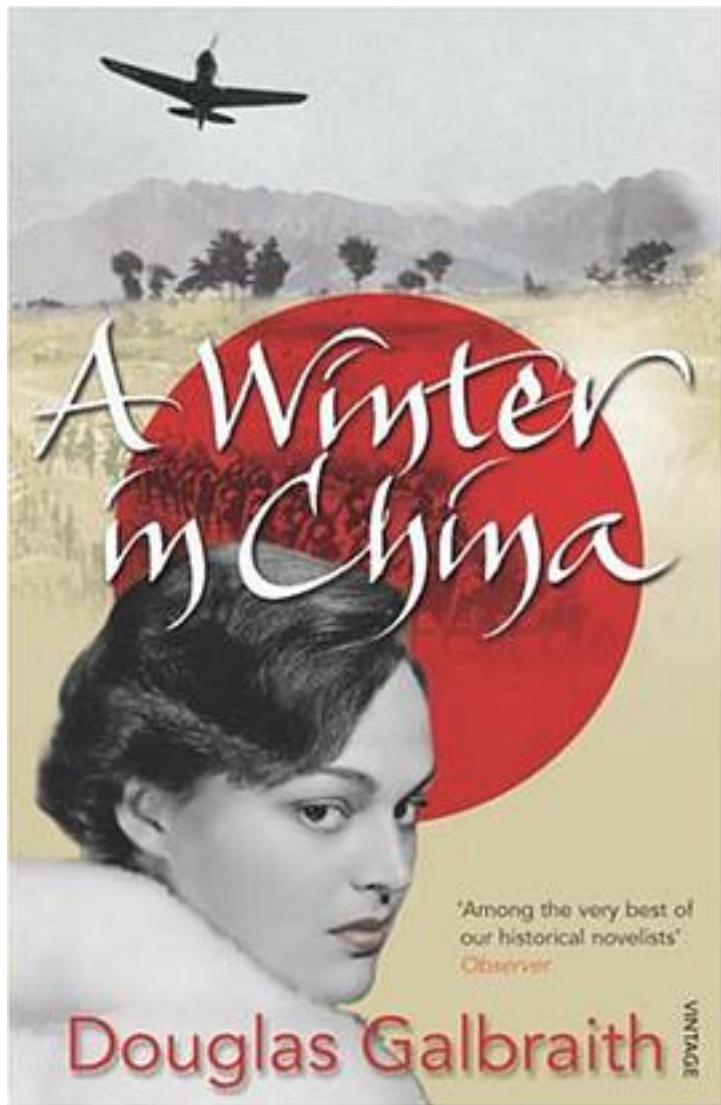


# A Winter in China



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Able, bored and just down from Cambridge in the summer of 1937, Sally Marsden contemplates her future without enthusiasm. So many have assumed she will marry Hugh Jerrold it is, practically, an engagement. When Hugh returns from his diplomatic posting to China there will be a wedding and a thoroughly respectable settling down. One afternoon Sally's father, impelled by a mixture of his own dissatisfactions, compassion for his daughter's predicament, a newspaper advertisement in *The Times* and a passing desire to spite his wife, suggests that she travel to China herself. Sally can spend a winter in China and she and Hugh can return together the next spring. Sally accepts a last adventure before submitting to the strictures of upper-middle-class English female life. By the time she arrives in the East it is not long before the Sino-Japanese war begins to lap around the edges of the isolated and complacent western settlements. A move inland to Nanking restores the peace. But only a few weeks pass before a disastrous miscalculation separates Sally from Hugh and leaves her trapped in the city, one of two dozen Europeans and Americans to witness the capture and sack of the Chinese capital by the Japanese Imperial Army. The experience is shared with Peter Moss, an American photo-journalist and friend of Hugh. Bystanders in a racial war, Sally and Peter emerge physically unscathed and return to the foreign settlements in Shanghai. Sally and Peter went through Nanking together and Hugh now finds himself on the outside of their changed lives. Attempts to carry on as before quickly founder. At last diplomatic party Sally takes violent leave of all the values and taboos of her class. As the situation in China deteriorates, the three find themselves on the same ship returning to the security of Europe in 1938. *A Winter in China* is a gripping portrait of lives in turmoil in a world running out of control.

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