

# I Hotel

By Karen Tei Yamashita

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**2010 National Book Award Finalist**


**2010-2011 Asian/Pacific American Library Association (APALA) Book Award Winner in Adult Fiction**

**2010 California Book Award Winner**

Dazzling and ambitious, this hip, multi-voiced fusion of prose, playwriting, graphic art, and philosophy spins an epic tale of America's struggle for civil rights as it played out in San Francisco's Chinatown. Divided into ten novellas, one for each year, *I Hotel* begins in 1968, when Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated, students took to the streets, the Vietnam War raged, and cities burned.

As Karen Yamashita's motley cast of students, laborers, artists, revolutionaries, and provocateurs make their way through the history of the day, they become caught in a riptide of politics and passion, clashing ideologies and personal turmoil. And by the time the survivors unite to save the International Hotel—epicenter of the Yellow Power Movement—their stories have come to define the very heart of the American experience.

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## **I Hotel By Karen Tei Yamashita Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #296387 in Books
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- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.46" w x 6.00" l, 2.05 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 640 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In Yamashita's latest, she strings together a stunningly complete vision of San Francisco's Asian American community in the late 1960s and early '70s, using the titular inn as a meeting point for ten loosely-connected novellas, each covering a single year. Focusing on the struggle for equality and peace as it involved this particular community, Yamashita's work also incorporates a broad view of the Asian and Asian American experiences, from Japanese internment camps to the Marcos dictatorship. Yamashita accomplishes a dynamic feat of mimesis by throwing together achingly personal stories of lovers, old men, and orphaned children; able synopses of historical events and social upheaval; and public figures like Lenin and Malcolm X (Yamashita's opening line: "So I'm Water Cronkite, dig?"). Despite its experimental and fictionalized nature, the novel reads more like a patchwork oral history, determined to relate the facts of its setting and, more importantly, the feelings of it; with varied commingling of voices and formats (stream-of-consciousness, slangy first person, quotes, dossiers, academic papers, even written-out choreography), the narrative reads like a collection of primary sources. Though it isn't for everyone, this powerful, deeply felt, and impeccably researched fiction is irresistibly evocative and overwhelming in every sense. 30 b&w photos and illus.

From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* The International Hotel, or I Hotel, was an actual San Francisco landmark, the base for a wild array of pan-Asian artistic, political, and community endeavors. And now this “fortress” and “beacon” provides the impetus and structure for Yamashita's exuberant, irreverent, passionately researched, and many-voiced novel about the Yellow Power movement. Author of the indelible *Tropic of Orange* (1997), Yamashita nets the social and personal ferment of the years 1968 through 1977 in 10 interconnected, stylistically varied segments. As this jazzy, kaleidoscopic novel unfolds, we meet orphaned teenager Paul and his mentor Chen, a radical professor; Mo Akagi, a Yellow Panther; Gerald, an avant-garde saxophonist; Sandy Hu, an innovative choreographer; and all kinds of gutsy and inventive activists, some in wheelchairs, who comprise a broad spectrum of courageous Asian Americans asserting their rights. With a rich soundscape punctuated by James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and Janis Joplin; Mao, Malcolm, and Martin; and a narrative pastiche of demonstrations, jam sessions, guerrilla theater, and kung fu; transcripts, puns, and letters—not to mention sex, pot, and risky adventures; comedy, tragedy, and triumph—Yamashita's colossal novel of the dawn of Asian American culture is the literary equivalent of an intricate and vibrant street mural depicting a clamorous and righteous era of protest and creativity. --Donna Seaman

Review

“As original as it is political, as hilarious as it is heartbreaking, *I Hotel* is the result of a decade of research and writing that included more than 150 personal interviews. . . . [and] will be dog-eared and underlined and assigned to college reading lists for generations. . . . In the end, the way *I Hotel* accounts for the Asian American movement is both sweet and sour. And for all the losses Yamashita records, there are, we know, great achievements as well. High among them is this beautiful book.” —*Washington Post Book World*

"[Yamashita] hasn't gained the broad recognition she richly deserves."—*Reader's Digest*

“Brilliant. . . . [Yamashita's] ambition is achieved with efficiency, showmanship and wit. . . . A surgically deft depiction of the political entwined with the personal. . . . Yamashita's book recalls what art is for: ‘To

resist death and dementia . . . To kiss . . . you good-bye, leaving the indelible spit of our DNA on still moist lips. Sweet. Sour. Salty. Bitter.’ In other words, *I Hotel’s* complex taste lingers and haunts, like something alive.” —*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“As in her previous works, Yamashita incorporates satire and the surreal in prose that is playful yet knowing, fierce yet mournful, in a wildly multicultural landscape. . . . [A] passionate, bighearted novel.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“Yamashita captures the fiery righteousness—and self-righteousness—of the civil-rights movement. . . . The complexity of the era that led to the birth of Asian America. It’s a glorious tone poem, a rich reminder of the multicultural, multifaceted past from which our city grows.” —*San Francisco Magazine*

“It’s a stylistically wild ride, but it’s smart, funny and entrancing.” —**Michael Schaub, National Public Radio**

“The breadth of *I Hotel’s* embrace is encyclopedic and its effect is kaleidoscopic. It wants to inform and dazzle us on the confusions and conclusions on the question of culture and assimilation.” —*Chicago Tribune*

“[A] multiform swirl of a novel about a decade in the life of San Francisco’s Chinatown and, by extension, the Asian experience in America. . . . With delightful plays of voice and structure, this is literary fiction at an adventurous, experimental high point.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Exuberant, irreverent, passionately researched . . . Yamashita’s colossal novel of the dawn of Asian American culture is the literary equivalent of an intricate and vibrant street mural depicting a clamorous and righteous era of protest and creativity.” —*Booklist*, (starred review)

“Magnificent. . . . Intriguing.” —*Library Journal*

“Stunningly complete. . . . Yamashita accomplishes a dynamic feat of mimesis by throwing together achingly personal stories of lovers, old men, and orphaned children; able synopses of historical events and social upheaval . . . This powerful, deeply felt, and impeccably researched fiction is irresistibly evocative.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“[Yamashita’s] novel is breathtaking in its scope and its energy and innovation make it a good fit with the exciting and transformative time period that it covers. . . . *I Hotel* demonstrates how complicated and finally irreducible history is—the many voices and perspectives it comprises, the divergent and winding paths it takes, the way it confounds conventional narrative. Yamashita celebrates this complexity, and she’s such a deft storyteller that you’ll end up celebrating it with her.” —*Women’s Review of Books*

“*I Hotel* is an amazing literary accomplishment and one of the most pleasurable reading experiences I have ever had. I believe it stands on the same plane of accomplishment as Roberto Bolaño’s *Savage Detectives* and Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World*—an amazing literary accomplishment and a brave and bold act of publishing.” —**Paul Yamazaki, City Lights Booksellers**

“Huge, messy, and frantically fun, *I Hotel* offers a very believable panorama of life at this time. . . . The portraits of these early generation Asian Americans . . . are quite moving and conveyed without sentimentality. It’s an impressive accomplishment from an author who continues to push the boundaries of innovative fiction.” —*Rain Taxi*

“One of the the things that is so amazing about Karen Tei Yamashita’s most recent novel, *I Hotel*, is that she not only retrieves the sad beauty of a particularly fraught period of a particularly squalid community —Asian Americans in San Francisco during the 1960s-70s — but that she does so in a way that is also exhilarating, celebratory. . . . Which is why we need novels like *I Hotel*: to patiently help the world remember itself.”—*American Book Review*

“*I Hotel* is an explosive site, a profound metaphor and jazzy, epic novel rolled into one. Karen Tei Yamashita chronicles the colliding arts and social movements in the Bay Area of the wayward ’70s with fierce intelligence, humor and empathy.” —**Jessica Hagedorn**

“*I Hotel*, in a genre all its own somewhere between historical fiction and creative nonfiction, is an inventive attempt to re-present such an era in a way that is simultaneously heuristic and available to the imaginations of the young.”—*Boom*

"*I Hotel* is a careful, considerate blend of fact and fiction, parody and pastiche; the book contains so many allusions to people, places, and things that comprised one of America's most transformational times that it bears comparison to such canonical works as John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* trilogy, and, in many ways, deserves to be called an encyclopedic text."—*Fiction Writers Review*

"Karen [Yamashita] is playful and experimental; she loves spectacle and cultural complications."—**Vida: Women in Literary Arts**

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Luz Davis:**

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book allowed I Hotel? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have some other opinion?

#### **Evelina Lewis:**

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive at this point, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a reserve your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this specific I Hotel book as starter and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

#### **Pam Gray:**

Here thing why this particular I Hotel are different and reputable to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good but it depends in the content than it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. I

Hotel giving you information deeper and in different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no guide that similar with I Hotel. It gives you thrill studying journey, its open up your own personal eyes about the thing in which happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. You can easily bring everywhere like in playground, café, or even in your approach home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the printed book maybe the form of I Hotel in e-book can be your alternative.

**Jennifer Evans:**

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read any book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book I Hotel it is very good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book has high quality.

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