

Reviews and Praises for *Butterfly Lovers*

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DAI, Fan. *Butterfly Lovers: A Tale of the Chinese Romeo and Juliet*. 251p. Homa & Sekey Books, 2000 pap. \$16.95. ISBN 0-9665421-4-2

YA--Yingtai Zhu, the only daughter of a prosperous family, despairs at the prospect of staying within the walls of her family's compound until she marries and goes off to live behind a new set of walls. More educated than most girls, she persuades her father to allow her to masquerade as a man and travel to Hangzhou to study with Master Zhou. On the way, she meets Shanbo Liang and the two become friends and "sworn brothers." Yingtai has difficulty concealing her gender from him, especially after she falls in love with him. Nonetheless, she keeps up the pretense until she is called home, entrusting Mrs. Zhou to reveal her secret after her departure. Of course Shanbo wants to marry her once he learns the truth--but her parents have found her a groom. **The story, based on a Chinese folktale, has all of the elements of a great tragic love affair, including misunderstandings, withheld information, meddling servants, jealous rivals, tears, psychosomatic illnesses--and last but not least--an ending in which the star-crossed lovers are transmuted into a pair of butterflies.** Yingtai is an engaging and clever heroine, never willing to give up the pursuit of her desires. Shanbo can be downright dense at times, but he makes a romantic leading man, even though he is never as resolute or courageous as Yingtai. He loves her beyond death, and that's what counts in this kind of story.

Butterfly Lovers is based upon a popular Chinese folktale and is an engaging, compelling, deeply moving, highly recommended and rewarding novel.

--- MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW, JULY 2000