

Penguin  Classics

CAO XUEQIN

THE STORY OF THE STONE

TRANSLATED BY DAVID HAWKES

The Story of the Stone, (c. 1760 A.D.) is the great novel of manners in Chinese literature. Divided into five volumes, of which *The Golden Days* is the first, it charts the glory and decline of the illustrious Jia family (a story which closely accords with the fortunes of the author's own family). The two main characters, Bao-yu and Dai-yu, are set against a rich tapestry of humour, realistic detail and delicate poetry which accurately reflects the ritualized hurly-burly of Chinese family life. But over and above the novel hangs the constant reminder that there is another plane of existence – a theme which affirms the Buddhist belief in a supernatural scheme of things.

The cover shows 'Girl Playing a Flute' by Tang Yin (1470-1523)

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