



Juni Taisen: Zodiac War

NisiOisiN (Creator) , Hikaru Nakamura (Illustrations) , ?? ?? , ??? (Illustrator)

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Twelve warriors enter a death match, but only one can survive to win the ultimate prize.

Rampage. Weep. Kill. Every 12 years, the 12 signs of the Chinese zodiac take the form of warriors and engage in the ultimate battle royal. They face one another in battles to the death, using all the powers of their star signs, and the sole survivor is granted the ultimate prize—a wish. Any wish.

Juni Taisen: Zodiac War Details

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Author : NisiOisiN (Creator) , Hikaru Nakamura (Illustrations) , ?? ?? , ??? (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Juni Taisen: Zodiac War for online ebook

Kevin says

THE MAIN VILLAIN REVIEWS

Fans of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* will definitely enjoy NisiOisiN's *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War*. Set in Japan, twelve warriors, each representing the Chinese Zodiac, will fight to the death. The sole winner will be granted any wish.

What makes *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* appealing even to the hardcore fans of *The Hunger Games* is it bends some rules. For example, some of the characters don't stay dead. How does that affect the tournament? Each character has their own story to tell-- some would kill just to join the Zodiac War, while others have no choice. Repeating patterns will have readers curious: why do most of the characters claim that they have seen one of the participants but couldn't place their thoughts where and when?

The characters' abilities will surely keep readers entertained and holding on to their seats. Twist and turns could happen anytime. The characters are human-- they are flawed and ready to get ready just for the sake of saving themselves.

NisiOisiN's *Juni Taisen: Zodiac War* is entertaining, quick, and full of action that turns the story in the most unexpected ways. Highly recommended.

Kate (Looking Glass Reads) says

4 out of 5 stars on Looking Glass Reads.

I can't believe I've never read a book by NisiOisin before. Not only that, I've only just started watching Bakemonogatari. Finally I can say that I've read something by this author! I happened to come across an absolutely beautiful copy of The Zodiac War by NisiOisin in my local bookstore not too long ago and immediately picked up a copy.

This book is about the Zodiac War, a battle that occurs every twelve years between fighters which represent each of the twelve zodiacs. What you see is pretty much what you get here. The story opens with the introduction of this year's Zodiac War by the overseer of the event before following each of the combatants as they utilize everything they possibly can in order to secure victory.

The point of view changes rather frequently in this book. Yet where other books I've read have trouble with story flow while switching between only two character's point of view, this novel makes twelve points of view feel like the most natural thing in the world. Each fighter, or nearly each fighter, gets a section from their point of view. The transitions from one chapter to the next were extremely smooth. The point of view was never confusing, and each character's voice was distinct enough to stand out from the rest.

The character's themselves were a very eclectic bunch. All were masters at something whether it was a fighting style, weapon type, or a more fantasy based ability. Personalities were also incredibly varied. There wasn't a single character I didn't like reading about, nor any one character that I particularly disliked. Each

one was very interesting in their own right.

The book is divided into ‘Battles’ as opposed to chapters. Though titled differently they work the same, dividing the book at appropriate points and are further broken down into shorter sections. Each new chapter features an image of the character who’s point of view we follow in that chapter as well as a short biography page that tells a little bit about the character’s background.

One of the interesting parts of the novel is that it only follows the Zodiac War. We see the participants fighting against one another, struggling to win. Some fight because that’s their job. Other’s fight because there was no way to turn down the invitation to fight. And some just want the wish they will be granted if they win.

Needless to say, this is a very fast paced book. A lot happens within 250 pages. There is plenty of fight scenes, some great strategizing, and I loved every second of it. What isn’t talked about is the larger implications of what the Zodiac War is and what it means. That isn’t to say that this is never discussed at all. Enough background is given both about the Zodiac Wars themselves and through some character’s pasts that readers get a solid idea of what it is and what it means. However, as the narrator states, this is a game on two levels. A physical one for the fighters, and a game of politics and money for those who organize it. And the latter is not something that the fighters, especially while on the battlefield, are thinking about in any great detail.

I would be interested to read more about these characters and this world. Thankfully, we do have a little more available to us. There is a one shot manga included within an anthology called Ogiri which features one of these characters, something I will definitely be searching for in the near future.

It isn’t very often that we get a high quality light novel release like The Zodiac War. This is a hardback with a beautiful dust jacket featuring all of the Zodiac War’s participants. Beneath the dust jacket is a gorgeous cream colored hardback covered in the character’s depicting the various animals of the zodiac and the same diamond shaped title and author image from the dust jacket. This is a book you’ll want to display, and if you’re like me, minus the dust jacket.

I really enjoyed The Zodiac War by NisiOisin. In the near future I’ll be both looking for the manga anthology Ogiri as well as watching the anime based off of this book. If you like fast paced stories with some light fantasy elements, definitely pick up this book. I highly recommend it.

Caleb Kohn-Blank says

Overall, J?ni Taisen: Zodiac War, was fairly mediocre. I found the book after watching the anime and I believe the anime was much better as it portrayed the characters more sympathetic and gave you a chance to not only root for them, but to get to know them before they died. In the book, however, all narration is done in the third person distancing the reader from the characters, and all personal information about the characters is given in one-page information dossiers. Besides for this, there were significant problems in pacing as the book could go from 0 to 100 in an instant, which could make sense due to the Hunger Games-esque plot, but it is all handled oddly. It is overall a pretty good but predictable book, with an extremely disappointing ending. For any one who is interested in this book, you’d be better off watching the anime.

Jorge Reyes says

Una experiencia curiosa leer a Nisio, esta novela ligera para adultos aunque predecible tiene una narrativa creativa en cuanto a los sucesos que van marcando el "torneo" o la guerra del zodiaco. Me parece que, incluso para una novela ligera, le faltó desarrollo y profundidad en los personajes. Me parece una obra decente, curiosa y creativa, aunque no en el sentido de lo que la mayoría de los lectores esperan. Me hizo pasar un buen rato de entretenimiento, aunque poco trascendente, no todo debe ser genial y esta obra como los vinos: "una lectura para cada momento".

khordofon says

2.5, na real

O livro é bem melhor que o anime (não passa eras e eras fazendo flashbacks inúteis, tem um ritmo melhor e até mesmo desenvolve mais os personagens), mas ainda assim tem um problema grave: falta de clímax e repetição de informações -- toda hora o autor para para nos explicar coisas que já foram explicadas 5, 6 vezes, e toda hora ele meio que faz uma recapitulação dos planos e do que aconteceu nos últimos capítulos, o que torna a leitura meio entediante (se ainda tivesse sido serializado, eu entenderia, mas não foi).

A história termina inclusive antes do vencedor fazer seu pedido (já que juntaria com o mangá oneshot), mas acabou ficando bem anticlimático por causa do jeito que o vencedor ganha. Me falaram que isso de anticlímax é marca do NisiOisiN, mas puta que pariu, há poucas coisas que façam o final dessa história não soar fraco, já que (view spoiler)

Enfim, esse é um tipo de trabalho que não é muito bom em si, mas que cria personagens cativantes o suficiente pra fanbase manter vivo por um tempo. Algo tipo Hetalia.

Terrence says

A solid, but not spectacularly interesting Battle Royale story. This is a true Battle Royale, no punches pulled when it comes to characters dying in bloody ways.

If you're looking for a sweeping epic with grandiose setup and character development, you've come to the wrong book. Besides a brief interlude about a character before each chapter, this book is focused on thoughts about actions and then the actual actions taking place. Most of the combatants don't know each other, and some don't even know the renown of the abilities of the fighters. Fights are swift, some being settled in a matter of a line or two. There are many instances where you'll likely be screaming at these characters to make more intelligent decisions / be more cautious, but alas, they'll often run into avoidable problems.

The victor of the battle seemed pretty obvious for how it was going. I wasn't sure how we were supposed to feel towards the scenario we saw. Like, one of the "villains" of the scenario could easily be seen as an

intelligent mastermind, someone worth rooting. Some of the "heroes" are not as cunning or intelligent again, some of them were just lucky, so I didn't really feel like rooting for them. I use the term hero and villain here just to mean characters with a disadvantage but they work together / try their best to overcome a single enemy, and villain as "characters with overwhelming odds in their favor that would normally be rooted against as people like underdogs". I don't know, I didn't care for the underdogs as much.

Despite the story being about granting a wish, we don't really get to see this wish in action, and we don't learn too many of the wishes other losers held. Is there more to this? Will there be a follow-up novel? Is this story some sort of commentary on people living in society (the reader) not always getting what they want / not seeing things fulfilled satisfactorily? I dunno. Maybe gotta read some other impressions and take a look at the Afterword.

Illy says

3.5

I enjoyed the book, I liked the interesting characters. Bunny was probably my favorite of course. Beyond that, the book was your pretty standard battle royale kind of book. I recommend it for those who like light novels and fighting plots. And who like interesting characters because you do go in depth with the 12 characters for the most part.

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

Juni Taisen: Zodiac War is a battle royale type of novel in which 12 warriors representing various Chinese Zodiac animals battle in a fight to the death. Although from Viz, this is not a manga - the only illustrations are collected on the cover and used as chapter headings. The novel itself is what we'd come to expect from a light novel type of story: minimal world building and twisty turns as each contestant is eliminated.

Story: 12 combatants are required to come every 12 years to fight in a battle royale to the death. Each represents a zodiac sign and mysterious 'god like beings' bet on the results. Only one is allowed to survive until the end and that person will be granted any wish.

The book is cleverly organized by viewpoints: each chapter starts with a graphic of the character and their background. Then it follows their viewpoint until they either kill or are killed. The killings are, of course, imaginative and each character's unique (and supposedly hidden) talent/ability/strength is often used against them to create their end.

The world building is non-existent - everything is 'mysterious beings' etc., who will clear out an entire town in order to create their betting coliseum of death. The focus is more on each character, how they think they will win, and how they eventually die. The special abilities felt lazily written - they didn't really tie in nicely to the Zodiac sign and I admit I was disappointed that the characters didn't tie in to the zodiac aspect strongly. The 'power up' abilities were more about how the author could find ways to use it against the characters rather than for the characters to win.

The book is a fast read, about two hours. At 250 odd pages, it sounds like a lot but this is not densely worded and the pace moves quickly. You have enough time to get into one character and then they are probably going to die. The shifting POVs allow the story to move at an interesting pace; it's almost like reading a compendium of short stories though it all unfolds chronologically that day of the battle.

The ending was a bit disappointing and more like an O Henry short story rather than a Battle Royale manga or Hunger Games. The lack of world building and very light tone make this ultimately a quick but fairly unsatisfying read.

There is a companion anime to this released the same time as the English license. Author NisiOisiN is best known for his Bakemonogatori and Medaka Box - psychological thrillers and horror. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

Olivia Script says

While this book had it's flaws, like lacking in character development, but I'm not taking away much because in the end there character is there for you to get to know only for them to be killed off. However, I really enjoyed the little snip its of information we got for each character. It made it so that you could feel more connected with them before their deaths. The universe this story takes place in is unique nonetheless, yet it still follows that same dystopian universe cliché but with a bit more class to it. I would say that you should definitely give this one a read, you will like. The characters are unique in their own ways and the reasons range from a variety of reasons. The ending is a bit hard to understand a first but as this review is being written there is an anime for this book. I say read the book first then go watch the show. The show fills in a lot of the gaps that couldn't be filled in the book and it also has episodes that give more background on the characters.

Also if you have a problem with the death order, then next time don't go out of your way to spoil yourself and be mad at the author for it.

Brooke says

I picked this up because of the anime adoption and wanted to see how different it was. The anime added more to the story with the addition of most of the fighter's backstories. The book didn't contain that and I was surprised when I started. Overall, I enjoyed the novel as much I enjoyed the anime! I also was happy to see that 11/12 fighters had profiles expect for one which didn't surprise me (but I would still have loved to learn more about them!)

Ushii (Warrior of the Ox) became my favorite along with Dokku (Warrior of the Dog). Oh and I was SUPER happy on how far Inonoshishi (Warrior of the Boar) went because I'm a boar! ...Loved it!

Michael says

I have to admit this book really disappointed me. I have to come to really enjoy NisiOisiN's books I've read so far, but this one didn't meet expectations. The premise of this book is really intriguing, as it features the 12

animals of the Chinese zodiac fighting it out to be the lone victor and have a wish granted. That part is awesome, but the structure of the chapters was not. Once I realized the pattern of how deaths occur, I was kind of bored. When you start a chapter and immediately know who the next death is before reading a single line, the fun of wondering who is next is sucked out of it. This book had potential, but it was squandered in my opinion. I give it a 3.25 out of 5.

Lacydior says

The premise of this story is about 12 warriors chosen to fight in a proxy war that is held once every 12 years. Battle royale is a genre that have saturated the market in recent years, given rise by the likes of Hunger Games and even Fate series, it is inevitable that Juuni Taisen will be compared to them.

I have started this book after finishing it's anime, so I went in with the knowledge of what will happen. And as many others have pointed out, it is predictable. But if you start this book with the mindset of wanting to be thrilled and/or you enjoy seeing the angst and grandeur melodrama just like what you can expect in other Battle Royale, then you will not enjoy this book.

What this book manage to do however is putting realistic and human response in a fantasy setting. It touches on philosophical questions in situations played out throughout the Zodiac war. Like the moral ethics of Rabbit, the question of 'how to do the right thing' by Tiger, the pacifist Monkey trying to save everyone, Rat dying ninety-nine times so that he could live one uninteresting life, just to name a few.

The book even ends off with a very anticlimactic ending, one where it ended off going along the lines of 'Life goes on, as usual.' It's a nihilistic book at its best, and that works for me. But it is also predictive and uninteresting at its worst.

On a personal note, I truly enjoyed it, and came to love every single characters. I would give it a 4/5 or even a 4.5/5. But on a much more level-headed mind, I would give it a 3/4 due to editing problems that I have caught here and there.

ps. I do wish that one day I will still get to know what Monkey's plans truly were. Though I do have a few slight ideas from clues in the book itself.

D says

L gave me their copy after reading, saying they had no sympathy for any of the characters and I was prepared for the worst. But actually it wasn't so bad?

So it looks like Juni Taisen is a prologue to a manga illustrated by Hikaru Nakamura (who also drew the cover for the novel) and I guess that makes sense considering how fast Juni Taisen just... went down. You get a few sub-chapters for each 'fight' and the battles don't usually last long. A blessing, from what I've seen of NisiOisiN's fight scenes to be honest, but also doesn't really give me the feeling that these people are the world's greatest fighters. We could chalk it up to 'well all of them are good so it's a matter of who's better right?' but honestly? After the hype we saw of Boar and how deadly she was, how femme fatale, how strong, and then bam she's just dead--I kinda feel cheated you know?

Two specific points I like: the combatants' bio that appears before their chapters. I like some of them and think they're interesting characters from their bio. Too bad the actual novel doesn't really show much of any of that.

Another is Tiger's disappointment about life in general. I didn't really think I'd like her as much as I did but her chapters were pretty good. It shows how an innocent and naive person can react to war and death and I liked that.

All in all the novel's not too bad, but I'm glad I didn't have to pay for it.

Harris says

Not bad. It was a fast read and had to make sure not to read the table of contents because it was easy to see whom would win. It was well written and I enjoyed it. Nisioisin is a creative writer and I would still read his stuff. Bakemonogatari was better.

Nique says

This was a pretty straight forward book.

Every 12 years 12 representatives of the zodiac have a battle royale with the prize being any wish. There are hints of a bigger plot, but this is a self contained story about a group of fighters killing each other.

I really liked it. Most of the characters were either likable or had distinct personalities, and the hints about the type of world this would happen in were interesting. Viz did a good job with the book's packaging too.

Nisioisin is a really good writer, though it's surprising he wrote this since this is nothing like the Monogatari series or the Zaregoto series (in letting the majority of the characters be men and writing in 3rd person kind of way).

My biggest problem with this book was just how predictable it was. I knew who would win, and it became clear exactly when a character would die. The how wasn't always obvious, but the who was.

But it's the journey not the destination that matters, or something.

Of all the characters, my favorite sections were Monkey, Sheep, and (surprisingly) Tiger.

One character remained a mystery to end sadly.

Final Thoughts: I liked it, but I wish it was a little less predictable (considering how he wrote it I get why it couldn't be and I really enjoyed how he wrote it, but still).
