



The Song of Everlasting Sorrow: A Novel of Shanghai (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

Wang Anyi

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Set in post-World War II Shanghai, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* follows the adventures of Wang Qiyao, a girl born of the longtong, the crowded, labyrinthine alleys of Shanghai's working-class neighborhoods.

Infatuated with the glitz and glamour of 1940s Hollywood, Wang Qiyao seeks fame in the Miss Shanghai beauty pageant, and this fleeting moment of stardom becomes the pinnacle of her life. During the next four decades, Wang Qiyao indulges in the decadent pleasures of pre-liberation Shanghai, secretly playing mahjong during the antirightist Movement and exchanging lovers on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. Surviving the vicissitudes of modern Chinese history, Wang Qiyao emerges in the 1980s as a purveyor of "old Shanghai"—a living incarnation of a new, commodified nostalgia that prizes splendor and sophistication—only to become embroiled in a tragedy that echoes the pulpy Hollywood noirs of her youth.

From the violent persecution of communism to the liberalism and openness of the age of reform, this sorrowful tale of old China versus new, of perseverance in the face of adversity, is a timeless rendering of our never-ending quest for transformation and beauty.

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