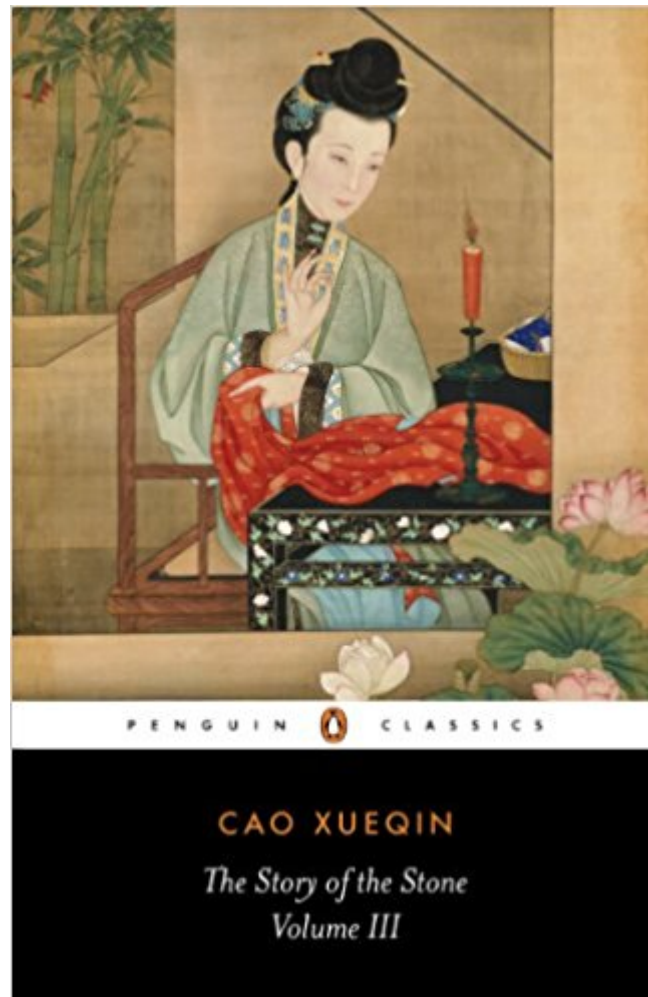


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The Story Of The Stone: Or, The Dream Of The Red Chamber, Vol. 3: The Warning Voice



Synopsis

The Story of the Stone (c. 1760), also known by the title of The Dream of the Red Chamber, is the great novel of manners in Chinese literature. Divided into five volumes, of which The Warning Voice is the third, it charts the glory and decline of the illustrious Jia family (a story which closely accords with the fortunes of the author's own family). The two main characters, Bao-yu and Dai-yu, are set against a rich tapestry of humour, realistic detail and delicate poetry, which accurately reflects the ritualized hurly-burly of Chinese family life. But over and above the novel hangs the constant reminder that there is another plane of existence - a theme which affirms the Buddhist belief in a supernatural scheme of things. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Volume 3 finds the significant idea in Buddhist that one would open his eyes to the vanity of human affections and causes a person to renounce the world, for one no longer subscribes to the conventions of the mundane, dust-stained world and thrives to be detached from it. The title of this gripping, escalating volume, The Warning Voice, duly confirms the intractable decadence of the Jias. Tolstoy's opening line in Anna Karenina best describes the unfavorable miasma - "All happy

families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Outsiders look at the Jias and all its wealth and immediately think how happy the Jias must be, they don't realize the vexations far outweigh the advantages and privileges. Being a big family with its numerous maids' converting to mistresses and concubines, daily fuss and drama are inevitable. These mistresses are conceited, usually full of their own importance, and always take offense at the most trivial matter, and at the slightest bit of cross do they begin to spread rumors to stir up trouble. It is under such quarrelsome milieu that the Jias gradually wanes. Volume 3 begins with the domestic hierarchy of maids in the house and how in the sabbatical of Xi-feng from managing house duties the well being of the family is left at the mercy of the senior maids. In the event of an imperial member's death, the Jia ladyships take to daily excursion to the palace where they attend ceremonies during the mourning period (usually spans 100 days during Ming and Qing dynasties). Their stewards and stewardesses are no less occupied with accompanying them and seeing that preparations are readied ahead of time.

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