



*Hotel on the Corner of
Bitter and Sweet* ESSAY CONTEST



OFFICIAL RULES

1. All entrants in the student category must be currently enrolled West Kentucky Community & Technical College students or Commonwealth Middle College students to enter the student category. High school students are allowed to enter the contest if they are currently enrolled in a dual credit course with WKCTC.
2. Essays must be typed, double spaced, and written in 12 point Times New Roman. Entries can be a maximum of five pages. All pages should be numbered in the upper right corner. Entries not properly formatted will not be read. Entries must have a title.
3. The writer's name should not appear anywhere on the essay itself. The writer should put his or her name on the entry form only and staple that form to the front of the essay. Essays with identifying information on or in the essay itself will be discarded. Essays with no entry form attached will be discarded.
4. WKCTC reserves the right to publish these essays.
5. There will be one first place winner and two honorable mentions per category. First place winner will receive \$50, and two honorable mention winners will receive \$25.
6. Winners are asked to be present to accept their award. Author Jamie Ford will present award certificates to the winners at the reception on March 4 at 6 p.m. in Crouse Hall at WKCTC.
7. Essays should refer specifically to the novel *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford. Essays are permitted to contain researched information or quotes from the novel. However, all source material and page numbers must be correctly documented in MLA format, and the writer should submit a correctly formatted MLA works cited page if using a source other than the novel itself.
8. Essays must be received between February 1 – 24. Essays should be turned in to Karen Mitchell (Student Center Room 138) or Matheson Library (Circulation Desk). Entries can also be sent through postal mail to Kim Russell at the following address:

Kim Russell, Humanities Division
WKCTC
PO BOX 7380
Paducah, KY 42002-7380

OFFICIAL TOPICS

1. The United States has been called a nation of immigrants. In what ways do the families of Keiko and Henry illustrate different aspects of the American immigrant experience?
2. What is the bond between Henry and Sheldon, and how is it strengthened by jazz music?
3. Compare and contrast Marty's relationship with Samantha to Henry's relationship with Keiko.
4. What struggles did your own ancestors have as immigrants to America, and to what extent did they incorporate aspects of their cultural heritage into their new identities as Americans?
5. The novel ends with Henry and Keiko meeting again after more than forty years. Jump ahead a year and imagine what has happened to them in that time.

(OFFICIAL TOPICS CONTINUED)

- The novel takes place in both the 1940s and the 1980s, and it's the story of Henry Lee's life and character. How is the Henry in the 1980s similar to his younger self, and in what ways has he changed since his adolescence?
- Describe the relationship between Henry and Keiko and discuss the factors that account for the special bond between the two.
- How was life in the internment camps portrayed in this novel? Was it right or wrong for the U.S. government to take this kind of action during a time in which our country was at war?
- Food plays an important role in *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, from the miso soup that Mrs. Beatty introduces into the camps to improve the internees' quality of life, to the dragon's beard candy that Samantha learns how to make, to the Chinese hum bau that Henry procures for his son, Marty. How is food linked to powerful associations and memories both in this novel and in life?
- What is the significance of the missing record, Oscar Holden & the Midnight Blue, for which Henry spends 40 years searching? When Henry eventually retrieves the broken record from the basement of the Panama Hotel, what does its damage represent to him?
- Compare and contrast Henry's relationship with Keiko versus his relationship with Ethel. Is it a betrayal of Ethel that Henry has carried feelings for Keiko during their marriage and has worked to reunite with her?
- Discuss your favorite character in the novel. Describe that character and explain why you admire that particular character.
- Why is a book about two kids in Seattle during World War II and the paths their lives take an applicable book today? In other words, what are some of the truths or lessons that readers can learn from this particular book?
- Discuss the roles that Mrs. Beatty and Sheldon had in the lives of both Henry and Keiko? Compare the similarities in the characters and their relationships with Henry and Keiko and discuss the importance of the roles they played.
- Henry, to most readers, is a very sympathetic character in that he is struggling against many forces and deals with numerous conflicts. Indeed, at times it seems that the only bright spots in his life are Sheldon and Keiko. Discuss Henry's antagonists in this book and the conflicts between Henry and these antagonists. How are those conflicts resolved, and is anyone actually triumphant in the end?

HOTEL ON THE CORNER OF BITTER AND SWEET ESSAY CONTEST OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Please fill out completely and legibly using blue or black ink. This form must be stapled to the front of your essay. Complete entries should be submitted to Karen Mitchell (Student Center Office #138), the Anderson Technical Building information desk, or the Matheson Library Circulation Desk. You can also mail this form with your essay to Kim Russell, Humanities, WKCTC, P.O. BOX 7380, Paducah, KY, 42002-7380.

All entries must be received by NOON on February 24. Winners are encouraged to attend the reception honoring author Jamie Ford on March 4 at 6:00 pm in Crouse Hall. Jamie Ford will present the winners with their certificates. First place winners will receive a \$50, and two honorable mentions will receive \$25. Please do NOT include your name on the essay itself. All identifying information should be included ONLY on the cover page (which will be separated from your essay for judging). Please write neatly and staple this form to the front of your essay.

Name: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Choose One: WKCTC Student Dual Credit Student Middle College Student

Home Mailing Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

KCTCS Official e-mail: _____ Personal (other) e-mail: _____

Topic Number (from list of topics): _____ Title of Essay: _____

Statement of Originality (Please Sign)

By signing this Statement of Originality, I am submitting that my essay is a product of my own thought and work. No part of this essay is copied from another source unless I have given full credit to the original source with correct MLA documentation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____