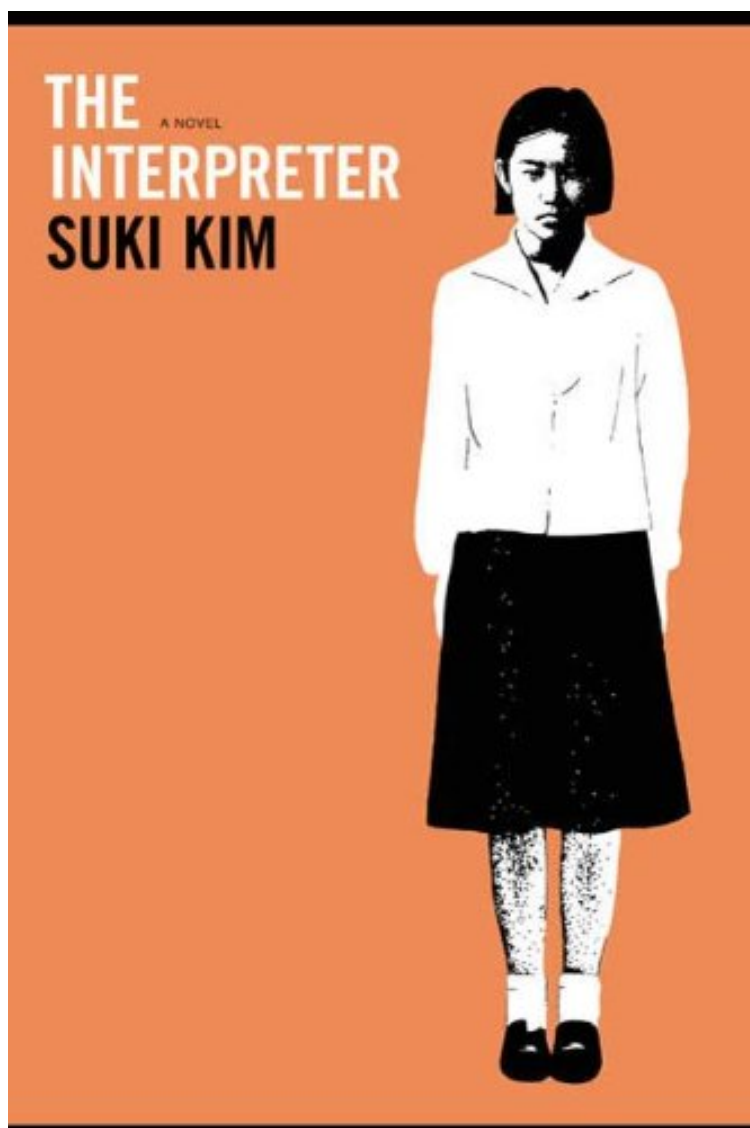


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# The Interpreter: A Novel



*Par Suki Kim*

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**Description :** Description du produitA striking first novel about the dark side of the American DreamSuzy Park is a twenty-nine-year-old Korean American interpreter for the New York City court system. Young, attractive, and achingly alone, she makes a startling and ominous discovery during one court case that forever alters her family's history. Five years prior, her parents--hardworking greengrocers who forfeited personal happiness for their children's gain--were brutally murdered in an apparent robbery of their fruit and vegetable stand. Or so Suzy believed. But the glint of a new lead entices Suzy into the dangerous Korean underworld, and ultimately reveals the mystery of her parents' homicide.An auspicious debut about the myth of the model Asian citizen, The Interpreter traverses the distance between old worlds and new, poverty and privilege, language and understanding.

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*Interpreter* Suzy Park, the 29-year-old protagonist of this ambitious first novel, carries a lot of baggage: two rocky relationships with married men, estrangement from her sister, a series of unsatisfying jobs and the guilt of having cut ties with her parents before both were shot dead in an unsolved double murder. The question is not whether Park can survive the trauma, but whether this hybrid relationship/mystery/suspense/ Korean immigrant story can. The cross-pollination of forms creates depth, but it also creates weight. The dark, doomed-to-fail relationships Park engages in can be viewed as a function of her disconnection from life following the murder of her parents, but these relationships also deaden the tone of an already very serious novel, and the present tense narration has a dreamlike quality that compounds the problem. Luckily, as the novel progresses, Kim's talents become apparent: a good eye for detail, an excellent prose style and the ability to create compelling characters. When Park stumbles across a clue about her parents' five-year-old murder, the urgency of the mystery gradually overcomes the inertia of her relationships, and the search for her now missing sister contributes additional suspense. As Park's investigations lead closer to the truth, the novel's gloom becomes a luminous darkness, and the latter half has an almost hypnotic effect, marred only by a rushed ending. This is an intriguing, tortured portrait of a second-generation Korean-American by a promising young writer. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Kim's spare and often terrifying first novel centers on New York City's Korean community. Rich in detail and grim in outlook, it introduces Suzy Park, a 29-year-old interpreter whose work involves her in a bevy of agencies throughout the five boroughs, from the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the criminal courts. Park is blas about her occupation until a routine translating job reveals that her greengrocer parents were not murdered by random violence, as the police had indicated, but instead had been shot by political enemies. These data provide fodder for Park, and the novel tracks her investigation into what really happened. As she delves, she discovers Korean gangs, gambling and prostitution rings, and an insular culture with its own rules and practices--all intriguing stuff. Nonetheless, readers will be disappointed. While time and place are well captured, the writing is so emotionally flat that one closes the book feeling aroused but ultimately unmoved. Recommended for large, urban collections only. Eleanor J. Bader, Brooklyn, New York Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.