



The Crystal Ribbon

Celeste Lim

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In the village of Huanan, in medieval China, the deity that rules is the Great Huli Jing. Though twelve-year-old Li Jing's name is a different character entirely from the Huli Jing, the sound is close enough to provide constant teasing-but maybe is also a source of greater destiny and power. Jing's life isn't easy. Her father is a poor tea farmer, and her family has come to the conclusion that in order for everyone to survive, Jing must be sacrificed for the common good. She is sold as a bride to the Koh family, where she will be the wife and nursemaid to their three-year-old son, Ju'nan. It's not fair, and Jing feels this bitterly, especially when she is treated poorly by the Koh's, and sold yet again into a worse situation that leads Jing to believe her only option is to run away, and find home again. With the help of a spider who weaves Jing a means to escape, and a nightingale who helps her find her way, Jing embarks on a quest back to Huanan--and to herself.

The Crystal Ribbon Details

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Author : Celeste Lim

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From Reader Review The Crystal Ribbon for online ebook

Anne says

Li Jing is often teased because her name is so close to that of the guardian spirit of her village: Huli Jing. When she talks to the oracle/revered wise woman of her village, however, she is assured that her name is a good, strong name and that her fate is entwined with that of Huli Jing. This is important because she will experience many things that will test her strength, courage, and character.

Strong female character. Loved the setting. Hard to believe this was a debut novel. Well-written and engaging throughout.

Elizabeth ?Smart Girls Love Trashy Books? says

-POTENTIAL SPOILERS-

The ironic thing is that this was recommended to me by somebody, and the day they recommended it to me was the very same day I got it from the library, lol. So I thought that was kinda funny.

I feel bad that I don't like this as much as other people did. I know it's a childrens' book, but I judge them as if they were any book, since my mind is very childish and I find I can get entertainment out of stuff like this far easier than other people. So I try not to be too harsh on childrens' books, but I wasn't really a huge fan of this.

I liked the general idea for the novel and why the author decided to write it. I liked learning about a lot of the Chinese customs and the mythology. Now, I don't know very much about Chinese culture, but I do know a lot about Japanese culture, which borrows a lot from Chinese culture. So I saw a lot of familiar deities and ideas pop up in this book, such as the idea of the jing.

I felt it moved a bit too fast, however. I had trouble really figuring out what year it was supposed to be and how old the protagonist was, as the book seemed to be structured in accordance to significant years in her life instead of a day-by-day thing as most book chapters are structured. It was also kinda boring and slow at the beginning, and I don't really tend to gravitate towards books that are slow at the beginning.

However, that was pretty much my major problem with the book, so that must be a sign of a decent book. A few people think the abuse in this book is too much for a middle-grade audience, but I feel like they can handle it as long as they're not extremely sensitive to it like I am.

I also think that cover is very beautiful and fits the story very well.

CW (The Quiet Pond) ? says

I HAVE BEEN TO THE SONG DYNASTY AND BACK.

What a wonderful and totally unexpected read! Ahhh my heart feels swollen with happiness.

- Interweaves fantasy/folklore with historical fiction! A really great book set in Imperial China and also

educational as well! (I learned so much!)

- Has a gorgeous protagonist by the name of Li Jing who is sold to another family to become the nursemaid and wife to a young boy of another family.
 - And it has SUCH an amazing adventure!! I feel like I've grown up with Li Jing and shared her experiences.
 - Only warning: there may be some parts that may be overwhelming for young kids or potentially triggering to others: (view spoiler).
 - Honestly, this book is such a blessing to MG.
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Laura (bbliophile) says

I finished an audiobook in 2 days? I've never done that before, so that says a lot about how much I loved it! I'm just a tad bit disappointed about the ending tho, because I wish things were wrapped up a bit better than they were. But the book is excellent and I'd really recommend it to anyone! Full review to come

Shenwei says

A lovely story of resilience, friendship, family, and magic. :)

Jess says

01/07/2017

Set in medieval China,

it tells the story of Jing, a girl sold by her family

to become the bride of a three-year-old husband,

and follows her escape and mystical journey,

in which her destiny is foretold by a golden fox spirit.

The book is slated for publication in 2017.

Neko Neha (BiblioNyan) says

? Story is about a young girl who faces severe obstacles that test her inner strength, spiritual fortitude, and belief in herself.

? Writing flows very easily, with straightforward prose.

? Utilises Chinese words and phrases common to the era (Song Dynasty), particularly where cultural customs are concerned, which added more depth and atmosphere; wish there was a glossary for referencing in the back of the book.

? Fantasy elements were miniscule in nature until the last one-third to one-quarter of the novel, which made it feel a bit rushed as we go from very little fantasy to one fantastical element right after another.

? The section involving the MCs in-laws felt like it was a tad bit longer than necessary, considering the other sections.

? All of the cultural customs and beliefs of medieval China explored in the novel were done so in a very accessible means and did a good job of reflecting the harsh social climate of the era, specifically for women.

? Regardless of having an 11-year-old main character, the contents and overall subject matter of the book is more suited for older, young adult readers of 14+.

? **TRIGGERS:** Scenes of child abuse (physical).

? 3.5 nightingales out of 5!

Heather says

Celeste Lim has taken us back to medieval China in *The Crystal Ribbon*. The Great God Huli Jing reigns and has a temple in Li Jing's hometown Huanan. Li Jing, is a twelve year old girl when we first meet her. She is the eldest child of a widower with three children. They live with their father, their grandmother and their Aunt. Jing is sold for the bride price of 5 silvers to the Guo family to be the bride of their 3 year old son (The same age as her youngest brother). Her role as wife is more that of a babysitter than a true wife.

When she meets her new family Jing realizes that she has been sold as a slave and not into a better life as her family believed. Her relationships with the family cook and her husband are the highlights of her situation. Her sisters-in-laws are very much like the evil step sister's in fairytales. When the Guo family falls on hard times Jing is sold to a house of courtesans and she tries to escape.

Although this is a work of fiction it is historically accurate and I am pleased that Celeste Lim took the time to get the history right. It is a very good book. It took me some time to listen to it because I had such a hard time with the selling off of Jing. Nancy At did a good job giving voice to the narration. I will recommend this book to most people.

Sunny says

I loved this book! Jing is such a lovingly rendered character. Though she faces incredible adversity, Jing's

sense of self carries her through. I loved the thoughtful way she considers and adapts to her fate and how she ultimately realizes her own power. There are many other things to love about this book but what will stick with me is the journey Jing takes to find her way back home to herself.

Steph says

This is on the mock Newberry list at my public library so I picked it up. It's just really not my cup of tea, but I can respect that it taught me more about medieval China and the story is well told. That's all I got.

Karen says

3.5

Abby Johnson says

A richly depicted historical fantasy novel about a young girl sold away from her family to abusive in-laws who helps and befriends jing, animal spirits.

I think that kids who like the journeying adventure of Where the Mountain Meets the Moon would like this book as well.

Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Li Jing has a difficult life in medieval China. Not only is her father a poor tea father, but she is made fun of for her name, which sounds similar to the name of the deity of her Huanan province, Huli Jing. When her parents can no longer afford to feed her, she is sold as a bride to the three year old son of a wealthy family. At first, she misses her own family and is bitter, but she takes care of her husband and finds that he is not a bad person. However, her new family falls on hard times, and she is sold to a brothel to become a geisha. She does not want to fall into this life, so manages to escape with the help of sympathetic acquaintances, and undergoes a magical journey to return to her home.

Strengths: This was well-researched and well-written. It reminded me a lot of the work of Pearl Buck in its depiction of family circumstances. After my older daughter was born, I read all of the Buck books at our public library, and The Crystal Ribbon's realistic portions were every bit as good as Buck's. The fantasy portions aptly draw in traditional folk and fairy tales in an appealing way. Fans of Grace Lin's books should definitely take a look at this.

Weaknesses: I'm not entirely sure I have readers for this. Debating.

What I really think: I can see this winning a lot of awards. I liked this one MUCH more than the very popular The Girl Who Drank the Moon.

Lindy MacLaine says

This author is sort of an Amy Tan for kids... sweeping story, strong characters.

Kami says

Amazing amazing amazing!
