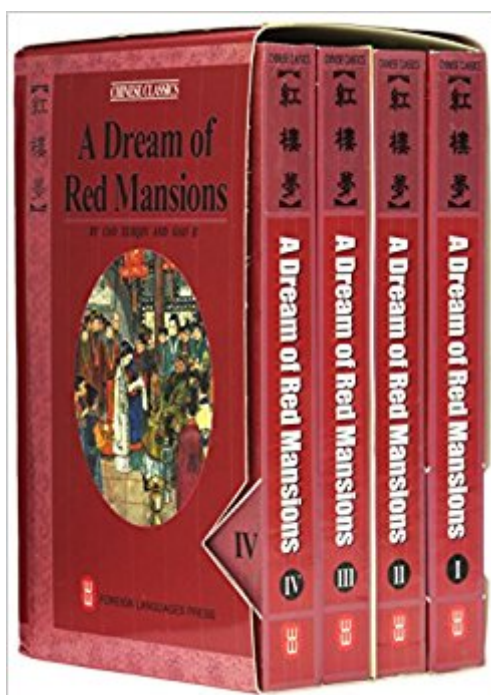


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A Dream Of Red Mansions (Chinese Classics, Classic Novel In 4 Volumes)



Synopsis

Also known as Hong Lou Meng, this is arguably China's greatest literary masterpiece. A chronicle of a noble family in the eighteenth century; but the splendor of enchanting gardens, pleasure pavilions, and daily life of the most sophisticated refinements hides the realities of decay and self-destruction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Cao Xueqin (1715? - 1763?) is the author of A Dream of Red Mansions. His personal name was Zhan, and his style (name adopted by a man at his coming of age), Mengruan. He was also known as Xueqin, Qinpu or Qinxi. His ancestral home was in what is now Liaoyang City, in Northeast China, and his forebears, although Han Chinese themselves, had been accepted into the Manchu Right White Banner. For three successive generations, a period of some 60 years, his ancestors had held the post of Textile Commissioner in Jiangning (present-day Nanjing). His paternal great grandmother, surnamed Sun, had been nursemaid to the infant who was later to become the Kangxi emperor's study companion and close attendant, accompanying him when he came to the throne on four of his six inspection tours of the south, a singular honor. After the death of Cao Yin, the family, under the headship of Cao Xueqin's father Cao Fu, continued to enjoy the emperor's favor, but when the Yongzhen emperor ascended the throne, Cao Fu was removed from his office and punished on charges of financial mismanagement and incompetence in the management of courier stations. The family property was confiscated, and the Caos' halcyon days came to an end. They moved to Beijing. Cao Xueqin, who had spent his childhood in pampered luxury, now shared the family's fate of a wretched existence. Dogged by poverty, he eventually moved to a rustic hovel on

the western outskirts of the capital. The death of his young son in 1762 was a crushing blow to Cao, from which he never recovered, and on February 12, 1763 he himself passed away. Cao Xueqin was haughty by nature, but an extremely talented literary man. His friend Dun Cheng compared his poems to those of the Tang Dynasty poet Li He, describing them as bold, solid and having the cold glitter of a knife blade. Unfortunately, all that survives of Cao's poetry is two lines of a poem dedicated to a play adapted by Dun Cheng from the famous Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi's long narrative poem Song of a Lute Player. Cao was also a painter who liked painting stones, in a style described by another friend, Dun Min, as sturdy. But Cao Xueqin's fame rests on his magnificent achievement in writing the full-length novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*. About the Translators: Yang Xianyi was born in Tianjin in 1915. His wife Gladys was born in England in 1919. They both graduated from Oxford University in the 1930s. They were married in 1940 in China. After teaching at several universities, they went to work for the National Compilation and Translation Bureau in 1943, in charge of translation of literary works. In 1952, they joined the Foreign Languages Press (now the China International Publishing Group) in Beijing, where Yang Xianyi worked as the chief editor of the magazine *Chinese Literature*. At the same time, he was a foreign literature research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a council member of the Chinese Writers Association and a council member of the Chinese Translators Association. For many decades, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang have devoted themselves to translating and research into Chinese and foreign literary legacies. Their translations of classic Chinese works of literature especially have brought them global fame, making a great contribution to the cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. Apart from their monumental translation of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, they have translated the *Elegy of Chu*, *Selections from the Records of the Historian*, *The Dragon King Daughter*, *The Courtesan's Jewel-box*, *The Man Who Sold a Ghost*, *Palace of Eternal Youth*, *The Scholars* and a number of works by the famous modern Chinese writer Lu Xun.

This is the story of a great Chinese family in decline. It is told mainly through the lives of the women and servants of the family and a boy who loved the company of the maids who surround him. The attention to every domestic detail is delightful. I think the story takes place in the 17th century. I don't think it can be read in a hurry. One needs to be alert while reading so it is not a bedtime book. Allow a year or so to enjoy it. I return to it again and again.

I love this story, I have read several different translated versions and this one seems to cover the most in a very condensed paper back. The Original book is over 5000 pages I think and that is

before the follow up author took it upon himself to finish the 1835 original unfinished work. Let's put it this way there are several movies the most recent with English sub titles is 28 episodes each an hour and a half long

This is one of the most interesting and profound novels I have read, a masterpiece of Chinese literature and a world class contribution. I genuinely enjoyed this translation of this 250-year old novel. The text flowed well and was clear and understandable. The Preface was well-written and extremely helpful to understanding this novel and the provenance of the text. Note that the original author had died after completing the first 80 chapters, and a different author made up the concluding 40 chapters. Those last 40 chapters were clearly not up to par, both in terms of literary quality, and in sticking to the character, spirit, and plot trajectory of the original novel. I therefore decided to stop reading at chapter 82 in Vol. 5. The original 80 chapters are a masterpiece however. The poetry therein stands out of itself as great literature. The descriptions and characterization are so realistic you feel as if you have known those people and places for years. I would say this is a must-read! I am studying Chinese and but my reading is not good enough to be able to read the original of this famous classic novel. What I really liked about this edition was having Chinese and English face to face, which helps me practice reading my Chinese. The English translation is generally good - it is easily readable, yet sticks closely to the Chinese original. It is not exact in some cases, especially when it comes to some of the names. Endnotes explain the meaning of the Chinese names, but there's relatively few of them so they don't disrupt the flow of the text. The 6 volumes are thick and heavy, and we are treated to a full page illustration in the style of Chinese painting every other chapter. That's about 60 paintings. The reason I give it a star less is the prevalence of typos. You're likely to encounter one every page or every few pages. Most were obvious and easy to correct, but it was rather annoying. A little more quality control in the typesetting would have helped.

a chinese classic, very well translated and a good read

Totally engrossing. The reader becomes enmeshed in the family and their day to day events. A great read. Reads like a diary.

Present Chinese culture rests on seven pillars. One of these is the sayings of Kung Fu Tse, the others are found embodied in the "Four Classics", of which this is one. An easy read, an easy

interpretation. Highly recommend for any traveler, and those who want to understand our Oriental Neighbor.

good book long on some chapter lots of explain but still good

This Chinese classic still has the power to surprise and delight. This edition has good footnotes and good translation, and nice illustrations, though there are some typos and the print is smaller than I'd like. I bought it used, and it was in very good condition.

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