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The Wondrous Woo

Carrianne Leung



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The Wondrous Woo tells the story of Miramar Woo who is the quintessential Chinese girl: nice, quiet, and reserved. The eldest of the three Woo children, Miramar is ever the obedient sister and daughter ... on the outside. On the inside, she's a kick-ass kung fu heroine with rock star flash, sassy attitude, and an insatiable appetite for adventure. Just as Miramar is about to venture forth on the real adventure of leaving home for university, her beloved father is killed in an accident. Miramar watches helplessly as her family unravels in the aftermath of her father's death. Her mother is on the brink of a recurring paranoia that involves phantom hands. Her younger siblings suddenly and mysteriously become savants, in possession of uncanny talents nicknamed The Gifts. As her siblings are swept up into the fantastic world of fame and fortune and her mother fights off madness, Miramar is left behind, feeling talentless and abandoned with no idea who she really is or who she wants to become. She gets herself to university on a bus with no family to see her off, no hugs, and no support. She is utterly on her own. In a story that spans four eventful years, Miramar ventures forth from the suburbs of Toronto to university in Ottawa and back again. Along the way she encounters people and situations light years apart from her sheltered world. She explores new friendships, lust, and a side of herself never seen before. Ultimately, Miramar discovers the meaning of courage, belonging, and family. The Wondrous Woo articulates a new voice that is at once displaced, but still squarely located in the centre of western and Chinese pop culture and everyday diasporic life. This novel joins other established novels in the increasingly popular genre of Chinese Canadian literature.

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