Homeseeking

by Karissa Chen



About the Book

An epic and intimate tale of one couple across 60 years as world events pull them together and apart, illuminating the Chinese diaspora and exploring what it means to find home far from your homeland.

A single choice can define an entire life.

Haiwen is buying bananas at a 99 Ranch Market in Los Angeles when he looks up and sees Suchi, his Suchi, for the first time in 60 years.

To recently widowed Haiwen it feels like a second chance, but Suchi has only survived by refusing to look back.

Suchi was seven when she first met Haiwen in their Shanghai neighborhood, drawn by the sound of his violin. Their childhood friendship blossomed into soul-deep love, but when Haiwen secretly enlisted in the Nationalist army in 1947 to save his brother from the draft, she was left with just his violin and a note: *Forgive me*.

HOMESEEKING follows the separated lovers through six decades of tumultuous Chinese history as war, famine and opportunity take them separately to the song halls of Hong Kong, the military encampments of Taiwan, the bustling streets of New York, and sunny California, telling Haiwen?s story from the present to the past while tracing Suchi?s from her childhood to the present, meeting in the crucible of their lives. Throughout, Haiwen holds his memories close, while Suchi forces herself to look only forward, neither losing sight of the home they hold in their hearts.

At once epic and intimate, HOMESEEKING is a story of family, sacrifice and loyalty, and of the power of love to endure beyond distance, beyond time.

Discussion Guide

1. How do you think this story might be different if we were to see Suchi?s point of view from present day to her youth, and Haiwen?s from his youth to present day?

2. Is there anyone in your own life that you always find yourself coming back to, whether in friendship or otherwise, in the way that Haiwen and Suchi do?

3. There is a big theme throughout this novel of trying to find one?s way home after being separated from it for so long. Howard and Suchi handle this in different ways: Suchi by refusing to look back, and Howard by refusing to forget. How might you handle this situation if you were put in their shoes?

4. What parallels can you draw between music and trauma, in relation to Haiwen and Suchi?

5. We see a lot of Haiwen?s and Suchi?s parents, especially in those scenes that describe their earlier years. Do you agree with the lessons they each tried to impart to their children? Why or why not?

6. If you could play as beautifully as Haiwen, what instrument would you choose to play?

7. What role does guilt play in the plot of HOMESEEKING? Why do you think that is?

8. What was your favorite scene, and why?

9. Throughout this novel, we see more and more of Haiwen?s ability to take himself away from his situation with a melody in his head, until he loses the ability during his time in the war. What might you play inside your own head in order to escape, and how would you feel if it suddenly went quiet?

10. If the author had written a scene with Suchi reuniting with her mother, what do you imagine would have happened?

Author Bio

Karissa Chen is a Fulbright fellow, Kundiman Fiction fellow, and a VONA/Voices fellow whose fiction and essays have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Eater*, *The Cut*, *NBC News THINK!*, *Longreads*, *PEN America*, *Catapult*, *Gulf Coast* and *Guernica*, among others. She was awarded an artist fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, as well as multiple writing residencies including at Millay Arts, where she was a Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation Creative Fellow and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, among others. She was formerly a senior fiction editor at *The Rumpus* and currently serves as the editor-in-chief at *Hyphen* magazine. She received an MFA in fiction from Sarah Lawrence College and splits her time between New Jersey and Taipei, Taiwan.

Homeseeking

by Karissa Chen

Publication Date: December 2, 2025
Genres: Fiction, Romance
Paperback: 528 pages
Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons
ISBN-10: 059371301X
ISBN-13: 9780593713013