

Meeting Luciano



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著者:Esaki-Smith, Anna

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From Publishers Weekly The author's confident if quiet voice gives credence to this polished, gentle first novel. When Japanese-American Emily Shimoda finishes college, she moves into her mother's house in Westchester County, N.Y., resuming her old waitressing job at a Japanese restaurant while deciding what to do with her life. Emily is worried that her mother, Hanako, recently divorced by Emily's father, is becoming more and more eccentric. An avid opera fan and Europhile, the cosmopolitan Hanako has decided to renovate her house because she believes with unwavering certainty that opera star Luciano Pavarotti is coming for a visit. Moreover, Hanako seems to be too trusting of the hearty Greek-American contractor, Alex, who aggressively inflates the home improvements, arousing Emily's suspicions and leaving her baffled at her mother's naive allegiance to this take-charge stranger. Under Alex's gaze and through the regenerative enterprise, Hanako blooms, however, taking stock of her newly reimagined life. Will Pavarotti actually show up? The answer to this question is delightfully unexpected, as the novel gracefully explores Emily's past and present to suggest that it is Emily, not her mother, with the identity crisis. Hanako, in her carefully controlled English, has fed her daughter colorful stories of growing up in Japan while making it clear that Emily and her siblings were expected to be fully assimilated Americans. This contradiction has rendered Emily obstinate and

confused, "a frowning girl." Emily is at times too analytical and detached, almost infuriatingly so, and her nostalgia for an old college boyfriend is a bit forced. Nevertheless, her fraught relationship with her mother is heartfelt and complicated; when she tries to dismiss her concerns about her mother's possible disappointment, she finds she can't. As Emily learns to see her ethnic identity clearly, Esaki-Smith delineates her heroine's maturation as a blend of personal choices, proud heritage and self-exploration. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition. From Library Journal Esaki-Smith's first novel is the delightful, humorous story of Emily, a recent college graduate who has returned home to live with her divorced mother, Hanako. Besides continuing her obsession for European things, especially Italian cooking, opera, and espresso, the Japanese-born Hanako has begun renovating the family home. To Emily's surprise, Hanako has pursued the renovation because she believes her hero, Luciano Pavarotti, is coming to visit. Eventually, Emily must come to terms not only with the fantasies and frailties of her mother but also with her own disappointments and fears. She must also deal with Hanako's odd friendship with Alex, the contractor whom she has hired to redo the house. Esaki-Smith's well-developed debut novel demonstrates great potential. Recommended for large fiction collections.?Faye A. Chadwell, Univ. of Oregon Libs., EugeneCopyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition. See all Editorial Reviews

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