

DEEP AS THE SKY, RED AS THE SEA

Rita Chang-Eppig



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A roaring adventure novel with a deep, mystical center, this historical debut brings alive the story of Shek Yeung, the real-life 19th century Chinese pirate queen who ruled the South China sea with her wits and her sword.

When Shek Yeung watches her husband, the feared pirate Cheng Yat, die at the hands of the Portuguese, she knows she must act swiftly or perish herself. Kidnapped from her father's fishing boat as a child and sold into a life of prostitution, Shek Yeung is familiar with the price of softness — grief and vulnerability only bring trouble. So instead of mourning her husband, Shek Yeung immediately marries his second-in-command, who expects her to bear a son and heir. As she fights for control over the army she knows she was born to lead, a larger threat to the alliance of pirates looms. Shek Yeung must use her wiles and her sharp mind to prevail, as she navigates new motherhood, her devotion to the ocean goddess Ma-zou, a series of questionable moral decisions, and a world that seems determined to cast her aside.

Carrying the magic and splendor of legend brought to life, DEEP AS THE SKY, RED AS THE SEA combines the feminist echoes of Lauren Groff's *Matrix* with the cultural ingenuity of Lisa See's *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*. With salt and grit, blood and sweat, this novel transports readers back to Qing dynasty China and into the life of a protagonist who refuses to be underestimated: a woman who leads with the courage and ruthlessness of our darkest and most beloved heroes.

Category: historical fiction debut

Rita Chang-Eppig received her MFA in fiction from NYU. Her stories have appeared in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *Conjunctions*, *Clarkesworld*, *The Rumpus*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Best American Short Stories 2021*, and elsewhere. She has received fellowships from the Rona Jaffe Foundation/Vermont Studio Center and more, and was the winner of Virginia Quarterly Review's 2021 Emily Clark Balch Prize for Fiction.