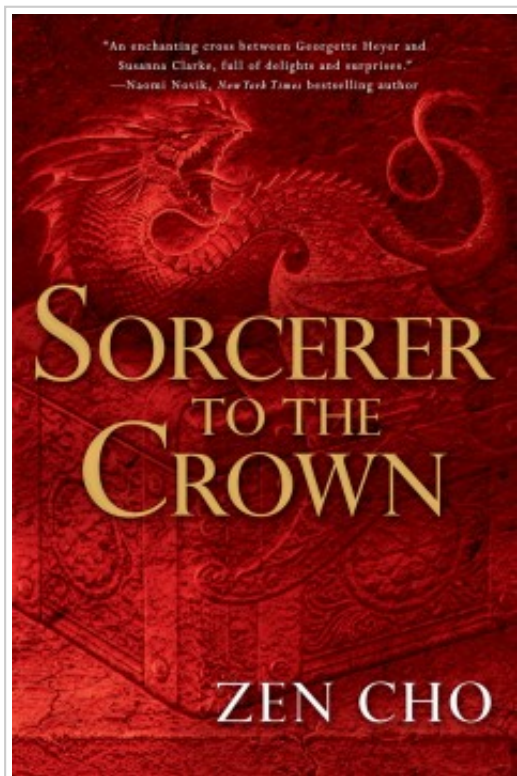


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Sorcerer to the Crown

by Zen Cho

Price: \$26.95(Hardcover)

Published: September 01, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: In this sparkling debut, magic and mayhem clash with the British elite...

The Royal Society of Unnatural Philosophers, one of the most respected organizations throughout all of England, has long been tasked with maintaining magic within His Majesty's lands. But lately, the once proper institute has fallen into disgrace, naming an altogether unsuitable gentleman—a freed slave who doesn't even have a familiar—as their Sorcerer Royal, and allowing England's once profuse stores of magic to slowly bleed dry. At least they haven't stooped so low as to allow women to practice what is obviously a man's profession...

At his wit's end, Zacharias Wythe, Sorcerer Royal of the Unnatural Philosophers and eminently proficient magician, ventures to the border of Fairyland to discover why England's magical stocks are drying up. But when his adventure brings him...

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What We Say

No, this isn't the second coming of Jonathan Strange. Nor is it the thin stuff that often passes for humor in fantasy. Instead, it's an original blend of fantasy, wit and yes romance. Comparisons to the marvelously entertaining Georgette Heyer aren't completely earned (few can match Heyer's aplomb and plotting) but they're certainly in the right ballpark. More interestingly is the social awareness that subtly raises this entertainment considerably. Zacharias Wythe is the Sorcerer Royal of the Royal Society of Unnatural Philosophers, much to the disapproval of seemingly everyone. Zacharias is a former slave and having a working class man as their leader is almost as distressing to most magical men of England as having a black man. (Almost.) Author Zen Cho soon raises the stakes: the fairy kingdom is blocking the flow of magic into England, France is poised to take advantage, numerous men are plotting to remove Zacharias from office or kill him or both and if all that isn't enough Zacharias has the absurd idea that women (women!) should be trained in the magical arts rather than tamped down or punished if they don't. Of course, the woman he discovers that is bursting with talent would prove to be willful with all sorts of ideas of her own and beautiful to boot. And a commoner! Author Zen Cho has great fun with all the layers of silliness going on here, from grumpy old witches to dragons to plotting fairies. But the romance at its heart is nicely kept at a low simmer while the genuine complications from race and class and gender prove stimulating. And it's funny, something one rarely says about fantasy once you're past the age of 12. The humor is in fact the book's strongest suit, along with the fact that our heroine Prunella is wonderfully talented but sometimes willfully dumb (it's tiresome to have a protagonist who is more powerful, more beautiful AND smarter than everyone else). Scenes where the females bustle about and practically ignore the hapless men around them are especially rich. This is a good book and it's possible Cho could deepen her world and her plotting and make the next one even better. If you're a fan of fantasy AND romance, why you'd be foolish not to dive in. -- Michael Giltz

[Less](#)

What Others Say

“An enchanting cross between Georgette Heyer and Susanna Clarke, full of delights and surprises. Zen Cho unpins the edges of the canvas and throws them wide.”—Naomi Novik, New York Times bestselling author of the Temeraire novels

“A delightful and enchanting novel that uses sly wit and assured style to subvert expectations while it always, unflinchingly, entertains. I loved it!”—Kate Elliott, author of the Spiritwalker series

“A deliciously true tale of politics and power in a charming, cruel world—it demands and deserves to be read again and again. Cho has humor and flair to match Pratchett and Heyer plus her own marvelous style.”—Karen Lord, author of The Best of All Possible Worlds

“Inventive, dangerous, brilliant, unsettling, and adorable, all at the same time. It shatters as many rules as its characters do. Historical Britain will never be the same again, and I can't wait for the next book.”—Courtney Milan, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author

“Fast-paced and witty...Should appeal to fans of Mary Robinette Kowal and Gail Carriger.”—Elizabeth Bear, author of Steles of the Sky