



Spring Pearl: The Last Flower

Laurence Yep , Kazuhiko Sano (Illustrator)

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After the deaths of her parents, 12-year-old Chou Spring Pearl is taken into the home of her father's wealthy benefactor. Unlike most Cantonese girls, Spring Pearl has learned to read and write, but she must now learn a new skill-how to survive in Master Sung's hostile household. While the Second Opium War rages in the streets and harbor of Canton, Spring Pearl faces battles of her own.

Spring Pearl: The Last Flower Details

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From Reader Review Spring Pearl: The Last Flower for online ebook

Elizabeth says

I really liked this book! I've read some other "Girls of Many Lands" but this was the most recent one I've read. It's really cool some of the stuff she does in here. And I love certain parts in it! (But I can't tell you what those parts were without telling you the story! :P)

Sarah Crawford says

This story takes place in the China of 1857. A young girl's father dies, leaving her without a home. She is given a chance to move in with another family but, due to her rather low social status, she's not actually welcomed by the people who live at her new home.

It's also not a settled time in China's history, because the England had been at war with them once and was getting ready to go to war against China again. There's even politics on the local level which affect her new household.

Spring Pearl is a strong young female character in a time when strong young female characters were few and the weight of society helped to crush aspirations of young women of the time.

It is interesting to see the lives of what probably amounted to around a middle-class family of the time. The historical section at the end of the novel is also interesting

nimrodiel says

Twelve year old Chou Spring Pearl's life is in upheaval. Recently orphaned, she is taken in by the family of her scholarly father's friend and benefactor Master Sung. Raised in a bamboo hut located in the "rat's nest" poorer neighborhood of Canton Spring Pearl has been raised in an unorthodox manner for girls of her time. The daughter of a scholar who was known for his paintings she knows how to read, and write, and can speak some English, due to her father's business with British and other foreigners before they were pushed out of the city, but does not know how to sew, embroider, or play music. Spring Pearl's home was humble compared to the home of the Sung family and her foster sister's and the servants tease her about her humble beginnings.

However, during her time in the Sung household, Spring Pearl finds herself slowly being accepted as a part of the family. Her dedication to reviving the fading garden in the compound and her honor and loyalty to Master Sung show her to Mistress Sung in a more favorable light than that of the "leech" the mistress had thought of her when she first came into the household. Caught in a place where she isn't a servant, but also isn't one of the wealthy family, Spring Pearl fights to find her place in the household she has become a part of. When Master Sung is arrested for treason, and the French and British attack Canton again will Spring Pearl be able to use her talents and knowledge to help the family that took her in to stay safe and keep their

home during the turmoil?

Spring Pearl the Last Flower is one of the Girls of Many Lands book series produced by the American Girls company between 2002 and 2005. This line of books and dolls was aimed at older girls and spanned several countries and time periods. I picked this book up from bookmooch to add to the books I was leaving at a little free library near the school I student taught at last spring. However, I hung onto the book to read because I thought it looked interesting and was written by the author of Dragonwings and Dragon's Gate which I read years ago when my younger sister cleared out her book collection prior to a move and had enjoyed very much. I found this book to be an interesting one that takes place at the start of the second Opium War in China. Spring Pearl is a positive strong heroine and would be a good role model for any tween. The book itself might be a little hard at times to read, there is a lot of historical detail included, and Spring Pearl's behavior is not what a modern reader might expect.

I wish that this line of books and dolls hadn't been so short lived. I love the range of countries and ethnicities included in the series. While this book looks at China in the late 1850's other books introduced Tudor England (1592), 18th century France (Pre Revolution), Yup'ik Alaska (1890), and Partition era India (1939).

As an adult reader I found this book to be fairly easy and informative historical fiction reading. I think it would be great for middle school aged readers with an interest in historical fiction.

Joyce Xiu says

LIFE GOAL: Meet Doggy's granny.

The first parts aren't really interesting. Some scenes are overly detailed, but it certainly pays off at the end :)

Kate says

I read the book Spring Pearl The Last Flower by Laurence Yep. The story is about a girl named Spring Pearl who lives in Canton, China. When her parents die, she goes off to live with her father's scholar friend, Master Sung. Master Sung's family is very wealthy and Spring Pearl's was not. At first, it was hard for Spring Pearl to fit in with her new sisters, Miss Emerald, Miss Willow, and Miss Oriole. Her brother, Blessing was nicer to her and they played lots of games of cards. Master Sung was also kind to Spring Pearl, but Mistress Sung was very cruel and made Spring Pearl work very hard to earn her keep. Meanwhile, outside the house's walls, a war was going on in China against the Chinese and the Europeans. Master Sung got captured and thrown into jail. Spring Pearl and her partner and friend, Doggy, use their lower-class knowledge and skills to help and protect the Sung family. Finally, the family looks at Spring Pearl in a new light, respect her and value her ideas. I think that Spring Pearl and Matilda have a lot in common. They both have parents and family who treat them like they are worthless and not loved. Spring Pearl has the Sung family especially Mistress Sung. Matilda has her parents, Mr. and Mrs. wormwood. Also, they both don't let the meanness get to them and they stay strong and both prove that as Matilda says, "Even if you're little, you can do a lot." So even though Spring Pearl is not high born like the Sung's, she is just as good as them and is capable of doing big things.

Meadow Frisbie says

When Spring Pearl's parents die, she is taken under the wing of a relative. Learning to read and write is unusual for her to learn, but she must also learn to survive in her new hostile home.

The description of the cultures are beautiful. The best part of the book is the cultural aspect.

Rlygirl says

Colorful and well written adventure about a sweet Chinese girl who becomes orphaned. Spring Pearl goes to live with a family friend, and has to try to fit in with the well-off Sung family and their haughty daughters and overconfident teenage boy. Then trouble strikes and Spring Pearl uses her street sense and wit to show that she is brave, refined, and strong spirited. I enjoyed this read, especially how quickly the plot moved, and the beautiful descriptions/imagery of Chinese culture and fashion.

Dominique says

One of my mom's best friends gave this book series to me way back when I was probably 11, when she learned from my mom that I loved to read. As I began reading this one, it got a little boring to me - not as intriguing as *Leyla The Black Tulip* - so I stopped. Recently, years later, I picked it up again, and, while it was still just a *little* boring in some parts, I made it through. I'm kind of glad I didn't continue to read this at a younger age, because all this talk about the foreigners and war would've been more confusing then. It was a little weird reading their names translated in English, but I figure that was done so young readers wouldn't have trouble pronouncing their names in Chinese. It's a bit of a sad story, but there's plenty of hope spots in it, especially towards the end. I'm also glad that Spring Pearl and Doggy didn't happen to fall in love with each other, like I was kind of predicting would happen.

Tasia says

From a modern American viewpoint, our protagonist doesn't really act like a typical 12 year old, but perhaps for her circumstances and time period, it's a bit forgivable? (probably not)

Still, a strong leading female character who addresses her adversity head-on is a good role model for young readers.

Amanda says

A good story of how Spring Pearl, now an orphan, tries to survive in Master Sung's household and her changing world. The British and French are coming to invade China. She has to live through name calling, a new home, and the question of what to do all without her parents. Can she be strong? Will she be the flower that survives?

Diane Eskridge says

i enjoyed the characters and the details of this well told story, especially the main characters. it is a nice quick read, with a rich dose of cultural and historical education in spite of the fact that it's fiction.

Contra says

Personally, I owe a lot to Laurence Yep for opening my eyes to my own culture and identity, but this book irked me in the sense that character-wise, the girl was historically inaccurate. I understand that he was trying to make her likable, but women during that time just weren't allowed to act like that, no matter how much they wanted to.

Overall, a decent read, but I didn't like it as much as some of his other books.

Emme says

I loved it! I love the strong female character!

Rosemary Reads says

My 12 year old sister and I both enjoyed this book. Though fast paced and a quick read the author manages to still pack a lot of historical information in this book about the first opium war, the Taiping rebellion, as well as cultural practices like foot binding. Although it doesn't explore these issues in depth it left me wanting to learn more about life in 19th century China. It was refreshing to see a strong female character like Spring Pearl in a book meant for middle school age girls. As well as complex characters that aren't simply "good" or "bad". I would highly recommend this book for ages 5 and up.

Madeline Henricksen says

"Spring Pearl The Last Flower" is about a girl named Spring Pearl who lives in China. Her parents have died, so she must move from her home to her dad's friend's house. Spring Pearl tries to be kind and to do what she would normally do at her own home. It is hard for her, though, because there are soldiers that are trying to invade the house, and the whole city is fleeing. She also struggles to be accepted by the Mistress of the household and her daughters. I recommend this book to anyone that wants to read a good story.
