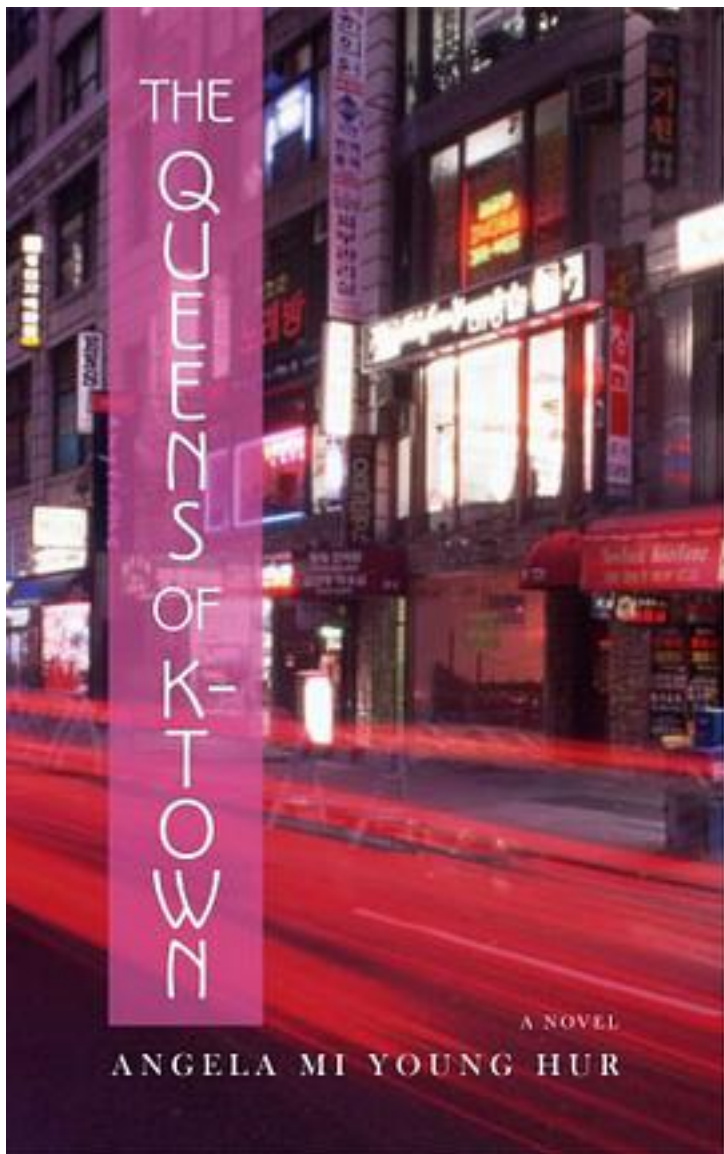


The Queens of K-Town



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Twenty-six-year-old Cora Moon comes back to Manhattan's Koreatown after an absence of ten years. The vision of a girl standing on the edge of a building hurtles Cora back into memory to her first summer in K-town, where along with her new friends, she got lost in the maze of nightclubs and room salons, mini-marts and private dining rooms behind rice-paper doors. The novel alternates between two worlds, as she relives her past and drifts through her present, in which she begins an affair with a stranger she calls "The Monk." They play "psychiatrist" in his living room, but Cora seeks understanding of herself through a crash course in theoretical physics. What seems to be a coming-of-age-story veers off into the higher dimensions and the shady underworld, featuring shamans and shopkeepers, misfits and exiles. From the prologue, we know that ten years ago, a girl leapt to her death. We know nothing else except that she was Cora's first love. The rooftop girl in the present is a stranger, which makes it convenient for Cora to assume her identity and follow in her footsteps. A double-stranded narrative, the novel gradually unravels two mysteries: Who was the first girl who jumped? And what will happen when Cora finally reaches the top?

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