

# Making A Scene PDF (Limited Copy)

Constance Wu



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# **Making A Scene Summary**

Breaking Boundaries in Asian American Representation.

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## About the book

In "Making a Scene," Constance Wu invites readers on an exhilarating journey through the tumultuous landscape of identity, ambition, and the pursuit of one's dreams within the entertainment industry. With poignant storytelling and sharp wit, Wu illuminates the struggles of an Asian American actress grappling with typecasting and cultural expectations as she strives to carve out her own narrative. This memoir transcends the boundaries of a traditional celebrity account, delving into deep themes of resilience, self-discovery, and the quest for authenticity in a world that often demands conformity. Wu's candid reflections and vibrant anecdotes not only capture the essence of her personal odyssey but also inspire readers to embrace their own uniqueness and fight for their place in a scene that desperately needs diverse voices. Join her as she dismantles stereotypes and makes a powerful case for representation that resonates far beyond Hollywood.

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## About the author

Constance Wu is a multifaceted actress, acclaimed for her groundbreaking roles in both television and film, notably her portrayal of Rachel Chu in the box office hit "Crazy Rich Asians," which made waves in Hollywood for its representation of Asian characters and stories. Born in Richmond, Virginia, to Taiwanese immigrant parents, Wu's passion for acting ignited at a young age, leading her to pursue a degree in fine arts from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Over the years, she has garnered critical acclaim for her role as Jessica Huang in ABC's hit series "Fresh Off the Boat," and has emerged as a vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion in the entertainment industry. With her debut book "Making a Scene," Wu combines her personal narrative with insights on navigating fame, identity, and the intricacies of creative expression, showcasing her talents not only as a performer but also as a storyteller.

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## Chapter 1 Summary: 1. Lucky Bucks

In the opening chapter of "Making a Scene," Constance Wu vividly recounts the moment she first met Rob, the maître d' at XYZ, where she began her career as a waitress. This initial encounter was marked by a profound emotional response, reminiscent of past trauma when she witnessed her father's medical emergency. Instead of fear, however, this time it was a thrilling drop of her heart, signaling the unexpected intensity of her attraction to Rob.

**1. First Impressions and Missteps:** Wu's awkward debut, where she mistakenly wore a mini dress instead of appropriate waitstaff attire, set the stage for a narrative filled with awkward charm and initial attraction. Rob, unbothered by her faux pas, became a topic of intrigue among the staff due to his striking appearance and composed manner when handling restaurant chaos, thus layering their initial interactions with both embarrassment and allure.

**2. A Friend's Encouragement:** The subtle nudging of her friend Sara compels Constance to engage with Rob, despite her initial reluctance—she perceived him as just another attractive figure in the bustling restaurant scene. As she approached him during a quieter shift, a shared moment over a psychology textbook revealed a deeper connection, igniting her confidence and sparking a blossoming romance.





3. **The Thrill of New Love:** Their first date, though held in an absurd restaurant setting, was filled with animated conversation and laughter, leading to a playful companionship characterized by childlike joy. Their intimacy evolved rapidly, marked by impromptu antics and a comfort in each other's presence. Wu captures the essence of young love with humor and honesty, celebrating their honest conversations about life, dreams, and existential musings.

4. **The Reality of Love:** As their relationship deepened, it contained both passion and vulnerability. Wu highlights the whimsical moments that bind them, from silly games to heart-touching experiences—like when they felt their heartbeats together, symbolizing a profound connection. Yet, they also navigated jealousy and insecurity; Wu's feelings of inadequacy began to surface as Rob transitioned into his academic pursuits while she remained in the uncertain arts.

5. **Conflict and Growth:** A pivotal moment of tension arose when her struggle with self-image and the pressure of his achievements created friction between them. Their interactions embodied a mix of youthful exuberance and emotional turbulence, depicted beautifully in a scene on a bus where Constance lashes out amid her insecurities, only to be met with Rob's unwavering patience and love.



**6. Separation and Reflection:** As Rob prepared for graduate school, the prospect of coming apart loomed large. In a strategic arrangement to preserve their relationship over the summer, Wu masked her internal anxieties with feigned calmness, unveiling the complexity of their dynamic as she attempted to pivot toward a new career in linguistics to impress him.

**7. The End of a Chapter:** Ultimately, the relationship unraveled under the weight of personal transformation, with Wu reflecting on her initial bravado fading into uncertainty as she juggled feelings of longing for Rob with new yet insufficient connections. In a bittersweet conclusion, Wu encapsulates the passage of time, comparing her past self and holding on to fond memories as she acknowledges the evolution of both herself and Rob into different lives.

The blend of humor, vulnerability, and the reality of first love in "Making a Scene" illustrates the complexity of relationships and personal growth, as Wu sets out on a journey from youthful infatuation to a deeper understanding of love—one that remains eternally etched in her heart.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Embracing Vulnerability in Relationships

**Critical Interpretation:** In moments of insecurity within a relationship, consider how confronting your fears can lead to profound personal growth and connection with others. Just like Constance Wu learned through her interactions with Rob, allowing yourself to be vulnerable not only deepens your bond with those you care about but also opens up a path for self-discovery. Instead of shying away from your feelings of inadequacy, embrace them. By sharing those doubts—not just with partners but with friends and mentors—you invite empathy and understanding into your life. This kind of openness can transform the way you view intimacy, shifting from a performance of perfection to an authentic exchange where both joy and struggles are recognized and respected.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: 2. Montana Gold

In 1997, with the legal employment age in Virginia set at fifteen, a young Constance Wu sought a job to fund her passion for fashion amidst a household of frugal parents and two older sisters. Her initial rejection from McDonald's led her to Montana Gold Bread Co., where she secured a cashier position thanks to her supportive friend Jessica. The bakery prided itself on traditional craftsmanship, with freshly milled flour sourced from Montana. Rich and Sher, the welcoming owners, embodied the bakery's wholesome ethos.

The ambience of Montana Gold was simple, characterized by clean white walls and a chalkboard displaying daily specials. The bakery catered to local clientele, including teachers and neighborhood regulars. As Wu immersed herself in the bakery's operations, she transitioned from merely running the cash register to playing an essential role in the bread-making process. Duties included closing the store and maintaining a pristine environment, highlighting her pride in the quality of their daily offerings.

Working beside the baking team was transformative for Wu, who learned the intricacies of bread making from a diverse group of colleagues. Rich's enthusiasm and involvement made her feel valued, teaching her techniques that instilled a sense of craftsmanship. As she grew in confidence, Wu learned to shape and knead dough, reveling in the satisfaction that came



from being productive and creatively engaged.

The mechanics of bread-making fascinated her, from the mixing of dough to its careful shaping and baking in an industrial oven that radiated warmth. Despite the labor's physical demands, she cherished the camaraderie and competitive spirit shared among her peers. As she progressed to becoming head pastry chef, her favorite task became crafting cinnamon rolls—a delight that provided wholesome satisfaction rather than the overly sweet options found at commercial outlets.

The rhythms of early morning shifts contributed to her feeling of importance as the bakery prepared to serve the community. The holiday season brought a unique joy, with the bustle reminding her of the purpose behind their work. However, when a rival bakery named Good Grain opened, it posed a challenge that weighed heavily on the team at Montana Gold. Good Grain, with its garish décor and disconnect from traditional baking, attracted customers with monetary incentives, influencing Wu's decision to leave out of financial necessity.

But at Good Grain, the atmosphere starkly contrasted with the nurturing environment of Montana Gold. Wu and her friend Marrienne felt out of place amidst corporate decorum and insincere positivity. They quickly realized that their experience and expertise were undervalued. As the bakery shifted to automated processes at the expense of skill, it became increasingly



apparent that they belonged to a place that truly valued the art of baking.

After Wu and Marrienne left for college, rumors about Good Grain's scandalous end eventually reached them, revealing its inherent instability—a stark juxtaposition to the lasting legacy of Montana Gold. As time passed and the low-carb diet trend led to closures, Montana Gold's essence endured thanks to Rich and Sher's dedication. Wu's connection to them remained impactful, sparking nostalgia and self-reflection as she grappled with her past.

Ultimately, the message that transcends her early experiences at Montana Gold is the deeper meaning of craftsmanship and community, contrasting superficial glamor with the enduring simplicity of making bread. As she reminisces about her formative work experience, Wu recognizes the profound life lessons in diligence, creativity, and connection that remain with her to this day. Despite the allure of more lucrative opportunities, it was the genuine, grounding principles learned during her time at Montana Gold that shaped her approach to both life and her craft.

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## Chapter 3: 3. Snap and Whistle

In Chapter 3 of "Making a Scene" by Constance Wu, the author opens up about her childhood experiences alongside her sisters, highlighting the bond she shared with her younger sister, E. The narrative unfolds through a series of vivid memories, showcasing both the joys and complexities of their relationship.

**1. Childhood Connection:** Wu reflects on her close bond with E, marked by playful activities and shared experiences such as climbing stairs on all fours and crafting makeshift Barbie houses. Unlike their older sisters, who often fought, the younger duo found solace in each other's company. Their connection was illustrated in their games, shared hobbies, and hours spent together in their room, fostering an environment of love and creativity.

**2. Freedom and Exploration:** The author describes a liberated childhood spent exploring the Virginia Commonwealth University campus where their father worked. Unsupervised and free to roam, they explored his office, played with vending machines, and engaged with lab assistants. The

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## Chapter 4 Summary: 4. Impeach the President

In the reflective narrative of Constance Wu's experiences from middle school, she poignantly explores the fluctuating dynamics of friendship, rivalry, and personal growth. The account begins with her friendship with Fiona, a classmate who seemed glamorous and worldly in contrast to Wu's more typical upbringing. Their common interests quickly established a bond, leading Wu to assume the role of an enthusiastic campaign manager during a pivotal moment: Fiona's election for vice president against the school's most popular girl.

**1. The Thrill of Competition and Creativity:** Wu's determination to help Fiona win the election sparked a creative marketing approach, symbolized by the catchy slogan "Vote for Fiona, the Angel in the Infield!" and the inventive use of halos as accessories. This period illustrated the excitement of collaboration and the rewarding feelings stemming from supporting a friend in competition.

**2. Shifts in Friendship Dynamics:** As they transitioned into eighth grade, the girls' focus shifted from school politics to boys, leading to a pact of courage to reach out to their respective crushes. However, their friendships took a turn; Wu's thriving connection with Ben contrasted sharply with Fiona's struggles, sowing seeds of jealousy and competition. This shift highlighted a key theme: how the introduction of romantic interests can



challenge the stability of friendships.

**3. Betrayal and Isolation:** The pivotal moment came when a casual comment led to Fiona turning against Wu, resulting in social ostracization and emotional turmoil for Wu. She experienced the raw sting of betrayal as her friend group, previously unified, adopted a collective animosity towards her. This experience emphasized the profound pain of rejection during formative years, showcasing the fragility of adolescent relationships.

**4. Resilience Through New Connections:** Despite the hurt, the narrative takes a hopeful turn with Wu's introduction to Molly, a peer with whom she forged a meaningful friendship built on mutual respect and shared interests. This new bond served as a lifeline, proving that while friendships can falter, new connections can blossom, often leading to deeper understanding and acceptance.

**5. Humor in Vulnerability:** Sharing her revenge fantasy of cutting Fiona's hair with Molly transformed what could have been seen as shameful into a moment of levity. This incident reinforced the notion that vulnerability and humor can bring friends closer, serving as a reminder of the power of laughter in times of hardship.

**6. Growing Up and Forgiveness:** As time passed, Wu learned to navigate the complexities of her relationship with Fiona, understanding that hostility



often stemmed from adolescent insecurities rather than malice. Her attempts at reconciliation during high school, although not fully realized, showcased the growth that comes from seeking forgiveness and closure.

**7. Enduring Friendship:** The closing reflection returns to the enduring bond with Molly, highlighting how formative experiences shape lifelong friendships. Despite various life changes, their relationship remains strong, illustrating the importance of resilience and human connection as they navigate the challenges of adulthood and parenthood.

Through Wu's narrative, readers witness not only the harsh realities of growing up in a complex social environment, marked by envy and betrayal but also the profound resilience that emerges from navigating such experiences. Ultimately, "Making a Scene" captures how painful moments can yield invaluable lessons in friendship, empathy, and self-acceptance.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** The Thrill of Competition and Creativity

**Critical Interpretation:** Think back to a time when you collaborated with others towards a common goal—perhaps in a school project or a competitive event. The energy you felt while brainstorming creative solutions and strategizing side by side was electric, wasn't it? This chapter serves as a powerful reminder that the thrill of competition and the joy of creativity can ignite not only friendly rivalries but also forge stronger bonds with those around you. Embracing the spirit of collaboration, much like Constance did in rallying behind Fiona, can inspire you to seek out new opportunities for teamwork in your own life, where every shared victory becomes a building block for mutual respect and lasting friendships.



## Chapter 5 Summary: 5. Of Course She Did

Constance Wu's deep-rooted passion for literature shines through in her reflections on childhood and formative experiences in Chapter 5 of "Making a Scene." Although her second love was acting, the foundation of her creativity was laid by her first love: books. Every weekend, her father took her to the Tuckahoe Public Library, where she eagerly devoured titles like "A Wrinkle in Time" and "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," often finishing multiple books in a week. She cherished moments spent in a well-worn corduroy chair in the sunroom, enveloped by sunlight and the soothing sounds of nature as she lost herself in stories.

Wu's journey as a writer commenced in eighth grade, when she received an exhilarating assignment: a ten-page term paper for her favorite teacher, Mrs. Kantor. Known for her vibrant personality, Mrs. Kantor embodied a unique blend of charm and fierceness reminiscent of a Disney villain. The students adored her sass and enthralling teaching methods, which often included captivating tales sprinkled with a hint of scandal to promote interest in history.

Wu's excitement for her assignment culminated in an opening paragraph that vividly depicted Beethoven as a singular red rose amidst a field of white roses—a metaphor she crafted with the fervor of a passionate young writer. However, this pride soon turned to despair when Mrs. Kantor accused her of



plagiarism, declaring, "you are not good enough to have written this." This shocking statement devastated Wu, leading her to tears. Instead of offering comfort, Mrs. Kantor's approach was harsh, suggesting that her tears indicated guilt rather than injustice.

The situation escalated as Mrs. Kantor attempted to further validate her accusation by seeking the opinions of Wu's other teachers, who all affirmed her disbelief in Wu's capabilities. The torment peaked when they unanimously deemed her writing beyond her perceived skill level, reinforcing an emotional wound. Yet, one teacher, Mr. Frizzell—her drama instructor—believed in her talent and declared, "Of course she did," thereby providing a much-needed affirmation at a critical moment. Despite being unfairly graded, Wu accepted her C, feeling wearied by the entire ordeal.

This painful encounter with Mrs. Kantor, compounded by Wu's desire to protect her immigrant parents from potential prejudice, lingered in her memory for years, surfacing repeatedly in therapy as a significant trauma. As she reflected on this event during her college years, she took the courageous step of confronting Mrs. Kantor, seeking acknowledgment of the hurt caused. However, the conversation proved unsatisfying, as Mrs. Kantor downplayed the incident, failing to grasp the lasting impact of her actions.

Clicking through memories like scenes in a play, Wu revisited her old feelings and perceptions from the confrontation, ultimately recognizing the





duality of her experience. The incident shaped her life, steering her toward a career in acting and reinforcing the importance of empathy and belief in others. Through this lens, she came to understand that, while Mrs. Kantor's disbelief was painful, it led her to discover the sanctuary of the theater—a place where she felt alive and safe.

Her journey culminated in a poignant realization linking her early trauma to her current advocacy for women's voices, particularly in the context of the #MeToo movement, where echoes of her childhood experience resurface. Wu's reflections illustrate not only her emotional growth from hurt to understanding but also the profound influence that belief—or disbelief—can have on a person's life trajectory.

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## Chapter 6: 6. Exploring an Orange

In the exploration of my early theater experiences, I found myself unwittingly embarking on a journey of self-discovery and artistic expression. It all began with a simple invitation from my friend Lauren to audition for a community theater production of \*A Little Princess\*. While I was initially unsure and filled with trepidation, the environment ignited something profound within me. Surrounded by other auditioning girls, I gleaned that the audition space was not merely about showcasing individual talent but about embodying characters—a notion that resonated, filling me with a sense of freedom that I had never experienced.

**1. The Audition Experience:** When my turn came to perform, I threw myself into the character of Sara with passion and fervor, shedding the constraints of my former self. As I dramatically wept and fervently acted out the scene, the response from the audience was one of awe, marking a pivotal moment where my vulnerability was acknowledged and celebrated rather than ridiculed. This engagement with my emotions was transformative; I secured a role in the play, despite being the only Asian child cast in an era

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## Chapter 7 Summary: 7. Welcome to Jurassic Park

In this chapter from "Making a Scene" by Constance Wu, the author delves into her childhood experiences and the interplay of cultural identity against the backdrop of friendship, belonging, and the struggle for acceptance. The narrative begins with fond memories of her best friend Mary Martin, highlighting their shared joys and differences. They play on a waterbed, enjoy treats, and partake in gymnastics, fostering a bond that transcends their contrasting home environments. Mary's house embodies a seemingly quintessential American lifestyle with its matching kitchenware and cable TV, while Wu's home is filled with cultural markers from her Asian heritage, characterized by mismatched items and non-Western foods.

1. The Comfort of Friendship: Despite recognition of socio-economic and cultural differences, Mary acceptance creates a safe space for Wu, allowing her to navigate the childhood experience without feeling judged for her background. This friendship symbolizes a connection that shields her from the disparities between their environments.

2. The Pressure to Assimilate: Wu reflects on her desire for assimilation within the predominantly white community she grew up in. The narrative encompasses the internal conflict of wanting to fit into American culture while simultaneously grappling with her Asian heritage. The concept of "assimilation" becomes a lens through which she examines her adolescence,



where conformity to the expectations of American society often required distancing herself from her own background.

3. The Journey of Self-acceptance: As Wu transitions into adulthood, she experiences apprehension when confronted with her identity, particularly as an Asian American in media. Her involvement in the sitcom "Fresh Off the Boat" becomes a pivotal moment. For her, the show represents not solely a career opportunity but also a reconciliation with her cultural identity and a challenge to the stereotypes often imposed on Asian individuals in Hollywood.

4. Embracing and Redefining Stereotypes: Wu candidly discusses the complexity that comes with portrayals of Asian characters, especially in comedic settings. The anxiety of perpetuating stereotypes is palpable, and she confronts the discomfort surrounding the association of her own familial experiences with negative portrayals on screen. This realization urges her to embrace her parents' traits and accents as integral parts of her identity, rather than symbols of shame.

5. Transformative Creative Expression: Through her performance in "Fresh Off the Boat," Wu discards the notion that success hinges on the absence of stereotypes. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of nuance and depth in character representation. By humanizing previously one-dimensional roles, she aims to elevate the narrative surrounding Asian Americans and their



stories.

6. Art Beyond Approval: Wu concludes with a powerful affirmation that true artistry does not cater to ignorance. She advocates for representation that embraces cultural specificity rather than shying away from it due to fear of ridicule. The chapter emphasizes a hopeful message: individuals cannot be seen if they do not express their authentic selves. By telling her story and the stories of those like her, Wu seeks to create space for understanding and connection that transcends cultural divides.

In summarizing her experiences, the author illustrates how childhood bonds, societal expectations, and creative roles intersect in her life, culminating in a journey toward self-acceptance and the celebration of cultural identity. Wu's narrative invites readers to reflect on their own understandings of culture, representation, and the beauty of diverse stories.

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## Chapter 8 Summary: 8. Betty and Syd

The narrative begins with a vivid recollection of a childhood characterized by warmth and community in an overwhelmingly white neighborhood, where the author and her Asian American family felt embraced. Their neighborly relationship with Betty and Syd Phillips is established through charming anecdotes, including heartwarming welcomes complete with baked goods—a gesture that symbolized their immediate integration into the community. Betty and Syd, an older couple who reveled in the joys of family life, became integral figures in the author's upbringing, attending her performances and remembering small details about her life, showcasing their genuine care.

1. Betty, with her warm demeanor and inviting nature, organized baking sessions filled with laughter and creativity alongside the author's sister. These small moments of connection and the shared joy of simple activities like baking transformed their bond into that of a surrogate family, especially significant since the author had limited interactions with her biological grandparents.

2. Summers on the Chesapeake Bay with Syd highlighted the carefree essence of childhood—memorable boat rides, playful splashes, and treasured picnic lunches fostered a unique sense of adventure and camaraderie among the children in their neighborhood, enveloped by the vibrant sun and cooling





breezes.

3. However, as time passed and the author and her sister entered their teenage years, they naturally drifted from those cherished activities. Life's changes intensified when the author left for college, experiences compounded by her parents' divorce, which altered family dynamics and interactions with Betty and Syd. Both aging neighbors faced health issues, underscoring the inevitable passage of time and the growing distance between the author and her once vibrant childhood companions.

4. Introducing a new character—Aaron, her much older boyfriend—further complicated the narrative, as his youthful cynicism contrasted sharply with the gentle, kind-hearted spirit of Betty and Syd. When the author brought Aaron to meet her neighbors, an underlying tension foreshadowed her personal conflict: the desire to showcase her roots conflicted with her longing to embody a cool, urban identity.

5. In the poignant conclusion, the author reflects on that last visit with a blend of nostalgia and regret. After learning about the passing of Syd and then Betty, she is confronted with a sudden sense of emptiness, realizing how deeply their presence had anchored her in a loving community. This moment of grief is compounded by Aaron's dismissive remarks, which prompt an emotional response in the author, as she feels torn between pride in her heritage and the need to adapt to her new identity.



Overall, this chapter intricately weaves themes of belonging, the passage of time, and identity crisis against the backdrop of a supportive neighborhood, encapsulating how familial ties can transcend blood relations and the deep impacts of loss on one's sense of self. The interplay of affection and disconnect narratively underscores the tension between the author's cherished past and her evolving present, leaving a lingering sense of nostalgia for simpler days and the profound relationships that once shaped her.

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## Chapter 9: 9. Making a Scene

In New York City, a palpable sense of invincibility envelops its inhabitants, fostering a love that thrives on aggression and authenticity. The city's grit, epitomized in its people, lured the author since childhood, promising a reality unmarred by pretense. However, upon moving there at twenty-two, she struggled with feelings of not belonging, desperate to extract affirmation and prove herself as one of the "cool kids." When Ty, a thirty-six-year-old New Yorker, asked her out, it felt like a prestigious invitation to the adult world she longed to join, despite a lack of genuine attraction.

Their first date set a tone of respect and charm, with Ty embodying the New York essence—intelligent, engaging, and seemingly sophisticated. Their conversations flowed naturally, showcasing mutual aspirations and artistic dreams, leaving her flattered and buoyed by the experience. However, a shift occurred during their second date when Ty presented her with a wrapped gift, which she pursued despite a nagging intuition she should tread carefully. Though the gift—a story he authored featuring her as the heroine—displayed romantic intent, it also foreshadowed a troubling power

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## Chapter 10 Summary: 10. Little Cassandra

In her poignant exploration of identity and ambition, Constance Wu narrates her experience in drama school where she consistently found herself typecast into ingenue roles, despite a fervent desire to embrace more complex characters. As her teachers encouraged her to discover her “true self” through vulnerability and innocence, Wu felt constrained by their inability to see beyond her petite stature and girlish attire. They unknowingly underestimated her capacity for depth and complexity.

When the opportunity arose to audition for the demanding role of Cassandra in the *Oresteia* during her junior year, Wu seized the chance to break free from the confines of her typecasting. Cassandra, a tragic figure bestowed with the gift of foresight that comes with the curse of disbelief, resonated with Wu’s own feelings of being misunderstood and underestimated. The character’s powerful and visceral monologue, filled with themes of pain and struggle, inspired Wu to channel her own indignation and rejection into her performance.

On audition day, confronted with the patronizing assumptions of her director, Hugo Kelly, who implied her youthfulness might hinder her, Wu transformed her frustration into a fierce determination to embody Cassandra. Clad in a shawl to represent the chains Apollo imposed upon her, Wu delivered a raw, emotionally charged rendition, shedding her own burdens in





the process. The culmination of this moment marked a personal triumph; she successfully secured the role, proving to herself and others that she could transcend the limitations imposed on her.

As her journey in acting progressed, Wu faced continuous setbacks and rejections based on her appearance and casting type. From her persistence in landing roles like the one in the pilot *Browsers* to pursuing her passion project *Hustlers*, she exhibited tenacity that defied the conventional expectations of leading ladies. Even after achieving fame, Wu's determination prompted her to create her own audition tape, challenging industry norms that sought to overlook her dedication in favor of automatic casting offers.

Reflecting on the discrepancies in opportunity, Wu draws attention to the stark contrast between herself and the "Golden Ones," those naturally charismatic figures who seem effortlessly to command attention and favor in auditions. While acknowledging their talent, she highlights the unique struggles faced by those who don't fit the traditional molds, such as herself who constantly feels the weight of Apollo's chains. Wu's narrative underscores that while innate presence may open doors, it is often the rigor and resilience of striving actors that truly define their paths toward success. Ultimately, her story is a testament to the power of determination and the unyielding spirit to break free from limitations imposed by both society and the entertainment industry.



## Chapter 11 Summary: 11. Poor Shark

In this chapter, the narrative chronicles the complex relationship between the narrator, Constance, and Matt, highlighting the blurred lines of their intimate connection which evolved from a casual physical arrangement into something more emotionally charged. Their story begins with a drunken encounter outside a Santa Monica bar, marked by flirtation and physical attraction, leading to a friendship steeped in shared experiences and occasional rendezvous over a span of three years.

1. The nature of their relationship was clearly defined as a 'fuckbuddy' situation, characterized by mutual benefits where both Constance and Matt sought comfort and companionship during lonely, horny moments. Their dynamic, however, continued to deepen with emotional intimacy woven into their encounters—late-night conversations, shared meals, and laughter. These moments fostered affection, though it was not reciprocated entirely in the same depth by Matt.

2. Constance recognizes that love, for her, requires a genuine connection, a sentiment she believed to have been lacking from Matt. Despite moments of tenderness and care from him, she acknowledged that such gestures did not equate to love, particularly when presented juxtaposed against the revelation of his long-term girlfriend, June, whom he had been cheating on. The shock of this betrayal unraveled her understanding of their relationship and





foregrounded the emotional conflict she experienced upon confronting him.

3. Matt's admission of guilt paints him as a deeply flawed individual wrestling with his infidelities. His repeated assertion of being a “shark” chasing after fleeting desires serves as a metaphor for his tendency to move on without considering the emotional ramifications of his actions. This labeling brought an element of tragic helplessness to his character, yet Constance remained acutely aware of the harm he inflicted on June, evoking her sense of empathy towards the wronged girlfriend rather than Matt.

4. When Matt subsequently breaks up with June, Constance grapples with her feelings, yearning for validation and a potential shift in their dynamic. However, his inability to separate his predatory instincts from genuine emotional commitment leads to further disappointment, culminating in a shocking revelation: he is engaged to another woman, Megan. This moment ultimately catalyzes Constance to cut ties with Matt entirely, underscoring the pivotal realization that their mutual attraction was overshadowed by deceit and emotional manipulation.

5. Years later, their paths cross again at a film festival, where Constance, now established in her career, remains guarded but cordial. Matt's genuine attempts to reconnect are met with skepticism as she recognizes the same patterns of behavior that once entangled their relationship. The playful banter and shared history resurfacing between them hints at an undercurrent



of unresolved feelings but also a maturing understanding of their past.

6. Their final encounter in a café several years later reflects significant growth from both parties, with Matt candidly discussing the challenges of his marriage and confessing to past errors in judgment. This meeting reiterates the notion of closure, allowing both of them to appreciate the past while recognizing their individual journeys toward personal fulfillment. As they share a heartfelt exchange, it becomes clear that despite the missteps and heartbreak, their connection retains a semblance of sincerity, ultimately leaving Constance with a sense of peace.

Through this narrative, the complexity of human relationships, the struggle with emotional truths, and the power of personal growth take center stage, offering a nuanced exploration of love, betrayal, and eventual acceptance.

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## Chapter 12: 12. Real Love

In a heartfelt reflection on love, Constance Wu shares the transformative journey of adopting a pet bunny rabbit, Lida Rose. At the age of thirty-one, after years of dreaming about having a real bunny companion, she takes the plunge, despite a lifetime filled with bunny-themed trinkets and decor. The choice is especially poignant as she identifies with Lida, the runt of the litter, who too embodies a sense of being overlooked.

1. The journey to finding Lida Rose begins with a careful selection process, ultimately leading Wu to a small brown bunny that captures her heart. Their early days are characterized by a mix of excitement and anxiety, filled with frequent vet visits and a devotion that sees Wu adjusting her lifestyle to cater to Lida's needs. As they explore each other's quirks, Wu learns how to care for Lida's unique preferences, creating an environment where her bunny feels comfortable.

2. The story unfolds with rich details of their bonding process. Wu recounts how Lida loves gentle pets on her forehead, enjoys certain foods like kale

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## Chapter 13 Summary: 13. You Do What I Say

In this chapter from "Making a Scene" by Constance Wu, the author recounts her experiences during the production of her first network TV show, \*Fresh Off the Boat\*. Wu's journey reveals both the challenges and nuances of navigating the entertainment industry while figuring out her identity as an actress.

The chapter opens with the relationship Wu has with her producer, M—, who initially presented himself as her protector and valuable ally in a daunting industry fraught with competition. M—, a Chinese American producer, takes a paternalistic approach to supporting Wu, often making bold statements like, “You do what I say,” which he delivers casually yet commanding. His guidance, although often masked as protection, begins to feel controlling as he exerts influence over not only her career choices but also her personal life.

The first principle illustrated in Wu's tale is that **navigating power dynamics is vital in a hierarchical profession**. M— had to fight for Wu to land her role, making her feel indebted to him for her success. This gratefulness translates into allowing him to dictate her professional and personal choices, convincing her that going against his advice would jeopardize her fledgling career. This reliance creates a precarious balance where Wu oscillates between gratitude and discontentment. She reflects on how she let worries



about job security overshadow her ability to assert her independence.

As Wu's career progresses, M— continues to make unwelcome advances into her personal space, offering unsolicited advice on her appearance and relationship choices, which underscores the second principle of **the complexities of mentorship and boundaries**. This behavior veers into troubling territory as M— pressures her for selfies and makes inappropriate comments, thereby crossing lines that complicate their professional relationship. Despite these discomfoting interactions, Wu rationalizes them by focusing on the larger significance of their groundbreaking show for Asian American representation. She grapples with the conflict of feeling grateful for M—'s support while simultaneously feeling marginalized and objectified.

The dynamics shift in Wu's experience when she decides to start asserting her own boundaries, leading to the eventual breakdown of her relationship with M—. Her first act of autonomy occurs when she refuses to attend a promotional event she feels uncomfortable with. This, however, ignites M—'s rage and ultimately results in a definitive break in their camaraderie—emphasizing the third principle of **the need for self-advocacy and recognizing one's own worth**. Wu realizes that her apprehension about being seen as difficult stems from the unique pressure placed on her as an Asian actress, implying that these double standards need to be confronted.





As Wu moves on from the experience filled with both regret and relief, she begins to unpack the toll this chapter of her life has taken on her mental health. The narrative culminates in her confronting uncomfortable truths about herself, leading to a self-imposed exile from social media and an eventual mental health crisis. The emotional journey births her determination to seek help, revealing how emotional burdens can impact one's well-being.

Lastly, through this phase of personal growth and recovery, Wu learns valuable lessons about vulnerability, redemption, and the importance of authentic connections, both professionally and personally. She re-establishes a sense of dignity and focus in her acting career with her next show, \*The Terminal List\*, emphasizing the significance of creating a supportive environment where she feels comfortable to be herself.

In summary, Wu's experiences highlight not only the hurdles women, particularly women of color, face in a demanding industry but also the valuable self-discoveries that arise from challenging and asserting one's boundaries. Her journey is profound, revealing multi-faceted realities of ambition, empowerment, and the continual struggle for respect in the workplace.



## Chapter 14 Summary: 14. The Utmost Sincerity

In this reflective chapter from "Making a Scene," Constance Wu delves into her journey of self-discovery and the misconceptions surrounding the romanticization of hardship. As a teenager residing in the affluence of Richmond, Virginia, she found herself captivated by the struggles depicted in the works of writers like Sylvia Plath and Jack Kerouac. Her longing to escape the mundane comforts of her suburban upbringing led to a series of artsy attempts to craft a deeper persona, marked by a rebellious attitude and disheveled appearance. This tumultuous search for identity intensified when she transitioned to an arts conservatory, where she grappled with feelings of sameness within her creative environment.

1. The Illusion of Hardship: Wu reflects on her youthful naivety, desiring authenticity amid a background of comfort and privilege. Her teenage imagination painted a picture of hardship as a pathway to artistic depth, a notion that later unraveled during her time in art school.

2. A Journey to a Monastery: In her quest for distinction, Wu joined the Humanistic Buddhist Monastic Life Program in Taiwan. This program was her attempt to immerse herself in a meaningful life experience. Surrounded by fellow students from prestigious backgrounds, she found herself at a Buddhist monastery—a place where she hoped to explore the complexities of faith and experience genuine existence.





As she arrived at the monastery, Wu discovered an environment governed by discipline and mindfulness, characterized by daily routines that included meditation, silence, and communal meals, which encouraged an intentional form of living. The structure of monastery life stripped away the distractions of modern living, revealing the beauty in simplicity and quietude.

3. Lessons in Mindfulness: Throughout her stay, Wu learned invaluable lessons in mindfulness and interconnectedness. Simple yet profound practices, such as how to fold trash neatly or bow with sincerity, became pathways to deeper self-understanding. She felt a powerful connection to the moment, where the act of meditating on death propelled her into a state of awareness, transcending superficial concerns.

4. The Discomfort of Reflection: The chapter's climax occurs during a weeklong silent meditation retreat where Wu experienced mental turmoil as feelings of impatience surged within her. Struggling with her restlessness, she learned that true clarity required enduring intense discomfort. It was during this labyrinth of feelings where she began to unravel her chaotic inner world, leading to transcendent moments of peace.

5. The Struggles of Post-Monastery Life: Upon returning to New York City, Wu found herself confronted by the chaotic and distracting nature of urban life, contrasting the clarity she experienced at the monastery. The itch of



impatience transformed into ambition, pushing her toward typical societal goals and aspirations. As she navigated this hectic landscape, she captured the tension between her past spiritual insights and contemporary ambitions.

6. The Quest for Sincerity and Belonging: A pivotal moment during a Christmas gathering at her childhood home brought forth reflection and introspection on her part. Faced with the sincerity of the people around her, she felt a wave of judgment toward both herself and her peers. This realization prompted her to ponder the essence of sincerity, leading her to recognize that virtue resides not in grand experiences but in humble, genuine expressions of gratitude and kindness.

7. The Exit from Quakerism: Wu's attempts to engage with Quaker services reveal her struggle with belonging and vulnerability. Even in an environment that encourages unpretentious expression, she found herself retreating, wrestling with a sense of isolation that echoed her earlier experiences at the monastery.

Wu's narrative artfully encapsulates the evolution of her understanding around privilege, hardship, and the complexity of human experience. In contemplating her past self—the angsty girl who sought depth through struggles—she acknowledges the bittersweet relationship with privilege and the authenticity of experience, ultimately arriving at the realization that sincerity and connection often dwell in the simplest of moments. Her story



becomes not just a memoir of her spiritual journey but an intricate exploration of the human heart's longing for meaning in a world saturated with distractions.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** The Beauty in Simplicity and Mindfulness

**Critical Interpretation:** As you navigate your own life, consider how Constance Wu's journey into the depths of mindfulness and simplicity at the monastery can inspire you. Reflect on the notion that true clarity and fulfillment don't always arise from grand experiences or turbulent struggles. By embracing the quiet moments—practicing mindfulness in daily tasks, fostering genuine connections, and valuing simplicity—you may find profound meaning and purpose in the seemingly mundane aspects of your life. Engage fully in each moment, and you'll discover that it is in the subtle act of appreciating life's simplest joys that you can cultivate a sense of belonging and inner peace, transforming your everyday existence into a tapestry of sincere experiences.

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## Chapter 15: 15. Dressing Wounds

In 2006, Constance Wu met George during a Shakespearean acting workshop where an initial attraction existed, though she was in a relationship with another man. Over the years, their paths diverged until they reunited for an eight-hour dinner date that marked the beginning of a deep connection. Their relationship blossomed through long phone conversations, shared experiences, and an intimate escape to West Virginia, where they explored personal histories and dreams. However, despite the intensity of their connection, George became emotionally distant, and their relationship quickly ended in a painful breakup.

**1. The Nature of Heartbreak:** Constance experienced heartbreak intensely and identified two ways to cope: numbing via distractions like alcohol or accepting the pain as a teacher. Ultimately, she chose acceptance, deciding to love George without reciprocity, which transformed her perspective and brought empathy to her acting.

**2. Navigating New Dynamics:** Over the years, their connection evolved

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## Chapter 16 Summary: 16. An Apology

In a candid and introspective reflection, the author openly confronts her past behavior of sexual harassment, specifically highlighting her repeated use of the word "penis" while filming the television show *\*Fresh Off the Boat\**.

The narrative begins with the author's admission of guilt, acknowledging that her actions, which might seem harmless or juvenile to some, were inappropriate and caused discomfort among her colleagues. She recounts the origin of this behavior, sparked by a joke in the show's script about the word "boob," leading her to question the double standards surrounding humor about male versus female anatomy.

1. This realization prompted her to engage in a misguided act of rebellion, thinking that if it was acceptable to joke about women's bodies, then similar jokes about men's bodies should be equally permissible. However, she recognizes that this rationale was flawed, affirming that two wrongs don't make a right.

As she candidly narrates her experience, it is evident that her humor—intent to mock societal norms—was not universally seen as funny. In fact, it led to discomfort for at least one colleague, which resulted in a conversation with producer Justin. Instead of becoming defensive when confronted about her actions, she chose to listen, accepting accountability and agreeing to stop her behavior, expressing genuine remorse for her actions.



2. The author reflects on the complexity of humor—acknowledging that what might be funny to one person can be hurtful to another. She emphasizes the importance of understanding and listening to others' feelings rather than dismissing them based on personal standards of humor. This moment of clarity led to a more profound understanding of the impacts of her words and actions on her workplace environment.

Through this essay, she seeks not only to admit her guilt but also to extend a heartfelt apology to those affected by her behavior. It is a sincere recognition of her missteps, underscoring a commitment to growth and an awareness of how humor, particularly in a professional setting, can carry weights of discomfort that may not be immediately apparent.

3. The essence of her message resonates deeply: accountability is crucial. While laughter can be a shared experience, it is imperative to acknowledge that not everyone will interpret humor in the same way, and what may seem innocuous to one can profoundly affect another. Her story serves as a reminder of the importance of sensitivity and respect, especially in communal spaces, urging readers to reflect on their own behaviors and the impressions they leave behind.

Ultimately, the author's exploration of her actions serves as a profound lesson in self-awareness and empathy, inviting an honest dialogue about the





complexities of humor in the context of gender dynamics.

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## Chapter 17 Summary: 17. Pisha, Masha, and Me

In the stillness of late nights after grueling shifts at the restaurant, I often found solace in the comfort of my car. My black Toyota Prius, Masha, served as my retreat, contrasting sharply with the chaotic pace of my days spent auditioning and working. Those quiet moments, devoid of distractions, were a time for reflection and escape, allowing me a brief respite from the relentless demands of my life in Los Angeles.

**1. The Significance of My Cars:** From my first car, Pisha, a beat-up '88 Chevy Corsica, to Masha, my reliable Prius, each vehicle symbolized different phases of my life. Pisha, with its myriad quirks and breakdowns, represented my teenage years filled with adventure and the realities of growing up. A disastrous breakdown one night taught me resilience and the kindness of strangers, shaping my understanding of vulnerability and human connection.

**2. Moments of Connection:** Encounters during car troubles, whether with a stranger who offered his phone or a couple who changed a tire for me, underscored the generosity of people. These instances of compassion left lasting impressions, highlighting how both community and randomness define our journeys. Each car echoed stories of hardship, growth, and unexpected kindness, impacting my outlook on life and the world around me.



**3. Navigating Change:** My transition to college with Pisha and then moving to Manhattan marked significant life stages. The challenges of harsh winters and city living tested our limits. Yet, through it all, I found comfort in those late-night drives, often reflecting on my insecurities while enjoying the city's vibrancy—and solitude—from my car window.

**4. Shifts in Lifestyle:** With success in my acting career, I eventually upgraded to a new Toyota, Masha. Yet, even in success, I fought to retain my sense of self, clinging to memories tied to my previous life. Masha was not just a means of transportation; she was a testament to my journey, a constant reminder of where I came from, even as my circumstances changed.

**5. Understanding Loneliness and Technology:** As the years progressed, the rise of smartphones altered my interactions, influencing how I experienced solitude. The ease of distraction through mobile technology clashed with my yearning for the reflective evenings spent in my car, where I once simply enjoyed quiet contemplation. I lamented the constant need to be connected, shifting my focus away from the world outside.

**6. Embracing the Past:** Reflecting on my journey through the lens of my cars, I acknowledge the transformative power of time and experience. The struggle to balance my newfound fame with the humility I held dear led to an ongoing internal tug-of-war. In recalling those moments spent alone, the



absence of distractions emphasized the importance of finding space for introspection, something I fervently tried to reclaim even in a fast-paced world.

Through it all, my connection to my cars served as a metaphor for my life's journey, ultimately guiding me back to the foundation of who I am—an individual still striving to find moments of respite amid the noise of life.

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## Chapter 18: 18. Unfinished Mansions

In "Unfinished Mansions," the poignant chapter from Constance Wu's "Making a Scene," she reflects on her childhood memories that intertwine a nostalgic exploration of change, familial bonds, and the complexities of identity and adulthood. As her older sisters left for college, her mother began taking Wu and her younger sister, E, on adventures through elaborate, unfinished mansions that soon began to define their suburban landscape. These explorations became more than mere curiosity; they were a portal into dreams and imagination, each mansion symbolizing an unspoken desire for possibility and beauty in a changing world.

1. As they ventured into these expansive homes, the details Wu vividly recalls evoke a smell of fresh paint and sawdust, which represented not just physical structures, but her mother's attempts to share experiences and knowledge with her daughters. In these fantasies, they claimed their rooms and cast visions of ideal lives—moments steeped in innocence that contrasted sharply with the impending changes in their family life.

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# Best Quotes from Making A Scene by Constance Wu with Page Numbers

## Chapter 1 | Quotes from pages 11-40

1. My heart dropped down to the bottom of my feet.
2. You took his breath away.
3. That heart-falling-to-feet feeling had meant something.
4. I had never done that before! Where the hell had that confidence come from?
5. We said 'I love you' for the first time. We said it at the exact same second.
6. It was a pleasure so delicate and fine, like a baby feeling the gentle brush of a feather.
7. He never actually did it, but sometimes I'd glance up at him and I could see it in his eyes.
8. In a grimy staff bathroom, me in my waitressing uniform, him in one shoe... there was just us and the miracle of love.
9. That small, casual night of board games and laughter is still the nicest one I've ever had.
10. Love remains. Once someone touches your heart, they can't untouch it.

## Chapter 2 | Quotes from pages 41-61

1. "I wanted money for new clothes... earning my own money for cool clothes was a necessity."
2. "It was nice to make something with my hands, nice to feel useful."
3. "Every night, I was allowed to take a loaf home to my family."



4. "I liked how the cold dough felt between my fingers, how soft it was against my floury forearms and elbows."
5. "There was something magical about baking bread before the sun came up."
6. "We were making people's bread and we would make it the best bread they ever had."
7. "I was proud to be a part of that team."
8. "It required forearm strength... but there was a lovely symmetry to it."
9. "Rich and Sher had taught us how to be real bakers."
10. "Montana Gold was spare and simple and made good bread... but it's the one that lasted."

### **Chapter 3 | Quotes from pages 62-82**

1. We concluded that that meant we completed each other—one could snap; the other could whistle.
2. It was one of the first times I remember trying not to cry.
3. Sometimes it's hard to know if an apology is meant for the receiver's benefit or for the apologizer's own selfish gratification.
4. I'd rather feel like a clown than a monster.
5. It was like she wanted me to remain the mean, sad teenager.
6. Couldn't I be allowed to change, the way I had let her change?
7. It's funny, I was so confident when we were little kids. But she is the more secure one now.
8. Her life is her own. She should have an inner life and friendships that I am not a part





of.

9. I guess that's what growing up is.

10. We both knew it was magic, so we didn't need to say anything.

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## Chapter 4 | Quotes from pages 83-94

1. "Even though it's hard having my friend group ostracize me, I'm grateful it happened, because that's how I met Molly."
2. "It felt good to help my best friend."
3. "How do you find intimacy without magic?"
4. "Proud that the most painful, nastiest thing I could think of was for her to have, like, the WORST hair."
5. "This story is not that unusual or especially traumatic. Everyone gets bullied or hurt in some way during their childhood."
6. "Childhood is a testing ground for what type of person you want to be, and part of that is trying things out, including cruelty, and seeing how it feels."
7. "What a relief it was to share something bad about myself and still be loved!"
8. "Her laugh took the shame out of it."
9. "I'm almost proud of that revenge fantasy. As far as revenge goes, it's pretty tame."
10. "We're both moms now with daughters of our own."

## Chapter 5 | Quotes from pages 95-111

1. Books were my favorite thing in the world.
2. During summertime, I'd spend all day in that gross blue chair eating Popsicles and reading books.
3. Her tough personality made her a legend in our school.
4. She was the type of scary that was fun, like a Disney villainess.
5. You are all idiots who are lucky to have me.



6. My emotions have always been larger than my body.
7. What do you do when the truth is not enough?
8. And he showed Mrs. Kantor the door.
9. Isn't that crazy? I'd spent so long dwelling on the hurt that I hadn't been able to look beyond to see how it helped me.
10. So that's why I became an actor. Of course I did.

## **Chapter 6 | Quotes from pages 112-136**

1. Wow! To me, that seemed like freedom. Why were these girls so stiff when they could be free?
2. For what felt like the first time in my life, I wasn't being punished or ridiculed for having big feelings. I was being applauded.
3. Community theater isn't about box office or authenticity or even art, really. Community theater is about just that: the community.
4. I had made magic.
5. In that quiet, you could hear the room fill up with gratitude. It almost felt like prayer.
6. The key to finding it, she said, is when the warmth hits you just right and brightness is all around.
7. It was a thrilling moment.
8. It feels bad when someone says you are not speaking right—to be heard not for what you're saying but for how you're saying it.
9. Until that exercise, I'd never realized how one little word could hold so much.
10. What a privilege to be an actor, to examine life in this way.





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## Chapter 7 | Quotes from pages 137-149

1. I didn't want to be associated with them. I had done such a good job of fitting in and I didn't want the dumb TV character to ruin it.
2. That career ethos, that desire to shut down Asian stereotypes, is a reaction to a Hollywood standard that was created by people who do not know us.
3. You don't make art for them, so why let their ignorant ridicule inform your artistic choices?
4. Stereotypes are not harmful for their mere existence; they're harmful for their reduction of a person or group.
5. When our reactivity to old wounds renders us ashamed to the point of objection or repudiation, it reinforces the mainstream's ignorant theory that the people who embody those stereotypes are inherently shameful.
6. True artists just create something beautiful out of whatever materials they have. They don't care if the idiots don't 'get' it.
7. Let's be proud of that. How many white Americans can say the same?
8. I want to see great Asian American actors in accented, previously stereotyped roles—because I know what great actors can do.
9. Those stereotypical attributes... are our mothers and fathers, our uncles and aunts, our brainy cousins—I don't want to hide their voices or their stories.
10. They can't see us if we don't move.

## Chapter 8 | Quotes from pages 150-156

1. In fact, when we first moved into the neighborhood, there were never fewer than six



welcome pies or cakes in our kitchen at all times.

2. Betty and Syd loved children.

3. I remember how Betty flagged me down when I was walking home from the bus stop just to tell me how delicious they were and how lucky I was to have a mom who was such a good cook.

4. There was something about eating on a boat that made those soft cold-cut sandwiches taste really good.

5. I met my biological grandparents only a handful of times.

6. In many ways, Betty and Syd were my surrogate grandparents.

7. They shared their love so freely.

8. That final time I saw Betty and Syd... I remember feeling proud that they were my neighbors.

9. That's just how people talk here.

10. I didn't know who I was anymore, and I didn't know who I wanted to be.

## **Chapter 9 | Quotes from pages 157-176**

1. New York City could make you feel invincible, like any shit you were given rolled right back to the shit giver.

2. I wasn't all that attracted to him, but I was excited about the date because I thought it somehow proved I was cool.

3. Even the way they walked felt gritty: hard, brisk, and with purpose.

4. I was only pretending to belong.

5. I had idealistic and romantic notions of sex. Sex always had to be meaningful, special, with someone I loved.





6. In movies, rape scenes are often dramatic and violent.
7. I was proud of that. My number was two and that's how I wanted it to stay for a while.
8. He smiled at me again like I was a baby kitten, held me close, kissed me.
9. I didn't fight back. I just... gave up.
10. I realized it was rape, and I hadn't done anything about it.

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## Chapter 10 | Quotes from pages 177-183

1. The hardest person to play—is your true self.
2. You have to dig deep. Face your fears.
3. That's when I decided, come hell or high water, I was going to win the part of Cassandra.
4. I wore a shawl to the audition as makeshift 'chains,' emotionally investing every fiber of my being into that shawl.
5. In that moment it was like I shed everything and everyone who'd ever hurt me, underestimated me, humiliated me, made me feel small.
6. FUCKING BALLER SPEECH. Hard as FUCK to do.
7. Cassandra came alive in my body—a roaring fire of pain that pummeled through me.
8. Even when it felt pathetic or embarrassing... it's what I did for my role in the television pilot.
9. I had the audacity to ask him to change the filming dates for me.
10. This is not to say that the Golden Ones have no talent—it's just that they don't arrive wearing Apollo's chains.

## Chapter 11 | Quotes from pages 184-197

1. "You don't do that to people you love. You don't lie."
2. "His hair was wet, his jacket was dripping, he was apologizing, his forlorn eyes curving downward with the rain but also upward to me, needy."
3. "I knew we were just fuckbuddies, but he had confused me when he did boyfriend-like things."



4. "It felt nice, but off."
5. "Her face was so kind. How could Matt have done that to someone so kind? She looked like someone he should have treated better. She deserved better."
6. "You were right. We had known each other for more than ten years; used each other's bodies for so long. But we were both still okay."
7. "I felt a lot of things—betrayal, depression, sympathy, fatigue—but also relief."
8. "Marriage had been really challenging. He and his wife really hadn't known each other when they had gotten engaged."
9. "It was easy and fun. Talking about our friends, families, careers. And acting. Always talking about acting."
10. "To know that, throughout all the lies and drama, our bond hadn't been false."

## **Chapter 12 | Quotes from pages 198-209**

1. I'd longed for this kind of love... but now I was thirty-one and needed to stop chickening out.
2. Love is not something earned through merit. It's something that happens with time.
3. Real things don't have shortcuts. That takes time.
4. Everything and everyone is lovable to someone, even if it doesn't make sense from the outside.
5. "Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you.
6. When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.



7. You become. It takes a long time.

8. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.

9. If someone stops loving you when your body changes, then they just don't understand real love.

10. I was scared of what would happen if I put her into surgery... But when the cataract got too big, I didn't want her to be in pain.

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## Chapter 13 | Quotes from pages 210-252

1. "Nobody wanted you. I had to fight for you."
2. "You have to strike while the iron is hot."
3. "You wouldn't be here without me."
4. "You do what I say."
5. "It was easier to play along. Besides, there was so much to be happy about!"
6. "It's a make-or-break moment for all of Asian American representation, and you won't even do this one damn appearance?"
7. "No, I don't want to! You can't make me!"
8. "I made a mistake. It wasn't a reflection of how I feel about you or about the show."
9. "It was the bravest thing I'd done in a long time."
10. "What I'm most lucky for is Randall."

## Chapter 14 | Quotes from pages 253-274

1. "It's easy to romanticize stuff you don't know jack shit about."
2. "None of the art school kids had lived at a Buddhist monastery."
3. "Interconnectedness is the word some Buddhists use for it, but language falls short."
4. "There are no shortcuts for the true things in life. You have to sit through the discomfort."
5. "I may have lived at a Buddhist monastery, but I wonder if the Christian cheese ball guy got it better than I ever did."
6. "True self-awareness requires context, and I'm glad to know it."
7. "I recognized how grossly privileged and naive it was for me to idealize hardship."





8. "Buddhism tells us that attachment causes suffering."
9. "Maybe what I truly wanted was something else entirely."
10. "Time and grace."

## **Chapter 15 | Quotes from pages 275-294**

1. 'In my experience, there are two options for dealing with a wounded heart: the first is numbing and avoidance... The second option—the one I've found to be most helpful—is to accept the heartbreak and use it to instruct you.'
2. 'So often, we equate our identities with Things: a job, a boyfriend, a fashion choice, our untouchable taste in music. But when we're stripped of Things, it forces us to reckon with our true identities.'
3. 'I told myself I was going to try a different approach to my acting career... I needed to get as far away as I could, to a place where I had no history.'
4. 'The love George and I shared made me feel real and seen. When I finally accepted that he didn't love me back anymore my shoulders dropped and my breathing softened.'
5. 'And that's when I decided to love George without reciprocation. Instead, I learned to see his face in every face I met.'
6. '...I was able to act cool for about two minutes before I was overcome with emotion.'
7. 'It hurt so much. I'm proud that, despite everything, I opened my heart enough to get hurt again.'
8. 'The breakup was clean, the way I had asked for it to be. I didn't call or drunk text or like his posts or anything.'
9. 'He listened to me with his still, attentive face. He held my hand, his eyes full of care.'



10. 'You dressed my wound as I slept.'

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## Chapter 16 | Quotes from pages 295-299

1. Two wrongs don't make a right; two boobs don't make a peen.
2. Laughter is not an excuse. Sometimes people laugh when they're uncomfortable.
3. Just because it's funny to me doesn't mean it has to be funny to everybody.
4. My humor and my innocent intentions are not the standard that everyone must follow.
5. If I'm feeling the need to defend myself, that means I feel attacked.
6. Who is the injured party here? They're the ones in need of defense. Not me.
7. Maybe I'll learn a standard that is different from mine. Maybe that's a good thing.
8. I'm glad you told me, and you are right, I shouldn't have done that.
9. I may have been joking, and sure, everyone laughed, but I shouldn't have done it.
10. This is an earnest apology. From the bottom of my boob, I am sorry.

## Chapter 17 | Quotes from pages 300-320

1. "Everything is terrible, but this is where I get to live. I'd dreamed of it my whole life."
2. "Sometimes, I still sit alone in the car when I get home, but I'm usually scrolling my phone when I do."
3. "There is dignity in the anonymity of NYC cabs."
4. "It's scary to knock on strangers' doors in the middle of the night, especially when you're a teenager."
5. "I felt embarrassed of my crying, but you know I can't stop my tears."
6. "Listening for suspicious sounds and smells, laughing with my friends about how



crappy she was."

7. "Driving a humble car made me feel real."

8. "I didn't want to be one of those lame rich kids with a Lexus. I preferred life with Pisha, where it was always an adventure."

9. "I could have accused him of selling me a shit car, but I didn't because I worried it might hurt his feelings."

10. "I'd like to say that I'm still the same person I was pre-iPhone, pre-success."

## **Chapter 18 | Quotes from pages 321-366**

1. Playing pretend life in these mansions was intoxicating.

2. Every week for a whole year, I wrote her letters, almost every week!

3. Your mom is so beautiful.

4. You're big enough to do it yourself.

5. You have to pinch off the small buds so that bigger blooms will grow.

6. You know why I had FOUR? Because I love babies!

7. I decided on that flight that I was going to do whatever it took to earn her love.

8. I just let her do whatever she wanted.

9. Your dad made me do it! He refused to get snipped, even though it's easier, haha!

10. When did she stop dressing beautifully?





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# Making A Scene Discussion Questions

## Chapter 1 | 1. Lucky Bucks | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What significant event does Constance recall when she first sees Rob at the restaurant?**

Constance experiences a strong emotional reaction when she first sees Rob, reminiscent of the panic she felt when her father got sick and collapsed. As her heart drops to the bottom of her feet, this feeling is mixed with surprise and attraction, indicating that this moment is pivotal in her experience of love.

### 2.Question:

**How does Constance's first day as a trainee waitress differ from her expectations regarding the dress code?**

Constance comes to her first day of training at XYZ restaurant in a strapless black minidress, interpreting the instruction to 'wear black' in line with her previous job's requirement for sexy outfits, which includes no denim. This choice stands out in stark contrast to the other trainees who were dressed in formal black shirts and pants, leading her to feel embarrassed but also sets the stage for her memorable first encounter with Rob.

### 3.Question:

**What role does Sara play in the budding relationship between Constance and Rob?**

Sara, one of Constance's first friends at XYZ, plays a crucial role in encouraging





Constance to pursue a connection with Rob. She observes Rob's interest in Constance and insists that something will happen between them, despite Constance's dismissive attitude toward Rob, believing he is just another hot person in a city full of attractive individuals.

#### **4.Question:**

**Describe the progression of Constance and Rob's relationship after their initial date.**

Following a less-than-ideal first date at a bizarre restaurant, Constance and Rob's relationship deepens quickly. They bond over conversations that are both exhilarating and intimate, sharing thoughts on philosophy, love, and personal dreams late into the night. Their connection grows stronger as they engage in playful antics and pranks, fostering a relationship filled with laughter, affection, and a growing sense of love.

#### **5.Question:**

**How does Constance's view of herself and her aspirations change in contrast to Rob's trajectory?**

As Rob progresses in his graduate studies and prepares for his future as a PhD candidate, Constance begins to feel insecure and insufficient about her own stalled acting career. Despite initially being confident and carefree, she starts manipulating her emotions and choices to match Rob's serious path, reflecting her desire for validation and security while simultaneously highlighting the disparity between her artistic ambitions and his academic achievements.



## Chapter 2 | 2. Montana Gold | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What motivated Constance Wu to seek employment at a young age, and how did she end up working at Montana Gold Bread Co?**

Constance Wu felt motivated to find a job when she turned fifteen because she wanted to earn money for new clothes, having grown up with frugal parents and older sisters who passed down clothes. After her initial application to McDonald's was rejected, she shared her disappointment with her friend Jessica, who then recommended her to the bakery where she worked. As a result, Jessica helped Constance get a job as a cashier at Montana Gold Bread Co.

### 2.Question:

**Describe the working environment and culture at Montana Gold Bread Co as described by Constance. Who were some of her coworkers and what roles did they play?**

The environment at Montana Gold Bread Co was friendly, wholesome, and community-oriented, fostered by the ownership of Rich and Sher. Rich was enthusiastic and welcoming, while Sher was pleasant. Constance described her coworkers as a colorful group that included various individuals each with their unique personalities: Stuart was the first openly gay man she met, Matt was a car enthusiast, Susan was a sweet divorced mom, and Todd was dedicated to his job and truck. Others included Chris, who Constance had a crush on, and Jeannie, a professional ballerina. Constance's best friend Marianne joined her later, emphasizing the camaraderie and supportive community within the bakery.

### 3.Question:

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What key responsibilities did Constance Wu have in her role at Montana Gold, and how did her experience there influence her personal growth?

Initially, Constance's primary responsibility was working the cash register, but as time went on, she took on multiple roles, including cleaning and eventually participating in bread-making. She learned how to knead dough, shape bread, and even became the head pastry chef. This diverse experience not only helped her develop her baking skills but also instilled a sense of pride, usefulness, and importance in her work. The supportive environment enabled her to grow personally and professionally, fostering a strong bond with her coworkers and owners. Her hands-on experience taught her valuable life lessons about hard work and dedication.

#### 4.Question:

**What was the outcome for Montana Gold with the opening of Good Grain, and how did this competition impact Constance's employment there?**

With the opening of Good Grain, a rival bakery, Montana Gold experienced a decline in sales despite its loyal customer base. Good Grain offered higher wages, which led Constance's friend Marianne to leave Montana Gold for a better-paying job. Eventually, Marianne convinced Constance to join her at Good Grain, despite her initial loyalty to Rich and Sher at Montana Gold. Although Constance fabricated a story about getting a job at Gap to conceal her real reason for leaving, she still felt guilty for her decision. Under Good Grain's ownership, Constance and Marianne encountered a toxic work



culture, which stood in stark contrast to what they had experienced at Montana Gold.

### **5.Question:**

**Reflecting on her experiences at Montana Gold, what sentiments does Constance Wu express about her time there, particularly in relation to the bakery owners and her memories of working there?**

Constance Wu reflects fondly on her time at Montana Gold, expressing deep appreciation for Rich and Sher, who not only taught her the ins and outs of baking bread but also created a nurturing work environment that contributed positively to her formative years. She feels a sense of nostalgia when recalling the bakery, signifying its lasting impact on her life. Despite her move to New York City and her subsequent career in acting, Constance acknowledges the solid, real experience of working with bread and people that shaped her, and she expresses a desire to return and reconnect with the owners, contemplating the passage of time and personal growth since then.

## **Chapter 3 | 3. Snap and Whistle | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**How did Constance Wu describe her relationship with her younger sister E during their childhood?**

Constance Wu described her relationship with her younger sister E as very close and supportive during their childhood. They naturally formed a bond due to their age difference, often splitting into pairs with their older sisters. Wu and E shared many



activities, such as playing with Barbies, gymnastics, and making up games while playing outside. They enjoyed each other's company, often found themselves in the same activities, and had a playful relationship characterized by their unique traits; W could whistle while E could snap her fingers, which made them feel like they completed each other. Their bond was highlighted through joint experiences, such as shared birthday parties, sleepovers, and imaginative play, reinforcing their feelings of closeness and friendship.

## **2.Question:**

**What role did Constance Wu's father play in her and E's childhood, and how did his profession influence their experiences?**

Constance Wu's father, a biology and genetics professor, was a positive influence on both her and E during their childhood. He allowed them to visit his office at the university, where they enjoyed the atmosphere filled with plants, games, and snacks, such as vending machine treats. His job allowed them free access to his lab, where they explored scientific curiosities. They also had opportunities to learn, play games like POGs with lab assistants, and enjoy the nearby university library where they could read and watch videos. His engaging personality and the nurturing environment he provided built a foundation for their love of learning and exploration, fostering an environment where both sisters could thrive creatively.

## **3.Question:**

**How did the dynamics between Constance Wu and her sister E change as they grew older, particularly during middle school and high school?**



As they entered middle school and high school, the dynamics between Constance Wu and E changed significantly. Wu began to feel exclusion as their paths diverged; their school bus schedules no longer aligned, and she found herself alone at the bus stop. This shift led to feelings of jealousy as E began to make her own friends, moving away from their once inseparable relationship. Wu's insecurity heightened as she perceived E was thriving without her, causing strained interactions between the sisters. Wu's feelings manifested in controlling and mean behaviors towards E, straining their relationship further and leading to a bitter distance. Wu felt guilt over her actions, which ultimately created a rift that remained through their teenage years, making them more like strangers as they struggled with their individual identities.

#### 4.Question:

**What was the significance of the moment when Constance Wu cried in front of E and how did it change their relationship?**

The moment Constance Wu cried in front of E in the car marked a pivotal turning point in their relationship. As Wu expressed her long-held feelings of guilt, shame, and a desire to reconnect, the intensity of her emotions broke down barriers that had built up over the years. While E had often kept her distance due to the hurt from their past, Wu's vulnerability allowed E to see her sister's pain and acknowledge the shared emotional turmoil they both experienced. This cathartic moment enabled them to reconcile their past conflicts, leading to a temporary cessation of the jokes and mockery about



Wu's childhood behavior. It brought them closer, fostering an understanding that, although they had hurt each other, they could still care for one another deeply. This emotional catharsis was a step toward healing, even if it didn't completely resolve their differences.

### 5.Question:

**How does Constance Wu reflect on her and E's different personalities, and what does this reveal about their growth as individuals?**

Constance Wu reflects on their contrasting personalities with a sense of admiration and introspection. Wu describes herself as the extroverted and bold sister, while E embodies qualities of gentleness and introversion. As they grew up, their differences became more pronounced, with Wu struggling to reconcile her perception of socially praised traits, such as sweetness and quietness, against her own extroverted nature. Wu's reflection reveals a process of self-discovery and acceptance, recognizing that E's introverted confidence thrives in ways that Wu's extroverted nature does not. The narrative highlights the sisters' growth in understanding their individuality; E solidified her self-worth and formed her own life, while Wu came to accept that her sister's life and friendships might not include her. Their differences, once a source of tension, became a testament to their unique identities as they matured.







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## Chapter 4 | 4. Impeach the President | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What was the relationship between the narrator and Fiona at the beginning of the chapter?**

At the beginning of the chapter, the narrator and Fiona shared a close friendship. They bonded over their mutual love for Broadway musicals, fashion (specifically Converse One Star sneakers), and other shared interests. Fiona was new in town, having moved from New York, and the narrator admired her sophisticated lifestyle, which included luxuries like a private bathroom and a modern house. Their friendship seemed strong as they enjoyed discovering new things together.

### 2.Question:

**How did the narrator's role as Fiona's campaign manager contribute to Fiona's victory in the election?**

The narrator played a pivotal role in Fiona's success by crafting an innovative campaign strategy. Instead of using standard slogans, the narrator created a catchy phrase, 'Vote for Fiona, the Angel in the Infield,' linking it to Fiona's position on the softball team and the popular movie 'Angels in the Outfield.' Additionally, the narrator developed unique promotional accessories (halos made from glittery gold pipe cleaners) that appealed to students and caught their attention, making the campaign more memorable and engaging. This creativity helped Fiona win the election against the more popular candidate.

### 3.Question:

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What caused the rift between the narrator and Fiona during eighth grade?

The rift between the narrator and Fiona was sparked by a careless comment the narrator made about Fiona's appearance, specifically regarding a blemish. This comment led to Fiona flipping out and subsequently turning their entire friend group against the narrator. Fiona's decision to ostracize the narrator resulted in a dramatic shift in their social dynamics, and the narrator found herself isolated, experiencing the pain of being the target of bullying and the silent treatment.

#### **4.Question:**

**How did the narrator cope with the bullying and isolation she faced after being ostracized by her friends?**

Initially, the narrator felt ashamed and lonely, facing bullying from her former friends who mocked her and rejected her presence at lunch. However, her coping mechanism began when a girl named Molly invited her to sit with her and her friends. This invitation opened up a new friendship, allowing the narrator to form a bond based on shared interests. Through this new friendship with Molly, the narrator found support and acceptance, contrasting sharply with her previous experience of social exclusion.

#### **5.Question:**

**What conclusions does the narrator come to about childhood cruelty and friendships by the end of the chapter?**

By the end of the chapter, the narrator reflects on the nature of childhood cruelty and the dynamics of friendships. She acknowledges that experiences



of being bullied or hurt are common during childhood and are part of the process of growth and self-discovery. She recognizes that both she and Fiona were merely teenagers trying to navigate their social worlds. Ultimately, the narrator expresses gratitude for the difficult experience as it led her to form a meaningful and lasting friendship with Molly, which she values highly. She concludes with an acceptance of her past experiences, indicating growth and maturity.

## **Chapter 5 | 5. Of Course She Did | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What early experiences shaped Constance Wu's love for writing and literature?**

Constance Wu describes her early weekends spent with her father at the Tuckahoe Public Library, where she would check out numerous books, including titles like *The Cricket in Times Square* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. She vividly recalls devouring multiple chapter books each week, reading the entire *Boxcar Children* series in a single summer. Her favorite spot for reading was an old, mildew-ridden blue corduroy armchair located in their sunroom, where she felt comfortable and at peace. These formative experiences with books fostered her passion for storytelling and writing.

### **2.Question:**

**How did Mrs. Kantor influence Wu's perception of her abilities as a writer?**

Mrs. Kantor, Constance Wu's eighth-grade teacher, had a complex impact on her self-esteem and writing ambitions. Initially, Wu admired her for her boldness and unique teaching style. However, when Mrs. Kantor accused her of plagiarism on her



term paper, Wu felt devastated and invalidated. Kantor's undermining statement—"you are not good enough to have written this"—deeply affected Wu, pushing her to withdraw from writing. Despite not being able to articulate this pain to her family due to cultural misunderstandings, the incident haunted Wu and influenced her decision to pursue acting instead of writing.

### 3.Question:

**What was the outcome of Wu's confrontation with Mrs. Kantor later in life?**

Years later, Constance Wu decided to call Mrs. Kantor to confront her about the plagiarism incident, expressing how hurtful the experience was and insisting upon her innocence. Mrs. Kantor's response downplayed the issue, suggesting that other teachers' agreement with her compounded her view. She emphasized that she did not give Wu an F since there was no evidence of plagiarism, which frustrated Wu even more. Ultimately, the conversation left Wu feeling worse, as Mrs. Kantor seemed unwilling to acknowledge the emotional impact of her earlier actions.

### 4.Question:

**How does Wu relate her writing experience to her career in acting?**

In reflecting on her experiences, Wu connects her painful encounter with Mrs. Kantor to her eventual career choice in acting. While the criticism and disbelief from Kantor pushed her away from writing, it also led her to a supportive environment in drama, exemplified by Mr. Frizzell, her drama teacher, who believed in her talent. This dichotomy—between the disbelief



of one teacher and the validation of another—ultimately shaped her identity and path, revealing how critical belief and support can be in nurturing an individual's self-worth and passion.

### **5.Question:**

**What does Wu reveal about her personal growth through the trauma of the plagiarism incident?**

Constance Wu articulates how the incident with Mrs. Kantor is one of her most painful memories, one that she continues to explore in therapy. The experience triggered a profound sense of disbelief and emotional turmoil, leading her to realize the importance of acknowledgment and validation in one's formative years. By revisiting the incident through sense memory and reflection, Wu uncovers how this pivotal moment helped shape her resilience and her career in the arts, ultimately realizing that pain can lead to personal growth and a deeper understanding of oneself.

## **Chapter 6 | 6. Exploring an Orange | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What prompted Constance Wu to attend her first theater audition, and what emotions did she experience during the process?**

Constance Wu went to her first audition because her friend Lauren wanted support, as she was apprehensive about going alone. During the audition, Wu felt a charged sense of purpose, contrasting with her past experiences of being ridiculed for her emotions. She observed the other girls auditioning, noting that most were nervous or overly



polished, realizing that here, it was acceptable to stand out—something she had always avoided. When it was her turn, she passionately delivered her monologue, fully embracing her emotions and receiving applause, which was a liberating experience for her.

### **2.Question:**

**How did Wu's experience with community theater shape her sense of belonging and identity, especially considering her background as the only Asian child in a predominantly white cast?**

Wu's experience in community theater provided her with a strong sense of belonging and connection to her community, despite being the only Asian actor in a predominantly white environment. The communal aspect of theater, where families participated and supported each other, helped her feel accepted and valued. The welcoming environment allowed her to grow and express herself without judgment, fostering her identity as an actress and a member of the community. This acceptance played a crucial role in countering the feelings of otherness she might have felt due to her background.

### **3.Question:**

**What lesson did Wu learn from her experiences in drama school, particularly from her teacher Jennie and the exercises related to character exploration?**

Wu learned to explore the depth of language and character from her teacher Jennie, who encouraged her to break down monologues and understand the





significance of each word. Jennie's exercises, especially one involving printing and isolating each word of the monologue, helped Wu connect personally to her roles, transforming her performance from superficial to profound. This approach, alongside Jennie's belief in Wu's potential beyond her typecast, empowered her to embrace more complex and challenging roles, such as Lady Macbeth.

#### **4.Question:**

**What does the 'orange exploration' exercise represent for Wu, and how does it connect with her emotional journey?**

The 'orange exploration' exercise represents a significant moment of self-discovery and emotional connection for Wu. During this activity, she engaged all her senses to connect with the orange, which unexpectedly triggered memories and feelings from her childhood. This exercise allowed her to reflect on her past, including her experiences in community theater, evoking both gratitude and a sense of loss for the free, emotionally expressive child she once was. It encapsulated her journey as an actress, exploring not just the craft but the privilege of examining life and emotions deeply.

#### **5.Question:**

**Reflecting on her childhood auditions and drama school experiences, what overarching themes does Wu express regarding vulnerability and emotional expression in acting?**

Wu expresses that vulnerability and emotional expression are crucial to



acting, as they allow for authenticity and connection with the audience. Her childhood auditions, where big feelings were rewarded, contrast with the often cynical environment of Hollywood, where sincerity can be mocked. Through her journey from community theater to conservatory training, she emphasizes the importance of embracing one's emotions and the art of acting as a means to explore the complexities of human experience, celebrating moments of rawness and connection.

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## Chapter 7 | 7. Welcome to Jurassic Park | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What activities did Mary and the narrator enjoy doing during their childhood?**

Mary and the narrator engaged in various activities such as playing on a waterbed, practicing gymnastics (like roundoff-back-handsprings and front and back walkovers), drawing in their shared diary, and making friendship bracelets. They also had double birthday parties that involved renting a roller-skating rink, where they invited classmates from their grade.

### 2.Question:

**How did the narrator feel about the differences between her house and Mary's house?**

The narrator felt embarrassed about her home and its differences compared to Mary's house, which she viewed as more 'American' with its matching decorative items and typical snacks. She thought of her own home as less acceptable and often longed for the American ideal she perceived through television shows, which did not reflect her family's lifestyle or culture.

### 3.Question:

**What impact did assimilation have on the narrator's identity and experiences growing up?**

Assimilation shaped the narrator's identity deeply, as she sought to fit into a predominantly white suburb. While she participated in typical American activities like cheerleading and sleepovers, she also felt immense pressure to avoid highlighting her



Asian heritage, particularly when watching TV characters that represented Asian stereotypes. This led her to internalize shame about her background and family traits, influencing her desire to blend in rather than embrace her cultural identity.

#### **4.Question:**

**How did the narrator's role in 'Fresh Off the Boat' challenge her previous views on representation and stereotypes?**

Landing the role of Jessica Huang in 'Fresh Off the Boat' forced the narrator to confront her long-held beliefs about race, representation, and stereotypes. Initially, she felt a mix of excitement and uncertainty as she grappled with portraying a character who not only embodied Asian cultural elements but also embraced them. The experience prompted her to reflect on her childhood views about stereotypes and ultimately led her to advocate for a more nuanced and humanized representation of Asian characters instead of dismissing them as harmful.

#### **5.Question:**

**What does the narrator suggest about the relationship between stereotypes and artistic representation?**

The narrator argues that stereotypes can have value when they are approached with nuance and depth in artistic representation. Instead of shunning roles with stereotypical attributes, she believes that actors can bring humanity and richness to these characters, thus challenging the reductionist view often held by mainstream media. She asserts that true artistry involves embracing one's own experiences and backgrounds, and



that it's vital to present fully-realized characters whose stories deserve to be told and celebrated, rather than concealed due to stigma.

## **Chapter 8 | 8. Betty and Syd | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What role did Betty and Syd Phillips play in the narrator's childhood?**

Betty and Syd Phillips served as surrogate grandparents to the narrator, Constance Wu. They were a vital part of her childhood, providing unconditional love, support, and a sense of belonging. They attended her plays and concerts, remembered her birthday, and even took care of her family's plants when they were away. The nurturing environment they created, filled with baking sessions and outings on Syd's boat, gave her the kind of familial warmth and connection that she didn't have with her biological grandparents who lived far away.

### **2.Question:**

**How did the narrator's perception of her identity change after her last visit with Betty and Syd?**

After the last visit, the narrator experienced a profound shift in her identity. While she initially felt proud of her neighbors and connected to her roots, her boyfriend's dismissive comments about Betty and Syd's slower way of speaking made her feel embarrassed. This confrontation with her boyfriend led to an emotional realization of her own struggles with identity, particularly in the context of her upbringing and the changes in her family dynamic following her parents' divorce. It brought up feelings of loss and confusion about who she was and who she wanted to become.

### **3.Question:**

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Describe how the relationship between the narrator's family and Betty and Syd changed over the years.

Initially, the relationship was strong and nurturing, with Betty and Syd being a constant presence in the narrator's life. They engaged warmly with her family, enjoyed each other's company, and shared culinary experiences, which fostered a deep bond. However, as the narrator and her sister grew into adolescence, their interests shifted away from baking and spending time with the elderly couple. Following the parents' divorce and Betty's health issues, the frequency of interactions decreased, and Betty and Syd's situations deteriorated, culminating in their passing, which signified a heartbreaking end to that familial connection.

#### **4.Question:**

**What emotions does the narrator express about the funerals of Betty and Syd?**

The narrator expresses a deep sense of loss and regret upon learning about Betty and Syd's funerals, which she attended after they had occurred. The news left her feeling hollow and melancholic, emphasizing her connection to them and the role they played in her life. She reflects on significant memories of them, symbolized by Betty's azaleas and Syd's boat, indicating that their deaths left a void that highlighted the nostalgia for her happier childhood experiences.

#### **5.Question:**

**How does the narrator contrast her upbringing with her boyfriend's**



perspective during their last visit to Betty and Syd?

The narrator portrays her upbringing as one characterized by warmth, community, and deep-rooted connections, exemplified by Betty and Syd's kindness and their slow, thoughtful way of speaking. In contrast, her boyfriend's perspective is quick and dismissive; he views their slower manner of communication as a negative trait. This clash of perceptions causes the narrator to reflect upon her identity more critically, leading to inner turmoil and eventually a confrontation of her feelings about her background, her pride in her community, and the value of her relationships with people like Betty and Syd.

## **Chapter 9 | 9. Making a Scene | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**How does the author describe the allure of New York City during her early years there?**

The author describes New York City as a place that can make a person feel invincible, where any negativity they experience seems to bounce right back to its source, similar to the experience of love in the city. The love is portrayed as being aggressive, grounded in the understanding that both individuals are capable of handling the challenges and the 'shit' that life throws at them. From childhood, the author's aspiration to live in this gritty city was influenced by films that depicted New York as a place of authenticity and resilience, emphasizing the dry humor and purposeful demeanor of its residents. She recounts a key moment of feeling out of place as a tourist, marked by a scolding from a local to keep moving, which highlights the pressure to project

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confidence and ingratiate herself with the city.

## **2.Question:**

**What were the dynamics of the author's relationship with Ty during their initial interactions?**

During their first date, the author's relationship with Ty is characterized by a mix of admiration and illusion. Although the author was not strongly attracted to Ty, she felt a thrill about being seen with him, a thirty-six-year-old 'real New Yorker,' as it validated her own desire to fit into the city's culture. Throughout their conversations, Ty maintained a charming demeanor, displaying manners and engaging in substantive discussions that made her feel impressed. Their connection was deepened by sharing aspirations and a sense of mutual understanding regarding the mundanities of life, which solidified the author's perception of the date as a significant milestone in her quest for belonging.

## **3.Question:**

**What key event shifts the narrative from a seemingly romantic moment to an experience of sexual coercion?**

After the second date, the turning point occurs when Ty invites the author to his apartment under the pretense of giving her a gift. Although she feels a twinge of warning, she ultimately dismisses it, leading to intimate physical contact where she clearly states that she is not ready to have sex. However, Ty ignores her verbal consent and continues to initiate sexual activity, which the author later reflects on as coercive—highlighting how her feelings of



shame and embarrassment prevented her from asserting herself against him. This moment emerges as a poignant example of how societal pressures and the desire to be perceived as 'cool' influenced her response to a violation of her autonomy.

#### **4.Question:**

**How does the author grapple with the aftermath of the encounter with Ty in terms of self-perception and societal narrative surrounding consent?**

Following the encounter, the author initially rationalizes her feelings, seemingly disassociating from the experience by focusing on Ty's sweet gestures rather than her violation. She suppresses her feelings of discomfort and instead emphasizes the romantic overtures, including the gift he presented. Over the years, she attempts to reframe the event in her mind and downplay its severity, eventually reaching a point where she believes she has forgotten it altogether. Years later, after achieving personal success and social awareness, she recalls the incident and confronts the reality that Ty had raped her. The author reflects on society's tendency to excuse male behavior while women carry the emotional burden of consent and shame. Her journey highlights the struggle against the narratives that often invalidate women's experiences and the need for recognition of their truth.

#### **5.Question:**

**What does the author conclude about the importance of discussing experiences of sexual violation and the culture surrounding it?**



In the conclusion of the chapter, the author emphasizes the necessity of addressing and articulating experiences of sexual violation openly. She critiques the societal tendency to overlook nuance in consent, advocating for a clearer acknowledgment of agency and the implications of coercion. The distinction she draws between her initial reluctance to label her experience as rape and the eventual realization of its seriousness underscores the dire need for both personal and societal conversations about consent and the complexities surrounding it. Through reclaiming her narrative, the author not only seeks to empower herself but also to advocate for greater awareness and support for others who have endured similar experiences.

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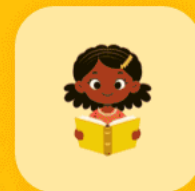
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## Chapter 10 | 10. Little Cassandra | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What role does Constance Wu aspire to play in the Oresteia and why is it significant to her?**

Constance Wu aspires to play the role of Cassandra in the Oresteia because she views Cassandra as a complex character who embodies the themes of tragedy and foresight. This role is significant to her as it represents a departure from the ingenue roles that her acting teachers had pigeonholed her into, such as Juliet and Laura. Wu resonates with Cassandra's struggle, as she experiences the burden of prophecy coupled with the curse of disbelief. For her, performing this role symbolizes a chance to express the raw and challenging emotions she believes she can embody, and it culminates in a powerful, cathartic audition that ultimately leads her to victory over the stereotypes applied to her.

### 2.Question:

**How does Wu's perception of her physical appearance impact her journey as an actress?**

Wu's perception of her physical appearance plays a pivotal role in her journey as an actress. She describes herself as petite and girly, which leads casting directors and her professors to typecast her as an ingenue, limiting her opportunities. Despite being the same age as her peers, she feels marginalized by the descriptors used by Hugo, who sees her merely as 'the younger, little actor.' This experience fuels her desire to break free from such labels, instilling a sense of determination within her to pursue complex roles, which she proves through her audition for Cassandra. Her journey highlights the challenges that come with physical typecasting in the industry and the internal struggle





to assert her identity beyond external appearances.

### 3.Question:

**What does Wu mean by "shedding Apollo's chains" during her audition, and how does it signify her emotional journey?**

During her audition, Wu's act of 'shedding Apollo's chains' symbolizes her reclamation of power and her desire to rid herself of the limitations placed upon her by others. The chains represent her struggles with typecasting and the emotional weight of the expectations laid upon her due to her appearance. When she drops her shawl, which serves as a makeshift chain, it marks a moment of liberation and transformation, allowing her to channel Cassandra's pain and anger. This act of shedding signifies her emotional journey of confronting past humiliations and asserting her true self, free from the constraints of others' perceptions. It embodies a significant turning point where she embraces her authentic self, leading to a powerful performance that astonishes the director.

### 4.Question:

**How did Wu approach the audition and what was the outcome?**

Wu approached the audition with intense determination and emotional investment, drawing from her own feelings of indignation and rage stemming from the dismissive attitudes of her peers and mentors. She performed her monologue with a raw intensity, embodying Cassandra's pain and struggle by fully immersing herself in the character's experience. Wu's delivery was so powerful that it stunned Hugo, the director, leading to her



being cast in the role of Cassandra. The outcome represents not just a personal victory for Wu over her own limitations but also an assertion that she can embody a role much larger than the 'little ingenue' typecast she had been assigned, marking a crucial moment in her professional development.

### **5.Question:**

**What comparison does Wu draw between herself and the so-called 'Golden Ones' in the industry?**

Wu draws a comparison between herself and the 'Golden Ones'—those actors who naturally command attention and exude a movie-star presence without seeming to struggle for opportunity. She acknowledges that while these actors often possess talent, they seem to have an effortless advantage that comes from their physicality and charisma, allowing them to secure roles even after mediocre auditions. Wu contrasts her own experience of having to consistently fight for roles, often by going above and beyond to prove herself, such as creating her own audition tapes. This comparison emphasizes her feelings of inadequacy in the face of typecasting and serves to highlight the differing experiences of actors based on inherent traits, underscoring the inequities present in the entertainment industry.

## **Chapter 11 | 11. Poor Shark | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**How did Constance Wu's relationship with Matt begin, and what were the initial circumstances surrounding their connection?**

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Constance Wu's relationship with Matt began quite spontaneously after they reconnected in Los Angeles, having previously met during a staged reading of a play in New York. Their initial contact occurred when Matt texted her out of the blue, suggesting they grab a drink. They ended up making out outside a bar in Santa Monica after consuming alcohol, leading to the establishment of their 'fuckbuddy' relationship. The intensity of their shared experience in the reading created an underlying bond, allowing for a unique connection that blended both friendship and sexual attraction.

## **2.Question:**

**What dynamics characterized Constance and Matt's relationship over the years they were together?**

Over the three years, Constance and Matt's relationship was characterized by an on-and-off dynamic where they would see each other whenever Matt was in Los Angeles. They maintained a casual physical relationship, but also became emotionally supportive of one another. They often engaged in late-night conversations after intimacy, shared meals, and participated in activities like doing crossword puzzles together, indicating a level of comfort and camaraderie. Despite these girlfriend-like interactions, it was clear to Constance that the relationship remained strictly physical and did not evolve into an official romantic partnership.

## **3.Question:**

**What revelation did Constance have about Matt that significantly changed her perspective on their relationship?**

Constance's perspective on her relationship with Matt shifted dramatically





when she learned that he had been cheating on his longtime girlfriend, June, with her. She discovered this information through a conversation with her friend Kit, who was familiar with Matt and his situation. This revelation was particularly jarring for Constance, as it contradicted the seemingly sincere care Matt had shown her throughout their relationship. Instead of feeling special, she grappled with feelings of betrayal and the realization that Matt had not been truthful about his commitments and fidelity.

#### **4.Question:**

**How did Constance handle the confrontation with Matt regarding his infidelity, and what was his reaction?**

When Constance confronted Matt about his infidelity, he broke down and admitted to cheating on June, expressing deep regret and self-loathing while comparing himself to a 'shark' that couldn't stop moving. Despite her anger and hurt, Constance found herself comforting him during this vulnerable moment. This encounter left her feeling a mix of emotions, including relief at finally knowing the truth, but also sympathy for June, the person Matt had been lying to all along. Ultimately, Constance ended the physical relationship by stating that it was over and that Matt needed to be honest with June or let her go.

#### **5.Question:**

**What was the outcome of Constance and Matt's relationship after their final encounter, and how did they interact in the years following?**

Following their final encounter, where Matt revealed he had proposed to



another woman named Megan, Constance officially ended all contact with him. However, they later crossed paths years afterward at a film festival, where they shared a cordial yet distant interaction. At this meeting, both seemed to have moved on with their lives. In a more recent unexpected encounter at a cafe, they reminisced about the past, acknowledged their shared history, and seemed to have buried the hatchet. Although they did not exchange contact information afterward, there was an understanding between them, suggesting a closure to their complex relationship.

## **Chapter 12 | 12. Real Love | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What led the author to finally decide to get a pet bunny after years of hesitation?**

The author had longed for real love since childhood, but fear of commitment held her back. At the age of thirty-one, she acknowledged her desire for a pet bunny and resolved to stop procrastinating and face her fears. She began by researching and preparing to welcome a bunny into her life, symbolizing a commitment to experience genuine companionship.

### **2.Question:**

**What specific details did the author reflect on regarding her journey to adopt Lida Rose?**

The author extensively detailed her experience of adopting Lida Rose, a Holland Lop bunny. She traveled with a friend to meet the seller, expressed her emotional connection upon seeing Lida Rose, and named her after a song, highlighting the joy and special



bond she felt. Over time, she described the trial and error in understanding Lida Rose's personality and preferences, observing her behavioral quirks, and nurturing their relationship.

### 3.Question:

**How did the author care for Lida Rose and what challenges did she face during their time together?**

The author meticulously cared for Lida Rose, taking her to the vet frequently, feeding her organic greens, and keeping her litter box clean. She faced immense anxiety over Lida's health, particularly when she developed a fungal infection affecting her eye. The author expressed her fears regarding surgery but ultimately prioritized Lida's well-being, understanding that her love for Lida was unconditional, despite the toll that change might take on her appearance.

### 4.Question:

**What does the author express about the nature of love through her experiences with Lida Rose?**

The author reflects on love as a gradual process that evolves over time, rather than a fleeting emotion. She compares her relationship with Lida Rose to her human relationships, emphasizing that real love is built through shared experiences and the passage of time. She challenges societal perceptions about the legitimacy of loving certain animals, suggesting that all forms of love, including her affection for Lida, should be respected as valid and meaningful.

### 5.Question:

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What philosophical insights did the author share at the conclusion of the chapter about the essence of 'real' love?

In concluding the chapter, the author shares a passage from 'The Velveteen Rabbit' that articulates her understanding of real love. She argues that real love is not based on external appearances or superficial attributes, and that true connection comes with time, shared experiences, and even suffering. Changes, such as Lida losing an eye, do not diminish love; instead, real love transcends physical appearances and embraces the authenticity of the bond formed.

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## Chapter 13 | 13. You Do What I Say | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**How does Constance Wu describe her relationship with M— in Chapter 13?**

Constance Wu describes her relationship with M— as complex and evolving. Initially, he is portrayed as her champion and protector in the competitive world of network television. He fights to get her cast in 'Fresh Off the Boat,' which she acknowledges she was grateful for. However, over time, the relationship becomes more controlling. M— demands a direct line to her, insists she runs all her decisions through him, and pressures her to conform to his demands, blurring professional boundaries and becoming increasingly intrusive in her personal life.

### 2.Question:

**What characterizes M—'s attitude towards Constance throughout her career development as depicted in this chapter?**

M— displays a mix of paternalistic protectiveness and casual sexism towards Constance. He views her as someone who needs his guidance and feels entitled to dictate both her professional choices, like signing with a particular agent, and aspects of her personal life, including her appearance and dating choices. His comments often reflect a dismissive attitude towards her autonomy, evidenced by his catchphrase "You do what I say," which he states casually, indicating his belief that his influence is essential for her success.

### 3.Question:

**What internal conflicts does Constance experience regarding her career and her**





treatment by M—?

Constance experiences significant internal conflict over her treatment by M—. On one hand, she feels gratitude for his support and protection in a new and intimidating industry. On the other hand, she becomes increasingly uneasy with his controlling behavior and casual sexism, which she initially rationalizes as harmless. As she gains confidence and recognition from her role in 'Fresh Off the Boat,' her resentment builds towards M—'s intrusion into her life, leading to a struggle over asserting her independence and confronting the toxic aspects of their relationship.

#### 4.Question:

**How does the chapter illustrate the theme of power dynamics in Hollywood, particularly regarding gender and race?**

The chapter illustrates power dynamics in Hollywood by highlighting the intersection of gender and racial issues in Constance's experiences. M— represents the established male authority figure who exerts control over a rising Asian American actress, which points to the challenges faced by women of color in the industry. While 'Fresh Off the Boat' signifies a breakthrough for Asian American representation, Constance's struggles with M— show the underlying sexism and racial biases that persist in Hollywood. Her need to navigate these complexities emphasizes how women, especially women of color, are often subjected to scrutiny and have to fight for their agency.

#### 5.Question:

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What pivotal moment leads to a turning point in Constance's professional relationship with M—?

A pivotal moment occurring in Chapter 13 is when Constance firmly asserts her boundaries for the first time by saying "no" to attending an unpaid promotional event, despite intense pressure from M—. This refusal triggers a significant escalation in their conflict, culminating in a shouting match where they both stand their ground on their respective demands. This moment marks a crucial turning point for Constance, as she begins to reclaim her agency in her career, ultimately leading to a breakdown in her relationship with M— and making her feel more empowered to refuse his controlling demands.

## **Chapter 14 | 14. The Utmost Sincerity | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What motivated Constance Wu as a teenager to seek out experiences that were drastically different from her suburban upbringing?**

As a teenager, Constance Wu felt discontent with her suburban life in Richmond, Virginia, which she perceived as too comfortable and lacking in depth. Inspired by writers like Sylvia Plath and Jack Kerouac, as well as artists like Ani DiFranco and Tori Amos, she romanticized hardship and sought to transform herself into a 'deep, artistic individual.' This led her to engage in stereotypically 'artsy' behaviors—dressing in all black, smoking, and expressing anti-establishment sentiments—where she felt that authenticity and 'real life' lay outside the comforts of her upbringing.

### **2.Question:**

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What led Constance Wu to choose the Humanistic Buddhist Monastic Life Program, and how did she see it as a means of personal exploration?

Wu learned about the Humanistic Buddhist Monastic Life Program from her friend Marrienne, who was studying religion at the University of Virginia, where the program was advertised. Eager for a meaningful experience that would differentiate her from her peers at art school, Wu viewed this opportunity as a form of personal exploration and an escape from her privileged background. She believed it would allow her to delve into spirituality and knowledge in a way that was immersive, educational, and away from the materialistic distractions she was familiar with.

### 3.Question:

**How did the structure of life at the monastery mirror aspects of military life, as described by Wu?**

Wu noted that life at the monastery was highly structured, much like military life. This included a strict daily schedule, uniforms for participants, and regimented activities such as morning gongfu (an exercise routine) and meditation sessions. Each part of the day had designated purposes and rituals, from waking to the sound of a wooden board being struck, to maintaining silence during meals in the communal refectory. The precise and orderly conduct fostered a sense of community and purpose among the participants, helping them to develop mindfulness and respect for their environment.

### 4.Question:

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What was Wu's experience during the weeklong meditation retreat, and how did it affect her mental state?

During the weeklong meditation retreat, Wu experienced a range of emotions, from clarity and vigor on the first day to intense agitation on the second day, where she battled with an overwhelming itch of restlessness and impatience. Despite the discomfort, she persevered through the entire retreat. By the third day, her emotional state began to stabilize, leading her to a state of interconnectedness and peace, where she felt fully present and alive. This experience marked a significant shift in her awareness and understanding of meditation, highlighting the need to endure discomfort to achieve true clarity and insight.

### **5.Question:**

**What realizations did Wu have about her previous romanticization of suffering and how it related to her identity after returning from the monastery?**

After returning from the monastery, Wu grappled with her past romanticization of suffering and its naive nature. During a holiday party, she felt an unexpected shame when she couldn't appreciate the sincerity of simple, suburban life and prayer, contrasting it starkly with her previous ideals. This moment prompted her to question her attachment to a narrative of hardship and whether her pursuit of meaningful experiences was in fact a form of attachment that ultimately caused suffering. Wu's reflections revealed her ongoing journey toward self-awareness and the understanding



that authentic experiences might not only stem from profound struggles but also from moments of sincerity and connection in everyday life.

## **Chapter 15 | 15. Dressing Wounds | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**How did Constance and George originally meet, and what was their initial relationship like?**

Constance and George first met in 2006 during a Shakespearean acting workshop where Constance was a student and George was a teaching assistant. Initially, Constance was dating someone else (Rob) and did not recognize George's significance in her life. They connected over shared humor and interests, but nothing romantic transpired during this first phase, and they went their separate ways after the workshop.

### **2.Question:**

**What catalyzed the relationship between Constance and George into a romantic one?**

Several years after their initial meeting, Constance, now newly single, invited George to dinner. This dinner turned into a captivating eight-hour date where they were asked to leave various locations due to their extended conversations and passionate interactions. Their chemistry sparked, leading to a deepening romantic connection, characterized by late-night phone calls, weekends spent together in West Virginia, and emotional vulnerability that included sharing childhood stories and personal experiences.

### **3.Question:**

**What challenges did Constance face with George as their relationship developed?**

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As Constance fell deeply in love, George began to withdraw emotionally, becoming less communicative and distant, which bewildered Constance. Despite a strong initial connection, George's casual withholding and lack of response felt punishing to Constance, leading to heartbreak. Their relationship ended abruptly when George broke up with her over the phone, leaving Constance feeling hurt and lost, as she grappled with feelings of abandonment and confusion about their connection.

#### **4.Question:**

**How did Constance cope with her heartbreak after her breakup with George?**

Constance tried to avoid the pain of heartbreak by focusing on practical matters, such as moving to Los Angeles without a clear plan. Initially, she fell into patterns of avoidance and numbness, but eventually recognized the need to confront her feelings. She chose to accept her heartbreak as a means of self-discovery, learning to love George without reciprocation and turning her pain into empathy for others, which enriched her acting. This process ultimately helped her move on from him emotionally.

#### **5.Question:**

**What significant transformations occurred in Constance and George's relationship over the years, particularly after their breakup?**

After their breakup, Constance and George developed a friendship that lasted seven years, characterized by deep conversations and letter exchanges without romantic involvement. Both moved on and found other relationships, which surprisingly strengthened their bond, allowing for



deeper trust and openness. When Constance eventually visited George in Ireland years later, they reconnected intimately, yet George remained hesitant about commitment, reflecting unresolved issues from their past. Ultimately, Constance had to end this cycle of emotional investment due to George's unwillingness to commit, marking a significant but painful transformation in their relationship.

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## Chapter 16 | 16. An Apology | Q&A

### 1.Question:

**What is the main confession that Constance Wu presents in Chapter 16 of 'Making a Scene'?**

Constance Wu confesses to being guilty of sexual harassment during her time on the show 'Fresh Off the Boat'. She specifically acknowledges that she made a habit of writing the word 'penis' repeatedly on props, which she initially believed was harmless humor. However, she recognizes that it crossed a line and made others uncomfortable.

### 2.Question:

**How does Wu rationalize her behavior, and what ultimately leads to her recognition that it was inappropriate?**

Wu initially rationalizes her behavior by comparing it to the objectification of women's bodies in humor, arguing that if 'boob' jokes are acceptable, then 'penis' jokes should be too. However, she comes to a realization that laughter does not justify her actions, and that making jokes at the expense of others, especially when it makes them uncomfortable, is not acceptable. This realization is solidified after a producer, Justin, approaches her about a complaint regarding her behavior and she reflects on the impact her jokes had on her colleagues.

### 3.Question:

**What significant moment does Wu describe when confronted about her behavior, and what is her reaction?**

When Justin confronts Wu about her writing 'penis' repeatedly on props, he explains



that it made someone uncomfortable. Wu immediately acknowledges his point without defending herself, expressing understanding and remorse by saying, 'I'm glad you told me, and you are right, I shouldn't have done that. I will stop. I'm sorry.' This moment signifies her willingness to learn and adapt based on the feedback she received.

#### **4.Question:**

**What lessons does Wu draw from her experiences, as outlined in this chapter?**

Wu emphasizes the importance of listening to others, especially when their feelings differ from her own perspective of humor. She learns that personal intentions do not determine the impact of her actions, and that it is crucial to respect the discomfort or hurt of others rather than dismissing it. She also reflects on the idea of accountability, recognizing that defending herself comes from a place of feeling attacked, but instead, she should focus on the perspectives of those who felt hurt.

#### **5.Question:**

**How does Wu's apology serve as a broader commentary on issues of power dynamics and humor in the workplace?**

Wu's apology serves as a commentary on the complexities of power dynamics and the differences in how humor is received in the workplace. She acknowledges that her humor may stem from a place of privilege as a woman feeling empowered to joke about male anatomy, but she realizes that this does not excuse her actions. She is aware that as an actress in a power-imbalance situation, her behavior could contribute to a toxic





environment. This chapter highlights the importance of being aware of these dynamics and the responsibility individuals have to consider how their actions impact others.

## **Chapter 17 | 17. Pisha, Masha, and Me | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What emotions does Constance Wu express during her late-night drives home from work?**

In Chapter 17, Constance Wu exhibits a profound sense of exhaustion and introspection during her late-night drives. The quiet, empty roads of LA provide her a moment of respite after the high-pressure hustle of her waitressing job. Sitting in her car, she feels a longing for comfort and the peace of solitude as she contemplates the stresses of her day. The contrast between the noise and chaos of her job and the silent companionship of her car reflects her vulnerability and desire for stillness and reflection.

### **2.Question:**

**How does Wu's relationship with her first car, Pisha, illustrate her personal growth?**

Wu's relationship with Pisha, her unreliable yet beloved first car, serves as a metaphor for her journey from adolescence to adulthood. Pisha's myriad of problems and quirks become symbolic of the struggles Wu faces as she navigates her life and career. The ongoing maintenance she performs on Pisha mirrors her own growth and resilience; each repair and challenge teaches her valuable skill sets and fosters a deeper appreciation for the effort it takes to achieve and maintain her personal dreams. Pisha



represents her humble beginnings and the joy of embracing imperfections in life.

### 3.Question:

**What does Wu mean by stating that Masha, her second car, became a 'badge of honor'?**

Masha, Wu's second car, embodies her journey toward success while remaining grounded in her roots. When she refers to Masha as a 'badge of honor', she highlights her commitment to authenticity despite her rising fame through 'Fresh Off the Boat.' Masha represents her refusal to conform to societal expectations of success, which often include material wealth and luxurious possessions. By keeping an older, modest vehicle, she feels connected to her past and reminds herself of the struggles she overcame. This attachment showcases her desire to retain her identity as the scrappy underdog.

### 4.Question:

**How does Wu contrast her experiences with cars in New York City versus Los Angeles?**

Wu juxtaposes her experiences with cars in NYC and LA to underscore the differing lifestyles in these two cities. In New York, she primarily relied on cabs, often cherishing the anonymity and the reflections the city offered through the cab windows. The emotional experiences she describes, such as crying after a fight in a cab, reveal a sense of vulnerability and self-discovery in an urban landscape where personal interactions are minimal. Conversely, in LA, owning a car becomes a necessity, and her

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vehicles become intimate spaces for solitude and self-reflection, altering her relationship with her own thoughts in the quiet moments of driving.

### **5.Question:**

**How has the introduction of smartphones influenced Wu's ability to experience solitude in cars?**

Wu discusses the impact of smartphones on her experience of solitude in cars, noting how they have changed her relationship with quiet moments. Previously, being alone in a car allowed her time for introspection and connection with her surroundings. However, with the prevalence of smartphones, she often finds herself scrolling instead of fully engaging with her thoughts or the world outside. This shift symbolizes a broader cultural change, with the ease of constant connectivity diminishing the meaningful solitude she once cherished. Wu expresses disappointment in herself for allowing distractions to replace moments of quiet reflection that defined her earlier experiences.

## **Chapter 18 | 18. Unfinished Mansions | Q&A**

### **1.Question:**

**What activity did Constance Wu's mother engage in with her daughters after the older sisters went to college?**

After both of her older sisters went to college, Constance Wu's mother began taking her and her younger sister, E, to explore a series of unfinished mansions in their neighborhood. This became a tradition on Sundays, where they would venture into

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these grand houses that were under construction. The mother would teach them about the different features of the homes, allowing them to pretend they lived there and to dream about their own futures.

## **2.Question:**

### **How did Constance Wu describe her mother's beauty and charm?**

Constance Wu described her mother as the most beautiful girl in her school and, by extension, the most beautiful woman in their town, Richmond. The admiration for her mother's beauty was compounded by the cultural context of growing up in a predominantly white neighborhood where conventional beauty was often defined by criteria far removed from her mother's features. Her mother was flat-chested with black hair and dark eyes, embodying a kind of beauty that resonated deeply with Constance. She was elegant, wore understated yet beautiful clothing, and possessed a unique charm that made her warm and accessible to others.

## **3.Question:**

### **What changes occurred in the family dynamics after Constance Wu's mother returned to work?**

After Constance Wu's mother began to work full-time after earning a degree in computer programming, significant changes occurred in their family dynamics. The mother stopped handling household duties and cooking, which led to a decline in the household's upkeep and a shift in expectations. Constance's mother became less involved in their daily lives, and her demeanor changed—her bright disposition was replaced by frustration and



resentment towards the family responsibilities she felt were being unfairly distributed. This ultimately strained relationships within the family, leading to arguments and a sense of neglect for their mother.

#### **4.Question:**

**How did Constance Wu's relationship with her mother evolve during and after her early career in acting?**

Constance Wu's relationship with her mother was strained during her rise to fame due to the pressures of public scrutiny and personal issues. Wu experienced anxiety and paranoia related to her fame, which led her to cut off communication with her mother for five years. Despite their estrangement, Wu began to reconcile with her mother during her pregnancy, seeking to rebuild their relationship gradually through regular FaceTime calls. This reconciliation process revealed deeper emotional layers, including hurt and misunderstandings from their past, ultimately leading to forgiveness and a renewed connection.

#### **5.Question:**

**What does the imagery of the unfinished mansions symbolize in Constance Wu's reflections about her childhood and her mother?**

The unfinished mansions symbolize both the dreams and possibilities that Constance Wu and her sister explored during their childhood and the unfulfilled potential of her mother. As the children ran wild in these houses full of promise, it mirrored their innocent hopes and the space for imagination that their mother fostered. In contrast, Wu later reflects on her



mother's life choices and the limitations imposed by her role in the family. The mansions are representative of what might have been—the grandeur of life that her mother could have pursued if circumstances had allowed. Wu returns to these mansions as an adult, symbolizing a realization of the beautiful yet complex legacy of her mother.

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