

# Response to the tiger's wife by tea obreht



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Response to " The Tiger's Wife" by Tea Obreht The Tiger's Wife is the story of Natalia Stefanovic's, a young pediatrician (Schillinger who traveled to render medical mission to the orphans at a monastery in an unnamed land clearly modeled after the former Yugoslavia (Al-Shawaf 1). As she performed her mission in the monastery, she found out a group of ragged people who were digging, looking for the corpse of relatives who were abandoned 12 year ago during the war (Charles 1.). When Natalia asked the diggers what they will do with the recovered cadavers, the men answered that they planned to give these relatives a decent burial, hoping to end a curse in their village causing the illness. Upon learning their situation, she remembered her recently deceased grandfather and had a brief look of her life when " there is war" in her hometown, the Balkan City. Natalia recalled that like any other little girl, she also loved and grew up listening to her grandfather's stories. She remembered the two stories of her grandfather with memorable mythical characters: the tiger's wife and the deathless man. The tiger's wife is the story of a lonely deaf and mute woman, who lived in an isolated mountain village. She was married to an abusive butcher, where in she always suffered beating. The woman was named by the villagers " the tiger's wife" because of their malicious thinking. The woman's affection and too much kindness to the tiger that escaped in the zoo during the war, had been maliciously mistaken by the villagers for something indecent. They thought the woman married the tiger. This rumor had led the villagers to plan for the killings of the tiger. However, as Natalia narrated, they were saved and protected by her grandfather. The story of the deathless man was based from the story of Natalia's grandfather, who was a Christian married to a Muslim from Sarobor. He met and had a chat with the deathless man over dinner in a deserted

restaurant in a Muslim city of Sarabor. Deathless man is the nephew of Death himself, who came to the world of living not to heal but instead sent to take the souls of the dead to the hell. In Natalia's narration, she claimed that the two stories explain everything necessary to understand her grandfather. However, it was contradicted by Charles who believed that the relationship of Natalia's grandfather to these mythical characters will only result to more confusion to the readers. Al-Shawaf, Charles and Schilliger negatively commented on the novel of Tea Obreht and said they were expecting that the novel was about and focused on the tragic and brutal Balkan's bloody war. However they were disappointed because not even one scene that depicted the violence and sufferings of the people during the war was included. Even the place where the story happened was not exactly told. Schillinger expected the massacres at Brcko and Srebrenica, the bombing of bread lines in Sarajevo, and the destruction of Mostar's 400-year-old bridge during the 1990's wars in the former Yugoslavia. Instead, the novel revolves on the mythical and lyrical stories of Natalia's grandfather. Schillinger even told that the novel " is more remarkable for being the product not of observation but of imagination," (2). As Charles mentioned, the presence of Natalia in the novel serves only as the novel's skeleton and the " meat" of the book is supplied by the lyrical stories of Natalia's grandfather. Al-Shawaf said that the novel is the " uncategorized - and flawed - work of an overly-exuberant young writer. " This is a novel in name only, for it comprises an array of widely different tales held together by the flimsiest of conceits, that of the narrator recalling the eventful life and times of her late grandfather." The critics also contend that the book could have been entertaining if the author developed the constituent elements as stand-alone stories. I believe

that the book was probably written for children or young readers and had been disappointingly left uncategorized that it fell on the wrong hands.

Reference: Al-Shawaf, R., Barnes & Novel Review. "The Tiger's Wife": A much-hyped debut novel enthralls, exasperates" Online Book Review, www.salon.com. Salon Media Group Inc., Web. 14 March 2011. Charles, R. "Book review: 'The Tiger's Wife' by Tea Obreht, Online Book review, www.washingtonpost.com. The Washington Post, Web. 8 March 2011 Schillinger, Liesl. "A Mythic Novel of the Balkan Wars." Online Sunday Book Review www.nytimes.com. The New York Times. 11 March 2011.