

Advance reviews for *If You Live in a Small House*

Park's modernist story *If You Live in a Small House* is an important and beautiful chronicle of American lives too little known to us. Park's stunning novella is capacious as is the story's tender heart.

—Min Jin Lee, author of *Free Food for Millionaires*

The authenticity of Park's characters, their food, their clothes, their expressions, brings immigrant family life in Hawaii poetically alive. Most poignant is the father with his WWII memories and losing his friends to suicide missions, and his fear that his son will be sent to Korea to fight enemies who “look like him.” A compelling reading experience.

—Kiana Davenport, author of *Shark Dialogues* and *House of Many Gods*

Completely avoiding the trappings of noisy, multigenerational family melodrama, this rich psychological narrative instead delves into the private longings of these characters. Beautifully told, *If You Live in a Small House* is the work of a truly gifted writer.

—Chris McKinney, author of *The Queen of Tears* and *Bolohead Row*

Sandra Park writes with a generosity and clarity of vision that is both great-hearted and splendidly unsentimental. Nothing escapes her gaze. The writing is fresh and urgent, the language lyrical, the characters alive and kicking on the page. An utterly compelling read from the very first sentence, *Small House* is an auspicious debut for one of America's most promising new writers.

—Alice LaPlante, author of *Method and Madness: The Making of a Story* and *Do Not Go Gentle*

A hauntingly beautiful prose poem that opens the door to a hidden world and a forgotten moment, *If You Live in a Small House* is thoughtful, tender, and not to be missed.

—Patricia O'Toole, author of *The Five of Hearts* and *When Trumpets Call*

Sandra Park blends action and reverie to evoke the texture and mood of postwar Hawaii in the lives of one Korean immigrant family. Reading *If You Live in a Small House* is like standing in Keaniani

Lane after dark, peeking through the windows of the “funny kind house.”

—Mary Helen Stefaniak, author of *The Cailiffs of Baghdad, Georgia* and *The Turk and My Mother*

Sandra Park’s novel is beautifully told. She is flawless in evoking the atmosphere of the early 1950s, when Kailua was still the country, the Korean Conflict taking sons and fathers who survived the previous war, prosperity a glimmer just visible on the horizon. With subtle humor and tender regard for her characters, Park brings to life an ohana-household with barely room enough for their desires, hopes, and losses. Suspended in the lull before the tsunami of Statehood, between forgetfulness and anticipation, Park’s lyrical novella is a small miracle of remembrance.

—Frank Stewart, editor of *Manoa Journal* and author of *By All Means*

Mesmerizing. Park’s language is magical—her precise, yet fable-like descriptions draw the reader into a world both new and familiar. When I finally set the book aside, I felt as if I was waking from a dream.

—Shawna Yang Ryan, author of *Water Ghosts*

A captivating portrait of an island family whose troubles and loves are a spicy mix of heartbreak, hilarity, and pure intoxication.

—Steve Stern, author of *The Wedding Jester* and *The Angel of Forgetfulness*

This lovely novella evokes a lush poetry of the everyday. I admire the perfect economy of Sandra Park’s writing, its richness of character, and her decision not to examine the tsunami’s destruction, but rather the eerie beauty of the withdrawn sea that precedes it. Gloria says of Dante, “Looking is loving: I could look at you all day long.” The reader will feel a similar affection for the book.

—Paul Hoover, author of *Sonnet 56* and *Poems in Spanish*

In the tradition of Sandra Cisneros’s *House on Mango Street* and Toshio Mori’s *Yokohama, California*, Park’s linked vignettes provide us with glimpses of her characters’ everyday lives and even their lifelong fantasies but, like the white-bordered, period photographs that

accompany them, remind us that much lies outside our field of vision. While we come to understand that most of her characters' dreams will go unfulfilled, and while we come to sympathize with their losses and yearning, Park's book ultimately asks us to consider what historical and social forces shape the community of 1950s Kailua.

—Floyd Cheung, American Studies and
Asian-American Literature,
Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

Park's narrative enfolds the complexity of a multi-ethnic island community, the histories of Asian immigration and settlement, and the presence of the United States military without subsuming the central exploration of the family's private dreams and experiences. She has achieved a wonderful balance between these larger historical narratives and the interiority of her characters, and her writing offers a stunning example of how political and cultural questions can exist harmoniously with aesthetic and narrative mastery.

—Paul Lai, Asian American Literature,
University of St. Thomas, Minnesota