



Master Wu's Bride

Edward C. Patterson

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It is Chi Lin's wedding day - an exciting time for any bride, unless the groom has died before the ceremony and the ceremony, as per contract, must proceed. Chi Lin becomes the Fourth Wife - the ghost bride in the House of Wu, a respectable Ming Dynasty household. But to keep her honor, Chi Lin assumes her role under the stern command of her mother-in-law and the disdainful eye of the First Wife. Still, as Mistress Purple Sage, Chi Lin survives, managing to bring fresh breath into this ancient household. Women in Fourteenth Century China played a subservient role. Most accepted their lot and worked within a man's world, supporting their husbands, revering their fathers and elders, and assuring their children followed the same dauntless path. Still, within the narrow confines of a subservient life, there was always a place to leave a mark and make a difference for the future. Master Wu's Bride is a journey seen from a woman's point of view - a woman who held secrets and cultivated them to everyone's advantage. From yesterday's stale cabbage, Chi Lin manages to cultivate her world to bloom. Come take this journey with Mistress Purple Sage, the ghost bride. Come take this journey that many women in a host of cultures still take today in the shadow of inequality's quagmire.

Master Wu's Bride Details

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From Reader Review Master Wu's Bride for online ebook

Edna Rankine says

Entrancing

A book that is hard to put down. The description of the Chinese rural culture and practice woven through the life of woman.

Jeanne Johnston says

A sweet story but really depressing. Whoever conspired to strip women of equality has a lot to atone for, especially here. This is not a time or place I'm ever going to romanticize.

The book itself confused me, rife with editing errors, mostly wrong verb tenses. I couldn't tell if it was an attempt to sound Chinese or just sloppiness. Either way, it detracted from the flow of the story.

Alicia Sardinha says

Entertaining

An interesting story that gives you a picture of a past world and the importance of respect in a culture. A respect for elders and sacrifices for families.

Sally Parcels says

Excellent

I have read Pearl S. Buck and Amy Tan and this work was in a class of its own. While reading this book, I wondered if there was a ghost writer because it so captures the Chinese woman's soul.

Susan Alberghini says

Nice story

The name switching made it confusing at times. I found myself to be skipping over paragraphs because I was unsure of who the character was..

E.P. says

A historical novel set during the Ming Dynasty, "Master Wu's Bride" is the story of Chi Li, a young woman taken into the Wu household as a "ghost bride," the wife of someone who dies before the wedding can take place. As such she occupies a tenuous position somewhere between respected wife and lowly servant.

When we first meet Chi Li, she is unhappy about the marriage and acts in a fairly stereotypical "spunky heroine" fashion, meaning that she sulks and pouts and secretly does "boy" things; in this case, reading and writing. Since I consider this to be one of those tropes--and probably the most common of them--that are supposed to be empowering to women but in fact only serve to disempower them, I started off with only lukewarm feelings towards the book, but as Chi Li's character grew, so did my appreciation for her and for the story. She learns how to negotiate the byzantine and restrictive rules and interpersonal dynamics of her household and society, winning the respect of her superiors and eventually becoming a force to be reckoned with within both her family and her district. The traps around her are woven with skill, and her trials and tribulations become genuinely dramatic, so that by the latter half of the book I had a hard time putting it down.

The setting is described in a way to immerse Western readers in the society of medieval China without confusing them, and in this it succeeds admirably. Social customs, business practices, and native words are presented with a balance of closeness and estrangement that allows readers ignorant of these topics to have the sensation that they are learning new information about the culture without being overwhelmed by it. An interesting read about characters and customs that manage to be sympathetic and familiar despite their separation from their intended audience in both time and space.
