

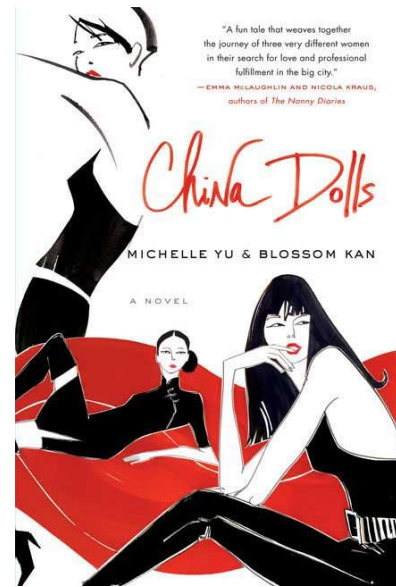
READING GROUP GUIDE

China Dolls

By Michelle Yu and Blossom Kan

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *China Dolls* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *China Dolls*.

About the Book

Set in New York City, *China Dolls* is the story of three best friends from childhood--each an unforgettable Asian woman--tackling career challenges and dating disasters over drinks, laughs, and dim sum: M.J., the sportswriter struggling to fit into her family's traditional Chinese culture and the very white, very male world of sports; Alex, the attorney fighting the submissive Asian woman stereotype and the fear of taking risks after a heartbreaking romance; and Lin, the investment banker trying not to relive her mother's mistakes--until she falls for the office playboy.

About the Author

Michelle Yu, a sports reporter, and lawyer Blossom Kan are cousins who both live in New York City.



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Discussion Questions

- 1) All three protagonists find themselves facing the double hurdles of gender and race in both their personal and professional lives. Professionally speaking, which do you think presents more of a challenge in today's society? What about in the personal realm?
- 2) The girls turn to each other for support, advice, and guidance. Do you think in today's society, young people are increasingly viewing their friends as their surrogate families?
- 3) M.J. often finds that her lifestyle choices clash with her mother's beliefs about what a "good, Asian daughter" should do. Is it possible to live in a modern society and stay true to traditional cultural values?
- 4) How do M.J.'s problems with her self-image contribute to her fixation on Kevin?
- 5) Was Alex right to chastise Lin about her affair with Drew? Do you agree that Alex was justified in saying what she said to Lin because she was trying to look out for her friend?
- 6) Alex holds onto her memory of Josh and compares every man in her life to him. Is the first love always going to be a measuring stick for all subsequent lovers? Or is it more of a learning experience?
- 7) Why is Lin so willing to risk everything - her career, her family, her friends - for Drew? What would you do in her situation? Do you think love should trump friendship or vice versa?
- 8) What do you think was Lin's real reason for breaking up with Stephen even though he was the perfect man for her? Was it so that she could "sow her wild oats"? Was she rebelling against her mother? Did she feel that his perfection highlighted her own inadequacies?
- 9) M.J. and her mother disagree on everything, Alex admires her mother's strength, and Lin says that she wants to be as different from her mother as possible. How do the girls' relationships with their mothers shape the women they become?
- 10) Like many in the Asian culture, Alex's mother believes in staying silent and not rocking the boat, even in the face of insult or injustice. Do you think that this traditional cultural reluctance to speak out and attract attention has any impact on the power (political/cultural/sociological, etc.) that Asian-Americans wield in this country today?

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