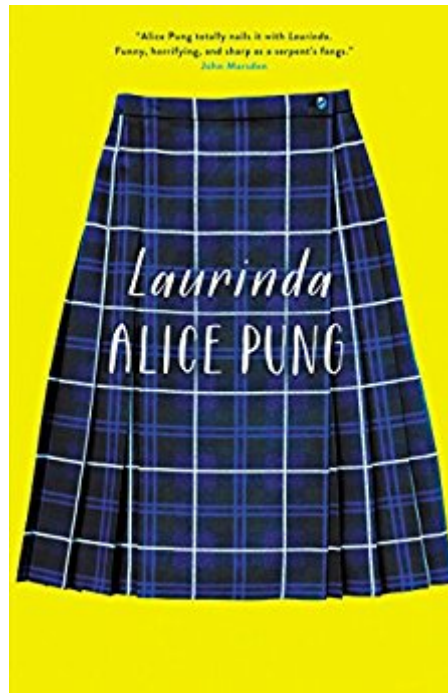




The book was found

Laurinda



Synopsis

When my dad dropped us off at the front gate, the first things I saw were the rose garden spreading out on either side of the main driveway and the enormous sign in iron cursive letters spelling out LAURINDA. No “Ladies College” after it, of course; the name was meant to speak for itself. Laurinda is an exclusive school for girls. At its secret core is the Cabinet, a trio of girls who wield power over their classmates - and some of their teachers. Entering this world of wealth and secrets is Lucy Lam, a scholarship girl with sharp eyes and a shaky sense of self. As she watches the Cabinet at work, and is courted by them, Lucy finds herself in a battle for her identity and integrity. Funny, feisty and moving, Laurinda explores Lucy’s struggle to stay true to herself as she finds her way in a new world of privilege and opportunity. Shortlisted, 2015 Indie Awards Longlisted, 2015 Stella Prize Shortlisted, 2015 Inky Awards Children’s Book Council of Australia 2015 Notable Book of the Year for Older Readers Shortlisted, 2015 Australian Book Industry Awards – Alice Pung totally nails it with Laurinda. Funny, horrifying, and sharp as a serpent’s fangs. – John Marsden – Pung continues to impress with her nuanced storytelling; Laurinda will surely resonate with anyone who remembers the cliquey, hierarchical nature of the playground. – Sunday Age – A candid and powerful exploration of family, culture and class – it is those of us who take our fortune and privilege for granted that I wish would read this powerful book. – Readings Monthly – In her debut novel [Pung] successfully dramatizes the high stakes when an impoverished Chinese girl is parachuted into the private system – Pung’s forceful writing reveals the diverse and often difficult lives of her immigrant compatriots too often hidden away from us by masks of discretion. – the Age – Based loosely on Pung’s own experiences, the book has an unmissable ring of truth to it, making it all the more compelling and horrifying. – the Sydney Morning Herald – Schoolgirl Lucy Lam was one of this year’s best characters – smart, hardworking and brave. Pung tackles big issues with a light touch. – Herald Sun – Biting yet compassionate – Books of the Year, Australian Book Review – Exquisitely sharp – Books of the Year, the Age Alice Pung is a writer, editor, teacher and lawyer based in Melbourne. She is the author of Unpolished Gem, Her Father’s Daughter and Laurinda and the editor of the anthology Growing Up Asian in Australia. Alice’s work has appeared in the Monthly, Good Weekend, the Age, The Best Australian Stories and Meanjin. Alice lives with her husband at Janet Clarke Hall at the University of Melbourne, where she is currently the Artist in Residence.

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Customer Reviews

Lucy Linh is a 15 year old girl who has won a scholarship to exclusive Laurinda Ladies College. Her family are refugees who arrived in Australia on a fishing boat and think they are lucky that her father has a job in a factory and her mother works at home illegally making garments for minimal wages. So this is a big chance for Lucy to break out of her poverty and into the privileged world of Laurinda. For Lucy, who was accepted and confident at her previous multicultural school, Laurinda is daunting. Power and wealth are the important drivers in the girls relationships with each other and their teachers and Lucy struggles to deal with the trio of girls who wield the power and can make life hell for anyone who is different or goes against them as described by the author: "They were like three big albino rats in a cage full of brown mice. You wanted to be close to the glorious creatures, not only because they were so compelling, but also because you hoped that if they smelled your familiar scent often enough, they would not eat you" Alice Pung, herself growing up a refugee in Australia, has written a brilliant account of what it is like to be a teenager suddenly thrust into an alien environment while at the same time struggling to find her own identity. She raises many

important topics, not just those of race and class but also of abuse of power, manipulation and bullying. This quote summed up the repression Lucy felt at the school: "There was something creepy about the femininity at Laurinda, something so cloistered and yet brimming with stifled sex that it reminded me of the Victorian whalebone corsets we once saw at the Werribee Park Museum, which kept everything cramped tight, until the stitches unravelled and out poured mounds of naked pink and white."

Wonderful book of an outsider in an elite all girls school in Melbourne. So spot on with middle class sensibilities and the inability of most to see outside their own lives and values. Alice has created a perfect character to see life through her very perceptive eyes, and she is a victim of the system and recognises it. Really enjoyed the writing, the characters and the description of school life as it often is or can be.

Stunning and important. Pung has captured something mercurial and little discussed in contemporary Australian culture. This book should be on reading lists everywhere. It is constitutive of the contemporary secondary education debate. And Linh is a complex delight of a character. Minor characters are also superbly drawn. As a teacher, I found this book comforting, energizing and confronting in the best way.

I saw an article about this book in an Australian national newspaper and thought it would be worth reading - I was not disappointed as I liked it very much. It was a story of how to be true to oneself and the overbearing infrastructure of Laurinda Ladies College. As a scholarship student from a Vietnamese background Lucy was challenged by this institution in many ways. The question it poses is who struggles the most? - the girls that strive to remain in charge by virtue of their privilege or those such as Lucy who strive to belong and make sense of it all. I liked Lucy - I felt empathy with her. There was so much love within her small tightly knit family. It was a very easy read - I loved Pung's turn of phrase and her earthy sense of humour. The socio-economic situation in different parts of Melbourne was a prime ingredient of the book and really brought the suburb of Stanley alive. For some students school can be something of a challenge and this was certainly portrayed. All in all an interesting and enjoyable read.

Intensely perceptive, this book reveals the climate in a posh private high school. Pung deftly contrasts her quiet life with hard working immigrant parents in Melbourne's tough western suburbs

with the leafy, sandstone world of privilege. She captures the two different worlds with razor sharp observations and traces Lucy Lam's difficult path as the Inaugural Equity Scholarship student.

My daughter just transitioned to another school in the 8th grade. The school she has transitioned to is a well known private independent school. She loved this book!

Not as much fun as I'd hoped. As a former student in a school like this, with a skirt like this, I thought it was fairly plausible. But there were no really likeable characters in this book - and they do exist, even in these cut-throat, snobby schools.

I enjoyed it very much. Very moving and funny. I have also read Alice Pung's memoirs and I can recommend her highly. What an amazing woman!

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Laurinda

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