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This enthralling account of modern China told through three unintentional heroes...

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This enthralling account of modern **China** told through three unintentional heroes is a page-turner.

Focusing on three courageous citizens who test the limits of reform and suffer injustice, **Ian Johnson** captures the subtlety of life in modern **China**, as well as its contradictions.

In three tales, Johnson tells about Ma Wenlin, a former Red Guard and self-educated peasant lawyer who gets jailed for representing the peasants against illegal taxes; Fang Ke, a bright architectural student who exposes the destruction of Beijing's ancient buildings; and Zhang Xueling, the daughter of a Falungong convert who seeks answers about the cause of her mother's death in prison.

Through these tales, Johnson links the crises faced in **China**'s villages and cities today with its turbulent history and identifies the country's potential political landmines, explaining why "rulers and ruled wage one hundred battles a day".

His prose is limpid, his ironies gentle but insistent. His characters are so fearless and wily that they will break your heart.

Raw emotion and gripping honesty propel you forward as you learn more about courage and politics in **China**. ù Renessa Teng