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Good Children Of The Flower



Synopsis

Decades after successful Chinese writer Hong Ying escaped the slums of her childhood, she discovers that time and distance cannot protect her from the past. When word of her mother's imminent death reaches Hong Ying in London, she races home to Chongqing only to find she's too late. While she tries to come to terms with her estranged mother's passing, she must navigate her family's delicate social structure and their long-held silence. Soon Hong Ying starts to ask unwelcome questions, and as old secrets are exposed, she must face not only what is revealed but also her own choices in love and marriage during the many years of her absence. In this bittersweet memoir, internationally bestselling author Hong Ying explores trauma, forgiveness, and truth and attempts to reconcile her painful memories with the beautiful life she hopes to create.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Good Children of the Flower is a moving, original book by a writer at the peak of her powers. Daring in its approach and limber in its motion, the story resonates at many levels: the autobiographical, the familial, the historical, the national, the international. It's a marvelous novel substantiated with authentic details." —Ha Jin

Hong Ying was born in Chongqing, China, and began her writing career as a poet. In 1990, she relocated to London and authored over a dozen books, some of which have been adapted for television or film. She is best known in the English-speaking world for *Daughter of the River*,

Summer of Betrayal, and K: The Art of Love. Her memoir, Daughter of the River, has been translated into thirty languages, and K: The Art of Love won the Premio Letterario Merck Award in 2005. Hong Ying currently resides in Beijing. Gary Xu is a scholar, author, translator, and art curator. He is a professor of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois. Shelly Bryant divides her year between Shanghai and Singapore, working as a poet, writer, and translator. She is the author of seven volumes of poetry, a pair of travel guides for the cities of Suzhou and Shanghai, and a book on classical Chinese gardens. Bryant's poetry has appeared in journals, magazines, and websites around the world, as well as in several art exhibitions. Her translation of Sheng Keyi's Northern Girls was long-listed for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2012. Nick Brown is a London-based musician and translator. Through his work in both fields, Brown has explored the languages and cultures of Europe, Asia, and North America.

A fascinating picture of a Chinese family and all the politics of sibling relationships. Also I was totally intrigued by the ritual of the funeral in China. I find it hard to believe that people in such a progressive country should still follow such incredible rituals and beliefs.

This book is not an easy read. No names are used for character's siblings etc....so it is very hard to follow. BUT, once I had the characters in place as to who they each belonged to, or where they fit into the story, it was a bit easier to read. It did take me a long time to get through the story because of this difficulty. I did enjoy learning about the main character and her journey through the time period in China.

Great writer. Good translation. Hongying is a unique novelist.

Good story. A bit confusing I stuck with it, it got better. I think the culture of not having names but place in family took a little time to get the rhythm of that. Overall good writing and story.

Horrible what she went through, but, while I read to the end, there was very little encouraging or surprising, other than the conditions and people were "sad".

Did not like it I did not even finish the story.

First of all - I got this book on Netgalley in exchange to my honest review. So on with the review. I always enjoy reading memoirs, and I've read quite a few that are about China. What always surprises me though, is the way people in China are portrayed. If this was just one book, I would think - yes, the author must be biased, maybe they're making it up, maybe they're painting it too strong. But two, three books? Two, three books - and I'm scared of China. Not even the regime - I'm scared of the people, of the culture. The author paints a very dark social scene in China - a scene with so many prejudices and dark beliefs that people hold in their hearts.. Where prejudice and opinion is more important than humanity. This isn't the first book I read where it's like this. Maybe it's because they are books written by immigrants, because they left, taking their pain? I found this book interesting, although extremely dark. I found the actions of almost all people completely impossible to understand - the lies, the righteousness, the mere reasons they do one thing or another, both for small and big things. Cultural gaps? Or do I just live in a completely different world? From the books I've read about China, I have to say books about Nazis scare me less. Because in those books, there are "bad guys" and the insanity is temporary. In memoirs like this, the darkness and insanity is NORMAL. Perhaps even proper? That's what chills you to the bone. Do read this book. It will open your eyes to the world around you. Maybe you will feel like the little world you live in is quite cozy and nice for a change.

It's difficult to tell from this translation how good or bad a writer Hong Ying may be. It's even difficult to know from it what she is trying to say. The translation is lazy, relying on illiterate Americanisms such as "get ahold of" and stock phrases such as "joined at the hip", which make the author sound uneducated and provincial. It's a lazy translation that stands in the way of the Chinese story she is trying to tell. This is the first of Hong Kong's books I have read. If I did not know of her reputation as an international author, I would not read another of her books. This translation does a disservice to the author.

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