

Diamond Head

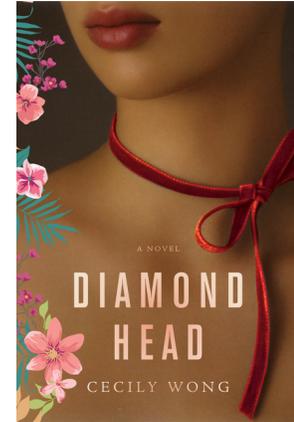
Harper

By Cecily Wong

ISBN: 9780062345431

Introduction

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.

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.

Questions for Discussion

1. Consider the red string motif that runs throughout *Diamond Head*. Do you believe in the idea of a red string or a superstition that runs through generations, connecting them? Can you think of an example from your own family?
2. How is love defined in this novel? Is it defined by passion, (financial) security, obligation, etc.? Does the story suggest that love is predestined or that love can be chosen and cultivated?
3. Discuss the role of guilt throughout the novel. What kind of guilt does each character feel, where does it come from and how does that guilt affect them throughout the novel?
4. *Diamond Head* offers a commentary about the role of women in Chinese culture. Considering Lin, Amy and Theresa, what is the role of women throughout the novel, and does it change over the course of the three generations?

-
5. Though most of the novel is told from the perspectives of Lin, Theresa and Amy, Hong plays a very important role. Discuss Hong's character and her role in the story.
 6. Is Amy to blame, at least partly, for Frank's death? Do you think she deserves to carry that burden? Why or why not?
 7. Discuss the role of the men in the novel. Consider Bohai, Frank, Henry and Grandpa Chan. How is masculinity viewed within the culture and society?
 8. Is there a single protagonist in this story? How did hearing all the different voices and perspectives inform your attachment to the characters?
 9. The story weaves in and out through distance and across time. What is the purpose of telling the story in this way? How does the story's structure tie in with the overall theme of the novel?
 10. Explore the mother-daughter relationships in the novel. Do the women in the novel end up forging new lives for themselves outside of their mothers' influences, or do they end up becoming products of their mothers' mistakes?
 11. At the end of novel, Hong explains what she believes is the difference between fate and destiny. Do you agree with her differentiation? Which characters relied on fate and which characters relied on destiny?

Book Clubs

Cecily Wong would love to be involved in your book club's discussions of her work, by phone/video chat or in person, if possible.

cecily@cecilywong.com