

From the award-winning, bestselling author of *Stone Sky Gold Mountain* comes the story of an Irish–Chinese family over four generations in Australia.

‘They said you were a murdering bushranger.’

It’s the winter of 2049 and Daniel is elderly and long isolated. After yet another devastating storm, this time destroying his beloved longan tree, he finds his fragile peace threatened by a growing friendship with a widowed neighbour and the appearance of a young reporter digging into a shameful event buried deep in his past.

Across the autumn of 2000, the summer of 1949 and the restless springs of the mid-nineteenth century, the tangled roots of Daniel’s family tree unfurl – to the moment an Irish orphan finds her fate entwined with that of a Chinese bushranger.

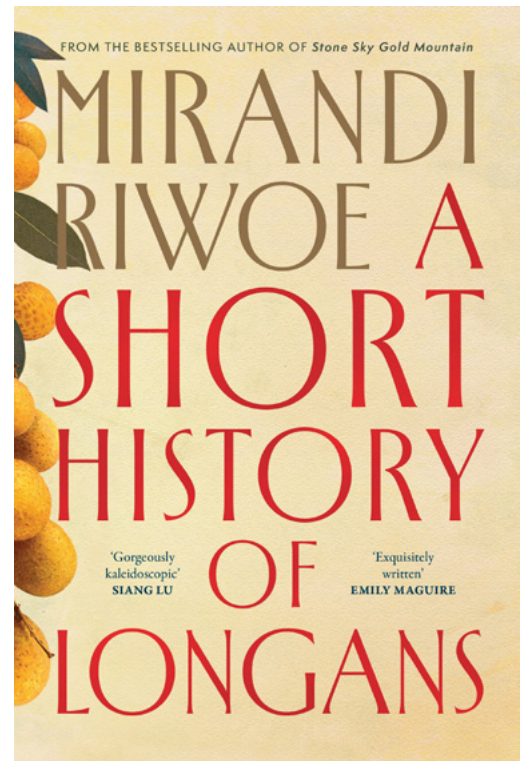
Intriguing and beautifully written, this dazzling novel spanning centuries and generations unravels the secrets and memories of one Irish–Chinese family to explore what it means to belong – to place, to ancestors, to ourselves.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mirandi Riwoe is the author of *Stone Sky Gold Mountain*, which won the Queensland Literary Award – Fiction Book Award and the inaugural ARA Historical Novel Prize, and was shortlisted for the Stella Prize and longlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award. Her second novel, *Sunbirds*, was set in wartime Java during World War II and was shortlisted for the Barbara Jefferis Award. Her debut

novella, *The Fish Girl*, was also shortlisted for the Stella Prize and the Queensland Literary Award – Fiction Book Award. Her work has appeared in *Best Australian Stories*, *Meanjin*, *Review of Australian Fiction*, *Griffith Review* and *Best Summer Stories*.



BOOK DETAILS

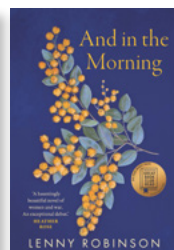
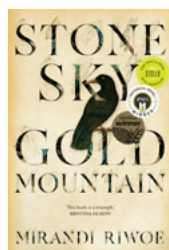
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‘Gorgeously kaleidoscopic and a deft reckoning of Australian identity. A Short History of Longans is a multigenerational jewel that traces the roots and bloodlines of one family across centuries in ways only Mirandi Riwoe can.’

Siang Lu

‘A Short History of Longans is a profoundly tender, intricately crafted novel about ancestry, longing and the fragile threads that bind one life to another. This is storytelling of great compassion and quiet power. Luminous, compassionate and beautifully wrought.’

Shankari Chandran



QUESTIONS OVER PAGE

Questions

1. The cover of the novel features a bunch of longans. Did you know what longans are before you read this novel? What do longans mean in this book?
2. Family, memory and inheritance are central to the novel. How do different characters preserve, reinterpret or resist the past?
3. The novel is structured in four sections, moving across seasons, centuries and generations, and between narrative voices. How did this structure influence your reading experience? In what ways do the shifts in voice and perspective deepen (or complicate) your understanding of the characters and their shared history? Did one timeline resonate with you more than the others?
4. Discuss the relationship between Daniel and his father James. What do Daniel's and subsequent perspectives reveal about James, Daniel and their places in the family?
5. Why do you think Daniel destroys and yet remakes family heirlooms? What might this suggest about identity and control over the past?
6. What do you think lies behind Wendy's husband's absence? How does this shape her character and her relationship with her daughter Michelle?
7. Food and sensory memory are recurring elements in the novel. How do shared recipes and remembered tastes – consider Wendy and Michelle perusing the family recipe book – function as a link between generations and a way into long-buried memories? Do you have a favourite family recipe? What feelings do the fragrance and taste of these recipes conjure for you?
8. Ruby's choices reflect both personal ambition and the constraints of her time. What do you think of her decision, given the time and context, to pursue her career? What do her actions say about independence and sacrifice?

Questions

9. Secrets and silences shape much of this family's story. What impacts do hidden truths have across generations and how are they finally confronted?
10. Maria is depicted both through her own account and through others' memories of her. How do these differing perspectives complicate your understanding of who she is? How would you describe Maria?
11. The novel explores ideas of belonging – to family, culture, place and history. Which character seems most at ease with their identity? Who struggles the most?
12. How did you read the ending of the novel? Did you find it hopeful – or something else? Why?