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KARTIKA REVIEW

MEDITATIONS ON "HOME"



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I am an alien in my own town. This frigid corner of America is as far from China as one can travel, yet this is where I choose to live – an odd decision, you might think, because here I can never truly be comfortable in my own skin. With my black hair and Asian eyes, I am as conspicuous as a Martian when I walk down Main Street.

I worry that my transgressions will be noticed. Was I curt with that store clerk? Was my tip too paltry at the local diner? I imagine them whispering: "That's how all Chinese must be, penny-pinching and rude."

Willingly or not, I am the ambassador for my race, one and a half billion Chinese strong, and I take my responsibility seriously. I am always on my best behavior. I smile too much. I tip extravagantly. I am the model American citizen.

The effort leaves me exhausted. Yet here I persist, living among people with Western eyes who look nothing like me, people whom (to be perfectly honest) I have trouble telling apart. But this is where I have landed, for better or worse, bringing with me the DNA of ancestors who could never have imagined how far a future daughter would travel -- to the state of Maine.



Internationally bestselling author **Tess Gerritsen** is a graduate of Stanford University and the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. Gerritsen started writing fiction while on maternity leave from her work as a physician and published her first novel, *Call After Midnight* in 1987. Since then she has written *Life Support* (1997), *Bloodstream* (1998), *Gravity* (1999), *The Surgeon* (2001), *The Apprentice* (2002), *The Sinner* (2003), *Body Double* (2004), *Vanish* (2005), *The Mephisto Club* (2006), *The Bone Garden* (2007), *The Keepsake* (2008; UK title: *Keeping the Dead*), and *Ice Cold* (2010; UK title: *The Killing Place*), among others, and her name became a constant fixture on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Gerritsen's books have been translated into 37 languages, and more than 20 million copies have been sold around the world. Now retired from medicine, she writes full time. She lives in Maine.