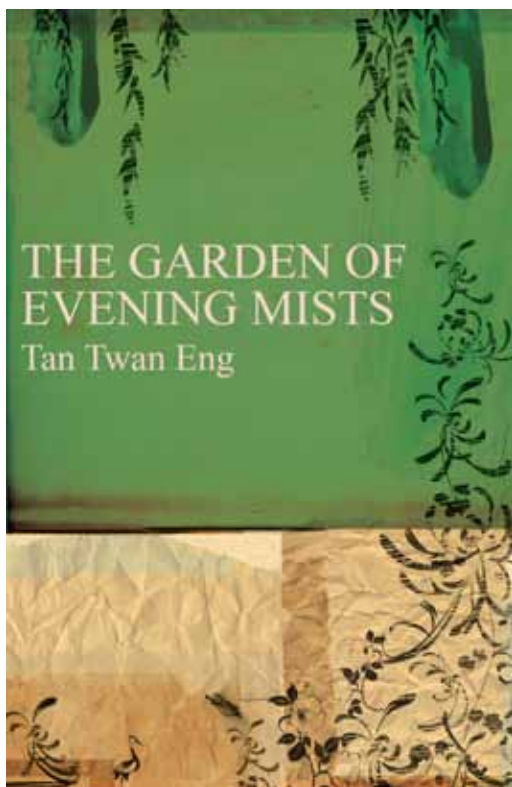




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Tan Twan Eng
The Gift of Rain (2007)

The Garden of Evening Mists Tan Twan Eng

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About the author

Tan Twan Eng was born in 1972 in Penang, but lived in various places in Malaysia as a child. He studied law at the University of London and later worked as lawyer in one of Kuala Lumpur's most reputable law firms. He also has a first-dan ranking in aikido and is a strong proponent for the conservation of heritage buildings.

His first novel, *The Gift of Rain*, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007.

He has spent the last year traveling around South Africa and currently lives in Cape Town. His second novel *The Garden of Evening Mists* was released in January 2012.

The Garden of Evening Mists

Set during the Japanese occupation, *The Garden of Evening Mists* follows young law graduate, Yun Ling Teoh, as she seeks solace among the plantations of the Cameron Highlands. Here she discovers Yugiri, the only Japanese garden in Malaya, and its owner and creator, the secretive Aritomo. Aritomo agrees to accept Yun Ling as his apprentice 'until the monsoon' so that she can design a garden in memorial to her sister. But over time the jungle starts to reveal secrets of its own...

Discussion points

Memory is one of the main themes of *The Garden of Evening Mists*, how does Tan Twan Eng use the garden as a metaphor for memory?

Tan Twan Eng said *The Garden of Evening Mists* was a difficult novel to write 'because Yun Ling very much wanted to keep her secrets to herself. Because of what she had gone through, and what she had become, no one was allowed into her head. And yet at the same time she wanted to – she had to – reveal those secrets. It was a constant battle for me to crack her open.' Do you get the sense that Yun Ling is a reluctant narrator?

Does Yun Ling's disposition towards Aritomo and towards the Japanese in general undergo a significant shift in the course of the novel, or does she rather maintain a constant though compartmentalised attitude throughout?

How and to what extent has Yun Ling's capacity for intimate love and affection in later life been affected by her experiences in the internment camp and or her shared time with Aritomo?

Although containing many violent scenes readers have commented that they found the story comforting, leaving a feeling of calm and tranquillity. What feelings are you left with having completed the novel?

Themed reading

Kazuo Ishiguro *The Remains of the Day*
Tash Aw *The Harmony Silk Factory*
Meira Chand *A Different Sky*

Useful links

Author's website

<http://www.tantwaneng.com/>

Publisher's website

www.myrmidonbooks.com

The Independent Boyd Tonkin review

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-garden-of-evening-mists-by-tan-twan-eng-7685361.html>