



Unwelcome

Quincy Carroll

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In Quincy Carroll's novel *Unwelcome*, a young man seeks personal understanding, a place to call home, and justifications for his own errors in pursuit of both.

Changsha, China, feels like more of a home to Cole Chen than the United States ever did. He'd visited China while studying abroad; the switch to living there seemed like it would be a positive change, considering his recent, but unsurprising, estrangement from his family. Family members, friends, girlfriends, and even mentors all seem to get their fill of Cole and cut ties. But is it just his mercurial personality that drives them away?

While he often feels alone, Cole has never really been independent before. Although he is half Chinese, he's still a stranger in a foreign land. Trying to escape from being stereotyped as just another thrill-seeking white guy, Cole immerses himself in Chinese culture.

Cole's need to feel a sense of belonging isn't limited to finding a home; he also hopes to find a partner. While he makes a handful of friends abroad, he's still unlucky in love. This starts to change when Cole encounters Harmony, a struggling artist. After an awkward start to their relationship, there may yet be hope for them—provided that Cole doesn't let this relationship fall apart, just like all his others.

Facing brand-new challenges on a regular basis in China, Cole decides to document all his exchanges and exploits in a memoir; with Cole's perspective dominating the narrative, one can't help but wonder how much he's left out.

Carroll's novel is a thorough examination of futility, exploring the depths of irrational thought. In it, a man tries places the blame on everyone but himself, making this story an accurate microcosm of toxic self-pity.

IAN DAILEY (March / April 2022)

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