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Dragon Springs Road

by Janie Chang



About the Book

In 1908, Jialing is only seven years old when she is abandoned in the courtyard of a once-lavish estate near Shanghai. Jialing is zazhong --- Eurasian --- and faces a lifetime of contempt from both Chinese and Europeans. Without her mother?s protection, she can survive only if the estate?s new owners, the Yang family, agree to take her in.

Jialing finds allies in Anjuin, the eldest Yang daughter, and Fox, an animal spirit who has lived in the haunted courtyard for centuries. But Jialing?s life as the Yangs? bondservant changes unexpectedly when she befriends a young English girl who then mysteriously vanishes.

Always hopeful of finding her long-lost mother, Jialing grows into womanhood during the tumultuous early years of the Chinese republic, guided by Fox and by her own strength of spirit, away from the shadows of her past. But she finds herself drawn into a murder at the periphery of political intrigue, a relationship that jeopardizes her friendship with Anjuin and a forbidden affair that brings danger to the man she loves.

Discussion Guide

1. What was the longest time you were ever left alone as a child?

2. One of the central themes in DRAGON SPRINGS ROAD is that of identity and belonging. Which story elements echo this theme?

3. DRAGON SPRINGS ROAD is set during a time of great social and political upheaval. Discuss how grandmother Yang?s reactions to change differ from those of her eldest grandson, Dajuin.

4. Fox spirits are popular in Chinese folklore. What culture(s) are represented in your family?s background and what

folktales do you know about supernatural creatures?

5. Missionaries in 19th-century and early 20th-century China faced many challenges. Have you ever met or known anyone who was a missionary in a foreign country?

6. From the tidbits of information Fox shares with Jialing, it?s clear that Fox has her own agenda. If you were to tell the story from Fox?s point of view, how would you describe the motivating factors behind her decisions?

7. Jialing is disadvantaged because of her mixed race, but other characters also suffer because of the customs and values of that era. Discuss these characters and how their situations contrast with our 21st-century expectations.

8. What would you do if you were given the opportunity to become a Fox?

Author Bio

Janie Chang is a *Globe and Mail* bestselling author of historical fiction. Born in Taiwan, Chang has lived in the Philippines, Iran, Thailand, New Zealand and Canada. Her novels often draw from family history and ancestral stories. She has a degree in computer science and is a graduate of the Writer?s Studio Program at Simon Fraser University. She is the author of THREE SOULS, DRAGON SPRINGS ROAD, THE LIBRARY OF LEGENDS, THE PORCELAIN MOON and THE FOURTH PRINCESS; and co-author of the *USA Today* bestseller THE PHOENIX CROWN, with Kate Quinn.

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