

SIMU LIU

We Were Dreamers

An Immigrant
Superhero
Origin Story

wm

WILLIAM MORROW

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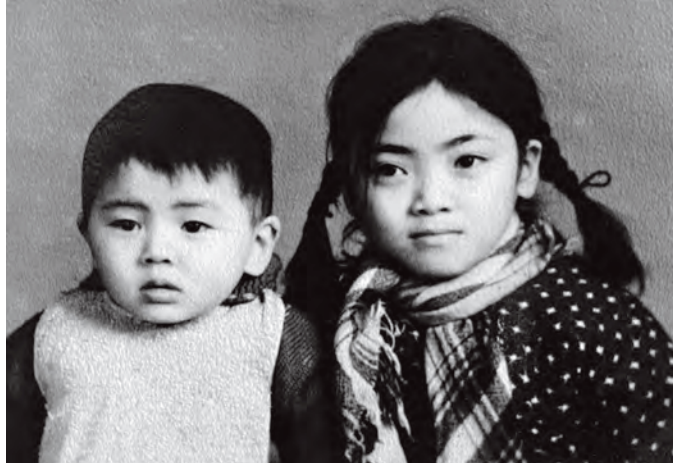
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My dad and his sister (my gūgu), circa 1961. Not that it's a competition . . . but I think I was cuter.



My mom, her two siblings (my jiùjiu and yímā), and her mother (my lǎolao), circa 1964.

Mom's cohorts
work in the fields of
Changping during the
summer of 1977.





1980—Mom and Dad pose in front of Tiananmen Square with their classmate Liuchen.



1984—My parents honeymooning in the Yellow Mountains. Something has clearly attached itself to Dad's head.



Mom and Dad on the day I was conceived. TMI? Probably.



My mom and my grandma (my nāinai) had to manually boil water on the stove in order to give twenty-day-old Simu a warm bath.

I call this one the Joe and Hunter Biden.



Dad sitting in his shared bedroom in Tempe, where he studied at Arizona State University for a semester in 1990.





My grandpa (my yéye) giving me his best Steve Buscemi impression.

1992—My parents introduce their landlord Mary and her friend Dorothy to the wonders of mapo tofu.



Three-year-old me throwing gender norms out the window and wearing the shit out of this gorgeous dress. Sorry Harry Styles; Simu did it first!



My dad and I visit Tiananmen Square with my cousins and my yímā. I'd be on a plane to Canada the very next day.



Baby's first (Canadian) birthday!



Moments before my mother's thesis defense in 1994.



Foreshadowing my work ethic as a first-year accounting associate at Deloitte.



Mother and son, circa 1996; still one of her favorite photos of us.



Happy 2000! Bundled up at Ontario Place watching the first fireworks of the millennium.



1999—Reunited with my Harbin family for the first time since I immigrated in 1994. I cried on our last day and begged my parents to let me stay.

Little league soccer championships, 2000—scored the winning goal in sudden death overtime. Pretty sure my life peaked here.





Mike L, Simu L, and Adrian L—three out of four members of the legendary boyband Lx4 (the legends were greatly exaggerated).



Spent the 2004 summer break with my mother's family in Beijing.



At my parents' convocation in 1996. Despite arriving in North America nearly a year apart, they managed to graduate on the same day.



My own convocation, fifteen years later. My mother appears to have found the elixir of youth during this time.



Taking the stage during freshmen orientation week to claim my title as the Superfrosh of Western University!

Hip Hop Western prepares for the Ontario Universities' Competition for Hip-Hop (OUCH) in 2007. First (but not last) time wearing makeup.



Yéye and Nāinai cozying up to my dog Barkley in 2013. We were finally able to bring them over to Canada permanently in 2008.



Before there was *Shang-Chi* . . . there was *Crimson Defender vs. The Slightly Racist Family*, a short film about an Asian superhero I wrote, directed, and starred in back in 2014. Please don't go looking for it.



Power napping on the set of CBC's *Kim's Convenience* in Season 1. Word of advice: never fall asleep around Andrew Phung (Kimchee)!

I wasn't allowed out of my hotel room at Comic-Con without a security escort and a disguise. This was moments before the big announcement that would change my life forever.

