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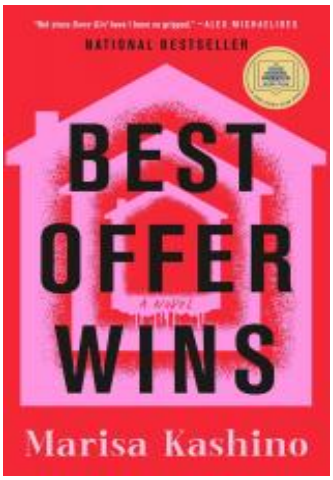
Best Offer Wins

by Marisa Kashino



About the Book

An insanely competitive housing market. A desperate buyer on the edge. In Marisa Kashino?s darkly humorous debut novel, BEST OFFER WINS, the white picket fence becomes the ultimate symbol of success --- and obsession. How far would you go for the house of your dreams?

Eighteen months and 11 lost bidding wars into house-hunting in the overheated Washington, DC suburbs, 37-year-old publicist Margo Miyake gets a tip about the perfect house, in the perfect neighborhood, slated to come up for sale in one month. Desperate to escape the cramped apartment she shares with her husband, Ian --- and, in turn, get their marriage, plan to have a baby, and whole life back on track --- Margo becomes obsessed with buying the house before it?s publicly listed and the masses descend (with unbeatable, all-cash offers in hand).

A little stalking? Harmless. A bit of trespassing? Necessary. As Margo infiltrates the homeowners? lives, her tactics grow increasingly unhinged --- but just when she thinks she?s won them over, she hits a snag in her plan. Undeterred, Margo will prove again and again that there?s no boundary she won?t cross to seize the dream life she?s been chasing. The most unsettling part? You?ll root for her, even as you gasp in disbelief.

Dark, biting and laugh-out-loud funny, BEST OFFER WINS is a propulsive debut and a razor-sharp exploration of class, ambition and the modern housing crisis.

Discussion Guide

1. Margo?s desperation for a house quickly escalates from minorly concerning behavior to an unhealthy obsession. When do you think she crosses a line?

2. Even as Margo crosses the line to get her dream house, did you find yourself sympathizing with her anyway? Why or

why not?

3. What does the house come to symbolize for Margo beyond just being a place to live?

4. Margo discusses how she and Ian sold their ?starter home? to upgrade to a bigger house. What does this say about Margo, or about American consumerism?

5. How do you think Margo?s childhood and background influence her choices and desires as an adult?

6. How does Margo?s fixation on the house affect her relationship with Ian?

7. Do you think Ian?s infidelity drives Margo to the edge, or is it Margo?s unhappiness and obsession that pushes Ian away?

8. Why does Margo ultimately decide she can live with Ian?s infidelity? Why was she willing to overlook this major crack in the picture of the perfect life she wanted?

9. How might the story have unfolded differently if Ian had shared her obsession?

10. The novel satirizes the overheated housing market. How does the story highlight inequities in access to housing and the ?American Dream??

11. What commentary does the novel make about the role of money, privilege, race and social status in homeownership?

12. Did the book make you reflect on your own experiences (or fears) about housing, renting or buying a home? How so?

13. What scenes made you laugh even though you felt you ?shouldn?t??

14. Do you think achieving ?the dream life? is possible without compromise --- or does striving for it always demand some level of obsession?

15. What would you have done in Margo?s situation? Where would you draw the line?

Author Bio

Marisa Kashino was a journalist for 17 years, most recently at *The Washington Post*. She spent the bulk of her career at *Washingtonian* magazine, writing long-form features and overseeing the real estate and home design coverage. She grew up near Seattle, graduating from the University of Washington with a degree in journalism and political science. She lives in the DC area with her husband, two dogs and two cats. BEST OFFER WINS is her first novel.

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