



The Noodle Maker: A Novel

By Ma Jian

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The Noodle Maker: A Novel By Ma Jian

From Ma Jian, the highly acclaimed Chinese dissident, comes a satirical novel about the absurdities of life in a post-Tiananmen China.

Two men meet for dinner each week. Over the course of one of these drunken evenings, the writer recounts the stories he would write, had he the courage: a young man buys an old kiln and opens a private crematorium, delighting in his ability to harass the corpses of police officers and Party secretaries, while swooning to banned Western music; a heartbroken actress performs a public suicide by stepping into the jaws of a wild tiger, watched nonchalantly by her ex-lover. Extraordinary characters inspire him, their lives pulled and pummeled by fate and politics, as if they are balls of dough in the hands of an all-powerful noodle maker.

Ma Jian's satirical masterpiece allows us a humorous, yet profound, glimpse of those struggling to survive under a system that dictates their every move.

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The Noodle Maker: A Novel By Ma Jian Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Having "boarded the express train of the Open Door Policy," the characters in Ma's (*Red Dust*) satisfying, satirical novel now find themselves disembarking in a land caught between the "bourgeois liberalism" of the West and the Communist strictures of the East. Here a novelist wears nail polish ("Blood-stained hands!") as Party leaders appoint her the town's first "professional writer," while an entrepreneurial son surreally roasts his willing mother in his busy homemade crematorium. The interlocked stories that make up this work spill out over a Sunday night dinner between two argumentative old friends: Sheng, a blocked writer just one propagandist novel away from an entry in *The Great Dictionary of Chinese Writers*, and Vlazerim, a wealthy professional blood donor. Sheng longs to write a novel based on the lives of his intimates, but the consequences of defying the Party, including demotion in professional rank and guaranteed literary obscurity, paralyze him. Instead he spends his days vociferously critiquing his neighbors' cooking as he daydreams. In these imaginings, he transforms the lives of those around him into high art, in much the same way a noodle maker turns plain ingredients into nourishing sustenance. Ma's spare meal of a novel provides an excellent counterpoint to the sumptuous lyrical banquet *Soul Mountain* by Nobel Prize winner and fellow expatriate Gao Xingjian.

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From [Booklist](#)

Ma Jian, an immigrant Chinese dissident and author of the acclaimed travel book *Red Dust* (2001), now turns to mordantly satirical fiction to capture the grim paradoxes of late-twentieth-century China. Western products and attitudes have infiltrated the rigid Communist state, but people are still not free of the party's malignant power, and the only individuals able to get ahead are entrepreneurs pursuing risky, illegal ventures, such as a well-off "professional blood donor" who regularly visits his friend, a poor "professional writer." As the two men eat, drink, and needle each other, Ma Jian mixes in sections of the writer's fragmented yet utterly involving novel, which depicts a cruel and grotesque world. Women are abused and raped. A man runs an unauthorized crematorium where he berates the dead. An actress commits suicide onstage. Echoing Gogol and offering an urban variation on the themes of Nobel Prize winner Gao Xingjian, Ma Jian presents a bleak yet compelling vision of an aberrant society in which people are caught in the grip of a capricious and treacherous power and starved for kindness, beauty, and reason. *Donna Seaman*
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Review

"One of the most important and courageous voices in Chinese literature." ?*Gao Xingjian, winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize for Literature*

"A superb comedian . . . this antic nihilist is hard to beat." ?*Los Angeles Times*

"Milan Kundera with a laugh track . . . One writer especially unafraid to flip off the Old Guard [and] still too punk to be found on Chinese bookshelves, even today." ?*Nerve.com*

"*Brave New World* territory, where national euphemisms attempt to obscure the nation's true horrors . . . Richly drawn characters . . . *The Noodle Maker* is a remarkable achievement." ?*Time Out New York*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

April Little:

The feeling that you get from *The Noodle Maker: A Novel* is the more deep you excavating the information that hide in the words the more you get considering reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to comprehend but *The Noodle Maker: A Novel* giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood simply by anyone who read this because the author of this e-book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this specific *The Noodle Maker: A Novel* instantly.

Paul Birch:

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