



## An Illicit Temptation

*Jeannie Lin*

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## **An Illicit Temptation** Jeannie Lin

Dao is a house servant masquerading as a princess on her way to marry a powerful chieftain. As a lowly commoner with no prospects, she is content to be an alliance bride until an encounter with Kwan-Li, her enigmatic escort, tempts her with the promise of forbidden love. On their adventure through the wild Khitan steppe, Dao discovers Kwan-Li has secrets of his own...

## **An Illicit Temptation Details**

Date : Published September 1st 2012 by Harlequin (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Jeannie Lin

Format : ebook 60 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Adult, Fiction, Cultural, China

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# From Reader Review An Illicit Temptation for online ebook

## Morwa Pal says

In "An Illicit Temptation," a serving girl takes the place of princess in this tale that takes our heroine across the wild steppe of ancient Asia. Though young Dao is grateful for her sudden elevation in status, it means marrying a barbarian far from the only home she's ever known, something she is quite willing to accept. But being a princess loses its appeal as Dao falls for her escort, Kwan-Li, a man with a hidden past. Author Jeannie Lin's ability to take the reader to a foreign land in a time readers know little about is unparalleled. "An Illicit Temptation" is a lunchtime read, short, but it will leave you satisfied emotionally. The scene description and introductions to the culture of the time are so well done, you will be left craving more. Lin is an outstanding storyteller, and "Temptation" proves she can create a wonderful romance in very few words.

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## Hilly says

2.5 stars. I did not round this rating up, because the slight story was not woven together well, either with its preceding story, or within its own narrative.

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## Kristel Villar says

**Re-read in 2018:** Just wanted a quick, light read and thought about re-reading this. It's still one of my all-time favorites and I still wished that it was a full-length novel. I love the maturity of this story tackling about the forbidden love trope. Dao is promised to another man and Kwan-Li is there to deliver her to Dao's husband-to-be tribe. I love how Dao and Kwan-Li dealt with their attraction towards each other. No heavy drama, no over-emotional, angsty pining, no whining. Just two people who are determined to stand by their words. My favorite couple.

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**MY FEELINGS ARE EVERYWHERE!** My only complaint is... **THIS IS TOO SHORT FOR ME!!!** I just crave for more of Dao and Kwan-Li that this is not enough!

A follow-up story on MY FAIR CONCUBINE, it tells about Dao's journey to the Khitan tribe for her alliance marriage. She was not really a princess, but a servant who took the place after the real princess ran away with her lover. Guarding Dao was a group of servants and warriors that include Kwan-Li, a member of the Khitan tribe himself but spent most of his years learning diplomacy and politics in Changan.

I love the attraction between Dao and Kwan-Li. Having been a lowly servant all her life, she was in wonder at the surroundings around her during their journey. Kwan-Li was civil and reserved to her at first, obviously because she was a promised bride and he could never have her. But once those walls were down, there were so much chemistry and energy between them.

I also love Dao's maturity and determination to fulfill her duties despite the growing attraction she feels for Kwan-Li. She is not the typical damsel-in-distress who needed rescuing (well, except for that horse riding part). Rather, she rescues herself.

Overall, THIS IS JUST TOO SHORT. It would have been an epic book had it been a full-length novel.

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### **Elizabeth says**

This short story is a companion to My Fair Concubine (of course I didn't realize that when I purchased it). I enjoy Ms. Lin's work, but wish this wasn't a short story. Too often with romance short stories, the tale feels like a truncated version of what could have been a book. This is not exception. It's the tale of Dao, the illegitimate half sister of the heroine in My Fair Concubine. She's taking her sister's place as the arranged bride to the Chief of a clan to the north.

She is being escorted by a diplomat and surprise along the way she notices an attraction that develops into something deeper.

There's so much here that could have been. I love the setting, the customs, but instead of a satisfying short story it felt rushed. (And I feel like I paid a bit too much).

This is the second short story of Ms. Lin's I've purchased assuming it was a nove. I wish that with both she would have developed the stories into novels.

Torn on how to rate this. I enjoyed it, but a short story format didn't do the story justice. And as a short story, it wasn't sufficient to be rated higher for me.

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### **Lindsay says**

I really like Jeannie Lin's writing, and this book was no exception -- her characters are wonderfully written and believable, the romance is a slow burn, and their friendship is just as important as their attraction. I love the attention to detail (Lin works incredibly hard at authenticity), and honestly it's just so great to read historical romances not set in Regency England.

I'd definitely recommend reading My Fair Concubine first for the back story on this, as it's a direct sequel, but it's honestly not necessary to understand the plot (it'll just save you from having the end of MFC spoiled!). It's not my absolute favourite Lin title, but it's still a very solid novel that'll keep your attention.

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### **AGMaynard says**

This is the 2nd Lin I've read, after reading recommendations about her writing and historical settings. Dao takes the place of the "princess" to make an alliance to help bind kingdoms together. During the journey though, she and her handsome escort take some detours. Recommended!

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## Carin says

An Illicit Temptation is a companion piece to My Fair Concubine and while it can be read alone it is best read as the sequel it was meant to be.

Dao is thrust into a world she is ill prepared for, that of being the Princess by decree sent to be an Alliance Bride and help secure a peace treaty between her Kingdom and the neighboring one. Dao was raised as a servant because she was the daughter of the second wife in the household, as such the opportunity to be a Princess is one she isn't going to pass up even for Kwan-Li who makes her feel things she is afraid the old chieftain she promised to never will.

Kwan-Li has spent the last 12 years learning about court politics in the Tang Dynasty away from his home and his roots. He is given the job to escort the Princess to her future husband the Emperor of his people. He finds what sounded like a simple task of escorting a snobby Princess turns out to be an exercise in self control when he discovers An-Ming isn't at all like he expected, she is so much more.

When the caravan is attacked and Dao and Kwan-Li are forced into close quarters things smolder as they battle inner desires for each other and concern about the political situation they are in.

This is an extremely well written novella, I had not read My Fair Concubine at the time I read this and even not having that to understand some of the history involved in the story I was able to jump right in and read this. There is enough explanation given that you are still understood and were able to connect with Dao and Kwan-Li. You get a wonderful sense of what a full novel by Ms. Lin is like, she is able to paint a picture of the conflict between the Empires, the honor and pride of the people, the beauty of the land and the love and desire that grows and builds between Dao and Kwan-Li.

The only problem I felt with this novella is in a small way it felt like the deleted scenes of My Fair Concubine. I felt like there should have been more to the story, that I was getting the details of The Rest of the Story. Overall I would say great novella but read it as a companion not as a stand alone.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review

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## Anna Bowling says

Readers who are familiar with heroine Dao (aka Princess An-Ming) from previous Tang Dynasty books will be eager to read her story in An Illicit Temptation. Part Tang Dynasty western, part Cinderella with an iron will, this novella is anything but predictable.

Plans for a peace marriage with the head of the Khitan have burned through two prospective brides so far (The Dragon and the Pearl and My Fair Concubine) as each heroine finds her true destiny elsewhere, and the imperial court still owes the Khitan a princess bride. What to do? Promote Dao from servant girl to princess, of course (to be fair, she does have noble blood) and send her into the wild frontier. Did we mention the fact that there's another bride, this one a true princess, heading for the very same bridegroom to whom the Tang princess is promised?

That's enough to give any girl reservations, but throw in the intriguing escort, Kwan-Li, a blend of Tang and

Khitan, and this is one wild ride. Dao/An-Ming and Kwan-Li are a very well matched couple, and the author packs the right amount of adventure into this short tale. Fans of road story romance will keep eagerly reading as Dao/An-Ming learns the true meaning of being a princess. Hint: real princesses do *\*not\** take insults lightly.

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## **Stella says**

You might remember how much I enjoyed *My Fair Concubine*, the 3rd book in Jeannie Lin's Tang Dynasty series (though no need to worry if you haven't read the previous books, they can be read as a standalone, the 3rd book was the 1st I read from the series as well), so when I heard that Jeannie Lin decided to write a short sequel novella, featuring one of the most adorable and entertaining secondary characters of *My Fair Concubine* I couldn't wait to read *An Illicit Temptation*.

*An Illicit Temptation* is Dao's story, who was a house servant and maid and confidante of the heroine in *My Fair Concubine* (and as we learned the half-sister of the master of the house). But due to events of *My Fair Concubine* Dao is now on her way to faraway Khitan to act as princess ambassador of China by concluding a diplomatic alliance marriage.

Dao is as we have come to know her in the previous book vibrant, impertinent and outspoken. But Jeannie Lin puts it in a much beautiful way:

"She was as restless and vibrant as a summer wind across the grassland."

She took on the sacrifice of leaving her homeland to marry into the faraway and unknown barbaric Khitan and while she approached this as an adventure and the chance to improve her lot in life she soon discovers that

"She had been so naive. Being a princess meant more than wearing silk and having servants attend to her every need. It meant being caught in politics and power struggles. Things she knew nothing about."

What I found wonderful was that Jeannie Lin managed to give depth and substance to the characters even in such a short novella. There were more to them than what we saw at first glance: Dao besides being the cheeky and confident tomboy showed signs of loneliness and her vulnerability in those moments was heart-squeezing. As for the hero I fell in love with him, with his sense of honour and integrity, and the way he was battling his emotions for his duty. I was amazed how Kwan-Li, the enigmatic and charismatic escort/guard had such an emotional and tender side. Both of them had hidden and fascinating facets that Jeannie Lin showed us glimpses.

"For the first time, he saw a break in her resolve and the loneliness underneath. He wanted to protect her. If this fire inside him were nothing but desire, [she] wouldn't have such power over him. He was angry at himself for this weakness."

The romance between Dao and Kwan-Li was beautiful. First it started off as curiosity and fascination but soon it evolved into something deep and meaningful both were unable to resist. Once again I applaud Jeannie Lin for giving us readers both heart-stopping romantic lines:

"You risked your life for the sake of this alliance today," she said.  
"No." His gaze burned into her. "I did what I did for you."

and pulse racing sensual scenes in such a short novella:

"There was nothing but the harsh rhythm of their breathing, his weight above her, and a feeling of being anchored and held to the earth while the heavens spun around her."

Besides the wonderful romance Jenanie Lin gives the reader the sense of an exotic adventure with foreign settings, unfamiliar traditions and explanation of local politics and diplomacy making *An Illicit Temptation* a very satisfying and intelligent, well rounded story.

Verdict: *An Illicit Temptation* was a delightful HEA continuation/tie off of *My Fair Concubine*. I fell in love with Kwan-Li and rooted for Dao, enjoying every minute of their adventure. My only complaint is that I wouldn't have minded if their story were a bit longer. Guess I'll have to read another full length novel of Jeannie Lin to appease my craving for an exotic historical romance story. A lovely bite of a story with sensual scenes and heartsqueezing moments, if you haven't read any Jeannie Lin's story yet I urge you to pick one up, you'll become addicted. I know what I'm talking about, that's what happened to me!

Plot: 9/10

Characters: 8/10

Writing: 10/10

Ending: 10/10

Cover: 7/10

I give *An Illicit Temptation* 4.5 stars!

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### **Aileen Noura Vitarelli says**

i hve to say that i love the previous book *My fair concubine*..ehhehe:)

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### **Aoi says**

"*Illicit Temptation*" is a short seven chapter follow-up to "*My Fair Concubine*". We go on Dao's journey through the Khitan wilderness on the way to marry the warlord khagan. As the poem goes, the "other side of heaven" is a different world altogether, and none of the problems that plagued the protagonists in the prequel matter anymore. This marriage is for symbolic purposes only, doesn't matter if it is to a daughter of a high-ranking family, or to the illegitimate child of the same high-ranking official.

The instant attraction that flairs between Dao and Kwan-Li is natural in their lonely surroundings. I thoroughly enjoyed the story up until the last chapter. I've noticed it is Ms.Lin's tendency in her short stories to make the ending abrupt,sudden and too neatly tied together. Unlike her full length novels, where the suspense/ conflict is drawn logically to its conclusion, the author chose to suddenly bring forth the meat of the action, and formerly unknown facts into the last chapter, making it very rushed.

Ms. Lin, if there is a side- story needed to be told, please give it full justice and make it longer.

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### **Angel says**

I'M RLY EXCITED TO START READING THIS.... historical romance stories that center on non-white ppl, you are the real temptation here :'|

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### **Shopgirl says**

This one picks up after the ending of My Fair Concubine and follows the story of Dao as she's traveling to the north to be married. Dao wasn't one of my favorite characters from that book, but I liked her a bit more in this story. She's better developed here, but I was left feeling that she wasn't particularly strong. I guess my issue is that in a lot of Lin's work, the women see their honor and duty--to family and empire--as a strength, and I have no issues with that per se, but given that most all of them share this quality, the characters have started blending together for me. Jia from Silken Thief is the one exception to this I've seen so far and as a result, I found her very compelling. I hope Lin starts exploring more characters like Jia in the future. Of all the characters in this particular story, I found the hero most interesting. I was glad for them to end up together in the end if only because I liked him so much and wanted him to be happy (quite honestly, I didn't care if Dao was happy). The change in scenery from Imperial China to exploring the culture and people of the outer cultures was a nice shift too.

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### **Librariasaurus says**

I loved this story! It filled the gaps left behind in My Fair Concubine nicely, especially since I felt that that story had lacked depth when it came to Dao and what happened to her after she left Changan. I am so glad she ended up with true love and genuine happiness. Kwan-Li is an excellent character and the first of Jeannie Lin's male characters to truly fight for the woman he loved.

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### **Melissa says**

This is a sequel to My Favorite Concubine, which I read back in May. Dao, now named An-Ming, is pretending to be the Empire's princess sent to the confederation of tribesmen in the north as an alliance bride to the leader of the confederation. Kwan-Li is the commander of the caravan that is to take An-Ming and gifts to the leader. Basically, this is a Tang Dynasty version of love on a road trip trope, and I loved it! Kwan-Li was a hottie and a bad ass; An-Ming was determined to take opportunity to better her station in life, although her heart belonged to the warrior (who was so much more worthy than the leader she was supposed to marry). A fun ride to spend an hour on.

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