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A Leaf In The Bitter Wind

By Ting-Xing Ye



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One of the best ways to understand history is through eye-witness accounts. Ting-Xing Ye's riveting first book, *A Leaf in the Bitter Wind*, is a memoir of growing up in Maoist China. It was an astonishing coming of age through the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1974).

In the wave of revolutionary fervour, peasants neglected their crops, exacerbating the widespread hunger. While Ting-Xing was a young girl in Shanghai, her father's rubber factory was expropriated by the state, and he was demoted to a labourer. A botched operation left him paralyzed from the waist down, and his health deteriorated rapidly since a capitalist's well-being was not a priority. He died soon after, and then Ting-Xing watched her mother's struggle with poverty end in stomach cancer. By the time she was thirteen, Ting-Xing Ye was an orphan, entrusted with her brothers and sisters to her Great-Aunt, and on welfare.

Still, the Red Guards punished the children for being born into the capitalist class. Schools were being closed; suicide was rampant; factories were abandoned for ideology; distrust of friends and neighbours flourished. Ting-Xing was sent to work on a distant northern prison farm at sixteen, and survived six years of backbreaking labour and severe conditions. She was mentally tortured for weeks until she agreed to sign a false statement accusing friends of anti-state activities. Somehow finding the time to teach herself English, often by listening to the radio, she finally made it to Beijing University in 1974 as the Revolution was on the wane — though the acquisition of knowledge was still frowned upon as a bourgeois desire and study was discouraged.

Readers have been stunned and moved by this simply narrated personal account of a 1984-style ideology-gone-mad, where any behaviour deemed to be bourgeois was persecuted with the ferocity and illogic of a witch trial, and where a change in politics could switch right to wrong in a moment. The story of both a nation and an individual, the book spans a heady 35 years of Ye's life in China, until her eventual defection to Canada in 1987 — and the wonderful beginning of a romance with Canadian author William Bell. The book was published in 1997.

The 1990s saw the publication of several memoirs by Chinese now settled in North America. Ye's was not the first, yet earned a distinguished place as one of the most powerful, and the only such memoir written from Canada. It is the inspiring story of a woman refusing to "drift with the stream" and fighting her way through an impossible, unjust system. This compelling, heart-wrenching story has been published in Germany, Japan, the US, UK and Australia, where it went straight to #1 on the bestseller list and has been reprinted several times;

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A Leaf In The Bitter Wind By Ting-Xing Ye Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"An engrossing saga of one woman's turbulent life in Cultural Revolution China. I couldn't put it down."

—Jan Wong, author of *Red China Blues*

"...a moving account of struggle and fortitude..."—*The Globe and Mail*

"...lurks in my memory, demanding to be re-read and shared..."—*The Globe and Mail* Reader's Choice

"Ting-Xing Ye tells her story with such vividness of imagery and such a galloping momentum that the narrative reads like splendid fiction."—Patrick Kavanagh in the *Ottawa Citizen*

"This account of a woman's quest to gain ownership of her own life in the face of incredible adversity and devastating, compounding circumstance does not let go easily... It feels like an immersion, one from which you cannot instantly dry off after the last page."—*Horizons*

"as powerful as *Wild Swans*...."—*Northern Star* (Lismore, Australia)

"Ye writes vividly, with a deal of wry humour and an eye for the absurd... Despite the dark years of deprivation, separation and exile this book records, family relationships are at its heart... Guilt and resentment simmer as Ye and her siblings flail about in the political quicksands seeking, like all those about them, a path to social acceptance."—*The Australian*

"It's a page-turner that can be enjoyed as exquisite grassroots history, or as the simple story of one woman's triumph over brutish odds."—*Cityview*, USA

"Clearly, the writing was a very personal, painful process for Ting-Xing Ye, calling up the treasured memories of her devoted parents and their untimely deaths. We experience, along with her, a range of emotions... We learn to appreciate the true value of friendship, the precious love of family, and the strength and resilience of the human spirit."—East York Reading Association

"...fascinating yet horrifying..."—*The Barrie Examiner*

"Ye is not afraid to present herself in a bad light at times. It is all part of her reconciliation with the past... This profound document of oppression and courage is an essential read for anyone who cares at all about freedom."—*Cancontent*

From the Inside Flap

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From the Back Cover

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Antonio Duncan:

Book will be written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can understand everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Close to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A e-book A Leaf In The Bitter Wind will make you to be smarter. You can feel more confidence if you can know about anything. But some of you think this open or reading the book make you bored. It's not make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or suited book with you?

Derrick Robertson:

The book A Leaf In The Bitter Wind will bring one to the new experience of reading some sort of book. The

author style to spell out the idea is very unique. In case you try to find new book to see, this book very suited to you. The book A Leaf In The Bitter Wind is much recommended to you to learn. You can also get the e-book through the official web site, so you can more readily to read the book.

Melinda McKinney:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book could be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the guide untitled A Leaf In The Bitter Wind can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Zandra Woods:

That reserve can make you to feel relax. That book A Leaf In The Bitter Wind was vibrant and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book A Leaf In The Bitter Wind has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until young adults. For example Naruto or Investigation company Conan you can read and think that you are the character on there. So , not at all of book are usually make you bored, any it offers up you feel happy, fun and unwind. Try to choose the best book for you personally and try to like reading which.

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