



Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir

Kai Cheng Thom

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Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir by Kai Cheng Thom is the highly sensational, ultra-exciting, sort-of true coming-of-age story of a young Asian trans girl, pathological liar, and kung-fu expert who runs away from her parents' abusive home in a rainy city called Gloom. Striking off on her own, she finds her true family in a group of larger-than-life trans femmes who live in a mysterious pleasure district known only as the Street of Miracles. Under the wings of this fierce and fabulous flock, Dearly blossoms into the woman she has always dreamed of being, with a little help from the unscrupulous Doctor Crocodile. When one of their number is brutally murdered, the protagonist joins her sisters in forming a vigilante gang to fight back against the transphobes, violent johns, and cops that stalk the Street of Miracles. But when things go terribly wrong, she must find the truth within herself in order to stop the violence and discover what it really means to grow up and find your family.

Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir Details

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From Reader Review Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir for online ebook

Arden Prins says

"Taller in my heels, I am closer to some dangerous heaven."

This book is beautiful and impossible to put down! I came looking for something to take me somewhere, and this was so enchanting that I wondered if it was really in my hands.

Sara says

I wasn't quite sure what to expect when I picked up this book but DANG WAS IT FREAKIN GOOD!!! I loved the writing itself, the "characters", the fact that there's a girl gang, all of it was fantastic!! I spent a lot of the story trying to figure out how much of it was "real" but that just added to the mystery and interestingness of the story! Would recommend!

Alex Morra says

Initial thoughts - A stunning, startling work about taking back the night--femme style, on the Street of Miracles. So much to chew on here. It is a novel, assembled as if each chapter were its own short story, written by a poet. Own voices.

M. says

I love this book! Like Anna Joy Springer's *The Vicious Red Relic*, Love, it stretches the genre of memoir in super exciting ways -- specifically, and explicitly, the genre of the trans memoir.

And! Like Amber Dawn's *Sub Rosa*, FFANL uses magic and fantasy in new and idiosyncratic ways. Was really interested in how Kai Cheng mobilizes magic to various ends, while emphasizing its limitations, too--there are multiple layers of realism, and she pulls back the magical overlay periodically; magic might get rid of the dead cop but not the anxiety and paranoia the characters are left with.

AND! This book deconstructs both girl gang and princess narratives while recentering them around transfemme experience.

Plus!! So much amazing imagery. Throughout, the writing is gorgeous.

This will be one of my favorites in life, I think.

Tracy says

My gods I loved this. It's beautiful. It made my heart sing. Thank you Laurel for choosing this for our book club.

Robyn Letson says

This book is a nice little dose of magic, which is especially welcome in times like these. What I liked most: Ghost Friend and, "What do you think the difference is between hunger and love?"

erica says

Ok -- writing this two months after reading, so bear with me as I try and recall my thoughts.

This was an exciting story to read, super imaginative and engaging. Definitely a recommended read. Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars follows a young trans girl who comes into her power as part of a grrrl gang and along the way figures out how to fit into the world, find love, and build chosen family.

Kai Cheng Thom's novel takes readers to a whole new world as the protagonist comes into her own trans womanhood on the streets of a city akin to Montreal, Qc. The way this writing was woven together felt incredibly poetic, from a crooked home in Gloom (reminding me of Victoria, B.C.) with crying mermaids on its shores, to knife-wielding greyhouse bus rides, to an arrival in a far far away place that offers a fresh start and new possibilities. Along the way, the protagonist faces various barriers and challenges as a young East Asian trans girl who is running away from home, trying to survive and learning how to trust others. This story touches on the nuances of East Asian privilege in POC communities, transphobia, intergenerational trauma, and trans women's liberation, all while embedding it into a narrative that doesn't feel didactic or moralistic.

I really liked the way the book's chapters were peppered with poetry and letters to a sister back home. In some ways, this gave it a journal-like quality, which felt very intimate to read. Thank you, Kai Cheng Thom for this generous gift.

Danika at The Lesbrary says

Wow.

The writing is incredible. I can't really articulate right now, but: wow.

Trigger warnings for transmisogyny, violence, self harm (cutting)

Ciara says

That title is a doozy, but I promise it's worth the read.

Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars centres on a young Asian trans girl, who runs away from an abusive home and joins a group of larger-than-life trans femmes in the notorious district known as the Street of Miracles. Part-memoir, part-fantasy, and every bit a coming-of-age story, this book handles family, vigilante gangs, and what it means to grow up.

Hooooo boy was this book a trip. Sure, I've read fantasies and memoirs, but I've never quite experienced both at the same time until now. This book completely deconstructs the genre of trans memoirs through fantasy and mythology. Kai Cheng Thom uses the structure of a made-up world to allow readers to understand and experience real-world complexities, and the commentary cuts deeps.

But even with this atypical-memoir writing style, my favourite part about this book remains with its characters. The way women are presented in *Fierce Femmes* is what truly outsells this book. Shown in a variety of race, gender presentations, and abilities, the women of this *Fierce Femmes* are allowed to be three-dimensional characters. They are allowed to be hateful and resentful, but also brave, loving, and supportive. Oftentimes, the representation of trans women in the media is limited to that of loners and tragic martyrs, and it's lovely and refreshing to see them portrayed otherwise.

Told through a mixture of prose and poetry, *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars* is a wonderful story that tackles transphobia, the nuances of privilege, and intergenerational trauma, while at the same time weaving a grand, epic adventure fitting of the fantasy genre.

TW: violence, transmisogyny, self harm

Review also found on the phantom bandit.

Josie says

"Every girl needs to be at least a little bit dangerous."

This became my favorite book on page 2, and has never wavered in that position. An amazing work, wise and healing and magical and brutal. I bought copies for friends; there were people in particular it called the names of and wouldn't stop until I got them a copy.

Rhea says

If you like magical realism, even a little bit, RUN DON'T WALK to get your hands on this book. Every page had a fresh delight. Kai Cheng Thom is changing the game for fictionalized memoirs. This book healed something in me.

Jacob Wren says

This book grabbed me by the throat and didn't let go until the very last page. I wrote about it here:
<http://mtlreviewofbooks.ca/reviews/fi...>

CaseyTheCanadianLesbrarian says

This book is a work of genius! A funny, dark, innovative story that completely takes apart the genre of the trans memoir. Kai Cheng Thom's writing is beautiful and powerful and poetic. It reminds me a lot of Amber Dawn's *Sub Rosa* but it's also very much its own thing. An ode to trans sisterhood. Highly recommended! Full review on my blog.

Hannah says

this is a very very real magical realist fairytale that i place in the lineages of francesca lia block and zoe whittall and amber dawn and also the oral & performance storytelling lineage of kai cheng thom herself, which is distinctive and swiftly recognizable. it has bitter and sharp and dark and it also has sweet and raucous and celebratory. my most favourite thing about this book is that it is the most strongly femme4femme thing i have ever read. my other most favourite thing about this book is that it holds violence with the reverence and delicacy it truly deserves and places it squarely within our safest and most-loved people and places. queers need this perspective.

reading this started to answer some of the questions i've been trying to figure out for myself as a writer about how you take life and make it fiction, how you make things a fairytale, how you move between there/here and other polarities, and how you show the way without bashing people over the head with blunt exhortations of how a person should be.

Book Riot Community says

I've never understood the idea of a fictionalized memoir until I read this book. Amongst the beached mermaids and fairy tale elements of this story is sharp, unapologetic truth. I fell in love with the dreamlike, poetic prose that encompasses this narrative of transmisogyny, racism, police brutality, and self harm. Kai Cheng Thom doesn't shrink from this, but she also reworks the idea of the trans memoir, allowing for more space, and more magic, in this often constrictive genre. This is a beautiful read that grabbed me from the first page.

—Danika Ellis

from The Best Books We Read In June 2017: <https://bookriot.com/2017/07/03/riot-...>
