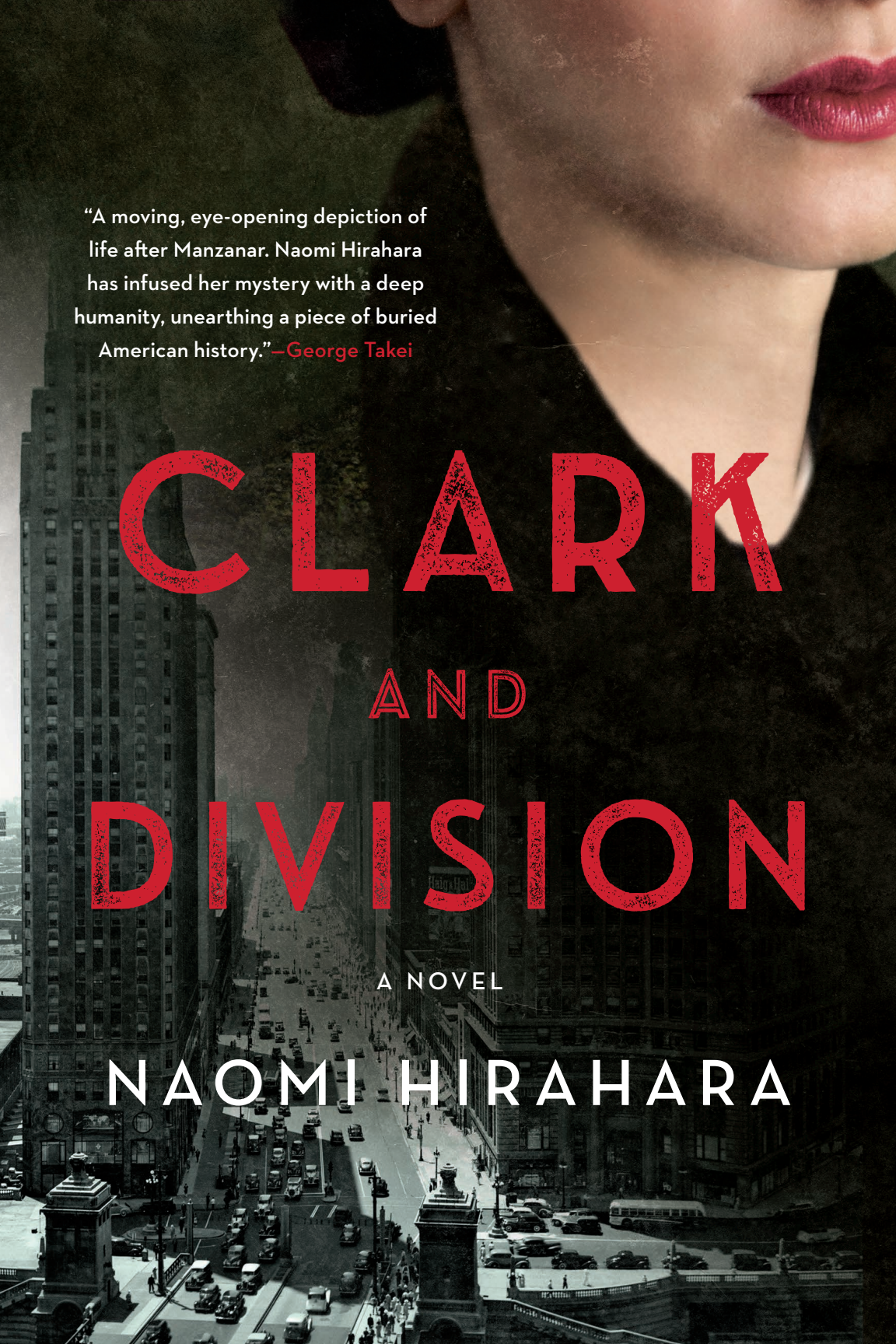
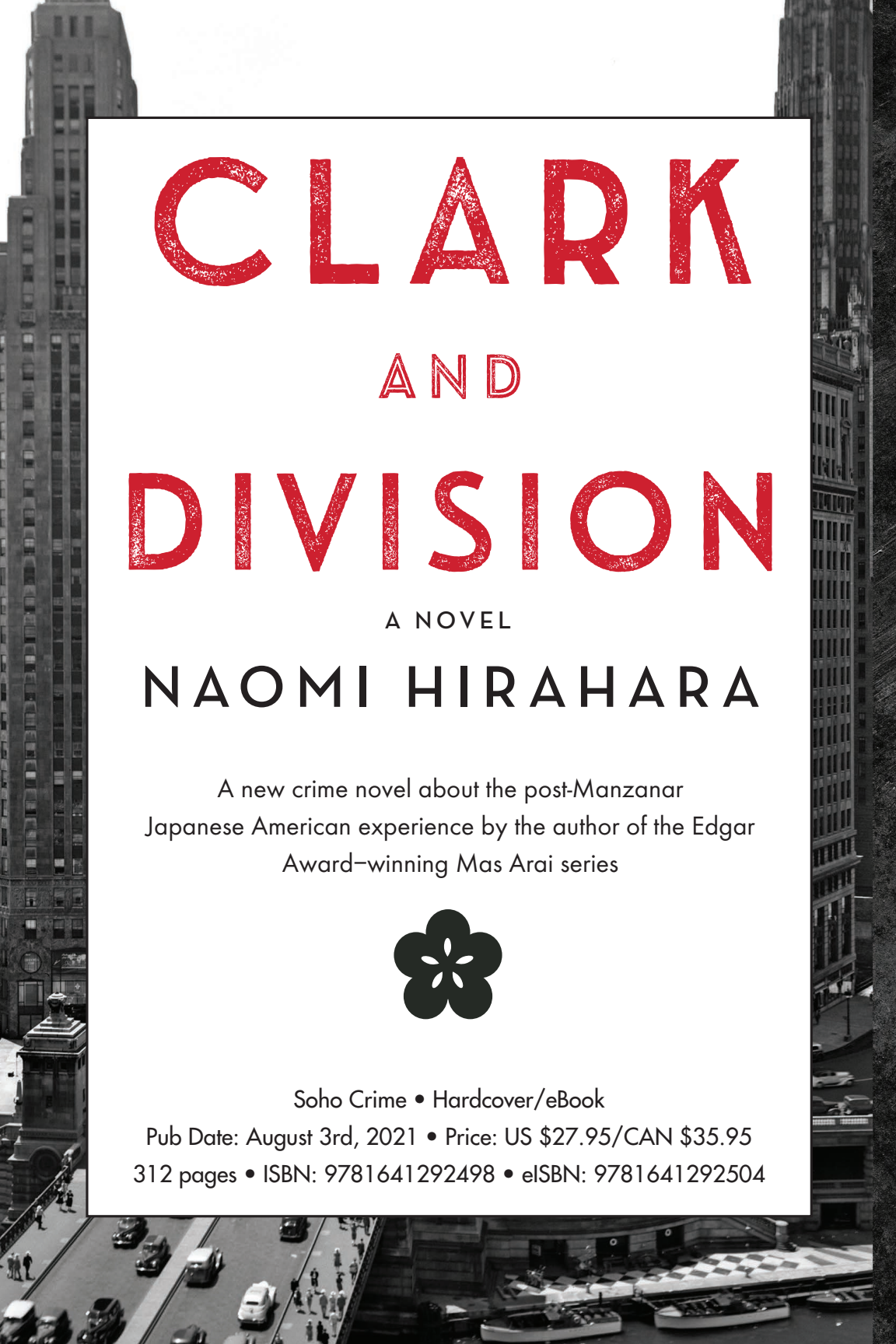

"A moving, eye-opening depiction of life after Manzanar. Naomi Hirahara has infused her mystery with a deep humanity, unearthing a piece of buried American history."—George Takei
CLARK AND DIVISION
A NOVEL
NAOMI HIRAHARA



CLARK AND DIVISION

A NOVEL

NAOMI HIRAHARA

A new crime novel about the post-Manzanar Japanese American experience by the author of the Edgar Award–winning Mas Arai series

Soho Crime • Hardcover/eBook
Pub Date: August 3rd, 2021 • Price: US $27.95/CAN $35.95
312 pages • ISBN: 9781641292498 • eISBN: 9781641292504

SOHO CRIME

Chicago, 1944: Twenty-year-old Aki Ito and her parents have just been released from Manzanar, where they have been detained by the US government since the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, together with thousands of other Japanese Americans. The life in California the Itos were forced to leave behind is gone; instead, they are being resettled two thousand miles away in Chicago, where Aki's older sister, Rose, was sent months earlier and moved to the new Japanese American neighborhood near Clark and Division streets. But on the eve of the Ito family's reunion, Rose is killed by a subway train.

Aki, who worshipped her sister, is stunned. Officials are ruling Rose's death a suicide. Aki cannot believe her perfect, polished, and optimistic sister would end her life. Her instinct tells her there is much more to the story, and she knows she is the only person who could ever learn the truth.

Inspired by historical events, *Clark and Division* infuses an atmospheric and heartbreakingly real crime fiction plot with rich period details and delicately wrought personal stories Naomi Hirahara has gleaned from thirty years of research and archival work in Japanese American history.

"*Clark and Division* opened my heart and mind to specifics of the experience of Japanese Americans during the Second World War. Rich in period detail, it is page-turning historical fiction, a tender family story, and a mystery that plays on two levels: *What happened to Rose Ito*? And *At what cost are Japanese Americans finally seen as full Americans*? It's a story that moved me deeply."

—ATTICA LOCKE, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Heaven, My Home*

"A beautifully written novel. A telling and touching story that echoes across the decades. Naomi Hirahara uses the past to inspire us to be relentless in doing the right thing, right now."

—MICHAEL CONNELLY, *New York Times* bestselling author of the Harry Bosch series

GETTING TO KNOW

NAOMI HIRAHARA

Naomi Hirahara was born in Pasadena, California. Her father, Isamu (known as "Sam"), was also born in California, but was taken to Hiroshima, Japan, as an infant. He was only miles away from the epicenter of the atomic bombing in 1945, yet survived. Naomi's mother, Mayumi, or "May," was born in Hiroshima and lost her father in the blast. Shortly after the end of World War II, Sam returned to California and eventually established himself as an independent gardener in the Los Angeles area. After Sam married May in Hiroshima in 1960, the couple made their new home in Altadena and then South Pasadena, where Naomi and her younger brother, Jimmy, grew up and attended secondary school.

The author, on a visit to Hiroshima at the age of three.

Naomi received her bachelor's degree in international relations from Stanford University and studied at the Inter-University Center for Advanced Japanese Language Studies in Tokyo. She also spent three months doing volunteer work in Ghana, West Africa.

She was a reporter and editor of *The Rafu Shimpo* during the culmination of the redress and reparations movement for Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from their homes during World War II. During her tenure as editor, the newspaper published a highly acclaimed inter-ethnic relations series after the LA riots.

Naomi left the newspaper in 1996 to serve as a Milton Center Fellow in creative writing at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas.

After returning to Southern California in 1997, she began to edit, publish, and write books. She edited *Green Makers: Japanese American Gardeners in Southern California* (2000), published by the Southern California Gardeners' Federation. She then authored two biographies for the Japanese American National Museum, *An American Son: The Story of George Aratani, Founder of Mikasa and Kenwood* (2000) and *A Taste for Strawberries: The Independent Journey of Nisei Farmer Manabi Hirasaki* (2003). She also compiled a reference book, *Distinguished Asian American Business Leaders* (2003), for Greenwood Press and with Dr. Gwenn M. Jensen co-authored the book *Silent Scars of Healing Hands: Oral Histories of Japanese American Doctors in World War II Detention Camps* (2004) for the Japanese

American Medical Association. Under her own small press, Midori Books, she has created a book for the Southern California Flower Growers, Inc., *A Scent of Flowers: The History of the Southern California Flower Market* (2004). Other Midori Books projects include *Fighting Spirit: Judo in Southern California, 1930-1941* (co-authored by Ansho Mas Uchima and Larry Akira Kobayashi, 2006).

Summer of the Big Bachi (Bantam/Delta, 2004) is Naomi's first mystery. The book, a finalist for Barbara Kingsolver's Bellwether Prize, was also nominated for a Macavity Award.

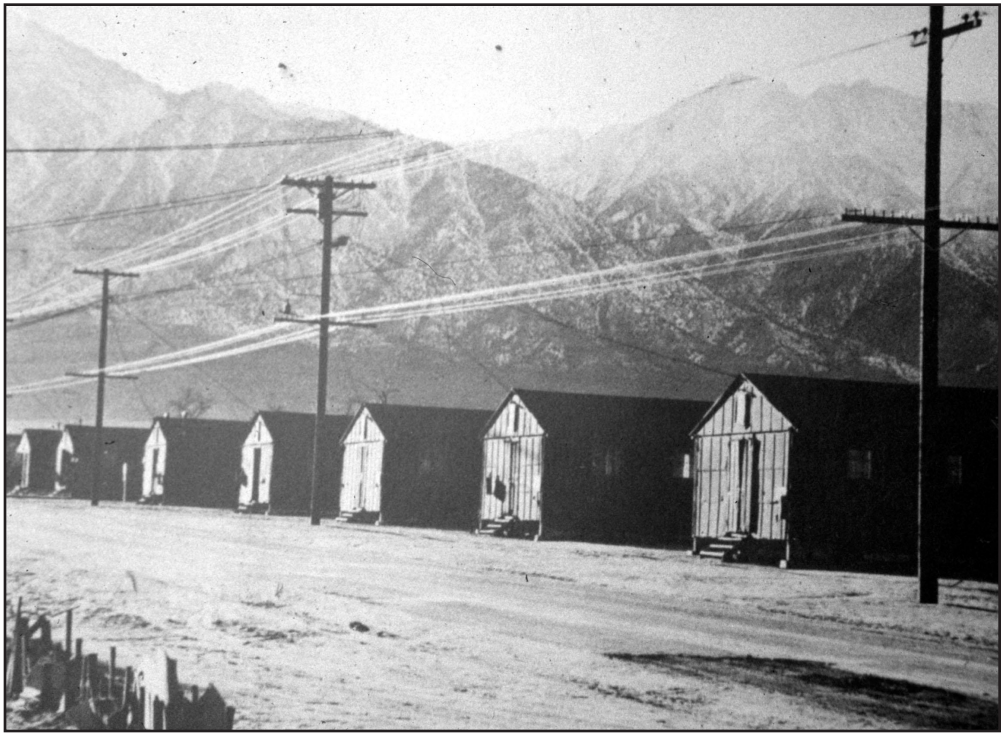
Receiving a starred review from *Publishers Weekly*, *Summer of the Big Bachi* has been included in the trade magazine's list of best books of 2004, as well as the best mystery list of the *Chicago Tribune*. *Gasa-Gasa Girl*, the second Mas Arai mystery, received a starred review from *Booklist* and was on the Southern California Booksellers Association bestseller list for two weeks in 2005. *Snakeskin Shamisen*, the third in the series, won an Edgar Award in the category of Best Paperback Original. The third Mas Arai book was followed by *Blood Hina, Strawberry Yellow, Sayonara Slam and Hiroshima Boy*, all currently published by Prospect Park Books. The seventh and final Mas Arai mystery, *Hiroshima Boy*, was nominated for an Edgar Award in the category of Best Paperback Original, an Anthony and a Macavity.

Naomi also has two books in her Officer Ellie Rush bicycle cop series, *Murder on Bamboo Lane*, winner of the T. Jefferson Parker Mystery Award, and *Grave on Grand Avenue,* both published by Penguin Random House. Her new series set in Hawai'i featuring Leilani Santiago is connected to the world of Ellie Rush. The series begins with *Iced in Paradise*, released by Prospect Park Books. Her only book for younger readers, *1001 Cranes* (Delacorte), received an honorable mention in Youth Literature from the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association.

Her nonfiction books include the multiple award-winning *Terminal Island: Lost Communities of Los Angeles Harbor* (Angel City Press), co-written by Geraldine Knatz, and *Life after Manzanar* (Heyday), co-written by Heather C. Lindquist. Naomi has also curated exhibitions at Descanso Gardens and the Los Angeles Maritime Museum.

Naomi and her husband, Wes, make their home in Southern California. Naomi served as chapter president of the Southern California chapter of the Mystery Writers of America in 2010.

THE INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WWII



"Barracks at Manzanar concentration camp, California, c. 1942.," *Densho Encyclopedia* https://encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-denshopd-i34-00170-1/ (accessed Feb 9, 2021).

The incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII remains one of the most traumatic events in US history. Altogether about 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to concentration camps, many losing everything in the process—land and homes they owned, businesses, possessions. It was a mass violation of human rights the United States is still coming to terms with.

Japanese American history begins much earlier, in the 1880s, when the United States and Hawai'i started seeing an influx of migration from Japanese laborers in search of the American Dream: farmers, fishermen, mill workers, and railroad workers. Their path to the American Dream, however, was not an easy one. Not long after their arrival, anti-Japanese movements blossomed

in many Western states. Japanese laborers were regularly subject to workplace harassment, and formal laws were passed to block Japanese immigrants from various aspects of American life. In 1913, states began enacting legislation that prevented people of Japanese descent from owning land, beginning with the California Alien Land Law. In 1922, the federal government ruled that people of Japanese descent could not become naturalized citizens. Two years later, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, which halted all Japanese immigration to the United States.

Despite the discrimination they faced in both government policy and their personal lives, Japanese immigrants and their American-born children settled and built communities and institutions, often centering around "Little Tokyos" consisting of churches, newspapers, youth organizations, and other cultural and social organizations.

In the early 1940s, as the threat of a possible war with Japan was growing, several US federal agencies began surveillance on Japanese American communities, putting together a custodial detention list of "enemy aliens" to be arrested if war were to come, on the grounds that any Japanese or Japanese American persons living in the United States might be saboteurs or embedded agents for Japan. On December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked the US military base in Pearl Harbor, the ramifications in the Japanese American community were swift and devastating. First, community leaders—heads of Japanese Association branches or priests of Buddhist temples—were apprehended and imprisoned. But West Cost political leaders were calling for stronger measures to be taken.

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which established new "military zones" across the West Coast—Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona—from which the military could exclude anyone. This paved the way for "voluntary evacuations"—that is, the forced removal of Japanese Americans from their homes and into concentration camps called "War Relocation Centers." The first such camp was Manzanar, in Southern California, and another nine followed. The government downplayed the prison-like conditions of these facilities. These centers were surrounded by barbed wire fences and guarded by soldiers. "Inmates" lived in blocks of barracks, sharing communal bathrooms that were sometimes no more than rows of toilets without any walls for privacy.

Although most Japanese Americans cooperated with the incarceration, a few did openly defy them. Gordon Hirabayashi decided that it was his responsibility as a citizen to defend the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans and turned himself over to the FBI in principled resistance to "internment." He took his case all the way to the Supreme Court.

In 1943 and 1944, with the encouragement of the War Relocation Authority, many young Japanese Americans left the concentration camps and headed east to cities like Chicago, Denver, and New York. Home was no longer the West Coast, as they were prohibited to return—they wouldn't be allowed back into the exclusion zones they had been forced from until 1945. With no other option but to start over, Japanese Americans slowly worked to rebuild their communities in new places.

In the 1970s, long after the war was over, Congress finally created a commission to examine the causes of the WWII incarceration. The commission found that there had been no military necessity, that the real reasons behind the removal of Japanese Americans from their homes were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. This eventually led to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which consisted of a presidential apology and a $20,000 payment to 82,000 surviving former detainees.

Today, this story has never been more relevant as America grapples with the controversies of immigration, terrorism, the infringement of civil liberties, and the ongoing institutionalized racism toward people of color.

When a system of selective service registration was introduced in camps, some men protested the military draft because of the unconstitutionality of mass incarceration. Nonetheless the segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Team was established in March 1943. Japanese Americans came out of confinement to serve on the frontlines of Europe and as military translators in the Pacific. Together with the 100th Battalion, which originated in Hawaii, the 442nd suffered serious casualties with 800 killed or missing in action and became the most decorated unit in US military history for its size and length of service.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do the opportunities and choices available to the Ito family—in terms of home, employment, education, and community—change after the bombing of Pearl Harbor? How do euphemisms such as "internment" and "relocation" diminish the harsh reality of incarceration?
2. Besides Aki, which character do you relate to most? In what ways do you think their decisions and actions during this tumultuous time resonate with your own approach and experiences?
3. Aki almost blacks out on the train ride to Chicago. What do you make of her sickness? Were you fearful when Aki heard Rose's voice? How does forced displacement and relocation affect the body, memory, and identity?
4. In chapter 9, Aki translates *kurou* as "a guttural moaning, a piercing pain throughout your bones." How does Aki cope with the grief of her sister's death? How do her parents internalize their pain? How do the physical items Rose left behind take on a new life?
5. Aki seems driven to protect her sister's legacy. Why do you think she takes the investigation of Rose's death into her own hands?
6. How is Aki watched and evaluated differently—at the police station, outside the chocolate factory, inside Art's truck—by *nisei* and *hakujin*?
7. Aki often describes herself as a lesser version of Rose. How does Aki's definition of herself in relation to her sister change over the course of the novel?
8. What do you make of the library scene when the professor belittles Phillis? What type of connection is the author making between the discrimination against Black and Japanese American citizens?
9. Why does Aki initially feel guilty about her relationship with Art? Were you surprised that she did not tell him about her efforts to find out what happened to her sister?
10. How is police sergeant Graves responsible for Rose's death and continued abuse against women? What is the relationship between the Chicago Japanese American community and local law enforcement? Do you think trust can exist between the police and an ethnic, racial, or religious minority community?
11. In chapter six, Aki's mother tells her to, "Never shame us. All we have is our reputations." How does Keizo take advantage of the silence and sacrifices demanded of Japanese American women and girls?
12. Why do you think the author chose *Clark and Division* as the novel's title?

RECIPES

YURI'S SPAM FRIED RICE

Serves 2-3 people

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of white rice (short grain preferred)
- Half a can of Spam (I prefer Lite), cubed into ½" squares
- ½ cup frozen peas
- 5 stalks green onion, diced
- Ground black pepper
- Splash of soy sauce

Instructions:

Prepare white rice as instructed on the package. In a greased large pan or wok, cook cubes of Spam until the edges are browned. Add steamed rice and heat over a medium flame, stirring constantly. Carefully add frozen peas and heat through. At the end, mix in green onions and add a splash of soy sauce and ground black pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

CHICKEN STOCK MISO SOUP

Serves 2 people

Ingredients:

- 3 cups chicken stock
- ⅓ tofu square (firm or extra firm), cut into ¾" squares
- 1 ½ tablespoon miso paste (red or white – I prefer organic low sodium white)
- 2 stalks green onion, diced

Instructions:

Heat chicken stock in a medium-sized sauce pot. Before stock boils, add tofu squares. When some of the squares start to float to the top, add the miso paste and stir until completely dissolved. Serve in bowls and top with green onion. Eat immediately.

BEVERAGE PAIRINGS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB: SAKE

During the pre-World War II era and even throughout the 1950s, sake was mostly consumed by Japanese who lived in the archipelago and abroad. As the West began their love affair with sushi, sake also began to gain a foothold in the US and Europe.

Today, you don't even have to worry about serving sake warm. To appeal to the American market, Japanese sake distilleries have started producing sake to drink cold or room temperature in wine glasses.

Here are a few recommendations:

HAKUTSURU SAYURI JUNMAI NIGORI

Nigori is the type of unfiltered sake which has a milky or cloudy color. The bits of unfermented rice that sit in the bottom of the bottle add to the richness of the taste.

Hakutsuru Sayuri Junmai Nigori is packaged in a pretty pink bottle reflecting its "sayuri" brand, which means little lily. Remember to refrigerate and shake before serving. 12.5% alcohol content.

SHIRAYUKI EDO GENROKU JUNMAI

For a special occasion, you might consider Shirayuki Edo Genroku Era Junmai, if you can find it at a specialty liquor store or high-end sushi bar. Less water is used to create this ancient sake, giving it an amber color. Taste is close to scotch whisky. 17.5% alcohol content.


SOHO
CRIME
SOHOPRESS.COM