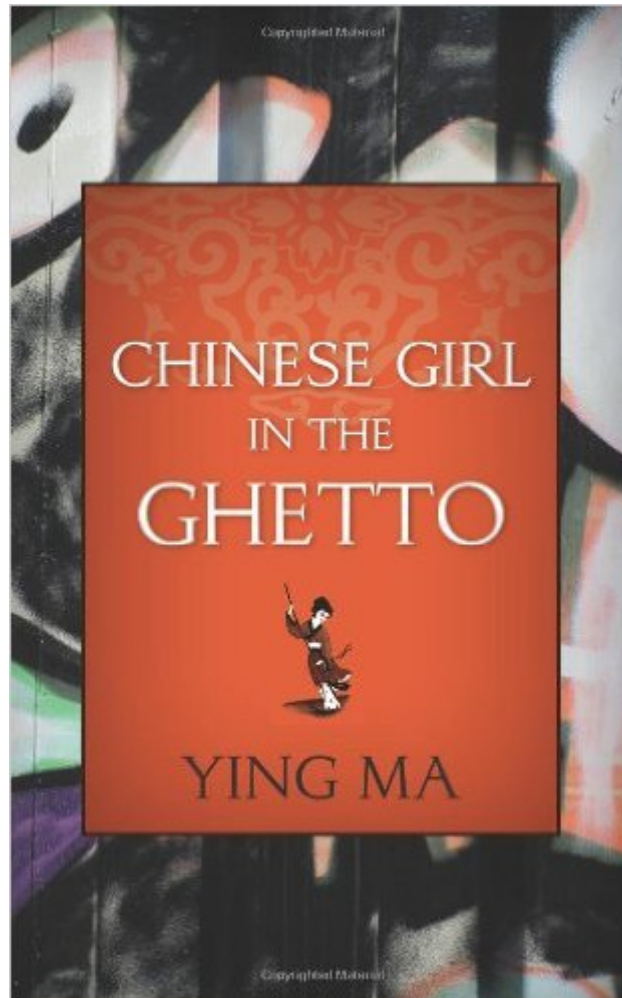


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# Chinese Girl In The Ghetto



## Synopsis

As China opens itself to the world and undertakes historic economic reforms, a little girl in the southern city of Guangzhou immerses herself in a world of fantasy and foreign influences while grappling with the mundane vagaries of Communist rule. She happily immigrates to Oakland, California, expecting her new life to be far better in all ways than life in China. Instead, she discovers crumbling schools, unsafe streets, and racist people. In the land of the free, she comes of age amid the dysfunction of a city's brokenness and learns to hate in the shadows of urban decay. This is the unforgettable story of her journey from China to an American ghetto and how she prevailed.-----"Direct and unvarnished, this book describes the endless possibilities of a free society that allows its citizens to chart their own destiny. Ying Ma takes her readers to dark corners where poverty, crime, and racism reign, all the while reminding us that even amid a sea of hate, individuals can choose to believe in kindness, decency, personal responsibility, and racial equality." -- Ward Connerly, Founder and President, American Civil Rights Institute, and Author, *Creating Equal: My Fight Against Race Preferences* "A beautiful account of a young girl's encounter with the insidiousness of authoritarianism in China and the tragedies of inner-city America. Ying Ma boldly details some of the worst imperfections of American society, all the while showing, with her own example, why freedom is worth choosing."-- Xiao Qiang, Adjunct Professor, University of California at Berkeley, and Founder and Editor-in-Chief, China Digital Times

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## Customer Reviews

Ying Ma's inspirational story should be required reading for anyone wishing to understand the

results of forty years of failed social policies in inner city America, while at the same time gaining insight into the recent Asian American immigrant experience. Instead of finding streets paved with gold, Ms. Ma arrives on our shores to find streets filled with potholes, crack-heads and thieves. The inner city America of Ying Ma's youth is a welfare state, where criminal behavior, anti-Asian prejudice, and an entitlement mentality prevail over the rule of law, education and work. An instant classic, Ms. Ma's engaging narrative pulls no punches in its critique of policies which have rewarded laziness and have excused anti-Asian bigotry by certain members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Thankfully, *Chinese Girl in the Ghetto* concludes with a positive lesson for all of us: Through perseverance, education and personal responsibility, we can extricate ourselves from the confines of the ghetto and achieve greatness. I would highly recommend this book.

*Chinese Girl in the Ghetto* shattered my preconceptions about life in inner city America. In trying to make sense of the senseless violence she witnessed in Oakland, as well as the challenges her family underwent while living under an autocratic regime, Ying Ma tells a tale that is much more than a memoir. On its surface, the book offers a poignant story about one family's cross-cultural experience. But at a deeper level, it is a fascinating anecdotal account of the the unintended results of government planning in two very different societies. Sometimes funny, often tragic, but always brutally honest, *Chinese Girl in the Ghetto* is a gripping read that challenges us to question what freedom really means.

In this informative and moving memoir / coming of age story, author Ying Ma tells two stories: (1) that of a young girl, headstrong and non-conformist growing up in an authoritarian Communist society in which individual identity is suppressed and independent thought is forbidden; and (2) the story of that same girl's arrival in the promised land of America, only to find a crime-ridden ghetto replete with social dysfunction and racism. Throughout both parts of the book, the author's intelligence and integrity shine through. She does not flinch from confronting painful and controversial issues (such as the PRC's "one child" policy, and the anti-Asian racism prevalent among inner city African-Americans) but does so with thoughtfulness and eloquence. Though she was deeply wounded by the racism of her schoolmates, the author rises above the temptation to respond with a counter-racism of her own, and her discussion of the kindness she encountered from an African-American teacher is among the book's most moving passages. I highly recommend this book for readers interested in modern China, or American urban affairs. I also recommend it to younger readers, who may find in Ying Ma a kindred spirit navigating the difficult shoals of

adolescence and young adulthood.

*Chinese Girl in the Ghetto* is a concise yet powerful look at urban life in two vastly different countries. The author has done a wonderful job comparing and contrasting American and Chinese societies, approaching her topic with an impressive level of personal insight and introspection. This page-turner provides the reader with a new perspective on the struggles faced by American inner-city youth, an informative reflection on the cultural differences between American and Chinese attitudes towards poverty, and a fresh, no-holds-barred account of the immigrant experience. Bravo.

Ying Ma takes the reader from China to Oakland's inner city in a memoir that is both well-written and engaging. The author highlights racial tension in the Bay Area's lower-income neighborhoods between blacks and Asians, and offers a new perspective on the immigrant experience. The strongest chapters, however, are the ones written about the author's childhood in China before immigrating to America. Ma draws the reader into her life and we feel her frustration as she learns to speak English, adapts to cultural norms and attempts to learn the rules of survival in her new country. The pace is quick: You can finish this book in one evening, and the narrative never lags. I'd definitely recommend this book to others.

Inspiring! The author -- a successful lawyer -- grew up middle class in China until age 10, then moved to a modern-day American slum without speaking a word of English. This book is her story ... a fascinating read for anyone interested in what it's really like to be one of those "starving kids in China" for which your mother used to make you clean your plate ... or for anyone who wants a tells-it-like-it-is, firsthand -- though not always politically correct -- account of the inter-minority hostility and other obstacles a poor immigrant child must overcome to realize the American Dream these days. The author has done a terrific job breaking the silence of many other similarly situated Asian immigrants, and has told an entertaining and endearing story with heart and candor. This book is worth a lot more than the price, and it feels good to support an author who had to endure our national embarrassment (the ghetto), but still ended up loving American freedom.

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