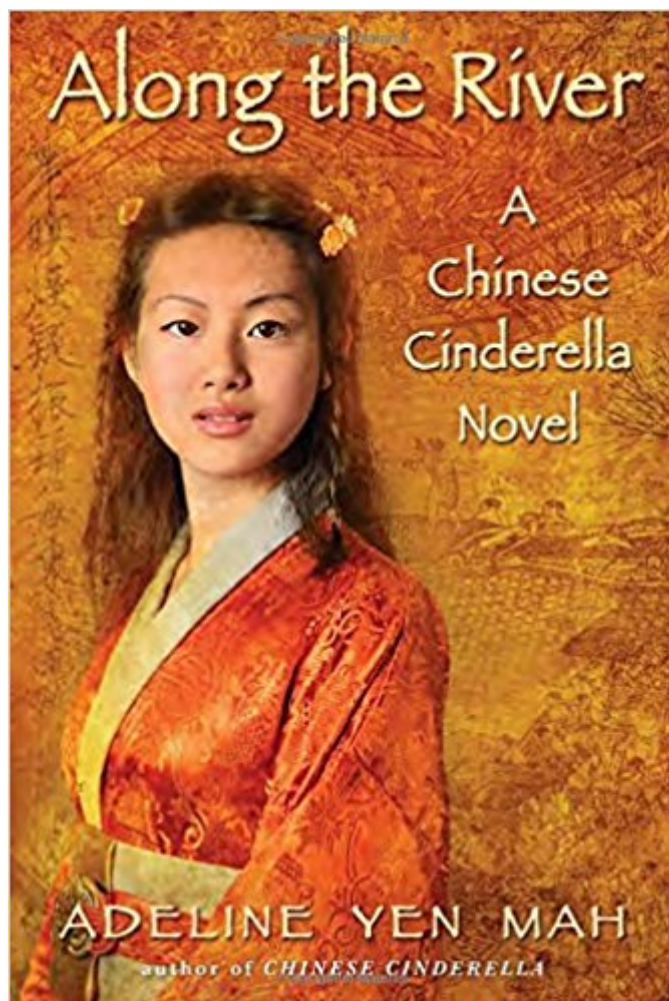


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Along The River: A Chinese Cinderella Novel



Synopsis

Bestselling Chinese American author Adeline Yen Mah weaves her authentic accounts of life in China into an absorbing novel about a Chinese girl and her vision of a previous life. After a fall, CC is whisked away to a hospital. As she drifts in and out of consciousness, she is haunted by vivid dreams that seem strange yet somehow familiar. Thus begins CC's emotional journey back to a privileged life lived eight hundred years ago during the Song dynasty. CC is the daughter of a wealthy and influential man, but she finds herself drawn to a poor orphan boy with a startling ability to capture the beauty of the natural world. As the relationship between these two young people deepens, the transforming power of art and romantic love comes into conflict with the immovable rules of Chinese society. This stunning fantasy adventure novel, inspired by China's most famous painting, *Along the River at the Qing Ming Festival*, tells the story of a friendship both tender and bold. CC's remarkable journey reminds readers that though time moves on, art and love endure. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Ember; Reprint edition (April 10, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 038573896X

ISBN-13: 978-0385738965

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #622,394 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Teens >

Historical Fiction > Asia #458 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #3774 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8 During World War II, 12-year-old CC is helping her grandmother rescue downed American pilots from behind enemy lines when she falls and ends up in a monthlong coma.

Hypnotherapy provides a superfluous frame for the main story. She learns that in 1091, she is 13-year-old Mei Lan, who, along with her older brother, forms a close friendship with Ah Zhao, an

orphaned slave possessing considerable artistic talent. As they grow up, the three friends explore the truth behind beauty and art, the prisons formed by societal expectations, and the lasting memories of one perfect day. In the story of their friendship, Mah provides a possible explanation for the provenance of several Song Dynasty paintings, reproductions of which appear in a full-color insert. Throughout the book, the story and characters are often lost in excessive historical detail and background. Further, explanations of culture and language are frequently and clumsily inserted into the dialogue. Despite this attention to historical detail, the characters are extremely modern, creating a confusing disconnect.

—Jennifer Rothschild, Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Oxon Hill, MD

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In this Chinese Cinderella novel, CC's odd conversations and references while recovering from an injury prompt Grandma Wu to take her to a physician who practices hypnosis. That's the tipping point that plunges CC from mid-twentieth-century China to the days of the Northern Song dynasty, where she lives as a privileged daughter in love with a gifted young orphan painter. Hard-edged stepmother Niang works to thwart the relationship as CC defies her family and fights for romance and adventure. The painter, Ah Zhao, is based on a famous court artist in this time-travel historical fantasy that sings the praises of art and love. Grades 5-9. --Anne O'Malley

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I bought this for my daughter. She's not old enough to read it on her own yet. I enjoyed the story & it's in my daughter's library when she is ready to read it herself.

CC is a young Chinese girl whose own misfortune landed her in a hospital in a coma. When she reawakens three weeks later, she feels and appears fine. That is, except for an unusual obsession with a painting called "Along the River at Qing Ming". A session with a hypnotherapist reveals the unthinkable. CC is possessed with the spirit of Zang Mei Lang, a young girl from the Song Dynasty, desperate to tell her story. CHINESE CINDERELLA's Adeline Yen Mah delights again in ALONG THE RIVER. Mah's gift of storytelling is evident on every page of this coming-of-age tale about two young girls linked across time, blending the beauty of the old ways with the promise of the future in ways that will both surprise and entertain you. This one is a real treat. Reviewed by: Monica Sheffo

Along the River was not at all what the subtitle A Chinese Cinderella Novel implied. Before the story even starts, there is a short prologue describing that Along the River is a young adult version of author Adeline Yen Mah's own life and the stories she made up as a child. This was really disappointing considering the book was purchased with the thought that it would be more like the fairy tale Cinderella (a lot of Western and Eastern folklore correlate) rather than based on a biography. Aside from the fairy tale mislead, the prose isn't that great either. Granted the book is easy to read and flows well for a younger age group, but the plot is slow moving and hard to get into. The characters are all likeable, but the story just seems to be an account of their daily lives. The time transition is also really strange. The book starts off in 1942 (CC's story) only to quickly switch to 1104 (Mei Lan's story). Which wouldn't be so bad, except that there are some very Western phrases that completely blow the ambiance of the 1104 setting, like go buy cages for the crickets "and keep the change". Although, Adeline Yen Mah certainly can make a cricket match (the bugs, not the sport) interestingly exciting. Overall, the book is recommended for a very young age group who is just becoming interested in the Chinese culture and wants an introductory look into Chinese life in two different eras. But for a more advanced reader and someone who already has that introductory knowledge, there are better Chinese books and writers who have more fully captured the ideals and concepts of early Chinese life (especially for girls).

I read this book for the under hyped readathon it had less than 300 goodreads ratings. It was great. It is historical fiction with Chinese culture, some words in Chinese characters (English translation in parenthesis), art, poetry, and reincarnation! Fantastic book!

Along The River Author: Adeline Yeh Mah Just imagine, it's during World War Two and your helping your grandma illegally transport American soldiers who are suppose to be in jail. Oh, and your around 12 or 13. Your grandma ship docks at a near by food market so you and your brother can go pick up some food. She warnings you to be careful, to not seem suspicious or you could ruin many lives including your own. When your almost done, you see this strange woman dressed in black. She seems very strange almost like shes waiting for you. Scared that she might know your dangerous secret, you walk away. Fast. She walks right behind you. Every step closer than the other. Freaking out, you run. At the moment, you don't care what people think about you as long as you get out of there. Jumping from building to building, you suddenly come to a dead end. Suddenly, you realize your falling over the edge but before you can catch yourself, its to late..... This is what happened to a Chinese girl named CC. After a two week coma, she wakes up finding herself strangely interested in

a painting named Along The River. Of course, this isn't strange considering she convinced her name is Mei Lan who lives in ancient China. She is forced to go to a therapist where she tells Mei Lan's story. When she is recovered, she finally gets to listen to what she thought was her life. Read this book to find out Mei Lan's story from having her step mother break her toes to trying to run away with a servant boy. I'm not gonna say this book wasn't good because honestly, I think the whole book was planned and written well. Mei Lan's story was actually the author's story rewritten. The reason I didn't like this book is because it just wasn't my type of book. But everyone is different so if you like adventurous, historical fiction and romance all combined in one, I would definitely check this book out!

Learned a great deal about those who stood by and those who took initiative to make a difference in wartime.

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