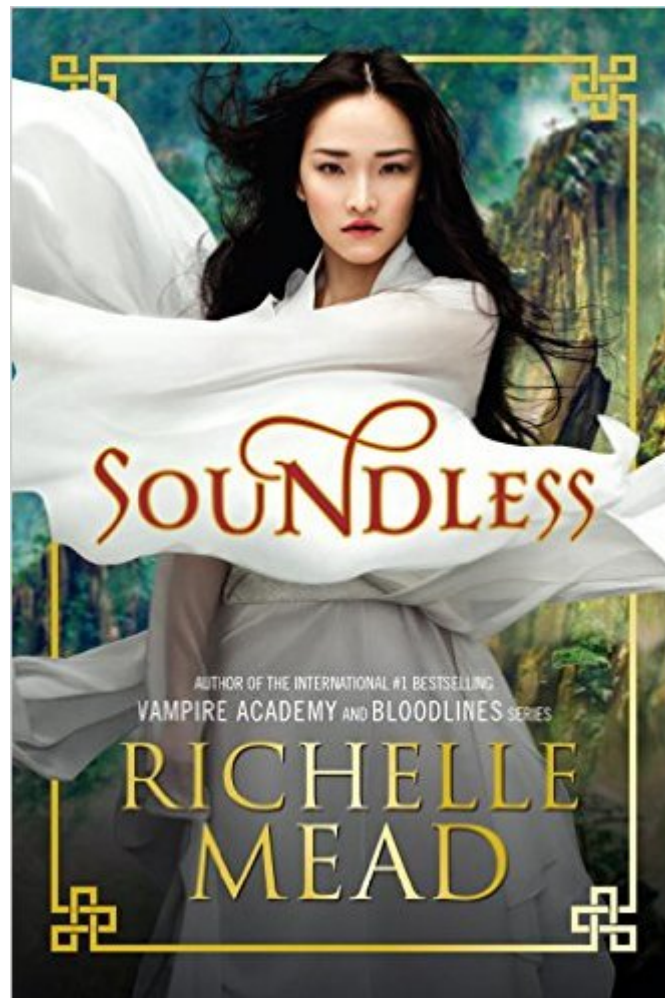


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# Soundless



## 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....From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (180 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #598,272 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Asian #1053 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends #1113 in Books > Teens > Romance > Fantasy

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I am a long time fan of Mead's writing, especially her Succubus and Vampire Academy series. Even writing YA she is fun for adults. This is nothing like her other works and lacks the wink, snark and overall cheer that the rest of her books have. This is a very simplistic, straightforward romance told

in first person. It has no layers or any level of sophistication. The advanced copy I have recommends this for grades 7 and up. In my opinion, this is really for much younger children, maybe age 7-10. There is no nuance here. The plot involves a community of deaf villagers held hostage for food by a barter system they do not control. Fei and Li Wei venture out and find much about the world that is unknown to their people. There are some fantasy elements. Some people get their hearing back as well as restoration of health. The deaf culture aspects are a bit simplistic and preachy. Restoration of hearing as a goal is a hugely controversial topic in the Deaf world so that poked me somewhat. As an interpreter for over 30 years, I felt the use of deafness as a device was well intended but clunky. I didn't enjoy this much and hope Mead returns to her other series work. The book is a very quick read but I just couldn't seem to find much to enjoy in the flat, naive style of this book. I can't recommend it.

SOUNDLESS was one of those books I could not ignore. With a scant amount of YA novels featuring non-Caucasian characters and fantasy settings not modeled after Medieval Europe, I was really happy that Richelle Mead, author of the popular VAMPIRE ACADEMY series, had crafted this book. And I'm part Chinese, so I was very excited to see the Chinese culture represented in YA lit. Sign me up for SOUNDLESS! The premise was interesting. I had no idea where Ms. Mead would go with a village, cut off from the rest of the world because of its location at the top of a mountain, whose entire population has also lost their hearing, would go. Then Fei, a teenaged girl training to be an archivist, suddenly regains her hearing. Where are we going with this? This question is what kept me reading frantically. Ms. Mead's writing flowed smoothly; some passages felt like they were written like a poem. I could picture the boulders of the mountain, the scent of trees, the overpowering presence of the people. The pacing was great for the first two thirds of the novel. The dialogue is all through sign language, which was great. Again, I was on pins and needles wondering where the novel was going. When the reveal of what has happened in to Fei and her village is revealed, it was so wonderfully unexpected. There was real tension between those that can hear and those who can't. Fei comes into her own. I was on cloud 9. However, the last third of the book changed tone and felt rushed. It seemed like there was going to be more, but the end had to happen. The huge letdown is the ex Machina element which comes in the last chapter, which makes for a neat and tidy ending. Some questions are left unanswered, which I liked, but for the most part, it was still a Happily Ever After that without a lot of merit. Drat! I am still happy I read this and got the opportunity to read it, and I hope many people read it for the diverse storyline.

Soundless by Richelle Mead is a fantasy novel using Chinese folklore as the theme. Soundless was a very different type of story by Richelle Mead, and though this was sort of a dystopian story, it was totally different using the Chinese folklore theme. Fei, our heroine, is a young girl who lives in a mining village high up in the mountains, with no way to leave. All the residents are deaf, as they use sign language to talk to one another. No one knows why they cannot hear, since this has been the way of life going way back. The miners in the village must work hard to pull precious metal from the mines, in order to ship them via a line down the mountain in exchange for food for them all. Slowly, some of the miners are going blind, causing fewer metals to be pulled, and thereby less food to feed them. Fei is an artist, one of the few chosen ones, who have the daily job of recording history through their paintings. Fei's sister, Zhang is also an artist, but she has begun to hide the fact that she is slowly losing her sight. One night Fei has a dream, and wakes up with different vibrations. She begins to realize that she is beginning to hear things. She is afraid to tell anyone, and doesn't know why this has happened. Fei spends the next few days listening to different sounds, and it was nice to watch her try to understand what the sounds are. Li Wei, our hero, is one of the miners in the village, who has become disgruntled at the poor conditions. Li who sees his father die from all those years in the mine, begins to protest the conditions. Li many years ago helped save Fei from a fall, and she has always had a crush on him. But they are like night and day, as he is determined to fight this kind of life, and she is content to do what she is expected to do. Once Fei's sister's impending blindness is discovered, and Zhang is demoted to a servant, she will go to Li and agree to help him. What follows is a very interesting story, as Li and Fei sneak out together and make their dangerous attempt to go down the mountain (via ropes) and try to ask for help. What they find isn't what they expect. There are so many different aspects of the story, including the budding romance between Li and Fei. Whatever the discoveries they find, and there are many, some horrific, Fei will stop at nothing to go back to save her sister. The wild ending was exciting, especially with the added fantasy element. To tell too much more would be spoilers. Soundless was a different but excellent storyline, which I thought started somewhat slow, though any world-building is normally that way. However, the last 1/3 of the book was very well done. If you are looking for a pulsating action packed adventure, you will not find that in this book. In the early part of the book, I did find myself losing a little interest, but thankfully I kept going and in the end, I did enjoy the story, and found the entire concept very interesting. Richelle Mead did a fantastic job writing this story and making it believable to us.

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Soundless Down to a Soundless Sea: Stories

