

## The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling

By Wai Chim

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760631581 SCIS: 1922126

\$19.99

### Blurb:

Anna Chiu has her hands pretty full looking after her brother and sister and helping out at her dad's restaurant, all while her mum stays in bed. Dad's new delivery boy, Rory, is a welcome distraction and even though she knows that things aren't right at home, she's starting to feel like she could just be a normal teen. But when Mum finally gets out of bed, things go from bad to worse. And as Mum's condition worsens, Anna and her family question everything they understand about themselves and each other. A nourishing tale about the crevices of culture, mental wellness and family.



### Lamont Review:

Anna is the oldest child in a Chinese-Australian family and with it comes expectations. But with their father spending most of his time one and half hours away running the restaurant, including often sleeping there, the pressures on Anna are even higher.

Her sister Lily is a high achieving scholarship student at a private school. Together, they shield their little brother Michael from their mother's outbursts, as she struggles with a mental illness that is never discussed. But this all changes when their mother finally has a public breakdown and is institutionalised.

Throughout all of this, Anna just wants to be normal. She is falling for Rory who does deliveries for the restaurant, and who himself has struggled with his own demons.

Anna's family is one where they do not discuss family problems. Coupled with high expectations, both academic and cultural, this book handles many challenging issues that face Australian teenagers.

With an easy flowing storyline and intriguing characters, I found this a truly entertaining novel.

With themes of family expectation, mental health, first love, but mostly family dynamics, this is a wonderful novel that will most appeal to teenage girls.

Reviewed by Rob