



Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern

Selah J. Tay-Song

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The tale of QaiMaj begins here.

War tears apart Iskalon, a cavernous world of ice, when Dynat, the half-mad King of Chraun marshals his powerful fire warriors.

His orders: “Make Iskalon burn forever.”

In the aftermath of war, Princess Stasia of Iskalon tries to keep the remnants of her kingdom intact. Her only hope is in a prophetic Dream that may lead her to a new home for her people. When Stasia desperately searches for magic strength in the inferno of Chraun, she learns that she can do the impossible—draw magic from both lava and ice. Using the power of fire, she might just find the vast blue cavern of her Dreams, and change the destiny of both Chraun and Iskalon forever in . . .

Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern
Dreams of QaiMaj, Book I

Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern Details

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From Reader Review Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern for online ebook

Natalie says

Finally finished. Very good read- I just had to sit down and let it take me. And I agree with another reviewer who said it had a slight "middle-earth" feel to it. Now I must wander over to the author's website and check out the character shorts.

Amanda says

Superb! I was blown away by this book. I don't give such praise lightly. I love high fantasy and this is a great example of the genre. I was swept away by the story, enchanted by the intricate world created by the author, and caught up in the struggles of the characters. There was only one problem. it ended! And I have to wait for the next book!

Joannah Miley says

I was immediately drawn into this book. It is set in an intricate network of underground caves that house two warring societies, Icers and Flames. The biggest difference between them is that Icers draw their magical power from the cold, while Flames draw theirs from heat. They have similar societies, but they seem to have different values, though their true differences get called into question in the book.

The author changes point of view from chapter to chapter but I was never confused as to which character's eyes I was looking through. From the Ice Princess, Stasia (who wants nothing more than to follow her 'Dreams') to Glace (Stasia's human guard who wants nothing more than to protect Stasia) to Dynat (the insane Fire King), to Bolv (Dynat's cool and calculating cousin and 'kinyara') the characters are interesting and distinct. Added into this mix are the Khell, a mysterious and seemingly unconnected society of nomads whom we see from the vantage point of one woman, Maia, the tribe's healer.

The end of the book left me satisfied with the story, but also wondering how certain characters had fared and about what was going to happen after the surprising turn of events at the end of the book. I'm looking forward to finding out what happens to everyone in volume two.

I also checked out the author's website and found that she has free short stories about people and customs in the three different societies in the book, as well as maps, and drawings of the imaginative animals that live among the Icers, Flames, and Khell.

I'd recommend this book to anyone aged 14 and up who likes to be submerged in a thoroughly thought out fantasy world or for anyone who just likes a good story!

Jean says

This eBook was given to me for free.

The story is mainly set in the land of Sholaen which is shared by two kingdoms. Iskalon (ice) and Chraun (fire). The two kingdoms are connected by a twisting network of tunnels and caves systems. Interestingly the caves are used for specific functions. Growing food, rearing livestock etc. The land above on the Iskalon side compromises a lake with bridges, palaces, homes and all the trappings you'd expect. It is very vividly drawn and believable.

There are a series of chapters dotted throughout the book titled "Interlude" Maia. These introduce the character Maia and a land called Khell. It alludes to a warrior, tribal world with cruel overseer type beings. To avoid spoilers I will not elaborate on this.

I usually have initial difficulty getting used to an unfamiliar authors writing style but thankfully not so in this case.

The language is easily understood and new word encounters at the beginning of the book should be accepted as their meaning is demonstrated within the storyline a few pages later.

The storyline progresses by chapters named for each individual character and becomes fast paced very early. The characters themselves are clearly delineated and believable making it easy to invest in them.

The story itself is not a straightforward goodies and baddies affair with lots of magic. There is intrigue, betrayal, grief kindness, horror etc. As it unfolds towards the end of the book you are led to compare individual's actions that may or may not alter your perception of what's what.

There is also a crossover from Iskalon to Khell.

This is book 1 of the series.

Very easily read and suitable for young adult to adult audience.

I was happy to give this 5 Stars as I did enjoy the book. I have book 2 on a to read list

Samuel Alexander says

There are too many great things to say about this book. The plot line is easy to follow yet complex enough to create sufficient depth. It's told through character headings as chapters. Which allows you to be pulled more into the world through the eyes of the characters then just being told what is happening. And it manages to have a secret second plot floating in the background that picks up steam at just the right pace to hit you at the end with that yearning to know where it will lead. Which of course means the ending is also brilliant.

The characters of each chapter heading were very clearly defined. What made them work is that they give the impression of being cliched, the typical warrior in love with the princess, the stubborn princess who has no time for the order of things loaded with I'm almost an adult teenage angst, the usually over cautious best friend of the princess who always takes the safe route. The evil villain bent on destruction at any cost, and of course the I'm evil but my king is just crazy and he'll kill us and the good guys if we don't overthrow him general who refuses to accept this truth. However, none of them are really any of these things.

As the plot moves on all of the main characters hit a learning curve. They find out things about themselves and don't squirm away from the realities of it. Those who appear strong end up weak, those who seem weak

turn out to have more strength than they knew, and those who thought they had a fair hand in life learn that they are not much different from others they thought less than them. Each character has a journey to go through that is very intricately interlocked with an opposing character.

The rules of each sect, the icers and the flames, are defined in a way that it doesn't come off as a history lesson. Things are learned as we need them. The hints as to what may be going on are calculated to their precise moments that you don't quite figure out where it's actually heading. And most importantly, the route most young adult fiction novels will take this one doesn't. It doesn't shy away from self sacrifice, making the tough decisions, and the glaring truth that in war heroes can die.

And it plays very well the issue of good versus bad when faced with total distraction. What the cost are of annihilating an entire race. And is blood ties actually thicker than water. Can one destroy their own brother or sister or cousin if they knew they must in order to gain ultimate power.

In all this book had a clearly defined world. Characters who had their own individual journeys and equal importance in plot of the book. And the author does an excellent job of making you feel the characters and more importantly feel their love and or distaste for the other characters. There is no way you can read this and not get a full spectrum of the importance of why and the understanding of why each character does what they do.

And the ending was brilliant. It was intense yet subtle at the same time and answered with out actually answering what was going on with this sub plot line. And something as subtle as switching from italics to regular print alludes to the fact that this plot line won't be so sub in the next book.

I give this such a high rating because all the things I like in a novel, which is making me feel your characters so much I don't even want the bad guys to die, avoiding the cliches that these types of novels fall into so often, defining the rules of the different sects and explaining how they use their power in a clear and easy to understand way, and most importantly having excerpts or interludes (I am very touchy about these types of things) that when I get to the end I say, yes the book did need them. There is nothing worse than an author putting in these short inserts every couple of chapters and I think if I read the book without them it would be the same. That was not the case with this book.

This was a book that held everything I like about young adult novels with the complexity of the plots of the more adult fare which is what makes reading young adult or new adult so enjoyable. When it hits right in the middle it makes for some of the most fascinating reading you can have. This novel is for any fantasy reader that likes well thought out plots and characters, doesn't shy away from the harsh realities of war and moves at a pace that never bores or leaves you thinking, why why why. It was in one word, brilliant.

And as a side note, in my opinion the character to really watch is Larc. She by far impressed me the most, so much so that in the scene where she finally came into her own I didn't even think it was her. And that is as good as writing can get.

There was only one part in the book that really annoyed me. Which did nothing for my overall view of novel. The princess after having to regroup her citizens made a very good point about how the council works, and having to wait on decisions and so on and so forth. She was, as far as I can tell, absolutely correct but was made to feel like she wasn't. It just didn't quite make sense for her to have her moment to shine and be beat down, however, in retrospect it was probably brilliant because it didn't stick she sorted it out her own way, the right way, ultimately. Which goes with what I said about the learning curve, so although I wasn't thrilled about it, in theory it makes sense, but I still wish she would've told her friends to shut the hell up she wasn't

there to make friends she was there to do what was best for her people. And they were either for here or against her. But maybe that's just cause I'm a hardass. Otherwise. No problems here.

Oliver says

I want to be entirely honest with you and therefore I have to admit that I only read this fantasy novel because Selah is family. Although I always steer clear of this genre, I was interested how she was doing. She then gave me a copy and I no longer had an excuse.

The book takes a couple of pages before it picks up pace. After reading the first 13 or 14 pages, I was still able to put the book back on the stack of unread books for a very long time. Something I later wondered about how it was possible. When I next grabbed it I had to read it through till the end only interrupted by inevitable daily tasks.

Selah creates a wonderful world which does not mean – without telling too much – that it remains intact in its entirety. She does not explain every animal or gadget when she first mentions it. That leaves the reader in some sort of enjoyable miraculous uncertainty – some linguistic kind of suspense. Different strands are woven into the story so there is always something going on of which you want to know how it ends. Knowing that Selah had planned and written a sequel, I feared that she would let the readers with the mother of all cliffhangers. Given her abilities as a story-teller that could really be a bad one. One the other hand side, she is not a mean person. But maybe it's better you read for yourself ...

I gave this book 5 out of 5 because Selah, alongside a totally entertaining story, uses the fantasy genre to offer new perspectives on human nature and society. A clear recommendation from my side.

Rachel says

The author does an excellent job with her characters, making them seem very real and relatable. I really loved seeing the story through many pairs of eyes, giving the reader many different view points instead of just the main protagonist and antagonist. Throughout the story, the author sprinkles in "interludes" of a character seemingly having nothing to do with the main story of the two underground countries of Iskalon and Chraun, and quite nicely joins everything together in the end.

Brianne says

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads. The author was very kind to take the time to sign the book and welcome me to this wonderful world she's created. I enjoyed exploring it, and it is quite different from a lot of what I read. I actually read some of the glossary before I started the story. It begins with the youngest princess exploring tunnels she Dreamed that turn out to be rather close to the enemy. Next point of view is her guard Glace who puts duty above desire. And Tay-Song tells her story through many more perspectives. I liked seeing the story from different angles. There was just one character that seemed to be telling a completely different story, and it wasn't until the end did I see how it connected. All in all, the

book was very good, and I will be reading the next one.

Elizabeth says

A wonderfully meaty book, there's so much to sink your teeth into - deep characterisation, knotty plot, thoughtful themes. And a brilliantly written antagonist that I want to hate but can't because his viewpoint chapters were so well done. Every character Tay-Song creates feels so alive and real, even the "walk-on" parts. Very much like Requiem for the Wolf in that regard, I thought. Both deserve more than being offered for free on Instafreebie! (Seriously, snap these two up).

Other thoughts - Tay-Song doesn't shy away from depicting violence and the horrors of war. The description of the destruction and impact on the people is absolutely heart-rending.

Worldbuilding - is I think the only place where it falls down for me. Magic fuelled by heat and cold....it doesn't make much sense. But I think that's just my scientific mind at work. Just ignore the laws of thermodynamics and enjoy the ride. She does do an awesome job at adhering to Sanderson's laws, anyhow, so that's cool. I'm just being picky.

The Dreams of QaiMaj deserves to be taken up by a publisher that can lavish it with the attention it deserves - I want a physical hardback copy, with lush fabric cover, an embossed spine...*swoons* Even in ebook form, it's beautiful - the cover and map art are gorgeous.

This is definitely one for the reread pile, I want to experience over and over.

Melissa says

I was given this book in exchange for an honest review.

This was an amazing, magical story that leaves the reader wanting more (in a good way). The storyline is well-developed and intriguing. I look forward to reading the rest of this series.

Anna Tan says

The Icer Princess, Stasia of Iskalon is convinced that she is close to finding V'ltruhst, a vast cavern from ancient legend that she has been Dreaming of. However, Flame King Dynat of Chraun, compelled by the Fire Spirit, has launched a war against Iskalon, intent on destroying the Icers' city and capturing all the princesses. Thrust into leadership when her family is captured, Stasia has to find the right balance between saving her people and following her Dream.

Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern (DVBC for short!) draws you into a magical world, where two races who can draw the T'Jas from cold and heat, called Icers and Flames, are pitted against each other. Humans, those without the magic of T'Jas, are unfortunately caught in between as guildsmen and assistants amongst the Icers and as slaves amongst the Flames. It feels like she might be inserting some social commentary here, but it's probably only going to be evident in the second book.

Tay-Song's writing is a pleasure to read - detailed enough to bring you into the scene at will, and yet broad enough for you to fill in the gaps with your imagination. The only thing that broke it for me in several parts were the interludes where Maia's story, set in Khell, brings in an ancient tribal-like feel that's far removed

from the rest of the story. It's only towards the end when the two storylines merge does it begin to fit together. I suppose this is something like what Brandon Sanderson has been doing in the Stormlight Archives. I would have liked the interlude to have been maybe a little more connected though.

* I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Mike Hartner says

This book is fun. A beautiful romance, set in a world that is well constructed and almost middle-Earth - ish. The supporting shorts on her website, are well constructed. I definitely look forward to Book Two from Selah, and highly recommend it to all readers.

Kayla says

I won this book in a goodreads giveaway.

This book completely swept me away. It is one of the most creative and well-done books I've read in a long time, with top-notch world building, characters, and plot. It's takes place in a world of caves, where Icers, Flames, and humans live. This book has a grand scope, following the characters through a war and its aftermath.

There are many well developed characters in this book who are shown through multiple POVs, which also adds to our understanding of the plot. Unlike most books with multiple POVs, I was actually invested/interested in each character and never found myself wanting to skip ahead or reading more quickly through one character's part in order to get to the next.

I cannot wait to read the second book! That said, don't wait until it comes out to buy this one. Put this at the top of your reading list!

Heather Langston says

So, after a somewhat slow start (which I believe was strictly on my end, not the book...had a little trouble focusing), I ended up finding it hard to put this one down! I started it yesterday afternoon and finished it today. Wonderful read! A little different and very interesting. There was a glossary at the end for those who like that, and a couple of maps at the beginning. The ending, while offering slight closure, did end on a small cliffhanger in certain aspects (okay, yeah, I did cry out NO! when I saw it had ended). This was a read that I can honestly say I lost myself in. Will definitely be waiting for the next and highly recommend this read.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Terence says

I received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

I feel particularly bad for not enjoying Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern considering I was given it for free, but getting the book for free isn't reason enough to change my review to something that's not true.

Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern relies heavily on its glossary to explain its book specific terms. Many terms are just brought up with no explanation what so ever and I found myself being pulled out of the book often to figure out what terms meant by checking the glossary. I'm not a fan of needing to check a glossary every other paragraph in order to move on with a story.

Another thing I felt Dream of a Vast Blue Cavern suffered from was the author too often just told us things were happening rather than having the point of view character describe their experience. Even though the book had point of view characters it seemed as though there was a narrator who was telling me about the character.

I felt disconnected from the characters and wasn't concerned with the events that were taking place.
