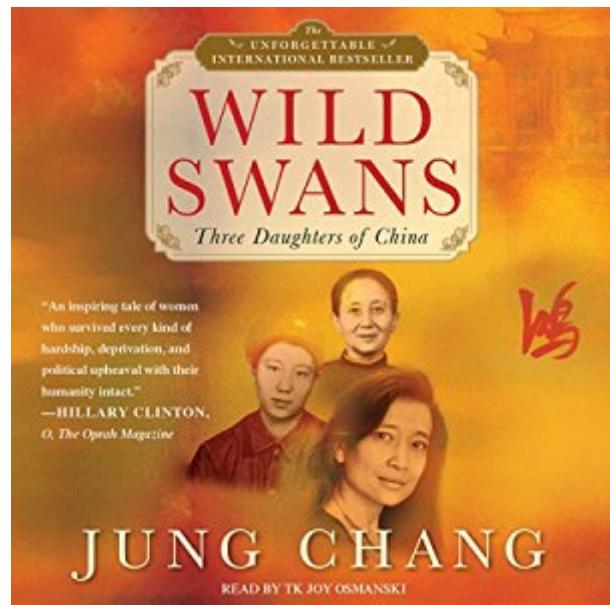


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Wild Swans: Three Daughters Of China



Synopsis

Few books have had such an impact as *Wild Swans*: a popular best seller that has sold more than 13 million copies, a critically acclaimed history of China, a tragic tale of nightmarish cruelty, and an uplifting story of bravery and survival. Through the story of three generations of women in her own family - the grandmother given to the warlord as a concubine, the Communist mother, and the daughter herself - Jung Chang reveals the epic history of China's 20th century. Breathtaking in its scope, unforgettable in its descriptions, this masterpiece is extraordinary in every way.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

When I sat down with *Wild Swans*, I had no expectations but to be informed and entertained by what I hoped would be a good book. I read to gain a personal understanding of the world in which we live through accounts and examples given by others of things I would never be able to experience first-hand. Never have I read a book that drew me in so powerfully and personally as Ms. Chang's *Wild Swans*. *Wild Swans* is epic in its historical backdrop moving untirelessly through the last century of China, roughly between the years 1911 and 1976, but this is no textbook. You will never feel as though you just entered a lecture hall and are sitting through a journalistic or pedantic analysis of these turbulent times. This is the story of the author Jung Chang, her mother, and her grandmother. It is through their lives that history unfolds and is exposed. From the end of Imperial China, through Japanese occupation, the Nationalist movement, the Civil War between the Kuomintang and the Communists, Communist takeover, Mao's Great Leap Forward starving tens of

millions to death, the Cultural Revolution turning a national identity upon it's head and breaking it's collective spirit in the process, to Mao Zedong's death, you will be amazed at what you learn in this book about the capacity of the heart to persevere and triumph. I couldn't help but to feel ashamed at the provincial life we are handed in our land of freedom, and at once be thankful that we are so endowed. Jung Chang explores her family so deeply that her subjects, such as her stoic father, a true believer in the Communist cause, and her grandmother, a veritable symbol through her bound feet of a time and place long gone, become indelibly etched upon the mind of the reader.

During dinner time one night, my sister and father developed a thoughtful conversation over the Communist revolution of China. My initial reaction was amazement. I had previously believed that my sister was like me: an American born Chinese completely unschooled in anything relating to our ethnicity. As I picked up scraps of their conversation, which coursed from the "Manchukuo" period under the Japanese rule to Mao's communist reign, I wondered how my sister had absorbed all of the information of this intensive period. To my relief, I discovered that I did not have to pick up a history text book in order to become familiar with Chinese history; I could instead visualize the past through a memoir of three generations of Chinese women in Jung Chang's *Wild Swans*. *Wild Swans* is insightful and descriptive in uncovering a tumultuous era that spans from 1924 to 1978. However, *Wild Swans* is more than a chronicle of China's events during this period; Chang's book is an account of how war and revolution personally affected Jung's grandmother, her mother, and herself. The moving stories of these courageous and characteristically different women bring life and meaning to China's twentieth century cultural revolution. Chang's chapter titles are clever; her writing style is direct, needing little embellishment in order to retell the fascinating lives of her family. Chang also discusses how the three women are molded by the societal trends of each generation. Educative and personal, *Wild Swans* is a tribute to family and friends, and a celebration of the lives of "Three daughters of China.

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