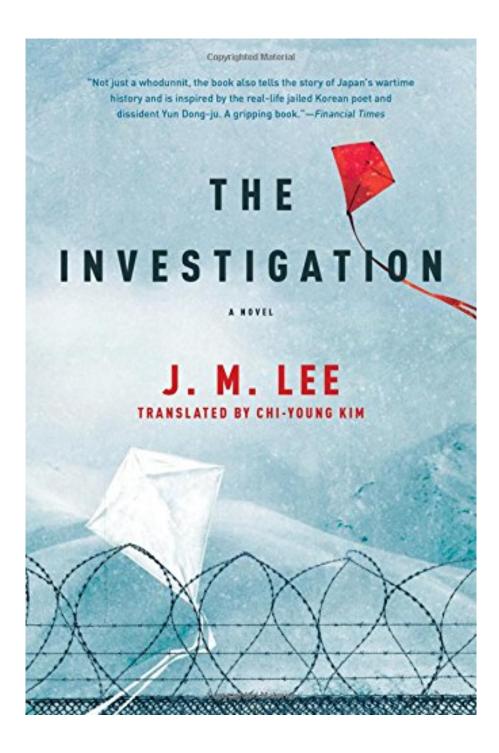


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#### Review

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Fukuoka Prison, 1944. Beyond the prison walls, the war rages. Inside, a man is found brutally murdered. What follows is a searing portrait of Korea before their civil war, and a testimony to the redemptive power of poetry.

Watanbe Yuichi, a young guard with a passion for reading, is ordered to investigate a murder. The victim, Sugiyama, also a guard, was feared and despised throughout the prison and inquiries have barely begun when a powerful inmate confesses. But Watanbe is unconvinced; and as he interrogates both the suspect and Yun Dong-ju, a talented Korean poet, he starts to realize that the fearsome guard was not all he appeared to be...

As Watanbe unravels Sugiyama's final months, he begins to discover what is really going on inside this dark and violent institution, which few inmates survive: a man who will stop at nothing to dig his way to freedom; a governor whose greed knows no bounds; a little girl whose kite finds an unlikely friend. And Yun Dongju?the poet whose works hold such beauty the can break the hardest of hearts.

As the war moves towards its devastating close and bombs rain down upon the prison, Watanbe realizes that he must find a way to protect Yun Dong-ju, no matter what it takes. As he digs further and further in to his investigation, the young guard discovers a devastating truth.

At once a captivating mystery and an epic lament for lost freedom and humanity, The Investigation, inspired by a true story, is a sweeping and gripping tale by an international literary star.

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Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

A Korean Steig Larrsson

By Becky Eastwood

A page turner and a great literary achievement. I was gripped from page 1 and finished the book in 2 days. I found it to be a unusual combination of poetry and call to humanity amidst a brutal prisoner of war camp during WWII. The setting is Japanese and the protagonists are Korean prisoners of war but the story is so universal. The book reminded me of The Shawshank Redemption and Gorky Park, too. It's the story of an everyman soldier ordered to investigate a horrific murder inside the camp. The spine tingling investigation twists and turns like a Kafka novel or an Escher painting...turning inside out and in, from one clue to another until the final page and a revelation so shocking that you won't forget it. I won't spoil it. J M Lee has the intelligence, political savy and great sense of humanity. His writing reminded me of Steig Larsson in that his book is so thrilling and filled with tension while containing such complex and unforgettable characters.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

He is kind of like Abraham Lincoln in the Vampire Killer novels

By Andrew

It is a challenge to convey just how profoundly awful a book is The Investigation by J.M. Lee. The book is pathologically saccharine. It is so over the top in its sanctimonious preaching and the preaching is so relentless and mindless that by the end of the three-hundred some-odd pages I felt as if I had been subjected

to some bizarre form of torture by Hallmark.

The book is as offensive as it is embarrasing. The author is writing about a very dark chapter of 20th century history, Japan's attempt at eradicating Korean culture, about which he has taken the time to learn almost nothing. Imagine a movie about World War II starring Robin Williams where Robin plays a prisoner interred at a concentration camp who wins over his German guards by quoting French poetry to them and convinces them to let him fly kites to cheer up the prisoners, stage Verdi and open a secret underground library where books about Nazi propaganda are re-fashioned into novels by Dickens and Tolstoy. That movie would only be a degree or two more disturbing than The Investigation, whose only creativity seems in the creation of a new genre: the Ahistorical Historical Novel.

The book is ostensibly about the Korean poet Yun Dong Ju, who died in a Japanese prison where he had been sent for advocating Korean independence. But the character of Yun in this novel is not based on biography or history. He is kind of like Abraham Lincoln in the Vampire Killer novels, a comic book superhero. Lee's Yun is part Buddha, part Jesus Christ with some Andy Dufrene from the Shawshank Redemption and Robin Williams from the Dead Poets Society mixed in. Anyone who claims to be inspired by this ridiculous cartoon of a real human being has not really been inspired. She or he has been duped, or is trying to dupe you.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Translation ruins the book.

### By Emily

I couldn't get into this book at all. While the premise of the book is intriguing, and I bet the book is excellent in its original language, the translation made me put this book down. The language is awkward instead of fluid, uses overly simplistic vocabulary, and I think loses much of the character of the book. It's extremely unfortunate since the translator previously translated an international bestseller.

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