
Lotus Shoes

A Short Story from

Ancient China

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Drum Tower Press, LLC

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THE SCENT OF JASMINE surrounded Mei-hua and her Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China father as A-gu, her father's older sister, slipped out Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China of the palanquin. With a maid assisting her on either side, she gracefully glided over to them.

At Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China the same time, the Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China second carrier's curtains were thrown back and a boy a year older than Mei-hua jumped out and onto the hard packed courtyard's earth.

Soon, a dainty shoe, embroidered with brightly colored flowers, appeared in the third palanquin's door. A maid rushed over and helped a young girl descend. She teetered briefly when her feet touched the ground, but regained her balance with the maid's assistance. Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China The child's face grimaced as if in pain, but then she smiled and moved towards them at a slow, unsteady pace.

As Mei-hua watched her cousins approach, she suddenly felt a hand clamp around her jaw and hold it in a vice-like grip. She squinted up at her aunt. The older woman began rocking Mei-hua's head back and forth, carefully inspecting Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China her niece's face.

"How lovely, younger brother," she said addressing Mei-hua's father.

Zhang Xue-wen Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China nodded, but simply said,

“She’s not exceptional, unlike your own charming children, little Shan-gao and his sister Nu-zhong.”

Mei-hua stared at the ground. While she knew politeness required modesty, she was hurt when he said she was ordinary, while praising his sister’s Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China children. She tried hard to please him and Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China be the best daughter she could be.

Her father gathered everyone together in the inner courtyard to enjoy a welcoming snack. Lotus Shoes: A Short Story from Ancient China Trying not to appear too obvious, Mei-hua quietly observed her cousins as they sat nibbling on dried fruit and sweet rice balls. She was tired of sitting in silence and hoped their parents would soon release them to play in the courtyard.

“Younger brother, you’ve done what you could for your daughter,” A-gu said, “but even you must admit you need a woman’s touch.” She stared at Mei-hua. “Not remarrying after Mei-hua’s mother died proved to be a mistake. Look. Your daughter’s almost seven years old and is like a flower growing wild: beautiful but without proper care and discipline.”

The comment stung. What did her aunt mean: growing wild?
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Xue-wen protested, “She’s never been neglected. Her tutor says she’s progressing remarkably well in learning her characters and is developing a fine hand in writing.”

Mei-hua pretended to study the embroidered bats and clouds circling her long, flowing sleeve. What did her aunt want? Mei-hua was happy with her father in their home. What was wrong?

“Characters,” his sister scoffed. “A girl doesn’t need to worry so much about learning to read and write—just enough to run a household. What your daughter needs is to be prepared for her role in life: to be a wife and mother.”

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