



# Colorado Book Club Resource

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DANCER DAWKINS AND THE CALIFORNIA KID BY WILLYCE KIM

1. The novel is set against the backdrop of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War era. How does Kim incorporate historical events and social issues into the narrative, and what impact do these elements have on the characters and their experiences?
2. Dancer Dawkins and Willy "The California Kid" Kim come from very different backgrounds, yet they form a close friendship. How does their friendship evolve over the course of the novel, and what challenges do they face as they navigate adolescence together?
3. The novel explores themes of racial identity and prejudice, particularly through Dancer's experiences as a Japanese American teenager. How does Dancer grapple with questions of race and belonging, and how do these themes resonate with the broader historical context of the 1960s?
4. Kim incorporates elements of Korean culture and tradition into the narrative, particularly through Willy's family and upbringing. How does Willy's Korean heritage influence his identity and sense of self, and how does he reconcile his cultural background with the American society around him?
5. The novel addresses issues of family dynamics and parental expectations, particularly in relation to Dancer and Willy's relationships with their parents. How do their family experiences shape their perspectives and choices as they navigate adolescence?
6. Kim incorporates elements of music and dance into the narrative, particularly through Dancer's passion for jazz and swing dancing. How does music serve as a form of self-expression and connection for the characters, and what role does it play in shaping their identities?
7. The novel touches on themes of love and loss, particularly through Dancer's relationship with his older brother and Willy's experiences with his father. How do these personal tragedies impact the characters, and how do they cope with grief and adversity?
8. Reflecting on the ending of the novel, how does Kim resolve the various plot threads and character arcs? Were you satisfied with the conclusion, or were there aspects you found unresolved or open to interpretation?
9. How does *Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid* capture the spirit of the 1960s and the cultural landscape of California during that time period? What details or descriptions stood out to you as particularly evocative of the era?



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10. What themes or messages did you take away from *Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid*, and how do they resonate with contemporary issues and experiences?

***Discussion questions generated by ChatGPT.***



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