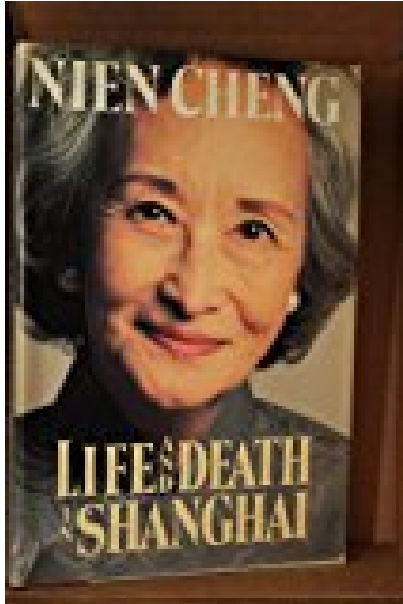


# Life and Death in Shanghai

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## BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Nien Cheng
- Pages : 547 Pages
- Publisher : Grove Pr
- Language : English
- ISBN : 0394555481

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## BOOK SYNOPSIS

Life and Death in Shanghai, Nien Cheng's searing memoir of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, was an instant international best-seller on its original hardcover publication by Grove Press. This phenomenal, unforgettable book captured the attention of the world just as Communism was starting to collapse. The main summer selection of the Book of the Month Club, it was excerpted at considerable length (13,000 words) in Time, and Cheng was invited to a state dinner at the White House, where she was seated next to President Ronald Reagan. More than twenty years after it was originally published, Cheng's memoir is considered a twentieth century classic, one of the most remarkable, enduring works on totalitarianism and personal endurance. In August 1966, a group of Red Guards ransacked Nien Cheng's home, threatened her and destroyed priceless, irreplaceable ancient Chinese relics. Cheng's background made her an obvious target for the fanatics of the Cultural Revolution: educated at the London School of Economics, the widow of an official of Chiang Kai-shek's regime, and an employee of Shell Oil, Cheng enjoyed comforts that few Chinese could afford. When she refused to confess to the false accusations that she was a spy, Cheng was placed in solitary confinement. Cheng suffered year upon year of brutality and deprivation, but she refused to give in to her torturers and interrogators. After more than six years, when they told her would be released because of her "attitude of repentance," even then she remained defiant, vowing to remain in detention until the Communist officials declared her innocent and published an apology. Life and Death in Shanghai is Cheng's powerful story of her imprisonment, of the hardship and cruelty she endured, of her heroic resistance, and of her insistent quest for justice when she was released. It is the story, too, of a country torn apart by Mao Zedong's savage fight for power. A penetrating personal account of a terrifying chapter in twentieth-century history, Life and Death in Shanghai is also an astounding portrait of one woman's courage.

Selected Reviews "A triumph of the human spirit . . . Here is the most stunning human document out of China since the Cultural Revolution—perhaps since the Revolution itself." —Clifton Fadiman "An absorbing story of resourcefulness and courage." —J.M. Coetzee, The New York Times Book Review "A harrowing story of personal suffering and tragedy, and at the same time a savage and compelling indictment of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, if not of Chinese communism itself . . . an extraordinary testament to human brutality." —Elena Brunet, Los Angeles Times "A gripping, poignant chronicle of her courage, fortitude, and, above all, stubborn integrity during . . . cold, hunger, disease, terror, and humiliation. . . . Her narrative deserves to rank with the foremost prison diaries of our time" —Stanley Karnow, Washington Post "Far from depressing, it is almost exhilarating to witness her mind do battle. Even in English, the keenness of her thought and expression is such that it constitutes some form of martial art, enabling her time and again to absorb the force of her interrogators logic and turn it to her own advantage." —Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, The New York Times "This is the extraordinary story of an extraordinary woman. . . . a story that so vividly documents the triumph of the human spirit of inhumanity." —Time "Her book is unquestionably one of the best ever written about the Cultural Revolution." —Houston Chronicle "An almost unbearably vivid picture of personal suffering and triumph." —Chicago Tribune

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