



Kalyna the Soothsayer

Elijah Kinch Spector

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In Elijah Kinch Spector's brooding novel *Kalyna the Soothsayer*, the end of the world is coming.

Kalyna knows that her country is about to collapse into war and destruction, but she cannot flee. She is trapped in the service of the crown. The royals think that Kalyna has prophetic powers that could help to avert the coming catastrophe, but they're wrong: as a prophet, Kalyna is a fraud.

The daughter of a soothsayer, Kalyna did not inherit his gifts, though she pretended to possess them, too. Gifts, bribes, and marks kept gold in her pocket. She listened to her father's murmurings in dreams each night to discern his prophecies. From them, she learned that the world could end in three months' time.

Kalyna, though she wants to help the crown, also needs to find a way to save herself.

The story is told in an episodic fashion, and it stretches into a saga. Kalyna's strange new reality includes magical chefs, philosophical armies, and the immense Sunset Palace. She's guided through these features by Lenz, who is both her jailer and her main source of information. She and Lenz argue about possible methods of saving the kingdom, but Kalyna still yearns to escape.

The intricate worldbuilding includes intriguing court politics and nefarious plotting galore. Kalyna's situation is complicated and immersive, through to the book's dramatic conclusion, when it is revealed that human beings who seek power operate the cogs that underlie the complex situation. To prevail, they have to contend with Kalyna, though, who is both a witty and a determined heroine.

Kalyna the Soothsayer is a fabulous puzzle box of a fantasy novel in which knowing the future could obscure present realities.

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