



The Lost Garden: A Novel (Modern Chinese Literature from Taiwan)

Ang Li

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In this eloquent and atmospheric novel, Li Ang further cements her reputation as one of our most sophisticated contemporary Chinese-language writers. The Lost Garden moves along two parallel lines. In one, we relive the family saga of Zhu Yinghong, whose father, Zhu Zuyan, was a gentry intellectual imprisoned for dissent in the early days of Chiang Kai-shek's rule. After his release, Zhu Zuyan literally walled himself in his Lotus Garden, which he rebuilt according to his own desires. Forever under suspicion, Zhu Zuyan indulged as much as he could in circumscribed pleasures, though they drained the family fortune. Eventually everything belonging to the household had to be sold, including the Lotus Garden. The second storyline picks up in modern-day Taipei as Zhu Yinghong meets Lin Xigeng, a real estate tycoon and playboy. Their cat-and-mouse courtship builds against the extravagant banquets and decadent entertainments of Taipei's wealthy businessmen. Though the two ultimately marry, their high-styled romance dulls over time, forcing them on a quest to rediscover enchantment in the Lotus Garden. An expansive narrative rich with intimate detail, The Lost Garden is a moving portrait of the losses incurred as we struggle to hold on to our passions.

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