



Lili

Annie Wang

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Like so many of her young compatriots, Lili Lin lives on the margins of society—she has been jailed for “having a corrupt lifestyle and hooliganism,” and at 24 she is unemployable because she doesn’t have connections and unmarriageable because she isn’t a virgin. Estranged from her parents, restless and cynical, she drifts from day to day. Then she meets an American journalist infatuated with China, who gradually opens her eyes to what is happening. Together they embark on a journey that will profoundly change Lili’s view of her country and of herself.

Lili Details

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Anomy says

This book is one of the milestones of my life. It is beautiful. It is like a ripple in the water, every time I read it, the more of an impact it makes on me.

Laine says

Don't know if i liked it. Reads quite poorly in places whereas in others the digging into cultural differences are amazingly insightful. The changes that occur to Lili are not quite believable but the descriptions of poverty at the margins of Chinese society are fascinating. In parts, its a great, eye-opener. In others its just soppy fluff. Fluff is acceptable because of the insights on Chinese life during the cultural revolution and up thru to the tieneman standoff. There was enough interesting stuff to keep me reading to the very annoying end.

Monica says

Can't say I hated it but it also isn't a favorite. Parts of this book were fascinating but then some parts were slow. I just think it took the character to long to change and she never really opened up. Got invested in the character without her really going anywhere

Saya says

Clearly a first book; the characterisation of the love interest was slightly nauseating but otherwise good for a no-brainer.

Fay Hensley says

This was an unexpected very good read. I started this without knowing what to expect and what I found was an emotional story of self struggle in an undemocratic society that really didn't have a lot of respect for woman at the time. What I loved the most, Lili was not afraid to be who she wanted to be and or really q...uestion who it was that she wanted to become. The price she paid during her lifes journey was not but painful to read. I'm not afraid to admit, but this one did make me cry. I highly recommend this book. It will definitely teach you a few things you may not have known and give you an appreciation for what you have.

Rachel says

I've read several historical novels set in China that were wonderfully written and that had brilliantly portrayed characters, but, unfortunately, this was not one of them. The main character has very low self-esteem due to having been traumatized as a young teen, and, believing that she has been ruined and is unworthy of experiencing true love, she throws herself into a lifestyle that her country calls "hooliganism," i.e., being a part of gang culture, consuming alcohol and partying, and being extremely promiscuous. Even though Lili does meet a man who truly loves her despite her past, she has difficulty believing this and doesn't feel worthy of him, and the book ends with him having been required to return to the United States and with her in China believing that she has no place other than in China and that she is unworthy of going to him in order to be his bride even though she does love him and had lived with him when he had been living in China. I found it sad that Lili never truly grows as a person or recovers from her past and that she is so passive in life; she lets life happen to her and is unwilling to do anything to change it. The book also has a really slow pace to it and far too much focus on politics for my taste; however, I will grant that it is decently written for a book written in a second language. Overall though, I just didn't like it much.

Nora Bryant says

I thought that this was a very interesting and also educational "feelings walk" through the mind's eye of a Tiananmen Chinese girl's coming to terms with her cultural upbringing and attempts to find herself within all of that and the history going on around her as well as the decisions she has to make for herself as a person as her life unfolds with the coming of age for every human being.

It is very interesting to try to get inside the old Chinese ways and thoughts, accepted way of acting and living as compared to American life and the distinct differences.

Annie Wang does not try to tell which way is "right" in her book, but does give the reader a chance to understand where her character and subsequently a Tiananmen Chinese of this time and age is coming from in thought and culture-shaping opinion.

Sheila says

Easy to read. But expected a bit more of historical events. It took a while to get into the details of Tiananmen. This book was about a girl named Lili and what she went through in life living in China during this time period.

Cmorice says

Chine des années 1980 et évocation de Tiennamen...

Marci says

The author is a good story teller, but when the voice (whoever voice it may be) becomes politically charged or opinionated, it all sounded like the same voice. Enjoyed the story when the judgements weren't being

voiced.

Latrevia says

I loved this book! It made me understand China better and it's quest in what it's trying to achieve. Also, it made me realize how each government portrays how they want to be, but the reality is much more skewed. Therefore, it's imperative that we ensure that whomever we vote for, whether mayor or president, we should hold them accountable and ensure they set out to do what's best for us. This book reminded me that I have a voice, and in the end I was inspired and literally jumping up and down!

Jessica says

I enjoyed this book not because I felt that it was particularly well written, but because I really liked the juxtaposition between Lili, a Chinese "hoolagin", and Roy, an American journalist. Seeing the way they interacted opened eyes to how Chinese view their culture which is misunderstood by many Americans. I would recommend to anyone who is interested in learning about modern China.

Giulia Cavallari says

This book felt like climbing a mountain. It started out boring as hell, and in the end I did not want it to finish. The climb was worth the view. On average a three stars, as I can't avoid wondering what it would have been if the beginning wasn't that difficult to pass through. The title is misleading. It isn't a novel of Tiananmen, but rather a novel that led to Tiananmen on the personal and sociopolitical level.

Estella Qing says

Whilst I very much enjoyed the colourful and frank portrayal of the socio-political environment of 1980s China, the storyline is essentially a shallow schoolgirl fantasy (Wang even states that she began this at 16). A fantasy where a damsel in distress is rescued by a wealthy American - throw in themes of poverty, suffering, and Tiananmen Square, and you've enraptured your western audience.

Shelley says

Wow--how life can change on a dime and be forever altered. One more sad story of how the cultural revolution with noble goals destroyed lives. Lili becomes a hooligan but then gets involved with an American journalist. She struggles to sort out her life, what to do with it, her conflicting feelings about China and just about everyone. Yes--read it.
