



Shelter: A Novel

By Jung Yun

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"Shelter is domestic drama at its best, a gripping narrative of secrets and revelations that seized me from beginning to end."?Viet Thanh Nguyen, Pulitzer Prize-Winning author of *The Sympathizer*

One of *The Millions*' Most Anticipated Books of the Year (Selected by Edan Lepucki)

Now *BuzzFeed*'s #1 Most Buzzed About Book of the Year

Longlisted for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize

Named a Best Literary Debut of the Year by *Buzzfeed* and a Best Book of the Year by *MPR*

Kyung Cho is a young father burdened by a house he can't afford. For years, he and his wife, Gillian, have lived beyond their means. Now their debts and bad decisions are catching up with them, and Kyung is anxious for his family's future.

A few miles away, his parents, Jin and Mae, live in the town's most exclusive neighborhood, surrounded by the material comforts that Kyung desires for his wife and son. Growing up, they gave him every possible advantage?private tutors, expensive hobbies?but they never showed him kindness. Kyung can hardly bear to see them now, much less ask for their help. Yet when an act of violence leaves Jin and Mae unable to live on their own, the dynamic suddenly changes, and he's compelled to take them in. For the first time in years, the Chos find themselves living under the same roof. Tensions quickly mount as Kyung's proximity to his parents forces old feelings of guilt and anger to the surface, along with a terrible and persistent question: how can he ever be a good husband, father, and son when he never knew affection as a child?

As *Shelter* veers swiftly toward its startling conclusion, Jung Yun leads us through dark and violent territory, where, unexpectedly, the Chos discover hope. *Shelter* is a masterfully crafted debut novel that asks what it means to provide for one's family and, in answer, delivers a story as riveting as it is profound.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In *Shelter*, Jung Yun takes Tolstoy's idea that every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way and packages it in the most familiar expression of the American Dream: owning a home. What the parents and children in this novel discover is that they can neither take shelter in their houses nor their families. This is domestic drama at its best, a gripping narrative of secrets and revelations that seized me from beginning to end."?Viet Thanh Nguyen, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author of *The Sympathizer*

"This absorbing, suspenseful debut tracks familial obligation and the legacy of trauma... The narrative piles on surprises at a tightly controlled clip, as [Kyung's] family is forced to confront the past and the price it has paid for stability."?The New Yorker

"Gripping... Yun shows how, although shelter doesn't guarantee safety and blood doesn't guarantee love, there's something inextricable about the relationship between a child and a parent... *Shelter* is captivating."?The New York Times Book Review

"I read the greater part of Jung Yun's *Shelter* in a 14-hour sitting, interrupted by only five hours of sleep. I was on a trip, with other people, but I couldn't do anything until I was finished; Yun's debut may be a family drama, but it has all the tension of a thriller. It's a sharp knife of a novel?powerful and damaging, and so structurally elegant that it slides right in....it gets better and richer with every page...Like the writer's version of a no-hitter, *Shelter* is a marvel of skill and execution, tautly constructed and played without mercy."?Steph Cha, *Los Angeles Times*

"Jung Yun dazzles in her haunting debut."?US Weekly

"[A] harrowing hybrid of wrenching domestic drama and nail-biting crime procedural? *Ordinary People* meets *In Cold Blood*."?Passport

"[A] fearless and thrilling debut."?Town & Country

"The tension inside Kyung [is] visceral... Yun skillfully makes his unraveling feel fast-paced and urgent."?Entertainment Weekly

"Yun keeps the suspense and family drama racing neck and neck... *Shelter* is a suspenseful, illuminating first novel."?Jane Ciabattari, BBC.com (Nine Books to Read This Month)

"The combination of grisly James Patterson thriller and melancholic suburban drama shouldn't work at all. Yet Ms. Yun pulls it off...The proximity of Kyung's parents and the atmosphere of grief and panic launch him on a spiral of self-destruction that's impossible to turn away from."?Sam Sacks, *The Wall Street Journal*

"I was riveted."?Rumaan Alam, *The Millions*

"Yun's powerful and tautly written novel is a brave and engrossing meditation on an adult child's need to reckon with his past in order to be free."?Min Jin Li, *Asia House*

"[A] thrilling debut novel...Dark and gripping, *Shelter* exposes the jagged edges of parent-child relationships

and the sacrifices we make in the name of family."?BuzzFeed, 19 Incredible Books You Need to Read This Spring

"What follows is the unfolding of a horrific and complicated crime?not to mention a horrific and complicated hidden family history."?Marie Claire

"Spare and suspenseful...This post-recession novel peels back the layers of emotional damage that the financial crisis wrought....Yun offers glimpses of family secrets as if a searchlight has illuminated them briefly, [and] as the novel continues, those secrets are fully exposed."?MPR News, The Best Books of the Year (So Far)

"[A] beautifully crafted, deeply moving first novel."?The Chicago Tribune

"If you want high stakes and suspense, you've found your book (I mean, just look at that cover). Jung Yun writes about family and identity and the tight bond between them ? especially when circumstances change in startling ways...*Shelter* will get your heart beating for sure."?Bustle, Most Anticipated Books of the Year

"A masterful work of literature."?Electric Literature

"This troubling, moving work from Yun explores what it means to be part of a family, even if it's nothing close to the one you might choose for yourself."?DuJour, What to Read This Month

"It seems as though every year a novel?and its author?appears out of nowhere and gets readers everywhere talking. This year that book is *Shelter*, by Korean American writer Jung Yun."?South China Morning Post

"Shocking, and very poignant...This is a dark family drama that reveals layer on layer of what responsibility and duty mean, and what it looks like when they clash with an individual's long-suppressed sense of self."?Times Literary Supplement (London)

"[*Shelter*] has all the tension and pace of a thriller. Replete with secrets, misunderstandings, and guilt, this is a powerful novel about what home really means."?The Daily Mail (UK)

"In other hands, this material could fall apart or lose steam, but Jung Yun keeps it together through pitch-perfect, but flawed narrator Kyung and a high-tension storyline...An unexpected page-turner."?The Globe and Mail (Toronto)

"A searing and beautifully written novel that still haunts me?I found it hard to put it down...Jung Yun elevates ordinary suffering and shame into literary art with an unflinching honesty."?The International Examiner

"Yun's emotional perspicacity and tensile prose combine to turn it into something deeper than mere family melodrama..*Shelter* emerges as rich and multi-layered."?The Toronto Star

"Poignant, spellbinding, and profound, *Shelter* will keep you up until the wee hours. In her brilliant debut novel, Yun skillfully untangles this snarled web of family lies, tragedy, identity, and loss. Redemption is hard-earned, and kindness comes in rare and unexpected places, but hope shimmers just beneath the surface. This is a book of heartbreaking genius."?Mira Bartók, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and bestselling author of *The Memory Palace*

"Jung Yun's *Shelter* is an urgent novel, a book so alive, contemporary, and, above all, honest, that it could only exist right now."?James Scott, bestselling author of *The Kept*

“Magnetic, searing, insightful, *Shelter* is a mic-drop of a debut: a story of post-financial crisis America that establishes Jung Yun as a necessary new voice in American fiction.”?Alexander Chee, author of *The Queen of the Night*

“Like Celeste Ng’s super-lauded best seller, *Everything You Never Told Me*, also about a dysfunctional mixed-race family’s tragedy, [*Shelter*] should find itself on best-of lists, among major award nominations, and in eager readers’ hands everywhere.”?Library Journal (starred review)

"[Yun's] commitment to offering the world a delicately wrought but utterly unlacquered account of family dynamics is courageous...A stunning debut."?The Daily Review (Australia)

"[Kyung's] reversal of fortune leads to dramatic and surprising revelations, dissecting questions of familial duty, betrayal and forgiveness. Jung Yun's *Shelter* weaves an intricately plotted intergenerational drama, delivered in cool spare prose."?The Age (Australia)

“There’s more than enough to appreciate in this above-average debut. Expect great things from Jung Yun.”?Bookreporter.com

“Arresting...A strikingly suspenseful debut novel, *Shelter* digs into the secrets and troubles of two generations in a Massachusetts Korean-American family.”?Shelf Awareness (starred review)

"*Shelter* maintains its narrative momentum right to the end...[A] valiant portrayal of contemporary American life."?Kirkus Reviews

"Skilled [and] deeply disconcerting...A work of relentless psychological sleuthing and sensitive insight."?Booklist

“With each page, Yun takes us deeper into Kyung’s troubles...As the crime drama unfolds in the background, Yun expertly explores what it means to be an immigrant in America, the true value of tradition, the parent-child bond, what makes a good marriage, and the need for forgiveness... Yun introduces us to a man riddled with anger and self-doubt, leaving the reader to judge whether time can truly mend what’s broken.”?BookPage

“In her intense debut, Yun explores the powerful legacy of familial violence and the difficulty of finding the strength and grace to forgive... This family drama [is] rife with tension and unexpected ironies.”?Publishers Weekly

About the Author

JUNG YUN was born in South Korea, grew up in North Dakota, and educated at Vassar College, the University of Pennsylvania, and University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her work has appeared in *Tin House* (the “Emerging Voices” issue); *The Best of Tin House: Stories*, edited by Dorothy Allison; and *The Massachusetts Review*; and she is the recipient of two Artist Fellowships in fiction from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and an honorable mention for the Pushcart Prize. Currently, she lives in Baltimore with her husband and serves as an Assistant Professor of English at the George Washington University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Hubbard:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive today, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a reserve your ability to survive boost then having chance to remain than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading any book, we give you this kind of Shelter: A Novel book as beginner and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

David Lau:

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