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Voices Carry: Behind Bars and Backstage during China's Revolution and Reform (Asian Voices)

Ying Ruocheng, Claire Conceison

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Voices Carry is the moving autobiography of the late Ying Ruocheng, beloved Chinese stage and screen actor, theatre director, translator, and high-ranking politician as vice minister of culture from 1986–1990. One of twentieth-century China's most prominent citizens, Ying was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution and devised unique strategies for survival, including playing pranks on guards and keeping a clandestine notebook. Ying's memoir opens with his prison years, and then flashes back to his boyhood growing up in a prince's palace as a member of a progressive Manchu Catholic intellectual family. He also details his experiences as a university student during the heady days when the People's Republic was being founded, followed by his subsequent experiences on stage, in film, and in politics.

A founding member of the Beijing People's Art Theatre, Ying Ruocheng helped open its doors to Sino-American exchange when he brought Arthur Miller to China to stage *Death of a Salesman* in 1983, playing the role of Willy Loman in his own translation of the play. Simultaneously a "spy" for his own government and a cultural ambassador for countless foreigners and fellow countrymen, Ying lived out his life as a bridge between China and the West, gaining a singular perspective on matters related to culture and politics.

While suffering from cirrhosis of the liver during the final decade of his life, Ying Ruocheng reflected on his experiences, collaborating with coauthor Claire Conceison to tell his story. Together, they take the reader on an exhilarating journey from Manchu wrestling matches to missionary schools, from behind prison bars to behind the scenes at ground-breaking stage performances, and from public moments of international recognition to private moments of intimacy and despair.

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