

***Ghost Hero* is a Lydia Chin narrated book. She is hired to find, or disprove the existence of, new or newly discovered paintings by a famous Chinese dissident artist who is reported to have died in the Tiananmen Square protests. Bill, her partner, introduces her to another American born Chinese P.I. who is an art expert. It turns out he has been hired by another individual for the same purpose. The story runs through obsession, legend, and honor, and takes our protagonists to a satisfying denouement.**

Book discussion questions, by their very nature, can give away plot points. If you dislike spoilers, please read *Ghost Hero* before looking at the questions below.

Book questions:

What does Lydia collect? Does this affect her understanding of the case?

When Lydia first meets Jack, is she flirting with him or 'taking his measure'?

How would you categorize Lydia's sense of honor? Where in the book did you begin to pick up on it? Which other characters display a strong sense of honor?

What is your favorite 'conversation' Lydia has with herself, or observation she makes, in the book?

What is your favorite 'outside the story' reference [e.g. Getty (p.11), Hatfields (12), Scott and Amundsen (23), Three Musketeers (52), Maurice Chevalier in *Gigi* (130), Mighty Casey (157), Daniel Dae Kim (220)]? As you read them, did others occur to you that you think would have worked better in those instances?

What does "gunpowder" describe in the book? What similar details are mentioned?

What did you learn about Chinese culture with reference to the sharing and drinking tea? How does that affect the atmosphere of the book?

Have you looked at the author's Art Guide (<http://sjrozan.net/novels/lydiabill/ghost-hero/ghost-hero-art-companion-guide>) and 30 Days of Art (<http://sjrozan.net/category/30days>)? What do you admire about Chinese art?

Discuss if Lydia, as the narrator, is the most important character.

Did any of the people who misidentified themselves actually need to? If you were one of these characters, how would you have presented yourself?

Who is your favorite character? What traits do you appreciate about him/her? Does s/he remind you of someone? Does that character differ from the one that you most identify with? If so, why?

Explain how different characters' actions are either the result of destiny or free-choice.

How does the author's choice of words set the tenor of the story? Is it optimistic, alarming, humorous, etc.?

Contractions are one of the hardest things to use properly for those who learn English as a second language. Prof. Yang uses contractions in his speech. Might this be considered out of character, and why did the author do this?

Just as Chau's art had hidden meanings, discuss if there is symbolism in the book's story.

What ethical or moral choices did characters make? How would you handle those situations? How does Jack use his relationship with his mentor, Dr. Snyder?

How many story lines are there in the book, how do they relate to one other, and what significance do they play in the story's resolution? The author explores obsession, legend, and the real world. Give an example of each from the book.

Ghost Hero is back-dropped by the theme of China's detention of dissident artists. Were you aware of these human rights violations before reading the book? Can you name contemporary Chinese artists/writers who have been jailed in their country?

Do you agree with the way the book ends, or should Anna be told about her father?

If you were the book's author, and couldn't use *Ghost Hero*, what title would you like to give it?

If you read the Lydia/Bill series questions:

How has Lydia's character matured over the books? How did *Ghost Hero* enrich your perception of her?

In what ways, if any, has Lydia's relationship with her mother and brothers molded her career choice?

Discuss the irony in Lydia naming Bill's Russian mobster character "Oblomov".

Do you consider the uncertainty of the Lydia/Bill relationship one of the biggest strengths of the series? Might Lydia ever see her relationship with Bill in a more intimate context? How did the addition of Jack Lee in this book affect the interaction between Lydia and Bill? Is her interest in Jack culturally based, or is he a very attractive guy?

How does the author use a different voice in the Lydia books from the one she uses in the Bill books?

Many of the books in this series use New York City as a character. How does that setting figure in this story? Can any other setting also be considered here?

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