



The Beijing of Possibilities

Jonathan Tel

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Blending elements of the surreal with carefully observed details of life in present-day Beijing, Jonathan Tel's short stories offer a rich and highly entertaining guide to the city and its many and varied inhabitants—from a modern-day Monkey King to an equally contemporary indentured servant, from a boy tasting his first cotton candy to a Ming Dynasty princess posting her first online profile.

The stories offer a vicarious tour through modern Beijing and a long view of Chinese history. The reader flies through the book, chuckling over one character's trickery, moved by another's plight, and horrified at another's unwitting actions, until reaching the culminating novella, which brings the whole book and its take on China back to the Western reader with a stunning immediacy.

Americans' newly minted fascination with China, stoked by the 2008 Olympics, can find both intellectual and artistic satisfaction in this collection.

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