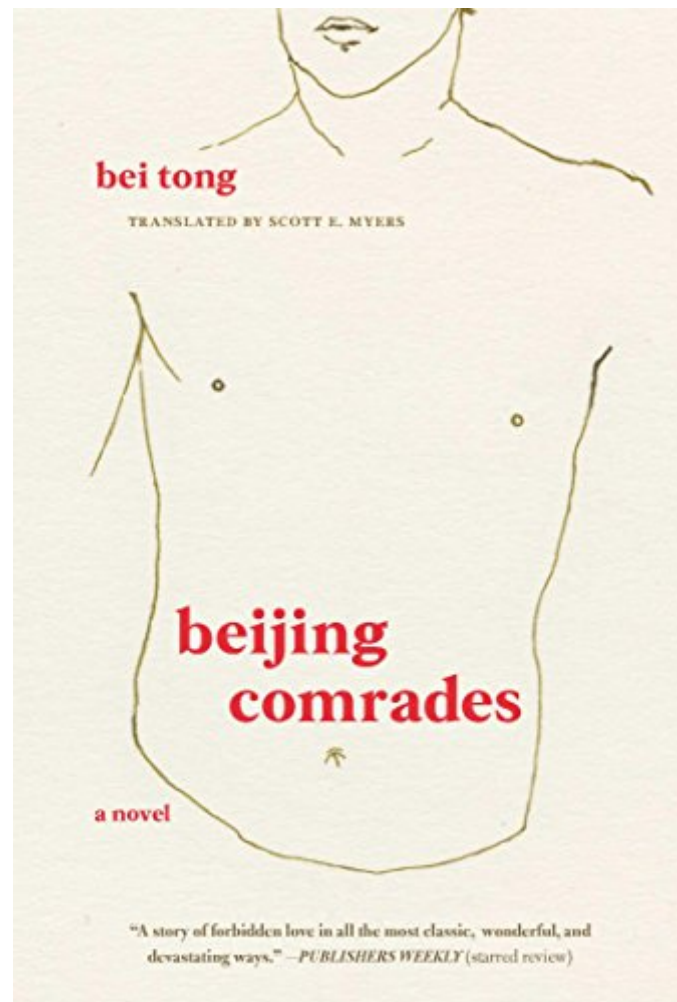


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# Beijing Comrades



## Synopsis

When Handong, a ruthless and wealthy businessman, is introduced to Lan Yu, a naïve, working-class architectural student, the attraction is all consuming. Arrogant and privileged, Handong is unsettled by this desire, while Lan Yu quietly submits. Despite divergent lives, the two men spend their nights together, establishing a deep connection. When loyalties are tested, Handong is left questioning his secrets, his choices, and his very identity. *Beijing Comrades* is the story of a tumultuous love affair set against the sociopolitical unrest of late-eighties China. Due to its depiction of gay sexuality and its critique of the totalitarian government, it was originally published anonymously on an underground gay website within mainland China. This riveting and heartbreaking novel, circulated throughout China in 1998, quickly developed a cult following, and remains a central work of queer literature from the People's Republic of China. This is the first English-language translation of *Beijing Comrades*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*Beijing Comrades* reads like a gay fanfiction of itself. Banned in Mainland China for some years, it's a mix of raunch, slice-of-life, and political commentary. At the story's beginning, Handong is a

businessman in his mid-twenties, made a millionaire mostly due to his parents' Communist connections. Handong is your typical, selfish elite: He has one night stands with both men and woman, is alarmingly misogynistic, nihilistic, cynical, and cold. He can't extricate his personal life from money in order to have a meaningful relationship with even a single individual. Then he meets Yan Lu. You can tell that this was a text written serially as an "e-novel." The plot doesn't progress linearly, with a neat rising action, climax, and resolution. But this is what makes *Beijing Comrades* special: It feels real. Our narrator Handong makes promises to himself "and us" at the end of chapters, and later those promises are forgotten, and his entire life changes. I felt like I was being jostled around, shaken awake. I'm so used to novels "even novels with unreliable narrators" making definitive promises and keeping them. Foreshadowing is supposed to mean something. Solemn statements of fact should carry weight. But in *Beijing Comrades*, Yan Lu and Handong break up and get back together again "repeatedly" and each time complicated layers are built upon one another as their intimate history becomes more tangled. In this regard, their relationship is highly relatable. In the Afterword, Petrus Liu writes that the story's setting of Beijing is incidental to the plot. I disagree.

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