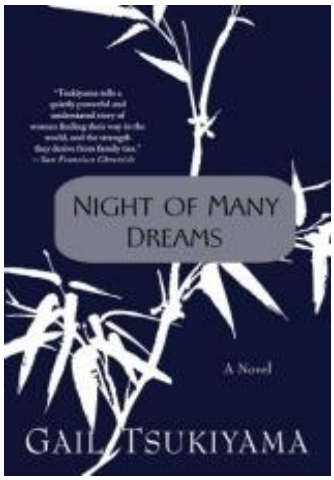
Night of Many Dreams

by Gail Tsukiyama



About the Book

When war threatens the comfortable life of Joan and Emma Lew, the daughters of a Hong Kong businessman, they escape with their family to spend the early 1940s in Macao. Upon their return home, Joan, the beautiful elder sister, hopes for a traditional marriage and children, until her passion for movies and romance gives her a promise of a different life. Emma, inspired by the independence of her aunt Go, considers college in San Francisco and the challenge of life in America. As the girls become women, each follows a path different from what her family expects. But through times of great happiness and sorrow, the sisters learn that their complicated ties to each other--and to the other members of their close-knit family--are a source of strength as they pursue their separate dreams.

Discussion Guide

1. Joan is the ?beautiful? sister, and Emma is the ?smart? sister. Discuss the significance of the scene in which Emma goes with Joan to collect their father?s money throughout the city during wartime. How do these descriptions affect each character?s sense of self?

2. Much of **Night of Many Dreams** takes place in Hong Kong. The city goes through several stages: pre-war, war, reconstruction and post-war boom. What happens to the landscape and businesses of Hong Kong in these different stages? How does the changing landscape of Hong Kong affect the characters, especially Auntie Go, Joan and Emma, throughout the book?

3. Macao is almost a magical refuge for Emma. It is also a very important place for both Auntie Go and Joan. What does Macao represent for each character?

4. Joseph Wong is the first seemingly suitable match for Joan. Not only does Joan fall in love with him, but so do Emma and Kum-Ling--each in her own way. What does the promise of Joseph represent for Joan, for Emma, and for Kum-

Ling?

5. Joan becomes passionate about cooking after she and Joseph break up. Kum-ling is angry about her desire to cook. Why is this? And how does Joan show that cooking is important to her?

6. How is marriage defined within the elite Hong Kong circles? What does the game of Mah-jongg fulfill for Kum Ling and her friends?

7. How does Auntie Go perceive her own social position, both within the immediate family and in Hong Kong social circles? How do Emma and Joan perceive Auntie Go?

8. Joan?s passionate and illicit affair with her director, Edward Chung, fires her acting in their movie, ?A Woman?s Life.? How does the character she plays help her understand her own experiences?

9. Joan and Emma?s father is generally silent. What do we learn about his relationship with Auntie Go at the scene of his death? What releases him from this world?

10. Emma goes through many changes when she moves to San Francisco. How does the boat ride affect Emma? In her first taxi ride around town, how does she perceive the landscape of the city itself? What and who most influence her in San Francisco? What changes do her family see when she comes home?

Author Bio

Gail Tsukiyama was born in San Francisco, California, to a Chinese mother from Hong Kong and a Japanese father from Hawaii. She attended San Francisco State University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master of Arts Degree in English. She is the bestselling author of such novels as WOMEN OF THE SILK, THE SAMURAI'S GARDEN and A HUNDRED FLOWERS, and has received the Academy of American Poets Award and the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award. She divides her time between El Cerrito and Napa Valley, California.

Critical Praise

"Tsukiyama brings a fluid elegance to her complicated novels."

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