



The Song of Everlasting Sorrow: A Novel of Shanghai (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

By Anyi Wang



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The Song of Everlasting Sorrow follows the adventures of Wang Qiyao, a girl born of the crowded, labyrinthine alleys of Shanghai's working-class neighborhoods. Infatuated with the glitz and glamour of 1940s Hollywood, Wang Qiyao seeks fame in the Miss Shanghai beauty pageant, and this fleeting moment of stardom becomes the pinnacle of her life. After the Communist victory, Wang Qiyao continues to indulge in the decadent pleasures of the Shanghai bourgeoisie, secretly playing mahjong during the antirightist campaign and exchanging lovers on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. She reemerges in the 1980s as a purveyor of "old Shanghai," only to become embroiled in a tragedy that echoes the Hollywood noirs of her youth.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Enamored by Hollywood in prerevolutionary China, Wang Qiyao serendipitously poses for a photograph that is chosen for the cover of *Shanghai Life* magazine. Dubbed A Proper Young Lady of Shanghai, she wins second runner-up in a 1946 beauty pageant and is soon mistress to a wealthy benefactor. After his death, marriage in her fallen state is out of the question, and Wang Qiyao embarks on a lonely, decades-long journey through Shanghai's myriad *longtang*, or vast neighborhoods inside enclosed alleys. In a beautifully constructed cyclical narrative from Wang Anyi (*Baotown*), fashion serves as the lens through which Wang Qiyao analyzes her descent from fleeting fame to desperate anonymity. Charting her fortunes becomes a metaphor for a vanished way of Shanghai life in this ingenious tale: friends and lovers come and go, Maoist China undergoes immense social and political changes (none explicitly detailed), yet Wang Qiyao finds that [t]here are only so many designs, and their rotation is what defines fashion. Only sometimes a cycle drags on too long. As the novel builds to its tragic conclusion, the manner in which character types and events recur against the city's shifting backdrop is impossible to forget. (Mar.)

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Review

Wang Anyi attempts to encapsulate the essence of her metropolis amid decades of twentieth-century vicissitudes. *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow: A Novel of Shanghai* is unquestionably the most acclaimed novel by one of China's most well-known authors. Michael Berry's translation is executed with care and is true to the original style.

(Robin Visser, assistant professor of Asian studies, University of North Carolina)

A beautifully constructed cyclical narrative... the manner in which character types and events recur against the city's shifting backdrop is impossible to forget.

(*Publishers Weekly* (Starred Review))

Michael Berry and Susan Chan Egan's graceful translation... helps us understand why Wang Anyi is one of the most critically acclaimed writers in the Chinese-speaking world.

(Francine Prose *New York Times Book Review*)

A genuine classic.

(Bradley Winterton *Taipei Times*)

Spellbinding, colorful... a page-turner right up to the end.

(Helene Williams *Historical Novels Review*)

Certain to take a preeminent place in China's literary canon... *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* is at last available in a masterful English translation.

(*World Literature Today*)

About the Author

Wang Anyi began her career as a writer in 1978. Her books in English include *Lapse of Time*, *Love in a Small Town*, *Love on a Barren Mountain*, *Brocade Valley*, and the novel *Baotown*, which was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book of the Year award. She currently lives in Shanghai and is a professor of Chinese literature at Fudan University. Michael Berry is associate professor of contemporary Chinese cultural studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the translator of several novels and the author of Jia Zhangke's *Hometown Trilogy*, *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film*, and *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers*. Susan Chan Egan, an independent scholar, is the author of *A Latterday Confucian: Reminiscences of William Hung 1893-1980* and coauthor of *A Pragmatist and His Free Spirit: The Half-Century Romance of Hu Shi and Edith Clifford Williams*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Timothy Rowe:

Precisely why? Because this *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow: A Novel of Shanghai* (Weatherhead Books on Asia) is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book have got such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking means. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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Darlene Lewis:

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