

City Under One Roof

by Iris Yamashita

Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & Authors Website)

Iris Yamashita is an Academy Award nominated screenwriter for the movie *Letters from Iwo Jima*. She has been working in Hollywood for fifteen years developing material for both film and streaming, has taught screenwriting at UCLA, and is an advocate of women and diversity in the entertainment industry. She has also been a judge and mentor for various film and writing programs, and lives in California.



City Under One Roof was her debut mystery. The book has been nominated for an Anthony Award and Barry Award and has made numerous “Best of” lists including “Best Thrillers of 2023” by The Washington Post.

Characters:

- **Detective Cara Kennedy** – Police detective on temporary disability. Widow. Her husband, Aaron, and son, Dylan, died during a hiking trip. Is claustrophobic.
- **Amy Lin** – (17) – Has lived in Point Mettier for 14 years. Helps her mom run Star Asian Food, a Chinese restaurant. Found body parts on the beach.
- **Officer Joe (JB) Barkowski** – Point Mettier police officer. Been there a about a year.
- **Debra Blackmon** – Spence and Troy’s mother. Divorced from Michael Lovanski due to domestic violence issues. Teacher.
- **Spence Blackmon** – Teen. Amy’s boyfriend. Has a 13-year-old brother, Troy. Mother, Debra, is a teacher.
- **Troy Blackman** – (13) – Debra’s youngest son. Spences’ brother. Quiet.
- **Charlie Dodger** – Man whose hand, foot, and head were found.
- **Jim** – Tollbooth operator. Native.
- **Angelo Fernandez** – Computer hacker who works for the police.
- **Mariko Ishida** – Lounge singer from Japan. Was famous for a short time.
- **Michael “Mick” Lovanski** – Debra Blackmon’s ex-husband. Divorced due to domestic abuse. Spence and Troy’s father.
- **Chuck Marino** – Butcher and general store owner.
- **Suzie McNally** – Little girl with a scooter who rides in the halls of DaveCo.
- **Lonnie Mercer** – Long time Point Mettier resident. Likes to wear different berets. Used to live in a psychiatric facility, The Institute. Has a pet moose, Denny. Her father is Chief Shipley. She has a watch with GPS so the residents of Point Mettier can watch over her.

- **Officer Neworth** – Anchorage police officer looking into the body parts (hand and boot) found in Point Mettier.
- **Chief Siple** – Point Mettier’s Chief of Police.
- **Wolf** – Leader of the “Village Men” gang of ex-convicts. Lives in Chugach Village. Came to Point Mettier on snowmobiles.
- **Ellie Wright** – Rents out rooms – “Cozy Condo Inn”
- **Point Mettier** – Isolated community in Alaska. People live in a single high-rise building, Davidson Condos (Dave Co). 205 full time residents. Often cut off from the rest of Alaska in the winter. One lane tunnel going to the city.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. How did having different narrators (Amy, Cara, and Lonnie) affect the storytelling? Did you identify with one more than with the others?
3. The book is set in Alaska. Did that have any effect on how you viewed the book?
4. Two of the main criticisms of the book are that the pacing was too slow and that the characters were too disjointed. What do you think?
5. The author has said that she was inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Did you find any references in the story? Do you think there were any characters or moments that could have been inspired by the book?
6. Did your feelings about some of the characters change as you read the novel? Do you have a favorite?
7. How do you feel about Lonnie? Why was her character important to the story?
8. Was Chief Siple a good father? A good Chief of Police? Why or why not?
9. Point Mettier is isolated for months out of the year. How would you like to live in a place like that?
10. There is a high occurrence of violence against women in Alaska. Why do you think that is? Do you think there is anything that can be done to change that?
11. Many of the people of Point Mettier are hiding from ex-husbands, the law, and others... and the rest of the residents are helping them hide. Do you think there are actually towns where that happens? Would you like to live in one? Why or why not?
12. What do you think you'd like most about living in Point Mettier? What would you like least?
13. Were you surprised by the identity of the body parts found in the Cove? Why or why not?

14. Did you suspect who the killer was before it was revealed? Do you think the readers were given enough clues to figure it out?
15. Were you surprised by the way the murder was handled at the end of the book? Were they right in how they handled it? Why or why not?
16. How do you feel about epilogue and the pictures found on Lovanski's phone? What do you think Cara will do after the revelation?
17. Iris Yamashita is a screenwriter when she is not writing novels or teaching college classes. Did Yamashita's screenwriting background come through in the novel? Did the book feel like it could make a good movie to you?
18. **City Under One Roof** was written by Iris Yamashita. Will you read anything else by the author?

References:

- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/y/iris-yamashita/>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/60818887-city-under-one-roof>
- Novelist – <https://web-p-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.clevnet.org/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=00821e74-3f5c-4adb-84e7-42b040fecc0c%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#AN=11098505&db=neh>
- Iris Yamashita's website – <https://www.irisyamashita.com/>

Iris Yamashita's Books

Series

Detective Cara Kennedy

1. City Under One Roof (2023)
2. Village in the Dark (2024)

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 - **City of the Lost** – Kelley Armstrong
 - **The Drift** – CJ Tudor
 - **Everyone Knows But You** – Thomas E Ricks
 - **The Blinds** – Adam Sternbergh
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