

# Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter

By Adeline Yen Mah

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**Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter** By Adeline Yen Mah

"Riveting. A marvel of memory. Poignant proof of the human will to endure."  
—Amy Tan.

"Brilliant, compelling, and unforgettable. A heart-rending modern day Cinderella story set against the turbulence of 20th century China. Autobiography at its best."  
—Nien Chang, author of *Life and Death in Shanghai*.

"Charged with emotion...A vivid portrait of the human capacity for meanness, malice—and love." —Jung Chang, author of *Wild Swans*.

"Fascinating and heart-rending stuff...a harrowing story of emotional cruelty."  
—*The Times of London*

**International bestseller.**

**The emotionally wrenching yet ultimately uplifting memoir of a Chinese woman struggling to win the love and acceptance of her family.**

In this compelling memoir that scaled bestseller lists in England, Australia, and Hong Kong, Adeline Yen Mah chronicles her painful childhood growing up in a wealthy yet abusive Chinese family. The unwanted daughter scorned by her family, young Adeline dreamed of freedom and independence, ultimately escaping to the West to launch a successful career in medicine.

When Adeline's mother died giving birth to her, she was deemed bad luck and ostracized by her family. Then her father took a beautiful Eurasian bride and Adeline soon fell victim to the wrath of her stepmother. Treated as a pariah, she was shuttled off to boarding schools, bullied by her siblings, and deprived of the beautiful clothes and things given to the rest of the family.

Moving from Shanghai and Hong Kong to London and the United States, *Falling Leaves* is an enthralling saga of a prosperous Chinese family set against a background of changing political times and the collision of East and West. Written in haunting prose, it evokes all the suspense and emotional force of a satisfying novel.

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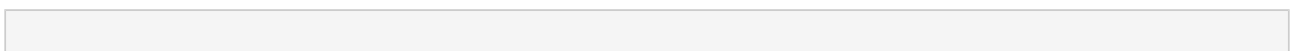
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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Snow White's stepmother looks like a pussycat compared to the monster under which Adeline Yen Mah suffered. The author's memoir of life in mainland China and--after the 1949 revolution--Hong Kong is a gruesome chronicle of nonstop emotional abuse from her wealthy father and his beautiful, cruel second wife. Chinese proverbs scattered throughout the text pithily convey the traditional world view that prompted Adeline's subservience. Had she not escaped to America, where she experienced a fulfilling medical career and a happy marriage, her story would be unbearable; instead, it's grimly fascinating: *Falling Leaves* is an Asian *Mommie Dearest*.

#### From Publishers Weekly

Although the focus of this memoir is the author's struggle to be loved by a family that treated her cruelly, it is more notable for its portrait of the domestic affairs of an immensely wealthy, Westernized Chinese family in Shanghai as the city evolved under the harsh strictures of Mao and Deng. Yen Mah's father knew how to make money and survive, regardless of the regime in power. In addition to an assortment of profitable enterprises, he stashed away two tons of gold in a Swiss bank, and eventually the family fled to Hong Kong. But he was indifferent to his seven children and in the thrall of a second wife who makes Cinderella's stepmother seem angelic. His first wife, Yen Mah's mother, died at her birth, and the child, considered an ill omen, was treated with crushing severity. But she was encouraged by the love of an aunt and eventually made her way to the U.S., where she became a doctor, married happily and, ironically, was the one her father and stepmother turned to in their old age. In recounting this painful tale, Yen Mah's unadorned prose is powerful, her insights keen and her portrait of her family devastating.

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#### From Library Journal

This dramatic autobiography by a writer and doctor begins with the reading of a will that mystifies, then flashes back to recount events in a truly unpleasant family of seven brothers and sisters, a cruel French-Chinese stepmother, and a rich, uncaring father. In 1937, Adeline's mother died giving birth to her in Tienjin, marking her forever as bad luck. The family moved to Shanghai, then Hong Kong, with trips to Monte Carlo, London, and, finally, California for Adeline. In the meantime, with World War II, the Communist takeover in 1949, Maoism, the Cultural Revolution, and the return of Hong Kong to mainland China. Mostly, however, rivalries, jealousies, injustice, neglect, conniving, backbiting, and betrayal dominate this family. An intriguing tale, though it says less about China than about one particular Chinese family; for contemporary China collections. ?Kitty Chen Dean, Nassau Coll., Garden City, Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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#### Robert Frye:

This *Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter* book is just not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper you read a lot of information

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**Robert Zamora:**

As people who live in typically the modest era should be update about what going on or details even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which can be always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what kind you should start with. This *Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter* is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and want in this era.

**Shannon Silva:**

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