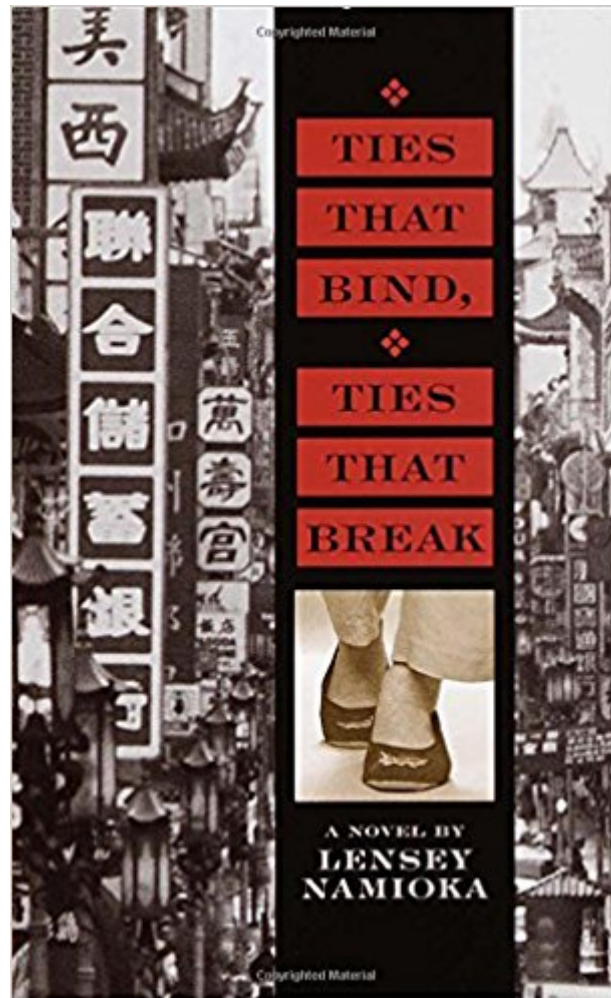




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Ties That Bind, Ties That Break



Synopsis

Third Sister in the Tao family, Ailin has watched her two older sisters go through the painful process of having their feet bound. In China in 1911, all the women of good families follow this ancient tradition. But Ailin loves to run away from her governess and play games with her male cousins. Knowing she will never run again once her feet are bound, Ailin rebels and refuses to follow this torturous tradition. As a result, however, the family of her intended husband breaks their marriage agreement. And as she enters adolescence, Ailin finds that her family is no longer willing to support her. Chinese society leaves few options for a single woman of good family, but with a bold conviction and an indomitable spirit, Ailin is determined to forge her own destiny. Her story is a tribute to all those women whose courage created new options for the generations who came after them.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

It's 1911, and China is slowly beginning to accept modern ideas--but the changes may not happen fast enough for young Ailin. Her grandmother has decided it's time she has her feet bound, to make her more attractive to a future husband. When Ailin sees the sad state of her sister's feet, she is stunned. "I stared at the pitiful stumps at the end of Second Sister's legs... her foot had been

squeezed into a wedge: the big toe had been left undeformed, but the rest of the foot... had been forced down under the sole... like a piece of bread folded over." Luckily, Ailin's progressive father allows her to keep her feet unfettered, even though it means breaking off her prearranged marriage into a more traditional family. He also sends her to a public school to learn English. But by the time Ailin is in her teens, her father has died, leaving her less tolerant Big Uncle to be the head of the family. Big Uncle forbids Ailin's schooling and gives her the choice of either being a nun or a peasant's wife--the only alternatives left for an unmarried Chinese woman with "big feet." Ailin refuses both options, and instead becomes a nanny for an American missionary couple. Due to their generosity, Ailin starts a new life in the United States. Powerfully told in flashback, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Break* is a thoughtful exploration of the ways cultural pressures can bend not only our personal values but even our physical appearance. And this gripping, lyrical story's theme may be most meaningful to those teens who feel the need to pierce and tattoo their bodies in order to fit into contemporary adolescent society. (Ages 11 to 14) --Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A wealthy girl growing up in early 20th-century Nanjing refuses to have her feet bound, severely limiting her choices in life. In a starred review, PW said, "With the force and intensity of a memoir, the novel chronicles a heroine who creates her own destiny through events as dramatic as they are credible, and weaves in just enough political history to help readers understand the turbulent climate." Ages 12-up. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Interesting novel on foot binding and the choices which are made which are contrary to society's expectations and how these ultimately change lives unalterably. Like genital mutilation today and yesteryear these savage and unquestionably irrational practices seem to be more entrenched by the mothers and grandmothers of daughters--as a woman I am disgusted that women seem to prolong the suffering of one another in favor of stupid fashions and traditions which are merely "honey-traps" for gaining husbands--often men of dubious worth. It is truly a case of the "beaten child becomes the beating parent syndrome." As such another interesting example of how women suffer for no good reason and that suffering is inflicted by women upon one another supposedly in the name of being "saved" by marriage and a husband. What a social commentary--however, this novel is easy to read, interesting, and a quick read! No preaching about social issues either.

Read this book as a kid and finally found it again. Purchased it on prime day and read it all in one

sitting. It's quite interesting to read.

This was a wonderful book with a happy ending. I gave it to a Chinese student who is learning English and she loved it. The book tells of a girl who defies the tradition of binding feet and what happens to her because of her defiance. Well written. Would be a good addition to a teacher's library.

I think it was sad because the poor girl has to make so many hard painful decisions and almost got her feet bound

Good condition. A great read for middle schoolers. A learning tool for understanding ancient Chinese culture.

My 13-year old was assigned this for a summer reading book. Here are his comments:"The first two chapters featured a Chinese girl who kept saying she didn't want to bind her feet. At that point, I knew that she would eventually move to a country where foot binding was not done, and indeed, that's what the story was about. I did, however, learn something about Chinese foot-binding."

I liked the plot and the fact that she went her own way. She was a good woman for starting a restaurant with James.

One of my all time favorite books. Thanks for the speedy delivery. It came in excellent shape. No complaints. :)

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