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Bound



Synopsis

YOUNG XING XING IS BOUND. Bound to her late father's second wife and daughter. Bound to a life of servitude as a young girl in ancient China, where a woman is valued less than livestock. Bound to be alone, with no parents to arrange for a suitable husband. Xing Xing spends her days taking care of her half sister, Wei Ping, who cannot walk because of her foot bindings, the painful tradition for girls who are fit to be married. Even so, Xing Xing is content to practice her gift for poetry and calligraphy, and to dream of a life unbound by the laws of family and society. But all of this is about to change as Stepmother, who has spent nearly all of the family's money, grows desperate to find a husband for Wei Ping. Xing Xing soon realizes that this greed and desperation may threaten not only her memories of the past, but also her dreams for the future.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800 (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 192 pages

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Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.6 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (55 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #159,228 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Asia #172 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Fairy Tales & Folklore > Adaptations #456 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

This is not your familiar, comfortable Cinderella story. There are no magic wands or pumpkin coaches, and happily ever after happens only in, well, fairy tales. Real life offers few of these sugar spun fantasies, particularly for three unsupported women in a Ming dynasty Chinese village. Fourteen year old Xing Xing, her stepmother, and her half-sister Wei Ping are each bound: socially, ideologically, and financially. The physical, crippling binding of Wei Ping's feet is a metaphor for an

encompassing system of patriarchal privilege. But in another sense of the word, to be bound is also to be heading towards something-- not so much a fate, as a rare and precious choice of fates. That freedom of choice is the greatest of presents from Xing Xing's dead mother. She may (or may not) be incarnated as a giant white and red carp, in a pond near the potter's cave in which the three women continue to live with increasing poverty after the death of Xing Xing's father. The orphaned Xing Xing lives on her stepmother's charity, such as it is, as a virtual slave. Life isn't all bad, of course. Xing Xing finds joy in writing calligraphy and poetry into the sky, in visiting the beautiful carp, in the beauty of a painted pottery shard, and in the green dress and very special pair of slippers her mother secretly left behind for her. These four women-- Xing Xing, her dead mother, Stepmother, and Wei Ping-- and their relationships to each other are at the heart of the story. Napoli redraws Stepmother as an understandable, if not likable, figure who behaves as she does for very good reasons: ideology, jealousy, and an anxiety for Wei Ping's and her own wellbeing, for which she is willing to sacrifice Xing Xing's.

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