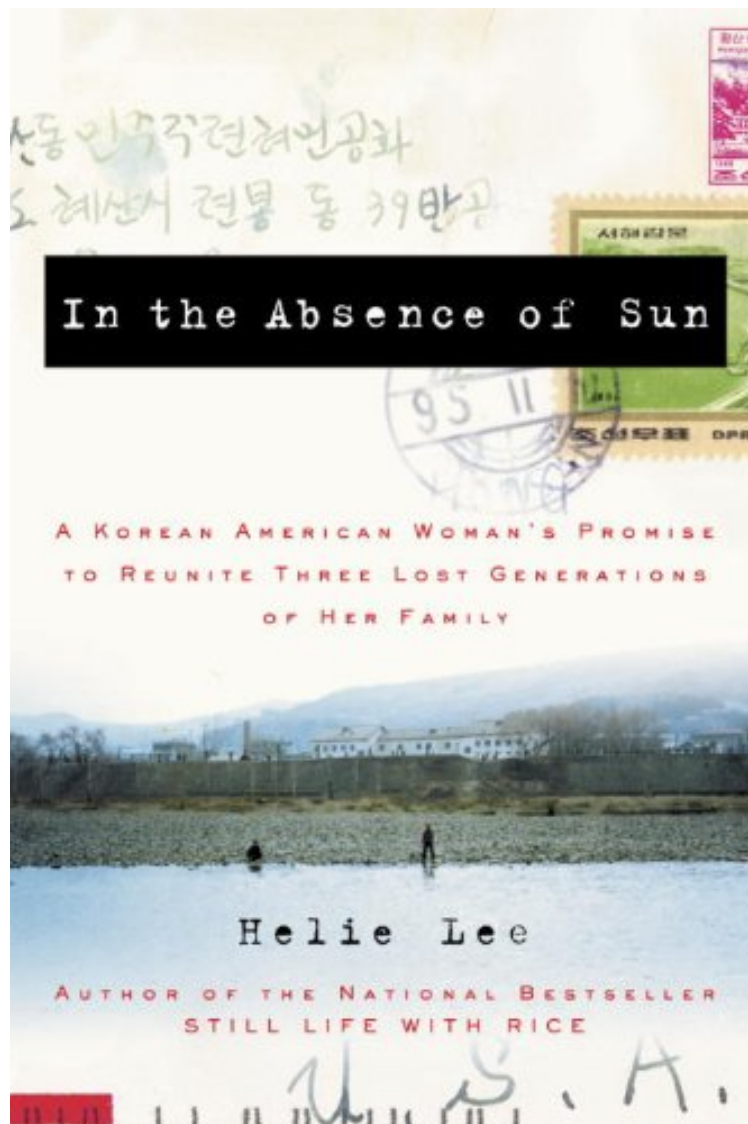


(Free) In the Absence of Sun: A Korean American Woman's Promise to Reunite Three Lost Generations of Her Family

In the Absence of Sun: A Korean American Woman's Promise to Reunite Three Lost Generations of Her Family

Von Helie Lee

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Von Helie Lee : In the Absence of Sun: A Korean American Woman's Promise to Reunite Three Lost Generations of Her Family before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Absence of Sun: A Korean American Woman's Promise to Reunite Three Lost Generations of Her Family:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Flucht mit HindernissenVon T. W. Erzhlt wird im Erstlingswerk von Helie Lee, "Still Life With Rice", die Lebensgeschichte von Baek Hong Yong, die Gromutter der Autorin. Sie stammte ursprnglich aus Nordkorea, floh aber whrend des koreanischen Krieges gen Sden, da sie und ihre Angehrigen als Christen im Norden verfolgt wurden. Ihr lttester Sohn floh gemeinsam mit 2 Freunden - ihm gelang die Flucht ber die Grenze nicht. ber 40 Jahre lang wusste Halmoni, Gromutter, nicht, ob, wo und wie ihr Sohn lebt. Auch in der Familie wurde das schmerzhaft Thema vermieden, so dass auch Helie erst von ihrem Onkel erfuhr, als sie ihre Gromutter fr ihr Buch interviewte. Am Ende des Buches fragt Helie ihre Gromutter, ob es etwas in ihrem Leben gibt, was sie ndern wrde. Das Schicksal meines erstgeborenen Sohnes", lautet die Antwort. Fortan setzt sich Helie das Ziel, ihren Onkel Yong Woon ausfindig zu machen. Die Authentizitt und die Brisanz der Erzhlung haben mir sehr gefallen und mich ber Schwachstellen hinweg sehen lassen - das Buch ist spannend, wenn auch es nicht ganz an seinen Vorgnger herankommt. Trotzdem spreche ich auch hier wieder eine unbedingte Leseempfehlung aus - wer einigermaßen Englisch kann, sollte dieses Buch im Anschlu an Still Life With Rice" lesen!

KurzbeschreibungA breathtaking true story of a rescue mission undertaken by a young woman and her family in one of the most repressive countries in the world. Helie Lee often had heard her grandmother speak of an uncle, lost decades ago when he was a child during the familys daring escape from North Korea. As an adult, he was still living there under horrid conditions. When her grandmother began to ail, Helie became determined to reunite her with her eldest son, despite tremendous odds. Helies mission became even more urgent when she realized that her first book, the bestselling novel Still Life with Rice, about the familys escape, might have angered the North Korean government and put her uncle in danger. Pushing through rivers and forests, fighting the cold, bribing and manipulating border guards, gangsters, and secret service agents, Helie and her father finally achieve their goal. But there are many hurdles. Her uncle is forced to make a harrowing choice: leave his North Korean family behind or continue to live in oppression and starvation away from his beloved mother. And Helie has to face her deep, sometimes ambivalent, emotions about her identity in the family and as a Korean American woman. Unmarried and outspoken, she struggles in Korea, where women marry early and keep silent, and writes eloquently about the landscape there, both literal and cultural. She comes through a heartbreaking love affair only to face an intense and confusing relationship with the Guide the man who, despite being crude and macho, ultimately helps to save her uncle and eventually his extended family through several daring acts of heroism. In the Absence of Sun is a riveting adventure story and a powerful tale of family bonds and reunion. An eerie fear crawled through my flesh as I stood on the Chinese side of the Yalu River, gazing across the murky water into one of the most closed-off and isolated countries in the world. I couldnt believe it. Even as my boots sank into the doughy mud, I had trouble coming to terms with the fact that I was actually standing there. . . . I was not prepared for the kind of despair and insane fear I felt that day. My wizened old uncle looked nothing like the sweet-faced teenager in the faded photograph that Halmoni kept pressed between the pages of her Bible. That day, at the Yalu River, staring helplessly into his terrorized face, I hadnt fully realized what a dangerous thing I had done the year before. I had placed him and his family in danger. By including details of my uncles life in a book, I had alerted North Koreas enigmatic leadership to the identity of my relatives in a nation where it was better to remain invisible. From In the Absence of Sun From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers Weekly Lee's bestselling debut, Still Life with Rice (1996), created quite a stir. It chronicled Lee's grandmother's 1950 escape from northern to southern Korea during a civil war that separated the Koreas and tore Lee's grandmother's family apart, as her eldest son, Lee Yong Woon, did not make it out of the north. Lee (who was born in Seoul, South Korea, and now lives in Los Angeles) used her uncle's real name in Still Life and included his picture. Once that book became available in South Korea, Lee's family was notified that her book had placed her relatives in North Korea in danger. Nonetheless, Lee promised her grandmother that she would see her son again, thus undertaking a daring mission chronicled here to reunite the family. The account is a gripping and inspiring one, and Lee's prose resonates with a poetic sensibility. She also brings a distinctly American perspective to the entire situation. At times, the author's desire to make the story her own (including a long segue into her relationship with her boyfriend) steal some of the swiftness and urgency from a story that ultimately belongs to her entire family. But an all-out thrilling escape story, complete with dangerous border crossings, unexpected romance and touching family moments, makes for a terrific and beautiful chronicle. Lee reflects, "I believe one family, one person, one action can make a difference, because we are all connected. When we realize this connection, peace is possible." Bw photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist *Starred * Lee's Still Life with Rice, published in 1996, was a novelized account of her grandmother's life and escape from what would become North Korea. One son was left behind, and, ironically, the success of Still Life with Rice put Yong Woon Uncle and his family in North Korea at risk. Grandmother, or Halmoni, is now over 80, and Lee and her family decide the time has come to try to unite Halmoni with her eldest child. With the help of a mysterious man known only as "the guide," and some assistance from the South Korean secret service

and the Seoul Broadcasting System (which keeps trying to stage-manage events for a documentary about the family's reunion), Lee and her father overcome obstacles, personal danger, and numerous setbacks to finally bring nine people out of North Korea and into a new life in the South. Woven throughout are Lee's complicated relationships with her father and with the guide as she continues her own struggle with her Korean heritage--in particular, the paternalistic and patronizing attitudes toward women. Still dazed by their perilous escape and their plunge into an alien world, the first thing her North Korean relatives ask her is the same thing she hears back home in L.A.'s Koreatown--whether or not she is married. As she showed in her previous book, Lee has a gift for dramatization. The sections that chronicle the rescue mission are gripping, and readers may find themselves wishing for more of this and less of the author's sometimes overwritten accounts of her own experiences. But the book is important for the glimpse it offers into a closed and oppressive society, as eye-opening for us as the Lee Yong Woon family's first exposure to even the moderate freedoms and comforts of China is for them. For books on a similar theme, see the Read-alikes column on p.1301. Mary Ellen Quinn Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved