



Only a Girl

Lian Gouw

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In "Only a Girl" three generations of Chinese women struggle for identity against a political backdrop of the World Depression, World War II, and the Indonesian Revolution. Nanna, the matriarch of the family, strives to preserve the family's traditional Chinese values while her children are eager to assimilate into Dutch colonial society. Carolien, Nanna's youngest daughter, is fixated with the advantages to be gained through adopting a western lifestyle. She is proven wrong through her turbulent and ultimately failed marriage and by the consequences of raising her daughter in the Dutch culture. Jenny's western upbringing puts her at a disadvantage in the newly independent Indonesian state where Dutch culture is no longer revered. The unique ways in which Nanna, Carolien and Jenny face their own challenges reveal the complex tale of Chinese society in Indonesia between 1930 and 1952.

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