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Book Review

Title: Fortress Besieged

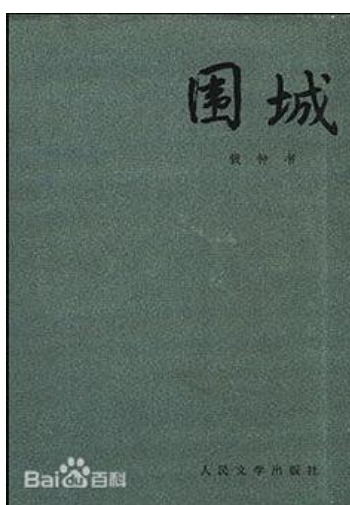
Author: Qian Zhong Shu

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Abstract

“Fortress Besieged” is written in the background of the war of resistance against Japan and it’s the only one long novel written by Qianzhongshu. In satirical terms, Qianzhongshu depicted that a group of students studying abroad like Fanghongjian in the book came back home and how they tried to make a living in that kind of complicated and hypocritical society. People surrounding them including themselves was thoroughly vulgar, selfish and indolent and they wanted to have a good reputation, enough rights and money to let people recognize and worship them to meet their sheer vanity. Nevertheless, someone had the capacity or skills to get this kind of vanity, whereas someone just could be a loser like Fanghongjian done. This book has been translated into five language and it has got a great number of readers in the world and it’s worthy of being read.

Keywords: Vulgarity, Hypocrisy, family, career, marriage

Body

Chapter one: Fanghongjian was engaged in a girl he never met before to their parents’ request. After his fiancée’s death, he exploited

his father-in-law to study aboard and bought a fake diploma. On his journey back home, he encountered two girls and he soon fell in love

with Miss Bao, which caused Suwenwan's jealous, his former classmate. Su once despised of Fang's coward of talking to girls in their university times. But now she was attracted by him and complaints arising from her.

Chapter two: Fanghongjian lived with his father-in-law's family and worked as a bank clerk in his father-in-law's company temporarily. A principal invited him to give a speech to his school. Owing to his ignorance and carelessness of his speech draft, he chose opium and syphilis as his topic, which embarrassed the "antiques" thoroughly. Because of his famous speech, Fang got his "reputation" too and some marriage suitors gradually drew back their daughters' information from his parents.

Chapter three: He visited Suwenwan and got acquaintance of Tangxiaofu and Zhaoxinmei, the pursuer of Su. Fang didn't love Su but he liked to have an ambiguous relationship with her, which mistook everyone, including Zhaoxinmei. Zhao often found faults with Fang and Su enjoyed it a lot. Fang often privately wrote letters to Tangxiaofu, which mainly told her about his life things and his love confession to her.

Chapter four: Suwenwan deliberately flirted with Fanghongjian, which upset Fang a lot and he wrote a letter to confess everything. Burnt with anger, Su told Tang that Fang's connection with his father-in-law's family, his fake diploma, his foggy relationship with her and the kiss of last night and his temporary love with Miss Bao and he was a thorough giddy man. Faced with Tang's questions, Fang chose to be silent and escape to Hunan province to be a teacher in Sanlv University. Su engaged in Caowenlang, a fake poet, which attacked Zhao a lot and he also decided to go Sanlv University. Zhao and Fang became friends overnight.

Chapter five: there were five person to go to the Sanlv University. On the journey they had witnessed how much the hardness the war had given to the Chinese people and how cold and indifferent people had become. Limeiting and Gu just brought the three-fourths of their journey fee remitted from Sanlv University. Li flirted with a widow on the half way and Sunroujia gradually fell in love with Fang. After arriving in Sichuan province, they had no money left and had to resort to the Sanlv University. Lacking in a reference, the money was just like a pie in the sky, which tortured them a lot, tired, starving, and without any acquaintance, Li even eat a sweet potato sneakily in a street corner, witnessed by Fang.

Chapter six: Gaosongnian, the principal of the new university, was too good, an old cunning fox. He had already had the five person taped. Fanghongjian was changed to be an associate professor instead of the promised professor for his fake diploma. Gao once promised Limeiting to be the director of the Chinese department, which was wanted by Wangchuhou, the uncle of the section chief of Hu Nan province. Gao bought all the medicine that Li took from shanghai in a fantastic price as a compensation. Zhaoxinmei, a master of an American university, smoothly was the director of the political department. Hanxueyu, a cunning stutter, having the same fake diploma as Fang, was the director of history department. Liudongfang, an enemy of Hanxueyu, was the director of foreign language department. Miss Fan, an average-looking girl and the roommate of Sunroujia, was a discipline teacher in the university. There were too much schemes and intrigues happened to them.

Chapter seven: Wangchuhou and his wife invited Fang and Zhao to their home to have a

blind date with Miss Fan and Miss Liu, the sister of Liudongfang. Over the dinner, Gaosongnian dropped by and told that Limeiting sued to him that Mrs. Wang played mahjong in school, which led Mrs. Wang's dissatisfaction. And Miss Fan told Luzixiao often wrote letters to Sunroujia and Fang was jealous a lot. Dinner was over and no couple was set. Due to Mrs. Wang's resemblance to Suwenwan, Zhao had an abnormal affair with Mrs. Wang, witnessed by her husband. Zhao quit the job overnight and went to Chongqing. Fang engaged in Sunroujia.

Chapter eight: After the engagement, Sunroujia concealed her calculating nature to Fang without any fear. And Fang decided to leave Sanlv University owing to the implacable contradiction between him and Gao. On their way back to Shanghai, Fang got married with Sun under the persuasion of Zhao.

Chapter nine: Sun didn't obey the rules of Fang's family, not kneeling to Fang's parents at their first sight. Sun thought that she was a new times lady and shouldn't do such odd and ridiculous things and she also didn't like the wives of Fang's two younger brothers who were gossip girls without any good education. The aunt of Sun, who once studied in American and married a half deaf American, also didn't satisfied with Fang, complaining that Fang was not rich, ignorant and a little stupid and didn't know how to make her niece happy. The two family had so many contradictions that they found fault with each other, at last the problems exploded and they broke up.

Comments

Fanghongjian was a contradictory role in the book who was kind and weak, justice and

stubborn, and he distained to do some wicked things but had to surrender to them. He knew nothing about life but had to be careful and prudent of everything. He accepted the marriage his parents set for him and used his father-in-law to study abroad and bought a fake diploma, fell in love with Miss Tang but without any courage to explain anything, unsophisticated to his work and at last went into the trap that Sunroujia set for him. He was trapped from one fortress besieged to another and was rebuffed in all sides and eventually he lost himself. Actually there are too much "Fanghongjian" examples in our life. Everyone wants to make some tries for their life but can't find a good point to balance, including their family, their career and marriage.

Famous sentences

Like "it's cruel to watch people who is ugly, except you hate her", "marriage is a siege, people want to go inside the city, the city people want to come out", "there are two kinds of person in the world: one would firstly select the best grape to eat and another would keep the best to the last and people are prone to think that the former is an optimist and the latter is a pessimist. On the contrary, the latter has some hope left but the former just has the memory", "a sleep, without a dream or feeling inside, is just a dead sample", "most of love is not successful, one is bored of what they have got and another is sad for what they haven't got", "gossip can spread more fast and thoroughly than a flu and had more destructive force than a meteor, more vicious than a rogue and can make people more exhausted than an abortion." So if you really want to feel the wisdom of the book, you can refer to this book, and it's very meaningful.

