

## **The Great Wall of Lucy Wu**

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In *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*, readers are introduced to a young girl named Lucy who believes that 6th grade is going to be her best year yet. Her sister is leaving for college, she is now the top dog in her elementary school, and basketball will be starting up soon. Lucy comes from a Chinese background, with her culture playing a big role within her family. She constantly feels like the underdog in her family, as her sister and brother speak fluent Chinese and participate in activities that their parents are proud of. While Regina finds her passion in all things Chinese and Kenny finds his in history, Lucy's heart is in basketball and she is super excited for the season. This is why Lucy's world is shaken up when she is told that she has to share a room with her grandmother's sister, Yi-Po. In addition, she is forced to attend Chinese school on the weekends and makes an enemy with Sloane Connors. The revolutionary year Lucy once envisioned seems to deteriorate before her eyes as these events unravel.

The most wonderfully crafted part of this novel is the development of the main character. At first, Lucy is stubborn and on the defense as she combats all the circumstances that are trying to ruin her year. To an extent, she is right to be upset. Nobody would like to be told that they cannot pursue their passion. Unfortunately, she tends to direct her anger at the wrong person-Yi-Po. No matter what goes wrong, she somehow finds a way to connect these events to her grandmother's sister.

However, as the novel goes on, we see Lucy warm up to her grandmother. As Yi-Po does little things such as making dumplings for her birthday party or fixing her grandmother's quilt, she begins to realize that she isn't that bad after all. When it comes to Chinese school, Lucy ends up not hating it as much as she thought it would. Plus, she gets to see her crush, Harrison, making the experience so much better! The concept of development is so important in a story. We don't just see Lucy start to accept things; we see her learn and grow as an individual. She becomes more confident in her ability to speak Chinese and begins to value her culture more deeply. She learns the value of teamwork, both in and off the court, and what it means to be a leader.

Two of the most appealing aspects of this novel are the influence of the Chinese culture and the relatability of the main character. Many people have family members they are less than fans of. Furthermore, many people have gone through the process of that family member staying at their house and somehow disrupting their daily routine. It can surely be an irritating circumstance, but can also be a learning experience. Just like Lucy, you may have difficulty with this relative at first, but can gain something valuable if you listen close enough. In addition, readers learn more about a fascinating culture in this novel. It is important that young readers educate themselves on the different customs of other cultures. Although the novel is not entirely

focused around Chinese traditions or history, the addition of words from the native language and the descriptions of different foods add flavor to the text (literally), some of those food descriptions made my mouth water!).

I would recommend this novel to readers ages 10-12. I would say it is a book that can be picked up from the local library. I would recommend *Because of Mr. Terupt*, *Dork Diaries: Tales From a Not-So-Fabulous Life*, and *Ivy and Bean( Book 1)* after reading this novel.