



Glamorous Asians Short Stories and Essays

By **May-lee Chai**

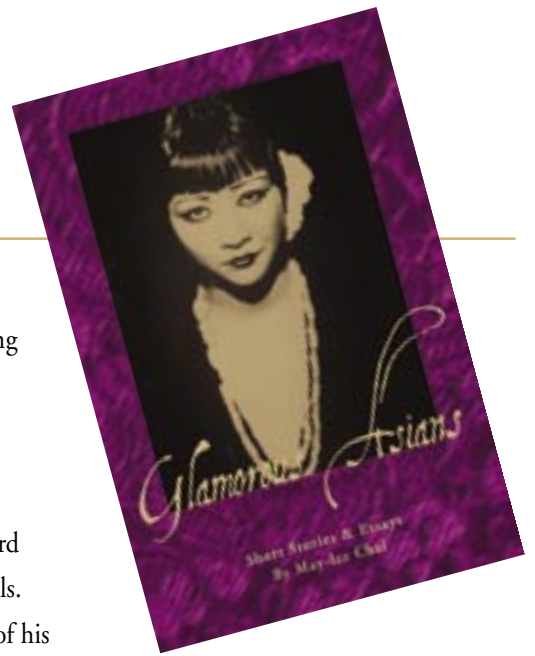
In this lyrical collection, May-lee Chai explores the diversity of the Asian-American experience, challenging stereotypes while experimenting with form, language, metaphor, and myth.

In “The Dancing Girl’s Story,” a goddess fleeing the civil war in Cambodia is picked up by a Coast Guard ship and interrogated by uncomprehending INS officials. In “Nai-nai’s Last Words,” a son ponders the meaning of his mother’s ghostly appearance after her death. In “Easter,” the biracial children of a Nebraska farmer and his Filipina showgirl wife must cope with the loss of their mother as well as their father’s way of life in their small farming community. In “Mr. Chu Returns to His Sleeping Wife,” an elderly Chinese man’s dreams meld with reality as he faces his own mortality. In “Saving Sourdi,” a thoroughly Americanized Cambodian teenager vows to save her more traditional older sister from an arranged marriage. And in the final story, “Your Grandmother, the War Criminal,” an elderly Japanese-American woman uses the principles of origami to teach her granddaughter about the many layers of their family’s complex history.

In her title essay, “Glamorous Asians,” Chai combines family stories with musings about the nature of cultural representation and images of beauty in America for a witty send-up of the American glamour industry. Her final essay explores, with humor and insight, continuing notions of “Yellow Peril” amidst political scapegoating as well as images of Chinese-Americans as eternal foreigners in their own country.

Together, these stories and essays provide a unique portrait of a diverse world.

“*Glamorous Asians* rises above the front of mass marketing chic. In this book, May-lee Chai renders the folly and wisdom of youth and age and lays bare the heartbreak beneath gender, culture, and class. We’re in the hands of a sophisticate with a piercing eye, a nuanced intelligence and a sprightly sense of irony.”—Marilyn Krysl, author of *Warscape with Lovers* and *How to Accommodate Men: Short Stories*.



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May-lee Chai is the author of a novel, *My Lucky Face* (NY: Soho, 1997), and coauthor with her father of a family memoir, *The Girl from Purple Mountain* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2001), which was nominated for the National Book Award. She is a former reporter for the Associated Press and has taught creative writing at the University of Colorado-Boulder and San Francisco State University. She received a master’s degree in East Asian Studies from Yale University and a master’s in English-Creative Writing from the University of Colorado. Beginning this fall, she will be teaching creative writing at Amherst College in Massachusetts.