

## **The Cave Man**

Xiaoda Xiao

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"When it comes to prison literature, China remains a great enigma. Whereas the Soviet Union gave us Alexander Solzhenitsyn, China has, of yet, produced no such comparable international voice in the modern age. Xiao's *The Cave Man* is... a small start... a compelling look at Mao's forced labor prisons." -Los Angeles Times

"Like Kafka's fiction. Xiaoda's storytelling has plenty of antic vigor... fueled by an activist's anger." - Washington Post

"As a parable of modern China, [The Cave Man] is chilling." -Boston Globe

"Xiao, a survivor of Mao's forced labor camps, has, like Solzhenitsyn, transformed his experience into sublimely vivid fiction. Like Kafka, Xiao has made memorable the mad, surreal conditions of the world he conjures up for us—its potential both for cruelty and for kindness. And like Chekhov, Xiao, a masterful storyteller, has given us a gorgeously crafted, hauntingly memorable tale rich in story and in human character. *The Cave Man* will have a transformative effect on all those fortunate enough to read it."—Jay Neugeboren, *Bookforum* 

The Cave Man is an exceptionally moving portrait of a brutalized man named Ja Feng, who has survived punishment in a 3 x 4½ foot solitary cell for a miraculous nine months, a time that has forced him to question his basic human faculties.

*The Cave Man* follows Feng as he is released from his solitary confinement and as he integrates with fellow prisoners who view his skeletal figure and screaming fits as freakish. It follows him through his heartbreaking attempts to assimilate, to reestablish familial bonds, and to seek an ordinary human experience.



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