test officials, who couldn't believe a war orphan from Rooster Province could pass without cheating; to Rin's guardians, who believed they'd finally be able to marry her off and further their criminal enterprise; and to Rin herself, who realized she was finally free of the servitude and despair that had made up her daily existence. That she got into Sinegard—the most elite military school in Nikan—was even more surprising.

The Poppy War

The Poppy War Map

But surprises aren't always good.

The Poppy War Summary

Because being a dark-skinned peasant girl from the south is not an easy thing at Sinegard. Targeted from the outset by rival classmates for her color, poverty, and gender, Rin discovers she possesses a lethal, unearthly power—an aptitude for the nearly-mythical art of shamanism. Exploring the depths of her gift with the help of a seemingly insane teacher and psychoactive substances, Rin learns that gods long thought dead are very much alive—and that mastering control over those powers could mean more than just surviving school.

The Poppy War Characters

For while the Nikara Empire is at peace, the Federation of Mugen still lurks across a narrow sea. The militarily advanced Federation occupied Nikan for decades after the First Poppy War, and only barely lost the continent in the Second. And while most of the people are complacent to go about their lives, a few are aware that a Third Poppy War is just a spark away . . .

The Poppy War Pdf

Rin's shamanic powers may be the only way to save her people. But as she finds out more about the god that has chosen her, the vengeful Phoenix, she fears that winning the war may cost her humanity . . . and that it may already be too late.

A really good book has a beginning, a middle, and then it absolutely ends you. The Poppy War is a really good book.

I wish my pupils were at least heart-shaped so I could more accurately demonstrate my passion but if I ever die suddenly and don't have time to say anything profound, just know that my real last words will always be about how much I love this book.

So, what's this book about?

The Poppy War is a historical military fantasy grounded in the bloody history of China's 20th century in which Rin, a dark-skinned war orphan from the rural south, has fixed her heart on passing the Empire-wide placement test and attending the most prestigious military academy in Nikan, as a desperate lunge at the hope of escaping the gruesome inevitability of an arranged marriage.

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A year at Sinegard of her rival classmates—all heirs of the Warlords and the wealthy and privileged—telling her to cease the folly of imagining herself their equal only gave Rin's determination a more savage edge, and soon Rin learns, with the aid of her seemingly insane and much-disdained teacher, that she possesses a lethal aptitude for the nearly-mythical art of shamanism.

But the chain of wonders and horrors hadn't ended with her discovery: the Nikans had lived with the certainty that sooner or later the Federation of Mugan would come and blood would flow, and when they did, Rin finds herself assigned to a company of the Cike—oddball misfits with shamanic powers—fighting for her country's very survival. Through their shared heritage and a connection to a perilous divinity, Rin glimpses the world as her Commander—Altan—sees it: made simple by the righteousness and fury that were the legacy of their unjustly murdered people. And it made a good

whetstone upon which to sharpen her own rage. Rin is determined to win this war and do whatever it takes to ensure that her country would never again be forced to its knees.

But just how many of those unavoidable choices will result in unforgivable consequences?

• War doesn't determine who's right. War determines who remains. •

To be honest, summing up the plot of *The Poppy War* does it a huge disservice. For one thing, it unfurls into at least three books' worth of plot, but without ever feeling rushed or anything less than sure-footed and scrupulous in its exploration of character and setting. This is a dazzling debut painted by an inventive hand that takes hold and doesn't let go. It's full of imaginative flair, mad entombed gods, truths too heavy for the hearts, and a high-stakes quest for revenge—blending magical elements with a culturally vibrant cast of characters and creating a shadowy world dripping with blood and revenge, in which our fierce, head-strong heroine must claw her way to the top of a deadly pecking order. The author also created secondary characters that were just as richly crafted and multidimensional so that each one gives you a tinge of pain when they go.

This is not a book for the faint of heart. *The Poppy War* is a wide array of unpleasant possibilities. My mind was unwinding the tangled threads with tattered patience, following each thread from one end to another through a thicket. The author is so good at building tension and setting tone and once the action gets going, she only delights in twisting the knife deeper and deeper. I never knew in which parts to be elated and terrified, and I continuously felt the caution of wondering whether everything was a trick, or another lie. My expectations were so uprooted and jumbled that I was constantly forced to sit rapt with attention just to get my bearings.

But what truly snagged at me the most is waking up to the gruesome horrified realization that the author's depiction of the war between Nikan and Mugen was strongly influenced by the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s, and specifically the Nanjing Massacre (also known as the Rape of Nanking). There's sadly nothing too far-fetched or too unbelievable about the horrors in this book and I just can't hold the reality of it all in my head without stirring a war in me between grief and utter disbelief.

• Children ceased to be children when you put a sword in their hands. When you taught them to fight a war, then you armed them and put them on the front lines, they were not children anymore. They were soldiers. •

Rin's character radiated such an extraordinary vitality and her arc was nothing short of astounding—the years that stretched between the book's beginning and its ending feeling impossibly vast. Everything Rin was, everything she became, grew out of the carnage of her people. Anger and indignation carved away everything else inside her—doubt, fear, embarrassment—leaving room for nothing else, and her will was a blade forged by the sight of her country being whittled down one small piece of itself at a time, despised and taken advantage of.

The Poppy War

I felt her every sorrow and anger and disappointment and so much loss with a keenness that often forced me to exclamation, to stamping my feet or clutching my book to my chest. And then she meets Altan and together, their wrath ignited, impossible to quell—carving through their minds and pushing everything out of its way.

Altan's life has been a sequence of monsters one after another tossing him about to suit their whims, and it all eventually twisted into wild distorted rage and thwarted fury. He and Rin were two hollowed-out halves of a whole, two allegiances doing battle but the one that has been sewn into their blood since birth winning out, because they would always be the last remaining survivors of their kind, and that has become a truth that both guarded and isolated them.

And as much as I tried to take heart from their scattered successes, it was precious little to take heart from when it's matched by horror at its costs and the knowledge that they both had finally become the worst of what they had always had the potential to be. Especially when I still can't shake off the feeling that all the characters are merely pawns in a very treacherous game.

“But I warn you, little warrior. The price of power is pain.”

Equal parts heartbreaking, and thoroughly satisfying, *The Poppy War* is the fantasy novel I feel I've been waiting two lifetimes and a half for. So clear your schedule before picking it up—you won't want to put it down!

TW: sexual assault, rape, self-harm, drug use.

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The Poppy War Reddit

“But I warn you, little warrior. The price of power is pain.”
Holy hell, what did I just read??

- ½ A fantasy military school
- ½ A rich world based on modern Chinese history
- ½ Shamans and gods
- ½ Detailed characterization leading to unforgettable characters
- ½ Adorable, opium-smoking mentors

That's a basic list, but this book is all of that and SO MUCH MORE. I know 100% that The Poppy War will be one of my best reads of 2018.

Isn't it just so great when you find one of those books that completely drags you in, makes you fall in love with the characters, and demands that you sit on the edge of your seat for every horrific, nail-biting moment of it? This is one of those books for me. And I must issue a serious content warning: this book explores some very dark themes. Proceed with caution (or not at all) if you are particularly sensitive to scenes of war, drug use and addiction, genocide, racism, sexism, ableism, self-harm, torture, and rape (off-page but extremely horrific).

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Because, despite the fairly innocuous first 200 pages, the title speaks the truth: this is a book about war. All of its horrors and atrocities. It is not sugar-coated, and it is often graphic. The "poppy" aspect refers to opium, which is a big part of this book. It is a fantasy, but the book draws inspiration from the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Rape of Nanking.

It begins with one of my favourite things: a downtrodden orphan attends a fantasy boarding school. However, Rin doesn't get to attend her school by being "chosen" or "special". She works her ass off

The Poppy War

studying for the Keju test, which allows her to go to the prestigious Sinegard - the best military school in the country. I absolutely love the message this book sends about the merits of hard work and perseverance over genetics and natural specialness. Nothing is handed to Rin on a plate.

This first part is much lighter than the rest of the book, but I enjoyed it immensely. And there are still many challenges to be faced in these early chapters. Rin must go up against school bullies and racist teachers who don't want a backwater war orphan in their classes. But she also encounters friendship and delightfully quirky teachers who like to get high on opium. And secrets. Secrets like that of the shamans who can conjure gods and use their powers - but those are just a myth, right?

But there's trouble brewing outside the school's walls. War is coming and Rin and her classmates will be put to the test again and again.

If she went with him, she would help him to unleash monsters. Monsters worse than the chimei. Monsters worse than anything in the Emperor's Menagerie-- because these monsters were not beasts, mindless things that could be leashed and controlled, but warriors. Shamans. The gods walking in humans, with no regard for the mortal world.

This is where things get very dark. The strong world-building and carefully-crafted characters set us up to care even more when the action really kicks in and lives are threatened. It is the very opposite of the "mindless action scenes" I have been complaining about recently in fantasy novels. I cared so deeply about the characters that the action scenes were extremely tense and terrifying.

I feel like my heart was pounding for the majority of this fantastic story. I can hardly recall the last time I was this engrossed in a book, and I am so so glad there will be more books to come. It's just a perfect blend of action, memorable characters, vividly-imagined setting and a look at humanity at its very worst. There's no romance, but there is a wonderful enemies-to-friends relationship that I can't wait to read more about.

I am so very excited about this series and seeing where the author takes us next.

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Hands down Best Fantasy of 2018!

This was such an amazing read and cannot wait to get my hands on the rest of the trilogy. The books will be insta buys for me!

War, school, magic, no freaking romance... This book kept me on my toes.

I have no doubt this series will become huge and I'll make sure to rave about it until you all read it!

PS. Just wanted to add that there are trigger warnings for... well everything. Self harm, drug use, rape, etc. It's a pretty dark book!