Take Me Home

by Brian Leung



About the Book

Adele "Addie" Maine is returning to Dire, Wyoming, forty years after the deadly events that drove her away from her husband without a word.

Years earlier, when Addie first heads West to stay with her brother Tommy, she is wary of the Chinese working alongside the white men in the local coal mines. But when Tommy falters at homesteading and the mine becomes their only path, Addie's eyes are opened through her association with one Chinese man in particular, Wing Lee?and a bond forms between them that is impossible and forbidden, even in a territory where nearly everyone is an immigrant. Together, Addie and Wing harbor a secret, and when racial tensions escalate to a combustion point, Addie will face a devastating choice between fighting for what is right . . . and survival.

Take Me Home is a searing, redemptive novel that explores justice in a time of violence, and the sweeping landscape between friendship and love.

Discussion Guide

1. The concept of ?home? appears often in this story?the home that Tommy builds, Wing being in foreign territory, and Addie being uncertain ?whether folks came to Wyoming Territory to live or to die.? How do you think ?home? evolves for Addie and Wing as the novel progresses? Which character does the title speak to?

2. Addie and Wing have a deep bond, almost from the first moment they meet. List the reasons why the two are drawn to each other and why Addie comes to trust Wing more than anyone, ?except maybe Tommy.?

3. On page 154, Wing claims, ?One language is never enough.? Do you agree? Describe times in your life when you?ve also felt that words weren?t enough to capture life?s experiences.

4. Addie comes to a new territory and then is alone, ?the last Maine she knew of,? fairly soon after. Can you imagine being in her shoes? Being in a territory where there wasn?t much space for women?

5. The landscape serves as a character in this book, the ?anonymity of open space? serving as a backdrop for constricting social forces. List scenes where you see the landscape interacting with Addie and Wing?s relationship, either as an antidote or as a restricting force.

6. On page 223, Addie states, ?For us, Wing, there?s no such thing as anywhere.? Do you agree with her?

7. The dreams of the men in the novel are listed on the page?Tommy?s homestead, Wing growing oranges?whereas Addie?s are more vague. What do you see as her dreams?

8. Muuk can?t be intimate with Addie during their marriage and then there is a surprising moment upon her return to Dire years later. How do you explain his inhibitions?

9. Addie tells Maye on page 231, ?Its love?but not the kind you?re thinking.? Do you believe Addie here?

10. Addie gives Ah Cheong a memento from Wing to take back to China. Harkening back to the theme of home, do you think people ?belong? in certain places?

11. At the book?s end Addie she acts kindly toward Muuk. How does this shape how we feel about Addie at the end of the novel?

12. What did you as a reader want for Addie and Wing? And, is this possible given their period? Discuss how the genre of historical fiction can both limit its characters via their context but also expand their possibilities through imagination.

13. Though **Take Me Home** is centered on a particular moment in history, its themes of xenophobia and building an ?American? identity are certainly still contemporary. Discuss the echoes from the book in the debates about immigrant labor we are engaged in today.

Author Bio

Brian Leung was born and raised in San Diego County --- a somewhat unlikely location, given that his mother was born in Battleground, Washington, and his father escaped from China in 1949. For many years, Brian lived in Los Angeles, where he studied the city's kinetic diversity and found his literary voice. In addition, he has lived in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington, regions of the country which also appear in his fiction.

Since 2000, Brian has taught in Cincinnati and Los Angeles, and now in Louisville, where he is an Associate Professor at the University of Louisville.

Brian?s fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry have appeared in *Story, Crazyhorse, Grain, Gulf Coast, Kinesis, The Barcelona Review, Mid-American Review, Salt Hill, Gulf Stream, River City, Runes, The Bellingham Review, Hyphen, Velocity, The Connecticut Review, Blithe House Quarterly, Indiana Review, Crab Orchard Review, Crowd*

, and in the short story anthology **The Habit of Art**. He is also the coauthor of the nonfiction humor title **Not Another Feel Good Singles Book**.

The recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, Brian earned his B.A. and M.A. at California State University, and an M.F.A from Indiana University.

Critical Praise

"The story is set in 1880s Wyoming, and Leung has re-created the warp and woof of the territory with faithful clarity?. An indelible picture of the Wyoming Territory and two unlikely lovers."

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