



Resonance

Celine Kiernan

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What does it mean to be alive? What is it worth to stay alive?

Ireland, 1890: two ruthless immortals prowl the theatre district in search of food for their 'Angel'. Ancient, pitiless and caring for none but their own twisted family, they will stop at nothing to maintain their grip on life.

A seamstress, the young man who loves her and a penniless American magician soon find themselves imprisoned in a snow-bound country estate, the latest additions to the family's warped collection. Here, they are nothing but food, nothing but entertainment, and soon they will be nothing at all.

Far from their homes and fighting for survival, Tina, Joe and Harry will come to understand that far more is at stake than their lives.

A rich and provocative feat of the imagination from the creator of the Moorehawke Trilogy.

Resonance Details

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Author : Celine Kiernan

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From Reader Review Resonance for online ebook

Suze Lavender says

Tina is a seamstress and she works for the theater. Harry is an American magician who has been promised a great show, but when he arrives in the UK he doesn't have any work. Joe loves Tina and wants to marry her, but first he needs to save enough to be able to start his own business. Their paths cross with Cornelius and Vincent who are taking them to a large country estate. They are there to serve a purpose, they have to feed the angel. Vincent and Cornelius have lived for a long time because of this angel and it's their task to bring people it can feed from. Slowly the angel will get stronger again by using their light. Tina is a seer and she's able to make sense of the situation and this being. That makes her position more special, but also more difficult.

Joe, Harry and Tina can't leave the house. They have been captured together with an old actress and they are both food and entertainment. Everything in the house is strange and has a weird history. There are no seasons, as even though it's snowing, around the house it's warmer, there isn't any food and two evil children are there to make their lives even more miserable. They have to escape, but Cornelius and Vincent are strong. To be able to get away they have to make sense of the angel and understand what's going on and to make that succeed they have to get the help of the people who captured them...

Resonance isn't an easy read, it's very complex. I even had to reread the first chapters to make sense of them. When I let go of the feeling that I had to understand everything that would happen in the story it became easier to comprehend. I let the story lead me and I enjoyed the writing, the eerie setting and the original and twisted events. Resonance isn't a story that can be compared to anything else, it's unique and different. Celine Kiernan uses beautiful phrases and I love the way she writes. It's a joy to read her work. If you like heavy literature with a fantasy component you will love this book. The story is fantastic, everything that happens is bizarre and nothing is ever predictable. I let myself be swept away by this amazing book and think it's a terrific read.

Adele Broadbent says

This book was one of the strangest but most compelling stories I have ever read. Three characters from Victorian Ireland, Matina (Tina), Joseph (Joe) and Harry (a young Houdini), come together by chance. Harry has arrived to find the promised job as a magician's assistant gone after the theatre he was to work in has had a fire. Tina and Harry are kind to him and they become friends.

Two strange characters Vincent and Cornelius (Lord Wolcroft) are in Dublin, looking for performing artists for an extravaganza they want to put on at their estate miles away. But they have strange reasons for doing so.

When they meet Tina, they realise that she is not just a seamstress, but a seer. They take her to their estate for their own strange ends and Harry and Joe are with them.

But what they find at the huge estate belies belief. Who or what is the Bright Man locked in the dungeons? And what is the strange green light pulsing from the bottom of the estate's pond?

I loved the characterisation and setting in this novel. I loved the deliciously scary children and the power that

Vincent and Cornelius had over others. I wasn't a fan of the mysterious green ? in the pond, but could imagine something quite weird from the excellent writing.

Gothic Horror, love story, and mystery all rolled into one.

Lisa Redmond says

Celine Kiernan is a writer I simply cannot recommend enough, I love her writing so much that I am struggling to write this review but here goes. Firstly this book combines gothic, historical, fantasy and horror in a way that is completely unique. Secondly the two settings; a gothic mansion in the Irish countryside and the narrow streets of inner city 1890s Dublin are brilliantly realised, Kiernan's use of dialogue and wonderful , rich, descriptive prose are a real treat. Thirdly Kiernan really knows how to create amazing, unique and interesting characters.

If that wasn't enough to get you racing off to the shops to buy this book perhaps the plot will hook you. The story focuses on two groups of friends; Tina a seamstress in a Dublin theatre, who works for the aging diva Ursula Lyndon, her suitor Joe who works several jobs trying to raise money for a future with Tina and Harry a young American magician who has arrived in Dublin looking for work (Actually a young Harry Houdini). The three friends along with Ms Lyndon soon catch the attention of Vincent and Cornelius who have arrived at the theatre to audition players to perform at their country house. In reality Vincent and Cornelius live at Fargeal Manor and have lived there for centuries with Raquel and her children and an assortment of retainers and villagers. They have clung to life and their youthful looks by feeding from the light of an "angel" locked beneath the manor house but they and the angel are growing weak and what the men seek are performers who will feed the angel and sustain them. Tina, Joe and Harry soon realise that something is not right and set out to release the angel but have no idea of the consequences.

This is a dark tale asking deep questions about the existence of God and the meaning of life and friendship. It will intrigue fans and new readers alike and is a must if you are a fan of Dracula or The Picture of Dorian Grey. With this book Kiernan has absolutely become the Queen of Irish Gothic Fiction.

Kristy (Book Nerd Reviews) says

This review appears at Book Nerd Reviews.

Resonance is a book which had all the appeal – a pretty shiny cover, a historical fantasy set the beautiful surroundings of Dublin and an Irish country estate, with a touch of gothic mystery. It sounded mysterious and creepy and I was sure this book would appeal to all to me in a way that books just have not recently. Sadly however, it did not live up to my expectations.

Resonance follows Tina, a seamstress for a Dublin theatre, Joe, a young man of hardship who is trying to better his life and obtain Tina's affections, and Harry, a young American man who has just arrived in Ireland (for the record, this is Harry Houdini, which was an aspect I thought I would really enjoy). Through circumstance, these 3 young people become friends, and their friendship will take one wild ride. Both Tina and Joe have attracted the attention of Vincent and Cornelius, two mysterious and wealthy men who have

come to Ireland to audition acts for an upcoming production. These men soon become interested in Tina and Joe for unknown reasons, and although neither of them have any desire to become an act in their production, these men are powerful – and not only in the way only money can buy.

Soon, Tina, Joe, Harry and Ms Lyndon (she is used as a decoy to get Tina to go) find themselves at their very strange country estate. It is here that they meet the even stranger Raquel, and her very disturbed and frightening children.

And more importantly, it is here that Tina, Joe and Harry slowly start uncovering secrets held by their strange companions and the strange place they reside at. The trio discover that the inhabitants of the estate have lived at the country estate for centuries, remaining perfectly preserved due to the fact that their lives are being sustained by an angel that they have locked up beneath the manor. They have been “feeding” the angel for centuries at the cost of normal human lives. Our trio quickly come to the conclusion that the only way to escape certain death, is to release the angel – but will this cost them more than their freedom?

Whilst there were certain elements of this book that I liked, I found that it was just too drawn out. Although the world-building was good, I thought the character development took up too much of the beginning of the story, and then the characters fell a little flat towards the end. Not to mention that the character development took up a good portion of the first half of the book, which was way too long and this is where it started to lose my interest a little.

I loved the creepiness of this “family” of immortals. I liked the fact that they were “auditioning” people to feed their angel and I loved the totally bizarre relationship they all shared (really bizarre – but very well written).

The book starts to pick up after they arrive back at the estate, however this is where things start to get confusing. I think that the along with the slow start and the confusion that follows actually causes some disengagement. I found that I was either confused as to what was going on or my mind was venturing off.

This gothic historical fantasy has some fantastic world building, and I really enjoyed Kiernan’s prose. I especially respected the fact the author created a sense of the time period (including the descriptions of settings and the way the characters spoke considering the period, their social status and education levels) which is something that is often overlooked in historical fiction. However, sadly this book just took too long for me to feel sucked into this world.

Trish at Between My Lines says

OK, don’t all look at that 3 star rating and dismiss this as book not worthy of your time! Hear me out, this book is really good but I’m just not the best target audience for it.

First Line of Resonance by Celine Kiernan:

“For a moment, the Angel looked directly at him and Cornelius’ heart leapt with joy and dread.”

My Thoughts on Resonance by Celine Kiernan:

I enjoyed this book but I would have enjoyed it more if I were a bigger fan of gothic style fantasy books. In general Fantasy is not my favourite genre but I like to try different genres out and give them a chance to impress me. And there was a lot in this book to impress me and the things that were a fail are more to do with my issues with the genre in general rather than this book.

What I Liked about Resonance by Celine Kiernan:

- The younger characters are great. I really enjoyed the interaction and the personalities of the three main YA characters - Tina (a seamstress in the theatre), Joe (an orphan cab driver and Tina's childhood sweetheart) and Harry (a magician who has travelled from America to work in the theatre). They came to life for me and I loved the bond that grew between them, it felt tender and touching. Especially for Joe as he badly needs the love and support that they give him.
- The setting in Dublin from the dirty poverty-sticken tenements to the theatre was gripping and I was kind of sad when the location shifted from here during the book. The other location is an isolated Estate House in the countryside.
- I liked the way the book linked in factual history (such as the Irish Famine) with the storyline as it felt clever and original.

I really cared about Tina, Joe and Harry and the tense atmosphere of the book made my heart pound for them over and over.

- The EVIL children were so well done, they freaked me out! They had no boundaries and no empathy and their uncontrolled wickedness was bloodcurdling.
- I ADORED this quote and found myself pondering over it quite a lot after reading it:

“Fiction is the human mind exploring all the possibilities of what is and what might be Luke. Every progress ever achieved began as fiction, in one form or another.”

What I didn't like so much about Resonance by Celine Kiernan:

- I thought it was confusing and muddled at times. The plot did lose me and I had to check back a few times with previous chapters to remind myself of facts. This is something that happens me with a LOT of fantasy books though not just this one.
- The book was fast paced but at the same time I felt I wanted to discover things sooner.
- I didn't really identify with the older characters that much and was less interested in the chapters from their pov. Also there was a lot of flashbacks and character povs which probably didn't help with my first issue above.

Overall though this was an entertaining read that felt very original and I loved the gothic setting. The dark feel of the book intrigued me and made me work through my confusion and by the end of it, I felt well rewarded for my efforts.

[rating-report]

Who should read Resonance by Celine Kiernan?

I'd recommend to fans of dark YA fantasy/paranormal books.

Thanks to The O'Brien Press for giving me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest unbiased review.

Alicia Papp says

What a fascinating story! I must admit when I first picked this book up I was expecting your standard vampire/paranormal tale. What I did get was a fresh and rather unique cross between a Gothic novel populated with Dickensian characters set in a type of malevolent Brigadoon; historical fiction meets paranormal meets sci-fi.... The young characters are well fleshed out and very likeable; you desperately feel for them in their plight (and they make a glorious change from angst teenagers with their first world problems). The mood is evocative, the settings shift from the poverty stricken streets of 1890's Dublin to an isolated, claustrophobic estate in the country, to pirate ships on the high seas. The tale is told in a series of flashbacks and shifts in character perspective which allows the mystery to slowly unfold, and gives you a wonderful insight into the personalities of all of the protagonists. And what truly wonderful use of language, interesting musings on how the powerful treat those beneath them, and showing immortality for what is probably actually would be ; a sad, dust laden nightmare of loneliness and despair. Oh and don't forget the evil children whose concept of 'fun' sent shivers down my spine - a truly awful pair. But this story is not all gloom and doom - there are moments of humour, true love, friendship and hope. An absolutely refreshing take on a genre that is sometimes bloated with clichés, stereotypes and caricatures. Four and a half stars.

Ruth Long says

I loved this book. It is not an easy read and it is not a quick read. It is a book to be savoured and enjoyed slowly. I had to stop reading it because I had too much on and start again when I was on holidays so I could really take my time with it. Dark and delicious, unnerving and unexpected. Celine is a wonderful writer and I can't wait for the next book.

Rebecca says

I literally read the last 300 pages in a single feverish sitting. "Resonance" is this sprawling, magnificent book set in 19th century Ireland with so very many good things in it: un-dumbed down period dialogue, bursts of Hebrew and Yiddish, theatre people, LGBT immortals, people of diverse ethnicities, fully sick moments of genuine paranormal woo-woo craziness, false magic, real magic, love, longing and loss. It was like an energising tonic, reading this.

Maureen Walshe says

NO SPOILERS :)

This book is a roller coaster of the unexpected. As with all Kiernans books, the world is created so vividly (but not at all in a rambling way!) that you can't help but get sucked in. The characters are wonderfully developed and easy to love, hate, sympathise with, laugh with and laugh at, and follow right to the end! The story sucks you in from the get go. Though you are never quite sure what is happening, the mystery and intrigue of it keeps you yearning for more! You find yourself craving the answer to the riddles presented with each page, and when you think you've figured it out, the story is turned on its head again! Really enjoyed this book. Wolfed it down. As I said before, expect to not know what to expect! Can't wait for the

next Kiernan installment! :D

Karina says

Atmospheric and intriguing, the tale begins in Dublin - tenements, back alleys, docks and theatre - before travelling to a decaying big house in the Irish countryside. Immortal beings stalk the entertainers of the city in search of prey in a clever twist on vampirism; it is not the lust for blood that fuels the hunt, but rather the need to feed on spectacle and emotions...

I loved the characters of Tina and Joe, especially against the background of tenement and theatrical life in Dublin - I would have loved to have spent more time experiencing that lively, filthy world. Also, Harry Houdini ftw!

When the scene changes to the big house, we gradually begin to discover the secrets locked within, secrets vital to the continued existence of Cornelius, Vincent and Raquel, the immortals that call it home.

It's very difficult to describe this unusual book without giving away important plot points - Gothick, horror, science fiction mingled with gritty realism, all suffused with passion and belief in the power of love. A compelling story.

Sue says

I was absolutely captivated by this unique gothic horror story. Set in Ireland in 1890 the story is set in the back-streets of Dublin and a mysterious mansion in the country-side, with strange supernatural entities and a history of unbelievable atrocities. Our young heroes, Tina, a feisty seamstress, her love interest, Joe and a very young Harry Houdini are whisked away from their lives by Cornelius and Vincent, two immortals intent on evil purposes. I am now intrigued to read more from Celine Kiernan and I highly recommend this book for readers who would enjoy an atmospheric gothic horror story full of intrigue and suspense.

Shaheen says

Resonance is a smorgasbord of delights, offering gothic fantasy, historical fiction, and horror in one 450 page novel that will readers spellbound. It certainly gripped me – I read it one sitting on a Sunday afternoon.

I admittedly spent most of that afternoon in a state of confusion – *Resonance* is one of those books where you have no clear idea about what's going on until 100 pages from the end – but I didn't care because I was having so much fun. The 19th century gothic setting, the wonderful characters, and the sheer mystery of it all had me enthralled.

The three main protagonists – Tina, a seamstress, Joe, a stable boy, and Harry, an American magician – breathe life into this story. I loved getting to know them, loved witnessing them navigate the creepy and mysterious world they suddenly found themselves in, loved watching them grow. I thought Cornelius and Vincent, the two immortals who brought them into this world, were darkly thrilling and unexpectedly likeable, but I wanted to know about Raquel. I feel that I only got to know her through the biased eyes of the other characters, and I think she had one of the most interesting stories of the cast.

This novel is mostly set on an isolated country-side estate in Ireland, but the action begins in the streets of

Dublin, where the three protagonists meet. Both are gorgeously and vividly realised, and I had no trouble imagining the mansion and its surrounds.

Resonance is a fast-paced story but it sometimes feels slow because readers are kept clueless for so long (I tend to associate pace with revelations/plot reveals). Kiernan spends a lot of time meticulously building up the mystery and leaving us clues, which I liked but there will be readers who get fed up of it.

I really enjoyed *Resonance*. I can't talk a lot about it because it's essential that readers go into it blind. Take my word for it though – it's worth it. I've waited a long time to read something by the author of the *Moorehawke Trilogy*, and *Resonance* did not disappoint!

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher for review.
You can read more of my reviews at **Speculating on SpecFic**.

Faith says

Original review posted on my blog here

My Rating

The announcement of Kiernan's new book literally sent me flailing. I loved her *Moorehawke Trilogy*, its world-building and its intricate characters that when I heard of *Resonance* I was beyond happy.

Unfortunately, I was slightly let down.

Despite my 'mind blowing' expectations, I still really enjoyed this book. I blame my hectic couple of weeks for dragging me away from really getting into this book but I still managed to get through it.

The idea surrounding this book I must admit was incredibly original and something only a creative mind like Kiernan could come up with. A bizarre, kind of creepy immortal family lock up their 'angel' for reasons that I will not spoil. This family travels to a theatre group to audition people for their show when in reality they are looking for people to entertain and feed their angel. This was quite a creepy undergoing and I felt that this was the first part of the book. The second part was Tina, Joe and Harry actually arriving to the creepy family's house and all the events surrounding that. The first part in my opinion was very dragged along. It could've been hurried up a bit more though it did have the role of building up Tina, Harry and Joe as characters but I did still find myself slightly bored through some parts. The second part was when things started to pick up but as they began to pick, so did my confusion. I wasn't overly confused but I was enough to lose a bit of my bearings.

As always, Kiernan's characters are each are very unique from each other and from other YA books. Because they're all from the 19th century, I did appreciate the fact that Kiernan did her best to make sure all the characters acted and sounded like the time they were from and also their upbringing. There are so many times in YA historical fiction where they don't sound historically accurate and even though there is that 'fiction' element in this genre, it still annoys me!

Kiernan's writing is still superb with her intricate choice of words. While the pacing was quite slow in the first half, her writing style was still beautiful. I mostly granted this book a 3.5 stars because of my confusion, the slow pacing at the beginning and the fact that felt very detached while reading this book. **Despite that, I would still recommend Kiernan's books to EVERYONE!!!!** The Moorehawk trilogy is **EXCELLENT**. The first book is The Poison Throne and it's an amazing book!

Disperse and pick it up!

Leonie says

From what I can gather the primary grumble with this book is a perceived lack of focus on the story of the "angel" itself. Which is not to dismiss the argument, however try to view the prism from a slightly different angle.

I may be projecting my own interpretation but I don't really see the story of the "angel" as the primary goal here. When you read the blurb it's actually nothing to do with the being itself, more so the people and their interactions with one another and whether that is co-dependency, poisonous, or positive - and why.

Try not to approach it so much from a storyboard beginning, middle, and end, such as a series of insights into what motivates people, their intentions, and how honest they can be with themselves, how true they are to who they are and what that means for them.

TL;DR: It's like Alien, the original one, you have no idea what is going on or why but it's a compelling insight into humanity and keeps you intrigued.

Bincabee says

From the reviews I have read, people seemed to think that the beginning was too drawn out. I actually enjoyed it. And while I like a bit of mystery I really wanted to know what exactly the go was with the creepy children. And poor Matthew!

Usually, I rejoice when I find a book in this genre that is stand-alone, but for once I was thinking I could have done with more, on ALL the characters. To me the ending, while had emotional heft, was rushed.
