# Exploring Queer Desire and Obsession in K-Ming Chang's 'Cecilia'



#### Cecilia by K-Ming Chang: A Vivid Exploration of Queer Desire and Obsession

In her latest novella, "Cecilia," American-Taiwanese author K-Ming Chang delves into the themes of queer love, sexual awakening, and intimate obsession. The narrative, presented through the eyes of 24-year-old Seven, unfolds in an atmosphere brimming with sensuality and psychological complexity.

Seven works as a cleaner at a chiropractor's office, a job suffused with routine and isolation. Her tasks range from the mundane, such as refilling soap dispensers, to the slightly grotesque, like gathering hair from the patients. The office setting, dreary and isolating, provides a stark backdrop against which Seven's inner life unfolds. Her only sporadic human interactions are with the chiropractor and the receptionist, heightening the sense of her solitude.

The novella takes a turn when Seven reconnects with Cecilia, a childhood friend who has long been the locus of her obsession. This chance meeting acts as a catalyst, triggering a flood of memories and emotions from their shared past. Seven's feelings towards Cecilia are a complicated mix of attraction and repulsion, creating a narrative tension that propels the story forward.

Their relationship, fraught with tangled emotions, ultimately culminates in a climax imbued with shame. This culmination lays bare the complex interplay of desire and guilt that has defined Seven's feelings towards Cecilia.

K-Ming Chang, who has previously earned accolades such as being named a "5 Under 35" honoree by the National Book Foundation for her debut novel "Bestiary," once again showcases her narrative prowess in "Cecilia." This novella is part of what Chang terms a "mythic triptych," which includes her other notable works, "Bone House," "Gods of Want," and "Organ Meats."

"Cecilia" stands out for its rich tapestry of myths, interwoven with both the characters' personal histories and the larger cultural narratives they inherit. These mythic elements serve as a lens through which the characters grapple with their identities and the complexities of their bodies. Chang employs a narrative style lush with vivid and often unsettling imagery, inviting readers into a world where the familiar is rendered strange and new.

The novella challenges readers to engage with the intricacies of queer relationships in a manner that feels both immediate and disorienting. It's a world where myths and memories collide, offering no easy resolutions but instead a deeper understanding of the human experience, especially from a queer perspective.

In "Cecilia," K-Ming Chang has crafted a work that not only explores the depths of queer desire but also invites readers to reconsider their own perceptions of love and obsession. Through its intricate narrative and evocative imagery, the novella stands as a poignant examination of the complexities that define intimate human relationships.