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# Sky Burial (Penguin Drop Caps)



## Synopsis

From A to Z, the Penguin Drop Caps series collects 26 unique hardcovers featuring cover art by Jessica Hischelt all begins with a letter. Fall in love with Penguin Drop Caps, a new series of twenty-six collectible and hardcover editions, each with a type cover showcasing a gorgeously illustrated letter of the alphabet. In a design collaboration between Jessica Hische and Penguin Art Director Paul Buckley, the series features unique cover art by Hische, a superstar in the world of type design and illustration, whose work has appeared everywhere from Tiffany & Co. to Wes Anderson's recent film *Moonrise Kingdom* to Penguin's own bestsellers *Committed* and *Rules of Civility*. With exclusive designs that have never before appeared on Hische's hugely popular Daily Drop Cap blog, the Penguin Drop Caps series debuted with an 'A' for Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, a 'B' for Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and a 'C' for Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*. It continues with more perennial classics, perfect to give as elegant gifts or to showcase on your own shelves.

**X is for Xinran.** In 1994, journalist and author Xinran met a Chinese woman with an extraordinary story. For over thirty years, since the 1950s, Shu Wen searched the mountains of north Tibet for her husband, a Chinese military doctor, who was missing in action. Her moving and unforgettable life story brilliantly recreated by Xinran, gives insight into the landscape, religion and people of Tibet. At the same time it illuminates the complex and emotional relationship and history between the Tibetans and Chinese. Traveling thousands of miles, and taken in by a Tibetan family, Shu Wen lived a nomadic life through numerous seasons with silence and simplicity, motivated by her search for her husband. An unforgettable and ultimately uplifting tale of loss, loyalty, courage and survival, above all, *Sky Burial* is an epic and enduring love story.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 90 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

Inspired by a brief 1994 interview with an aged Chinese woman named Shu Wen, Beijing-born, London-based journalist Xinran (*The Good Women of China*) offers a delicately wrought account of Wen's 30-year search for her husband in Tibet, where he disappeared in 1958. After less than 100 days of marriage, Wen's husband, Kejun, a doctor in the People's Liberation Army, is posted to Tibet and two months later is reported killed. Stunned and disbelieving, 26-year-old Wen is determined to find Kejun herself; a doctor also, she gets herself posted to the isolated Tibetan area where Kejun had been. There, as one of the few women in the Chinese army, she endures much hardship and rescues a Tibetan noblewoman named Zhuoma. After being separated from her fellow soldiers in the wake of an ambush by Tibetan rebels, Wen, accompanied by Zhuoma, sets off on a trek through the harsh landscape. Years later, after going native with a tribe of yak herders, Wen learns the circumstances of Kejun's death and understands that her husband was caught in a fatal misunderstanding between two vastly different cultures. Woven through with fascinating details of Tibetan culture and Buddhism, Xinran's story portrays a poignant, beautiful attempt at reconciliation.

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In China these days, Tibet is all the rage: Beijing hipsters lounge in bars festooned with yak horns, pop divas sing ballads about Lhasa, and tourists mob the rooftop of the world. This novel, by a Beijing journalist now living in London, plays into the fantasy of the region as a Wild West populated by noble savages, with much to teach the cosmopolitan Chinese. Purporting to be a fictionalized account of a true story, it tells of a Chinese woman whose husband dies while on an Army expedition in Tibet, in 1958. She heads out west to learn the truth about his death, and winds up living with nomads for three decades, conveniently missing out on the Cultural Revolution. For American readers, the urge to mythologize the frontier will be familiar; but here there are no bad guys, only misunderstandings. Copyright © 2005 The New Yorker --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the third book I've read by Xinran and I just ordered two more because this author writes like an angel. Her words are chosen with simplicity and meaning to create good, clear storytelling which

actually requires a great deal of skill to pull off. The people spring to life and our emotions are stirred as we learn their life stories. In this particular book, I wonder what happened to Shu Wen after the tale is told. Did she find her family? Go to Beijing to rejoin her friends? Return to Tibet? I'm guessing most readers would love to know. Thank you, Xinran, for mastering your art and craft, and for sharing the fruits of your labors with all of us.

Probably the best book I was required to read since junior high, and that was *The Outsiders*. I am college now to give you an idea of how long that has been. The plot itself wasn't what made me like this but actually how much it talked about the Tibet culture and everything I learned about it as I knew nothing before hand. So from that standpoint I loved the book, the plot was an added bonus to me. To me it was quite interesting reading something that had a plot but so packed full of information and how it was written you can't help but to learn something new every time you read it, that is something I never experienced before outside of a textbook.

If you're going to the Chinese Tibet border and want to learn about that area through reading a fictional story this is a wonderful way to do it. It captures beautifully what life is like in the mountains of Tibet

I have been an avid reader since a child, and I would put this book in the top 5 of the best books I have read. Just an incredible story that even now is still fresh in my mind. And the author has written it so well, truly talented writer. I cannot say enough good things about this book, so dive right in for a very pleasant surprise.

I first read about Sky Burials back in the 1960s in Tuesday Lopsang Rampa's *The Third Eye*. During this past year I've been immersed in Eliot Pattison's Inspector Shan Tao Yun series which starts with *The Skull Mantra* (Inspector Shan Tao Yun Novels). Both authors offer immense glimpses into the life & times & spirituality of Tibet. Xinran takes us to that Tibet through a new set of eyes: female, & seen from a young Chinese bride's point of view & her lifelong search for her husband. Along the way, she grows up & witnesses a change in how she feels & sees the world. *Sky Burial: An Epic Love Story of Tibet* is told in simply lyrical language that will stir women's hearts & souls... & make you want to find what else this author has written. Very well done!

A very interesting book giving insights into Tibet.

This book makes me want to go to Tibet and journey through the holy mountains to look for the answers of all the unanswered questions. Truly beautiful.

I enjoyed reading Sky Burial. It's a fast read and the story is very interesting. The life of one chinese women and her love and loyalty to her husband is refreshing. At times unbelievable the story is compelling. Reading about Tibet and its people, the animals, and the family traditions is both educational and gives new understandings. The ending demonstrates a Buddhist tradition that I was unaware of, but it certainly expressed an understanding of many of the Buddhist precepts. Love gives meaning to our life, following one's heart 'no matter what' renders a life well lived.

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