



2014

The Last Dandelion

LESLEY DOWNER

The Last Concubine by Lesley Downer

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How do you fall in love whilst your society has no observe for it? "The final Concubine" is an The Last Concubine epic love tale heavily in accordance with historic events, chronicling nineteenth century Japan's amazing switch from a medieval to a latest country. this can be the tale of a shogun, a princess and the 3 thousand girls of the women's palace - all of whom quite existed - and of the civil struggle that introduced their lifestyle to an finish ...Japan, 1865: the women's palace within the nice urban of Edo is a sprawling advanced very similar to a middle-eastern harem. Bristling with intrigue and erotic rivalries, the palace is domestic to 3 thousand ladies and just one guy - the younger shogun. Sachi, a stunning fifteen-year-old girl, is selected as his concubine. yet Japan is changing. Black Ships have arrived from the West, bringing foreigners desirous to upload Japan to their colonial empires. As civil battle erupts, Sachi flees for her life. Rescued via a insurgent warrior, she reveals unknown emotions stirring inside of her; yet this can be a global during which inner most passions haven't any position and there's now not even a note for 'love'. earlier than she dare dream of a lifestyles with him, Sachi needs to resolve the secret of her personal origins - a secret that incorporates a flawed so bad that it threatens to damage her ...From the undying fantastic thing The Last Concubine about the Women's Palace in Edo to bloody battles fought outdoors its walls, "The final Concubine" is an epic evocation of a The Last Concubine rustic in revolution, and of a tender woman's quest to determine who she rather is. conceal

i am nonetheless dive in to the deep of this book. permit me dive, and flying within the clean water of this phrases of this book. Ramuan kompleks sebuah The Last Concubine labirin yang berbumbu intrik cinta, persaingan politik, perebutan kekuasaan, kepahlawanan, nasionalisme yang boleh jadi polos, serta romantika psikologis seorang wanita yang menjadi istri selir menyatu padu dalam The Last Concubine cerita yang mengalir pada novel ini. Awal novel ini memang seperti dongeng purba yang sering diangkat dalam fiksi-fiksi tentang lelaki penguasa dan wanita biasa. Tak jauh dari fenomena mimpi masyarakat kelas bawah yang kerap mengidap apa yang sering disebut sebagai "Cinderella Complex" sehingga mentolerir berkembangnya budaya patriarki pada sebuah kekuasaan. Mengambil latar belakang cerita tentang kekuasaan Shogun di Jepang pada period pertengahan 1800-an yang kekuasaannya dianggap hampir menyamai keagungan seorang kaisar, penulis mampu mengangkat cerita purba tentang selir dengan pemahaman yang cukup gamblang dan mendetail. Alkisah pada waktu itu banyak perempuan bermimpi dijadikan selir The Last Concubine oleh Shogun. Kalau pun tidak demikian, tak jarang juga justru para orang tua yang mengidamkan anaknya mendapat The Last Concubine berkah menjadi selir Shogun tersebut. Dus, dalam novel ini, tersebutlah seorang gadis bernama Sachi yang hidup di sebuah kampung pedalaman daerah pegunungan di Jepang. Meskipun lahir dan tumbuh di pelosok daerah Jepang, Sachi memiliki penampilan dan wajah yang berbeda. Berbeda dengan gadis pelosok kebanyakan, Sachi memiliki guratan wajah yang tak kalah dengan kaum ningrat Jepang kebanyakan. Suatu hari, yang mulia Putri Kazu, istri yang mulia Shogun yang tengah melakukan perjalanan ke Edo berkenan mampir di desa tempat Sachi tinggal. Melihat penampilan Sachi yang berbeda, sang putri terpicat, sehingga berkenan memboyong Sachi yang masih berusia belasan tahun

tersebut menjadi salah satu dayangnya di kastilnya. Di dalam kastil yang dihuni tak kurang dari 3000 perempuan lainnya tersebut Sachi mengalami lonjakan gaya hidup yang luar biasa drastis. Sachi mampu berubah rupa dan penampilan menjadi gadis ningrat dengan gerak-gerik, cara bicara, tingkah laku dan ketrampilan-ketrampilan perempuan-perempuan ningrat pada umumnya. Sampai akhirnya sang putri semakin tertarik dan memberi hadiah istimewa kepada Sachi. Berkenaan dengan rencana sang Shogun yang akan melakukan perjalanan jauh, Sachi diberi kepercayaan oleh sang Putri untuk menjadi "persembahan istimewa" bagi sang Shogun. Sachi dipilih sang putri untuk menjadi selir baru sang Shogun sebelum melakukan perjalanannya. Sialnya, anugerah tersebut tidaklah lama bisa dirasakan Sachi. Kenyamanan dan kenikmatan sebagai selir yang diperoleh Sachi melalui polemik, intrik dan rivalitas erotis di tengah 3000 wanita penghuni kastil tersebut, ternyata hanya bisa dinikmati Sachi dengan singkat. Kematian sang Shogun dikarenakan penyakit yang menjangkitinya *The Last Concubine* saat dalam perjalanan menjadikan Sachi sebagai "Selir terakhir sang Shogun". Apalagi tak lama setelah Sang Shogun meninggal, Jepang pun mengalami pergolakan politik yang drastis. Kedatangan kapal-kapal dari luar negeri yang membawa berbagai macam ambisi telah memicu meletusnya perang sipil. Terjadi pemberontakan kelompok yang disebut kaum selatan yang memaksa semua penghuni kastil Edo *The Last Concubine* untuk pergi menyelamatkan dirinya masing-masing, tanpa terkecuali Yang Mulia Putri Kazu. Guna menyelamatkan sang Putri yang notabene menjadi incaran utama kaum pemberontak inilah, Sachi ditugaskan untuk menyamar sebagai sang Putri. Dalam pelarian dan tugas sebagai pengecoh kaum pemberontak inilah Sachi menemukan berbagai pernik-pernik kehidupan yang belum sempat disesapnya saat masih menjadi gadis kampung usia belasan maupun saat menjadi penghuni kastil Edo. Di tengah seru dan mencekamnya perang pedang tradisional, duel dan heroisme para samurai, dan patriotisme pada ksatria, Sachi menemukan sisi psikologis lain yang belum pernah dirasakan sebelumnya. Sachi mulai merasakan benih-benih cinta sejati yang memang seharusnya mulai dirasakan oleh sesusianya, yang sebelumnya sangat ditabukan dalam kehidupan di dalam kastil Edo. Saat diselamatkan oleh seorang ksatria dia menemukan perasaan yang menyenangkan bersamanya. Tetapi dunia yang dipenuhi oleh nafsu-nafsu pribadi sepertinya tidak memberikan sedikit pun tempat bagi kata cinta sejati. Setelah dimanjakan oleh mimpi kebahagiaan bersama sang ksatria, Sachi harus dengan misteri wajah asli sang ksatria. Sebuah wajah asli yang meneror dan menghancurkan dirinya. Secara keseluruhan novel yang berlatar belakang period sejarah paling penting bagi Jepang di masa lalu ini mampu menampilkan polemik petualangan serta romantika cinta kelas atas. Lebih dari sekedar kisah cinta biasa. Kisah Sachi mampu membawa kita pada saat-saat perubahan penting di Jepang yang membawanya sebagai negara modern. Diwarnai oleh penggambaran rinci yang aspect mengenai keindahan dan kemewahan abadi sebuah komunitas harem, sampai pada penggambaran suasana mengerikan dan mencekam peperangan berdarah di benteng dan luar dinding istana yang seolah kita saksikan dengan mata kepala sendiri. Dengan pemilihan diksi yang teliti, penulis mampu menciptakan sebuah epik liris menarik dari revolusi sebuah negara melalui jendela pergulatan seorang perempuan muda dalam mencari jati dirinya yang sesungguhnya sebagai seorang wanita. Penulis mampu menggambarkan suasana sejarah *The Last Concubine* masa lampau secara gamblang dan detail-detail sejarah yang membuat kita merasa intim. Novel ini mampu memberikan pengetahuan yang segar dan berbeda mengenai Jepang baik bagi mereka yang sudah merasa mengerti tentang Jepang, atau pun mereka yang merasa belum mengenal Jepang sama sekali. Didasarkan pada fakta-fakta faktual yang nyata, Cerita Sachi mampu membawa kita pada petualangan imajinasi dunia masa lalu

yang sudah silam sekaligus menjadikan kita seperti benar-benar berada di dalamnya. Pemahaman dan empati penulis terhadap budaya Jepang masa lalu, mampu menghadirkan karakter masyarakat Jepang yang seakan-akan nyata dan tanpa cela. Novel ini mampu menjebak imajinasi kita pada petualangan sejarah yang benar-benar terasa segar, dan mengaduk-aduk perasaan pembaca dalam pergolakan patriotisme yang rumit, sehingga kita tak bisa berhenti membacanya sebelum benar-benar sampai pada halaman terakhir. Ketika perang menghancurkan segalanya dan jiwa sang tokoh *The Last Concubine* melayang gamang, penulis mampu menghadirkan polemik nyata sebuah negara yang tengah didera pergolakan. Dia mampu melemparkan pembaca ke dunia lain yang benar-benar berbeda melalui kesempurnaan pilihan kata-kata yang terkadang radikal dan berani. Aliran keseluruhan cerita yang penuh dengan intrik cinta yang eksotis, gairah yang menhanguskan, perang dan duel pedang yang heroik, seperti membawa pembaca pada rekreasi imajinasi di dunia yang sebelumnya tak tersentuh. Penulis benar-benar mampu menggambarkan aspect suasana alam, bagian pegunungan, dan kota masa lalu yang sangat deskriptif. Penulis seakan-akan mampu mengajak indera penglihatan, penciuman, dan pendengaran kita pembacanya untuk merasakan sendiri suasana yang ingin disuguhkannya. Akhir kata, "*The final Concubine*" adalah formulation fiksi sempurna tentang kisah kepahlawanan para samurai, keteguhan sikap para ronin, dan kesaksian seorang perempuan pada saat runtuhnya period Tokugawa, yang membuat kita menemukan suasana berbeda dibandingkan novel-novel sejenis lainnya.

The Last Concubine

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