

APPENDICES

Summary of The Good Earth

The Good Earth is set against the late nineteenth century China. A young Chinese farmer, whose name is Wang Lung, is a hardworking man. He works in the field everyday. Wang Lung is getting married with a slave, named O-lan. She is a slave at the House of Hwang, the wealthiest family in the city. Wang Lung never meets O-lan before because his marriage has been planned by his father. He only knows that she is not pretty. After several months Wang Lung realizes that he is happy to have a good wife but he does not love her. Then O-lan is pregnant and they have a son who makes Wang Lung proud to be a father.

Different from his uncle, Wang Lung never wastes his money on gambling or fancy foods. Hearing the House of Hwang wants to sell some of their land, Wang Lung has an idea of buying it. Although O-lan does not agree, he insists on buying the land. After several years, people in the village are in famine. Wang Lung has nothing to feed his family but he still has his land and never thinks of selling the land. They decide to go to the south to find food. But in the south there is nothing good which can make Wang Lung get more money. Moreover, he finds his son becoming a thief. He is angry and decides to go back to his land, but he has nothing to sell except his daughter. Nevertheless, he refuses to sell his daughter as a slave. Fortunately, there is a dispute in town so he can take some

money from a big house. Later, Wang Lung becomes a rich man. His social status is higher than before.

When Wang Lung's land is flooded by water he has a lot of time to spend. Then he meets a beautiful woman named Lotus in a tea shop. He falls in love with Lotus because of her beauty. He decides to marry Lotus without thinking of O-lan's feeling. He becomes extravagant and always spoils Lotus with everything she needs, including a slave to serve her. When Wang Lung realizes that O-lan is better than Lotus, everything has been too late: O-lan dies because of her illness. Wang Lung does not like Lotus anymore but she still lives in Wang Lung's house.

After his father dies, Wang Lung never gets peace in his life. Problems always come to Wang Lung. His problems usually deal with his son. Another problem in Wang Lung's house is his uncle, who always asks for money to Wang Lung.

Wang Lung is proud of himself for having done what he wants to do. He regards his life as mostly over, and his family continues to flourish. Wang Lung's old days are spent on his land. When his first two sons visit him and talk about their plan to sell the land after his death, he is angry with them and tells his sons that they must never sell the land. Both of his sons agree, but they have no intention of keeping their promise.

Biography of the Author

Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker was born in Hillsboro, West Virginia on June 26, 1892. Her parents, Absalom and Caroline Sydenstricker, were Southern Presbyterian missionaries, stationed in China. Pearl was the fourth of seven children (and one of only three who survive to adulthood). When she was three

months old, she was taken back to China, where she spent most of the first forty years of her life.

From childhood, Pearl spoke both English and Chinese. In 1910, Pearl enrolled in Randolph-Macon Woman's College, in Lynchburg, Virginia, from which she graduated in 1914. Although she had intended to remain in the US, she returned to China shortly after graduation when she received news that her mother was very ill.

In 1915, she met a young Cornell graduate, an agricultural economist named John Lossing Buck. They married in 1917 and immediately moved to Nanxuzhou in rural Anhui province. In this impoverished community, Pearl Buck gathered the material that she would later use in The Good Earth and other stories of China. Pearl had begun to publish stories and essays in the 1920s.

In 1931, John Day published Pearl's second novel, The Good Earth. This became a best selling book of both 1931 and 1932, and won the Pulitzer Prize and the Howells Medal in 1935. In 1934 Pearl moved permanently to the US. From the day of her move to the US, Pearl was active in American civil rights and women's rights activities. Pearl Buck died in March, 1973, just two months before her eighty-first birthday. She is buried at Green Hill Farm.

