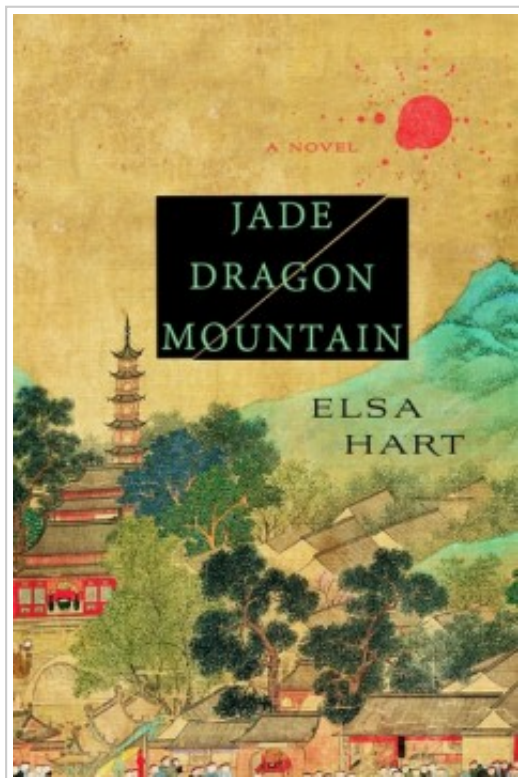


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Jade Dragon Mountain

A Novel

by Elsa Hart

Price: \$26.99(Hardcover)

Published: September 01, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: On the mountainous border of China and Tibet in 1708, a detective must learn what a killer already knows: that empires rise and fall on the strength of the stories they tell. Li Du was an imperial librarian. Now he is an exile. Arriving in Dayan, the last Chinese town before the Tibetan border, he is surprised to find it teeming with travelers, soldiers, and merchants. All have come for a spectacle unprecedented in this remote province: an eclipse of the sun commanded by the Emperor himself. When a Jesuit astronomer is found murdered in the home of the local magistrate, blame is hastily placed on Tibetan bandits. But Li Du suspects this was no random killing. Everyone has secrets: the ambitious magistrate, the powerful consort, the bitter servant, the irreproachable secretary, the East India Company merchant, the nervous missionary, and the traveling storyteller...

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What We Say

It's 1708 and disgraced librarian/scholar Li Du is reluctantly checking in with the local officials while traveling throughout the outer regions of China. He's been banished from the Forbidden City and long ago gave up the hope or desire of returning. Unfortunately for him, the Emperor is coming to this godforsaken corner of his empire to witness (and indeed "bring about") an eclipse. It's all show to demonstrate the Emperor's potency and lay claim to the hearts and minds of a region barely under control. When a Jesuit astronomer is murdered, Li Du must reluctantly investigate in order to prevent any further complications during the Emperor's visit. Naturally, Li Du faces a full array of suspects in this small town, including a representative of UK businessmen, local rebels unhappy with the Emperor's reign, a calculating consort of the head magistrate who may be unhappy about her man's advancement since it would mean leaving her behind and many more. Li Du must sort through the possibilities, with the nominal aide of a storyteller/Watson or sorts and needs all his wits to stay invisible (he is after all persona non grata), avoid ruffling feathers, smooth the way for the Emperor and if possible see justice done. Hart's debut in what is sure to be a series is very strong on atmosphere and a Christie-like plot containing all the suspects in one specific settling when the murder takes place, complete with timelines, red herrings and the like. Li Du's sidekick hasn't come into his own here but might well in future adventures. It's already great fun and hopefully Hart will improve things even more the second time around. Buys who enjoy mysteries set in worlds and times they can learn about will find much to savor. - Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

Perfectly melds history with the mystery genre for a lush look at China on the cusp of change. Set in the early 1700s, Jade Dragon Mountain delivers a compelling look at Chinese politics, culture and religion, delivering the complexities of each with a character-rich story...One of the year's most engrossing debuts. - **The Washington Post**

This debut historical mystery deftly combines ingenious plotting and suspense with a subtle understanding of China, its culture, and its people. The protagonist, Li Du, a librarian and intellectual, is well worth keeping an eye on. - **Donna Leon**

Jade Dragon Mountain is an amazing book-truly wonderful. Stunning in its atmosphere, setting, the gift of language, and great writing. Elsa Hart and her protagonist, Li Du, deserve a place in every collection. If you like great books, you will love Jade Dragon Mountain. I loved this book! - **Louise Penny**

Part mystery, part exploration of a culture fading into history's shadows, Hart's novel is a fascinating, intelligent debut...Think Agatha Christie writing Shogun...captivating. - **Kirkus Reviews**

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