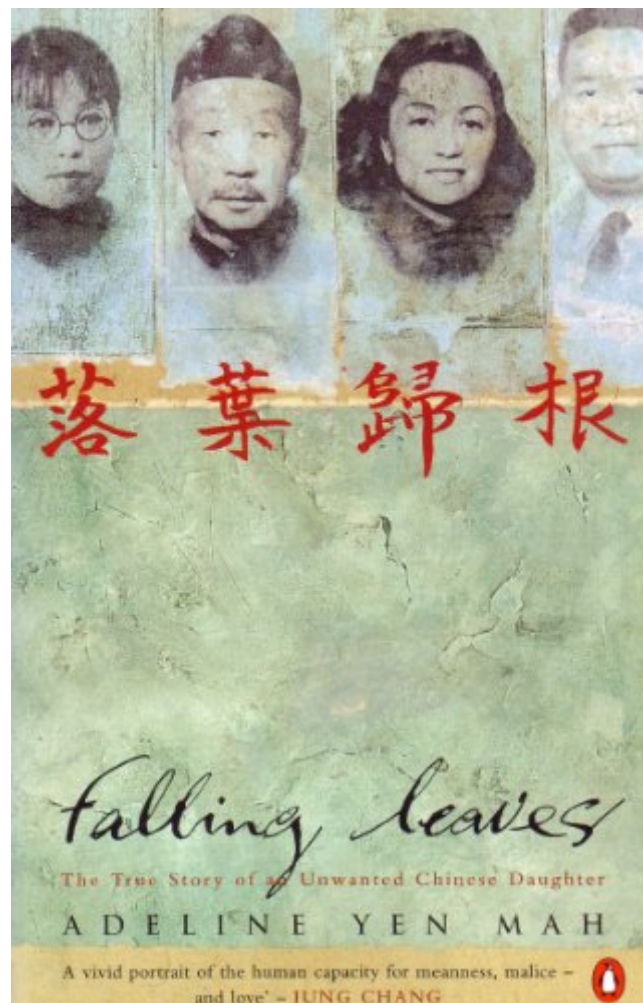




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Falling Leaves Return To Their Roots: The True Story Of An Unwanted Chinese Daughter



Synopsis

The story of an unwanted Chinese daughter growing up during the Communist Revolution, blamed for her mother's death, ignored by her millionaire father and unwanted by her Eurasian step mother. A story of greed, hatred and jealousy; a domestic drama played against the extraordinary political events in China and Hong Kong. Written with the emotional force of a novel but with a vividness drawn from a personal and political background. FALLING LEAVES has become a surprise bestseller all over the world.

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Customer Reviews

Kierkegaard writes of one imprisoned by a tyrant in a brazen bull and slowly tortured over a steady fire. The cries of the victim could not be heard so as to strike terror into the victim's heart. When the cries of the one imprisoned finally do reach the tyrant's ears, they sounded like sweet music. As men crowd around they say to the prisoner, "Sing for us soon again." This prisoner Kierkegaard calls the poet. The sweet music of Falling Leaves comes from such a tortured heart. Mah is a lyrical poet, singing of cruelty, bitterness, revenge, and finally the triumph of the heart's longing to belong. If you do not weep when you read this account of suffering, make an appointment with your

mortician.

Although this book was difficult at times to read, the author did keep me fascinated with her story. She has an ease of writing that very much feels as if she is having a conversation with the reader, and the book just flows. The story is one that is ageless: a man marries a woman and they have several children (in this case 5). When the youngest is born, the woman dies from complications, and the man in his loneliness quickly finds another woman to marry. He concerns himself more with outward appearances than with character, and ends up with wife #2 who is controlling, domineering, and wishes she had been wife #1 instead of wife #2. She really doesn't care for the fact that her husband has 5 children from wife #1, but no matter. Since her husband is weak and does as she wishes, she can treat them as she likes. Which isn't pleasant. Adeline is the youngest of the 5 siblings and therefore the recipient of not only her stepmother's wrath, but most often her 4 siblings as well. Unlike some children, Adeline never seems to truly stand up for herself, and that might be her personality or it might be cultural. Whatever it is, it defines her. Some reviewers here think Adeline is "whiny", especially after she reaches adulthood. Perhaps. However, if anyone knows somebody who was treated as though they were unwanted and/or unloved as a child - and my mother was such a one - then they might very well see the same behavior Adeline portrays as an adult. I thought this book was fascinating and a terrific tale of the healing power of the human spirit. At times I just wished I could have reached through the pages of this book and snatched Adeline away to a safe place where she could be nurtured and feel safe.

Oh, how I admire Adeline Yen Mah after having read *FALLING LEAVES*. I have always been in awe of the family loyalty trait of the Chinese, but I never knew just how far that loyalty could reach. Reading about Adeline's Niang and her cruelty, I have such a new appreciation for forgiveness. Adeline is my new heroine. My own suffering seems nothing compared to hers. I only wish this could be required reading for young people in America so they could truly understand the phrase, "God bless America!"

A memoir of a girl in China around the time of the revolution, and after, to current day. Thru no fault of her own, she was despised & mistreated by most of her family. The betrayals & wrongs just never stopped. But -- she prevailed, she made a great career & a happy marriage - & she kept her integrity. If the author ever reads this review, I want her to know that her story was a true epiphany for me - I realized that sometimes the cruelty of your family has very little to do with you. You gave

me courage, & some freedom, madam - thank you. The best revenge is a happy life! To you!

There was an incredible account of a young Chinese girl in a time of turmoil in the middle of the century full of turmoil, cruelty, and glimpses of love. I felt so deeply for this writer, who eventually became a doctor in the US. The only thing I missed in this book, and it certainly may have to do with past cultural expectations in that time, is feeling the emotion that I know was there. I just couldn't feel it from the words. But she writes so well, it is easy to imagine this child, who was treated so cruelly in her youth and young adulthood, and what such sad, lonely, fearful child might have felt.

I found this book very interesting, but I also wanted to hit her upside the head for letting her Father & StepMother (after she was an established doctor) order her around so much. And I couldn't believe she cared that much into her later life. She needed to get psychological help to overcome needing her parents approval. She had a family of her own & she should have been putting her focus on her own family - not her crummy parents. But I know adults who were abused as children & the only way they got over it was through therapy. Abused children have a hard time overcoming that kind of treatment. It is sad.

Book was yellowed by age, but was in good shape.

A must-read book for anyone who is interested in China and family relations/human psychology. Mah's story does NOT represent a typical Chinese family but her vivid descriptions certainly offer you lots of insights. It's the book that many people can relate to: the cruelty of physical/emotional abuse that she endured as a child, the COURAGE that carried her to personal triumph. It's not all about whining, but rather a basic human instinct to survive, to prevail. I actually cried (1st time since 15) when I read that her rich parents refused to buy her a plane ticket to the States. What makes it more horrifying is that her family was so affluent but treated her like dirt and the same makes her success so much more special. What puzzled me in the end was the fact that she kept coming back to the family that most people would want to forget once for all. Her childhood trauma certainly caused her longing for love and acceptance. One of the questions is why she looks for love and acceptance from a devious stepmother and other not too nice siblings? What's her personal relations with her own family and friends? Was she actually a little admiring her stepmother deep in her mind? Was she also interested in a share in the family fortune? Despite these unanswered questions I give this book a rating of five. Mah is a remarkable woman! The Memoir is equally incredible!!

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