

About the Author



Qin Sun Stubis was born in the squalor of a Shanghai shantytown during the Great Chinese Famine. Growing up during the Cultural Revolution, she quickly learned that words could thrill – and even kill. She saw her defiantly honest father imprisoned and tortured for using the wrong words. Shunned as political pariahs, Qin and her family sustained themselves with books and stories of adventure and past glory. With the help of a borrowed radio, an eccentric British teacher, and a fortuitous assignment as a library assistant, Qin discovered and fell in love with Western literature, committing to memory the strange but beautiful sounds of Keats, Wordsworth, and Lincoln.



But it was in bed late each night, after scouring local parks for enough firewood to cook the family's meal of rice, that Qin and her three small sisters heard the dramatic stories that make up this book. The four girls listened to their mother, an aspiring actress in the early days of Asian cinema, recount colorful tales of pirates, prophecies, fortunes won and lost, babies sold in opium dens, glorious lives and gruesome deaths. Based on actual experiences and family lore from Imperial to Post-Revolutionary times, these stories represent a wealth of colorful but largely overlooked Chinese history.

For the past 15 years, Qin has been a newspaper columnist and writes poems, essays, short stories, and original Chinese tall tales inspired by traditional Asian themes. Her writing is inflected with both Eastern and Western flavors in ways that transcend geography to touch hearts and reveal universal truths.

To learn more and to follow Qin, please visit www.QinSunStubis.com.