BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

Committee Number: 41 **Date** 4/5/23

Name of Novel Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Lo, Malinda

Directions: After reading the selected novel, review the material using the below criteria. Note upon review of the book the following Beaufort County School District Non Discrimination will be taken into consideration:

Non-Discrimination. The BCSD affirms the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and/or harassment. The BCSD is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, the BCSD does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX or any other local, state, or federal law.

EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	**Check all that apply**
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓
Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:	

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓
Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY: The notes of the author helped to put the story in perspective.	

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓
Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY:	

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓
Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS:			

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	**Check all that apply**
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The book focuses on historical accuracies while keeping the plot of the story relevant.
The book references language used during that time period and captures the persecution of Asian Americans during the 1950s.

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

The book was extremely well written with cultural references and footnotes to explain. The historical aspects were addressed and portrayed in an easy to read storyline.

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓
Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY: The book is not vulgar and the depictions of any activity is well written and tasteful.	

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓
Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS: The historical maturity of this book is best suited for 9-12.			

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	Check all that apply
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The book covers historical content in America and China in a historically accurate way. The novel shows cultures and how immigrants responded to racism in many different forms.

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

The text was very well written with great information on STEM, Math, Science, History with awesome historically well written. Accurate information combined with an emotional story of a young teenager who struggles with being different.

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓
Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY: The book was written using loving ways to explain sexual acts. It was not vulgar in my opinion.	

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓
Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS: Just given the history content, I think high school age would be the more appropriate fit.			

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	Check all that apply
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The historical accuracy and exquisitely written descriptions of the era, society and the area were profoundly impactful.

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

Inclusion of timelines, detailed descriptions of places and events, was helpful in illustrating all aspects of the text

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY:

There was NO vulgarity in this text at all - no graphic content; all depictions of their romantic feelings were beautifully depicted and heartfelt.

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓

Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS:

Absolutely appropriate for high school - maturity level and comprehension appropriate —

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	**Check all that apply**
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Historical references gives insight into the social & political climate of the era which informs & enhances the issues of the time, both then and even now.

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
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The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

- many readers would relate to this text
- historically based/ infusion of timelines

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓

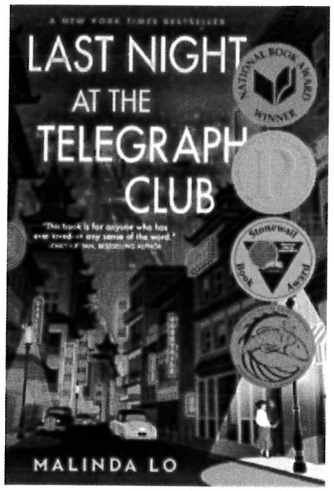
Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY:

The novel includes mature relationship themes however they are presented in a mature, respectful manner

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓

Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS:

- Definitely appropriate for High School



Preview

Last night at the Telegraph Club (#1933FU5)

by Lo, Malinda

8 reviews & awards | **5** full-text reviews

FollettBound Glued — Dutton Books, 2021

Price: **$18.76**

10+ in stock.

Description: **415 pages : illustrations ; 21 cm**

Dewey: **-Fic-**; Audience: **Young Adult**

AR 6.3 UG 17 516234EN; **LEX** 900L

From the publisher: **Age 14**

From Booklist: **Grades 9-12**; Kirkus: **Ages 14-18**; PW: **Ages 14-up**; SLJ: **Gr 9-Up**

Overview

From Follett

Includes bibliographical references (pages 409-410) and filmography (page 410). 1954, in San Francisco's Chinatown, seventeen-year-old Lily Hu falls in love with Kathleen Miller.

Product Details

- **Publisher:** Dutton Books
- **Publication Date:** December 28, 2021
- **Format:** FollettBound Glued
- **Edition:** First paperback edition.
- **Dewey:** -Fic-
- **Classifications:** Fiction
- **Description:** 415 pages : illustrations ; 21 cm
- **ISBN-10:** 1-66881-192-8 (originally 0-525-55527-7)
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1-66881-192-4 (originally 978-0-525-55527-8)
- **Follett Number:** 1933FU5
- **Audience:** Young Adult
- **Age:** 14
- **Booklist:** Grades 9-12
- **Kirkus:** Ages 14-18
- **Publishers Weekly:** Ages 14-up
- **School Library Journal:** Gr 9-Up
- **ATOS Book Level:** 6.3
- **AR Interest Level:** UG
- **AR Points:** 17
- **AR Quiz:** 516234EN
- **Lexile:** 900L

Reviews & Awards

- **Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature Award**, 2022
- **Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books starred**, 12/01/20
- **Horn Book Magazine starred**, 03/01/21
- **Kirkus Reviews starred**, 12/01/20
- **Michael L. Printz Honor**, 2022
- **Publishers Weekly Annex starred**, 01/25/21
- **School Library Journal**, 01/01/21 **Stonewall Book Award**, 2022

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist starred (November 1, 2020 (Vol. 117, No. 5))

Grades 9-12. For 17-year-old Lily Hu, San Francisco's Chinatown during the 1950s is home to her community and culture. However, despite having friends and loving parents, she struggles with a sense of belonging. Rather than fixating on boys, like her friends, Lily dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab (where her aunt works) and traveling to Mars. Slowly, Lily realizes that more than her life goals are in play here, as she recognizes that she is attracted to women rather than men. That includes Kath, the other girl in her math class, whose goal is to fly airplanes. After the two connect over an ad for a male impersonator at the Telegraph Club and begin frequenting the establishment, Lily's life changes forever. Fearful of exposing her feelings and of her family being labeled Communists (as a result of the Lavender Scare), Lily is faced with hard decisions about herself and those she loves. Writing beautifully with a knowing, gentle hand that balances Lily's unease and courage, Lo presents a must-read love story in an uncommon setting: the midcentury queer Bay Area at a time when racism, homophobia, and McCarthyism held tight grips on the citizenry. The author's notes are a wealth of historical information and discuss the seed from which this alternately heart-wrenching and satisfying story grew.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Horn Book Magazine (March/April, 2021)

High school senior Lily Hu lives in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1954 with her medical professional parents; she behaves obediently and dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab like her aunt Judy. But she hides a secret yearning. After seeing an ad featuring "Tommy Andrews Male Impersonator," she sneaks out to the performance at the lesbian Telegraph Club with Kath, a white classmate who shares Lily's longing. Soon the two are club regulars, even though Lily's parents have warned her they are being watched (after her father's citizenship papers were confiscated by the FBI) and could be deported. When an incident at the Telegraph threatens to uncover Lily's lesbian identity to her family, she is forced to make a difficult choice. This standout work of historical fiction combines meticulous research with tender romance to create a riveting bildungsroman. San Francisco, "with its steep stairways and sudden glimpses of the bay between tall, narrow buildings," is almost a character itself. Interspersed flashbacks that detail the personal histories of Lily's parents and Aunt Judy and timelines of world events further put the 1950s Chinese American experience into context for readers. Lo's (Ash, rev. 11/09; A Line in the Dark, rev. 11/17) comprehensive author's note includes an absorbing section on "Lesbians, Gender, and Community" and a select bibliography of print and film resources. Jennifer Hubert Swan March/April 2021 p.95

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Kirkus Reviews starred (December 1, 2020)

Finally, the intersectional, lesbian, historical teen novel so many readers have been waiting for. Lily Hu has spent all her life in San Francisco's Chinatown, keeping mostly to her Chinese American community both in and out of school. As she makes her way through her teen years in the 1950s, she starts growing apart from her childhood friends as her passion for rockets and space exploration grows—along with her curiosity about a few blocks in the city that her parents have warned her to avoid. A budding relationship develops with her first White friend, Kathleen, and together they sneak out to the Telegraph Club lesbian bar, where they begin to explore their sexuality as well as their relationship to each other. Lo's lovely, realistic, and queer-positive tale is a slow burn, following Lily's own gradual realization of her sexuality while she learns how to code-switch between being ostensibly heterosexual Chinatown Lily and lesbian Telegraph Bar Lily. In this meticulously researched title, Lo skillfully layers rich details, such as how Lily has to deal with microaggressions from gay and straight women alike and how all of Chinatown has to be careful of the insidious threat of McCarthyism. Actual events, such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek's 1943 visit to San Francisco, form a backdrop to this story of a journey toward finding one's authentic self. Beautifully written historical fiction about giddy, queer first love. (author's note) (Historical romance. 14-18)

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

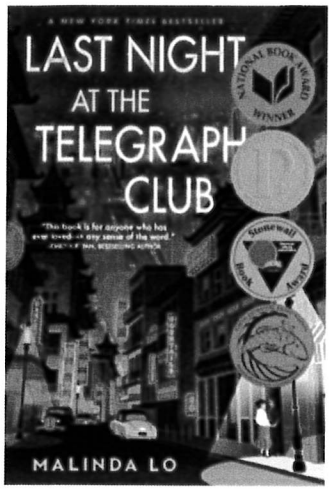
Publishers Weekly starred (January 25, 2021)

The year is 1954, and American-born Chinese 17-year-old Lily Hu, a rising senior at San Francisco's Galileo High School, discovers the existence of the Telegraph Club nightclub by chance: via an ad in the Chronicle featuring a Male Impersonator. Lily secretly gathers photos of women with masculine qualities; she's drawn toward "unfeminine" clothing and interests such as chemistry, engines, and space. Dawning recognition of her lesbianism comes alongside a budding connection with Kathleen Miller, a white classmate. But openly exploring queerness isn't an option-not with her mother touting "respectability," and society's limited perception of Chinese-Americanness as either "China doll" or "real American"-adjacent, and especially not amid McCarthyism-during which Chinese people, including those within Lily's close Chinatown community, are targeted as Communist sympathizers. As Lily falls deeper in love, though, she must work to balance the shifting elements of her identity with a landscape of sociopolitical turmoil that will resonate with contemporary readers. Lo incorporates Chinese food and language, appending explanatory footnotes for romanized Cantonese and Mandarin terms and characters. Smoothly referencing cultural touchstones and places with historic Chinese American significance, Lo conjures 1950s San Francisco adeptly while transcending historicity through a sincere exploration of identity and love. Back matter includes an author's note explaining Lo's personal connection to the story. Ages 14-up. Agent: Michael Bourret, Dystel, Goderich & Bourret. (Jan.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

School Library Journal (January 1, 2021)

Gr 9 Up-It's 1954 San Francisco, and 17-year-old Lily Hu is the epitome of a "good Chinese girl": She's modest, respectful of her parents, and her most outlandish interest is rocket science. Then she finds a magazine ad for Tommy Andrews, male impersonator at the Telegraph Club, and everything changes. She befriends classmate Kathleen Miller, who's into airplanes and knows about the Telegraph Club too, and all of her unspoken feelings begin tumbling out. The pair sneak out to the club, and Lily is both overwhelmed and thrilled as she is enveloped by the San Francisco lesbian scene. But the girls' secret is dangerous; it threatens Lily's oldest friendships and even her father's citizenship status. Eventually, Lily must decide if owning her truth is worth everything she's ever known. Lo's historical novel is a meditative exploration of a young gay Chinese American girl in the 1950s. While there are many compelling tenets woven throughout Lily's journey (racism, anti-Communism, her Chinese family's relationship to their American identity), an abundance of detail weighs down the plot. The focus on world-building is at times heavy-handed, causing repetitiveness and rendering Lily and Kath's relationship the slowest of burns. Lo's prose comes alive when describing Lily's blossoming awareness of desire; readers will be enthralled with her breathless, confusing experience of seeing the long-awaited Tommy Andrews and finally expressing her feelings for Kath. The ending is devastatingly realistic for its time, but an epilogue shimmers with a gloss of hope. VERDICT A pensive, rich work of queer historical fiction that will reward patient readers.-Ashleigh Williams, School Library Journal © Copyright 2021. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.



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- **Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books starred**, 12/01/20
- **Horn Book Magazine starred**, 03/01/21
- **Kirkus Reviews starred**, 12/01/20
- **Michael L. Printz Honor**, 2022
- **Publishers Weekly Annex starred**, 01/25/21
- **School Library Journal**, 01/01/21 **Stonewall Book Award**, 2022

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist starred (November 1, 2020 (Vol. 117, No. 5))
Grades 9-12. For 17-year-old Lily Hu, San Francisco's Chinatown during the 1950s is home to her community and culture. However, despite having friends and loving parents, she struggles with a sense of belonging. Rather than fixating on boys, like her friends, Lily dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab (where her aunt works) and traveling to Mars. Slowly, Lily realizes that more than her life goals are in play here, as she recognizes that she is attracted to women rather than men. That includes Kath, the other girl in her math class, whose goal is to fly airplanes. After the two connect over an ad for a male impersonator at the Telegraph Club and begin frequenting the establishment, Lily's life changes forever. Fearful of exposing her feelings and of her family being labeled Communists (as a result of the Lavender Scare), Lily is faced with hard decisions about herself and those she loves. Writing beautifully with a knowing, gentle hand that balances Lily's unease and courage, Lo presents a must-read love story in an uncommon setting: the midcentury queer Bay Area at a time when racism, homophobia, and McCarthyism held tight grips on the citizenry. The author's notes are a wealth of historical information and discuss the seed from which this alternately heart-wrenching and satisfying story grew.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.
Horn Book Magazine (March/April, 2021)
High school senior Lily Hu lives in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1954 with her medical professional parents; she behaves obediently and dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab like her aunt Judy. But she hides a secret yearning. After seeing an ad featuring "Tommy Andrews Male Impersonator," she sneaks out to the performance at the lesbian Telegraph Club with Kath, a white classmate who shares Lily's longing. Soon the two are club regulars, even though Lily's parents have warned her they are being watched (after her father's citizenship papers were confiscated by the FBI) and could be deported. When an incident at the Telegraph threatens to uncover Lily's lesbian identity to her family, she is forced to make a difficult choice. This standout work of historical fiction combines meticulous research with tender romance to create a riveting bildungsroman. San Francisco, "with its steep stairways and sudden glimpses of the bay between tall, narrow buildings," is almost a character itself. Interspersed flashbacks that detail the personal histories of Lily's parents and Aunt Judy and timelines of world events further put the 1950s Chinese American experience into context for readers. Lo's (Ash, rev. 11/09; A Line in the Dark, rev. 11/17) comprehensive author's note includes an absorbing section on "Lesbians, Gender, and Community" and a select bibliography of print and film resources. Jennifer Hubert Swan
March/April 2021 p.95

Taken from the **Hardcover**.
Kirkus Reviews starred (December 1, 2020)
Finally, the intersectional, lesbian, historical teen novel so many readers have been waiting for. Lily Hu has spent all her life in San Francisco's Chinatown, keeping mostly to her Chinese American community both in and out of school. As she makes her way through her teen years in the 1950s, she starts growing apart from her childhood friends as her passion for rockets and space exploration grows—along with her curiosity about a few blocks in the city that her parents have warned her to avoid. A budding relationship develops with her first White friend, Kathleen, and together they sneak out to the Telegraph Club lesbian bar, where they begin to explore their sexuality as well as their relationship to each other. Lo's lovely, realistic, and queer-positive tale is a slow burn, following Lily's own gradual realization of her sexuality while she learns how to code-switch between being ostensibly heterosexual Chinatown Lily and lesbian Telegraph Bar Lily. In this meticulously researched title, Lo skillfully layers rich details, such as how Lily has to deal with microaggressions from gay and straight women alike and how all of Chinatown has to be careful of the insidious threat of McCarthyism. Actual events, such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek's 1943 visit to San Francisco, form a backdrop to this story of a journey toward finding one's authentic self. Beautifully written historical fiction about giddy, queer first love. (author's note) (Historical romance. 14-18)

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

Publishers Weekly starred (January 25, 2021)

The year is 1954, and American-born Chinese 17-year-old Lily Hu, a rising senior at San Francisco's Galileo High School, discovers the existence of the Telegraph Club nightclub by chance: via an ad in the Chronicle featuring a Male Impersonator. Lily secretly gathers photos of women with masculine qualities; she's drawn toward "unfeminine" clothing and interests such as chemistry, engines, and space. Dawning recognition of her lesbianism comes alongside a budding connection with Kathleen Miller, a white classmate. But openly exploring queerness isn't an option-not with her mother touting "respectability," and society's limited perception of Chinese-Americanness as either "China doll" or "real American"-adjacent, and especially not amid McCarthyism-during which Chinese people, including those within Lily's close Chinatown community, are targeted as Communist sympathizers. As Lily falls deeper in love, though, she must work to balance the shifting elements of her identity with a landscape of sociopolitical turmoil that will resonate with contemporary readers. Lo incorporates Chinese food and language, appending explanatory footnotes for romanized Cantonese and Mandarin terms and characters. Smoothly referencing cultural touchstones and places with historic Chinese American significance, Lo conjures 1950s San Francisco adeptly while transcending historicity through a sincere exploration of identity and love. Back matter includes an author's note explaining Lo's personal connection to the story. Ages 14-up. Agent: Michael Bourret, Dystel, Goderich & Bourret. (Jan.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Taken from the **Hardcover**.

School Library Journal (January 1, 2021)

Gr 9 Up-It's 1954 San Francisco, and 17-year-old Lily Hu is the epitome of a "good Chinese girl": She's modest, respectful of her parents, and her most outlandish interest is rocket science. Then she finds a magazine ad for Tommy Andrews, male impersonator at the Telegraph Club, and everything changes. She befriends classmate Kathleen Miller, who's into airplanes and knows about the Telegraph Club too, and all of her unspoken feelings begin tumbling out. The pair sneak out to the club, and Lily is both overwhelmed and thrilled as she is enveloped by the San Francisco lesbian scene. But the girls' secret is dangerous; it threatens Lily's oldest friendships and even her father's citizenship status. Eventually, Lily must decide if owning her truth is worth everything she's ever known. Lo's historical novel is a meditative exploration of a young gay Chinese American girl in the 1950s. While there are many compelling tenets woven throughout Lily's journey (racism, anti-Communism, her Chinese family's relationship to their American identity), an abundance of detail weighs down the plot. The focus on world-building is at times heavy-handed, causing repetitiveness and rendering Lily and Kath's relationship the slowest of burns. Lo's prose comes alive when describing Lily's blossoming awareness of desire; readers will be enthralled with her breathless, confusing experience of seeing the long-awaited Tommy Andrews and finally expressing her feelings for Kath. The ending is devastatingly realistic for its time, but an epilogue shimmers with a gloss of hope. VERDICT A pensive, rich work of queer historical fiction that will reward patient readers.-Ashleigh Williams, School Library Journal © Copyright 2021. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.