

# American Knees: A Novel by Shawn Wong Explores the Complexities of Identity and Belonging



## American Knees: A Novel by Shawn Wong

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1472 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 240 pages



Shawn Wong's debut novel, *American Knees*, is a powerful and moving meditation on the complexities of identity, race, and belonging. The novel follows the journey of Priscilla, a young Chinese-American woman, as she navigates the challenges of growing up in a society that often marginalizes her.

Priscilla is a bright and ambitious young woman, but she is also painfully aware of the ways in which her race and gender shape her experiences. She is constantly being reminded that she is different, and she struggles to find her place in a world that often seems hostile.

As Priscilla grows older, she begins to explore her Chinese heritage. She learns about her family's history, and she begins to understand the ways in which her own experiences are shaped by her ancestors' struggles. This

exploration of her identity ultimately leads Priscilla to a greater sense of self-acceptance and belonging.

American Knees is a beautifully written and thought-provoking novel that offers a nuanced and insightful exploration of the human experience. Shawn Wong's prose is lyrical and evocative, and his characters are complex and relatable. This is a novel that will stay with you long after you finish reading it.

## Characters

The characters in American Knees are complex and well-developed. Priscilla is a particularly compelling protagonist, and her journey of self-discovery is both heartbreaking and inspiring. The novel also features a cast of supporting characters who are equally well-drawn and memorable.

- **Priscilla:** The protagonist of the novel. She is a young Chinese-American woman who is struggling to find her place in the world.
- **Henry:** Priscilla's father. He is a Chinese immigrant who has worked hard to provide for his family.
- **Eleanor:** Priscilla's mother. She is a Chinese-American who has struggled with depression and addiction.
- **Irene:** Priscilla's sister. She is a successful artist who is struggling to come to terms with her own identity.
- **David:** Priscilla's love interest. He is a white man who is struggling with his own racism.

## Themes

American Knees explores a number of complex themes, including identity, race, and belonging. The novel also examines the ways in which our past experiences shape our present.

- **Identity:** Priscilla is constantly struggling to define her identity. She is not fully Chinese, but she is not fully American either. She feels like an outsider in both cultures.
- **Race:** The novel explores the ways in which race shapes our experiences. Priscilla is constantly being reminded that she is different, and she struggles to find her place in a world that often seems hostile.
- **Belonging:** Priscilla longs to belong somewhere, but she feels like she is always on the outside looking in. She struggles to find her place in both the Chinese and American communities.
- **The past:** Our past experiences can have a profound impact on our present. Priscilla's experiences with her family, her friends, and her lovers have all shaped who she is today.

## Writing Style

Shawn Wong's writing style is lyrical and evocative. He uses beautiful prose to create a vivid and immersive world for his readers. His characters are complex and relatable, and his story is both heartbreaking and inspiring.

Here is an example of Wong's writing:

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***“Priscilla sat on the edge of the bed, staring at her reflection in the mirror. She saw a young woman with dark hair and eyes, high cheekbones, and a delicate mouth. She was pretty, but she didn't feel pretty. She felt like an outsider, like she didn't belong anywhere.”***

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