

Book Review: Chinese Cinderella – The Secret Story of an Unwanted Daughter

“Could that really happen? Is this really true?”

That was the first question that came up in my mind after I had read the “Chinese Cinderella: The Secret Story of an Unwanted Daughter”. I simply could not believe how cruel Adeline’s family had treated her, how they simply left her alone, unwanted, lonely, unloved as if she was just some piece of rubbish. I had thought that “Chinese Cinderella is a true and moving account of Adeline’s childhood...” as mentioned in the blurb might have been exaggerated a lot. I couldn’t believe how Adeline’s family always picked on her, tricked her, laughed at her...it all seemed untrue, something the author made up. I read the book again and again, read about how Adeline’s family just simply forgot about her, about how they always had to make her unhappy, about how she was always punished, even if she did nothing wrong. Could anyone treat his or her family member like that? The book was so sensational and moving that it really seemed that the author had actually been through all these terrible things. It was as if everything was *true*. You actually share the same feeling as the characters feel as you read the book, cry when Adeline got beaten, feel cheerful when she was with her friends, feel safe and loved when she was with Aunt Baba, feel happy when someone cared about her and frightened when Niang, Adeline’s stepmother, was angry. However, on the other side, I just didn’t believe the cruelty of Niang and Adeline’s siblings. Was the author’s stepmother that evil? Would anyone blame their siblings for something they never have done and never forgive them? Or did the author just exaggerate everything? After reading the book many times, I believe that the story was true and it did happen.

“It’s so sad, they could have been such a happy, joyful family...”

Adeline wasn’t the only character I cried for. I also cried for YeYe, Nai Nai, Aunt Baba, Father and Adeline’s brothers and sisters. If it were not because of Niang, they would not have such a terrible life. They could have been such a lovely family, a nice father, happy children and lovely grandparents. If only their mother had not died, if only Niang didn’t have the power to control everything, they would have been a wonderful family, caring and loving each other. They would have freedom instead of having their life controlled by the evil stepmother. The children would have all the love they all wanted so badly instead of being deserted because their stepsiblings were “much more precious”. Aunt Baba would be able to live her life cheerfully, instead of having to hope that one day, Niang’s power would come to

an end. It was so sad, Ye Ye had to watch his daughter-in-law taking away all the freedom and hurting his grandchildren.

“It’s awful to see how the kind people have to be so unfortunate and the mean people get what they want.”

I realized, after reading the book, that we are very lucky. We have a loving family that care for and love us. Maybe your parents always tell you off or maybe your siblings always annoy you, but whatever happens, you always know they love you no matter what. Some people, like Adeline, aren’t as lucky. While the other children get letters from their families and have visitors every Sunday, Adeline never did. Her family didn’t care for her, didn’t love her and didn’t want her. They probably even forgot about her! Maybe we don’t always get what we want, don’t always get to do what we want to do, but at least, we have a family that love us and at least they do not do something to show that only some members of the family are important and that only some have special privileges. At least our families do not take away all our freedom. At least they give us enough clothes, food, etc. Our loving families are what make us very lucky and bring us joy for which we have to treasure the most.

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