



## **TWO SPARROWHAWKS IN A LONELY SKY**

Written by REBECCA LIM

**RECOMMENDED FOR: Ages 11–14 YEARS OLD (YEARS 5 TO 8, UPPER PRIMARY/LOWER SECONDARY)**

**GENRE:** Rite of passage; historical fiction

**THEMES:** History of China – The Great Leap Forward (1958–1961), Chinese Diversity, Feminism, Eastern versus Western Cultures, Refugees and Immigration Policy in China and Australia, Honour, Importance of Learning, People as Victims of the ‘Machine’ of Government or Industry, Resilience, Family

### **CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS:**

- Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)
- English: Literature, literacy and language
- Visual Arts

**NOTES WRITTEN BY:** Robyn Sheahan-Bright

**ISBN (AUS):** 978 1 76118 022 4

## INTRODUCTION

*'My two sparrowhawks, my two fierce, bright young birds, carrying a piece of us with you wherever you go.'* (p 74)

What if you were forced to set sail for a country that didn't want you, to meet a father you couldn't remember? Thirteen-year-old Fu, his younger sister, Pei, and their mother, Yun, live in a small rural community in Southern China that is already enduring harsh conditions when it is collectivised as part of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward campaign that ultimately led to economic disaster, widespread famine and millions of deaths. After tragedy strikes, and threatened with separation, Fu and Pei set out on a perilous journey to find their father, who left for Australia almost a decade ago. With nothing to guide them but a photograph and some documents in a language they cannot read, they must draw on all their courage and tenacity just to survive – and perhaps forge a better life for themselves.

An unforgettable story of family, resilience and the complex Asian-Australian experience from the esteemed author of *Tiger Daughter*, winner of the CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers.

## PLOT SUMMARY

*'The sea seems as if it will always be out of reach.'* (p 7)

Uncle Bob Chen had been sent as a boy to live with his Chinese relatives in Long Jing Cun, a village in Southern China, but was considered a *'foreign devil boy'* (p 10) by the villagers. When Ru's father rescued him from drowning in a well, Bob formed a lifelong attachment to the notion of repaying that gift of life. It is he who arranged for Ru to travel to Australia and who also assisted when the children went to Kit Harrison for aid to leave Hong Kong. The children and their mother suffer the privations of living under the 'Great Leap Forward' regime before she dies. But before her passing, Yun shows the children her pot of treasures (p 49), which contains letters, a photo of their father, and a menu from the Lucky Jade Lounge in Melbourne, Australia. Later, she gives them a treasured gold ring and a pair of jade earrings (pp 69–72). She tells them that the Lucky Jade Lounge was named for Fu (luck or good fortune) and Pei ('a ... jade pendant symbolising excellence and harmony', p 55). Armed with these small treasures, they follow her instructions and travel across the open sea to Hong Kong, where they locate the Acting Australian Trade Commissioner, Kit Harrison, and are able to make contact with Bob Chen, now living in Sydney. They are each issued with a Certificate of Exemption and make their way, against all odds, to Australia. This is a migrant story of immense power and range, which celebrates the resilience and bravery of those who are forced to risk everything in order to make a new life for themselves.

## BEFORE READING

- What other books by Rebecca Lim have you read?
- What does the cover and title of the book suggest to you, prior to reading it?
- What do you know of Chinese history?
- What do you know about Australia's immigration policies?

## Q&A WITH REBECCA LIM

### Tell us about yourself?

'I was born in Singapore and my first languages/dialects were Mandarin/Hokkien/Teo Chew. We migrated to live in Warwick, Queensland when I was a toddler in the early 1970s. My father was a doctor at the Warwick Base Hospital. We later moved to Melbourne and I have subsequently lived all over.'

### What sort of books did you read as a child?

'I remember tearing through the Digger the Dog readers in Prep and have not stopped reading since. I turned to reading fantasy and sci fi novels in primary school because I'd read most of the children's books in my school library and local library, which did not feature any protagonists remotely like me. Sci fi and fantasy novels did not seem to be as gender/class/ethnicity bound as the standard children's books on offer and they are probably a huge part of why I am a genre writer today.'

'When I'm not reading, you'll find me writing, eating, running, roller skating, drawing, watching martial arts movies, making music, knitting, crafting or playing apps with Hello Kitty or dragons in them. When I am not coming up with new stories, I am a practising commercial lawyer, copywriter and editor.'

### What motivates you to write?

'I am just compelled to — I call it "channelling voices". I've just always done it, and there is a kernel of a story in just about anything.'

'I've never wanted to write only "migrant" stories, but I have always tried to ensure that my fiction reflects the real world – people will break into other languages, they will be poor, overweight, ill, scarred or in desperate circumstances, but still manage to find reserves of ferocity, tenacity, strength and humour to deal with whatever is thrown at them by life.'

'My guiding principle when I write is to seek to build empathy in my readers and if that means starting with an 'unlikeable' main character who will grow and change, and hopefully grow and change the reader as well, so be it. I also seek to champion stories written by

people from all sorts of marginalisations, to try to combat decades of children's books that don't reflect all the real people who live in the world, whose stories also matter.'

### **Why this book?**

'Modern Australia is a nation essentially built on a racist ideology and racist legislation. Closing the Gap, the Voice to Parliament, our constitution, our treatment of asylum seekers are just a few of the issues founded in that history. So, in this book, I wanted to explore some of the "secret" history that is not often discussed in children's literature. Also, I wanted to tell a story about asylum seeking, migration, tenacity and survival.'

'The idea for *Two Sparrowhawks in a Lonely Sky* came out of extensive reading about, and extended family stories from the mid-20th century regarding the impact of Communist Chinese policy on rural villages, as well as escape stories across borders, forced migration stories and the real impacts of 20th century Australian anti-immigrant/anti-alien policies. The novel is interrogating a historical period and its mores and policies that have real parallels with Australia right now.'

'The novel seeks to show how far we've come as a nation, but also how much farther we have to go. We still don't teach enough First Nations history and culture in schools; we still haven't established treaty with our First Nations peoples; our immigration minister still has "god-like" discretionary powers; refugees are still dying or being incarcerated or deported when they take to the seas, hoping to reach a new country in which they will be safe. *Two Sparrowhawks in a Lonely Sky* aims to set the record straighter for Asian-Australians, but also Australians generally — we should recognise that the population of this country has always been diverse, regardless of what our laws said, or intended. There's a kind of accepted, collective amnesia around Australia's original founding principles. In its own quiet way, *Two Sparrowhawks in a Lonely Sky* is seeking to de-colonialise the narrative. For me, growing up here, the colonial narrative was "it" — there was nothing else. It felt massively alienating and exclusionary.'

### **Do you have any specific suggestions for classroom activities relating to your book?**

'The novel should be studied in conjunction with First Fleet and convict migration narratives, Gold Rush narratives, the Eureka Stockade (a deeply anti-Asian movement), the Australian Federation movement (also deeply anti-Asian), the two World Wars and British and 'acceptable' European migration to Australia post-World War 2, and the treatment of our First Nations peoples in the lead up to them securing the right to vote in 1962.'

## **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGLISH**

#### **LITERATURE**

- The novel is told in third person, past tense.

*Activity:* Rewrite one incident in the novel in first person from Pei's or Fu's perspective.

- Characters include: Pei (Liang Guang Pei), Fu (Liang Guang Fu) and their parents Liang Ling Ru and Liang Yun; Uncle Bob Chen (Chen Guang Fu); Cadre Ling Wei (p 92); Sister Zeng, a Tanka woman who sails the children to Hong Kong on her wooden sampan, accompanied by her pet cormorant Baozi; Kit (K.H.) Stevenson, Acting Trade Commissioner for Australia (p 202); Miss Ewa Kalecki (p 267), a Polish Jewess who teaches Pei to speak English on board the ship *Shangte*.

*Question:* Which character did you find most interesting and why?

## LITERACY

- The novel is structured as follows: Drawings of main characters; Prologue (a Letter from Bob Chen to Mr A.G. Turner, Acting Secretary, Department of Immigration, Canberra, 1949); Part 1: Village Life 1951–1958; Part 2: Passage; Part 3 Border Crossings. The drawings are charming evocations of the people, but we know from the text that Yun dies looking much older than her years; Ru is no longer a dapper schoolmaster; Sister Zeng is far more weathered; and Miss Ewa is described as being in her forties.

*Question:* What do these images tell the reader about each character? How does Bob Chen's letter in the Prologue relate to the rest of the novel?

- Settings in the novel are painted vividly. Long Jing Cun (Dragon Well Village); the Tanka community at Huangmao River; being at sea aboard Sister Zeng's sampan; and 1950s Hong Kong.

*Activity:* Invite students to consider these four settings and locate quotes which describe each of them.

- Critical Literacy involves close looking and reading to discover further meaning in a text.

*Activity:* Invite students to answer questions about the narrative. For example, what happened to Sister Zeng as a child to make her such an independent spirit? What restrictions did Australia place on Chinese immigrants like Ru? Compare or describe the different systems of government of China and of Australia during the years in which the novel is set, and now — have they changed? Or are both systems of government still essentially the same?

## LANGUAGE

- Literary Device and Use of Language: Examples include '*as a crow spreads its wings when passing overhead, surveying the land below it with a beady, all-seeing eye*' (p 42); '*a*

*squalling typhoon like a roaring shrieking monster with many grasping hands'* (p 262). The title of the novel is also a metaphor.

**Activity:** Encourage students to locate other examples of literary devices such as simile, metaphor and personification in the text.

- Each part opens with a quotation.

**Activity:** Invite students to discuss their meaning in relation to the novel. Ask whether the students agree or disagree with the sentiment of each quotation.

### ASSESSMENT:

- Write a short story in Pei's voice describing her initial impressions of living with Ru, her father, finally meeting Bob Chen in person, and going to school in Australia.
- Miss Ewa's poignant parting words to Pei are: *'Once I am settled at my brother's place, I'll come down to see you and eat some of your father's good cooking. How much more you will know by then! How much taller you will have grown!'* (p 284) This could act as a prompt for another story describing this possible visit.
- Read other novels about Chinese-Australians or Asian-Australians and compare to this novel. [See **Corresponding Literature** below.]
- Read a play which deals with the Chinese-Australian or Asian-Australian experience and analyse its thematic content. [See **Corresponding Literature** below.]

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

*History of China – The Great Leap Forward (1958–1961):*

- The novel outlines the poor conditions experienced by the villagers still bound by the village chieftain's brutal reprisals when rent isn't paid by them (pp 19–20). Then it details how things worsen when the 'liberators' arrive and call on the villagers to *'lay your grievances and misery, for years of injustice and poverty, at the feet of this filthy landlord.'* (p 21) When he is summarily executed, they become part of a new order. Although the villagers are unfamiliar with the words *class struggle* or *agrarian revolution* (p 24) or *proletariat* (p 27), initially all seems promising: *'You're all landowners now, comrades! ...You've taken the first step on the glorious road to the socialist transformation of agriculture!'* (p 29); *What we put in, they agreed happily, we will get out. No one will ever go hungry again.* But that was not really true, and the villagers would come to understand this before long.' (p 30) Initially, the villagers controlled their own means of production, but the cadre (high-ranking soldiers) who administered the laws of this government insisted that they share their resources in 'mutual aid teams' (p 31), and that they meet supply quotas, which leads to bitter grievances, and the government also makes increasing demands on what to produce

and take much of what is produced so that the villagers begin to suffer dire need. Then the ruling comes that they should become 'co-operative' and surrender all their holdings to the central government, which would control the means of production (p 38). Long Jing Cun later becomes part of a larger 'collective' where villagers are forced to share their resources with many other villages (p 64+). Then they become part of an even larger Tan Jiang Commune (p 86). The scavenging necessary to stay alive when almost all the produce is taken from them is described (pp 76–77). Collective kitchens and childcare (p 77) separate parents from their children. The soldiers' lack of understanding of farming (pp 83–85) causes further disastrous decline in production and leads to a tragic lack of food for all. And the demands of the soldiers become ever more eccentric and desperate: *'Every peasant must now be a steelworker!'* (p 84).

*Question:* What did you learn about the 'Great Leap Forward' in reading this novel? How were the people disadvantaged by the government's collectivisation policies?

- Ling Wei's father is a powerful member of the party but his daughter admires his humanity: *'He says that if you do not know the People, you cannot properly govern them, and that you need to understand their lives, in all their conditions, to bring about lasting revolution.'* (p 115)

*Question:* If more of the party members thought like this, might the national project have succeeded?

### China's Ethnic Diversity

- *'Not all people in this country are the same!'* (p 123)  
Most people are aware that Cantonese and/or Mandarin are spoken by Chinese people. But China is a country of many ethnic groups. Yun is from the north, which makes her a suspicious figure in the south where the Liang family live. Kit speaks Putonghua or Mandarin (p 203), which the children are familiar with, because of their mother. Miss Ewa, although Polish, also speaks it (p 266), having lived in Shanghai.

*Activity:* Research the ethnic diversity of China in terms of language, culture, geography and economic prosperity.

- Fu and Pei are introduced by Ling Wei to Sister Zeng, known as the Sampan Queen, who is a "sea gypsy": *'Until liberation occurred, her people were among the poorest, most excluded and dispossessed in the entire nation – exiled to our waterways and treated shamefully for centuries.'* (p 115) *'They are a remarkable people, the Tanka,' she said. 'You would call them the People of the Water – Shuishangren – in your mother's language.'* (p 119) Pei is fascinated to observe of Cadre Ling Wei and Sister Zeng: *'They were women from two entirely different tribes, meeting on common ground.'* (p 123) Sister Zeng speaks passionately about her people's freedom: *'The sea feeds us, asking for nothing but hard work and patience in return.'* (p 124) Sister Zeng sings songs to the children, which she describes as salt-water songs or *Xianshuige* (p 153) and the children are amazed that Sister Zeng also knows words in English, the language in which the Lucky Jade Lounge menu is written.

*Activity:* Research the fate of the Tanka people in contemporary society.



### Feminism

- The female soldier, a four-star field officer of the People's ground forces (p 107), Cadre Ling Wei, inspires Pei not only with her imposing and beautiful presence (pp 82–83), but with her objection to a child being forced to marry, and her rebellious statements: *'This is feudalism!' the female soldier hissed. Child slavery! Remember, old man: women hold up half the sky.'* (pp 94–5) She is not only a believer in women's rights, but has an ambitious personal goal to rise through the ranks and a plan to one day *'help build a ship that can fly into space, or fly it myself!'* (p 100) But she takes a grave risk in hatching a plan to save them (p 101) and even gives Sister Zeng an army-issued pistol for protection (p 134).

*Activity:* Read and discuss her impassioned speech on women's rights: *'Woman? ... People like you.'* (p 107)

*Question:* Were women like Ling Wei able to change Chinese attitudes to women in the short term?

*Question:* Did Ling Wei's privileged background (p 133) give her the freedom that other women in China found difficult to acquire?

*Question:* How did Chinese society view the role of women in the pre-Revolutionary period?

- Pei describes her constant anger (p 279) and says that: *'Life seems like a test people like us can never pass because we never know what the rules are, and there are always rules. I want to know the rules. I want to write the rules.'* (p 280) Miss Ewa replies that: *'An angry woman is a good force for change... But you have to remember not to burn people with all that fire, maybe just direct it a bit more at the places that need burning. Not at the people who care about you, and want the best for you.'* (p 280)

*Activity:* Discuss these two quotes.

*Question:* Does Pei's quote ring as true today as it might have in the 1950s?

*Question:* What has prompted Miss Ewa to say this to Pei? Do you agree with Miss Ewa? Do you think Ling Wei would agree with her?

### Eastern versus Western Cultures

- In escaping China, the children are thrown into a new world: *People, boats and buildings came in all different shapes and sizes! ... Every day brought new vistas to their eyes and new ideas to their understanding of the world. It was bigger, and stranger, than anything they could have imagined back home in Long Jing Cun.* (p 174) In the years in which the novel is set, Hong Kong is a colonial outpost of the British Empire and many imported British customs were on display. They witness their first cricket game: *In the middle of the field, surrounded by all the other men, were two ghosts wearing white gloves – even in this heat – and strange padded contrivances worn up the front of each leg to mid-thigh... also finger-pointing.* (p 182). Pei and Fu also witness electricity for the first time (pp 220–221).

*Question:* Fu and Pei travel from what is virtually a feudal society to a world on the cusp of a technological revolution. What major differences do they observe in Hong Kong? What does the novel suggest about the impact of the clash between western and eastern cultures?



### Refugees and Immigration Policy in China and Australia

- The novel reveals the prejudices faced by refugees in both Hong Kong and Australia. When Sister Zeng points out the island of Hei Ling Chau where a colony of lepers forcibly resides in isolation (p 161), Fu and Pei realise gloomily that *They were as good as lepers.* (p 162) Pei and Fu feel the disgust of the Hong Kong people they pass in the street, who ignore them or abuse them. *They may as well have been invisible and made of air.* (p 180) Their attitude to refugees is denoted by these two quotes: *'They would want something. Refugees always wanted something. Someone else could help them.'* (p 190) and *'These people should be stopped,' a woman in a floral cheongsam said sourly to another all dressed in black, glaring down at Pei. 'Coming here and expecting us to take care of them! There's entirely too many of them in the country.'* (p 195)

*Activity:* Discuss these two quotes.

*Question:* What made people respond this way to refugees? Have people's attitudes changed in ensuing decades or are we still witnessing similar attitudes today?

- The Australian *Immigration Restriction Act 1901 – 1958* (p 206) is described as a 'narrow door' (pp 212–3). We also hear that there is a lengthy file on Ru (pp 216–217) detailing his failure over the years to gain permanent residency in Australia. Bob Chen tells the children that *'It's a Judas promise that is offered to Chinese wishing to settle in Australia. People like us, even those that were born here – like I was – are simply not welcome. It is the prevailing policy.'* (p 233) and that *'They don't want the Chinese to stay. We're only welcome to work hard and then to clear off back where we came from – that is the long and the short of it.'* (p 234) The children can only disembark in Australia if they arrive with a Certificate of Exemption (p 234), which Kit arranges for five years (p 236). Ru's possible expulsion (p 57) is a crisis for him because Ru's time as a Kuomintang intelligence officer (pp 57–8) would endanger him on his return to China. Australia's inhumane immigration policy is compared to China's: *'It seems that Australia and China are more alike than your Ba realised before he left.'* (p 59) Sister Zeng fears that their papers will be inadequate to the ghosts in Hong Kong (p 163).

*Question:* Research and discuss these policies. Have they changed a great deal since the 1950s? How do we treat refugees today? [See Museum of Chinese Australian History <<https://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/>>]

- Other refugee stories are encompassed in this narrative, as well, for example, Miss Ewa's story as a Polish Jew who found safe haven in Shanghai, before travelling to her brother in Sydney on the ship also carrying Pei and Fu. (pp 273–4)

*Question:* Research the plight of Polish Jews during World War Two. How difficult must it have been for them to arrive in China speaking no Chinese and with no idea of the culture?

*Question:* What happened to these people after the Revolution?

### Honour

- Bob Chen believes he owes a great debt to Ru's father, who rescued him as a child, and he honours this by helping Ru and the children to come to Australia: *'Repay good with good, and the bad shall be overcome.'* (p 239) This and other values imbue this narrative.

Question: What other values did you discover in this novel?

### Importance of Learning

- Fu and Pei know their father was a teacher but are surprised to hear that their mother had also trained as a teacher: *'We honour learning in this house. It's how we met – at teachers college in the city. When your eyes are open, children, you learn. Everything is a lesson; everything can be used. You never stop learning. It will save you.'* (p 12)

Question: In what ways does learning save these two children?

### People as Victims of the 'Machine' of Government or Industry

- *Yun's hands stilled in Pei's hair. 'There is more than one side, Pei,' she whispered, 'and no side ever remains fixed. Nor is the correct side, the proper side, governed by people with our interests at heart. They don't even see us. We are merely gears and levers, parts of a machine. You will understand this with time.'* (p 16)

*'Ma told me once, before she died, that we are merely gears and levers, parts of a machine. I never understood that before, but now I think I do. The machine ... it holds you tight so that you can't get away, or it pushes you out.'* (p 273)

Activity: Discuss these two quotes.

Question: How does Yun's quote relate to her family's experiences under both the Chieftain's rule and under the Communists? How does Pei's quote relate to both her mother and father's experiences? If you were in their situation, would you have chosen to stay or to escape?

### Resilience

- Yun explains about the contact in Hong Kong (p 61) whom the children must locate, and her final words to the children are: *'Go find your father ... Go now. Find the sea, the sea that is always waiting, as Ba told you.'* (p 97) Kit is amazed that the children have made their way to Hong Kong: *No one could get a bale of wool, a leg of ham, or a ton of wheat into China, but starving people with nothing left to lose but their lives were somehow managing to find their way round armed guards at the borders between Hong Kong and China, or taking to the typhoon-prone shark-infested south China sea, at great personal risk.'* (p 203) They are fortunate that Kit knows Mr Chen, has been to the Lucky Jade Lounge with him, and has met Ru there (p 209), and decides to help them.

Question: Would the children have persevered if Kit hadn't been willing to help them? What might have happened to them if they had to stay in Hong Kong or return with Sister Zeng to China?

**ASSESSMENT:**

- The four characters – Liang Yun, Liang Guang Pei, Ling Wei and Miss Ewa are each rebellious in their own ways. Yun's independence is suppressed by the government, but her steely resolve to protect her children is dogged; Pei is always angry and determined, and this will fuel her future success; Ling Wei is an articulate advocate for women, holding great hopes for them in the modern age; Sister Zeng is equally strong, born out of her childhood, when she was stolen and enslaved; and Miss Ewa is a survivor of a number of brutal regimes, yet retains her wit, grace and humour. Analyse the various forms of feminism represented by these four women.
- Discuss this quote: *'Are they a polite people, the ghost people?' Pei asked with interest. 'Only on the surface,' Sister Zeng answered grimly, 'in my experience. All the same, underneath.'* (p 155)
- Pei asks her father when they meet again: *'Was it worth it?'* to which he replies: *'We're going to find out.'* (p 288) What do you think their answer will be once they have spent some time together in Australia? What problems might the children face in living with their father in this new country?

**VISUAL ARTS**

- The cover image is a visual metaphor. The two children escape but don't sail a boat singlehandedly. It is a glorious image of their resilience and independent spirit in silhouette.  
*Activity:* Invite students to create an alternative cover for this novel.
- There are some vivid descriptions of Hong Kong in the novel.  
*Activity:* Invite students to draw a scene described in the novel.
- The lively action in this novel would lend itself perfectly to graphic novel treatment.  
*Activity:* Create a comic strip of one of the incidents in the novel using frames, panels, gutters, speech and thought balloons, e.g., Ling Wei introducing the children to Sister Zeng and her cormorant Baozi.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- Write a simple picture book text describing the action in this novel. Then create a storyboard to accompany it.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**REBECCA LIM** is an award-winning Australian writer, illustrator and editor and the author of over twenty books, including *Tiger Daughter* (a CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers and Victorian Premier's Literary Award-winner), *The Astrologer's Daughter* (A Kirkus Best Book and CBCA Notable Book) and the bestselling *Mercy*. Her work has been shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, Queensland Literary Awards, Margaret and Colin Roderick Literary Award, Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards and Isinglass Award, shortlisted multiple times for the Aurealis Awards and Davitt Awards, and longlisted for the Gold Inky Award and the David Gemmell Legend Award. Her novels have been translated into German, French, Turkish, Portuguese, Polish and Vietnamese. She is a co-founder of the Voices from the Intersection initiative and co-editor of *Meet Me at the Intersection*, a groundbreaking anthology of YA #OwnVoice memoir, poetry and fiction.



Photo by Eugenia Lim

See also:

Agnew, Ruth Oy Har 'Across the Ditch: Rebecca Lim' *The Sapling* June 24, 2021

<<https://www.thesapling.co.nz/across-the-ditch-rebecca-lim/>>

Lim, Rebecca 'I write to give my children a face in society' *The Sydney Morning Herald* October 18, 2019

<<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/rebecca-lim-i-write-to-give-my-children-a-face-in-society-20191014-p530er.html>>

Lim, Rebecca 'Stranger, in this short life of yours, choose kindness' *The Sydney Morning Herald* April 6, 2021

<<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/stranger-in-this-short-life-of-yours-choose-kindness-20210402-p57g30.html>>

O'Brien, Kerrie 'The 'burning fury' that helped this writer win prestigious book award' *The Sydney Morning Herald* August 19, 2022

<<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/here-s-the-secret-to-keep-kids-reading-from-someone-who-knows-20220815-p5b9y3.html>>

*Meet Me at the Intersection* edited by Rebecca Lim and Ambelin Kwaymullina. Fremantle Press, 2018.

See also:

Voices from the Intersection <<https://voicesfromtheintersection.pgtb.me/6JqH9B>>

## ABOUT THE WRITER OF THE NOTES

**Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. She is President of IBBY Australia and Deputy-Chair of the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

## CORRESPONDING LITERATURE

(In alphabetical order of authors)

### Picture Books and Graphic Novels

Ahmed, Safdar *Still Alive: Notes from Australia's Immigration Detention System* Twelve Panels Press, 2021. (Graphic Novel)

Bui, Thi *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* Abrams ComicArts, 2018. (Graphic Novel)

Cunxin, Li *The Peasant Prince* Ill. by Anne Spudvilas. Penguin Random House, 2017, 2007.

Do, Anh *The Little Refugee* Allen & Unwin, 2011.

Gaiman, Neil *What You Need to Be Warm* Bloomsbury, 2023.

Greder, Armin *The Island* Allen & Unwin, 2007.

Greder, Armin *Australia To Z* Allen & Unwin, 2016.

Greder, Armin *The Mediterranean* Allen & Unwin, 2018.

Guo, Jing Jing *Grandpa's Mask* Benchmark/Cygnets in association with University of Western Australia Press, 2001.

Li Duke, Selina *In the Year of the Tiger* Ill. by Stanley Wong. Jam Roll Press, 1994.

Lim, Rebecca *Our Family Dragon: A Lunar New Year Story* Ill. by Cai Tse. Allen and Unwin, 2023

Pung, Alice *Be Careful, Xiao Xin!* Ill. by Sher Rill Ng. HarperCollins, 2022.

Rippin, Sally *Speak Chinese, Fang Fang!* Omnibus Books/Scholastic, 2006.  
Sworder, Zeno *My Strange Shrinking Parents* Thames & Hudson, 2022.  
Tan, Shaun *The Arrival* Hachette, 2006. (Graphic Novel)  
Wang, Gabrielle *The Race for the Chinese Zodiac* Ill. by Sally Rippin. Penguin, 2010.  
Watanabe, Issa *Migrants* Gecko Press, 2020.  
Wheatley, Nadia *Flight* Ill. by Armin Greder. Windy Hollow Books, 2015.  
Yu, Li-Qiong *A New Year's Reunion* Ill. by Zhu Cheng-Liang. Candlewick, 2013.

### **Fiction**

Binks, Danielle *The Year the Maps Changed* Lothian/Hachette, 2019.  
Castagna, Felicity *No More Boats* Giramondo, 2017.  
Chim, Wai *Freedom Swimmer* Allen & Unwin, 2016.  
Chim, Wai *The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling* Allen & Unwin, 2019.  
Fraillon, Zana *The Bone Sparrow* Hachette, 2016.  
Li, Isabelle *A Chinese Affair* Margaret River Press, 2016.  
Lim, Rebecca *Relic of the Blue Dragon* Allen and Unwin, 2018.  
Lim, Rebecca *Race for the Red Dragon* Allen and Unwin, 2019.  
Lim, Rebecca *Tiger Daughter* Allen & Unwin, 2021.  
Marr, Shirley *The Glasshouse of Stars* Puffin, 2021.  
Marr, Shirley *All Four Quarters of the Moon* Penguin Random House, 2022.  
Pung, Alice *Laurinda* Black Inc, 2014.  
Song, Xianlin and Jose, Nicholas *Everything Changes Wu Chang: Australian Writers and China, a Transcultural Anthology* UWA Publishing, 2019.  
Wang, Gabrielle *A Ghost in my Suitcase* Penguin Group (Australia), 2009.  
Wang, Gabrielle *Little Paradise* Penguin Group (Australia), 2010.  
Wang, Gabrielle *The Garden of Empress Cassia* Penguin, 2002.  
Wang, Gabrielle *Ting Ting the Ghost Hunter* Penguin Random House, 2018.  
Wang, Gabrielle *Zadie Ma and the Dog who Chased the Moon* Penguin Random House Australia, 2022.

## Plays

Bates, Vanessa (Adaptation of the novel by Gabrielle Wang) *A Ghost in my Suitcase* (Adapted from the novel by Gabrielle Wang) Currency Press, 2019.

Law, Michelle *Single Asian Female* Currency Press, 2018.

Nguyen, Diana and Kalive, Petra *Laurinda* (Adaptation of the novel by Alice Pung) Currency Press, 2022.

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Non-fiction

*Asylum Seekers and Refugees* (Issues in Society Volume 479) edited by Justin Healey. The Spinney Press, 2022.

*Attitudes to Immigration* (Issues in Society Volume 456 ) edited by Justin Healey. The Spinney Press, 2020.

Roberts, Ceri *Refugees and Migrants* (Children in Our World) Ill. by Hanan Kai. Hachette, 2018.

### Non-fiction Memoirs

Do, Anh *The Happiest Refugee* Allen & Unwin, 2010.

Brooks, Alis *Chinese Australians* Echidna Books, 2008.

Byrne, Denis, Ang, Ien and Mar, Phillip, eds. *The China-Australia Migration Corridor: History and Heritage* MUP, 2023.

Gock Yen, Mavis *South Flows the Pearl: Chinese Australian Voices (China and the West in the Modern World)* Edited by Siaoman Yen and Richard Horsburgh, and introduction by Sophie Loy-Wilson. Sydney University Press, 2022.

Law, Benjamin *The Family Law* Black Inc, 2016.

Cunxin, Li *Mao's Last Dancer* Viking, 2020, 2009, 2003.

Pung, Alice *Unpolished Gem* Black Inc, 2006.

Pung, Alice *Her Father's Daughter* Black Inc, 2011.

Pung, Alice *Close to Home: Selected Writings* Black Inc, 2018.

Pung, Alice, ed. *Growing up Asian in Australia* Black Inc, 2008.



## ONLINE LINKS IN FULL

Asian Australian Children's Literature and Publishing Project' *AustLit*

<<https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/5960598>>

*Being Asian Australian*

<<https://beingasianaaustralian.net/>>

Booth, Emily and Narayan, Bhuva (2021) "Identifying Inclusion: Publishing Industry Trends and the Lack of #OwnVoices Australian Young Adult Fiction," *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 12.

<<https://sophia.stkate.edu/rdyl/vol3/iss1/12>>

'Chiang Kai-shek' *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Chiang-Kai-shek>>

'China Map and Satellite Image' *Geology.com*

<<https://geology.com/world/china-satellite-image.shtml>>

'China's 56 Ethnic Groups' *ChinaCulture.org*

<[http://en.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/minzuwang/2010-06/08/content\\_381865.htm](http://en.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/minzuwang/2010-06/08/content_381865.htm)>

'China's Great Leap Forward' *Association for Asian Studies*

<<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/chinas-great-leap-forward/>>

'Chinese Australians' *Wikipedia*

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_Australians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Australians)>

'Collecting Chinese Australian Stories' *National Library of Australia*

<<https://www.nla.gov.au/stories/blog/collecting-chinese-australian-stories>>

Jones, Paul 'Chinese-Australian journeys: records on travel, migration, and settlement' *National Archives of Australia* 2005

<<https://www.naa.gov.au/help-your-research/research-guides/chinese-australian-journeys-records-travel-migration-and-settlement>>

Kwai, Isabella '200 Years on, Chinese-Australians Are Still Proving They Belong' *The New York Times* May 7, 2018

<<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/07/world/australia/china-australia-history.html>>

Loy-Wilson, Sophie 'Shanghai's Lost History of Chinese-Australians' *University of Sydney* 23 September, 2016

<<https://www.aacta.org/international-program/unsung-stories/>>

'Mao Zedong' *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mao-Zedong>>

*Museum of Chinese Australian History*

<<https://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/>>

*Museum of Chinese in Australia*

<<https://www.moca.com.au/>>

'Nationalist Party, Chinese political party (also called Kuomintang) *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nationalist-Party-Chinese-political-party>>

Soutphommasane, Dr Tim 'The Chinese presence in Australia' Speech to Western Sydney University conference on 'Community Sentiment and Chinese Australian experiences' 1 March 2018 *Australian Human Rights Commission*

<<https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/chinese-presence-australia>>

'Tanka people' *Wikipedia*

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanka\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanka_people)>

'The Chinese Community in Australia' *My China Roots*

<<https://www.mychinaroots.com/places/651532/hongkong>>

'The Reading Australia Guide to Asian-Australian Literature' *Reading Australia*

<<https://readingaustralia.com.au/2017/05/reading-australia-guide-asian-australian-literature/>>

'Unsung Stories' *AACTA*

<<https://www.aacta.org/international-program/unsung-stories/>>

'Zadie Ma and the Dog who Chased the Moon' *Gabrielle Wang*

<<https://gabriellewang.com/book/zadie-ma-and-the-dog-who-chased-the-moon/>>