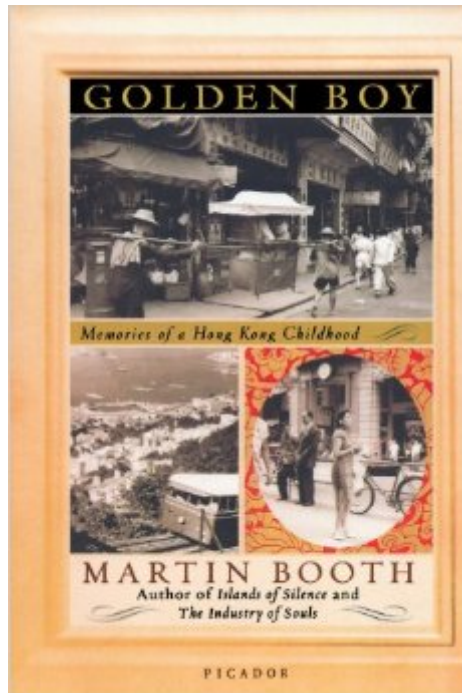


The book was found

Golden Boy: Memories Of A Hong Kong Childhood



Synopsis

At seven years old, Martin Booth found himself with all of Hong Kong at his feet when his father was posted there in 1952. This is his memoir of that youth, a time when he had access to corners of the colony normally closed to a gweilo, a "pale fellow" like him. From the plink plonk man with his dancing monkey to Nagasaki Jim, and from a drunken child molester to the Queen of Kowloon (the crazed tramp who may have been a Romanov), Martin saw it all--but his memoir illustrates a deeper challenge in his warring parents. This is an intimate and powerful memory of a place and time now past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Running free among the tiny, crowded markets, opium dens and shantytowns of 1952 Hong Kong, British writer Martin Booth had the sort of idyllic, adventurous childhood that is scarcely conceivable now. At age 8 Booth roamed the streets almost at will, confined only by school hours and his mother's direct prohibitions, which were few and usually circumvented at the first opportunity. Booth's father, Ken, was posted to Hong Kong as a mid-level functionary in the provisioning of the British army. While young Booth and his mother, Joyce, were drawn to the culture and beauty of the place immediately, Ken remained resolutely standoffish, the epitome of the clichéd British colonial. Booth began this book near the end of his life at the request of his children, after being diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Though there's undoubtedly a certain amount of nostalgia in these vivid memories, it's not all dazzle and wonder. In a place so teeming with refugees, there are many stories of cruelty and tragedy. Several fires engulf the squatter

shantytowns of impoverished Mainland Chinese who had already lost everything in their flight from the communists. And, more personally, Booth's parents seldom exchange a civil word. His father comes across as a humorless, small-minded bigot, a man who detests England, but encases himself in his British identity, despising all that's foreign. His mother, who had lost her father young and known much sadness and privation, blossoms in Hong Kong. She learns Cantonese, cultivates Chinese friends from all walks of life, and takes Martin all over the island to Chinese festivals and Russian bakeries and old colonial hotels for tea. But Martin's real education is all on his own.

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