**Snow Flower and the Secret Fan**

By: Nichole Torgerson

The book *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* is about two young Asian girls by the names of Snow Flower and Lily. They are not sisters but they were born on the same day at the same time and they have similar looks too. The girls however, come from different economic class status. Snow flower is the girl from a big rich town. She seems to have everything going in the right direction. Lily is the girl from a small poor town and her life doesn’t seem to be going all that great. Despite their economic differences, the girls go through everything together. They get married at the same time, and they even have children at the same time. Ironically, Snow Flower has to marry out and she gets matched up with a poor family. Her husband is a butcher. Lily, on the other hand, marries into a rich family because a man comes along and checks out her feet for foot binding and says she has a good chance of having perfectly formed feet. Young Asian girls are judged for their beauty and economic status by how well their feet are bound. When they were younger, Lily and Snow Flower had their foot bindings done together. These two girls are called laotongs. Laotongs are like pen pals that live together.

Unfortunately Lily and Snow Flower get in a fight about how their lives as married women turn out. They argue often and Snow Flower decides that she doesn’t want to fight anymore and chooses to move on. Snow Flower switches her friendship to what’s called “sworn sisters.” Sworn sisters are a group of three girls that spend a lot of quality time together. Because Snow Flower left Lily for these other girls, Lily gets really upset because she feels like the love of her life (Snow Flower) doesn’t love or care for her anymore. They live apart for nearly two years.

Sometime after the two years pass, Lily finds out that Snow Flower is very sick. Snow Flower has a tumor in her stomach. Because she realizes the deep love for her friend is still in her heart, Lily goes to Snow Flower to help her and try to cure her. The tumor is too big to cure, and unfortunately Lily is unable to make her better. Eventually, the sworn sisters tell Lily that Snow Flower had always loved her even though she left her earlier. Now that her friend is dying, Lily regrets everything she has said to Snow Flower over the past couple of years.

The story ends with Lily heartbroken and unable to think about anything but the pain she may have caused her friend and the pain, her friend, Snow Flower was enduring with her illness.

**Recommendation**

I really enjoyed this book because it was written in a style that I had never read before which made it interesting to read. This book is a story that really describes love and friendship on a different level. It is also interesting to read because it describes what girls have to go through in order to be accepted. Not only do Asian girls have to deal with the pressure that comes with not having been born a boy, they are forced to endure traditional responsibilities like the foot binding process and hours of sewing lessons and work.

I would recommend this book to any young women because the book is mostly about young women and their lives. It talks about their ways of life, their culture, their feelings, and the knowledge they gain from these experiences. You would also enjoy this book if you like intense and dramatic topics. The author does a great job of describing everything with great detail and extreme passion. Like the part that stuck out at me was the foot binding chapter where the author explains the intense pain the girls felt, how damaged their feet looked after the binding process, and the tragic after effects of the process.

I would not recommend this book to people who have a difficult time reading slow moving books because some parts of the plot seem to drag on for too long. I would also not recommend this book to people that enjoy action books with fighting and wars because this story has a more solemn and touching format.

If you read this book, I hope you enjoy it too. Although this story is heartbreaking at some parts, it is heart-warming and pleasant at others. A heartbreaking part in this story is when they are talking about Lily’s youngest sister dying from an infection following her foot binding experience Another heartbreaking part was when Lily is describing the fight between her and Snow Flower. A happier and more pleasant part in this book is when Lily finds out she is going to marry into a rich family. Another pleasant part is when Lily and Snow Flower get over the fight they are having and learn to love each other again.