



Memoirs of a Eurasian: A Novel

Vivian Yang

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In Shanghai's French Concession in 1944, a young Russian fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution from his homeland falls in love with a local teenager. She dies giving birth to a girl without his knowledge, and he is expelled from China along with most other Westerners following the Communist takeover in 1949. The daughter grows up to be a piano instructor and becomes an unwed mother herself in 1962. Her daughter Mo Mo, whose father remains a mystery to all but her reticent mother, is beautiful, intelligent, and ambitious. But she is a rare Eurasian in a politically radical and culturally homogenous society. We enter her bleak yet fascinating world cloaked to the West where Eurasian appearances are a double-edged sword, cherished and fetishized simultaneously. As the plot of this evocative novel twists and turns through the lost glorious days of the old Shanghai, the Sino-Soviet ideological split of the 1950s, the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, the economic reform that ensued in China, the bubble years in the 1980s Japan, and the 20th century Russian and Chinese immigration, a captivating story of one girl's courageous journey of overcoming extraordinary racial and socio-political circumstances unfolds ... Vivian Yang (www.VivianYang.net)'s "Memoir of a Eurasian" and "Shanghai Girl" are also available on Kindle. FIVE-STAR REVIEWS Memoirs of a Eurasian is a fascinating read in which the author audaciously explores the issues of inter-cultural, inter-racial, mother and daughter relationships rarely seen in other literary works on China. The story is about Mo Mo, a Eurasian growing up in racially homogenous China; her Eurasian family saga from the Russian Bolshevik Revolution to Shanghai's colonial past in the 1930s and 1940s; her coming of age stories during China's tumultuous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and her courageous journey to success through odds and adversities. The novel spanning almost the whole 20th century and involving quite a few international cities--each with its own local flavor and intrigue--provides a unique, intertwined story-line. The story is beautifully written, rich in metaphorical language, with a plethora of references from Chinese literature to Western literature. A truly remarkable literary feat. I highly recommend this compelling story. - Yinjie Qian Memoirs of a Eurasian is a riveting narrative spanning decades of 20th century history, from the Russian exile to Shanghai's French Concession to Cultural Revolution to Japan and beyond ... A captivating reading experience. - Virginia Heyler Vivian Yang's "Memoirs" provides a refreshingly unique take on Communist-era China. The majority of the story takes place in Shanghai's former European quarters (specifically, the French Concession) and follows Mo Mo (latova), a Chinese young woman whose Russian blood presents her with unique challenges as well as opportunities. Mo Mo's sophisticated first-person narration of the experiences of herself, her mixed-blood relatives, and the disenfranchised pre-Communist era (-- 1949) leisure- and working-class Christian converts over a course of decades makes it easy for readers to sympathize with her. The subject of the attitudes toward race and sex in homogenized greater China and Japan is explored here, as is China's recent economic boom and the revival it has brought to cosmopolitan Shanghai. It is a captivating tale of a distinctively private life unfamiliar to the Western readers amidst the turmoil of 20th century Chinese and Russian Diasporas and Communist rule in the most cosmopolitan city in China. Other settings are Hong Kong, Tokyo, and snippets of St. Petersburg and Warsaw, all relevantly linked and fleshed out in a tale with expected yet satisfying plot twists and turns. Perhaps embellished from her own life in China (the author bio indicates she emigrated as an adult), Yang is able to effectively create a dynamic story rich in history, culture, and psychology. - R.B., NYC

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