



The Descent of the Lyre

Will Buckingham

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It is the early nineteenth century, and the Bulgarian village of Gela, the legendary home of Orpheus, is suffering under the heavy taxation and arbitrary justice of Ottoman rule. When his bride-to-be is abducted the night before his wedding, Ivan Gelski takes to the hills and turns to banditry to seek revenge. But a chance encounter with a travelling guitarist, and the bloodshed that follows, set him on a musical journey through fame, martyrdom and legend. In this remarkable reinvention of the tale of Orpheus, Will Buckingham plunges us into the music and folklore of Bulgaria, in a parable about storytelling, sainthood and myth-making.

The Descent of the Lyre Details

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Author : Will Buckingham

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From Reader Review The Descent of the Lyre for online ebook

Elspeth G. Perkin says

A lyrical parable with Old World charm

There is nothing I enjoy more than a story that sets me on a journey of research after I have finished reading and reminds me of stories of the old ways and traditions. *The Descent of the Lyre* is one of those such reads that as soon as I finished, I combed through my resources high and low for more information about European locations, character's names, icons mentioned and details that may be born of imagination or serve as a new piece of trivia for this reader. With this novel I learned about unfamiliar topics and above all was entertained with this tale of music, love, anger and death. With its distinctive expressive flow and setting, this novel felt more as a parable passed down and I could imagine myself sitting in a candle lit room listening to my Baba tell portions of this story. Like the old fashioned ways of storytelling *The Descent of the Lyre* holds the audience's attention with: religious beginnings, superstitions, dark sides of human nature, near forgotten traditions, love lost, passages of self discovery, moral lessons and regional folklore. As this tale builds this book takes the reader on a journey from small villages at the foot of high mountain passes to isolated religious sites then to the elegance and splendor of Europe's most celebrated cities- with music always in mind, how it can soothe and even transform a lost soul. Finally like the old fashioned tales, there is something to learn at the ending but that message is up to the listener.

In the end, *The Descent of the Lyre* certainly had the historical essentials that are always inviting and enchanting to this reader but I couldn't ignore the feeling this novel seemed oddly rushed towards the end and something was missing to tie off all of the strand-like storylines. I understand the author set the flow of this novel to replicate a dance tempo and indeed it felt at times as so, moving from quick and measured to jumping forward and back taking on different rhythms at any moment with introducing characters and locations, to one entire leap into the future that dedicated the page to the specifics relating to composition research. Although those changes were very inventive and unique, I won't lie, it took me a little longer than I expected to get used to those changes to the pace of the story and unfortunately those creative courses slowed this short book even more for this reader. I also honestly think I missed a few hidden messages in this book, but perhaps other readers will understand and gather from all of the presented passages. Still overall, this was a unique lyrical read that I would recommend to others looking for a music historical inspired parable with Old World charm in the pages, just waiting for the right listener.

Charlotte says

(Full review will be on my blog soon)

I had the privilege of being taught Creative Writing by Will Buckingham for three years and in that time I learnt a great many things from him. He talked passionately about this book and I was able to hear him read from the story a few times.

I expected this to be a simple "revenge story" in which I would follow Ivan on the quest to take back his lover. It is about so much more than that. Through each part of the story (of which there are four) Will introduces different characters and their lives, offering up their perspectives to give new and exciting tastes of the world.

While turning the pages of this book, it brought to the forefront why I love reading so much. I read for a

variety reasons (as I am sure you do the same) and while experiencing this book, I was struck by how books have the ability to make readers experience places they have never been to, or long to go to by placing them in those locations through a combination of letters and words. I have never been to Bulgaria and yet, after reading this book I feel like I have.

Robin says

Great start, weak finish

One review I read gave me the impression that this would be historical fiction, but I would characterize it as being a bit history-informed. Still, I like the writing style and the story pulled me in. Being a musician, I was attracted to the theme of redemption through music. But the ending was not satisfying to me; it just stopped and then a few loose ends were tidied up.

Sally says

"I give you my son...may you and the holy saints do with him what you will", 31 December 2015

This review is from: The Descent of the Lyre (Kindle Edition)

I was immediately caught up in this story, right from the introduction where the reader is invited up a vividly described forest path in the Bulgarian Rhodope Mountains to a chapel. Among the frescos is an image of a saint, his wrists bandaged and a guitar over his shoulder.

The story of the (fictional) saint, Ivan Gelski, is beautifully told; from his youth under the brutal Ottoman regime, taking him across Europe. The reader sees parallels (at times) with Christ; elsewhere with Orpheus, the musician of mythology whose home was in this part of Bulgaria.

Utterly different and beautiful; a recommended read.

Anette says

<http://www.thebookbag.co.uk/reviews/i...>

Chuck says

Really well done story using the Orpheus legend as a template.
