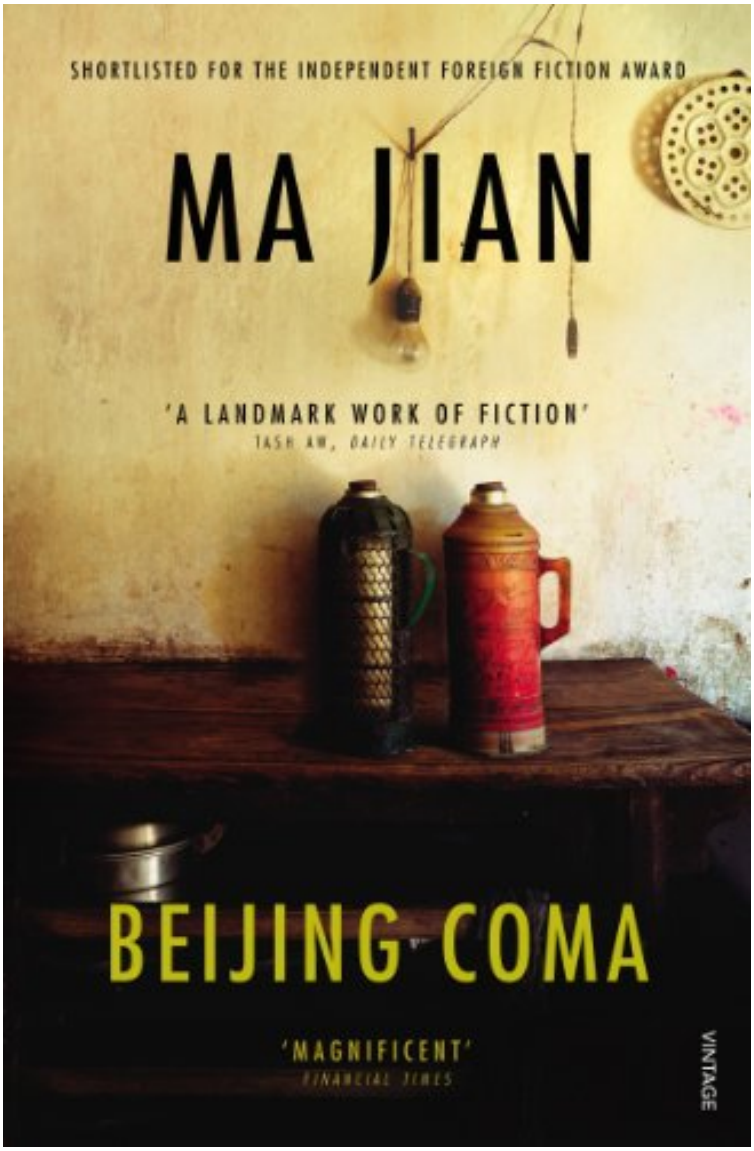
Beijing Coma



Par Ma Jian
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(Read ebook) Beijing Coma

Par Ma Jian : Beijing Coma before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beijing Coma:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurDai Wei lies in his bedroom, a prisoner in his body, after he was shot in the head at the Tiananmen Square protest ten years earlier and left in a coma. As his mother tends to him, and his friends bring news of their lives in an almost unrecognisable China, Dai Wei escapes into his memories, weaving together the events that took him from his harsh childhood in the last years of the Cultural Revolution to his time as a microbiology student at Beijing University.As the minute-by-minute chronicling of the lead-up to his shooting becomes ever more intense, the reader is caught in a gripping, emotional journey where the boundaries between life and death are increasingly blurred.ExtraitThrough the gaping hole where the covered balcony used to be, you see the bulldozed locust tree slowly begin to rise again. This is a clear sign

that from now on youre going to have to take your life seriously.You reach for a pillow and tuck it under your shoulders, propping up your head so that the blood in your brain can flow back down into your heart, allowing your thoughts to clear a little. Your mother used to prop you up like that from time to time.Silvery mornings are always filled with new intentions. But today is the first day of the new millennium, so the dawn is thicker with them than ever.Although the winter frosts havent set in yet, the soft breeze blowing on your face feels very cold.A smell of urine still hangs in the room. It seeps from your pores when the sunlight falls on your skin.You gaze outside. The morning air isnt rising from the ground as it did yesterday. Instead, its falling from the sky onto the treetops, then moving slowly through the leaves, brushing past the bloodstained letter caught in the branches, absorbing moisture as it falls.Before the sparrow arrived, you had almost stopped thinking about flight. Then, last winter, it soared through the sky and landed in front of you, or more precisely on the windowsill of the covered balcony adjoining your bedroom. You knew the grimy windowpanes were caked with dead ants and dust, and smelt as sour as the curtains. But the sparrow wasnt put off. It jumped inside the covered balcony and ruffled its feathers, releasing a sweet smell of tree bark into the air. Then it flew into your bedroom, landed on your chest and stayed there like a cold egg.Your blood is getting warmer. The muscles of your eye sockets quiver. Your eyes will soon fill with tears. Saliva drips onto the soft palate at the back of your mouth. A reflex is triggered, and the palate rises, closing off the nasal passage and allowing the saliva to flow into your pharynx. The muscles of the oesophagus, which have been dormant for so many years, contract, projecting the saliva down into your stomach. A bioelectrical signal darts like a spark of light from the neurons in your motor cortex, down the spinal cord to a muscle fibre at the tip of your finger.You will no longer have to rely on your memories to get through the day. This is not a momentary flash of life before death. This is a new beginning.Waa, waaah . . .A babys choked cry cuts through the fetid air. A tiny naked body seems to be trembling on a cold concrete floor . . . Its me. Ive crawled out between my mothers legs, my head splitting with pain. I bat my hand in the pool of blood that gathers around me . . . My mother often recounted how she was forced to wear a shirt embroidered with the words wife of a rightist when she gave birth to me. The doctor on duty didnt dare offer to help bring this son of a capitalist dog into the world. Fortunately, my mother passed out after her waters broke, so she didnt feel any pain when I pushed myself out into the hospital corridor.And now, all these years later, I, too, am lying unconscious in a hospital. Only the occasional sound of glass injection ampoules being snapped open tells me that Im still alive.Yes, its me. My mothers eldest son. The eyes of a buried frog flash through my mind. Its still alive. It was I who trapped it in the jar and buried it in the earth . . . The dark corridor outside is very long. At the end of it is the operating room, where bodies are handled like mere heaps of flesh . . . And the girl I see now - whats her name? A-Mei. Shes walking towards me, just a white silhouette. She has no smell. Her lips are trembling.Im lying on a hospital bed, just as my father did before he died. Im Dai Wei - the seed that he left behind. Am I beginning to remember things? I must be alive, then. Or perhaps Im fading away, flitting, one last time, through the ruins of my past. No, I cant be dead. I can hear noises. Death is silent.Hes just pretending to be dead . . . my mother mumbles to someone. I cant eat this pak choi. Its full of sand.Its me shes talking about. I hear a noise close to my ear. Its somebodys colon rumbling.Wheres my mouth? My face? I can see a yellow blur before my eyes, but cant smell anything yet. I hear a baby crying somewhere in the distance and occasionally a thermos flask being filled with hot water.The yellow light splinters. Perhaps a bird just flew across the sky. I sense that Im waking from a long sleep. Everything sounds new and unfamiliar.What happened to me? I see Tian Yi and me hand in hand, running for our lives. Is that a memory? Did it really happen? Tanks roll towards us. There are fires burning everywhere, and the sound of screaming . . . And what about now? Did I pass out when the tanks rolled towards me? Is this still the same day?When my father was lying in hospital waiting to die, the stench of dirty sheets and rotten orange peel was sometimes strong enough to mask the pervasive smell of rusty metal beds. When the evening sky blocked up the window, the filthy curtains merged into the golden sunlight and the room became slightly more transparent, and enabled me at least to sense that my father was still alive . . . On that last afternoon, I didnt dare look at him. I turned instead to the window, and stared at the red slogan raise the glorious red flag of marxism and struggle boldly onwards hanging on the roof of the hospital building behind, and at the small strip of sky above it . . .During those last days of his life, my father talked about the three years he spent as a music student in America. He mentioned a girl from California whom hed met when he was there. She was called Flora, which means flower in Latin. He said that when she played the violin, she would look down at the floor and he could gaze at her long eyelashes. Shed promised to visit him in Beijing after she left college. But by the time she graduated, China had become a communist country, and no foreigners were allowed

inside.I remember the black, rotten molar at the side of his mouth. While he spoke to us in hospital, hed stroke his cotton sheet and the urinary catheter inserted into his abdomen underneath.Technically speaking, hes a vegetable, says a nurse to my right. But at least the IV fluid is still entering his vein. Thats a good a sign. She seems to be speaking through a face mask and tearing a piece of muslin. The noises vibrate through me, and for a moment I gain a vague sense of the size and weight of my body.If Im a vegetable, I must have been lying here unconscious for some time. So, am I waking up now?My father comes into view again. His face is so blurred, it looks as though Im seeing it through a wire mesh. My father was also attached to an intravenous drip when he breathed his last breath. His left eyeball reflected like a windowpane the roof of the hospital building behind, a slant of sky and a few branches of a tree. If I were to die now, my closed eyes wouldnt reflect a thing.Perhaps I only have a few minutes left to live, and this is just a momentary recovery of consciousness before death.Huh! Im probably wasting my time here. Hes never going to wake up. My mothers voice sounds both near and far away. It floats through the air. Maybe this is how noises sounded to my father just before he died.In those last few moments of his life, the oxygen mask on his face and the plastic tube inserted into his nose looked superfluous. Had the nurses not been regularly removing the phlegm from his throat, or pouring milk into his stomach through a rubber feeding tube, he would have died on that metal bed weeks before. Just as he was about to pass away, I sensed his eyes focus on me. I was tugging my brothers shirt. The cake crumbs in his hands scattered onto my fathers sheet. He was trying to climb onto my fathers bed. The key hanging from his neck clunked against the metal bed frame. I yanked the strap of his leather satchel with such force that it snapped in half.Get down! my mother shouted, her eyes red with fury. My brother burst into tears. I fell silent.A second later, my father sank into the cage of medical equipment surrounding him and entered my memory. Life and death had converged inside his body. It had all seemed so simple.Hes gone, the nurse said, without taking off her face mask. With the tip of her shoe, she flicked aside the discarded chopsticks and cotton wool shed used to clear his phlegm, then told my mother to go to reception and complete the required formalities. If his body wasnt taken to the mortuary before midnight, my mother would be charged another night for the hospital room. Director Guo, the personnel officer of the opera company my parents belonged to, advised my mother to apply for my fathers posthumous political rehabilitation, pointing out that the compensation money could help cover the hospital fees.My father stopped breathing and became a corpse. His body lay on the bed, as large as before. I stood beside him, with his watch on my wrist.After the cremation, my mother stood at the bus stop cradling the box of ashes in her arms and said, Your fathers last words were that he wanted his ashes buried in America. That rightist! Even at the point of death he refused to repent. As our bus approached, she cried out, At least from now on we wont have to live in a constant state of fear!She placed the box of ashes under her iron bed. Before I went to sleep, Id often pull it out and take a peek i...Revue de presse"This is an epic yet intimate work that deserves to be recognised and to endure as the great Tiananmen novel ... a magnificent book brim-full of humanity, insight and humour ... beautifully translated by Flora Drew" (Financial Times)"Once in a while - perhaps every 10 years, or even every generation - a novel appears that profoundly questions the way we look at the world, and at ourselves. Beijing Coma is a poetic examination not just of a country at a defining moment in its history, but of the universal right to remember and to hope. It is, in every sense, a landmark work of fiction" (Daily Telegraph)"A huge achievement ... a landmark account through fiction of a country whose rise has amazed the world, but which remains cloaked in shadows... finely written and translated" (The Times)"A modern literary masterpiece ... Ma Jian has created an intense, passionate and painful-to-read parable for today.. The elegant and bravura writing of Ma Jian is utterly convincing" (Sunday Express)"Monumental... splendidly translated by Flora Drew... This vivid, pungent, often blackly funny book is a mighty gesture of remembrance against the encroaching forces of silence" (Guardian)