


The Tower and the Tears

Cecilia Tan

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Combining the freshness and excitement of new adult romance with a paranormal setting reminiscent of Harry Potter, *The Tower and the Tears* is the second volume in Cecilia Tan's Magic University series.

Kyle is a college sophomore worrying about the usual things students do, like what he's going to major in and getting along with his dorm mates, but he attends a most unusual college. He's a student at Veritas, the hidden magical university inside Harvard. Kyle finds he has a talent for sex magic, and when Ciara, a girl in his sex magic class, has a crush on him and needs a practice partner, he looks like he's in for a very pleasurable semester of study. But can Kyle pass the grueling tests necessary to be accepted into the Esoteric Arts program, including the bisexuality requirement?

When a professor is mysteriously attacked, Kyle finds himself embroiled in a mystery deeper than university department politics. Someone has been stealing magical artifacts and the dean suspects Ciara, sending Kyle on a quest to discover the real culprit. Kyle will learn sizzling sexual technique and unleash powerful magic on his incredible erotic journey, but is the study of sex really the route to true love? Perhaps what Kyle needs to learn about most is himself.

Cecilia Tan is "simply one of the most important writers, editors, and innovators in contemporary American erotic literature," according to Susie Bright. Her BDSM romance novel *Slow Surrender* (Hachette/Forever, 2013) won the RT Reviewers Choice Award in Erotic Romance and the Maggie Award for Excellence from the Georgia Romance Writers. Her books include the ground-breaking erotic short story collections *Black Feathers* (HarperCollins), *White Flames* (Running Press), and *Edge Plays* (Cirlet Press), and the erotic romances *Slow Surrender*, *Slow Seduction*, and *Slow Satisfaction* (Hachette/Forever), *The Prince's Boy* (Cirlet Press), and *The Hot Streak* (Riverdale Avenue Books). Her short stories have appeared in *Ms. Magazine*, *Nerve*, *Best American Erotica*, *Asimov's Science Fiction*, and tons of other places. She was inducted into the Saints & Sinners Hall of Fame for GLBT writers in 2010, was a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Leather Association in 2004, and won the inaugural Rose & Bay Awards for Best Fiction in 2010 for her crowdfunded web fiction serial *Daron's Guitar Chronicles*. She lives in the Boston area with her lifelong partner corwin and three cats.

The Tower and the Tears Details

Date : Published January 22nd 2015 by Riverdale Avenue Books (first published January 26th 2010)

ISBN : 9781626011410

Author : Cecilia Tan

Format : Paperback 280 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Adult Fiction, Erotica, Lgbt, Magic, Romance, M M Romance, Urban Fantasy

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From Reader Review The Tower and the Tears for online ebook

Nathan says

Likes:

Polyamory: Kyle and three friends spend a semester break in a house in a sweet menage. One scene in particular was enlightening, showing two straight best friends enjoying sex together without either gay panic or intentional sexual contact between them. (I still hoped they'd hook up eventually).

Everybody Lives: Rather than dying conveniently or exiting stage left, the antagonist in the previous book comes back as a friend and peer, working through their own issues and the consequences of their actions.

Irks:

Bigus Dickus: Kyle is well endowed, and it seems like everyone wants to point it out.

Douche ex machina: poop-free first time spontaneous anal sex is truly fantasy. On the other hand, they are magical, so maybe there's some reverse conjuration going on.

Junior high sophomore year: Some of the interpersonal emotional scenes seem to be more appropriate to junior high than adults in their early 20s.

Amberfaye says

Damn it Kyle! Get your shit together.

Kira says

[Frost (hide spoiler)]

melissa says

Wow, this was a bit of a difficult read.

While I kinda joke about being french vanilla (a slightly exciting vanilla) with my more adventurous friends, this book definitely shows how terribly unadventurous I am. I have tons of friends that happily enjoy a poly lifestyle, it's just something I could never wrap my head around for myself and the book kinda hits home as to why.

Year 2 at Veritas and the school is in peril because of some stolen artifacts. Kyle is enrolled in Esoteric arts classes and is learning to channel his power through sex.

He strikes up a new relationship, but then a few others get thrown into the mix and it seems to break apart the original couple. It seems that Kyle is searching for love but settling for and confusing sex for love while trying to make his partners happy despite his unhappiness.

I'm definitely looking forward to continuing the series and tend to usually hate the formulaic happily ever after bullshit in most books, but would love to see Kyle find that for himself.

*Digital review copy provided by NetGalley and the publisher.

Online Eccentric Librarian says

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

This Magic University series is what I consider a guilty pleasure; no it isn't high literature and yes it is very erotic (read: lots of sex). Unlike so many erotic titles out there, it isn't raunchy or rude; it's consensual, written and performed with respect. As well, Tan creates both a book-length arc as well as a series-long arc. So characters are allowed to grow and I applaud that Tan has managed that so well here. It might be easy to shrug this off as an adult Harry Potter fanfic but really, that is doing The Magic University series a disservice.

Plot: Kyle continues his esoteric studies while finding a new girlfriend in Ciara. His sophomore year might be a bit more than he expected, however, as the university reels from the theft of 3 very special magic artifacts. It begins to affect the teachers and the students as suspicions mount. But as Kyle's powers strengthen, he begins to recognize that the prophecy in the school's history might just be referring to him. But if so, who then is the partner of which it speaks?

As with the first book, there are many false trails that Kyle and his colleagues will follow. There are also enough hints dropped in this volume to guess exactly where the story will go from here. Kyle still has to deal with abandonment issues - only Alex has stayed by his side throughout and is still a calming influence/almost mentor more than friend. New teachers are introduced and each will influence Kyle in some way.

Tan definitely ups the erotic parts this book - it's not going to be all vanilla from here on. But at the same time, I really respect the way it is written so it isn't cringe worthy or lascivious. I never felt like I was reading soft porn and Tan is quite gentle and almost loving in the way she writes the sex scenes. That, for me, makes this a very palatable story. For once, I don't have to (or want to) skip the raunchy sex scenes in a novel.

I will definitely continue to book 3. So while it definitely isn't literature, it's an enjoyable way for an adult to pass the afternoon. There's an undeniable feel-good theme throughout. Reviewed from an advanced reader copy provided by the publisher.

Cozen says

This is the beginning of a long line of incomplete and unfinished books. I wanted to like this book, was

really looking forward to it. I tried and tried but just couldn't do it. It might be for the fact I picked this up at audible.com and didn't realize this was book two in the series. Audible didn't give me enough info when I purchased it to tell.

Anyway, I still found it hard to get into this book. I don't think I'll be returning to this series.

Tequila says

Cecilia Tan has created another phenomenal book in the Magic University series. Even though this is only the second book, I can say this series just gets better the more I read and leaves me eager to start the third book in this series.

One thing in particular that I really love about this book is the gender fluidity of the characters and how they are open and accepting of one another's gender and sexual orientation. The sex scenes are fantastic and more than once found myself getting hot and bothered.

Renia Carsillo says

One of the most evolved erotica-style books I've ever read. This is a great choice if you're a fan of erotic stories but find them constantly too "rape-y" or "porn-ish" for you. Tan is careful with tough topics like consent, equality and safe sex. It all makes for a fun read.

Kibayami says

It's year two at Veritas, the magical university hidden in the shadow of Harvard, and Kyle finally is getting over his heartbreak from last year. On recommendation, Kyle decides to put his being a "Lightning Rod" to good use by declaring his major in the Esoteric arts (sex magic). But things are never that easy for Kyle for as soon as his first class ends his teacher is found unconscious and powerful magical artifact is stolen. If that isn't bad enough Kyle will also have to pass the acceptance tests for his Esoteric arts major, tests chosen to push a student to places they have never before experienced and test if they have what it takes to succeed.

Kyle makes new friends and lovers and starts to see who he really is and what he wants in life, though it won't be without scars new and old re-opening. Kyle will need courage as well as open-mindedness if he is going to find the answers he seeks, what is it he wants in life and what life wants of him.

*Digital review copy provided by NetGalley and the publisher.

Kristina says

The Tower and the Tears by Cecilia Tan is the second book in the Magic University series. Kyle is starting his sophomore year of college and he has decided to major in esoteric (erotic) arts. In order to be accepted into the department, he will have to pass three tests of the judges choosing. Someone is also stealing the

Rings of Lore which are five rings that increase the wearer's abilities if they are worn during esoteric rituals. Kyle, Alex, and the girls are hard at work studying, deciding their majors, and trying to find out who has stolen the Rings of Lore. They will also find out more about the mysterious tower and the Dean (none of the students have seen him).

The sex scenes in The Tower and the Tears are more graphic and intense than in The Siren and the Sword. This book is definitely for a more mature audience (despite the cover with the young looking kid).

The Tower and the Tears is good, but not great. I wish the author would focus a little more on the story as in The Siren and the Sword. I give The Tower and the Tears 3.75 out of 5 stars. It will be interesting what happens to Kyle in the next book.

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

Bethany T says

Love it, completely. Couldn't stop reading.

Zetagilgamesh says

This book picked up on the promise that was delivered in the first book and dropped it like a carton of eggs from a 10 story building. There isn't a solid story arc. I never felt that the characters had anything significant going on. It felt like this book was a lazy attempt to just publish some sex scenes.

Additionally the characters were so incredibly flat, that they would have failed the Replicant test from Blade Runner in the first question. I can't understand how we *still* know next to nothing about the family life, past, concerns and highschool of the protagonist. I am not certain if the author went to high school and college, because it feels like she doesn't have a clue how people work together, relate, discuss their pasts and the things that they have done as they attempt to define who they are in the present.

I feel that the protagonist is essentially an alien, beamed down to the planet and given a few false memories to help him blend in.

So I have to say...lazy, and I am done with this series and this author.

Alysa H. says

While it's still got plenty of entertainment value and an interesting (and sexy!) magical system, I didn't enjoy this as much as Book 1.

Because Book 1 was an introduction to the world of the series, it could rely more on world-building to carry the rest. Without that, Book 2 needed more plot and character development and structure that just wasn't

often there.

This installment finds Kyle formally practicing for a potential specialty in, well, sex magic, and it's basically sex scene after sex scene with the larger plot not particularly well integrated. The sex is graphic without being smutty, in my opinion, and I suspect that's because the whole thing is so much about author Tan's take on the subject of healthy polyamory. The sex is also mostly heterosexual, and though the Magic University series at large is rightly billed as queer, there is quite a long build-up to Kyle's exploring anything other than fairly vanilla sex with women, and this may not be what many readers expect or are looking for.

It's kind of like being in HP fandom and starting to read a very long HP/DM fic in which H has tons of sex with nearly every female character in the series, including the professors, before finally getting ~~trapped~~ trapped in a closet with D. BUT WITH ONLY THE HP/DM PAIRING LISTED IN THE HEADERS.

(And if you did not understand any of that last paragraph, then you would probably not be so interested in the *Magic University* series in the first place.)

I'll be reading Book 3, as the ending here indicates that the series is going in a more plotty and less vanilla direction, but I'm not holding my breath.

** I received a Review Copy of this book via NetGalley **
(2015 Riverdale Avenue edition)

Blooded Bay says

The second book in Cecilia Tan's Magic University series delves deeper into the world of Veritas, the secret university that lies within Harvard. The best simple summary for this book is just one word: more. More sex, more magic, more relationships, more friendship, more everything. If there was anything you liked about the first book, *The Siren and the Sword*, then I highly recommend you revisit with Kyle and his friends in this second installment.

I had a few minor complaints about *Siren & Sword*: that there wasn't much body diversity, relationship diversity, and the magic was so minor. All of those are vastly improved in *The Tower and the Tears*, to such a degree that I'm going to have to scramble to criticise anything at all!

Perhaps my eyes glossed over the initial description of Marjory in *Siren & Sword*, but it's definitely clear in *Tower & Tears* that she's a woman of size. Not only that, but she's one of two women of size that are Kyle's sex partners! What a thrill, not only to have my body type appear, but shown as sexy, intelligent, powerful beings!

I was disappointed in the passivity of Kyle's first girlfriend, but none of his partners in *Tower & Tears* are meek. They're hungry women with sexual appetites to match and even outstrip Kyle's, and he works his magic through his cock! I particularly like the fiery Irish young woman Ciara, a fellow Esoteric Studies student. Their sex was often focused on mastering new sex magic techniques, but trust me, those were extremely yummy scenes. How I wish my college homework had been similar!

Relationship diversity was plentiful, as Kyle and his friends make a natural transition into a polyamorous quad. It was so skillfully written, that I couldn't help but wallow in gentle memories of my own first poly quad, my boyfriend and our best friends naturally dissolving the boundaries between friends and lovers. Easy as falling into bed. The complicated stuff comes later.

There's more magic in this book, and it's bigger and better. Maybe that's intentional, that in the first book Kyle was such a newbie to the magical world that he kept assuming magic all around him was just mundane actions. Like, say, jumping a subway gate instead of working a little magic to fool the machine. This time around, I'm ready to sign up for Esoteric Studies, to use sex for mind reading and emotional healing and so much more. I'm disappointed at the choice Kyle makes at the very end, but I suspect it's not as final as it sounded.

I can't be specific without mentioning spoilers, but my fellow bisexuals will be thrilled to see that Kyle definitely acts on more of his inclinations in this book. His partner is one I'd suspected in the first book was set up as a "so much hate, it must be love" type, but the circumstances of their getting together and what happens afterwards are not anything I could have possibly predicted.

This is an excellent book, and I can't wait to see the reissue of the next one! I bet it's going to have another gorgeous cover. I'm sure I'll enjoy reading it just as much as these first two.
