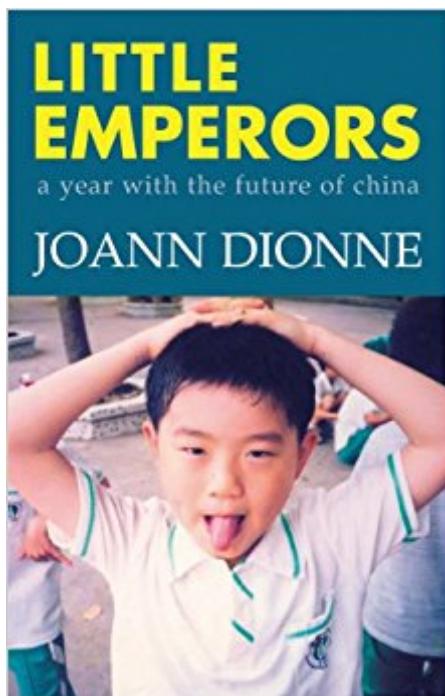


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Little Emperors: A Year With The Future Of China



Synopsis

Short-listed for the 2009 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize Much has been made about how the New China has become an economic juggernaut in todayâ™s world while civil liberties and basic freedoms remain constricted. We know where the aging leadership has taken and is taking China, but what about the very young? What are they like? When JoAnn Dionne arrived in Guangzhou, she came prepared to live and teach elementary school in a Communist country. She expected to see soldiers in the streets, people in grey Mao suits, and lineups to buy toilet paper. Instead she found the worldâ™s oldest country, throwing itself headlong into the future. She found traffic jams and 24/7 constructions, neon lights and smog, shopping malls and modern high-rises. And then she met the people who would live in that future â“ her students. Along with crisp insights into Chinese culture as seen through the eyes of a North American, Dionne provides a funny, often poignant glimpse of a nation undergoing rapid transformation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Immediacy of language and lightness of tone make the memoir readable, fun and vivid while at the same time providing insights into the minds of young Chinese. In an often humorous way, JoAnn captures what it is like for a North American to explore China. (Lakeshore News)

JoAnn Dionne, who travelled to China to teach elementary school, offers a funny, poignant glimpse of a nation undergoing rapid transformation.

Where the news is full of stories about China's economy and dissidents, Little Emperors is about the details of everyday life in China. Ms. Dionne shares the experience of teaching English to Chinese children in Guangzhou for a year: the dreams of her Chinese teaching assistants, alternately eating snake and going to the new McDonald's, and the odd Bad China Day of pollution, poverty, and frustration. Her students are my favourite characters. Their English skills take off when she teaches them to say "I like ..." and "do you like?" and their favourite game is Bingo. In between teaching, she finds the opportunity to visit Hong Kong for the handover back to China and in Beijing hears an old man's eyewitness account of the Tiananmen Square protests. The observation is detailed and the writing is excellent and often very funny. Ms. Dionne's respect, empathy, and affection for the people she meets make this a great read.

I cried, laughed, cheered and atop of it all, I absolutely loved the book. Though there were times when I saw the word 'market', and I was not sure if I should skip the paragraph due to what animal part, etc I would learn about next...however I did not miss a word. The flow was incredible and it made the read effortless. Questions I had regarding China were answered, and I (think) I can understand why you keep going back. Those children, the stories from Connie and the Old Man, for me, they grabbed my heart and I would yearn to learn more. Thank you so much for the insight to a complicated yet beautiful land...

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