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Empire of the sun door J.G. Ballard

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TITLE Empire of the Sun

AUTHER J. G. Ballard

PUBLISHER Victor Gollancz Ltd.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1984

NUMBER OF PAGES 269

GENRE War / Adventure Novel

SETTING The setting is in China during WW II (1940 – 1941)

First Part of the Book is in Shanghai where Jim Lives with his Parents

A short part is in a jail near Shanghai where Japanese Enemies are kept in prison.



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The Last and main part (around $\frac{3}{4}$) is in Lunghua Camp, a Japanese concentration camp in China

MAIN CHARACTERS

DESCRIPTION

Jim

The Main character in the book is Jim. (His real name is Jamie but only his parents call him Jamie)

Exterior: Jim is English. He is a young rich kid living in Shanghai before the war. During the war he grows a little older and thinner. He has brown hair. He also has an obsession with planes, especially the Japanese zero and later the American P-51.

Interior: Jim is very brave and cares a lot about other people. Jim's respect goes out to brave people and he dislikes people who aren't fair or people that tease a lot. Jim can get stressed but he rarely is afraid or in grief. During the story I have build up sympathy for Jim because he helps other people and is always honest. It is not said in the book but I think Jim suffers the borderline syndrome.

Basie: Basie is an American soldier. During the story you don't really get to know how Basie thinks and what his motives for certain actions are. Basie is selfish but he has a small heart.

He acts like he is Jim's friend but only if it is in his privilege.

Dr Ransome: He is an English doctor living in Singapore. Dr. Ransome is a kind man always willing to help. He cares a lot about Jim. While being in Lunghua camp he is Jim's teacher and Jim's friend.

Jim's parents: Jim's Father is a rich man and owner of a textile company. Jim's mother is taking care of the household. Both of them seem to be nice parents that care a lot about their only son Jim. You don't get to know much about them because they are only in a small part of the book.

OPINION

Experience reading: The fact I enjoyed reading it says a lot because I dislike reading.

The more I read the more I started to enjoy reading it. It wasn't hard to read.

I even read 4 hours non-stop something that had never happened to me before.

I like the way the story is told, it contains a lot of excitement and some humour, a very good mixture.

It shows the war through the eyes of a child which is different from most other war books or movies.

I also like the fact that Jim doesn't really choose sides between England and Japan. He is English but he has even more sympathy for the Japanese. Because he is just a child you get such a clear view and doesn't illustrate the war just from one side.

SUMMARY

Jim is a young boy living in Singapore with his parents when the second world war emerges.

Together with his parent he sees how the Japanese destroy two Chinese Ships in the Shanghaiing harbour.

Jim loses his father while trying to rescue the people from the ships. After that he wakes up in a hospital.

When he is recovered and allowed to go home again he sees that his house is empty. Jim wanders around Shanghai searching for food and a way to get to his parents. Jim wants to get arrested by the Japanese but they don't seem to be interested in the young boy. When Jim is being chased by a boy that is trying to steal from him he is saved by an American Soldier.

The soldier takes him home where Jim meets his older mate, Basie, who is also an American Soldier.

The 2 Soldiers try to sell Jim to the Chinese but they don't succeed. When he invites the soldiers to his house in the rich neighbourhood he sees that there are lights burning in his house. Jim thinks that his parents are home again but Japanese soldiers open the door. The three of them are arrested and Jim ends up in a jail for foreign Japanese enemies. (English and Americans mostly)

Circumstances in the camp are bad. Jim knows that only the healthy go to the concentration camps and he thinks that his parents will be there so he tries to be transported to one of these camps. After being declined for several times Jim and Basie are allowed to go such camp, not because they are that healthy but because Jim knows the ins and outs of Shanghai and the Japanese don't. After being rejected in an English camp they continue their long way to another camp, Lunghua camp, where Jim and Basie are accepted. During this long journey Jim met a doctor called Dr. Ransome. In the camp he does a lot better than the rest. He spends his time with Basie and Dr. Ransome. Dr. Ransome teaches Jim about English, Mathematics and the society when there is no war. Jim is obsessed by planes especially the Zero. Jim has a lot of respect for the Japanese pilots because

they are so brave. Luckily for Jim there are Planes flying of and on near the camp. Jim doesn't mind being in Lunghua, in fact he likes being there.

In the camp they hear that the war is moving itself against Japan, there are more American bombers flying over the camp day by day. Jim dislikes the idea of the war being over because he doesn't know what to do if the war is over. Because Japan is losing the food in the camp is getting worse and worse, portions are cut were cut half. Many people are ill and mortality is growing in Lungua camp. When the war is coming to an end Basie escapes. Jim is disappointed because Basie did not ask Jim, neither had he inform Jim.

The Japanese had to leave camp Lunghua and they take all prisoners to a football stadium near Shanghai. After 3 years Jim leaves Lunghua for the first time. The trip to the football stadium is long and the prisoners are weak, many of them die along the way. Jim makes it to the stadium but he doesn't want continue to Shanghai and therefore acts dead. His plan had worked and Jim returns to Lunghua camp.

When Jim reaches camp Lunghua the camp is almost empty except for some American soldiers. Jim joins up with the soldiers who had planned on going to the football stadium to steal the precious things which were taken from Chinese houses by the Japanese. During the trip to the stadium the soldiers are attacked by a gang that wants lay there hands on the treasures in stadium too. Among the gang members is Basie. Basie saves him and Jim joins up with the gang. By doing this he could maintain the feeling that the war would last forever. For several weeks he stays with the gang but when the gang gets into another fight Jim escapes and returns to Lunghua for the third and last time.

When Jim reaches Lunghua camp he sees it is taken into use by American soldiers. In the camp's hospital Jim meets dr. Ransome again. Dr. Ransome takes to a place where parents can find there children back if they had lost them during the war.

At this particular place Jim's parents are already waiting for Jim.