

## **Soricide in the Forbidden City: Women Oppressing Each Other in the Chinese TV Drama “The Legend of Zhen Huan”**

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**Abstract :** The 2012 TV series "The Legend of Zhen Huan" is one of the most popular and influential historical dramas on Chinese television and is regularly discussed on Chinese social media such as Weibo. Set in the Qing dynasty, the 76 episodes series features palace intrigues focused on female characters. In the Forbidden City, concubines must survive the cruelty of an extreme polygamy system, constantly competing against each other. The patriarchal oppression of the women sequestered in the harem relies on fierce female competition and does not leave much room for compassion. Using Michel Foucault's theory of power, feminist theories, and visual anthropology, this paper analyzes the complex relationships between the female characters, from their rise to power to their fall from grace, from alliances to betrayals, from sorority to soricide. This analysis aims to understand what makes this series particularly popular with young female audiences in China and explain its importance in Chinese media.

**Keywords :** Chinese TV Drama, feminism, popular culture, Theory of Power

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