



The North China Lover: A Novel

By Marguerite Duras

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Far more daring and truthful than any of her other novels, *The North China Lover* is a fascinating retelling of the dramatic experiences of Duras's adolescence that shaped her most famous work. Initially conceived as notes toward a screenplay for *The Lover*, this later novel, written toward the end of her life, emphasizes the tougher aspects of her youth in Indochina and possesses the intimate feel of a documentary.

Both shocking and enthralling, the story Duras tells is “so powerfully imagined (or remembered) that it . . . lingers like a strong perfume” (*Publishers Weekly*). Hailed by the French critics as a return to “the Duras of the great books and the great days,” it is a mature and complex rendering of a formative period in the author's life.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Hailed in France as "an incomparable pleasure," Marguerite Duras's 1991 novel is a spare, beautiful retelling of the dramatic experiences of her own adolescence. More daring and truthful than any book she wrote previously -- including *The Lover*, it emphasizes the realities of her youth in Indochina and reveals much that her earlier works concealed.

From Publishers Weekly

The veteran French author, who scored a considerable success with *The Lover*, here zeroes in much more closely on the passionate affair between her young self, a French teenager at a school in Indo-China in the early 1930s, and the spoiled young son of a Chinese millionaire. Beginning as bare notes toward a film script (Duras wrote the script for *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*), the story quickly takes on its own intense, exotic flavor. The febrile sexuality of the young girls at the school, the languid emotionalism of the Chinese lover, the splendid cars, the melancholy American dance music, the open roads across the rice paddies under wide rainy skies, the cinemas and nightclubs, and finally the ocean liner that takes her tragic family back to France--Duras evokes all this with the utmost economy but the most telling atmospheric force. No doubt her lean, haunting prose reads even more beautifully in the original French, but Duras's story is so powerfully imagined (or remembered) that its blend of passion and cynicism lingers like a strong perfume. Irresistible for grownup romantics.

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Review

An original and powerful book, with the brutal honesty of a black-and-white documentary. -- *Chicago Tribune*

The North China Lover sends a strange thrill through you. . . There is a strangeness in [this] novel that is its own, a quality that keep[s] this story from being reduced, and in the end makes it, for all its brevity, immense. -- *New York Times Book Review*

Users Review

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John Minnis:

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