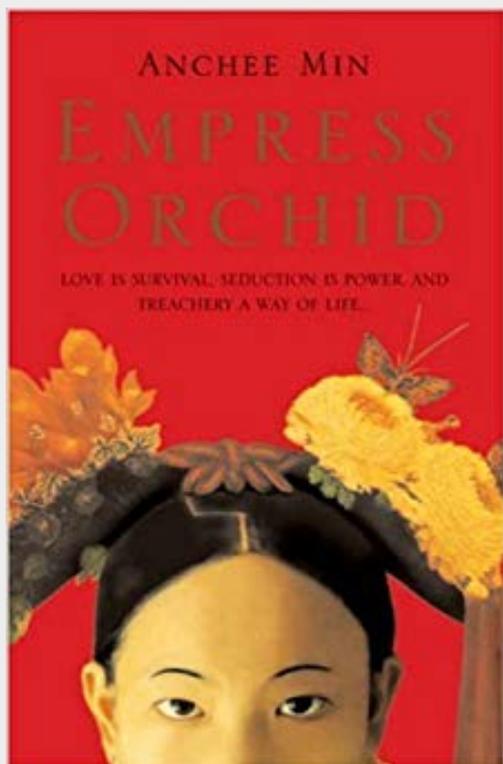


EMPRESS ORCHID by Anchee Min



DOWNLOAD LINKS (Clickable)



ISBN: 0747576130

ISBN13: 978-0747576136

Author: Anchee Min

Book title: EMPRESS ORCHID

Pages: 352

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Co./Mariner; Later Printing edition (2005)

Language: English

Category: Genre Fiction

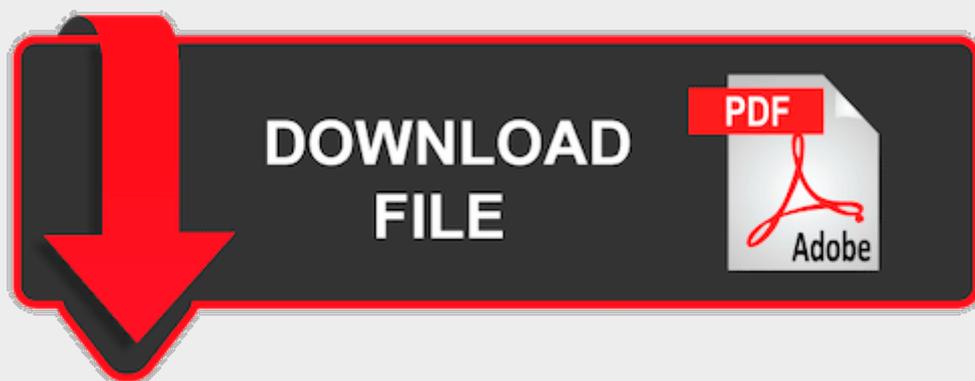
Size PDF version: 1799 kb

Size ePUB version: 1557 kb

Size FB2 version: 1462 kb

Other formats: doc mobi txt docx

EMPRESS ORCHID



Reviews of the **EMPRESS ORCHID** by Anchee Min

1. Elastic Skunk

Our book club read this as our 54th selection. The hostess has a background in Chinese history and wanted to share her passion with the book club group. There were six women in attendance, ages 31 to 40, all with varying backgrounds and education. This review is solely remarking

on this book as a book club selection, and so I will limit the story rehash as many other reviews capture the essence of this novel.

In a nutshell, *Empress Orchid* sweeps readers into the heart of the Forbidden City to tell the fascinating story of a young concubine who becomes China's last empress. Min introduces the beautiful Tzu Hsi, known as Orchid (based on the real-life Empress Dowager Cixi), and "weaves an epic of a country girl who seized power through seduction, murder, and endless intrigue. When China is threatened by enemies, she alone seems capable of holding the country together."

The themes in the book itself inspired a wonderful examination of China itself, through a delightful potluck, fun games and prizes, as well opportunities for beautiful decor. The book itself is reader friendly, though at first glance it appears dense. As you begin to read the novel, it's as readable as your average best seller. In fact, it reads like typical women's literature, with a female heroine at the center who you want to root for. The sweeping descriptions of the Forbidden City were, agreed across the board, one of the most winning aspects of this novel. Every book club member was memorized by the vista, the palaces, and the minute discussions of tedious and centuries-old traditions.

A large complaint of the novel was that the author seemed to lose track of characters (namely the Empress Dowager, Orchid's mother-in-law, or her sister, as examples). It was frustrating to get snippets of long-forgotten characters, or to have the suggestion of a role that is never played out. A similar complaint was the same issue but with plot points. There are major issues introduced early on (such as supposedly scheming eunuchs, the threat of jealousy from other concubines, or even the risk of being the "favorite" which apparently won one prior concubine a limbless life in a jar, that are just never examined or become a big part of the story... and recognition that they did NOT occur in spades never happens). And last, a minor issue was the description of this novel not holding weight with the contents of the actual material. There was no "seduction" or "erotic examination" to speak of as an example, despite the blurbs and quotes on the cover lending this as a major concept of the book itself. Orchid is presented as a lustful lady, indeed, but more neglected in this way than exploited. She wins the emperor with her wit, not her wiles, but I digress.

All that being said, this book was voted as a seven out of ten by all present members, which puts it into our top 20% of books read out of 54. Most of the complaints of the novel examined above are relative and subjective, and the novel itself is still a striking and complex journey to enjoy. Pretty much everyone enjoyed the vivid descriptions so much that the flaws in the read were largely overlooked. In fact, no one was disappointed that the book wasn't more erotic, for example, because everyone enjoyed the wit presented much more (after all, isn't it far more impressive that

Orchid won her position with her brain rather than her body?). And there is plenty of intrigue and politics, which we all enjoyed. Invariably, all questions and discussions derived from the material were astute, interesting, and exciting.

This book is recommended for a book club because of its readability, strong heroine, interesting discussion, and educational benefits. There are probably similar or even better reads on the subject available, but this one is a strong contender because of its readability and easy-to-understand word choice.

2. Wnex

The history of China in this book was fascinating. The Empress was a real person; however, what happened during these times of her life may or may not have happened. Regardless of the heavy descriptive language that explains China's customs, history at the time, morals and principles one can learn a lot reading this book. Being a lover of history, there was a lot about China I didn't know--now I do. I saw the historical movie, "55 days at Peking" and that movie was also about this Empress and the Boxer rebellion. I enjoyed the authors wording of the environment that the Empress lived in. I will buy and read "The Last Empress" next that continues this story.

3. Oso

I am not a history novel read but when I entered a book club that suggested reading this one I chose to give it a try.

I really liked how it kept me going even when some chapters were long and slow.

When you see yourself between marrying your cousin and serving your

Emperor, you obviously just run away when you're only a teen.

Orchid did not. She refused to let her family drown in sorrow and poverty so she chose to pursue the imperial life. What she didn't know was that somehow she would become the one person to bring back China and keep it afloat.

4. LiTTLe_NiGGa_in_THE_CriBE

I just don't think this author did her research fully on this novel, given what I already know about ancient China. It was a pleasant novel, and I would like to believe it, but a few incidents just stick in my craw, causing me to take the whole thing with a grain of salt. We are expected to believe that Orchid, after being chosen as concubine of the Emperor of China, is then sent home. Now I already know that the Chinese were fanatical about their women being virgin, and Min in fact describes the process where Orchid is examined for virginity. If Orchid is sent home, rather than being kept in the palace after being formally declared a virgin, she could lose that virginity and even conceive a child that was not the Emperor's. She describes how she bribed her way into the Emperor's bedchamber. She could do so, and pass off a child that was not the Emperor's. This is the ultimate nightmare of the Forbidden City. No, it would never happen this way, and I cannot believe Anchee Min proposes that it did.

Even more unbelievably, after an incident where Orchid complains that she is so well attended that she cannot go to the bathroom in private, we are asked to believe that she successfully sneaked out of the palace, went home, and went to a whorehouse to learn the arts of pleasing a man for the Emperor. Rubbish! Read "Daughter of Heaven" by Nigel Cawthorne about the ancient Chinese Empress Wu Chao to read how thoroughly concubines were prepared for the Emperor, and he for them. They were given extensive illustrated books as well as stretching exercises to do, and lesbianism was rampant. They were not ignorant girls just turned loose, as Min portrays.

It was a pleasant novel, but I am going to read others about this Empress, since I just can't believe this one. A few incidents that are just outrageous make me doubt the entire sequence.

Related PDF to **EMPRESS ORCHID** by Anchee Min

5. [DARK ORCHID: Anthology of Erotica.](#)
6. [Dark Descent: Diving and the Deadly Allure of the Empress of Ireland](#)
7. [Empress Josephine's Crown](#)
8. [The Last Empress](#)
9. [The Last Empress](#)
10. [Of Wool and Loom \(White Orchid Books\)](#)
11. [Orchid Splendors 2004 Calendar](#)
12. [My Life With Empress Dowager Cixi \('Wo zhai ci xi shen bian de ri zi', in traditional Chinese, NOT in English\)](#)
13. [Orchid Flowers: Their Pollination and Evolution](#)
14. [The Night Orchid \(Monogram\)](#)