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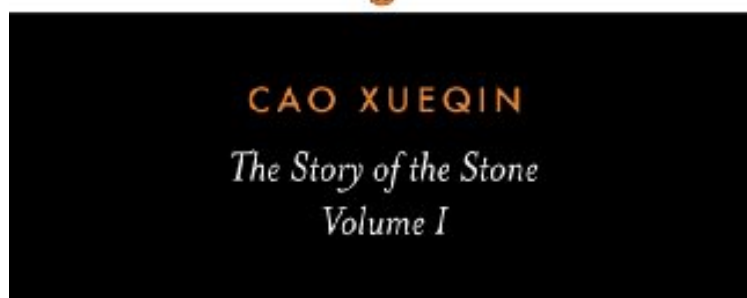
## The Story of the Stone: The Golden Days (Volume I): Golden Days v. 1 (Classics)

Von Cao Xueqin

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**Von Cao Xueqin : The Story of the Stone: The Golden Days (Volume I): Golden Days v. 1 (Classics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Story of the Stone: The Golden Days (Volume I): Golden Days v. 1 (Classics):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen6 von 6 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A

Chinese classic that should be better known in the West

**Von Ein Kunde** This is one of the most entertaining, satisfying "big baggy"-type novels of all time. Readers who like long Victorian or Russian novels, or got all the way through "Clarissa," will get many hours of enjoyment from "Story of the Stone" ("Dream of the Red Chamber" is the more common title). It is about a cultured, wealthy family in early Ching dynasty China, with a teenaged hero called Bao-yu. Bao-yu spends all his time in the women's quarters, which is unheard-of for a boy his age but allowed because his grandmother spoils him. Instead of fulfilling his filial duty by studying for the civil service exams, he indulges in the same idle pleasures as the women of the household, eating, dressing, gossiping, composing poetry, and/or playing drinking games with his many girl cousins, aunts, mother, doting grandmother, myriad serving maids, a troupe of actresses, and the occasional nun from a convent located on the grounds. Bao-yu is a dreamy, precocious romantic, very spoiled but charming, and always (usually platonically) in love with several girls at once. However, his deepest feelings are for his cousin Dai-yu, his soulmate, who is sickly, orphaned, frequently whiny, and not considered a good match by the family. It is hard to believe that Cao Xueqin wrote about 300 years ago on the other side of the world, because he gives such a touching, ironic depiction of romantic love unfolding between two sensitive, self-conscious, and precocious kids. His characterizations of women are also sympathetic and insightful, aware of the suffering that society's conventions inflict on them. And the rest of the novel is a fascinating portrayal of traditional Chinese culture, manners, religion, entertainment, food, clothes, interior decoration, medicine, and family values. Family members and servants go about their lives, putting on funerals, having birthday parties, intriguing for improved status within the family, casting spells on enemies, eating lavish meals, entertaining Imperial guests and poor relations, threatening or committing suicide to save face, scheming to take concubines behind wives' backs, etc. etc. Symbolism in names, metaphors, dreams, poems, etc. abounds. The novel has literally hundreds of characters (David Hawkes helpfully organizes them by letting the family members keep their Chinese names and translating the servants' names into English, the actresses' names into French, and the monks' and nuns' names into Latin). Caveat lector: "DRC" is challenging even for a Chinese reader because of its allegories, wordplay, poetry, and cultural references. It is full of allusions to Chinese literature and history -- which can be frustrating since Hawkes does not provide explanatory footnotes. (I was able to get my Chinese boyfriend and his mother to explain some of the allusions.) Also, although the translation is unabridged and usually idiomatic, it sometimes grated on my (American) ears. Hawkes sometimes makes the characters talk painfully quaint British slang. But if you can overlook these difficulties, this is one of those novels that can conjure up a world and make its inhabitants real for the reader.

3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Die chinesischen Buddenbrooks

**Von schlimmerdurst** Sehr interessant und auch überraschend kurzweilig wird das Alltagsleben einer großen chinesischen Adelsfamilie beschrieben. Der Band ist mit "The Golden Days" untertitelt, und diesen Eindruck hat man beim Lesen auch: Der Zerfall und die Dekadenz, die Ritualisierung des Alltagslebens und der ständige Ennui bei gleichzeitiger dauernder Unruhe dieser privilegierten Schicht wird sehr plastisch geschildert. Diese Kapitel des Romans wirken unbeschwert und leicht; vom späteren Niedergang ist noch nichts sprbar. Der Leser, der moderne Romane gewohnt ist, wird sich auf ein paar Eigenheiten der klassischen chinesischen Romane einstellen müssen. Auch wenn das vorliegende Werk das Erbe der mündlichen Weitergabe schon deutlich hinter sich lässt, sind immer noch typische Merkmale, wie die Einleitungsgedichte, die Kapitelschlussformulierung und die in Gedichtform eingestreuten Umgebungsbeschreibungen vorhanden. Auch der für chinesische Romane typische Zerfall an Personen kann etwas einschüchternd wirken, gerade zu Beginn; die ersten 5 Kapitel sind nicht leicht zu lesen, danach wird es deutlich besser verständlich, wenn die wichtigsten Figuren eingeführt sind. Man darf natürlich bei diesem Werk auch keine sprachliche Ausgefeiltheit wie bei Mann oder eine Charakterisierung wie bei Dostojewskij erwarten, dazu ist die Gattung bei diesem Roman noch nicht weit fortgeschritten genug. Trotzdem bietet sich dem Leser ein Familiendrama, das einen schnell in seinen Bann zieht. Der hier vorliegende Band 1 enthält die Kapitel 1 bis 26 (von 120), man muss sich also auch die anderen 4 Bände zulegen, um die Geschichte ganz zu lesen. Eine gelungene Einführung und zuerst hilfreiche Familienstammbäume runden das Werk ab. Die Übersetzung von David Hawkes ist sehr gelungen und hat neben einigen leserleichternden Kunstkniffen (Namensübersetzung von Nebenpersonen) auch einen sehr angenehmen Fluss zu bieten, in dem weder die (homo-)sexuellen Anspielungen noch die teilweise deftige Sprache untergehen. Wenn dieses Werk gefällt, kann sich auch "Die Gelehrten" (Rulin Waishi, "The Scholars") ansehen, da sowohl Thematik als auch Stil recht ähnlich sind.

10 von 10 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Fascinating, but needs initial patience

**Von Ein Kunde** This is the first volume of a 5 volume series, and does not stand alone. If you read it, and enjoy it, be prepared to read the other four volumes. The story is difficult to begin with, not for lack of interest, but because of the complexity of Chinese names for the western reader. The book is provided with a useful list of characters for each volume, and after referring to this during the first half of the first volume, all becomes clearer for the remainder of the book. The story itself is a fascinating picture of life in 18th century China, and portrays the development of a young boy who has otherworldly origins. The western reader needs to view dispassionately the Buddhist theme which pervades the novel, but when read with an open mind, the philosophy underlying the novel is both charming and practical (in its own way). I found the book addictive, though it has to be said that others of my acquaintance found it too difficult to cope with, and abandoned the story before the end of the first volume. If you persevere, it forms a wonderful introduction to classical Chinese literature, and those similarly addicted will find it leads into many other

books of Chinese prose and poetry.

**Kurzbeschreibung**The Story of the Stone (c.1760) is one of the greatest novels of Chinese literature. The first part of the story, The Golden Days, begins the tale of Bao-yu, a gentle young boy who prefers girls to Confucian studies, and his two cousins: Bao-chai, his parents' choice of a wife for him, and the ethereal beauty Dai-yu. Through the changing fortunes of the Jia family, this rich, magical work sets worldly events - love affairs, sibling rivalries, political intrigues, even murder - within the context of the Buddhist understanding that earthly existence is an illusion and karma determines the shape of our lives.

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**Synopsis** Considered one of the greatest works of Chinese literature, this five-part story charts the changing fortunes of the Jia family. It sets worldly events - love affairs, sibling rivalries, even murder - within the context of the Buddhist understanding that karma determines the shape of our lives.