



A Comrade Lost and Found: A Beijing Memoir

Jan Wong

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In the early 1970s, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, Jan Wong traveled from Canada to become one of only two Westerners permitted to study at Beijing University. One day a fellow student, Yin Luoyi, asked for help getting to the United States. Wong, then a starry-eyed Maoist from Montreal, immediately reported her to the authorities, and shortly thereafter Yin disappeared. Thirty-three years later, hoping to make amends, Wong revisits the Chinese capital to search for the person who has haunted her conscience. At the very least, she wants to discover whether Yin survived. But Wong finds the new Beijing bewildering. Phone numbers, addresses, and even names change with startling frequency. In a society determined to bury the past, Yin Luoyi will be hard to find.

As she traces her way from one former comrade to the next, Wong unearths not only the fate of the woman she betrayed but a web that mirrors the strange and dramatic journey of contemporary China and rekindles all of her love for—and disillusionment with—her ancestral land.



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