



# Stars Between the Sun and Moon: One Woman's Life in North Korea and Escape to Freedom

*Lucia Jang , Susan McClelland*

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**Stars Between the Sun and Moon: One Woman's Life in North Korea and Escape to Freedom** Lucia Jang , Susan McClelland

An extraordinary memoir by a North Korean woman who defied the government to keep her family alive.

Born in the 1970s, Lucia Jang grew up in a common, rural North Korean household—her parents worked hard, she bowed to a photo of Kim Il-Sung every night, and the family scraped by on rationed rice and a small garden. However, there is nothing common about Jang. She is a woman of great emotional depth, courage, and resilience.

Happy to serve her country, Jang worked in a factory as a young woman. There, a man she thought was courting her raped her. Forced to marry him when she found herself pregnant, she continued to be abused by him. She managed to convince her family to let her return home, only to have her in-laws and parents sell her son without her knowledge for 300 won and two bars of soap. They had not wanted another mouth to feed.

By now it was the beginning of the famine of the 1990s that resulted in more than one million deaths. Driven by starvation—her family's as well as her own—Jang illegally crossed the river to better-off China to trade goods. She was caught and imprisoned twice, pregnant the second time. She knew that, to keep the child, she had to leave North Korea. In a dramatic escape, she was smuggled with her newborn to China, fled to Mongolia under gunfire, and finally found refuge in South Korea before eventually settling in Canada.

With so few accounts by North Korean women and those from its rural areas, Jang's fascinating memoir helps us understand the lives of those many others who have no way to make their voices known.

## Stars Between the Sun and Moon: One Woman's Life in North Korea and Escape to Freedom Details

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## **From Reader Review Stars Between the Sun and Moon: One Woman's Life in North Korea and Escape to Freedom for online ebook**

### **Maren says**

I am so fascinated by these memoirs, not only by the horrors of North Korea but the strength and determination of those who escape.

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### **Barbara says**

Well, I listened to this book, and while I was horrified at what this woman had to endure, I was not a fan of the reader. She did not put enough emotion into the reading.

I am pleased that the author was finally able to make her way out of North Korea for good (several trips out and then back home, and try again, and back home again- I began to get a bit irritated because she didn't go and just "stay gone." But I understand her predicament; often people who don't know any differently about the outside world stay in their situation. But I'm glad she finally made the decision.

What a horrible, horrible country.

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### **Patricia says**

A harrowing memoir of strength and determination by Jung Sunwha and her escape from North Korea. Sunwha has informally married in Chosun, North Korea to an abusive man, Myungin. She gave birth to their son, Sungman, who was sold. For years she escaped back and forth from Chosun, to China, and then caught and imprisoned in North Korea. The cycle went round and round with torture and starvation. She becomes pregnant by an ethnic Korean in China, gives birth to a son, Taebum, and ultimately they escape to South Korea, via Mongolia, and in 2008 she and her son settle in Canada.

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### **Stephen Douglas Rowland says**

I'd probably think more of it if I had not already read so many other tales of DPRK defectors. This is probably the least interesting of the bunch, and all the whining about her child gets tiresome. Still, the subject continues to fascinate me and I could barely put the book down, mediocre as it is in retrospect.

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### **Gowri Sudhir says**

What a heart wrenching, soul stirring memoir about Lucia Jang's life and her struggles in North Korea and her escape to freedom. Her journey has been so painful to even read, I cannot even begin to imagine how she actually lived through it and endured so much misery in one lifetime. I was constantly telling myself what I

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am reading is not fiction but HAS actually happened to this woman. This book left me speechless and teary in the end.

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### **Angie says**

I read this book in just 2 days because it was so engrossing, right from the first paragraph. Last month I read my favourite book of the year, "The Orphan Master's Son" by Adam Johnson and it really peaked my interest in North Korea. Johnson did a lot of research before writing his novel and even though it is a work of fiction it is based on fact (as good fiction often is). I wanted to read more about this country and the people who have actually lived there. There are quite a few memoirs from defectors out there. Lucia Jang now lives in Canada and this is her story about surviving the harrowing years of famine (the 1990's) and how she tried to help her family by selling herself in China and how she survived being imprisoned several times. Eventually she flees her home country with her infant son. I felt hungry and guilty while reading this memoir, how Jang and her family survived on weeds she could collect in the forest - literally thousands of people starved to death in this period. If you want to know what it is like to live in North Korea, I highly recommend this memoir.

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### **Mandi Mclarney says**

This book had me in awe and simultaneously in terror and heartbreak over the way humans have been and are still being treated. This woman and her bravery are inspiring. A must read if you need some perspective and a reason (or a few) to be thankful to live where (and how) we do.

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### **sappho\_reader says**

I'm completely devastated after reading this memoir about life inside North Korea. Lucia Jang's story is so dire and horrifying that I almost wish she fabricated some of it so I can continue to believe that life cannot be so cruel. She was born to a poor family in the countryside that would be forever scorned because her grandfather and uncle defected to South Korea. She will have no ability to join the Party and would only be a manual laborer for life. Times were tough until the Arduous March (famine) when her life became a nightmare just to survive. Her descriptions of how people were literally wasting away and starving to death resonated strongly with me. What was most interesting was how she smuggled into China to trade for food to feed her family back home, and how she was sold into marriage and mistreated by the Chinese for simply being from Chosun. Reading this put a human face to the tragedy of North Korea, and is a story that will stick with me for some time.

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### **Nicole says**

There are very few books I have ever read in a single day, and this is one of them. I am not a fast reader. I plod through books, rereading sentences as I grow more tired. This woman's story of life in North Korea is illuminating, and I found her irrepressible zeal for life refreshing. No matter what happens to Lucia Jang, she presses on with a rare strength. Sometimes I found myself wondering what it was that fueled her tenacity, how could she go on any further?

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Life in North Korea has been shielded from the media to such an extent, that unless you are Dennis Rodman, no one is aware of the suffering taking place there - or the brainwashing.

If you enjoy stories of triumph over adversity, you will love this book.

If you have suffered a great deal in your life at the hands of others, this may bring up painful memories, so proceed with caution.

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### **Karatepop says**

The first defector story I've read about a woman - a woman with a baby, no less.

The writing is spare, but effective. She describes some pretty horrific things (no gory details if you are worried about that sort of thing) and gives some insight into the trafficking of North Korean brides and children, but also about daily life pre-famine. The fact that she escaped with her baby is amazing.

This was pretty interesting and tremendously sad. Women are treated as subhuman, always subject to a man, and it never ceases to amaze me that people can be so cruel to one another, knowing full-well the consequences. That said, I am always pleasantly surprised by descriptions of the Mongolian border patrol and their kindness. And I am always impressed by how hopeful North Koreans are, despite the horrendous things they endure in North Korea, trying to escape, and, often times, afterward.

I read these things because I am interested in North and South Korea, the language, the history - I am not even remotely hardened or desensitised to violence, cruelty, people just being jerks to one another, etc. So, if you aren't either, this book is probably a good place to start as far as defector stories go.

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### **Kristin Strong says**

I have no idea how this woman survived everything she did, nor how she could bear to relive it to write this memoir. Circumstances created by the system of government in North Korea render most people's lives, if they were related like a biography, a litany of human rights violations. Starvation, inhuman conditions when imprisoned for daring to escape the regime, forced abortions for women "enemies of the state" who are pregnant when arrested, constant indoctrination and enforced reverence for the late Dear Leader and his son the General...any one of these could kill or break the spirit of any citizen. Lucia Jang's story is a testament to her courage and indomitable will. Here's hoping that the regime can be brought down and its long-suffering subjects saved.

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### **Kristin says**

Excellent written and well told story. No usually a huge fan of non-fiction and I couldn't put it down.

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### **Don Best says**

I think we have come far in the last 50 years as an open, global community. Equal rights, dignity, opportunity on a macro scale. Yes, despite wars, conflicts and terrorism that roil the world on a larger scale. I think we have made advances. But, there are exceptions and this book takes us to one of the nations that continues to make headlines for all the wrong reasons. North Korea. Lucia Jang provides a personal and detailed description of growing up as a citizen under the closed, draconian, nationalist government of North Korea and as a woman trapped by the stigmatism of being a female, even worse...an independently minded one, in a society that values males more and in many cases treats females as property. This in a country that recently claims to have tested a hydrogen bomb ( never mind the old-fashioned atomic bomb for those are so passé in it's claim to join the world of respected nations ). What makes this story unique is not just the author's experiences but the context of her and countless others living in a nation like North Korea that still exists in today's marketplace, global enterprise. While North Korea is not alone in abuses of human rights, it remains an island of exceptional pursuit of a one-man state. This book is a reminder there is still more to be done, much more in some cases, to become a global open society ( and I realize it is a fine line between imposing American values on other nations, but I still believe in the pursuit of democracy and opportunity and we should pursue that with our policies ). Co-authored by Susan McClelland the narrative is well written, organized and easily takes you into Jang's life not only from the perspective of living in North Korea but also as a child, adolescent and young woman. It is a tribute to Jang's determination, luck and escape to freedom.

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### **Vontel says**

This is the first book/life story of a woman who finally escaped from North Korea, ultimately to Canada, after a number of attempts and incredible odds, with first person accounts of the difficult life, her very gradual awakening to the possibility that the society built around fealty to the Kim's doctrines might not be based on facts, as well as the harshness and challenges of the society, including any food security. It is well written, translated during a year's conversations with the co-author. While on the surface it is easily read, it presents the incredible odds and the particular vulnerabilities of, and cruelty to, women in these situations. She was torn between leaving her parents and siblings and including a first son who was given/sold to another family somewhere in the country, and the need to survive.

This book is a complement to/counterpoint to some of the recent books which are men's stories from North Korea, one an escapee from an entire life in a brutal prison camp, and one an escapee from the privileged life of the 'cadre', one of the core of the Kim elite tasked to promote the superiority of North Korea outside the country.

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### **Bree Hill says**

This book had me on the edge of my seat the entire read. The end of each chapter left me curious and anxious to learn what was going to happen next or how something was going to pan out.

This is a story of survival from beginning to end and a glimpse into what some have to do in the pursuit of freedom. This story is going to stay with me for a LONG time and at any moment that I doubt myself, will be a reminder that someone out there is having chase and hideout for the things that I have. Absolutely recommend!

