

THE DREAM MESSENGER

忘川郵政

An unemployed man stumbles into a job as a dream messenger, helping those who have died tell someone the thoughts they left unsaid in life and let go of their regrets. In the process, he discovers the secret of his own birth.

Yang Tzu-Chi was orphaned at an early age when his mother died. Though he is honest and kind, his life is a mess: not only has he just been fired, but he is beaten up, left unconscious, and taken to the hospital after a strange man lectures him. Later, Tzu-Chi receives several mysterious letters about a new job with the Oblivion Letter Service. He dismisses these as a prank until the strange man shows up in a dream and tells him to report for work, or else!

The Oblivion Letter Service turns out to be a mail service that bridges the gap between life and death. Its “dream messengers” write and deliver letters on behalf of anyone recently deceased whose regrets weigh on their hearts. The messenger summarizes the person’s thoughts on dream letter paper, seals the letter with a small piece of the person’s soul, and delivers the letter by dream. Tzu-Chi has no choice but to accept a job no mortal has ever done.

In his new position, he meets clients of every description: an older man worried about his reputation after falling out with his sworn brothers; a mother lacking the courage to face her son; an entrepreneur who thought his biological mother had abandoned him.... Tzu-Chi’s longing to see his own long-dead mother leads him to search for her. He also finds himself drawn into a political struggle between gods. Who, he wonders, gave him this job? Where is his mother’s soul? Does some bigger conspiracy lurk unseen?

X. Y. Chou makes superb use of structure, tugging on readers’ heartstrings with this blend of fantasy, Taiwanese folk beliefs, and dreams. In a story that plumbs the depths of love, longing, and regret, she probes the boundaries between good and evil, allowing her



Category: Commercial Fiction

Publisher: Cite Original

Date: 9/2023

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Pages: 336

Length: 152,982 characters

(approx. 99,400 words in English)

protagonist to overcome self-doubt and discover himself and his own worth in the process.

X. Y. Chou 周小洮

X. Y. Chou is a gifted writer of fantasy and adventure novels. Her latest work won first prize in the fantasy category of the 2023 KadoKado Novel Award.