



Life and Death in Shanghai

By Nien Cheng

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Here is the haunting, inspirational account of Nien Cheng's six-and-a-half years as a political prisoner during Communist China's Cultural Revolution. "A moving affirmation of the capacity for human endurance."--Los Angeles Times.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This gripping account of a woman caught up in the maelstrom of China's Cultural Revolution begins quietly. In 1966, only the merest rumblings of political upheaval disturbed the gracious life of the author, widow of the manager of Shell Petroleum in China. As the rumblings fast became a cataclysm, Cheng found herself a target of the revolution: Red Guards looted her home, literally grinding underfoot her antique porcelain and jade treasures; and she was summarily imprisoned, falsely accused of espionage. Despite harsh privation even tortureshe refused to confess and was kept in solitary confinement for over six years, suffering deteriorating health and mounting anxiety about the fate of her only child, Meiping. When the political climate softened, and she was released, Cheng learned that her fears were justified: Meiping had been beaten to death when she refused to denounce her mother. The candor and intimacy of this affecting memoir make it addictive reading. Its intelligence, passion and insight assure its place among the distinguished voices of our age proclaiming the ascendancy of the human spirit over tyranny. Cheng is now a U.S. resident. BOMC main selection; author tour.

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From Library Journal

Cheng's widely acclaimed book recounts in compelling specifics her persecution and imprisonment at the hands of Mao Zedong's "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976). Inquisitors accused her of being a "spy" and "imperialist," but during the harrowing years of solitary confinement she never gave in, never confessed a lie. We read this, not so much for historical analysis, but, like the literature of the Gulag in Russia, for an example of a humane spirit telling terrible truths honestly, without bitterness or cynicism. Highly recommended. BOMC main selection. Charles W. Hayford, History Dept., Northwestern Univ., Evanston, Ill.

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