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Red Rose, White Rose

By Ailing Zhang and Eileen Chang



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Red Rose, White Rose By Ailing Zhang and Eileen Chang

There were two women in Zhenbao's life: one he called his white rose, the other his red rose. One was a spotless wife, the other a passionate mistress. Isn't that just how the average man describe a chaste widow's devotion to her husband's memory - as spotless, and passionate too? Maybe every man has had two such women - at least two. Marry a red rose and eventually she'll be a mosquito-blood streak smeared on the wall, while the white one is 'moonlight in front of my bed'. Marry a white rose, and before long she'll be a grain of sticky rice that's gotten stuck to your clothes; the red one, by then, is a scarlet beauty mark just over your heart. In Eileen Chang's eloquent and evocative novella, Zhenbao is a devoted son, a diligent worker, and guarded in love. But when he meets a friend's spoilt, spirited, desirable wife, he cannot resist her charms, or keep their relationship under his control. As he succumbs to passions and resentments, "Red Rose, White Rose" is both sensual and restrained.



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Eileen Chang (1920-1995) was born into an aristocratic family in Shanghai. Chang studied literature at the University of Hong Kong, but the Japanese attack on the city in 1941 forced her to return to occupied Shanghai, where she was able to publish the stories and essays (collected in two volumes, *Romances*, 1944, and *Written on Water*, 1945) that soon made her a literary star. The rise of Communist influence made it increasingly difficult for Chang to continue living in Shanghai; she moved to Hong Kong in 1952, then emigrated to the United States three years later. In spite of the tremendous revival of interest in her work that began in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1970s, and that later spread to mainland China, Chang became ever more reclusive as she grew older. She died in Los Angeles in 1995.

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