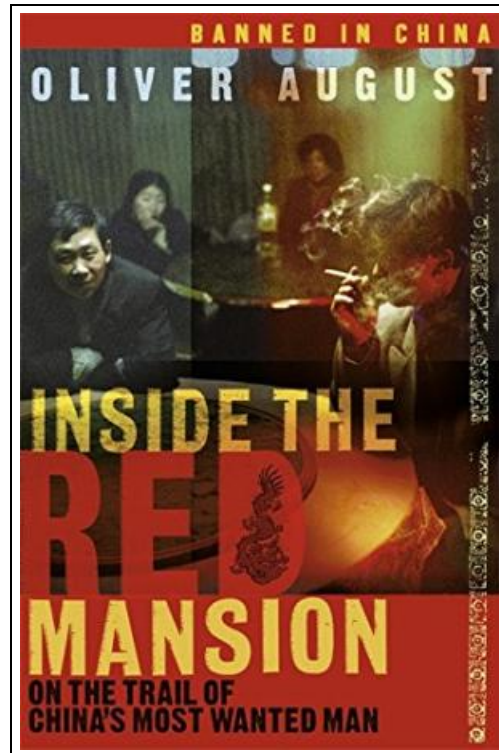


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Hodder Stoughton General Division, United Kingdom, 2008. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In 1999, shortly after arriving in Beijing as The Times's China correspondent, Oliver August set out on the trail of China's most wanted man, Lai Changxing. An illiterate peasant from the coastal city of Xiamen, Lai created his own shipping empire from nothing before vanishing abruptly when the Communist Party accused him of corruption and fraud. Once the richest man in the country, Lai was now public enemy number one because his immense wealth became a threat to Beijing's power. Oliver August's highly entertaining search for Lai takes him to the brothels, backwaters and boardrooms that define the spirit of an emerging nation. Fascinated by Lai's story, the author visits the town where he was born, travels on the boat used by his smuggling racket and stays in the hotel where government investigators interrogated and tortured his helpers. The book investigates the tycoon's meteoric rise, his catastrophic demise and the mystery that surrounds his disappearance. After two decades of capitalist reforms, the New China seems to have more clichés than people. Both free and oppressive, anarchic and authoritarian, totally chaotic yet highly regulated, China is changing completely whilst seeming to stay itself. Part investigation, part personal memoir, *Inside the Red Mansion* is a deeply atmospheric journey into the New China. From the austere bureaucrats of Beijing to the gilded pirate coast opposite Taiwan; from the Gobi desert plains where migrant labour is recruited, to the skyscrapers and nightclubs of boomtowns like Xiamen, Oliver August's gripping yet thoughtful account reveals the dark side of China's economic miracle and a nation finally awakening to its desires.



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