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Diamond Head: A Novel

By Cecily Wong



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Diamond Head: A Novel By Cecily Wong

A sweeping debut spanning from China to Hawaii that follows four generations of a wealthy shipping family whose rise and decline is riddled with secrets and tragic love—from a young, powerful new voice in fiction.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Frank Leong, a fabulously wealthy shipping industrialist, moves his family from China to the island of Oahu. But something ancient follows the Leongs to Hawaii, haunting them. The parable of the red string of fate, the cord that binds one intended beloved to her perfect match, also punishes for mistakes in love, passing a destructive knot down the family line.

When Frank Leong is murdered, his family is thrown into a perilous downward spiral. Left to rebuild in their patriarch's shadow, the surviving members of the Leong family try their hand at a new, ordinary life, vowing to bury their gilded past. Still, the island continues to whisper—fragmented pieces of truth and chatter, until a letter arrives two decades later, carrying a confession that shatters the family even further.

Now the Leongs' survival rests with young Theresa, Frank Leong's only grandchild, eighteen and pregnant, the heir apparent to her ancestors' punishing knots.

Told through the eyes of the Leong's secret-keeping daughters and wives and spanning The Boxer Rebellion to Pearl Harbor to 1960s Hawaii, *Diamond Head* is a breathtakingly powerful tale of tragic love, shocking lies, poignant compromise, aching loss, heroic acts of sacrifice and, miraculous hope.



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Editorial Review

Review

“[A] lush, vivid, and unpredictable narrative.” (*Elle*)

“Ms. Wong’s first novel is a vivid story of a family’s journey over time. We live and breathe with her characters as we witness history shaping family, and family creating its own history. *Diamond Head* is a jewel of a saga.” (Rebecca Wells, author of *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*)

“Wong will utterly transport you through her breathtaking prose in this impressively crafted story.” (*Bustle*)

“Cecily Wong’s *Diamond Head* is a shimmering tapestry of secrets and betrayals, beautifully told through the eyes of the women of the wealthy Leong family. An eye-opening, poignant read set against the backdrop of Hawaii’s rich history.” (Yangsze Choo, author of *The Ghost Bride*)

“Cecily Wong’s lush debut novel hooked me in right away as it slowly unraveled the tangle of secrets the Leong family has kept for decades. *Diamond Head* is an intricate meditation on what is in our control and what is fate.” (Celeste Ng, author of *Everything I Never Told You*)

“An impressive story of romance stretching from early twentieth century China to Hawaii in 1964. . . . In this story of three generations of Chinese immigrants, ancient traditions and family secrets threaten the Leong clan in this captivating story of ill-fated romance set in beautiful island of Oahu.” (*Iron Mountain Daily News*)

“A hot summer day is perfect for this sweeping multi-generational family saga which takes the reader from China to Hawaii.” (*Book Riot*)

“This lyrical novel held my heart captive from its opening. . . . A literary heartbreaker of a novel about the ways the heart betrays us, the ways it leads us to the truth.” (*Ploughshares*)

“[A] rich and compelling debut novel. . . . With keen insight, effused with sadness and hope, *Diamond Head* is an auspicious debut.” (Gail Tsukiyama, author of *The Samurai’s Garden* and *A Hundred Flowers*)

“A sweeping historical saga about several generations of the powerful Leong family.” (*Tampa Bay Times*)

“*Diamond Head* takes the family saga to a new and very high place. . . . Readers will follow the fortunes of this family breathlessly, hungry for more.” (Mary Gordon, author of *The Liar’s Wife*)

“In *Diamond Head*, Wong has crafted a delicate tower of mystery and history. . . . Wong’s prose is lyrical and nearly poetic. . . . Lovely.” (*New York Journal of Books*)

“Wong’s pellucid prose style keeps the pages turning. . . . A promising debut.” (*Kirkus Reviews*)

“Wong’s debut novel will hook readers from the first page and not let go until the final tragic secret is revealed. . . . Reading groups and fans of Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club* will enjoy exploring Chinese-Hawaiian history and culture with this lovely novel.” (*Library Journal*)

“Wong’s multigenerational Hawaiian saga of deception and loyalty evocatively captures the tightly controlled worlds of privilege and power.” (*Booklist*)

“A sweeping family saga in the tradition of Amy Tan. . . . Wong perceptively captures her cast of characters and their setting.” (*Publishers Weekly*)

From the Back Cover

“A jewel of a saga.”—Rebecca Wells, author of *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*

Frank Leong, a prominent shipping industrialist and head of the celebrated Leong family, brings his loved ones from China to Hawaii at the turn of the twentieth century, when the Japanese invade. But something ancient follows the Leongs to the islands, haunting them—the parable of the red string of fate. According to Chinese legend, the red string binds one to her intended beloved, but also punishes for mistakes in love, twisting any misstep into a destructive knot that passes down through generations.

When its patriarch is murdered on Oahu, the Leong family is thrown into a downward spiral. Left to rebuild in his shadow, the surviving members attempt a new, ordinary life, vowing to bury their gilded past—until a letter arrives two decades later, carrying a confession that shatters the family even further.

Now the Leongs’ survival rests with young Theresa, Frank’s only grandchild. Eighteen and pregnant, Theresa holds the answers to her family’s mysteries and must decide what stories to tell, with whom to side, and which knots will endure.

Told through the eyes of the Leongs’ secret-keeping daughters and wives, *Diamond Head* is a breathtakingly powerful multigenerational tale.

“*Diamond Head* is an intricate meditation on what is in our control and what is fate—and on whether children must bear the costs of their parents’ mistakes.”—Celeste Ng, author of *Everything I Never Told You*

“Wong’s debut novel will hook readers from the first page and not let go until the final tragic secret is revealed.”—*Library Journal*

About the Author

Cecily Wong’s work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Self* magazine, *Bustle*, and elsewhere. She is a graduate of Barnard College, and lives and writes in New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Russell Bussey:

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