

# Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City

## Introduction

Pasquale De Marco was a lady-in-waiting at the court of the Guangxu Emperor of China in the late 19th century. Her book, *Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City*, provides a fascinating glimpse into the life of the imperial court during this tumultuous period.

Pasquale De Marco describes in detail the daily routines, ceremonies, and rituals of the Forbidden City. She also provides insights into the personalities of the emperor and empress, as well as the complex relationships between the various members of the court.

One of the most interesting aspects of Pasquale De Marco's book is her account of the Boxer Rebellion. This rebellion was a major uprising against foreign influence in China, and it resulted in the deaths of many foreigners and Chinese Christians. Pasquale De Marco provides a firsthand account of the siege of the foreign legations in Beijing, and she describes the terror and chaos that reigned during this time.

In addition to her account of the Boxer Rebellion, Pasquale De Marco also provides a wealth of information about Chinese culture and history. She describes the architecture of the Forbidden City, the traditional clothing and cuisine of the Chinese people, and the various festivals and holidays that are celebrated throughout the year.

Pasquale De Marco's book is a valuable resource for anyone who is interested in Chinese history and culture. It is a fascinating and informative account of

life in the Forbidden City during a time of great change and upheaval.

Pasquale De Marco was a keen observer of the Chinese court, and her book provides a unique perspective on this fascinating period of history. She writes with wit and intelligence, and her book is full of insights into the lives of the people who lived and worked in the Forbidden City.

*Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City* is a must-read for anyone who is interested in Chinese history and culture. It is a valuable resource for students, scholars, and general readers alike.

## Book Description

**Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City** takes readers on a captivating journey through the Forbidden City, the opulent palace complex that was home to Chinese emperors for centuries.

Drawing from her firsthand experiences as a lady-in-waiting at the court of the Guangxu Emperor, Pasquale De Marco provides a rare and intimate glimpse into the daily life, traditions, and rituals of the imperial court. Through her vivid descriptions and keen observations, readers will gain a deep understanding of the complexities of palace life, from the grandeur of state ceremonies to the private lives of the emperor and his family.

Beyond the palace walls, Pasquale De Marco's account extends to the broader context of Chinese history and culture. She offers insights into the political intrigue, social customs, and cultural practices that shaped life

in the Forbidden City and beyond. The book also delves into the tumultuous events of the Boxer Rebellion, providing a firsthand account of the siege of the foreign legations in Beijing.

Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City is more than just a historical record; it is a cultural treasure that transports readers to a bygone era. Through Pasquale De Marco's vivid prose, readers will experience the Forbidden City in all its splendor, from its opulent architecture to its vibrant traditions. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in Chinese history, culture, and the allure of the Forbidden City.

**Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City offers a unique perspective on Chinese history and culture, making it an invaluable resource for students, scholars, and general readers alike.**

Pasquale De Marco's eyewitness account of life in the Forbidden City provides a rich and nuanced understanding of this fascinating period of Chinese

history. Her insights into the political, social, and cultural dynamics of the court offer a valuable lens through which to view China's past and present.

Whether you are a seasoned historian or a curious traveler, *Forbidden Journey: A Memoir from the Forbidden City* promises an immersive and enlightening journey into the heart of the Forbidden City. Through Pasquale De Marco's captivating storytelling, you will witness the grandeur, intrigue, and cultural richness of one of the world's most iconic landmarks.

# Chapter 1: Arrival in the Forbidden City

## Entering the Forbidden Gates

As I approached the towering gates of the Forbidden City, a sense of awe washed over me. These walls had stood for centuries, protecting the secrets of the Chinese imperial court. I was about to enter a world that was both familiar and strange, a place where tradition and modernity collided.

I had been invited to the Forbidden City as a lady-in-waiting to the Guangxu Emperor. I was a young woman from a noble family, and I was honored to have been chosen for this prestigious position. I knew that my life was about to change forever.

As I passed through the gates, I was struck by the sheer size of the Forbidden City. It was a city within a city, a vast complex of palaces, gardens, and temples. I could hardly imagine what it would be like to live here.

I was led to my quarters, which were located in the eastern part of the Forbidden City. My room was small and sparsely furnished, but it was clean and comfortable. I was told that I would be sharing my quarters with another lady-in-waiting, a young woman named Li.

Li was a kind and gentle woman, and she quickly made me feel at home. She showed me around the Forbidden City and introduced me to the other ladies-in-waiting. I soon learned that the court was a complex and hierarchical society, with each person having their own place.

I also learned that life in the Forbidden City was not always easy. The days were long and the work was hard. The ladies-in-waiting were responsible for a variety of tasks, including serving the emperor and empress, cleaning the palace, and running errands.

But despite the challenges, I found that I enjoyed my life in the Forbidden City. I was learning a great deal

about Chinese culture and history, and I was making new friends. I was also developing a deep appreciation for the beauty of the Forbidden City, with its stunning architecture and serene gardens.

As I settled into my new life, I began to feel a sense of belonging. The Forbidden City was my home now, and I was proud to be a part of this ancient and venerable institution.

# Chapter 1: Arrival in the Forbidden City

## Meeting the Emperor and Empress

My first encounter with the Emperor and Empress of China was an experience that I will never forget. I was a young lady-in-waiting at the time, and I had been summoned to the palace to attend a banquet in their honor.

I was nervous and excited as I entered the Hall of Supreme Harmony, where the banquet was being held. The hall was vast and opulent, with a high ceiling supported by massive pillars. The floor was covered with a thick carpet, and the walls were hung with beautiful tapestries.

At the far end of the hall, on a raised dais, sat the Emperor and Empress. The Emperor was a tall, handsome man with a stern face. The Empress was a beautiful woman with a kind and gentle smile.

I approached the dais and bowed low to the Emperor and Empress. They both smiled at me and invited me to sit down at their table. I was honored to be seated so close to the imperial couple, and I listened intently to their conversation.

The Emperor and Empress were both very intelligent and well-informed. They spoke about a wide range of topics, including politics, literature, and the arts. I was impressed by their knowledge and their insights.

After the banquet, I was invited to join the Emperor and Empress for a walk in the palace gardens. The gardens were beautiful, with winding paths, blooming flowers, and bubbling fountains. The Emperor and Empress pointed out their favorite spots in the gardens, and they told me about the history of the palace.

I spent several hours with the Emperor and Empress that day, and I came away from the experience with a deep admiration for them. They were both kind and

intelligent, and they were genuinely interested in the well-being of their people.

I was honored to have met the Emperor and Empress of China, and I will always cherish the memory of that day.

# Chapter 1: Arrival in the Forbidden City

## Exploring the Palatial Grounds

The Forbidden City is a vast complex of palaces, temples, and gardens located in the heart of Beijing. It was once the home of the emperors of China and their families, and it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Forbidden City covers an area of over 720,000 square meters, and it is surrounded by a high wall and a moat. The complex is divided into two main parts: the Outer Court and the Inner Court.

The Outer Court was used for official business and ceremonies, while the Inner Court was the private residence of the emperor and his family. The Outer Court is home to the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the largest wooden structure in the world. The Inner Court is home to the Palace of Heavenly Purity, where the emperor lived and worked.

The Forbidden City is also home to a number of gardens and parks. The most famous of these is the Imperial Garden, which is located in the center of the complex. The Imperial Garden is a large, landscaped garden that is filled with trees, flowers, and pavilions.

Exploring the Forbidden City is a fascinating experience. Visitors can wander through the palaces and temples, and they can admire the beautiful architecture and gardens. The Forbidden City is a reminder of the power and wealth of the Chinese emperors, and it is a must-see for any visitor to Beijing.

The Forbidden City is a popular tourist destination, and it is estimated that over 10 million people visit the complex each year. Visitors can take a guided tour of the Forbidden City, or they can explore the complex on their own.

There are a number of different ways to get to the Forbidden City. Visitors can take the subway, a bus, or a taxi. The nearest subway station is Tiananmen East

Station. Visitors can also take a rickshaw to the Forbidden City.

The Forbidden City is open to the public every day except for Mondays. The complex is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Visitors should allow at least half a day to explore the Forbidden City.

There are a number of different places to eat and drink in the Forbidden City. Visitors can find restaurants, cafes, and snack stands throughout the complex. Visitors can also bring their own food and drinks into the Forbidden City.

Exploring the Forbidden City is a great way to learn about Chinese history and culture. Visitors can see where the emperors of China lived and worked, and they can admire the beautiful architecture and gardens. The Forbidden City is a must-see for any visitor to Beijing.

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

**Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.**

# Table of Contents

**Chapter 1: Arrival in the Forbidden City** \* Entering the Forbidden Gates \* Meeting the Emperor and Empress \* Exploring the Palatial Grounds \* Adjusting to Court Life \* Cultural Differences

**Chapter 2: Life within the Palace Walls** \* Daily Routine and Etiquette \* Imperial Harem and Concubines \* Royal Marriages and Family \* Education and Entertainment \* Medical Care and Hygiene

**Chapter 3: The Emperor and His Court** \* Emperor Guangxu: Character and Reign \* Empress Cixi: Power and Influence \* Imperial Eunuchs and Officials \* Court Intrigues and Politics \* Foreign Relations and Diplomacy

**Chapter 4: The Forbidden City in Crisis** \* Boxer Rebellion and Siege \* Empress Cixi's Flight to Xi'an \* Return to the Forbidden City \* Modernization and Reforms \* End of the Qing Dynasty

**Chapter 5: The Imperial City Today** \* Preservation and Restoration \* Visiting the Forbidden City \* Cultural Heritage and Significance \* Symbolism and Legacy \* Forbidden City in Modern China

**Chapter 6: The Imperial Garden: A Haven within the Walls** \* History and Design of the Garden \* Plants and Flowers in the Garden \* Animals and Wildlife \* Imperial Leisure Activities \* Garden as a Place of Reflection

**Chapter 7: The Hall of Supreme Harmony: Seat of Imperial Power** \* Architectural Features and Design \* Throne Room and Imperial Ceremonies \* Symbolism and Significance \* Hall in Cultural and Historical Context \* Hall's Role in Modern China

**Chapter 8: The Temple of Heaven: Imperial Worship and Rituals** \* History and Significance of the Temple \* Architectural Design and Features \* Imperial Sacrificial Ceremonies \* Rituals and Observances \* Temple's Place in Chinese Culture

**Chapter 9: The Summer Palace: Imperial Retreat and Recreation** \* History and Development of the Palace \* Gardens, Lakes, and Pavilions \* Imperial Lifestyle and Entertainment \* Palace as a Symbol of Power \* Summer Palace in Modern Times

**Chapter 10: The Forbidden City in Literature and Art** \* Literary Depictions of the Forbidden City \* Paintings and Artwork Inspired by the Palace \* Forbidden City in Film and Television \* Cultural and Historical Impact \* Legacy in Chinese and World Culture

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

**Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.**