

A Many-Splendoured Thing

by Han Suyin

In *A Many-Splendoured Thing* Han Suyin has written, as I see it, a very complicated book. It is also an exceedingly beautiful one. With some minor exceptions she tells her story in the first person and there is no pretence that her heroine, a young Eurasian doctor in Hong Kong, is not herself.

At the beginning of her story she is in Hong-Kong; the huge, festering volcano of China, about to burst in revolution, lies behind her across thousands of miles of mainland. She is also a widow; she is not ready, in her loss, for any new experience in love and is indeed, with a growing child, anxious to resist it. When Mark Elliot arrives in Hong Kong she is faced with a kind of dual paradox: a cruel dilemma of need and passions. She needs love and is unprepared for it; she wants to give herself and yet is terrified, as people so often are, of the price of giving. These personal problems are heightened and complicated by the fact that Mark Elliot is English and married and she Eurasian and widowed. and they are further heightened and complicated by the fact that her heart is very much of the past and the East and her mind, her trained and educated intellect, of the West.

It is the poignancy of this conflict, with its tortured counter-emotions and counter-reasonings, that gives the earlier part of the book its rare beauty.

- *H. E. Bates in the Broadsheet.*

Published by Reprint Society, size 5.25" x 7.5", 351 pages.