

born into a world of dispute and violence. When she is sent to a Chinese colony to be educated, she must contend with the disdainful attitudes of her hosts, who consider the Hsien to be savages, even as both the Chinese and the Hsien are at constant risk of attack from the truly savage neighboring people, the Dog Heads. In reality, the princess is a fair and wise leader, even at a young age, with a brilliant mind for military stratagems. Her leadership skills are put to the test when war breaks out and the Dog Heads begin to move in.

Prolific Newbery Honor author Laurence Yep () contributes a remarkable tale to the Royal Diaries series. This fictionalized account of the real-life princess will introduce young readers to a long-ago land with a fascinating culture and edge-of-seat adventures, and will certainly inspire some to delve deeper into Chinese history. As in all the titles in the series, a section in the back provides context and historical background. (Ages 8 to 14) --*Emilie Coulter*

From School Library Journal Gr 5-8 This entry in the series covers four months in the life of Princess Redbird, a member of the royal family of the Hsien people. Decades before, China had invaded their land and now the Hsien live in an uneasy peace with the invaders. With an eye to the future of his people, Redbird's father sends the 16-year-old to a Chinese school to learn the language and the customs of the Chinese, and also to be a representative of her people. Once there she also learns the joy of reading while studying under Master Chen. Her schooling is interrupted when a neighboring tribe, the Dog Heads, begins attacks on both the Hsien and the Chinese. The attacks escalate and all Princess Redbird's knowledge is required to help set up an alliance between the two to defeat the invaders. Before the Hsien forces triumph, many are killed, including Master Chen and Redbird's father. She, however, has discovered a talent for diplomacy and the foresight and practicality to look ahead for the good of her people. Characters are well drawn, especially Redbird and Master Chen. Historical notes are appended describing China of the sixth century and the real Lady of Ch'iao Kuo (a title bestowed years later by the Chinese). This worthy addition to this series features a feisty heroine who must take on adult responsibilities too soon.

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