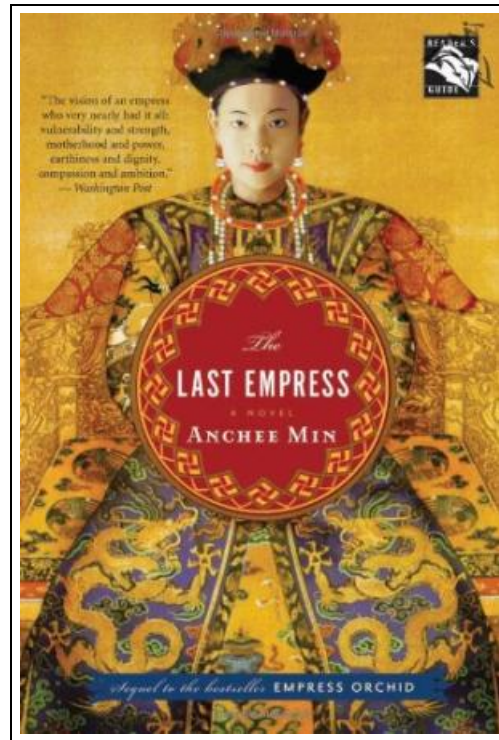


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Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, 2007. Hardcover. Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. Min, Lee Q. (illustrator). First Edition. Mylar protected dust jacket. "The last decades of the nineteenth century were a violent period in China's history marked by humiliating foreign incursions and domestic rebellion, ultimately ending in the demise of the Ch'ing dynasty. The only constant during this tumultuous time was the power wielded by one person, the resilient, ever-resourceful Tzu Hsi, Lady Yehonala -- or Empress Orchid, as readers came to know her in Anchee Min's critically acclaimed novel covering the first part of her life. The Last Empress is the story of Orchid's dramatic transition from a strong-willed, instinctive young woman to a wise and politically savvy leader who ruled China for more than four decades. Moving from the intimacy of the concubine quarters into the spotlight of the world stage, Orchid must face not only the perilous condition of her empire but also a series of devastating personal losses, as first her son and then her adopted son succumb to early death. Yearning only to step aside, and yet growing constantly into her role, only she-allied with the progressives, but loyal to the conservative Manchu clan of her dynasty-can hold the nation's rival factions together. Anchee Min offers a powerful revisionist portrait based on extensive research of one of the most important figures in Chinese history. Viciously maligned by the western press of the time as the "Dragon Lady," a manipulative, blood-thirsty woman who held onto power at all costs, the woman Min gives us is a compelling, very human leader who assumed power reluctantly, and who sacrificed all she had to protect those she loved and an empire that was doomed to die".

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