

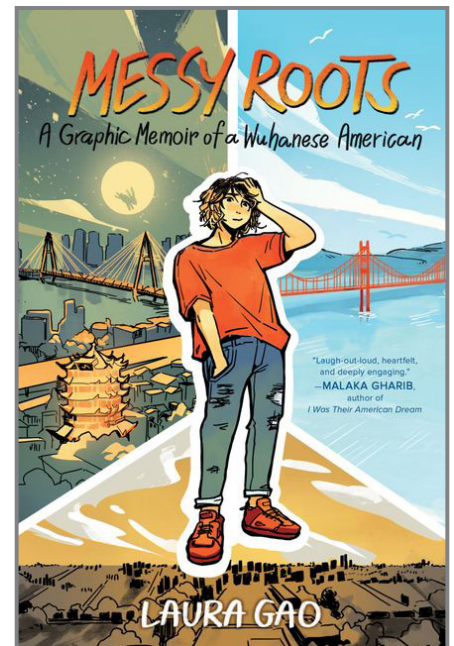
Messy Roots: A Graphic Memoir of a Wuhanese American

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SCIS: 5401085

ISBN: 9780063067769

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Secondary



SYNOPSIS

After spending her early years in Wuhan, China, riding water buffalos and devouring stinky tofu, Laura immigrates to Texas, where her hometown is as foreign as Mars—at least until 2020, when COVID-19 makes Wuhan a household name.

In *Messy Roots*, Laura illustrates her coming-of-age as the girl who simply wants to make the basketball team, escape Chinese school, and figure out why girls make her heart flutter.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Laura Gao was born in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and grew up in several small towns in Central Texas. A graduate of University of Pennsylvania, she now lives in San Francisco, where she is a product manager at Twitter. You can visit Laura at www.lauragao.com.

STUDY NOTES

- How did Laura feel the first time she visited Wuhan again since immigrating? In what ways did the art help convey her emotions?
- Why was Laura hesitant to go to the Lunar New Year party? What was each person's viewpoint at the party and did you relate to any?
- A rabbit appears in *Messy Roots* multiple times as a motif. What do you think the rabbit represents? How does the art convey Laura's relationship with it whenever Laura confronts it?
- How did the Chinese Student Association's Cultural Show change Laura's perspective on her identity?
- *Messy Roots* toggles back and forth between Laura's life growing up and her present dealing with COVID-19 and anti-Asian racism. What connections and parallels can you make between her past and present? How has Laura grown in her identity from childhood to when she confronts anti-Asian racism during COVID-19?