



## Take Me Home

*Brian Leung*

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## **Take Me Home** Brian Leung

Take Me Home is a powerful story about friendship and love set against the stunning backdrop of 1880s Wyoming and based in the pages of history.

Like many classic stories, Brian Leung's novel begins with a journey home. Adele "Addie" Maine is returning to Dire, a Wyoming coal-mining town, forty years after the deadly events that nearly took her life and drove her away without a word to her husband.

Years earlier: Headed West to stay with her brother Tommy, a young and feisty Addie arrives in Wyoming having been convinced along the way that the Chinese who work alongside the white men in the small Wyoming town are half-man, half-beast - devious creatures to be wary of. When Tommy falters at homesteading, the siblings look to the coal mines and Addie comes into close contact with one Chinese man in particular, Wing Lee. The bond between the two is a mere spark at first, hampered by the reality for both that a friendship would be impossible, forbidden, even in a territory where almost everyone is an immigrant.

Together, Addie and Wing harbor a secret. Ultimately Addie must protect Wing's life and fight for what she knows is right, but she still can't find the answers to life's most important questions. It's only as a much older woman, returning to Dire to bid farewell to a friend from decades ago, that Addie comes face-to-face with the man she's certain tried to kill her, and at last confronts the surprises and losses that await at the end of a difficult journey.

Take Me Home is a searing, redemptive novel that explores justice in a time of violence, and the sweeping landscape between friendship and love.

## **Take Me Home Details**

Date : Published October 5th 2010 by Harper (first published September 18th 2010)

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Author : Brian Leung

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## From Reader Review Take Me Home for online ebook

### Donna says

A new author for me and a new novel for him! This historical fiction about Addie Maine traveling from Kentucky to the Wyoming Territory to meet her brother on his homestead leads her into the conflicts of the mining industry between the Chinese laborers and the white laborers. Addie's character is developed and expanded and she begins to learn of the hard life in the West in the late 1800's. She befriends a Chinese young man and form a bond that is tender and deep. Addie is forced to see how much hatred envelopes the miners. She had to move through grief and tragedy.

One of the things I really liked about the book was the way Brian Leung moves us from the present to the past and back again several times. This kept me reading, wanting to see how things progressed in both settings. A great read!

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### Saleh MoonWalker says

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### Wendi says

#### Take Me Home

By Brian Leung

Published by Harper

Told in episodes, *Take Me Home* is the story of Adele "Addie" Maine. Brave and spirited, Addie became something of a hero in the mid 1880's; though she wouldn't call herself so. Times were different then, and a person didn't have much of a choice if they wanted to live to see tomorrow, though she almost didn't.

Moving to Wyoming at her brothers request, Addie had no idea what she was in for. Arriving on the train, Addie was shocked to find herself in a vast, dusty poverty stricken wasteland called Dire. Where she expected houses or even shacks, ramshackle subterranean dwellings were all that could be hoped for by the mine laborers. And there was something more. There were foreigners. Chinese. 'Animals', if you listened to the white's talk.

At a loss to help her brother or improve their situation, and determined as ever to make a go at this life, Addie decides to go into business for herself selling wild game. She hires Wing Lee, a Chinese cook, to help her prepare the game and sell it to both camps of miners; whites and Chinese. Over time, this arrangement evolves into a friendship, as it becomes clear as day that Wing is a man, just like any other, and there is no difference between people, save the color of their skin.

Addie's friendship with Wing isn't her only act of derision in Dire. When a mine collapse leaves her brother trapped, and no one goes in to help; Addie runs into the mine intending a rescue. Deep in the mine, she finds three men, one Chinese, and two white. Her brother is hopelessly trapped but the other two merely injured. Knowing she needed help to free her brother, she pulls the two injured men out, intending to return for her

brother with additional aid. Unfortunately, it was never to be. A second mine collapse sealed his fate before there was anything to be done.

Despite having gained the respect of both the white men and Chinese, Addie's life becomes increasingly complicated. She marries her brothers' friend out of respect for his wishes and as a means to a living; a marriage in name only. Her husband is a man she does not understand. He is broken inside and does nothing to ease the pain of her brother's loss. All the while, Wing is her constant companion, lifting her spirits and rousing her heart with his gift of friendship. When a riot erupts and the whites are bent on driving the Chinese out, Addie does what she can to help the Chinese she comes across escape while frantically searching for Wing. She is shot in her pursuit.

*Take Me Home*, is a frank and stirring account of Mid-West life in the late 1880's. A reminder that blacks were not the only people group to be victimized and oppressed during the forming of this nation. Leung makes an import statement with this work and while I appreciate the historical accuracies and theme, I was unable to become enveloped in the story. A bit slow in some spots while rushing past others, the book is nevertheless worth the read.

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### **Cannwin says**

If I could find only one word to use for it's description it would be beautiful. Yet, even that hardly seems to do it justice. This book encompassed many things that I love in literature; historical points, love, redemption, and peace. I cried at the end and my daughter (who was reading Harry Potter 6 next to me) looked at me in surprise.

"Mommy, what's the matter!?"

I rubbed my eyes and smiled through my tears. "Nothing Baby, it's just. So. Good."

She clearly didn't understand so after I finished the last page I tried to explain, "She finds peace."

It will be years before my darling 9 year old will be able to truly comprehend the power of *Take Me Home*, but it wasn't for her that I cried. It was for that part of me that felt healed by reading it. That part of me that gloried in having the opportunity to share in such a marvelous love story. A real love story, not just a story about passions released but about friendship, trust, companionship and consequence.

Read more of my reviews at [literarysoundtrack.blogspot.com](http://literarysoundtrack.blogspot.com)

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### **Elizabeth says**

I received this book as part of the First Reads program. If I could give this three and a half stars, I would. It was written well, had good flow and character development, and was descriptive. A couple of things were a little predictable, but that's okay. My main reason for not giving it four stars is because in the last six months

I also read "My Antonia" (Willa Cather) and "Thousand Pieces of Gold" (RuthAnne Lum McCunn) and I felt that this book was a combination of the two in many ways. Person moves west to be with family, meets immigrant, becomes friends with immigrant (My Antonia). Person moves from China to America, from San Francisco goes east, meets one white person that isn't cruel (Thousand Pieces of Gold). Where this book is different is that there isn't a happy ending and it doesn't really work out in the end.

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### **Melissa says**

In the 1880's, Addie traveled to visit her brother, a coal minter in Dire, Wyoming. At the time, the town recruited Chinese men to work the mines for less pay. They were were not trusted, accepted or wanted by the locals. Addie developed an unlikely romance with one of them, Wing Lee. Tension peaks between the Americans and Chinese; violence and tragedy descends. Addie's life is forever changed and she leaves Dire for good. Now as an elderly woman, she is finally making the trip back to settle some unfinished business and finally understand what it was she truly lost on that tragic day. A perceptive and well written story.

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### **Brian Leung says**

Well, I wrote it, so I won't go on about it. I can honestly say it's the best fiction I've ever written.

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### **Cheryl-Lynn says**

A first reads good reads win! 3.5 stars

This is certainly a thought provoking book. It kind of reminded me of The Grapes of Wrath (though it's been a long time since I read that one). The historical foundation comes from some riots in Rock Springs Wyoming in 1882. It was certainly interesting to read about life in the Wyoming territory during this time period. Addie is a likable, tough woman who does very well, considering the circumstances. There are great descriptions and it made me glad to not live in a time and place like this. However, this book was slow for me. It jumped some between the 1880's and 1920's when Addie returns to face her husband who she believes shot her. I would liked to have followed her life a little longer and found out how she was in the 1920's. I do think it's valuable to follow the lives of individuals who lived lives such as this I just wish the book had moved a little faster.

Content: Recommended for 18+. Violence (riots have that) and some sexual connotations

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### **Nancy says**

I "won" this book from Goodreads!!

I enjoyed the book very much. It is the story of Addie Maine, a strong woman, in the Wyoming territory. It is also the story of Wing, a Chinese immigrant, who cooks for the coal miners. Addie and Wing become friends and through the riots between the white and Chinese miners, face bitter consequences of their friendship.

The story is well-written, from both Addie's and Wing's perspectives. I really got a feel for the time and the separation/difference/family themes are pretty universal.

I didn't like the title of the book and I wanted to know more about Addie's life after she left Wyoming. A lot of Addie's story was missing.

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### **Susan says**

In this work of historical fiction, the reader is transported back to Wyoming Territory, 1895. Addie Maine is a young, single woman traveling alone to help her brother on his homestead. What she finds is earth too barren to grow much, men that work in the mines and live in the most hopeless situation. In this desperate land Addie befriends a Chinese man who is a cook in the camp for the Chinese workers who are miners. This was very unseemly for not only a woman, but anyone, because the whites did not understand the customs and appearance of people so different from themselves and there was a lot of racial discrimination.

I liked the premise of this book and for the most part I think it was really well written. It had some parts that were a little draggy, although I couldn't put my finger on what it was exactly. The last third was the best part of the book and I would have liked to have seen a different outcome, although I know that because of the prejudice and hate that it would not have been possible. It was good to read a book about this overlooked part of history. Overall a very nice read.

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### **Aaron Lozano says**

Loved the plot twists in this book! Well written and entertaining and obviously well researched. As a Wyomingite I found it to be a good look into one of our darker times as a State/Territory. A book that kept me on my toes, and still through in one last twist in the end that I did not see coming, I highly recommend this book!

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### **CF says**

Addie is on her way to Dire, a country town in the middle of nowhere, to join her brother Tommy, with the dream of building a homestead.

At the time (late 19th century) Chinese workers have been filling the mines and race rows build slowly between them and the white men.

Addie meets Wing, a kindly Chinese cook, and begins to understand the racism that is boiling between the two camps. Wing and Addie become close over a certain amount of time, as there is growing problems with Addie's husband Muuk.

This is very beautifully written, sweeping landscapes and barren images appear clearly. The story includes racism, love and the complexities of revenge.

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## cheryl says

This novel falls into the realm of books that I wanted to like more than I did. I very well might have picked it up on my own and I wouldn't have regretted it but I also would be unlikely to return to it or pass it on. I'd give it a solid 3 out of 5 stars.

The novel follows Addie Maine in both her first stay in the Wyoming Territory (1880s) and her return as an older woman (1920s). The focus is on the earlier period, when she joined her brother who had been attracted to the territory by the promise of a homestead. Having found the land rough, he ends up working in a coal mine shortly after Addie arrives. The area is populated by both Caucasians and Chinese, the latter brought in by the rail and mine groups to provide cheap labor. The lack of money leads to strong racial tensions, tensions to which a growing friendship between Addie and a Chinese man run counter. I won't say too much more to avoid venturing into spoiler territory, although it becomes clear early on that Addie is wounded in a local riot (one that has a historical parallel).

I like stories about strong women and Addie is certainly one. I am also interested in the history of racial tension, especially stories that sometimes go untold...I knew of tension with those of European descent and the Chinese (it's easier to have tension w/ groups that appear different on sight) but not of the particular story that provides the historical backdrop for the tale. I just never felt fully pulled in, never fell into the story and the characters (I've said before, characters make a book for me more than plot). I wanted to know a lot more about Addie's lone female friend in the territory but that was pretty much a side story. Leung (who I think is only on his 2nd novel) has talent for identifying an interesting context and tale. His prose flows well and has character. But I just didn't find myself surrendering to the tale enough to give it a higher rating. Good, but not great.

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## Misfit says

Adele (Addie) Main's story is told in alternating time lines, the first being the \*present\* in 1927 when she returns to the home she left behind in Dire, Wyoming and coming to grips with the tragic events that brought her to leave. The second timeline is Addie's story as she comes to join her brother in Dire, her marriage to Muuk and friendship with Wing-Lee. Dire is a coal mining town in the back of beyond and Chinese are not exactly popular and eventually the tensions heat up to the point of no return - will Addie and Wing-Lee survive?

Yep, there's a lot more than that but I see other reviewers have been ahead of me and done a nice job recapping so I'll pass on one more rehash. While not a bad book by any means, there really wasn't a whole lot in Addie's story to keep me reading on into the wee hours of the morning, nor I pick up on any really chemistry between Addie and Wing-Lee. That said, I think my biggest issue was the constant POV switches - and I'm not talking about the timeline switches either. What threw me off was starting a chapter in one place (Dire) and then we're hurtling back to Addie's early days learning about her parents and childhood. Other chapters would start and then flip back to something that happened a few days ago and/or minutes ago. I found it quite distracting and half the time I never knew where I was at the beginning of the next chapter, except for when Addie was riding in a motor vehicle. Then I knew it was 1927. The copy I read was an ARC so perhaps this was corrected in the final version, but a note at the chapter header of date and/or "Addie" or "Wing-Lee" would have been very helpful to cut the distractions to a minimum..

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## Jenny Shank says

From Dallas Morning News, November, 2010

Over the past year, Chinese miners in the Old West have drawn a surge of interest from all kinds of writers.

In nonfiction, we have seen *The Poker Bride: The First Chinese in the Wild West* by Christopher Corbett and *Massacred for Gold: The Chinese in Hells Canyon*, by R. Gregory Nokes. That Idaho massacre is central to David Abrams' novel *Deep Creek*, and Chinese miners had a cameo role in Ivan Doig's Montana mining novel, *Work Song*. Now comes Brian Leung's heartfelt second novel, *Take Me Home*, set in the rough mining town of Dire, Wyo., where an improbable love affair develops between a white woman and a Chinese man.

All these writers agree that the Chinese who came to America to work as miners and railroad builders were the subject of rough treatment and discrimination, derided with all kinds of slurs, and subjected to lives that were isolated and difficult in part because their sojourns here were intended to be temporary.

Leung's novel is distinct in that it recreates this experience from the perspective of one immigrant, Wing Lee, a sensitive, artistic young man who chooses employment as a cook because he fears the physical damage mining inflicts. As Corbett noted in his book, direct accounts from Chinese immigrants in America during this period are rare because few of these workers could write in English, and most who didn't perish returned to China, leaving without sharing their stories with a younger generation.

Wing's impressions of Wyoming are striking. Leung writes, "When [Wing's] parents wrote for news following his departure from San Francisco, he described this very view, the slope of Dire Draw that fanned out into the valley, the black embroidery of train tracks that snaked under a blue so wide and unyielding that in his letter he repeated the character for sky three times in a row."

While in Dire, Leung meets the formidable redhead Addie Maine, an encounter that is unusual both because women were scarce in these mining towns and because whites rarely interacted with Chinese, who kept to their own Chinatown sections.

Addie comes from Kentucky, where she was abandoned by her mother as a child and survived her alcoholic father's limited parenting. Addie's older brother Tommy invited her to join him in Wyoming, where he's trying to prove up on a dispiriting plot of land and mining in the meantime. Upon Addie's arrival, Tommy's descriptions of Chinese people she'll encounter are so prejudiced and off-the-mark that when she sees her first pronghorn, she asks if it's a "coolie." But Addie is independent minded, and when she realizes she is not going to get anywhere by relying on her brother's work ethic, she decides to shoot, cook, and sell meat to miners with the help of Wing.

Addie speaks and thinks in a folksy way common to characters in period Western books, but Leung beautifully describes the process of Addie's mind and heart opening to Wing and the other Chinese.

The narrative jumps back and forth in time, cycling around an 1885 massacre of Chinese miners by whites in Rock Springs, Wyo., whose events *Take Me Home* touches on many times before fully revealing the horrible particulars. For the most part, this structure provides momentum and mystery to the novel, but there are a few details that are underemphasized in its shuffle, such as how Wing learned to read and write English so well, a skill that he conceals from everyone but Addie.

Leung's writing is so clear and lovely and his characters are so well-realized that he convinces the reader that the improbable attraction between Wing and Addie wasn't impossible, and the character of Wing speaks

eloquently for thousands of Chinese miners whose voices are lost to history.

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