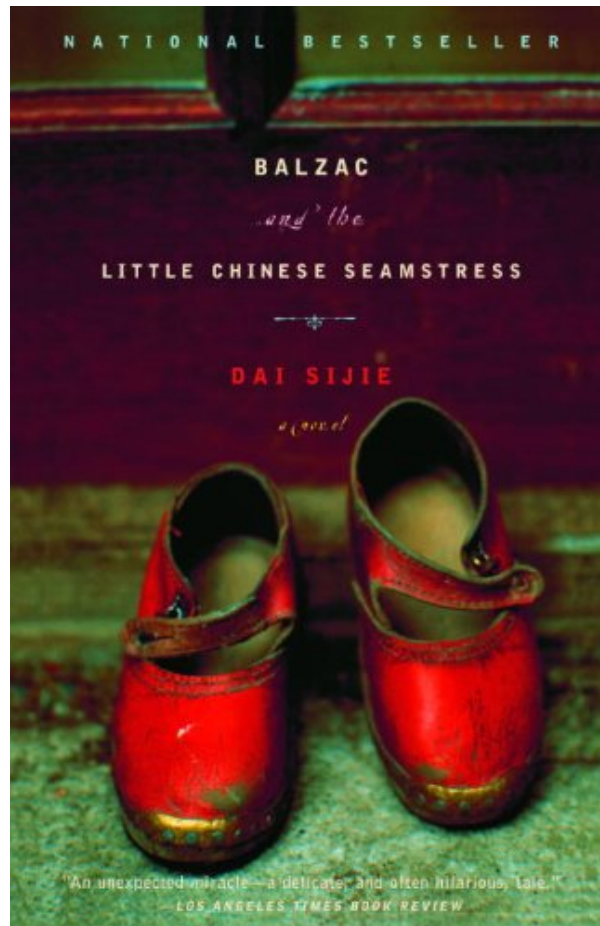
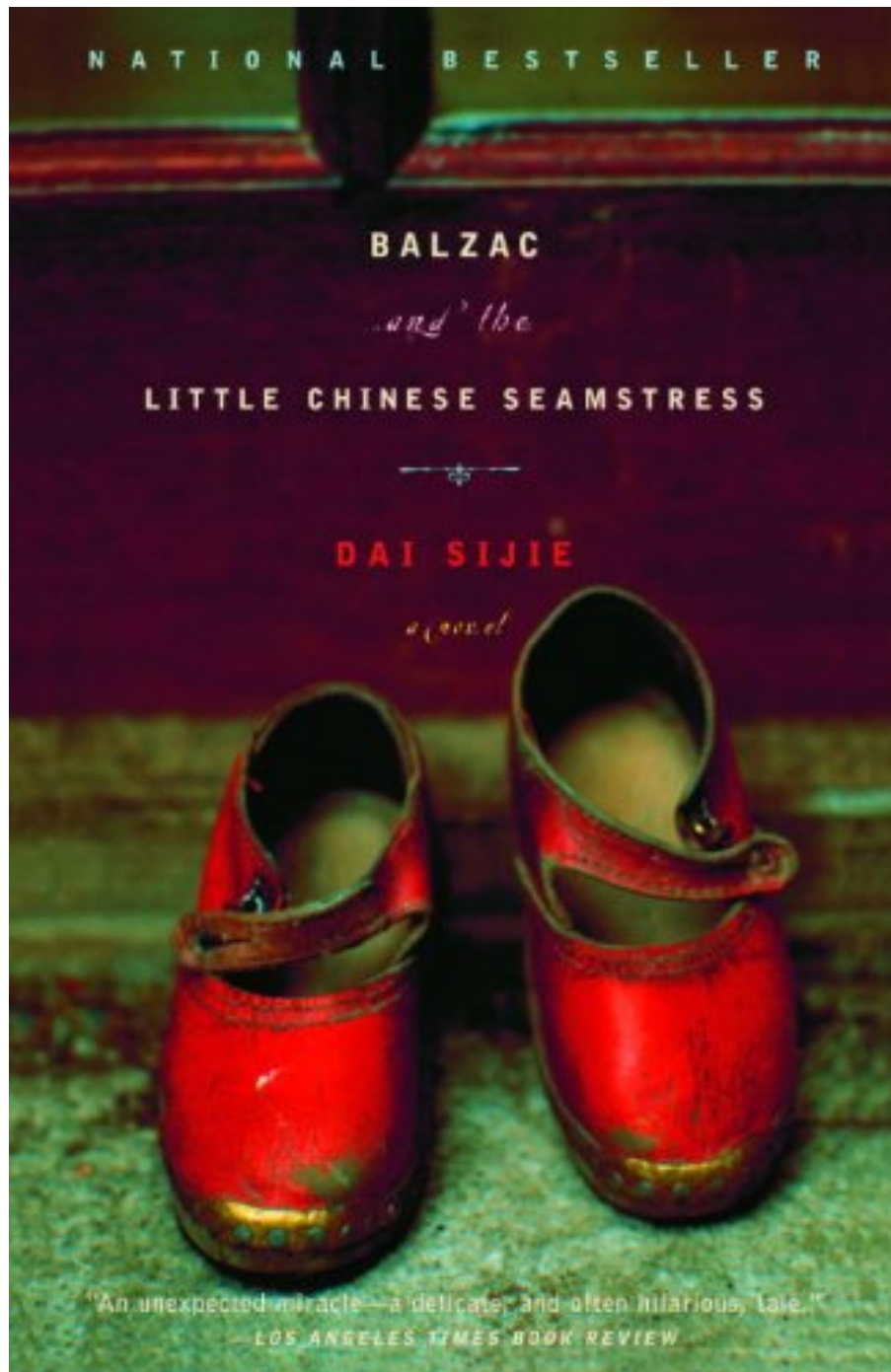


BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS: A NOVEL BY DAI SIJIE



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From Publishers Weekly

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From School Library Journal

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Emily Lloyd, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress is an enchanting tale that captures the magic of reading and the wonder of romantic awakening. An immediate international bestseller, it tells the story of two hapless city boys exiled to a remote mountain village for re-education during China's infamous Cultural Revolution. There the two friends meet the daughter of the local tailor and discover a hidden stash of Western classics in Chinese translation. As they flirt with the seamstress and secretly devour these banned works, the two friends find transit from their grim surroundings to worlds they never imagined.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 184 pages

Features

- Great product!

From Publishers Weekly

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Unintended Consequences

By John Petralia

Unintended consequences. It's what frequently happens when you try something for the first time. You know, like Dr. Frankenstein's experiment with creating life. Christopher Columbus looking for a new route to India. Alexander Graham Bell calling for Watson. Banning Books. Thalidomide. Nuclear Power. Slavery. Smoking. Deforestation. The Automobile. Almost anything you can think of comes along with unintended consequences. Some good. Some not so good. Some, terrible.

In this novel, the author demonstrates the law of unintended consequences by telling the story of two privileged young men in China during the Cultural Revolution. They are being "reeducated" in a poor village

far from their homes. There, they meet a beautiful seamstress who has not been exposed to books, western music or the ways of the world. The boys set out to reeducate her, and, in so doing, woo her. One plays Mozart for her on his violin and skillfully acts out scenes from popular movies. The other reads to her from a forbidden cache of western books by Cervantes, Hugo, Tolstoy, Dumas, Flaubert, Bronte, Balzac and other luminaries.

Because the story is related in simple language, often with slapstick humor, what should be an oppressive nightmare reads like a fairytale complete with a Cinderella, two Prince Charmings and more than one wicked villain. In the end, irony prevails over passion, demagoguery, and the best intentions of the various "reeducators".

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

I found it a dull read, but I may be missing something

By Amazonian

I am not a fan of this book, but I read it for a book group. Everyone else thought it was touching, suspenseful and deep. I was the lone dissenter. They read much more into the characters than I did. I found it a dull read, but I may be missing something.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Unputdownable !

By Koonu

Read it in one sitting within 24 hours of buying. Author has a remarkable flair for storytelling just like other recent English writers of Chinese origin Ha Jin (*In the pond, Waiting*) and Adeline Yen Mah (*Falling Leaves, Chinese Cinderella*). Having myself grown up during adolescence in a remote part of India on a staple diet of western classics including Russian authors like Tolstoy and Chekov, I could empathise with the characters savouring Balzac in translation notwithstanding the cultural disconnect. I also felt guilty that unlike the characters of this book, two boys denounced during Mao's cultural revolution, just for having the wrong parents; I was privileged to be growing up in a free, albeit third world country with access to a decent public library in my own cozy home town. As the Economist has rightly said in the blurb, this book is "A paeian to the magic of literature" and "A true book lover's book" (pun intended). The little Seamstress had the last word in this 21st Century French novel written by a Chinese author, ..she had learnt one thing from Balzac: that a woman's beauty is a treasure beyond price !! This tells us that Dumas, Mozart, Balzac or Beethoven transcend man made national boundaries while pollinating intellectual curiosity of adolescents of the global village.

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