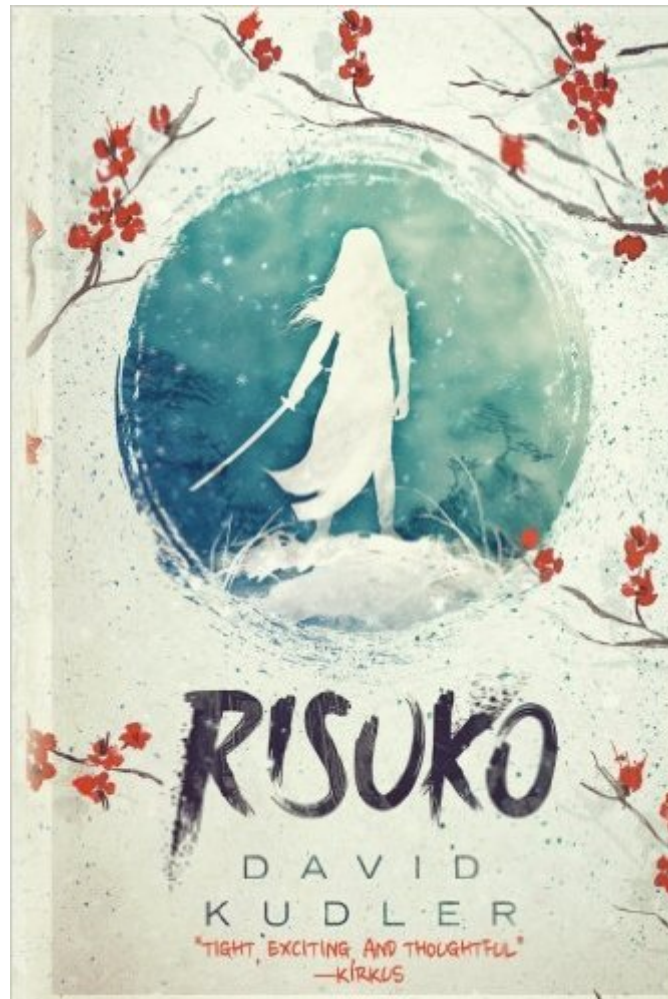


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Risuko: A Kunoichi Tale (Seasons Of The Sword) (Volume 1)



Synopsis

Samurai, assassins, warlords... and a girl who likes to climb! • Tight, exciting, and thoughtful! • -- Kirkus
Kano Murasaki, you may not realize it, but I have done you a great favor. I have it in my power to give you a gift that you don't even realize you desire. Make yourself worth my trouble, and you will be glad of it. Disappoint me, and you will be very, very sorry. - - - Though Japan has been devastated by a century of civil war, Risuko just wants to climb trees. Growing up far from the battlefields and court intrigues, the fatherless girl finds herself pulled into a plot that may reunite Japan -- or may destroy it. She is torn from her home and what is left of her family, but finds new friends at a school that may not be what it seems. Magical but historical, Risuko follows her along the first dangerous steps to discovering who she truly is. Seasons of the Sword
Can one girl win a war? Kano Murasaki, called Risuko (Squirrel), is a young fatherless girl, more comfortable climbing trees than down on the ground. Yet she finds herself enmeshed in a game where the board is the whole nation of Japan, where the pieces are armies, moved by scheming lords, and a single girl couldn't possibly have the power to change the outcome. Or could she? Historical adventure fiction appropriate for young adult and middle-grade readers

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book reminded me so much of Tamora Pierce's Tortall books, specifically the first Alanna or the first Kel book. Many of the plot-points are the same: a girl enters a new institution and spends all her time learning new skills, training, and passing tests. Only instead of a fictional fantasy world,

Kudler's tale takes place during feudal Japan, during a time of civil war when different clans fought for political domination. Risuko's story takes place during the sixteenth century reign of Oda Nobunga. Risuko, along with Emi and Toumi, are picked up by Lady Chiyome and taken to Mochizuki where the girls become novices and begin training to be kunoichi. The characterization is simplistic, with the author falling back on generalizations in character rather than creating fully fleshed-out people. Toumi (along with junior initiates Mai and Shino) are mean girls. Emi is the quiet one. And Risuko is the headstrong willful one who is too curious and smart for her own good. Even the more dominant background characters seem bit one-dimensional in characterization. Kee Sun, for example, is one who gets a lot of space in the book, but other than being Korean, dedicated to food, and jolly with a bit of a temper, there's not much to glean from him. Hopefully, this is something that is rectified in the second book. There's also a whiff of "chosen one" to this story. Of course Risuko is a skilled climber, which becomes plot relevant many times. Of course Risuko is smart and clever. That all said, I did really enjoy this book. The plot moves a bit slowly, and other readers may get bored with the day-to-day life of Mochizuki (it does devolve at times with this happened, and then this, and the this).

Original Post: Risuko: A Kunoichi Tale at FLYLÄ“F [...]IT WAS ODDLY nostalgic reading Risuko: A Kunoichi Tale by David Kudler. The vivid portrayal of the Japanese culture brought back many fond memories of my childhood, a time when I was much more rooted in my Asian heritage. Kano Murasaki, nicknamed Risuko (Squirrel) is a young, fatherless girl with a gift for climbing. Her unique talent catches the eye of Lady Chiyome, Head Mistress of a remote school in Mount Fuji. Risuko soon finds herself torn from her family and swept into a school that is much more than what it seems. Here, Risuko and orphans Emi and Toumi, are taught the ways of a Kunoichi "the Japanese art of becoming an assassin" in the hopes of possibly changing the outcome of a feudal Japan. I'm drawn to Risuko and the young orphans for their misfortunes. Though complete strangers, they share a great responsibility to restore the honor to each of their family's name and legacy. But, I had difficulty seeing how they would achieve that. Emi is quiet and wears a perpetual frown, Toumi is often angry, or "growling [and] clenching her fist." Risuko is my favorite of the orphans for she is more resilient, curious and compassionate. Even so, the characters were simple, even childish at times, and fell a bit flat for me. I enjoyed the older, secondary characters. Mr. Kudler poignantly and effortlessly captured the quiet and unspoken deadly art of an assassin through Meiko. As one of the highly trained assassins, and instructor to Risuko, she is as formidable in her ability to kill from the shadows, as she is gentle and feminine...beautiful. The pacing was slow, with

thorough attention dedicated to the culture: food (Korean, actually, but still mouthwatering), custom, and philosophy.

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