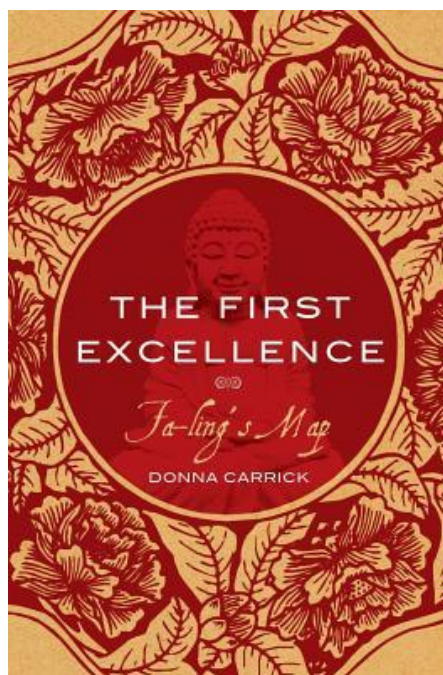




The First Excellence ~ Fa-ling's Map

Donna Carrick

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Winner of the 2011 Indie Book Event Award for excellence in fiction.

What happens when East bleeds into West? Join Fa-ling on an incredible journey into the heart of mainland China. Searching for her lost heritage, Fa-ling encounters murder, kidnapping, political intrigue and organ theft. With Detective Wang Yong-qi and his brilliant but uncouth partner Cheng Minsheng, Fa-ling must uncover a high-stakes kidnapping plot – before another child goes missing!

Donna Carrick is the award-winning author of several crime novels and anthologies, including The First Excellence, Gold And Fishes, The Noon God and Sept-Iles and Other Places.

The First Excellence ~ Fa-ling's Map Details

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From Reader Review The First Excellence ~ Fa-ling's Map for online ebook

Renda Dodge says

This was a really fun read by a very talented story teller. I recommended it to anyone who loves a well crafted story and lots of intrigue.

Sharon says

I obtained this book via Smashwords some time ago and only recently got around to reading it. Unfortunately, the author has removed it from Smashwords and I am unable to review it at the source.

This is the story of Fa-ling, a Chinese adoptee who has gone back to the land of her birth to try to learn more about her birth family. She is part of a tour of couples who are adopting Chinese infants and toddlers. Unfortunately, due to various circumstances, the group finds itself at the center of political intrigue.

Fa-ling and police detective Wang Yong-Qi start looking into matters on their own and, naturally enough, become attracted to one another -- which leads to another set of challenges.

I thought the book was well-written, with interesting characters. There were some formatting issues in the ePub edition I read, with type being almost microscopic at times and gigantic at others. Furthermore, the double-spaced formatting was a little distracting. Perhaps other editions are not plagued with these issues. The book was well worth reading in spite of these matters, and I recommend it to those with an interest in the subject matter.

Fran Riedemann says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is layered and rich, with the added benefit of walking away feeling like you were somehow expanded. My only critique was being able to get a handle on the characters by name thereby having to go back and reread portions to reestablish who the character was. But, that aside, the story was captivating, descriptive, and full of the kind of intrigue that keeps the reader curious. My compliments to the Author who did a great job illuminating a culture that is so different from our own, yet being able to connect the reader with the personalities of the characters.

B.L. Newport says

I absolutely loved this book!

I don't know what was best about The First Excellence. Was it the multi-faceted characters? The mystery? The adventure? Or was it the way each chapter was an important thread woven into the tapestry that turned out to be a beautiful story? I can't say for sure; but what I can say is that this book will definitely be added to the shelves that hold the 'books I will read again' books.

Alison Bruce says

Just started but I love the way Donna sets the scene.

Morgan Linden says

Fa-Ling's Map is a fascinating trip through a very alien world through a series of interlocked lives that weave in and out of each other without feeling forced, the coincidences simply meant to be, rather than deus ex machina. Each of the tales woven into the other-arching story is interesting in and of itself, from the desperate and neurotic wife to the police duo, the shady savagery of government operatives to Fa-Ling herself, and you are engaged in each so when focus switches there is no desire to skip passages to get to characters you 'actually care about'.

My only complain would be a particular literary 'tick' from the author. The third person narrative often switches through the internal monologues / thought processes of different characters, and this is generally handled well, but too often, this will happen:

Good thing no one knows I am lying, thought person A
She's lying, thought person B

Although the characters are meant to be reading each other's intentions through body language and behaviour rather than any sort of psychic powers, these almost-psychic exchanges, they start to come so often they are predictable.

Overall a very enjoyable, well thought out book with a lot to say about the meeting of Chinese and Western culture.

Denise says

One of many "freebies" for kindle downloaded over Christmas, this one outshines most of the others. I look forward to the next instalment in Fa-ling's adventures.

J.L. Campbell says

If stories to do with communist states, personal quests, and plain intrigue are your thing, then the First Excellence is for you. (I got this book on Kindle for 99 cents, but the story is way above that dollar value) There were two major external plots are work in this novel, one to do with the state clamping down on something (in this case a religious sect) they didn't understand, but saw as a threat, and the other detailed the lengths to which someone will go when faced with ruin.

The plot was complex, but not hard to follow. The main characters each had their own quest and the plot lines threaded nicely together to form a cohesive whole. I thought the writer did a good job with closing out

the kidnapping angle, which saved a member of the visiting group from spending time in prison. The state angle of course was more difficult. For each corrupt government official that is neutralized, there are many more to continue the job of oppressing those who choose not to follow the beaten path.

There was one thread that was left unresolved and made me wonder how many times we meet people who are connected to us, but we're oblivious to that fact.

The title of the book puzzled me, but half way into the story, I saw the light. I'll definitely read more from this writer and hope that having found her First Excellence, Fa-Ling will take me on other adventures. See full review at <http://readerssuite.blogspot.com/2011...>

Meredith Stoddard says

This book was excellent. The characters are clearly drawn and interesting. The story is heart rending and compelling. It's full of fascinating cultural insights that can only come with first hand knowledge. I was drawn in immediately and remained engrossed.

A lot of independent authors publish before their stories are ready and the result is often a book sorely in need of editing and proofreading. I'm happy to say that is NOT the case with this book. Ms. Carrick's work is very polished and well-edited. Her work is a cut above. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a good read.

Beth says

Donna Carrick has crafted a wonderfully entertaining and moving novel. The story is rich with intrigue, all the characters are well developed and quite complex, and the pacing is excellent.

This story took me on a journey both deep into a young woman's heart and outward where the exotic setting, the history, and the culture of China felt real, as did the vivid imagery.

The First Excellence doesn't shy away from tough topics or the emotions they evoke; in fact, it exposes them, but does so realistically and without sensationalism. This is a great read that offers an insiders look into the beauty and shocking darkness of a culture while telling a great (and surprising) story.

Janet says

On the edge of your seat kind of book; held my attention. Murder, intrigue and mystery in China about international adoptions.

Lori says

Wow, I have to say this book is wonderful. There is so much detail it's as if I am right there every step with the characters. I fell in love with Fa-ling and was so entrenched in her journeys that I couldn't put the book

down. The Author Donna Carrick not only did her research, very well, she made me feel every heart breaking turn that Fa-Ling was experiencing. Even trying to write this review I find myself wanting to go into detail the highs and lows of each experience Fa-Ling found herself in. Any book that can keep me glued to its pages, and act as if the story is playing out as a movie in my head, deserves high praise and to be read by all. I don't wish to ruin the story for you but I do recommend you read 'The First Excellence'. The imagery, the adventure and the emotion that was poured into writing this book is definitely evident throughout the pages. You do not want to miss this story.

Jeanne says

This was a wonderful book, well written and exciting I even liked the ending. I feel strongly that most writers don't really know how to end a book without leaving me feeling I needed more this one left feeling ok I like more but I do not feel cheated.

Derek Haines says

Donna Carrick's The First Excellence is a wonderfully deep and elaborate story that gave me a little of a James Clavell feeling right from the very first page. Perhaps it was how easily I connected with Fa-Ling, or maybe it was the setting. In any event I thoroughly enjoyed the book and the twists and turns in the plot. A terrific read.

Cynthia says

The First Excellence is a layered and complicated story that touches on international adoption, child abuse and the politics of communist China. Yet, author Donna Carrick makes it an easy read.

The First Excellence needs to be on the NY Best Seller List! This is truly an intriguing story with many facets and layers of plot and sub-plot. The characters jump right into your heart and take you on an emotional and fast-paced ride through the streets of China.

Donna Carrick's creativity really shines with how she can intertwine the characters and keep the reader up to speed. Move over, Dan Brown!

I absolutely loved this book!

A more detailed review on <http://theheartofwriting.blogspot.com>
