

Book Club Questions for THE LOTUS INN by Nisha Sharma
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(CONTAINS SPOILERS)

1. The Lotus Inn is first and foremost a romantic suspense novel. What are some of the moments in the story that create this balanced hybrid narrative?
2. Aji is in a bad place when she returns to The Lotus Inn for the first time in over a decade. How much of her circumstances are the product of her own making, versus circumstances that were foisted upon her?
3. The Chawla sisters have all been traumatized by the town, the inn, and their father throughout their childhood. Discuss the differences in the way they cope with their trauma, and how that's impacted their relationship with each other and their mother.
4. Much of Rohan's conflict resolves after Aji's divorce to Sanjeev. However, there are still moments when he appears conflicted as he supports the woman he loves throughout the novel. What are the hurdles Rohan overcame and what are some of the relationship hurdles he'll still have to navigate after the story is over?
5. Sangeeta has always tried to do her best as a mother, a wife, and an innkeeper. Discuss the ways in which she has supported (or failed) her daughters, and how her circumstances as a young immigrant bride may have shaped her story.
6. Hari's deal with Agarwal would've resulted in the temple taking the Inn if it wasn't for Sangeeta's interference. Why do you think Hari made a deal with Agarwal in the first place?
7. This story has clear messaging about race and class. There are predominately cis-gendered white individuals who are bad, and South Asians who are fighting for justice. However, Agarwal sells out his community, while Matt stands for the Chawlas. How does internalized colonialism and racism influence the characters in the story?
8. The Lotus Inn sits on a valuable piece of property that was once a part of an Indigenous land trust. If it wasn't for the terms of the land agreement, it could create a lot of economic prosperity for an impoverished town. At the end of the novel, Aji shouts at Agarwal "Take it. It's just land." Do you believe this is true? When do the means justify the end when it comes to land acquisition? Do they ever?
9. The Chawla's relationship to the surveillance state is fraught with racial and classist undertones. The Sheriff is most notably "the bad guy". However, Keith is very much a "good guy." How does wealth, race and class shape the way the Chawlas communicate and/or create friction with police?
10. Aji is fighting against a large private equity company that is attempting to take over the land and build a hotel. However, Rohan is also in private equity. What are some of the similarities and differences between the roles that DGS plays and Rohan plays? Why is Aji willing to forgive one versus the other?