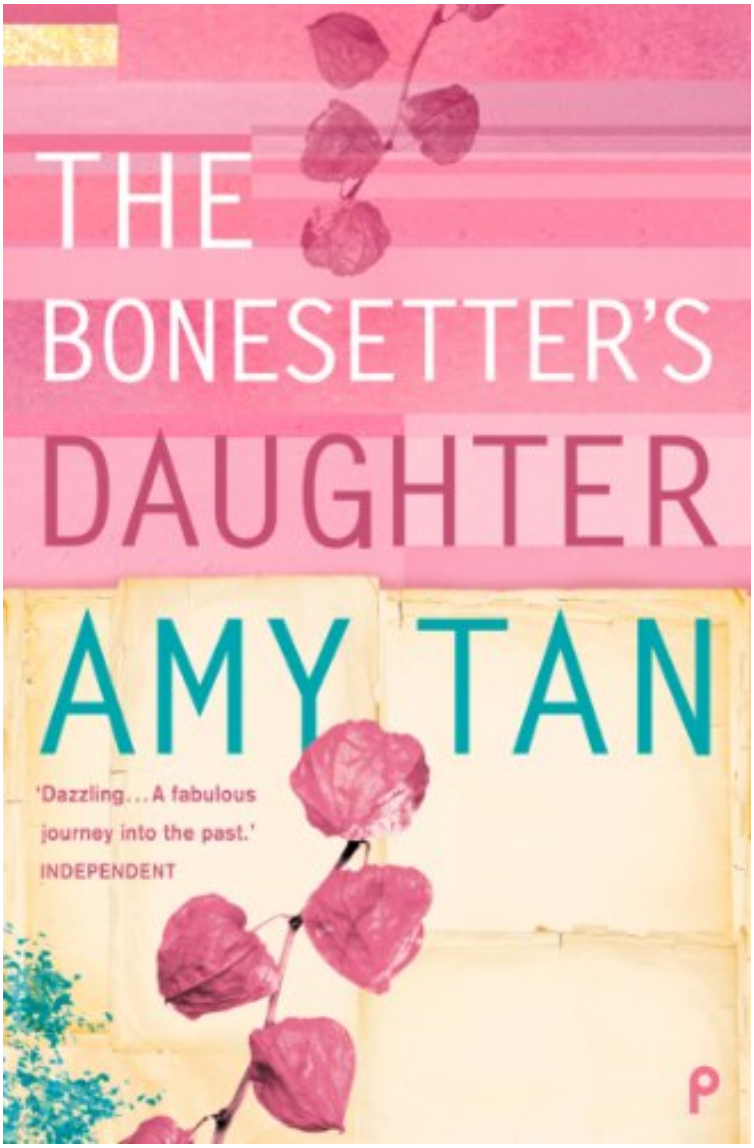
The Bonesetters Daughter



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Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #41041 dans eBooksPubli le: 2012-05-31Sorti le: 2012-05-31Format: Ebook Kindle

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Par Amy Tan : The Bonesetters Daughter before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bonesetters Daughter:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA major novel from the internationally bestselling author of The Joy Luck Club, The Kitchen Gods Wife and The Hundred Secret Senses.LuLing Young is in her eighties, and finally beginning to feel the effects of old age. Trying to hold on to the evaporating past, she begins to write down all that she can remember of her life as a girl in China. Meanwhile, her daughter Ruth, a ghostwriter for authors of self-help books, is losing the ability to speak up for herself in front of the man she lives with. LuLing can only look on, helpless: her prickly relationship with her daughter does not make it easy to discuss such matters. In turn, Ruth has begun to suspect that something is wrong with her mother: she says so many confusing and contradictory things.Ruth decides to move in with her ailing mother, and while tending to her discovers the story LuLing wrote in Chinese, of her tumultuous life growing up in a remote mountain village known as

Immortal Heart. LuLing tells of the secrets passed along by her mute nursemaid, Precious Auntie; of a cave where dragon bones are mined and where Peking Man was discovered; of the crumbling ravine known as the End of the World, where Precious Auntie's bones lie, and of the curse that LuLing believes she released through betrayal. Like layers of sediment being removed, each page unfolds into an even greater mystery: Who was Precious Auntie, whose suicide changed the path of LuLing's life?Set in contemporary San Francisco and pre-war China, The Bonesetters Daughter is an excavation of the human spirit. With great warmth and humour, Amy Tan gives us a mesmerising story of a mother and daughter discovering together that what they share in their bones through history and heredity is priceless beyond measure.ExtraitTRUTHThese are the things I know are true:My name is LuLing Liu Young. The names of my husbands werePan Kai Jing and Edwin Young, both of them dead and our secretsgone with them. My daughter is Ruth Luyi Young. She was born in aWater Dragon Year and I in a Fire Dragon Year. So we are the samebut for opposite reasons.I know all this, yet there is one name I cannot remember. It isthere in the oldest layer of my memory, and I cannot dig it out. Ahundred times I have gone over that morning when Precious Auntiewrote it down. I was only six then, but very smart. I could count. Icould read. I had a memory for everything, and here is my memoryof that winter morning.I was sleepy, still lying on the brick k'ang bed I shared with PreciousAuntie. The flue to our little room was furthest from the stovein the common room, and the bricks beneath me had long turnedcold. I felt my shoulder being shaken. When I opened my eyes, PreciousAuntie began to write on a scrap of paper, then showed mewhat she had written. "I can't see," I complained. "It's too dark."She huffed, set the paper on the low cupboard, and motioned thatI should get up. She lighted the teapot brazier, and tied a scarf over hernose and mouth when it started to smoke. She poured face-washingwater into the teapot's chamber, and when it was cooked, she startedour day. She scrubbed my face and ears. She parted my hair andcombed my bangs. She wet down any strands that stuck out likespider legs. Then she gathered the long part of my hair into twobundles and braided them. She banded the top with red ribbon, thebottom with green. I wagged my head so that my braids swung likethe happy ears of palace dogs. And Precious Auntie sniffed the airas if she, too, were a dog wondering, What's that good smell? Thatsniff was how she said my nickname, Doggie. That was how shetalked.She had no voice, just gasps and wheezes, the snorts of a raggedwind. She told me things with grimaces and groans, dancing eyebrowsand darting eyes. She wrote about the world on my carry-aroundchalkboard. She also made pictures with her blackenedhands. Hand-talk, face-talk, and chalk-talk were the languages Igrew up with, soundless and strong.As she wound her hair tight against her skull, I played with herbox of treasures. I took out a pretty comb, ivory with a roostercarved at each end. Precious Auntie was born a Rooster. "You wearthis," I demanded, holding it up. "Pretty." I was still young enoughto believe that beauty came from things, and I wanted Mother to favorher more. But Precious Auntie shook her head. She pulled offher scarf and pointed to her face and bunched her brows. What usedo I have for prettiness? she was saying.Her bangs fell to her eyebrows like mine. The rest of her hair wasbound into a knot and stabbed together with a silver prong. She hada sweet-peach forehead, wide-set eyes, full cheeks tapering to a smallplump nose. That was the top of her face. Then there was thebottom.She wiggled her blackened fingertips like hungry flames. See whatthe fire did.I didn't think she was ugly, not in the way others in our familydid. "Ai-ya, seeing her, even a demon would leap out of his skin," Ionce heard Mother remark. When I was small, I liked to trace myfingers around Precious Auntie 's mouth. It was a puzzle. Half wasbumpy, half was smooth and melted closed. The inside of her rightcheek was stiff as leather, the left was moist and soft. Where thegums had burned, the teeth had fallen out. And her tongue was like aparched root. She could not taste the pleasures of life: salty and bitter,sour and sharp, spicy, sweet, and fat.No one else understood Precious Auntie 's kind of talk, so I hadto say aloud what she meant. Not everything, though, not our secretstories. She often told me about her father, the Famous Bonesetterfrom the Mouth of the Mountain, about the cave where they foundthe dragon bones, how the bones were divine and could cure anypain, except a grieving heart. "Tell me again," I said that morning,wishing for a story about how she burned her face and became mynursemaid.I was a fire-eater, she said with her hands and eyes. Hundreds ofpeople came to see me in the market square. Into the burning pot of mymouth I dropped raw pork, added chilis and bean paste, stirred this up,then offered the morsels to people to taste. If they said, "Delicious!" Iopened my mouth as a purse to catch their copper coins. One day, however,I ate the fire, and the fire came back, and it ate me. After that, I decidednot to be a cook-pot anymore, so I became your nursemaid instead.I laughed and clapped my hands, liking this made-up story best.The day before, she told me she had stared at an unlucky star fallingout of the sky and then it dropped into her open mouth and burnedher face. The day before that, she said she had eaten what shethought was a

spicy Hunan dish only to find that it was the coals usedfor cooking.No more stories, Precious Auntie now told me, her hands talkingfast. It's almost time for breakfast, and we must pray while we're stillhungry. She retrieved the scrap of paper from the cupboard, folded itin half, and tucked it into the lining of her shoe. We put on ourpadded winter clothes and walked into the cold corridor. The airsmelled of coal fires in other wings of the compound. I saw OldCook pumping his arm to turn the crank over the well. I heard a tenantyelling at her lazy daughter-in-law. I passed the room that mysister, GaoLing, shared with Mother, the two of them still asleep. Wehurried to the south-facing small room, to our ancestral hall. At thethreshold, Precious Auntie gave me a warning look. Act humble. Takeoff your shoes. In my stockings, I stepped onto cold gray tiles. Instantly,my feet were stabbed with an iciness that ran up my legs,through my body, and dripped out my nose. I began to shake.The wall facing me was lined with overlapping scrolls of couplets,gifts to our family from scholars who had used our ink over thelast two hundred years. I had learned to read one, a poem-painting:"Fish shadows dart downstream," meaning our ink was dark, beautiful,and smooth-flowing. On the long altar table were two statues,the God of Longevity with his white-waterfall beard, and the Goddessof Mercy, her face smooth, free of worry. Her black eyes lookedinto mine. Only she listened to the woes and wishes of women, PreciousAuntie said. Perched around the statues were spirit tablets ofthe Liu ancestors, their wooden faces carved with their names. Notall my ancestors were there, Precious Auntie told me, just the onesmy family considered most important. The in-between ones andthose belonging to women were stuck in trunks or forgotten.Precious Auntie lighted several joss sticks. She blew on them untilthey began to smolder. Soon more smoke rose--a jumble of ourbreath, our offerings, and hazy clouds that I thought were ghostswho would try to yank me down to wander with them in the Worldof Yin. Precious Auntie once told me that a body grows cold when itis dead. And since I was chilled to the bone that morning, I wasafraid."I'm cold," I whimpered, and tears leaked out.Precious Auntie sat on a stool and drew me to her lap. Stop that,Doggie, she gently scolded, or the tears will freeze into icicles and pokeout your eyes. She kneaded my feet fast, as if they were dumplingdough. Better? How about now, better?After I stopped crying, Precious Auntie lighted more joss sticks.She went back to the threshold and picked up one of her shoes. I canstill see it--the dusty blue cloth, the black piping, the tiny embroideryof an extra leaf where she had repaired the hole. I thought shewas going to burn her shoe as a send-away gift to the dead. Instead,from the shoe 's lining, she took out the scrap of paper with the writingshe had showed me earlier. She nodded toward me and said withher hands: My family name, the name of all the bonesetters. She putthe paper name in front of my face again and said, Never forget thisname, then placed it carefully on the altar. We bowed and rose,bowed and rose. Each time my head bobbed up, I looked at thatname. And the name was--Why can't I see it now? I've pushed a hundred family namesthrough my mouth, and none comes back with the belch of memory.Was the name uncommon? Did I lose it because I kept it a secret toolong? Maybe I lost it the same way I lost all my favorite things--thejacket GaoLing gave me when I left for the orphan school, the dressmy second husband said made me look like a movie star, the firstbaby dress that Luyi outgrew. Each time I loved something with aspecial ache, I put it in my trunk of best things. I hid those things forso long I almost forgot I had them.This morning I remembered the trunk. I went to put away thebirthday present that Luyi gave me. Gray pearls from Hawaii, beautifulbeyond belief. When I opened the lid, out rose a cloud of moths, astream of silverfish. Inside I found a web of knitted holes, one afterthe other. The embroidered flowers, the bright colors, now gone. Almostall that mattered in my life has disappeared, and the worst islosing Precious Auntie 's name.Precious Auntie, what is our name? I always meant to claim it asmy own. Come help me remember. I'm not a little girl anymore. I'mnot afraid of ghosts. Are you still mad at me? Don't you recognizeme? I am LuLing, your daughter.Revue de presseAS COMPELLING AS TANS FIRST BESTSELLER THE JOY LUCK CLUB. . . No one writes about mothers and daughters with more empathy than Amy Tan.The Philadelphia Inquirer[AN] ABSORBING TALE OF THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOND . . . THIS BOOK SING[S] WITH EMOTION AND INSIGHT.PeoplePOIGNANT AND BITTERSWEET . . . A STORY OF SECRETS AND REVELATION, ESTRANGEMENT AND RECONCILIATION.Rocky Mountain News