

## goodreads.com reviews



Mar 24, 2021

**Sebastian Kelly** rated it

it was amazing

Do you know what's special about books like this? It's raw and it's so personalized, we all relate to the characters and their hurdles. One instance is J, a strong-willed empowered woman with courage and knows what she wants. She is inspirational, especially to our time surrounded by people with their judgments. This teaches us to grow a part of us like her, as courageous and steadfast.

It's one of the most genuine and sincere stories I've read, I will probably re-read this again with a ready heart. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 24, 2021

**Jackson BROOKS** rated it

it was amazing

The Education of Jennie Wang gives me a nostalgic feeling, even when it is dated, it gives me a feeling that I am involved. The characters are so genuine, each having distinct attitudes making them each special in their

own ways. It is not a typical story that we long a happy ending, it doesn't even give a hint where and how it will end. A new and thrilling book, a story of resistance and courage. We all need to meet J because we all have been like her at some point in our life.

Highly recommended!

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[Mar 24, 2021](#)

**[Henry WATSON](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

A compelling book that opens our eyes to contemporary issues that need to be in the spotlight. Jennie Wang made sure that we feel the characters and can relate to their experiences, even to the point we want to get inside and be in the same setting as the characters. I love the fact that J also highlighted the stories of the other characters, it made us feel their presence and impact on the life of J.

Such a timeless story! This book deserves recognition.

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[Mar 24, 2021](#)

**[Daniel JAMES](#)** rated it  
really liked it

The book gave me a long ride in the early life of Wang, and it made me feel a mixture of thrill and relief at the same time. The story was happening so fast, I didn't go get a grasp of all the events but the feelings remained and stacked up. Even though it was heavy, the author made it lighter. The book gave us an education about the history of the cultural revolution, and the importance of education.

An eye-opening book, this generation should definitely read this!

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[Mar 24, 2021](#)

**[Michael RAMIREZ](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

The book *The Education of Jennie Wang* is a book based on real events—keeping a record of the happenings in her diaries and memoirs. This is a story aimed at everyone, for it is a fair mix of relationships of families and character growth. It focuses on various social issues that are also relevant in today's time. I love this book, the writing techniques that are used and the use of language fits the mood of the story.

In addition, it also made use of illustrations that added more depth to the stories and gave readers a vision to picture out the characters and the events. Overall, a compelling book that is both informative and full of life realizations.

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Mar 23, 2021

**Camila GARCIA** rated it  
it was amazing

A story so genuine and tragic, this book is not just a simple memoir, it's a timeless masterpiece.

Jennie Wang pulled off an amazing novel with a lot of stories and lessons to offer. This may be a book about her, but the way the book is written made me feel like she wanted us to see a young girl on her own adventure and not just the polished person she has become.

I admire the way of writing, it's a mix between reading a private letter and feeling like you've been where the author described. I can imagine Shanghai in all its glory even though I have never been there. I can see the characters, their expressions as they struggle, and the little details the author wished to come across.

A great read, this book is phenomenal, given more recognition and it might just become the most well-liked memoirs of the 20th century. ([less](#))

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Mar 23, 2021

**Aria MARTINEZ** rated it  
it was amazing

A beautiful story of education, resistance, and the importance of pulling through the destruction that is thrown in your way. The main character

thrives on society that has placed a man's value on his money and status, said society is facing a threat caused by cultural revolution and she has to make sure that not only will she get through the revolution, but she must also maintain an educated person.

What I love about J is her ability to not get sidetracked, she has a goal and she aims for it, there may be people and events that try to hinder her path but she finds support from both her peers and herself. This book sends such a powerful message and I'm glad I'm able to see it.

Many praises to the author for giving us a powerful historical perception and profound experience from a scarred time. I really enjoyed reading about China's culture and compared it to what we see today.

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[Mar 23, 2021](#)

**Lucas COX** rated it  
it was amazing

Jennie Wang, a student from Shanghai was determined to take her education into her own hands when a tragic occurrence fell upon their community. The book is an intertwined set of stories that all involve J, the stories really had their impacts on the main character and you can see how she changed in accordance to what stories the people around her led.

I think the best thing about the book is that J is not only the main character, when someone's story is told she shares the spotlight and becomes a side character for the character, and she takes it as a lesson.

Beautiful writing, amazing backstory, and satisfying ending, this book has checked all the squares. If given the chance I will reread this and revisit the passages I may have not understood fully. Hope this book goes down in history. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 23, 2021

**James BAILEY** rated it  
really liked it

The memoir of Jennie Wang exceeded all the expectations I had for it. J's story is inspiring, it starts with the narration of events that lead to the cultural revolution, the trials J faced while getting through a society wherein your status matters more than anything.

From the start you can see that the main character is smart, she is determined and passionate and will do anything it takes to reach her goals, in this case- a proper education. Following her journey was amazing, I got to also meet relevant people in her life and understood why she had to meet them in the end, the book was J's whole character development, and I'm glad I read through it.

If I could rate this book, I would give it 4 stars out of 5. It's beautiful enough as it is, with the right mixture of sentimental and factual yet there were small scenes I didn't feel should be included.

Overall, a great book and one that should be read by a lot more people.

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Mar 23, 2021

**Liam Holiday** rated it  
really liked it

A story about dedication amidst tragedy, Jennie Wang really pieced together an amazing work of literature that stands out among the rest. The Education of Jennie Wang is inspiring and relevant even in today's youth.

The story takes place in the 1960s, burdened by the death of her teacher, and being kicked out of school, J decided to take her education into her own hands and attain the highest possible form of education. The author describes the sequence of events clearly, with each scene unfolding just as easily as the last one with her way of words. I especially love how even if the author experienced what the main character did firsthand, the narration was done as if we are seeing J take on this adventure without knowing what will happen next.

I love the plot, the writing style, and overall impact of this book, a work that needs to be recognized and praised. Kudos to the author for pulling off such a marvelous book!

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[Mar 22, 2021](#)

[Tironia Wilson](#) rated it  
it was amazing

A memoir of a young girl who chases her dreams amidst the crisis across their country.

In order to establish Mao's definition of "new world" in building a socialist China, he introduces his revolutionary ideas to the people, particularly to the young generations. His new beliefs, myths, and an alien system of thought and practice are passed down to the next generation.

Mao believes that the bourgeoisie will corrupt the mind and the revolutionary will of the youngsters. And to preserve the revolutionary spirit of the rising generation he proposed the concept of "class struggle during the period of peaceful transformation", in which the youth are enforced to go down to the countryside to live there and work together with the barbarians. Mao insisted that college students, intellectuals, professionals, celebrities as well as cadres, and office workers need to be reeducated by the peasants to conserve their "Red Blood" inside and out.

I know a great number of countries that belittles the work of the farmers but with Mao's revolutionary ideology, he made them realize how hard it is for the farmer to endeavor so the people of their nation would eat something on their plate. Although it was a hard job for the city girls, they learned something along the process.

In our family, our parents used to teach us not to waste our food for every grain of rice is a drop of sweat from a farmer's brow. I hope others will also appreciate their efforts. They are the men and women who work in the searing heat and bitter cold, they are the laborers who rise with the sun to tend their crops. They are the backbone of every country.

This has been a bewildering journey with Jennie Wang. And I wish I could read more of her life stories. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 22, 2021](#)

[Tray Girard](#) rated it  
it was amazing

It is very unusual and disturbing that polygamy exists before. Wherein, J's Uncle Union had 2 wives and 5 children. In other nations, polygamous marriages are fueling poverty, neglecting one family over another, leaving thousands of women and children impoverished and easy prey for exploitation. Whereas, poverty and exploitation are very prevalent in China as well.



Other than its discussion on political ideologies, it also talks about Arranged marriages which have been around for a while and sti [...more](#)

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[Mar 22, 2021](#)

[Jeremy Wilson](#) rated it  
it was amazing

"I will not let the mistakes of government policy stop my education! If school will never open, I will have to complete my own education one way or another, sooner or later to the highest level attainable. No one shall stop me."

J is someone you wouldn't want to underestimate. Her willingness to learn is anomalous. I am ashamed as I do not enjoy learning as much as she does. We do have a few common qualities and one of them is our love for books. She shows her strong desire to learn English and explore literature, despite the Cultural Revolution in their country which resulted in the shutting down of schools, she didn't lose hope and continue to seek knowledge with the help of everyone close to her heart.

Other than the political aspect tackled in the story, it also emphasizes the roles of men and women in society. There's great stress or emphasis on patriarchy, whereas dividing societal rights, privileges, and power primarily along the lines of sex, results in the oppression of women and privileging men.

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Mar 22, 2021

**Anthonet James** rated it  
really liked it

What I love in this book is it isn't just explored the in-depth political issues a decade ago, but the author also subtly dropped some important topics into the story. Whereas, she had so much more to say but did it in a way that would not confuse her readers. The memoir isn't one of those books that you read compulsively, furious to find out what awaits in the next page. It is, in fact, a better read when you read it slowly, little by little, gradually in a way that allows you to savor every word and absorb the power and the magic it contains. It's going to take a while for this book to fully sink in, but overall this was a masterpiece. I feel like I was just given a history lesson but in the most emotionally damaging way possible.

Nothing I say will ever make this book justice. So, trust me when I say it's a worthwhile read. Try and read it so you can justify my words.

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Mar 22, 2021

**Juliet Lawrence** rated it  
it was amazing

I never imagined that I would love every bit and piece of this book. I thought it is a typical story of a young woman, a good student who wishes to complete her education at the highest level attainable and I regret underestimating such a great book. I cannot believe how attached I became to the characters and the overall story. There are a lot of them whom you will love but others you'll despise.

This book had me on a roller coaster ride of emotions and I want to ride it one more.

I like how J achieves the epiphany of what's happening in their country after a few pages. She's pretty uninformed and unknowledgeable to how this movement will impact the lives of the people until she felt the guilt towards her teacher's suicide because of her indirect involvement in it. This is a book that tackles so much about life. Some are inspiring but most of them are dark.

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[Mar 20, 2021](#)

[Stella Landry](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Demise, youth, life itself, and its conundrum were put together in a book.

There's a lot that goes through this book. I don't have enough words to describe how dynamic and provoking it was. It opened my eyes to culture and issues in China that I haven't heard of before, even though it's only a tiny fraction of what there is to know about their country, I feel like I've gained so much knowledge through Jennie Wang's storytelling.

I'm not confident enough to claim that my clumsy words would give this story justice. But I'm sure time will speak for itself, I'm certain that this would remain in even decades and generations after another. There's nothing more I wish but this book to have its place in every reader's heart. Even if you don't normally read this kind of genre, give this one a chance. I swear, this is something in your life, you wouldn't regret doing. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 20, 2021

**Lovely Caron** rated it  
really liked it

I don't know what to say about this book. I literally cannot gather my emotions to write them down at first. After reading the first page I already expected this to be good but that still blew me away with how engaging and impactful it was.

We are all flawed creatures, all of us. But being flawed doesn't mean hopelessness. It doesn't mean forsaken. No one said to give up. We shouldn't be suffering while our mouths are close and conforming to what they want. We don't need to let our questions pending and leave them behind.

We have so much power than we allow ourselves to think. We have the potential to fight if we only knew how to speak for what we believe is right. There's a reason why they don't look for teenagers for guidance on fraught issues and prevalent affairs in our society. Because youth are the powerful pawns.

That's why you should treasure your education for it is the only foundation that no one can ever steal.

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Mar 20, 2021

**Tristan Cameron** rated it

it was amazing

It really does a good job of giving a wide scope of China's Culture. After reading this, you will walk away with significantly more knowledge and awareness. I'm madly in love and I will never stop talking about how dear and close this book is to my heart. I am running out of ways to look for anything that will make me hate this book. And I bet you wouldn't be a hole in it too.

This has shed light on problems that the Chinese had experienced to a great extent. Whether socially, politically, in culture, or in morals. It just didn't show me a new perspective but a reflection of the darker side of reality.

It is definitely an eye-opener. Can you imagine a high schooler joining activism rather than going to school? It is just unbelievable but it often happens to a lot of countries.

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[Mar 20, 2021](#)

[Trisha Gagne](#) rated it  
really liked it

I never thought this book would be a sadder and darker story. But if through reading this story many people across the globe including my countrymen will learn what happened in China in the past, I appreciate what it was for. It's more important to learn others' culture and their days of yore than anything else to break the barriers between the countries and diversify your reading practices. It's an honor to read books written by different people from different cultures because it helps you learn numerous facts about the other's culture.

I'm beyond the bounds excited to read more from Jennie Wang's work in the future. Her writing felt sincere, forthright, and genuine. This something I would definitely recommend to my friends. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 20, 2021](#)

[Elena Dube](#) rated it  
it was amazing

In 1967, J made a wish to complete her education against all odds and despite all the obstacles. She saw how the economy of her country crippled, how millions of lives were ruined, and how the revolution thrust China into 10 years of turmoil, bloodshed, hunger, and stagnation. From thereon she dedicated herself to education to get a better hold of what's happening in their country. Private Tutors were hired for her to enhance her English. She also borrowed textbooks from her relatives to obtain a higher learning ability.

Overall, my reading experience with this memoir of a good student was purely positive. It brought a fresh stance to a highly sensitive topic in China. This book is beyond impressive, from the personality of our main character to her story, you will love it without a doubt. If you're still having any second thoughts about reading this, I recommend you to invest in it right now. Trust me, it's worth your time.

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[Mar 19, 2021](#)

[Zoey HERNANDEZ](#) rated it  
it was amazing

This story happened in 1966, where gangs of teenagers in red armbands and military fatigues roamed the streets of Beijing and Shanghai and raided the houses of those with "bourgeois" clothes or reactionary haircuts. "Imperialist" street signs were torn down. These Red Guards destroyed paintings, books, and furniture; all were items that they viewed as part of the Four Olds. Books before were as valuable as gold and even the families' long-kept genealogy books were burned to ashes. All these vicious tortures have led to people committing suicide. After J's entanglement in her teacher's suicide, she had stopped getting involved in any student activism for she was caged in guilt and what happened made a scar in her heart. Behind those smiles, we have our own battles to fight. Behind those scars is the untold story of survival.

A book that you would want to share with anyone. To have it at night and read it in a warm bed with the windows open while the stars are shining bright.

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[Mar 19, 2021](#)

**[Riley YOUNG](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

"It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop." - Confucius

With our current situation, this book will definitely motivate us to continue and move forward against all odds. What happened in 1966 was very similar to our situation right now, whereas students were deprived of education because of the on-going crisis of COVID-19. The coronavirus pandemic has turned the spotlight on one of the problems that haven't been resolved until now:

making education accessible to all, under any circumstances. Although distance learning is a self-paced one, keeping the students to push throughout is another issue. To some, education is not their priority right now. Others are forced to work to provide even one meal for a day, but finances are just a factor, and internet accessibility is just part of a bigger problem. It's so sad that students were being left behind.

This is a book that will speak to us to continue despite everything that is happening across the globe. Just like how J strives to educate herself and continue to look for a reason to learn, we will also get through this.

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[Mar 19, 2021](#)

**[Penelope HALL](#)** rated it  
really liked it

One thing that I like in this book is the friendship between J and Klever. They were best of best friends who helped each other to learn and never thought of competing with each other. Neither of the two came to the point where they get jealous of the other's accomplishments. Both of them were at the top of their schools. They never failed to maintain a decent record, hence, their intelligence earn a respect from their teachers. But a long dream turned into a nightmare after the schools were shut down. They thought that if they wouldn't budge a bit and just go with the flow they will be left behind uneducated just like her other peers. And together, hand in hand, they educate themselves.

There is the kind of people you ought to befriend with. Those who will lift you and help you to get through your problems. Because a friend in need is a friend indeed. A lot of people walk in and out of your life, they come and go whenever they want, but those who leave imprints in your heart are the ones you should treasure for life. But most of all, a friend is someone who stayed with you during the worst seasons of your life.

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[Mar 19, 2021](#)

**Chloe WALKER** rated it

it was amazing

This is a book that speaks about J, a young woman in Shanghai who was deprived of education at an early age because of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 that leads to the termination of a hundred schools around the country. But together with her family and relatives, friends, and teachers who helped her to the best of their ability, she was able to get through it. She has sought knowledge from her cradle and will continue till her grave. Her passion to learn leads her to where she is right now.

I was impressed by Jennie Wang's writing. All are accurately written in detail. And her storytelling will unconsciously drown you in. There are only a few books that catch my eyes and flutter my heart, one of them is "The Education of Jennie Wang".

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[Mar 19, 2021](#)

**Grace LEE** rated it

really liked it

A book that will take you to its country itself. It is a fascinating narrative perspective of Jennie Wang's life during the '60s. The story mainly focuses on how the Cultural Revolution has affected the education of J. It was Mao's goal to preserve Chinese communism from the remnants of the capitalist, he has earned the admiration of his countrymen, thus, Red

Guards were formed as part of the Cultural Revolution. But as one person after another turns dead after dark, the revolution drew the ire of the world.

Some classical pieces of literature and other books from various authors were also mentioned in the story. An information-packed story filled with historical data. A great reference book or source for those who are studying or interested in China's history while in the hands of Mao Zedong. These are full of first-hand information that could make a different impact on your paper.

It took me only a few pages to get into the story and the moment I did, I couldn't stop. Such an amazing book! I wish I had read it sooner. [\(less\)](#)  
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[Mar 18, 2021](#)

**Victoria CLARK** rated it  
it was amazing

This memoir tells us about Jennie Wang's life story written in her notebooks of journals and diaries. It narrates her life during the Cultural Revolution in 1966, and how it affected her academic pursuits. J is worthy of imitation, who shows young people how to live with integrity, optimism, hope, determination, and compassion. She plays a vital part in her reader's positive development.

I loved the idea of accentuating the fact that war isn't all about men but women, children and elders also have crucial roles in the whole process. What kept me turning pages, rather, were the characters' lives and the short, well-crafted scenes. This is a story full of information. A great read for those who easily get bored with history books but is interested to read one in the future. In this book, you will never find a single page that will bore you out. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 18, 2021](#)

**[Madison RODRIGUEZ](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

You will hate the Red Guards for a million reasons but those youth might only play along to survive.

Because victims during the Cultural Revolution were often paraded publicly, placards hanging around their necks with forced apologies for their alleged crimes against Mao's ideology. Some were swept up in the Cultural Revolution because they are given the power they never had before.

They are encouraged to do things that are beyond laws; to resist authority and destroy things. But their actions cannot justify the death of millions of people. Millions of others suffered imprisonment, seizure of property, torture and general humiliation. And the root of all this, the culprit, is Mao Zedong.

It is truly a horrifying event in Chinese history. Mao Zedong's goal is to establish a communist community. But behind the smokescreen of a fictitious mass movement, it was all for the political power. There had been so many books published in this time period and I must say that I've read a pretty decent amount of stories. But this one rose above my heap of books.

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Mar 18, 2021

**Thomas SULLIVAN** rated it  
it was amazing

There are cultural stories in J's memoir, but that's not really what the book is all about. It's about women in wartime. How the students survive without education, which was their only weapon in their time. In history class, we were always told about a war led by men, it's true, but what we didn't know is how women fight in the revolution. And this is the untold story of the home front.

The Red Guards came to search J's house for three long days and nights. They took all their valuable things and took her mother out in the public to humiliate her. They criticize their bourgeoisie's lifestyle and display the material objects that were found in their household to justify their search. When the Red Guards asked J to criticize her mother she made it without hesitation. I just can't believe that she got entangled in those who shamed her mother. But when the Red Guards coerce PoPo (J's Mom Nanny) to admit all the crimes made by the lady and she defending her instead. J was ready to get mortified that day, to go through self-criticism, or to confess in public but because she conformed to the Red Guards, they let her go. Considering her intelligence, the Red Guards asked her to write all of Teacher Wang's wrongdoings, she even helped them to write big letter posters to disgrace the teacher for they all hated the teacher herself as well as her class and grading system. She made a decision which she can never tell whether it is going to warm her heart or burn down her house. In the end, she regretted it all.

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Mar 18, 2021

**Anna CAMPBELL** rated it  
it was amazing

After reading the introductory, I was amazed that this book was based on over 50 journals and diaries. I have always wanted to write one for myself but I sometimes get lazy to get up from my bed and write. It's nearly unbelievable that she was able to keep a ton of notebooks with her life story in them for years, but she did it anyway.

The conflict begins with the announcement of the mass movement, the Cultural Revolution, where students are divided into "Rouge et Noir", which means red or black. Wherein the people born in and came from a family of the proletariat are considered to be red, while the black puppets are those children born from the parents of landlords, affluent-peasants, counter-revolutionaries, criminals, right-wing politicians, and nonconformist, where J is considered to be one.

Labeling people as "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie", whilst treating them differently is unbelievable. These labels shouldn't exist. There shouldn't be a barrier because we are all equal.

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Mar 18, 2021

**Dylan PATTERSON** rated it  
really liked it

There's a sea of books, films, and television series that portray other ways of living. But this autobiography of Jennie Wang is what I lived for.

Jennie Wang never gets a hold of a fancy dress. She never dared to wear anything that would make her look like a bourgeoisie because girls or women in their generation were taught to be thrifty and simple. To them, simplicity is valued as a virtue. And once you were caught with valuable things, you would possibly get beaten up.

After the instigation of the Cultural Revolution in China, People were categorized into "proletariat" "capitalists" or "bourgeoisie", these people and even those with honorable reputation; party officials, teachers, intellectuals, or those within the higher level of the hierarchy were publicly humiliated, beaten and in some cases murdered or driven to suicide after vicious struggle sessions.

You really get a sense of how the Red Guards took over the lives of the Chinese people. And to what extent their manipulation can get. They gradually caused divisions within communities, scaring people into humiliation and tortures.

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Mar 17, 2021

**[Brooklyn PARKER](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

What I like about this book is it talks about cultural norms and traditions that are brass-bound and adamantine. While the country is in plight because of the Cultural Revolution, she goes through a battle of going against the

grain and standing up for her morals and beliefs. Her parents remain heavily involved in their children's marital decisions. This traditional practice of arranged marriage is out of her league.

I believe that we don't really need to find a man to ensure our financial security similarly in the past, or face pressure to marry workers and farmers to prove their socialist values during Mao's era.

Because arranged marriages are cruel, per se, people deserve to choose who they marry and a chance to love whom their hearts desire.

This is a story that will take you to another country in a swift of a page. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 17, 2021](#)

**[Samuel BENNETT](#)** rated it really liked it

This is a story that we can somehow all relate to. Because we are all in the same storm, just riding a different boat. As we all know, coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has infected nearly every continent, forced countries into states of emergency, sent individuals into varying levels of quarantine and isolation and shuttered businesses and schools. But there's an unheard story that also deserves attention: the youth rising to meet the threat of this pandemic. This is an awfully similar situation to what happened to J (Jennie Wang) in 1966. The Cultural Revolution in China has led to a massive closure of educational institutions across the country. But this conflict didn't stop J to learn, she didn't lose her hope.

Her love for books didn't disappear simply because of one predicament she encountered, thus, this challenged her to survive more than everyone else to continue her education.

It is a privilege to read this book. I will be gushing about this novel for some time to come. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 17, 2021](#)

**[William MURPHY](#)** rated it really liked it

A historical moment that ended Jennie Wang's school education in China. In May 1966, communist leader Mao Zedong believed that their current leaders were leading them in the wrong direction, and in order to reassert his authority over the Chinese government, he introduced his ideology of the Cultural Revolution. The movement escalated swiftly as the students were influenced by Mao and formed paramilitary groups called the Red Guards to attack and harass members of the intellectual population such as teachers, celebrities and bourgeoisie.

Her size and age are the sole indications that she hasn't been around for years but she bravely pointed out the wrongdoings of their government. It's an honor to read a story of a woman who stepped into the heart of this space, and showed us what it looks like to lead with courage and incredible moral clarity.

It really has a special place in my heart for it was truly beautiful. I don't think I'll be able to adequately put into words the power in which this novel has moved me. If you are into something historical with a touch of life story in it, this is the book for you.

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Mar 17, 2021

**Savannah PHILLIPS** rated it  
it was amazing

This book is all about Jennie Wang, a fierce girl who continues to pursue her education notwithstanding their situation back then. She encountered a dilemma that made a hearth in her heart and a storm brewing in her soul. At a very young age, she was captivated in literature. She always shows intrigue in reading books to gain knowledge and understanding. Not until Mao Zedong inaugurated the "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", this decade-long period of political and social chaos caused the closure of schools in her time. During this revolution, Mao honors the Red Guards of the position of revolutionary force. He urges them to challenge the status quo, education system, social values, and hierarchy power of the people which ensues the Red Guards of raiding each and everyone's house, taking all the valuable things while beating and humiliating the family members. This bewildering complexity and almost unfathomable brutality don't make sense of everything that occurred during the period.

I absolutely loved Jennie Wang's autobiography. Even after reading this, it was hard for me to congregate my emotions into one because of its beautiful and vivid story. I felt like I was with J through all of her terrible experiences and I just wanted to shelter her and everyone else from it all. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 17, 2021

**William BAILEY** rated it  
really liked it

My favorite books have a pretty exclusive list and it usually takes me a while to decide whether a book fits that list or not but this was an instant favorite.

A very detailed description of what you all need to know about China's political convulsion. J, our main character shows us her passion to learn despite the on-going Cultural Revolution in their country, which resulted in all students dropping out of school. In 1966, this revolution was launched by Mao Zedong, and his goal to preserve Chinese communism by purging remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society catalyzed the bloodiest era of Chinese history.

J is the best fit for a role model to the scholars in our society today. Because just like in her times, we also encountered a crisis that becomes a hindrance to our education. This pandemic has made a huge impact on our lives, but it didn't stop us and resort to another solution which is the new normal learning. Her pursuit of knowledge is never-ending.

This should all be the root of inspiration to all students out there because the day you stop seeking knowledge is the day you stop growing. [\(less\)](#)  
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Mar 15, 2021

**Aubrey ADAMS** rated it  
it was amazing

I have never heard much about the cultural revolution, and this book really educated me on it. Not only does it give us a look at Jennie Wang's life, it also gives us a history lesson around China and the world where your status mattered. I really felt for the characters, especially J's willingness to pursue her academic career.

The plot of this book is not unlike other memoirs. It gives us a rundown of Jennie Wang and where she learns certain things at certain points in life, but she retells her story in a special way, not only adding practical moments but significant emotional moments in her life.

This book is one of a kind, it takes you on an amazing ride through the ordeals of people during the cultural revolution and really shocks you with the untwisting of events. A great read, recommended to everyone who enjoys plot-driven memoirs.

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**Ellie BAKER** rated it  
it was amazing

A story about resistance, hardships and the importance of education. J is from a place where the most important thing is status. She is strong-willed and gives high regard to her education. Throughout the book you see her change and how the choices she made and its consequences affected her in a good or bad way.

I almost felt bad while reading some scenes as they are so personal and it's like reading a page of someone's personal notes. I rooted for a lot of characters, and I love how the book showed their wills and choices without being out of character.

One of the most sincere and heartfelt memoirs I read. This book moved me to tears a lot of times, and I still feel a pang when I remember the characters that have fallen to tragedy.

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**[Stella GONZALEZ](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

This book could pass off as a timeless classic. A book that can compete with Dickens and a lot of notable authors. This book is really descriptive, with the narration clear and flowing naturally. I love how it's like I'm reading a diary, and there are raw emotions to every character.

I think J is an amazing character. She strives to complete her education despite the tragedies that befell her and the drive to continue so really inspired her. The character dynamic didn't seem forced at all and I can see that they were based on real people.

To say that I loved this book is an understatement, I'm captivated by this book and every page of it is addicting and full of things to learn. It a great read and one that I will always remember! [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**Natalie NELSON** rated it  
it was amazing

The genuineness of this book is off the charts. Jennie Wang is an amazing author, and this book has moved me to tears every chance it gets. I love the characters, I love the plot, I love the writing style, everything about this book is perfect and I loved every second of reading it.

The story is about a girl who decides to teach herself when the school she's in is closed due to the revolution in China, she makes a lot of decisions and she questions a lot of her choices but in the end, she makes it through. I have formed a lot of emotional attachments with the characters, and it really drove me crazy when something tragic happened to them.

Overall, these are my favorite memoirs at the moment. I need more books like this from the author, and I hope to read more of her works for this book really grabbed my interest.

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**James Williams** rated it  
really liked it

Reading this book was like reading a diary. The author pours so many emotions in not just one but all of the characters that you really feel as though you live amongst them and not just trapped in the main character's point of view.

This book starts in Shanghai at the height of the Cultural Revolution. People are separated by their status and most schools closed due to the effect the revolution left. J, from a very young age, is a passionate learner and when the chance to study left her, she decided that she should take it into her own hands.

Not only is this book educational, but it's also entertaining and heart-wrenching. This is unlike any memoirs I have read and I look forward to reading more books from this author. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**[Benjamin COOPER](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

If you're looking for a fast-paced memoir, with obstacles and a strong female lead, this book is for you. I love how the main character prioritized her education, she is headstrong but still has the senses to think before acting. The stories that we're told around her really help build her character, and how she dealt with social norms is really inspiring.

The interaction between the characters is so natural, some tragedies make you grieve because of how the other characters react, the bond I had with the book is unlike any other and I love how it feels close to me.

Plotwise, the book is ok, but with the way the author wrote, it takes a normal memoir to a whole new level.

10/10, highly recommended. I'm so glad I've been recommended this book since I wouldn't have read it otherwise, this book is phenomenal and worthy of every praise.

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**[Oliver RIVERA](#)** rated it  
really liked it

J is a strong character unlike any other, she pursues her education amidst the disasters that come her way. Jennie Wang created a fast-paced classic memoir that is so unique, it deserves its own genre.

Though there are scenes that I couldn't help but skip, I loved the entirety of the book.

The book starts off strong, introducing the characters and the events that led up to the revolution. J is stuck in a world where status matters, and she must acquaint herself with the right people, and climb to society by a good marriage. J is torn between standing up against this practice or keeping a good image, and until the end her knowledgeable instincts saved her.

This book is perfect for people who want to read a memoir but want it to be just as eventful as a nonfiction book. This book offers quality that can't be measured, and I'm so glad I'm able to read this.

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[Mar 15, 2021](#)

**[Bella EVANS](#)** rated it

it was amazing

A brilliant work, the main character is a modernist, and she goes to lengths to continue her education despite all odds. J lives in a small town in Shanghai and when her education is threatened by a revolution, she works hard to uphold her values and push through the prying eyes of society.

At first, the book didn't tempt me, I don't read a lot of memoirs and this was one that I have no expectations upon diving. Not long after reading through, I realized that this book is actually quite engaging, especially how the author writes in a diary-like way.

A book worthy of praise, how the stories in this book weave together is amazing, and I enjoyed reading all of it.



Mar 15, 2021

**Claire EDWARDS** rated it  
really liked it

A literary masterpiece. From a very young age, the author is shown to have a fascination for reading at a very young age. I related to the main character because I also love reading, and I can not fathom a world where it is taken away from me.

The book's main purpose is to show how the main character took her education into her own hands, how she struggled with her decisions and tried to do her best to live in a society ruled by status and power. J is a strong female lead, she is the head of her time and really questions laws that were actually destructive. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 15, 2021

**Skylar Collins** rated it  
it was amazing

A girl from Shanghai takes her education on her own hands after the terrors of the cultural revolution forced the schools shut. The Education of Jennie Wang is addictive and nostalgic to a time that I never lived in. The author is great at delivering words and turning them into scenes that can easily be imagined.

I connected with the characters easily, I was empathetic, happy, and grieving for the characters in the story as if I haven't only known them from the pages in the book. I was rooting for J throughout the whole book, I admired her intellect and how she chased for education despite all the obstacles.

This book made me realize the privilege I have of being able to attend school and learn, this book opens up a discussion that should be had and I'm hoping for more people to read this book. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 14, 2021

**Lucy STEWART** rated it  
it was amazing

I've always admired the raw details about memoirs. This book has unique qualities that make it memorable. This book takes place when arranged marriages were still a thing, and people with status will do what it takes to stay in power. So those who are less were abused and faced violence regularly.

What I love about this book is how it doesn't promise a good ending or any ending at all. It only wishes for us to see the struggles the author had with her education and choices during a time of crisis. She meets people and they are also highlighted in the book, not just as a side character but also with a story of their own.

Overall, I think this book must be discovered by more people, it's new and relevant, and it tackles the issues that are still relevant in today's generation. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 14, 2021](#)

**[Violet ROBERTS](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

A relevant piece that takes you on a time travel to the cultural revolution of China. J is the literary representation of Jennie Wang, and despite being the author of the piece, there are angles of the book that you can feel as though J is described by other people rather than herself.

The characters are very realistic, probably because they're based on real characters but I love how the author gave them stories instead of being just a side character for J's story. I can really tell that the author put her soul into the work, as when I read the book, I feel the sincerity of the characters.

A piece that will go down in history, it's new and timeless, something that intrigues the mind and makes you look at Education in a more alarming light. I loved this book and I recommend it to everyone.

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[Mar 14, 2021](#)

**[Aurora TURNER](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

A phenomenal work that lets you peak in the curtains of the cultural revolution and contemporary issues that need more attention. This book really affects the reader in such a way that you want to be inside of the book and be more significant to the characters. The writing is so vivid, I can see myself in every place the author describes.

I love the main character, not only is she strong intellectually, she is driven and determined to reach her goals. Despite the times she is haunted by her past choices, and the decisions she has to make, you can really tell how she does what she thinks is best.

A book this generation needs to talk about, it is in line with Anne Frank and other notable memoirs. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 14, 2021](#)

**[Nicolas Valdez](#)** rated it

it was amazing

This book really takes you into the depths of Jennie Wang's earlier life, as if you were thrown in a time machine and were there to witness it firsthand. The plot of this book is fast-paced, a lot of horrible things happen, and the events that lead to a number of tragedies are properly fleshed out as not to leave the reader confused.

I found J to be one of my favorite contemporary protagonists now, she's a mirror of the author thrown in a third perspective, and through it, you can see the personality of the author take over a lot of times while still not drawing attention away from the main character. I love how cautious she is, and how she uses her knowledge to get away from tragedy.

A book with a lot of lessons, worthy of every time I spent on it. I would definitely reread this over and over as this book really left an impact on me.

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[Mar 14, 2021](#)

**[Dillan Ford](#)** rated it  
really liked it

An outstanding look at education and the obstacles are thrown by the cultural revolution. J is a character who was forced to take her education into her own hands when the schools shut down due to the revolution. She makes her way into the world through her wisdom and helps from those around her.

The writing style of this book is picturesque, it's like being there to witness the events firsthand, the author draws her experience and retells it impeccably. I love how J doesn't let the obstacles get to her even when she has to make a choice to betray societal norms or stick to traditional ways.

This book is really eye-opening, a perfect read for those who want to know more about China's history and want a great character to root for.

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[Mar 12, 2021](#)

**[Nathalie Roberts](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

A phenomenal and remarkable book. Even though the events that are presented are heavy experiences, it is written in such a way that it is reassuring you that it will lead to somewhere. You need to read further to find it out.

Jennie Wang also made use of illustrations that helped in giving us a vision and perception of the setting and the characters that are involved in the events. I find it interesting, and I really allot time to stare at the illustrations and show appreciation to them.

A brilliant way of writing, it made use of striking language that adds intensity and extent to the events of the stories.

Wang shined the spotlight on the life of each character and their different personalities with this masterpiece. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 12, 2021

**Violet Edwards** rated it  
really liked it

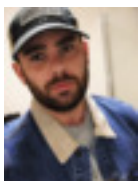
A girl who is coated with strength, courage, and a lot of self-awareness, this resembles the main character of *The Education* by Jennie Wang. What I really look forward to every time I span the pages of this book is how J will face the hiccups of her life along the way. Will she be able to withstand the problems? Will she be able to keep her courage until the end?

Nevertheless, the author did not disappoint. The way it made us simple words, yet all leave a significant impact on its readers. Remarkable style of writing, it made us know the characters and get a glimpse of their emotions and deep desires.

Overall, what a great book for the people who seek self-help books and sight books of real stories and events. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 12, 2021

**Jorden Compton** rated it  
it was amazing

To be simple was virtue itself. This line is embedded unceremoniously in the middle of a page-long paragraph from *The Education of Jennie Wang*.

It seems simple but can spark a significant impact on its readers. People are not defined by what others see them, but they are seen to what they do and what their soul's most authentic intentions are.

I love this book; it is a story that I never get tired of following. There are times it gets heavy, but it just pulls me to read more and more. The way it was written developed a connection to me. It felt so familiar, and the feelings of the characters were transparent which makes me so fragile.

Overall, it is an awe-inspiring book of passion, life lessons, and relationships with families and friends. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 12, 2021](#)

**[Milton Jacobs](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

Jennie Wang also left a message in the book that one's looks were not as important as one's soul and mind. This might seem a little principle to others, but this is relevant to clear out the insecurities of young people, especially girls. One thing that this book taught us is that what matters most is what your heart and mind desires and what it encompasses.

Being able to be someone who is strong in mind, with confidence and strength to speak up, is what makes one beautiful. The concept of having the passion, having the will to reach others, and how to spark joy in them. This is a very interesting book, and I am looking forward to reading more of her works and reading stories like these.

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Mar 12, 2021

**Stella Roberts** rated it  
really liked it

Over fifty books and diaries, Jennie Wang was able to write an inspirational book dedicated to everyone. This is not just an ordinary story, but a story closest to her. I admire her for having the courage to share something as personal as this in order to share knowledge and impart life lessons.

The author made us use different techniques of writing and added a hint of illustrations that I find interesting. This all makes the book exceptional and distinct from all other memoirs. From the different social issues to personal problems and handling them each one by one, I say Wang did not disappoint us and gave us such an interesting book to read and share with others as well.

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Mar 11, 2021

**Brooklyn Evans** rated it  
it was amazing

Diaries and memoirs are one's best friend, especially when the world seems so confusing and you have no one to open up to. This may seem cliché to all, but these kinds of writings are the ones closest to my heart,



and I admire the courage of those people who would share what their heart says to people in order to inspire and make a stand.

Jennie Wang is inspirational; her story is something that one should tell to the world. She tells it with striking language that makes the narrative more deep and eloquent. The way she writes it, the illustrations all add up to the excellent and exceptional book. This book is really commendable, especially to the young.

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[Mar 11, 2021](#)

[Everlyn Smith](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Salient lines, impressive life lessons. The Education of Jennie Wang enlightens us to how important and valuable dreams and goals are. In line with this, it is also much important that we dedicate ourselves to our goals and align our actions with them.

One thing that I can comment on how the author writes the story is that she tries to make the readers feel light amidst the heavy discussions and situations the characters are in. This helps to be able to allow them to continue reading, absorbing the life lessons that are taught without being able to feel such heavy encounters. I like this kind of writing, and this does not make the plot less of what it is, but rather it gives weight to it. I am looking forward to more books from the same author! [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 11, 2021

**Salili Turner** rated it  
really liked it

A striking and inspirational book, the way the book is written is exceptional. It is personalized and covers a broad aspect of reality, showing various social issues that are of equal relevance today.

The Education of Jennie Wang has taught us to dream and make that dream a reality by putting action to it. To reach the highest level of education attainable may be a small thing for others in this time but seeing the context and the world in their time, that seemed ambitious and impossible.

Commendable writing skills, I find it ironic and interesting that the book was written in a "third eye," as what they call it, is distant but closest to her heart—recommending this to others!

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Mar 11, 2021

**Tinaperez27Tina Perez** rated it  
really liked it

One great thing that The Education of Jennie Wang has made us realize is that our knowledge is the strength that will empower us, and no one will

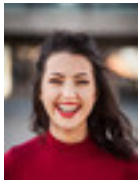
ever take it away. To be able to be successful, one should use the given knowledge in the appropriate manner, along with self-growth, character, and the experiences we have.

There is no question on the style of writing; it was emotional and had a deep sense of educating and raising awareness on several issues. The author made use of vivid words and descriptions that add depth to the writing. This will be an excellent book for different kinds of people, and many will appreciate the life lessons that they will get from reading this book.

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[Mar 11, 2021](#)

[Nora Baker](#) rated it  
it was amazing

"What you store in your brain, no one could take away."

This is one of the highlighted lines in the book and is something valuable to ponder on. Jennie Wang has taught us that in this world full of people who steal and cheat all the way to the top, your knowledge is something they can't take away from us. Along with this knowledge is our life experiences and our principles we have that we instill in our hearts.

With these things, character and wisdom are sculpted over time. Your best stories will come from overcoming your greatest struggles, and you'll inspire a lot of people, and at the end of the day, you'll grow to be an intuitive and independent woman.

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Write a review



Mar 10, 2021

[Angel Humphrey](#) rated it  
it was amazing

"Love couldn't be true between two people from different class backgrounds."

This was a line from a book, The Education by Jennie Wang, that left me hanging. Indeed, the hierarchy is real, and it reached the point that this has been stuck with the people's minds for long years.

The book had taught me that the power that people hold could make us mute and blind. We are forced to close our eyes to fake ourselves for other people's sake, and it saddens me that they have to experience that.

However, I am grateful that this kind of issue has been slowly minimized, and the discrimination has been lesser than before. This is a good start, books can speak a lot, and I am happy that I've got to read a story like this.

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Mar 10, 2021

[Ellie Nelson](#) rated it  
really liked it

Even though there is a big-time gap between today and the setting of the book, it has a deep connection. The youth of today should be able to come across this book to understand the different social issues that are partially resolved or still ongoing at all.

What I find ironic is that it is not written from the first point of view, as what diaries and memoirs are. Still, it is written in a technique wherein the author speaks up from afar, pointing at the events and the characters, and I think it added to the perfection of the book.

Jennie Wang did not disappoint us, and it made us appreciate more of what we have today and makes us understand the evolution of how various social issues rose and slowly minimized. Kudos to the writer! [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 10, 2021](#)

[Leah Carter](#) rated it  
it was amazing

What interests me is that these old diaries and memoirs give us a glimpse of what happened in their time and what they are facing during their era. The book of Jennie Wang had made us travel from today's time to something that happened years ago, and it recalls what social issues also are evident.

The way the author played with words and techniques in writing added more to the depth of the story and added more character.

A very informative as well as an emotional book, this paves the way for diaries being too wordy into something that is valuable and needs to be cherished. Stories like these deserve more recognition and should be shared with people. I did not regret opening this book!

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[Mar 10, 2021](#)

**[Davon Boyd](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

Hierarchy exists, then up until now. One scenario that strikes me the most is when J's mother had an affair with a widowed man. Although their relationship was valid and allowed, it was not approved because of the social construct of classes.

The book of Jennie Wang has taught me that these issues have been going over for such long decades, and it is still going on today. The sad part in that scenario is it ended horribly, and the man had to result in a decision because of what society will do because of the news. Jennie Wang really showed us the reality; it happened and is still happening today.

Overall, the story was awakening; it gives us the sense of being involved and speaking up. An outstanding masterpiece, this should be read by everyone.

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[Mar 10, 2021](#)

**[Addison Adam](#)** rated it  
really liked it

I am still dipping my toes into fiction books and books like this, finding what works for me and what doesn't, but this book is definitely my cup of tea.

The Education of Jennie Wang is a book for everyone. Whether you had a dark past or you had problems with your family and friends, this book communicates with you in a way you cannot understand. It has been different reading at first, for it is dated and does not have the regular routines anymore, but it gets more interesting as I read further.

People are going to search for this book and will search for books of the same genre because it has a way of getting into your heart and shifts your perspective to social issues and self-growth. Worth the read!

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[Mar 09, 2021](#)

**[Faith Baker](#)** rated it  
really liked it

Different, and eloquent book by Jennie Wang entitled, The Education of Jennie Wang. Even though it is not a fiction book people would love to imagine with, it is indeed a story everyone would love to listen to. The story gives us the value of education and several social issues within society.

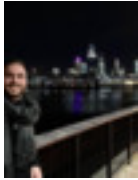
The line of events in this book is heavy, and It made me both eager to get my hands on it at the same time terrified, but the author made it light and really worked! This one is a must-read. How that author made use of words, and played with them, added depth to the happenings of the book and made it more authentic and vivid. Like how the students are very much

assertive in listening to her adventure, people are going to look for these stories as they read yours.

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[Mar 09, 2021](#)

**[Quinn Clements](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

The past is always a part of us, and it can not be departed or detached from us, or so we thought it ends there. Maybe something is a thing in your past, but Jennie Wang taught us that these should be embraced for us to grow.

No matter how dark our experiences are, the important thing is we had a goal, and we did our best to attain that goal. In achieving that, your past is part of it. It is something where you take your strength from, somewhere you take your courage.

A very enrapturing book of Jennie Wang, full of emotions. A substantial work of art, it had captured my heart, and I never did stop thinking about it even after days I finished reading it. I would definitely read it again.

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Mar 09, 2021

**Bobby Salinas** rated it  
really liked it

A compelling book.

What I adore about this book by Jennie Wang is that she narrates the story from a certain distance, showing us that even though we have a dark past, we could always move forward and continue with our lives until we would be able to tell our own stories with confidence and full of lessons.

Going back to each of our stories will be less painful for us as we are already grown up because of the lessons that our past brought to us. Nevertheless, the use of vivid language has successfully given me a glance at what their life looks like, what the characters feel, and how the settings are flash.

The events were sequenced accordingly and stated with coherence and consistency.

This is a book that is worth reading! [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 09, 2021

**Aubrey Scott** rated it  
it was amazing

Often, books like these where there is a narration of events in a journal or diaries and written in the first person. This is as if the reader is the one who lives the life in the story to capture the emotions. However, The Education of Jennie Wang is written in a unique manner as it is written from afar. I find this impressive, and it is really a good technique. Having to make the reader feel distant yet so close to the story.

The outline of the story was well-written. The characters were all distinct from each other, and all of them were factors of how J had grown. This is an enrapturing book, the vivid language has successfully transported me into her world, and this should be shared with other people for them to know the life of J.

An extremely powerful book and can empower women and dreamers out there.

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[Mar 09, 2021](#)

[Laila Hill](#) rated it  
it was amazing

The first few lines of the book got me hooked up. Ever wonder how a girl dreams despite the chaos in her past? The way Jennie Wang made it personalized made me realize a deep connection with it as if I was there when it happened. It has been her destiny to be able to go back to her notebooks that had been kept safe and be able to tell the story to others, and I am grateful that I have come across this book.

Even though it was painful for her to recall those memories, she kept it in her mind that her weakness can be a strength and inspiration for others. A fascinating book, with such inspirational notes from the author, I will definitely recommend this!

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[Mar 08, 2021](#)

[Lea Benton](#) rated it  
it was amazing

How far can you go to make your dream into reality? Are you willing to make sacrifices and taking risks?

This is a captivating and inspiring story of a young woman who at a young age had faced life with great courage. With the school closed leaving many students uneducated after the 1966 Cultural revolution, J aspires to complete her education no matter what. She lived up to her nanny PoPo's wise words to study hard, to keep reading books because the knowledge that is stored in your brain will never be taken. This was during the Red guard's operation on raiding houses and taking valuables, torturing and humiliating Chinese peasants.

J's character imposes a strong sense of responsibility and discipline as she worked her way towards completing her education through her own efforts. With the help of her family, friends, and her Uncle Earnest, she became an accomplished woman bearing a highly rational mind.

The story also presented a rich historical background of China in the '60s and its cultural norms and thoughts practiced by the people. Well-written

and very detailed work, and exhibits professionalism. Great work! Highly recommended.

[\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 08, 2021](#)

[Daisy Norris](#) rated it  
really liked it

It portrays the life of a good student and her journey for self-educating herself; following her passion for literature and learning the English language. A story of struggles and sacrifices, tragedy, and family and friendship, and China's early transition in the '60s.

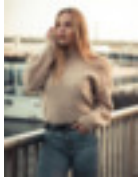
One of the main conflicts in the story is continuing her education with the school closed as the Cultural Revolution suddenly changed things. Destruction of old norms and thoughts. But with her own efforts and willingness to learn, with the people around to support her and with her Uncle Earnest's help for teaching her English, she made it. Of course there were many struggles along the way as the road to making her dream into reality was no joke. And in a span of many years later, she tasted the fruit of her success.

It was very inspiring, splendidly written with a strong inclination for vivid details. The author did not fail to make me realize that my generation is very lucky to have access to many resources for learning and only the willingness and effort is all that is needed to educate the mind. Amazing work and highly recommended, best suited for this generation especially the students.

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Mar 08, 2021

**Amya Rocha** rated it  
it was amazing

In this memoir, we can witness and learn from the experiences of J (the main character) as she struggled to finish her education. A strong passion for intellectual pursuits especially in the area of literary context. At a young age, she is already educated in Marxist, Leninist Theory, and Mao's Thoughts. Had read various books on classical Chinese and Western literature.

On 1966 August 18, a Cultural movement happened. Schools were forced to stop operating leaving many students almost directionless and uneducated. And so J's journey for self-education and a reputation for being a good student began.

With all the support from her family and friends, she can get and her Uncle Earnest's help to teach her for free in sharpening her English writing and speaking skills, she built a strong foundation and was very grateful for him.

The story is very inspiring, offers great detail for history, the characters involved and China's rich cultural and societal norms. Beautifully written and clearly presented, though it needs a bit of polishing, it was good. Highly recommended.

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Mar 08, 2021

**Valentin English** rated it  
really liked it

I think this story would be very relevant today as it portrays how much a revolution can affect the youths. Together with family problems with parents divorced, a struggle to finish education, a battle for status quo, money and power. A child born and lived with all these present would certainly mature early.

A story of perseverance to complete one's own education through her own efforts and willingness. With J's strong sense of discipline and morals, bears a true mark of a rational mind and a catalyst for change. She embodies the thought that a woman's place is in the house and also in the senate.

Not only does the story inspiring, but it also offers a clear historical background of China's revolutionary movement and the cultural norms of early Chinese as depicted in J's story. Quality-wise and smooth writing. Top rated.

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Mar 08, 2021

**Jamarcus Holmes** rated it  
it was amazing

Things had never been the same after the Cultural Revolution in 1966 broke out as it affected the different sections of the government - economics, politics and governance, and Education. The schools were ordered to stop operating as a result many students were left uneducated. Although they graduated on time, they didn't have any proper education for three years. It must have been a nightmare for students who were put in an unavoidable situation.

Because of this, J had to self-educate herself. On the year 1967 of her birthday, she made a wish, and that is to complete her education in any way attainable. Her journey for self-education was a tough ride. She stumbles but never backs down. Eventually, she emerges as a very accomplished woman.

The main character's development is evident from the very beginning of her journey until the end. Smoothly written with keen attention to detail. Neat and organized. Highly recommended.

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[Mar 07, 2021](#)

[Maximus Coleman](#) rated it  
it was amazing

J's journey of self-educating herself began as the school was brought to closure after the Cultural revolution in 1966 happened. Her journey and perseverance despite all the odds are what make her a good student. Living her PoPo's and Mao's wise words, she made her 1967 birthday wish come true.

That is to complete her education, and she succeeded. She became someone she always wanted herself to be.

A story of family dramas, bonds and friendships, hardships and struggles, China's early cultural norms, societal issues and many other things which greatly contributed to J's character development.

Splendid and captivating. Well-written, simple, and organized. A million praises to the author for sharing her incredible life-story as a good student. Highly recommended for personal use.

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[Mar 07, 2021](#)

[Drake Wade](#) rated it  
it was amazing

The author did not fail to capture the historical events vividly particularly the great Cultural revolution in 1966 which greatly played a part in her development and to write it in clear details which she extracted from her notebooks and diaries.

The story was set in the early '60s onwards in which her self-education started because schools were ordered to close and did not re-open until 1969, three years later. Her journey for self-education wasn't easy as there were only very limited resources like books for learning. Thankfully, she had her Uncle Earnest to teach her English. She was an art student which made Uncle Earnest like teaching her.

After all those years of self-education, she harvested the fruit of her hard work. In 1979, she had the opportunity to teach English in Shanghai



Jiatong University for the special program by the government called "Study Abroad."

Years later, she flew to America to study English Major and eventually became a College professor for English and literature. It a roller coaster journey and a very inspiring one.

Highly recommended. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 07, 2021](#)

**[Payton Barajas](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

Without proper education, we would be most likely to rely on other people to make a decision for us.

This is a story of perseverance and determination to follow her passion for literature, and the struggle she overcomes as she worked her way to make her dream come true - that is to finish her education.

I admired J's (the main character) discipline and her strong sense of justice and equality. She speaks her mind after balancing things so many times. It will also open your eyes to what had happened during the Cultural revolution in 1966 and its effects on the country.

Every character mentioned in this book has its own story which played a part in J's life. Beautifully written but need a bit of editing. For wanting to get inspired by a real-life story and interested in China's revolutionary movement and cultural norms, I think this book is made for you. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 07, 2021

**Demetrius Maddox** rated it really liked it

Pursuing one's dream to finish her education through her efforts and determination for self-improvement. Of course, her journey for self-education was not at all easy. There was the Cultural Revolution which resulted in the schools for closure; the Red guards with their "house searching movement" raiding houses, taking valuables, torturing people and humiliating them in public, with their crazy labeling and reminding their ancestral sins caused by their forefathers.

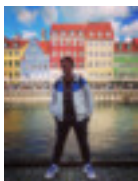
J's interests were in studying the English language and literature. When you studied English, there were only two possible jobs for you to land - English teacher and being a translator which was considered to be not a profitable job.

It was an inspiring story that never failed to amazed me - J's portrayal as a good student and other characters 'life-story, and the rich historical details of events in China in the '60s.

Well-documented with pictures for reference. Amazing work. Highly recommended to everyone! [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 07, 2021

**Cale Lawrence** rated it

really liked it

Having lived to experience one of China's revolutionary movements had greatly affected J's life as she continued her passion for learning and completing her education. An inspiring story of a simple woman who amidst the crisis she was in, never gives up. She thinks like a modernist and believes that a woman must also have a dream and the desire to think for herself, not just get stuck in the role of taking care of the family.

It clearly emphasizes the 60's events and their aftermath which gradually changed the people's lives. I was fascinated by some of the cultural norms and focus of Chinese people. Most of them are thinking about how to climb the ladder for the status quo for advancement and to get hold of social classes. The power of ancestral sins and family backgrounds would likely determine what type of job you can get hence knowing your place in the society. I didn't know that divorced and extra-marital affairs were common in China in the '60s.

Beautifully written and well-documented, though it needs a bit of polishing, its overall content produces satisfaction for readers. Highly recommended. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 06, 2021](#)

[Aryan McDaniel](#) rated it  
it was amazing

In this memoir, we can learn what's more to life in fighting for an almost impossible dream, a deep passion for learning, and a very rational mind who at a young age were educated in Marxism, Leninism Theory, and

Mao's Thoughts. What interested her the most is her passion for reading literary and English books.

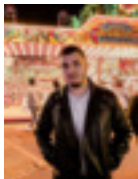
The great Cultural revolution deeply played a part in her development as a good student. With the learning institutions closed, she then began to formulate a plan on how she would be able to continue her education.

Eventually, J got right to it, self-education under the supervision of her Uncle Earnest who had helped her build a solid foundation in the English language. Years later, as the government saw a huge opportunity abroad, they began their "Study Abroad" special program. Now J's job is to teach them English conversation, Western culture, how to take a test of TOEFL, a little grammar, and everyday writing; thus preparing them for research and study abroad.

After that, J had to leave the country to study in America with the help of her cousins and eventually landed a good job leaving the bitter memory and experiences from yesterday. A job well done by the author for sharing her education life-story. [\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 06, 2021](#)

[Aidan Andersen](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Knowledge is obtained when one works to obtain it. For J, continuous learning will yield freedom of the mind and make up one's own important decisions. J was born to experience the great Cultural revolution to test her passion for learning, the strength of her character, and how far she can fight for her dream.

At a young age, she experienced the horror of having her parents divorced, her mother gets humiliated publicly and ignored by her co-workers, the tragedy of her teacher's suicide prompted her to never get involved in students' activism again.

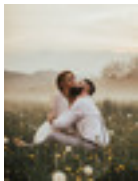
The story offers vivid details of the historical backgrounds of China in the '60s and the inspiring life story of J with her burning passion for learning. A story of family dramas, friendship, love and sacrifices, and the cultural norms strictly imposed in the society.

Worthy of reading! Grab your copy now.

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[Mar 06, 2021](#)

[Juan Anthony](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Jennie Wang's life showcases her passion for learning and her love for literature. At a young age, she already had a long list of books that she had read, from classical Chinese and Western literature. The burning desire for education did not stop even after the great Cultural revolution in 1966 that resulted in school closures and was only reopened three years later.

Thankfully, she had a few friends which have the same interests as hers where education is given importance. And to her cousins where she can borrow a few college textbooks to study Economics, Mathematics, Biology, and other subjects of interest in the curriculum. Most importantly, to her Uncle Earnest who helped her build a strong foundation in the English language.

With all those hard work for self-education, she became an accomplished woman. She made her dream come true to complete her education.

Well-written and organized, though it needs a little editing. Great work. Would recommend it.

[\(less\)](#)

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[Mar 06, 2021](#)

[Greyson Wiggins](#) rated it  
it was amazing

J's dedication to learn and to follow her intellectual pursuits is an embodiment of a real student - a passion to learn amidst the crisis. With her courage and a strong sense for equality and justice; being outspoken in defying values based on what she believed had caused her to see beyond the government and society's errors. Educated in Marxist, Leninist theory, and Mao's Thoughts, she'd be hard to fool.

The author did not fail to provide the details of historical backgrounds in terms of events and places that J had visited, pictures for reference, and the story of every character involved.

The main character's development is evident as depicted heavily in every chapter. From Cultural Revolution, then self-education, working and her almost love-story with Summit, and to her departure to further her study for English Major and eventually became a professor in America.

Impressively written. Well documented and inspiring. Perfect for those who are interested in China's transition after its Cultural revolution. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 06, 2021

**Peyton Garner** rated it  
it was amazing

An inspiring story coupled with a rich historical background of China in the early 1960s. From over 50 notebooks and diaries kept by the author, she wrote her memoir on how she worked out to save her education after the schools were ordered to close in 1966, Cultural revolution.

With the school closed, many young students were left uneducated. Some of these young students were forced to look for work to help their starving families while others settled down in the countryside deep in the mountains. Perhaps, only a fraction of these students had the opportunity or have chosen to continue their education.

It offers a beautiful story of determinism to have a right to education and self-improvement. She lived up to Mao's wise words, "Study hard and make progress every day." The Cultural Revolution was a tragedy for Chinese peasants. With the little resources, she reminded herself over again of her PoPo's wise words, and with the help of her Uncle Earnest, teaching her for free to sharpen her English writing and speaking skills. There, she made it.

It was a good book. Highly recommended!

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Mar 05, 2021

**Rhett Harding** rated it  
it was amazing

The author believed in writing her memoir in the form of J that education should also be an important part of living a good life just like one cannot live without food, clothes, and shelter. Having a good education is a product of one's willingness to learn, not just relying on teachers and the elderly to teach you. One must do his/her part. For her, knowledge is power.

J impressively wrote down her list of books that she had read, either classical Chinese or foreign literature such as Les Miserables, Anna Karenina, Don Quixote, Oliver twist, and other notable literary works.

Though things got shaken after 1966 because of the Cultural revolution, she did not stop following her dream and passion for learning. Indeed, a good student works her own way with a few of her families, friends, and relatives to back her. An inspiring story. [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 05, 2021

**Danna Mccarthy** rated it  
really liked it

A simple woman from Shanghai who followed her intellectual pursuits in any way attainable. With her family, friends, tutors, and relatives at her side, she made her birthday wish come true to complete her education despite all the odds that come her way.



It wasn't until the great Cultural revolution in 1966 that she had to make her way out of self-educating herself and persevere even more. Following her PoPo's admonition pierced deep into her mind, and the efforts of her Uncle Earnest to sharpen her English language writing and reading skills.

I like J's character for she embodied a good example in her time and even at this present time. Her story will always be relevant especially for students working out their own way to finish their education.

A self-educated and accomplished woman who is never afraid of anything and always ready for battle. Well-written, easy to understand, and attention to detail. Though it needs a bit of polishing, the overall content passed the criteria. Quality-wise and highly recommended.

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[Mar 05, 2021](#)

**[Carla Hart](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

A work of real-life story made so vivid and documented. It follows our main character J in self-educating herself. Her character proved to be an epitome of a good student. To her, learning is very important.

The country's current economic and political state and its educational curriculum changed after the great Cultural revolution in 1966. Exploitation, starvation, and poverty rose its numbers. The country was in a state of shock with its people tortured and humiliated, taking their things while some were forced to live away from their homes.

The worst thing is, schools were ordered to close and did not continue operating for three years. Although they graduated on time, they graduated

without enough education. This is where J's student life started to get serious. With her own efforts through self-education and her Uncle Earnest's help, she made it to teach in the University in Jiatong, had a chance to study abroad with the help of her cousins, and eventually landed a good job to become a College professor for English major and literature.

An extraordinary real-life story. Very interesting. J's life defines all the odds for her dreams to come true. And thanks to the people who have never abandoned her. It's a good one. Highly recommended!

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[Mar 05, 2021](#)

[Daisy Bright](#) rated it  
it was amazing

A love of learning and the desire for self-improvement. It shows how books can bring big changes into our lives and to have a wider view of the world through self-education. At a young age, she already had read many books of various genres as listed in her notebooks, can quote them, and can explain them deeper.

Her Uncle Earnest, who had helped her the most through self-education was perhaps the proudest to have J as her student. J learned from him and he learned from J. And because of it, J was able to have a solid foundation in English and other literary works.

Though the Cultural Revolution had greatly affected her life, her family, her friends, and society at large, she never stopped following her heart for

education. She lived up to PoPo's wisdom and made her 1967 birthday wish come true.

Beautifully written, easy to understand, and offers a great historical background of China and its cultural norms. Top rated and more power to this book. Grab yours now!

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[Mar 05, 2021](#)

[Shane Fisher](#) rated it  
it was amazing

A highly inspiring and imaginative journey of a young woman who ventured her way through the path of being a good student despite how rocky the roads have been, she never loses hope and instead perseveres more to bring out the best in her.

Well-written and documented portraying the life of the people after the great Cultural revolution in 1966, family and the societal issues with their cultural norms some of which I think is funny.

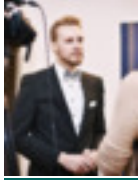
Whenever someone dressed in fancy clothes, people would immediately label them a bourgeois. I like the peasant's sense of discipline and responsibility in men and simplicity in women. Chinese cultures and norms are heavily depicted.

I like PoPo's wisdom which she imparted on J's life to become what she is right now. Her Uncle Earnest was her proudest teacher. And her relationship with her friends: Klever, Bellring, Pinnacle, Olympia, and Currie

- just like J, they also aspire to be educated women who worked in their own way to have a good life.

There were many lessons which I think we most needed in our lives growing up and following our passions. And looking back, we'll notice how things change and how they shaped us into what we are in the present. A must-read book.

[\(less\)](#)



Mar 04, 2021

**William Lee** rated it  
it was amazing

A well-written story of someone as being a good student. It's a matter of perseverance. Learning is not about having many resources yet doing nothing, but it's a matter of finding them and being creative. J was one of the many unlucky students who lived to experience the great Cultural Revolution and the cruelty of the Red guards.

Schools were ordered closed for three years. So she does a self-study with the little resources she'd find or borrowed from friends and relatives.

Many students joined the activism, but she did not dare after having an indirect involvement in one of her teacher's suicide after she wrote a poster on the Red guard's order that causes the teacher to even more depressed and humiliated. Red guards had been marching and raiding houses around, torturing and humiliating people even teachers which were considered to be a very respectable profession.

The story offers a rich historical background on what it feels like living in the years the 1960s onwards in early China. Men and women had very distinctive roles in the family, arranged marriage for social class status, and the society imposes strong patriarchal control.

Vivid historical background and an inspirational life story - a great combo. Top-rated and highly recommended to all sorts of people. Guaranteed that you will discover more things when you read this book.

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[Mar 04, 2021](#)

**[Thomas Lewis](#)** rated it  
really liked it

The story of J gave me a wider perspective of having a strong passion for learning and working for it. It's not just something very superficial work-his-way-up success story. It's not. Every story and the character associated with it has its own merits in J's life - describing them vividly and even provides pictures for reference. She knows more of her roots.

Despite what had happened in 1966 when the Cultural Revolution broke out, causing schools to stop operating she did not flinch a muscle to stop her education. One of the notable statements in the story was her wish on her birthday in 1967, "I will not let the mistake of government policy stop my education! If school will never open, I will have to complete my own education one way or another, sooner or later, to the highest level attainable. No one shall stop me!" Reading this, I can sense the voice of someone who is going to have a brighter future waiting for her.

Every page, every story, and every character is worth reading. I love how the story was presented. Reading it, you can really visualize her life and perhaps make a family tree. She embodied traits of a European woman though she's from China. A memoir worth reading. Highly recommended especially for college students who may have lost their way to finishing their degrees.

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[Mar 04, 2021](#)

**[Barbara Hernandez](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

I deeply appreciate Ms. Wang for sharing her story. Not only it inspired me as a student to see her struggles and perseverance despite everything that happened along the way. However, I was also able to picture out scenes of happiness, tragedy, strict cultural norms, strong parental control, and a patriarchal society that wanted nothing but to climb his/her way up the ladder - status quo and social classes through marriage.

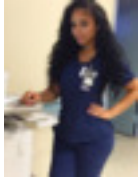
To appreciate stories of a beautiful friendship, family, and to other people who had been part of her life. She travels in the Opera with her father, her visits to PoPo's place, and her almost love story with Summit.

J, (the main character) is a catalyst in her time. I was also impressed by how many books she had read as listed in her diary and notebooks. Her passion for literature is very evident in her story. Not only did she read classical Chinese, but also foreign authors as well. Reading this, I came to realize that whatever you have in mind as long as you work for it, someday you'll have its sweet fruit. A fruit of success. Loved it, will recommend it to my friends.

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Mar 04, 2021

**Linda Young** rated it  
it was amazing

It all started in 1966 August, when the Cultural revolution happened with the Red guards marching around and doing the "house searching movement." Due to this, schools were ordered to close. It was at this moment that she must make a decision for herself. J wanted nothing but to read and study. So, she self educates herself to whatever resources she can lay her hands on. Books became her precious jewelry.

It's not an easy journey as this Cultural revolution with their Red guards raiding houses, taking almost everything, torturing and humiliating everybody labeling them with some old crazy categories about their background and lifestyle. J's house was raided and her mother got humiliated and a few of her books taken, their furniture, closets and some silk and clothes.

Despite all that, she did not stop her passion. She got a best friend, Klever, who happened to have the same interests as hers. And together, they made themselves study buddies. J also got the opportunity to have a tutor and a guide, Uncle Quixote and Uncle Earnest who she had learned the most. And they build a strong foundation in English.

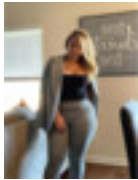
After many years, all her hard work paid off. She got an offer to teach at the university as an English teacher and eventually study abroad with the help of her cousin. She eventually landed a good job teaching English and literature at the American University. She is blessed for her family and friends' support, her Uncle Earnest, and perhaps for what happened because she pushes herself up beyond limits.

An inspiring story, fairly written in simple terms and vividly presented. China's early transition and cultural norms are clearly depicted from the life of the main character. Another highly recommended book up to date.

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[Mar 04, 2021](#)

**[Patricia Allen](#)** rated it  
it was amazing

Such an inspiring story of being a good student, a passion for learning, and being completely strong in a situation where everything just seemed to be going wrong. A simple girl living in the town of Shanghai will tell us that it's not the end for us, instead, we should aspire more to be the person we always wanted to be.

Her character defies all the people and the cultural norms she grows. During her self-education, as the school had been closed after the Cultural Revolution, her mother told her that she needs to work and that this schooling will do no future for her. She needs to earn a living. So she did, but she did not stop looking for ways to learn. For her, learning is everything; self-improvement and awareness of the errors of the government is something she cannot just ignore.

She's outspoken, independent at a young age, a good daughter, and a great friend. She has a strong intuition of knowing what's good for her and wouldn't just give up despite everything.

This memoir is very detailed, offers a good background in every character involved with pictures for reference. It's worth reading this book. Might as well write my memoir soon. Highly recommended to everyone! [\(less\)](#)

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Mar 03, 2021

**Jessica Stewart** rated it  
it was amazing

Jennie Wang's memoir of a good student tells a story of self-determinism to reach one's dream, a story of family and friendship, tragedy and history, cultural norms and tradition of early China, and the burning desire for literary pursuits.

The story was set from 1966 onwards from the eruption of the Cultural Revolution that forced the schools for closure and as a result, many students were left uneducated. Some students might want to continue their education but they can't since there were no resources. Hiring private tutors is also costly.

J, on the other hand, was quite lucky to have few resources available and having her Uncle Earnest teaching her throughout the Self-education curriculum. According to him, he had not met a student who is as brilliant as J, and that teaching her would be worth his time. Eventually, J's foundation got solid. She also borrowed textbooks from her cousins and friends and learned Mathematics, Biology, Economics, and Politics to name a few.

She is also educated in Mao's Thoughts, Leninist, and Marxist Theory. Her dedication to learning did not fail her. In the end, she came out successful. An accomplished woman of her own right.

This book also offers a rich historical background of each character involved, her town, and of the government. This is a good reference for both scholarly and inspirational story purposes. Highly recommended and best regards to the author. ([less](#))



Mar 03, 2021

**Deborah Collins** rated it  
it was amazing

For J, to live uneducated is a suicide. Knowledge is power, as she said. Although the school had closed because of the great Cultural Revolution that brought radical changes in the country, she never loses hope and even worked harder and dreamed more.

One of the notable things I learned after reading this is her PoPo's admonition that serves as a mantra that made her an accomplished woman in the literary and English world. This was during the Red Guards' "house searching movement." PoPo's words were, "People can take away what you possess in the house, but they cannot take away what you possess in your mind. They cannot take away what you learned and stored in your brain. Yes, keep reading those books." This is a pearl of powerful wisdom imparted by PoPo into J's mind.

I like how it is written, every character is connected, has their own story, has their past, and how they are doing in their lives. I never personally came across reading a memoir that is both inspiring and very detailed as well. It also has a touch of brief history in early China's transition.

Highly recommended for students who think that it's the end of their dream. Read this memoir of a good student and let's all get inspired.

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Mar 03, 2021

**Kimberly Edwards** rated it  
it was amazing

While most fishes go left, she goes right. In terms of passion for learning, reading books, and self-improvement, no one or nothing can stop her. On 1966 August 18, a nightmare happened. The Cultural Revolution took place, schools were ordered to be closed. Red Guards marching and doing "house searching movement." It started in Beijing then moved to J's hometown, Shanghai. Red Guards is a band of men, something like a military, raiding people's houses, taking valuables, criticizing, and doing public humiliation and tortures. Because of shame, many people committed suicide thereafter.

J's passion for learning is very evident since she was young. Her love for books and passion for reading literary works. At a young age, she had already read so many books and shows familiarity with classical Chinese literature. She had also read foreign authors like Austen, Bronte, Hemingway, Hardy, and many more. Her list of books read is quite long. I am only familiar with some authors, but not all.

I like J's character. She stood for what she believed in and will not be easy to get influenced by numerous nonsense in society. She is unafraid to challenge the long-established norms and her family's traditional thinking.

It is beautifully written. Inspiring and organized. Highly recommended and more power to this book!

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Mar 03, 2021

**Richard Collins** rated it  
really liked it

An inspiring story of a good student. Hope and courage to face the current crisis in the country, fighting for her dreams, and to never run away; instead, turning negativities into opportunities.

After the great Cultural revolution erupted, J's journey for self-education started. She promised herself to complete her education no matter what it takes, to learn, and to continue her passion for English and literature. A real epitome of a good student.

With her mother, her beloved nanny PoPo, a few of her friends in school, and her uncle Earnest who is her tutor in English, teaching her for free greatly impacted her self-development to what she is now in the present. They somehow served as a bridge for her to cross for something bigger than herself and make radical changes to the people around her and into society as a whole.

This memoir offers a great historical reference in early China, particularly during the 1960s onwards. It is inspiring and clearly written; almost like a documentary of one's life. A well-documented legacy. Worthy to read. [\(less\)](#)  
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Mar 03, 2021

**Betty Nelson** rated it  
it was amazing

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution took place causing a great change in early China's economy, politics, and education. Schools were ordered for closure and did not re-open until three years later in 1969. Many students were left uneducated as everyone relied primarily on going to school to learn. But this is not the case for J, short for Jennie. She aspires more to learn, reading and studying various literary works - classical Chinese and foreign literature.

What makes her a good student is her self-discipline and her burning passion for intellectual pursuits. A well-accomplished woman who has a dream, who wants to learn and complete her education, not just a traditional woman made only for display and marriage.

An inspiring story! The self-determinism amidst a crisis is very evident in the main character's heart and mind. Beautifully written, detailed, and well-organized. Highly recommended.

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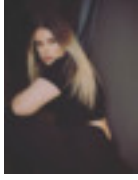


**[Jacques](#)**

rated it

it was amazing

[Feb 16, 2021](#)



Feb 06, 2021

**Ryann Rangel** rated it  
it was amazing

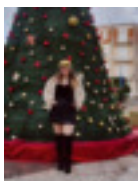
If you love academic books with a little touch of drama to them, this is for you.

It talks about a young mind on how far she can follow her academic pursuits. The country was in a hot spot when the Cultural revolution in 1966 happened. School had ended. And the only thing for these young minds can do is to travel across the mountains to find work and to help support their families. The number of uneducated increased in numbers.

The English language was given less priority then, only the traditional curriculum from classical Chinese philosophers and poets like Confucious and Mao were given importance where students have to memorize and recite them.

Somehow, J was not happy with it. So she read and explored more from Classical Chinese literature to various authors' works of literature across the globe particularly in Russia, America, Germany, England, and some parts of Europe. With the help of her Uncle Ernest, she was able to build a strong foundation for her English speaking and writing skills.

The story feels like an adventure into the past of early China. You can almost envision the events that took place as the author vividly describes each scenario with some pictures for reference.



Feb 06, 2021

**Eleanor Riddle** rated it  
it was amazing

The book tells us another good story. It proves to us that you don't need to go to school to learn things. It taught us how early China looked like from the '60s onwards, carrying both inspirational and rich historical background of the transition of early China. The book is written in simple words and easy to understand. There were however some typographical errors such as misspelled words and incorrect terms but grammatically correct. These are just some little issues of what you can get from the book when you read it.

From the title itself, we can already tell that it's all about a passion of a good student to learn. But there's more to it. The relationship of the main character, her adventures, her struggles, her almost-love-life story, and how she was able to learn English from China in times of crisis. You can also learn more about China's early cultural traditions and norms. There is a vast knowledge contained in this book. Just keep exploring.

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[Feb 06, 2021](#)

**Estrella Wolfe** rated it  
it was amazing

Do you want to hear a story of a good student?

This is a memoir of Jennie Wang which will teach us about her passion to learn despite the Cultural Revolution in 1966 which resulted in the students dropping out of school. Many students suffered from being uneducated

enough. The books and other resources for independent learning are very limited. Private tutors are also expensive. Some didn't want to continue schooling anymore.

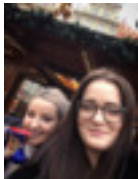
During the Cultural Revolution, Red guards had raided almost all houses in Shanghai. Taking valuable things and beating some family members. There were also public humiliation and tortures which resulted in higher numbers of suicide. Poverty rising and exploitations are unavoidable.

J saw all things and devoted herself to learn and reading books. She pointed out the errors of the government and would fight to live her own life the way she wanted. Her parents hired private tutors for her to improve her English. She also borrowed textbooks from her relatives to learn Mathematics, Biology, Economics, and other subjects.

She never loses hope. That's what I like about her character. Despite everything that happened, she thinks objectively and continues with her life. The book also offers a rich historical background of early China. This is a good book because we get to see first-hand the events that took place from the memoir of a good student. [\(less\)](#)

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[Feb 06, 2021](#)

[Yaritza Walter](#) rated it

it was amazing

The book is neatly organized with pictures to show for reference. The memoirs tell a story of a young mind about her intellectual pursuits of English language and literature. There were lots of things that this book can offer. The historical transition in early China, how radical feminism was viewed, conservatism, what it's like to live under strong parental and



patriarchal control, and most of all, how the Cultural Revolution played a great role.

It follows a story which introduces you to some notable literary poets like Mao, Confucius and some famous novels which she read like Austen's, Bronte's, Dickens and etc. J is a character that is bookish but applies what she learned to real life. Though she faces some dilemmas along the way, she never loses her strong sense of equality and justice.

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[Feb 06, 2021](#)

[Diamond Woods](#) rated it  
it was amazing

A journey of a young girl in a society that imposes a strong parental and patriarchal control where cultural norms and traditions are heavily practiced from one generation to another. And which education was only given less importance in the society.

J's character greatly evolved shaping her life in which her mother, her grandmother, her PoPo, her friends, and tutors played a good part. But what really stuck to her mind and soul, was her undying passion for books and literature. I am amazed by how much the main character's knowledge of various works and literature as I read her lists in her diary. Her character is outspoken and unpretentious, she speaks her mind and she is intelligent.

There were more to this book that you will discover as you read them. The book uses simple English, easy to understand, and a highly recommended

one for people who would like to get inspired and to delve deeper into early China's history particularly the Cultural revolution in 1966. ([less](#))

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

**Perla Suarez** rated it  
it was amazing

One of the things I like the most in this book is passion. A passion to learn despite the unfavorable things that happened. It embodies the role of a good student in times of crisis and to dream even more. It wasn't an easy path of course. There were full of struggles along the way but with the help of her families, friends, and tutors she was able to accomplish even more.

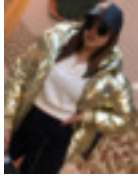
The story shows strong parental and patriarchal control. Emphasizing the roles of men and women, how important is money, status quo, and obtaining social status. It also included how common was family affairs and divorce in families during those times. Poverty and exploitation are also not uncommon in China. You will also be shocked by their rules, and traditions they practiced.

For J, a man must have ambition. A woman also must have ambition. And not just to marry and take care of their home, her husband, and children. Radical feminism is also greatly emphasized in this book.

Furthermore, this memoir offers a great deal of information on early China and how J's life as a student reacts to it. ([less](#))

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Feb 05, 2021

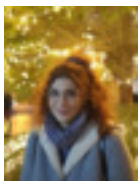
**Gracelyn Cooke** rated it  
really liked it

There are five reasons I would like to point out in this book and why you should read it: (1) It talks about the historical transition of Early China and how the Cultural Revolution played a big part in the main character's life development. It served as a match of her literary dreams to burn and to create a big fire of intellectual pursuit. The story of how she made it, you'll find out once you read the book. (2) It talks about cultural norms and traditions that are almost unbreakable in early China, the conservatism that must be observed in women, the battle of maintaining a status quo and social classes were the common worry of most families around J's environment. (3) It talks about the simplicity of life and how to be happy in small things. This is in PoPo's place which J visited. It also shows you some crazy rules about getting a salary through score points. How the role of men and women was greatly emphasized in society. (4) How the beauty of intellectual pursuits can broaden your mind and dream higher. (5) The lessons that are imprinted on J from her grandmas, from her PoPo, from her friends, and from her tutors. You can see the beauty beyond determinism to reach one's dream.

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Feb 05, 2021

**Lana Mora** rated it  
it was amazing

The book will make you hate the Red guards at first because of the Cultural Revolution that took place, resulting in many schools stop operating. Students were left uneducated, unable to continue their education with no to little resources available to learn independently.

And then you will be amazed by J's character, her willingness to learn and her love for literature are exceptional. She's outspoken and unpretentious. She imposed strong morals in her life and to other people with a strong sense of justice. I am amazed by how many books she had read and listed in her diaries. She was so organized.

In the middle to the last, you will discover various people who would play different roles in her life.

Here, you can appreciate the story of a family, of friendship, and her role in society. She then began to see what is wrong with society and decided what should be done.

The book will take you into different places which the main character had traveled, there were also pictures for reference. It will make you think to write your own memoir also someday. A legacy. [\(less\)](#)

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Nyla Christensen](#) rated it  
it was amazing

I like how the book was compiled from the author's few notebooks and diaries. It was very detailed and highly organized. Each person involved in the book has their own story knit in a few paragraphs and pages. The relationship of the people to the main character is explicitly explained.

J, a young schoolgirl who loves reading books and literature fighting for her dream to finish school and get a degree in English Major. She shows how her enthusiasm to learn can change the view of common people for her through her dedication and to rise above her means.

I like the character of J. She is unpretentious and speaks her mind straight. She thinks objectively which helps her to realize that there is something wrong with society and works hard to have her own way. She is brilliant!

Thanks to her Uncle Quixote and Earnest who taught her to improve her English for free. Through them, she got a strong foundation that enables her to get accepted to America for College.

The story has a taste of real history and at the same time can be inspirational.

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Emmalee Cross](#) rated it  
it was amazing

The book offers quite a good history in early China's transition, the cultural norms and traditions, a story of family and friendship, the vast knowledge of the main character in the area of literature, and a beautiful story of intellectual pursuit.

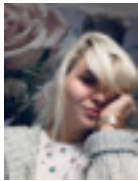
The Cultural revolution in 1966 had caused a great stir in China's economy and education. Schools were stopped operating. Many students were left uneducated and were forced to send to different places to work to help support their families. Poverty and exploitation were rampant.

I was also surprised as a reader to know that family affairs and divorce were common in China. The burden of cultural norms are heavily imposed throughout the family: arrange marriage, parental and patriarchal society, conservatism among females, and other practices that are almost unbreakable.

The memoirs spoke strongly of the main character's roots. She knows more things of her own than any other average person. I felt ashamed as a reader that I knew little of my roots. Furthermore, the character of J shows a very inspirational story of a good student. [\(less\)](#)

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Kristen Stout](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Worth owning!

J is the main character in the book which the author embodied herself in the third person's point of view. A simple school girl from Shanghai, China who possesses a strong liking for literature, an autodidact with a heart of a scholar.

The story took place from 1966 onwards, in which the Cultural Revolution forced the schools to stop operating. Many students were left behind uneducated. Abuses and violence of common people of various 'labels' like "the capitalists," "the bourgeois," "the proletariat" and even the most respected teachers in the society did not escape from public humiliation and tortures from the Red guards. Many people committed suicide thereafter. The guilt of J's indirect involvement in one of her teacher's

suicide buried deep in her mind and left a scar in her heart, since then, she had not played a role in students' activism.

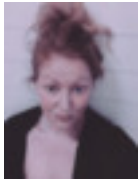
One of the major conflicts encountered by the main character was going against the family or society's cultural norms and traditions, the battle between living a simple life and choosing her own life choices, and who to marry is out of the ordinary. The story took place where arranged marriage is still in practice, acquiring status quo and social classes were the main focus of the people in her society.

It will take you into another country and help you see the beauty of the character's intellectual pursuits. It uses simple words which makes it easy to understand. Another good book to add to your bookshelves.

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Layla Jacobson](#) rated it  
it was amazing

Upon reading this memoir, I learned more about China's history, particularly the Cultural revolution. The values taught from their forefathers, cultural norms and traditions that were almost unbreakable, conservatism, and the continuous battle of status quo and social classes were some of the best parts of this book.

The main character J is a straightforward person who has a strong desire to learn English and to explore more literature. She does good in her school and loves reading books. I was impressed by how vast her knowledge of literature from Classical Chinese to other works of various authors all over the world particularly in America, Russia, Germany, Spain,

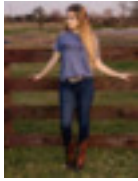
England, and some other parts of Europe. As a reader, I was happy to know some famous authors of various books.

J was blessed with the people around her. They were always on her side helping her in all her endeavors. PoPo played a great role in her life imparting knowledge to her and her friends Klever, Pinnacle, Olympia, Bell Ring, etc., and her relatives abroad. Through them, J made it for her American dream.

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Leah Ortega](#) rated it  
it was amazing

A memoir that is written in a very detailed text. It talks about not only the struggle of being a good student, but it includes many more things compressed in a book in an excellent job. There were stories of friendships, family, the oppressed, the undying traditions and norms of family and society, fighting for the status quo and social classes.

The story follows a young girl who wanted to acquire more knowledge in literature. After the Cultural Revolution happened in 1966, the schools were ordered to be closed and students were forced to stop schooling. But J refuses to accept her fate. Wanting to follow her heart for literature.

Remembering her birthday wish in 1967 which she wrote in her diary, "will not let the errors of the government policy stop her education. If school will never open, she will have to complete her own education one way or another, sooner or later, to the highest level attainable." In which she began to look for textbooks used in college.



With the help of her family, friends, and tutors, she was able to build a strong foundation in the English language and find a good job.

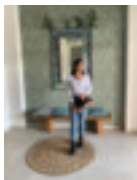
With a detailed early China's transition history and a touch of the inspirational story of a good student, a rare combination.

Highly recommended!

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Cassandra Kidd](#) rated it  
it was amazing

For the most part, I was impressed by the author's rich knowledge of the literature of both classical Chinese and other works from various famous authors outside China. Even at an early age, she already showed an interest in reading books. But then, the Cultural Revolution erupted, many schools were closed. Satan began to reign in China with its pawns-the Red guards. People from different backgrounds that are labeled as either "capitalists" "the proletariat" "the people with bourgeois taste" and even the teachers that occupy a very respectable position in the society were persecuted through public humiliation and tortures. It was like a great depression which many people committed suicide thereafter.

J was reluctant in joining other students in activism after her teacher died in which she indirectly played a part in her teacher's suicide. Though the students had stopped going to school after its closure, J continues to learn. I like PoPo's (family nanny) admonition that imprinted on J's mind.

"People can take away what you possess in the house, but they cannot take away what you possess in your mind. They cannot take away what you learned and stored in your brain. Yes, keep reading those books."

Books in those times were a luxury, very rare to find. The Red guards took everything valuable in the house, even the books were confiscated. Thankfully, they discovered the books underground and began reading them.

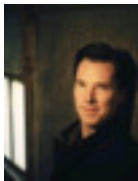
The main character in the book is indeed a good student, a role model that pursues her intellectual pursuits against all the odds.

Another highly recommended book for starters who do not want to study plain history in early China and wanted to be inspired by J's story as a good student.

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[Feb 05, 2021](#)

[Davian Franco](#) rated it  
it was amazing

The book talks about a common girl from Shanghai that continues to seek education despite the Cultural Revolution happening in 1966 that brought the schools to closure. With the help of her family, close friends, and tutors,

she was able to rise above the ground. A young mind seeking knowledge and wisdom; a virtuous woman who thinks like a modernist.

The memoir was written in an organized journal from what the author retrieved from her few notebooks and diaries. It describes J's (the main character) life from an early age in China, her family, friends and every other individual involved has their own story in the book. It depicts a rather difficult time since the Cultural Revolution started. With the schools closed, and public humiliation and tortures of common Chinese people from the Red Guards, students, and the working class almost headed for a breakdown. Traditions and norms with the battle of status quo and social classes are all depicted.

There were many things that the readers can learn from this book. The events were explained clearly where it feels like you were transported there through the time machine and witnessed first-hand the transition of early China.

For people and scholars interested in the history of early China, its culture, and traditions that are passed down from one generation to another, I highly recommend this book for reference. It will open the eyes of the readers to the real events that happened; the lessons left behind and the author's vast knowledge of both classical Chinese literature and the other books written by various authors all across the globe.

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