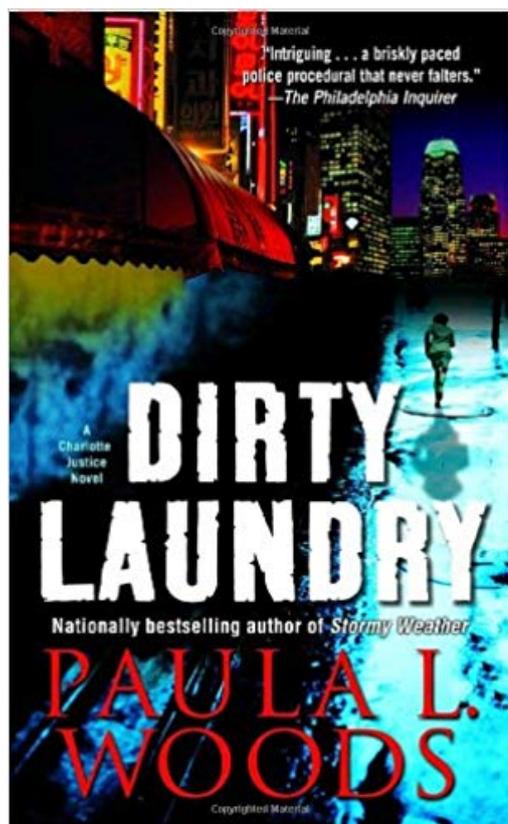


## Dirty Laundry: A Charlotte Justice Novel (Charlotte Justice Novels (Paperback)) by Paula L. Woods



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In her award-winning Charlotte Justice novels, Paula L. Woods has created a rare blend of mystery, suspense, and an unflinching social critique of urban, multiethnic America. Featuring an African American homicide detective in the LAPD's elite Robbery-Homicide Division, this new Charlotte Justice novel is a sizzling story of murder, politics, families, and betrayal in the uneasy melting pot of Los Angeles, where everyone has their own. . . .**DIRTY LAUNDRY**For Charlotte and her team, the case begins when a woman's body is found in L.A.'s Koreatown district, where a series of robberies and murders has already put besieged merchants on edge. Now the spectacle of a bright, successful young Korean woman found bludgeoned and bound in an alley is stirring fears, passions, and city politics. In the hours after Vicki Park's murder, Charlotte Justice must contend with a complex crime scene and a beleaguered community's hostility toward the police. Interestingly enough, Vicki (like Charlotte) lived and worked in two different worlds: her close-knit Korean community and the wider political world where she served as a special aide to handsome, media-savvy Mike Santos, whose is vying to become L.A.'s first Latino mayor. With twenty-four candidates running to replace a long-standing African American incumbent, the mayor's race is shaping up as a wild brawl, full of dirty tricks and innuendo. Is Vicki's murder connected to the campaign or is the answer to be found in the ethnic enclave that nurtured Vicki-and that may now be hiding her killer?While Charlotte searches for answers, she must also navigate the perils of life in the LAPD, which complicates her personal life, namely her budding relationship with Aubrey Scott, an emergency-room physician. Justifying her relentless hunt for Vicki's killer as part of her mission as a homicide detective, Charlotte must face the possibility that her motivation may also be to ease the pain she feels over the violent death of her husband and young daughter years before-a possibility that is challenged in unexpected ways.A powerful story about families and the secrets they keep, *Dirty Laundry* is a fast-paced, deeply human thriller that builds to a powerful climax. Featuring one of the great female characters in detective fiction today, this book is a fascinating portrait of Los Angeles from the streets of Koreatown to the power corridors of City Hall. *Dirty Laundry* is Paula Woods's richest, most

rewarding novel to date. *From the Hardcover edition.*



## Reviews of the **Dirty Laundry: A Charlotte Justice Novel (Charlotte Justice Novels (Paperback))** by Paula L. Woods

Utchanat

Authoress gives impression she has to set "race tone" pre-empting everything. One could gather story content without all of that. I feel it would be more pleasing a read without all of the comparisons to the past. Overkill.

Hudora

Well written but start with the first in the series. I didn't - I read backwards. A lot of angst, struggle and darkness - will things get better for the main character or will there just be more of the same?

Tto

Paula Woods has brought back the sharp-edged, tough-talking detective, Charlotte Justice, in her latest mystery, *Dirty Laundry*. As always, readers can expect a supporting cast of a diverse group of detectives from all walks and cultures of the greater Los Angeles area on duty, getting the job done and putting their own twist on the murder case involved. When Vicki Park, a Korean-American woman is found dead behind a Laundromat it becomes symbolic of the dirty laundry that is thrown around throughout the novel. The murder is immediately counted as a celebrity murder as Vicki is an assistant to the Latino candidate for mayor, Mike Santos, a charismatic guy, who has some dirty laundry of his own. This is a year after the Rodney King riots in 1992 and relationships between Koreans and the Black and Latino residents of the neighborhoods where they have businesses are tenuous, to say the least. They also feel they have not been supported by the police department and the city, in general.

Charlotte is at the best place in her life as she approaches her fortieth birthday-in fact she has never been better. After the devastating, violent deaths of her husband and baby daughter fourteen years prior, she has finally found happiness with a great man, Aubrey and has made peace with her manipulative mother, who is a snob. In fact, Charlotte calls the family home where her upper-class African American family congregates, the Nut House. As a detective in the highly regarded Homicide and Robbery division, she has gone through more than her share of drama in the department. She comes into the Park murder after a particularly rough year when she brought accusations against her former superior while she was required to appear before a police commission for questionable conduct while on duty.

It is known nationally that the Los Angeles Police Department has their share of problems with countless cases of victims' abuse and corruption amongst their personnel. Woods does an effective job of demonstrating the nuances of a city under a microscope without over dramatizing the details or pointing fingers at any one issue or group. Additionally, this author does an excellent job, as in her previous novels, of giving readers a view of Los Angeles (also her home) history interwoven throughout the narrative. When Woods was here in Oakland for her book signing, she said she wanted to weave a multicultural tale that would depict the diversity of the city. In doing so she also

manages to create realistic three-dimensional African American characters from different walks of life. Her characters, including the protagonist, are flawed and Woods delves deep into the psyche of these people as if they are real people. The first fifty or so pages moved a little slowly but picked up momentum and made for an evenly-paced, satisfying read. I look forward to meeting up with Detective Charlotte Justice in her next assignment.

Dera Williams

APOOO BookClub

Mr.Death

With the city still reeling from the aftershock of the Rodney King riots, the mean streets of Los Angeles have gotten a lot meaner and more treacherous as African-American detective Charlotte Justice of the LAPD's elite Robbery-Homicide division returns to active duty after serving out a four-month suspension following a previous investigation which had ended tragically. Three weeks away from a potentially explosive...multi-candidate...mayoral primary, LA is a powder keg of racial/political tensions that's ready to blow at the slightest provocation. When Charlotte and her new partners, black lesbian Billie Truesdale and white 'newbie-Tec' Roger Middleton, catch their first case as a team (the cold-blooded killing of a politically-well-connected Korean-American woman whose dead body has been found bound, gagged and dumped in a Koreatown alley), it could well prove to be the high-profile spark that will destroy LAPD's last remaining shreds of credibility and set the city ablaze. Savvy, stunning Vicki Park had been working as a campaign strategist for charismatic, former news-anchor Mike Santos who is running hard and well-ahead of the pack in his campaign to become LA's first Mexican-American mayor. Apparently dissatisfied with the role which she's being asked to play in his race, has Vicki's discontent caused her murder? Charlotte's investigation becomes further complicated by another death...that of a Korean detective who has been serving as her link with the community: was it an accident or was he set up? and she needs every bit of her hard-won street smarts, detective skills and self-control to work her way through a maze of false clues, misleading information and an old-boys' Department network that would like nothing better than to see her lose her badge permanently. Inevitably, as she starts to zero in on the how's and why's of Vicki's murder, the stakes rise, and the final confrontation between Charlotte and a traitorous killer/cop had me glued to the pages until I could safely breathe again.

That's actually the best criteria that I have to praise Paula L. Woods as a fresh, unique and utterly absorbing new voice on the police procedural scene! This lady can WRITE! I came to Charlotte Justice cold, and was excited to the point where I stopped reading after only a couple of chapters (hard to do!) in order to seek out her two previous adventures first. Yes, this novel will absolutely stand-alone, but I quickly realized that if I really wanted to be able to savor its nuances...especially those having to do with the black community: its family values and focus which are so integral to Ms. Woods' plotting...obtaining additional background material from "Inner City Blues" and "Stormy Weather" could and did make an enormous difference in my enjoyment of "Dirty Laundry". I was especially enthralled and impressed by Ms. Woods' 'take' on Charlotte's experiences in dealing with the barbed-wire, racist/sexist climate in LAPD. This novel rang with the fervor of I'll-tell-it-like-it-is-let-the-chips-fall-where-they-may! authenticity, and I can tell you this: whatever she chooses to write in the future, I plan to be right there with her.

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