

Ventura County Library | One County, One Book 2021
Discussion Questions for *Your House Will Pay* by Steph Cha

- 1) Do you personally remember the LA Riots that occurred after the verdict for the Rodney King case was announced? Do you remember the Latisha Harlins shooting that Cha partially based her novel on? If you do, how did Cha's narrative impact you?
 - a. Did you learn something about those events that made you think about them differently? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you think Cha did a good job of presenting these events accurately?
 - c. If you do not remember the riots or the Harlins case, was Cha's narrative enlightening? Why?
- 2) How did Cha portray the changes in, or the similarities about, the way immigrants and Black Americans are treated in our society? Have attitudes about race, the inner city, immigrants, and justice changed at all since the time of the LA Riots? What is different and what is the same after almost 30 years?
- 3) Grace and her sister, Miriam, have very different feelings about their mother, ranging from anger to sympathy. Did Cha make their attitudes feel earned? Who, of the two, did you identify more with and why?
- 4) Cha, as a Korean-American, takes a bit of a risk in writing extensively from the point of view of Shawn Matthews, a black man who in some ways heads his extended family.
 - a. How, in your estimation, did Cha handle writing her black characters and their traumas and triumphs?
 - b. Often writers face criticism when writing outside of their own race and experiences. Weighing Cha's writing, did you feel she avoided stereotypes? Why?
- 5) *Your House Will Pay* blends the elements of mystery and suspense along with a story of families, history, social hierarchies, and racism. What part of the novel grabbed you the most? Were you more attracted to the mystery or the book's other elements? Why?
- 6) Other characters besides Grace and Shawn influence the flow of the story. What characters seemed the most important to you in driving the story and why?
- 7) Big themes regarding revenge and forgiveness arise in Cha's novel.
 - a. How do you think the main characters handle these emotions?
 - b. What did you think about the way the novel ends?
 - c. Was the ultimate confrontation/resolution satisfying and earned?
 - d. How were you hoping the story would end?
- 8) Are there other characters you wanted to hear more from? Who and why?
- 9) Cha says she was interested in looking at the historical divides between the Korean and Black communities. Did you think her novel did a good job in doing this? Do you have a deeper perspective about how these communities interact after reading this book?
- 10) What are some ways that you think different ethnic communities can work out differences and tensions? Was there a way that the crimes at the heart of the book could have been avoided?