



Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China

By Jung Chang

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The story of three generations in twentieth-century China that blends the intimacy of memoir and the panoramic sweep of eyewitness history—a bestselling classic in thirty languages with more than ten million copies sold around the world, now with a new introduction from the author.

An engrossing record of Mao's impact on China, an unusual window on the female experience in the modern world, and an inspiring tale of courage and love, Jung Chang describes the extraordinary lives and experiences of her family members: her grandmother, a warlord's concubine; her mother's struggles as a young idealistic Communist; and her parents' experience as members of the Communist elite and their ordeal during the Cultural Revolution. Chang was a Red Guard briefly at the age of fourteen, then worked as a peasant, a "barefoot doctor," a steelworker, and an electrician. As the story of each generation unfolds, Chang captures in gripping, moving—and ultimately uplifting—detail the cycles of violent drama visited on her own family and millions of others caught in the whirlwind of history.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In *Wild Swans* Jung Chang recounts the evocative, unsettling, and insistently gripping story of how three generations of women in her family fared in the political maelstrom of China during the 20th century. Chang's grandmother was a warlord's concubine. Her gently raised mother struggled with hardships in the early days of Mao's revolution and rose, like her husband, to a prominent position in the Communist Party before being denounced during the Cultural Revolution. Chang herself marched, worked, and breathed for Mao until doubt crept in over the excesses of his policies and purges. Born just a few decades apart, their lives overlap with the end of the warlords' regime and overthrow of the Japanese occupation, violent struggles between the Kuomintang and the Communists to carve up China, and, most poignant for the author, the vicious cycle of purges orchestrated by Chairman Mao that discredited and crushed millions of people, including her parents.

From Publishers Weekly

Bursting with drama, heartbreak and horror, this extraordinary family portrait mirrors China's century of turbulence. Chang's grandmother, Yu-fang, had her feet bound at age two and in 1924 was sold as a concubine to Beijing's police chief. Yu-fang escaped slavery in a brothel by fleeing her "husband" with her infant daughter, Bao Qin, Chang's mother-to-be. Growing up during Japan's brutal occupation, free-spirited Bao Qin chose the man she would marry, a Communist Party official slavishly devoted to the revolution. In 1949, while he drove 1000 miles in a jeep to the southwestern province where they would do Mao's spadework, Bao Qin walked alongside the vehicle, sick and pregnant (she lost the child). Chang, born in 1952, saw her mother put into a detention camp in the Cultural Revolution and later "rehabilitated." Her father was denounced and publicly humiliated; his mind snapped, and he died a broken man in 1975. Working as a "barefoot doctor" with no training, Chang saw the oppressive, inhuman side of communism. She left China in 1978 and is now director of Chinese studies at London University. Her meticulous, transparent prose radiates an inner strength. Photos. BOMC alternate.

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From Library Journal

Wild Swans is a memoir of three generations of women growing up in 20th-century China. Chang, the author, is the final link in this chain. The story reads like the sweeping family sagas of genre fiction but rises far above the norm. The characters are well drawn, the events are riveting, and the story teaches lessons of history as well as lessons of the heart. It also allows listeners to visit a world unfamiliar to most Westerners. The author brings memories of a foreign life and illuminates them with graceful prose. The narration by Anna Massey is excellent, as are the production values. This is a good choice for public libraries as well as academic libraries with a popular listening component. Multicultural collections will also benefit from this recording.

Jacqueline Smith, Philadelphia Coll. of Pharmacy & Science Lib.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shawn Francis:

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William Bellard:

Beside this particular Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China in your phone, it might give you a way to get closer to the new knowledge or facts. The information and the knowledge you can got here is fresh from your oven so don't always be worry if you feel like an previous people live in narrow community. It is good thing to have Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China because this book offers to you personally readable information. Do you occasionally have book but you seldom get what it's about. Oh come on, that won't happen if you have this in the hand. The Enjoyable agreement here cannot be questionable, including treasuring beautiful island. Techniques you still want to miss it? Find this book as well as read it from at this point!

Beulah Scherr:

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