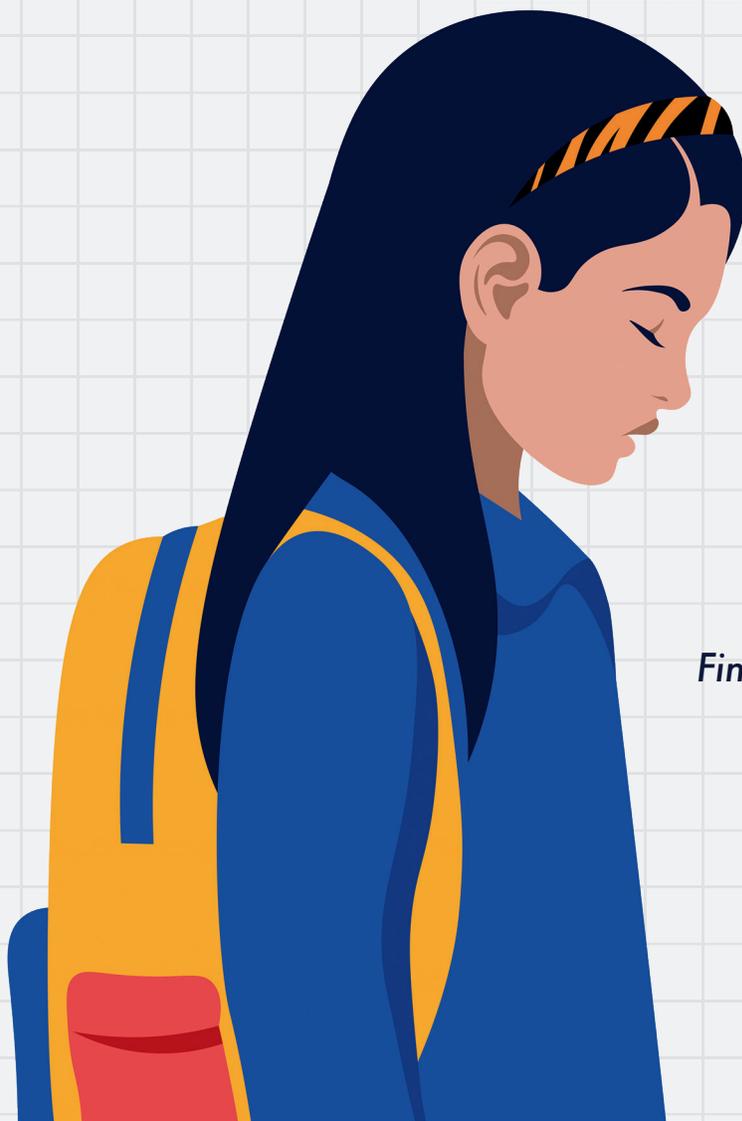


# TIGER DAUGHTER

CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AUTHOR

REBECCA LIM



*Find your strength.*

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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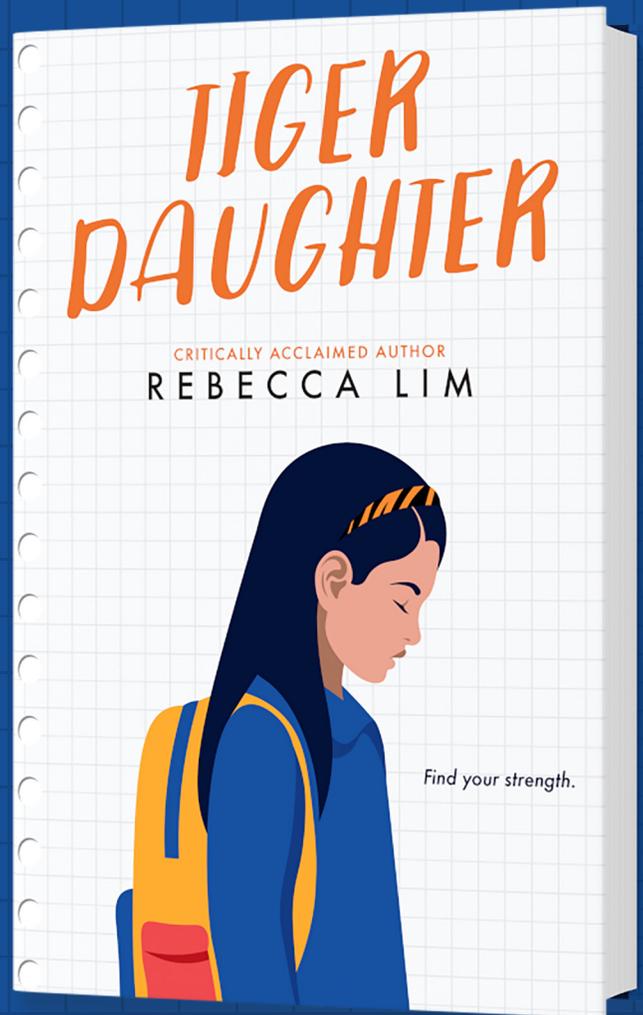
## About the Book

Wen Zhou is the daughter of Chinese migrant parents, a first-generation American. Her parents have high expectations for her to succeed in school, especially her father whose strict rules leave her feeling trapped. She dreams of creating a future for herself more satisfying than the one her parents expect her to lead.

Then she befriends a boy named Henry, who is also a first generation immigrant. He is the smartest boy at school despite struggling with English and understands her in a way nobody has lately. Both of them dream of escaping, and together they come up with a plan to take an entrance exam for a selective school far from home.

But when tragedy strikes, it will take all of Wen's resilience and tiger strength to get herself and Henry through the storm that follows.

*Tiger Daughter* is a coming-of-age novel that will grab hold of you and not let go.



## About the Author

Rebecca Lim is the author of the award-winning novel *Tiger Daughter*. In Australia, it won both the CBCA Book of the Year and People's Choice at the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. As the author of over twenty books, her work has also been longlisted for the Davitt Award for YA, the Gold Inky Award, the David Gemmell Legend Award, and honored as an Aurealis Awards finalist. She lives in Melbourne, Australia.

## Praise for the Book

★ “Young readers will enjoy the story’s **SATISFYING CONCLUSION** and its reminder to work hard and never forget your dreams.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ “Tough but **UPLIFTING AND, ABOVE ALL, HEARTFELT.**”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “**EMPATHY AND KINDNESS** prevail in this novel as mother and daughter both learn it is better to risk everything to do what is important rather than take no action, turning a bleak story into one about resilience and change.”

—*The Horn Book*, starred review

★ “An **EYE-OPENING NOVEL** that covers weighty issues of abuse, grief, mental health stigma, racism, and sexism.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “A middle-school **MUST-READ.**”

—*Booklist*, starred review

“An **IMMERSIVE COMING-OF-AGE EXPLORATION** that should resonate regardless of readers’ backgrounds. . . .  
Champions empathy and kindness.”

—*Shelf Awareness*

“What a powerful read! **HEARTBREAKING AND ULTIMATELY UPLIFTING**, Wen and Henry are characters you can’t help but care deeply about. A beautiful emotional story that hits hard and deep and will leave readers thinking about it for a very long time.”

—*Ellen Oh, author of Finding Junie Kim*

## Prereading Questions & Activities

- *Tiger Daughter* tells about the experiences of two friends who are migrants and refugees. Look up the definitions of *migrant* and *refugee* and research the various reasons why people might leave their home or country. What actions could you take to support or welcome others who are seeking safety and opportunities in a new place?
- Consider the title of the book and the front cover. Why do you think author Rebecca Lim named her novel *Tiger Daughter*?
- Conduct research into the topic of migration with a family member, friend, or neighbor. Interview a willing participant to learn more about their lived experiences of migration.
- Think about all the different groups or categories you belong to that make up your identity and jot these down (for example, your age, gender, race, interests, or family dynamics). How does being a member of multiple groups affect you? How does it influence what others think about you?

## Discussion Questions

- The Zhou and Xiao families both moved to Australia from China. What were some of their experiences as migrants and refugees in a different country?
- Wen attends an extracurricular English language class with her friend Henry. She says, "I don't need to be here—even though I might look like I do—but my best friend Henry does." (p. 3) Why does Wen say others might mistake her for somebody who needs extra language support? How do you think she might feel when others make assumptions about her skills and abilities based on how she looks?
- During English class, Mr. Cornish states, "Life is about taking risks. The more you do it, the easier it will become." (p. 10) However, Wen says that she and Henry are always at risk: "It's in the air we breathe, it's in our bones, and people like Mr. Cornish have *Absolutely No. Idea.*" (p. 11) What do you think Wen means by this? How is Mr. Cornish's experience different from Wen and Henry's?
- Wen's father experiences both overt and subtle racism. What are some examples? How does this affect him?
- Many of the characters experience rage in the story. Wen explains, "Anger has tides and temperatures and speeds that can suck you down or spit you out, depending on the day, the hour, the moment—changing you forever." (pp. 28–29) Identify some points at which different characters feel rage. How does anger affect them in the moment? How does it influence their development?
- As an immigrant, Wen describes being caught in the middle of two different worlds, and she learns to speak out when something feels unjust or wrong. What are some Chinese cultural ideas and traditions that Wen rebels against and why? What are some Australian cultural ideas and traditions that Wen rebels against and why?
- Wen and her mother sustain Henry and his father in their grief by bringing them food. Why are their actions so important?

## Discussion Questions (continued)

- In addition to the food provided by Wen and her mother, others provide support to Henry. Miss Spencer sends homework packets and Nikki and Fatima put together a bag of donated clothes. What are some other ways you could support somebody who is going through a difficult time?
- Wen observes that when she is in the school library, she is surrounded by the “usual book displays of girls with long flowing golden hair in colorful ballgowns.” (p. 85) How do you think Wen feels being surrounded by those images on a regular basis? What messages might these book displays send to children?
- Miss Spencer supports Wen and Henry and uses her power as a teacher to help them obtain what they want, need, and have the right to. What actions does she take, and how do they support Wen and Henry? In what ways would you like a teacher to advocate for you?
- Mrs. Xenakis dresses smartly in a skirt suit and high-heeled shoes, rather than her usual white lab coat. Wen describes her outfit as “lady armor” or “clothes to face down the world in.” (p. 116) How do clothes act as armor for Mrs. Xenakis and Mrs. Zhou? Why do they need armor?
- This story tells what it can feel like to be marginalized. Consider the different ways Wen was marginalized by others and made to feel like she was unimportant and different from everyone else. What is something in the story you were surprised by and why? What is something you could relate to?

## Extension Activities

- After Mrs. Xiao’s death, Wen and her mother drop off carefully selected and lovingly prepared food for Henry and his father every day. Interview your family members and identify some foods or dishes that are special to your family or culture. How can food nourish the soul as well as the body?
- Mrs. Zhou grows and develops in different ways throughout the story. Conduct a character analysis to understand her actions. Choose four words to best describe her, and jot down evidence from the text to support your conclusions.
- Wen describes how her parents, particularly her father, perceive boys and girls, or sons and daughters, differently. Create a T-chart contrasting how the two sexes are treated differently according to Wen. Afterward, reflect on the list. Have you ever been treated differently because of your gender? How did you feel?
- In the author’s note, Rebecca Lim offers encouragement to readers who see themselves in Wen and may feel like they, too, are stuck in a place or season, with no hope of change. Lim says to push back, think independently, and accept no limitations. Using sticky notes or pieces of paper, mark four pages in the story where you felt a text-to-self connection with Wen. For each connection, jot down a possible action you could take to move beyond the challenging situation.

## Additional Resources

- **Mental health** Many characters in this novel show what it is like to battle depression, stress, anxiety, and challenging situations. If you are struggling with similar feelings, reach out to a trusted grown-up right away. All children have the right to a safe and loving environment. Speak up and tell a family member, doctor, or school counselor if you are struggling.
- **Grief support** Henry and his father experience deep grief following the death of Henry's mother. If you are also experiencing grief and mourning the loss of a loved one, make sure you are regularly talking with a trusted adult who can support you. Organizations, such as the National Alliance for Children's Grief ([nacg.org](http://nacg.org)), can help connect you to a professional if needed.
- **Domestic abuse** Wen and her mother experience domestic abuse at the hands of Wen's father, Mr. Zhou. Organizations such as the National Institute of Health, World Health Organization, and International Justice Mission provide important information about domestic violence and abuse against women and children. Check in with a trusted adult to find information and learn more together. To report domestic violence, tell a trusted adult such as a doctor, teacher, counselor, or family member right away.

*Educator's guide prepared by Joanne Yi, PhD. Joanne is a former elementary teacher and an adjunct assistant professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University. She researches diversity and inclusion issues in children's literature.*



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