

Qin Sun Stubis' Historical Epic, "Once Our Lives," Wins Readers' Favorite 2023 International Book Award

Sweeping saga about four generations of Chinese women who survive war, revolution and an ancient superstition wins prize for cultural nonfiction

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-- Competing among thousands of books from more than a dozen countries, Qin Sun Stubis' historical epic, "Once Our Lives: Life, Death and Love in the Middle Kingdom," about four generations of Chinese women who survive war, revolution and the seemingly unshakeable effects of an ancient superstition, won a Readers' Favorite 2023 International Book Award for cultural nonfiction. Stubis, whose book had already been awarded the highest rating of five stars by a Readers' Favorite reviewer, was honored on the stage of the Hilton Blue Lagoon Hotel in Miami in a ceremony attended by hundreds.



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The book takes readers on a dramatic adventure from cosmopolitan 1930s Shanghai to China's dusty and dangerous "Wild West," and is filled with fantastical but true tales of pirates, prophecies, babies sold in opium dens, and a love story between a man whose fate was said to be sealed before he was born and a woman with three identities.

"Once Our Lives" was written by Chinese-American author Qin Sun Stubis, who was born in the squalor of a Shanghai shantytown, lived through the Great Chinese Famine and Cultural Revolution, and is now a Washington, D.C.-area writer, poet and newspaper columnist. The book follows the lives of two families over the course of nearly 100 years and chronicles the extraordinary lives of ordinary people living in the shadows of some of the greatest headlines of the 20th Century.

This newest honor is part of a growing swell of praise and recognition for "Once Our Lives."

Debuting as an [Amazon](#) #1 New Release for 41 days, "Once Our Lives" has been named a Gold Winner of the international Nonfiction Book Awards, the #1 winner of the PenCraft Book Awards for literary excellence in culture/history, the 2023 Best Book Awards winner for cross-genre nonfiction, and a winner in the Readers' Favorite 2023 International Book Awards for cultural nonfiction. It has also been short-listed in the Chanticleer International Book Awards' "Journey Book Awards" recognizing emerging new talent and outstanding works in the genre of Overcoming Adversity in Narrative Non-Fiction and Memoir.

Kirkus Reviews calls the book "...a sweeping story, rich with detail" and "a wide-ranging story that keeps the reader engaged throughout."

Ms. Magazine says it is "Engaging, endearing, heartbreaking and hopeful" and chose it as the lead recommended read for June 2023.

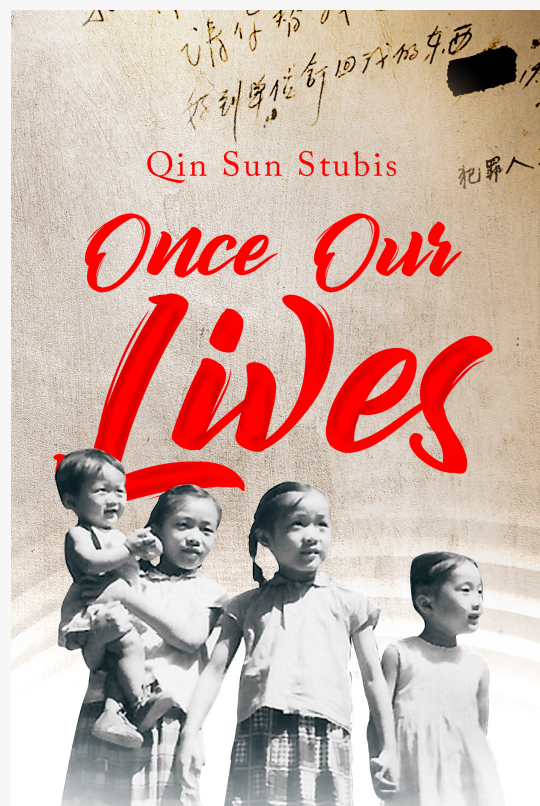
Glamour Magazine UK calls "Once Our Lives" a "Best New Book" and told its readers, "For some stunning non-fiction . . . this one is perfect for all fans of the multi-generational family saga."

Readers' Favorite gives the story five stars and says that it is "A well-written, beautifully immersive book that while non-fiction reads even better than fiction. Very highly recommended."

"I am so thrilled that 'Once Our Lives'



Readers' Favorite 2023 International Book Awards medal



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has won a Readers' Favorite Book Award," says Qin. "The fact that this real-life story resonates with readers gives me hope that we can forge a greater understanding between East and West and remind people of our common hopes, dreams, struggles, and humanity."

About the Author

Growing up during the Cultural Revolution, Qin Sun Stubis quickly learned that words could thrill – and even kill. She saw her defiantly honest father imprisoned for using the wrong words. Shunned as political pariahs, Qin and her family sustained themselves with books and stories of adventure and past glory. With the help of a borrowed radio, an eccentric British teacher, and a fortuitous assignment as a library assistant, Qin discovered and fell in love with Western literature, committing to memory the strange but beautiful sounds of Keats, Wordsworth, and Lincoln.

But it was in bed late each night, after scouring local parks for enough firewood to cook the family's meal of rice, that Qin and her three small sisters heard the dramatic stories that make up this book. The four girls listened to their mother, an aspiring actress in the early days of Asian cinema, recount colorful tales of pirates, prophecies, fortunes won and lost, babies sold in opium dens, glorious lives and gruesome deaths. Based on actual experiences and family lore from the Post-Imperial to Post-Cultural Revolution eras, these stories represent a wealth of colorful but largely overlooked Chinese history.

Eventually, through sheer grit and perseverance, Qin won admission to the famed Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages and graduated with a bachelor's degree in English and English Literature. With the help of family, friends, and a powerful U.S. Senator, Qin was granted a visa to study abroad. She arrived in America with two suitcases and not much more. After winning several scholarships, she graduated with a master's degree and a profound love for her new adoptive country.

For the past 15 years, Qin has been a newspaper columnist and writes poems, essays, short stories, and original Chinese tall tales inspired by traditional Asian themes. Her writing is inflected with both Eastern and Western flavors in ways that transcend geography to touch hearts and reveal universal truths. Learn more: www.QinSunStubis.com. Cover photo, headshot: www.QinSunStubis.com/press-kit

"Once Our Lives: Life, Death and Love in the Middle Kingdom" (Guernica Editions, ISBN # 9781771837965, \$21.95, 366 pp) is available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and independent bookstores.

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