



White Chrysanthemum

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For fans of Min Jin Lee's *Pachinko* and *Lilac Girls*, the heartbreaking history of Korea is brought to life in this deeply moving and redemptive debut that follows two sisters separated by World War II.

Korea, 1943. Hana has lived her entire life under Japanese occupation. As a *haenyeo*, a female diver of the sea, she enjoys an independence that few other Koreans can still claim. Until the day Hana saves her younger sister from a Japanese soldier and is herself captured and transported to Manchuria. There she is forced to become a "comfort woman" in a Japanese military brothel. But *haenyeo* are women of power and strength. She will find her way home.

South Korea, 2011. Emi has spent more than sixty years trying to forget the sacrifice her sister made, but she must confront the past to discover peace. Seeing the healing of her children and her country, can Emi move beyond the legacy of war to find forgiveness?

Suspenseful, hopeful, and ultimately redemptive, *White Chrysanthemum* tells a story of two sisters whose love for each other is strong enough to triumph over the grim evils of war.

White Chrysanthemum Details

Date : Published January 30th 2018 by G.P. Putnam's Sons

ISBN :

Author : Mary Lynn Bracht

Format : Kindle Edition 314 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, War, World War II, Cultural, Asia

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From Reader Review White Chrysanthemum for online ebook

Tania says

"Instead she swallowed her emotions, until she was able to continue to exist."

This book reminded me why historical fiction is one of my favorite genre's. I learned so much about the Korean war and Korean traditions. I also knew nothing about haenyeo, women of the sea, a community of close-knitted female divers and matriarchs.

The author is an amazing writer, she tackles the very upsetting topic of comfort women - women/girls abducted to be sexual slaves to the Japanese army - with empathy and dignity. I sometimes find that when I read about really harrowing experiences, far removed from anything in my life, it becomes almost too much and my brain shuts down. In White Chrysanthemum, the author made me feel deeply, but without overwhelming me and causing me to become numb.

As the author says in her afterword, we should learn from history so that we don't repeat mistakes previously made - and this book may be specifically about comfort women, but it reminds us about atrocities committed against women in all wars.

An exquisitely written, informative and deeply stirring story about the effects of war. Highly recommended.

Dem says

A deeply moving and beautifully written historical fiction novel of human resilience and enduring love of sisters, a story about the Korean 'comfort women' prostituted by Japanese soldiers in World War II and two sisters separated as young girls but the bond of sisters remains strong and they never stop thinking about each other..

This was an eye opening and haunting debut novel by Mary Lynn Brecht and while fictional it is based on real life events that are harrowing and disturbing in places to read but I always remind myself that I only have to read about these events "*real women had to endure them and their families have to relive them in trying to find justice and peace for these women*" and I thank the author for giving me the opportunity to read and learn about a time in history that was not taught in my curriculum in secondary school. The people in this book are not just make up characters but flesh and blood people in the past whose stories need to be told through fiction or non fiction to educate and keep their memory alive and to seek the truth for a new generation. I have lined up a couple of Non Fiction reads to further educate me about this time in our world's ugly history.

I listened to this book on audio and the narrator was excellent, well paced and easy to listen to. I always find historical fiction books really give a terrific insight into history and although they are not 100% accurate they do tend to introduce the reader to events and people in history they may not have been aware of or might never read about and I think that is so important.

I am starting the Rape of Nanking a non fiction book about the Nanking Massacre and the massive atrocities committed by Imperial Japanese Army after it.

Lori says

Powerfully heartbreakng. I am always so appreciative of authors that bring remarkable stories like this to the forefront. How many stories like Hanna's exist? 'The list of women suffering wartime rape is long and will continue to grow unless we include women's wartime suffering in history books, commemorate the atrocities against them in museums, and remember the women and girls we lost by erecting monuments in their honor, like the Statue of Peace.' These events can not be covered up... knowledge is power and stories like this need to continue to be written. A must read. 5 stars.

Dorie says

I have read many, many books about WWII but this is a part of that history that was new for me. Ms. Bracht has composed a novel about the suffering of the Koreans during WWII and it is well researched, well written but entirely heartbreakng.

The story is about two sisters, Hana and Emiko who live on an island, Jeju, off of the coast of Korea. The novel opens beautifully with Hana being induced as a "Haenyeo", a woman who dives expertly to sustain her family. It is a difficult but peaceful life and the sisters have known nothing else.

Unfortunately the Japanese also know about these secluded women and have come to the island to forcibly take the young women as their slaves. When Hana sees a Japanese soldier on the shores as she is diving she shows herself, rather than hide, to protect her younger sister Emi from the fate that she fears will befall her.

The story is then told from two points of view. Hana's story is so violent and terrible we don't know if she will survive. Emi survives both WWII and the Korean war only to live with a feeling of guilt. She believes that she should have gone with Hana when she was taken. It isn't until her last year of life that her children help her to let go of her guilt knowing that is what her sister would have wanted.

I won't go into the plot because there are many reviews where that is given. This book was very difficult to read but it was a story that needed to be told. As a reader I wish that it would have had a little more balance between the "good and the bad", something to ease the reader a bit after the long chapters about the horrible abuse, but of course the author had her story that she needed to tell.

During the Japanese occupation many Korean women were captured and used as sex slaves in the most unconscionable and brutal way. The women were taken to brothels in Manchuria which were maintained purely for the pleasure of the Japanese military. These women, some as young as 12, were kept in their rooms, barely fed and clothed and repeatedly raped day and night by soldiers. The author states that "some historians believe fifty thousand to two hundred thousand Korean women and girls were stolen, tricked or sold into military sexual slavery".

The author is of Korean descent and has written a wonderful author's note. In part she states "The list of women suffering wartime rape is long and will continue to grow unless we include women's wartime

suffering in history books, commemorate the atrocities against them in museums, and remember the women and girls we lost by erecting monuments in their honor, like the Statue of Peace in Korea”.

I am glad that I read the book but I would add a caution that the book is very sexually explicit and perhaps not suitable younger readers.

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher through Edelweiss, thank you.

Roman Clodia says

The true story of Korean 'comfort women' i.e. sex slaves abducted by the Japanese army for the 'servicing' of troops, undoubtedly deserves to be told but this isn't a particularly accomplished or sophisticated novel. In fact, so keen is it to tell a story, that Hana, a 16 year old girl enslaved by a Japanese military officer, spends more time on the run in Manchuria and Mongolia than in the brothel in which she's placed.

Hana's story is interspersed with that of Emi in the present, her younger sister, now an old woman, uncovering family secrets and searching for a trace of her lost sister.

I'm sorry to sound a bit dismissive: this **is** an important story based on the claims that only came out in 1991 that Korean women were enslaved, raped and forced into prostitution by Japanese occupying forces in the run-up to and during WW2. Of course, this is horrific; of course it needs to be told - but as a novel this feels too simplistic and straightforward a treatment.

The author's afterword has a similar naivety about it when it reiterates, again, the platitude that we need to remember history to stop us repeating it - but, as she well knows, women continue to be raped during conflicts in, for example, Rwanda, Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia, Syria, Iraq (even as I write this)... the evidence rather shows that we *don't* learn from history so let's not kid ourselves.

So yes, an important, story, but rather disappointing as a novel.

Thanks to the publisher for an ARC via NetGalley.

Paul Fulcher says

I am a haenyeo. Like my mother, and her mother before her, like my sister will be one day, her daughters too - I was never anything but a woman of the sea. Neither you nor any man can make me less than that.

The beautiful ??? (Jeju Island) is perhaps my favourite holiday resort, and one I visit annually (more so I suspect in future as my in-laws are building a hotel there), so it was lovely to read a book set there, particularly one focusing on the unique ?? (haenyeo), the diving women of the island, that combine the three elements (???) of the island, ??, ??, ?, women, wind and rocks. (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haenyeo>)

(from the author's website)

The novel tells the story of two sisters, brought up, as the opening quote suggests, to become ??, Hana (a name that, significantly, works in both Japanese and Korean, albeit with different meanings) and Emi (or Emiko in Japanese).

The historic part of the novel is set in 1943 when Hana is 16, during WW2 but also during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910-1945 which dominates the backdrop to a novel.

Hana became (presumably around 11) a haenyo is an ancient, and under colonial rules illicit, ceremony:

She chants a greeting to the Dragon Sea God, welcoming him to their island, beckoning him to travel through the bamboo gates towards Jeju's tranquil shores. The sun sparkles on the horizon, a pinpoint of iridescent gold, and Hana blinks at the newness of the coming day. It is a forbidden ceremony, outlawed by the occupying Japanese government, but her mother is insistent upon holding a traditional gut ritual before her first dive as a fully-fledged haenyeo. The shaman is asking for safety and a bountiful catch. As the shaman repeats the words over and over, Hana's mother nudges her shoulder and together they bow, foreheads touching the wet sand, to honour the Dragon Sea God's imminent arrival. As she stands, her sister's sleepy voice whispers, 'I want to dive, too,' and the yearning in her voice tugs on Hana's heart. 'You will be standing here one day soon, Little Sister, and I will be right beside you to welcome you,' she whispers back, confident of the future that lies ahead of them.

Salty seawater drips down her temple, and she wipes it away with the back of her hand. I am a haenyeo now, Hana thinks, watching the shaman twirl white ribbons in circles along the shore. She reaches for her sister's small hand. Side by side they stand, listening to the waves tumbling onto the beach. The ocean is the only sound as the small group silently acknowledges her acceptance into their order. When the sun rises fully above the ocean waves, she will dive with the haenyeo in deeper waters and take her place among the women of the sea.

Emi is too young to yet become a haenyeo so watches from the sea shore. For safety Hana's Mother, also a haenyeo, trains her always to look back to the shore each time she resurfaces from her lengthy dives, after expelling the remaining air with a sumbi sound (????), in order to reorientate herself:

Look for your sister after each dive. Never forget. If you see her, you are safe.

But one day doing so, she sees that her sister isn't safe as a Japanese soldier, who she later finds is called Morimoto, is approaching. She swims to shore and attracts his attention, distracting him from her sister, only for him to kidnap Hana instead as both his personal chattel and as a comfort women for the Japanese troops.

This thread of the novel then follows her harrowing journey to Manchuria and the brutalities she is forced to endure. The book effectively uses her resolve as a haenyeo as a way for her to try and cope, often managing to hold her breath for the entire 2-3 minutes an Imperial soldier takes to satisfy himself:

With a clear head, she has the power to make herself retreat into her imagination. As the men visit her each day she withdraws from reality and sees herself diving deep beneath the ocean, escaping her surroundings. She learns to hold her breath as a soldier invades her body.

Morimoto has a perverse but genuine affection for Hana, and thinks they have a special relationship, whereas she retains nothing but disgust, regarding him as

She imagines that's what he is, a black Jeju pig (???) that lives beneath the latrine behind her house (???) and eats human excrement.

And he eventually 'rescues' her from the brothel where she is forced to work, taking her into Mongolia.

The present day section of the novel, which alternates, tells of Emi's story. Set in 2011, she is still working even at age 77 as a haenyeo, but still searching for her sister. although the girls' mother held a mourning ceremony for Hana, floating flowers on the sea:

It was a chrysanthemum, a symbol of mourning for Koreans. The imperial seal of Japan was the yellow chrysanthemum, a crest symbolising the imperial family's power. Emi had wondered which came first, the symbol of power or mourning.

The novel tells us something of the aftermath of Hana's disappearance, as well as her own guilt that Hana sacrificed herself to protect her, and also touches on the ?? 4-3 ??, the 3 April 1948 uprising on Jeju, when fellow Koreans wreaked more devastation on the islanders than the Japanese occupiers managed.

This was also covered in the brave novel by ??? (Hyeon Gi-yeong), Aunt Suni (????), which I unfortunately read in what the authoritative Ktlit website described as "in contention for the worst translation from Korean to English in the last decade" (<http://www.ktlit.com/hatred-rage-and-...>), although it has been subsequently retranslated.

But most of the focus is on 2011, as Emi, suffering increasingly poor health, travels to Seoul, both to see her son and daughter, but also to take part in the protests of the former comfort women and to see the statue of the comfort women unveiled outside the Japanese embassy.

Bracht also cleverly contrast traditional and modern Korea, with Emi's daughter, now in a same-sex relationship with an American partner, and having earlier rejected her vocation on Jeju:

The day she told Emi that she didn't want to learn to dive was the worst day Emi ever experienced as a mother

and yet her reaction was also tinged with pride at her academically gifted daughter, who has gone on to become a professor at the highly prestigious ??????? (Ewha Women's University), of which my wife is incidentally an alumni.

This is a moving and powerful novel although I did have two reservations.

1. I generally prefer translated fiction, and this at times felt overly aimed at a UK/US audience with a little too much unnecessary exposition.
2. Bracht so fell in love with her characters that she chose to give them a happy ending (view spoiler). In practice it would have perhaps been more honest, and more effective, to have this be imagined by Emi rather than a reality.

Still - worthwhile. 3.5 stars

Diane S ? says

This is a book with very hard to read subject matter. It is a beautiful book and an ugly book, and a book based on historical truisms. It is also about historical events of which I had no knowledge.

Hana comes from a long line of strong women who are called haenyo, they dive for a living, capturing the bottom feeders of sea creatures, which will be sold at the market. Emi, her younger sister, still not a strong enough swimmer, stays on shore to guard the catch. The Japanese are the occupiers of South Korea, and the women have been warned about these men, never to be found alone. When she sees her younger sister about to become a victim, Hana does the only thing possible, drawing their eyes from her sister and on to herself. A beautiful act of unselfish love.

Forced to endure sex as a comfort women, to the Japanese, though in her case it is a particular enemy, Morimoto, who will become her keeper and enslaver. The book alternates between the fate of Hana and other women, and Emi, now in her seventies. She still dives, freer in the water than on land with her aged body, and the life she now leads. A story that is both poignant and horrifying, but told very well.

The authors note explains the history behind the story. Between 50,000 and 200,000 of South Korean women were kidnapped and forced to become comfort women to the Japanese army. Most times their parents did not know what happened to them, their fate unknown. I loved both these women, Hana, her strength of character and Emi, who seeks closure. As I said some scenes are hard to read, they are graphic, but they happened. Are in fact still happening to women of many nations. Why is it that men wage war, and women left behind pay the price? What the men went through is acknowledged, we now understand PTSD and other effects of war, though I admit I find even their treatment subpar. What women have gone through is little talked about, if they are lucky enough to return home their family is often too embarrassed to talk and often hide what happened. A guilty shame. So books like this are important. They force us to see and feel for those lost in the shadows.

ARC from Edelweiss.

Gumble's Yard says

In March 2016 I travelled to Seoul to see Pyeonghwabi (the Statute of Peace) ... It was a sort of pilgrimage for me to journey half way across the world to set my eyes on the symbol representing, for me, wartime rape not only of Korean women and girls, but of all women and girls the world over: Uganda, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Myanmar, Yugoslavia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and more. The list of women suffering war time rape is long and will continue to grow unless we include women's wartime suffering in history books, ... , museums .. [and] ... monuments

This book can be seen as the author's admirable contribution of adding fiction to her own list of areas where the wartime suffering of women should be remembered.

Growing up as the daughter of "a South Korean mother and influenced by her community of expat friends"

Mary Lynn Bracht has chosen for her debut novel the terrible plight of the Korean “comfort women”.

The book alternates in chapters between two sisters – Hana and Emi, both part of a tradition and community of haenyeo (female sea divers) on the Island of Jeju. The two are separated in 1942, when Hana is 16 and Emi 9 when Hana is captured on a beach by a Japanese soldier – Corporal Morimoto: Hana effectively having sacrificed herself to protect her younger sister.

Hana’s chapters are set in 1943 and describe her harrowing ordeal – first raped repeatedly by Morimoto and then put to work in a brothel before Morimoto (seemingly an opium dealer with connections among a small family of tent-dwelling poppy growers in Mongolia), and who is increasingly disillusioned with the war effort) escapes with her to Mongolia and leaves her with his contacts (there she receives the only respite from her ordeal) before returning to reclaim her. The only thing that sustains her is her hopes for Emi and memories of her family.

Emi’s chapters are set in 2011 – she still dives and although she has both a daughter and a son in Seoul her relationships with them are distant. She visits them and insists on attending (as she does each year when she visits) the Wednesday Demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy – her main motivation being to hope to catch sight or news of her sister. This time coincides with the erection of the Statue of Peace and to her shock she realises that the statue is of Hana. Her subsequent insistence on revisiting the statue, despite her severe ill health (she is suffering from heart failure) finally forces her to open up to her family on her past – both her sister’s capture as a comfort woman, her own shame at the fact she hid while her sister was captured and the further suffering of her parents (and the role their father, her husband played in that suffering) in the 1948 Jeju uprising.

The book is unstinting in its portrayal of Hana’s ordeal – with (at least until the Mongolians) no attempt to lessen or mitigate it and no attempt to portray her treatment as anything other than rape and her capturers as anything other than abusers (not least Morimoto who clearly sees himself as her rescuer). The choice of Hana and Emi’s back story works well – giving a strong sense of community and female solidarity and strength, but one that is still helpless in the face of atrocity. The book does have some faults – principally the narration can at times lapse into exposition, and the ending at least for Hana is perhaps too positive. However given its subject matter, approach and generally favourable reviews, I was surprised not to see longlisted for the Women’s Prize and I think it would have merited a place there. 3.5 stars rounded up.

Celia says

Sometimes, old wounds need to be reopened to let them properly heal

The white chrysanthemum – in Korea, the flower of the funeral, the flower of death. This story tells of death – perhaps not always death of the body; the spirit can die too.

This book tells of the ‘comfort women’, women stolen from Korea to satisfy the sexual needs of the Japanese invaders. Somehow the Japanese think that sexually satisfied men will make better warriors.

This book had me captivated from sentence 1. Historical fiction is my kind of book. And, despite its sadness and horror, oh, I do love this book. It is historical fiction at its finest, full of historical and unfamiliar facts.

In the first 5 sentences alone, I found:

Japan annexed Korea in 1910

Koreans speak fluent Japanese, are educated in Japanese history and culture, and are prohibited from speaking, reading, or writing in their native Korean.

Hana, the protagonist, and her mother are haenyeo, women of the sea, and they work for themselves.

Haenyeo are female divers in the Korean province of Jeju and are known for their independent spirit, iron will and determination.

The story of Hana and her family begins in 1943. Hana is an only child until she turns 7 years old. When Little Sister is born, her mother says in a serious tone “You are her protector now, Hana”. Hana promises to protect her and knows this promise is forever.

This is a very fast paced book. In the first chapter alone, we meet Hana, her sister is born, a Japanese soldier abducts Hana, and in order to save her sister as she has promised, she goes with the soldier without complaint. Hana is abducted but her sister stays behind.

2011. We meet Emi and quickly learn she is Little Sister... 58 years later. Emi is old and sad and tormented with horrible dreams. She has lost someone she loves. Can she find her?

The story alternates between Hana, whose body is imprisoned and Emi, whose spirit is imprisoned.

Yes, the book is full of gruesome and horrific images. However we need to know these horrible things happened.

I strongly recommend this book to those who love historical fiction and those who care.

RoseMary Achey says

A heartbreak tale of two sisters beginning in 1943 as one of the sisters is kidnapped by a Japanese solider in occupied Korea. Forced into sexual slavery she served as a Comfort Woman to members of the Japanese military. The sister left behind spends the remainder of her life looking for her stolen sibling.

The writing is good, the story well researched but some passages will be tough for mild mannered book clubbers. An important part of history that many of us are unaware and I thank the author for bringing this to the forefront.

Angela M says

This was not an easy book to read, yet I'm glad that I did. It's a beautifully written tribute to Korean women who were taken from their homes during the Japanese occupation and forced to be “comfort women”, an inconceivably gentle phrase for the sex slaves they were made to be . It's also a tribute and a remembrance as the author points out in her note, to all women around the world subjected to rape during wartime. These horrific events of barbaric treatment, this story of what happened to these women is depicted through the lives of two sisters. Their separate narratives are told decades apart, but they each are very much a part of one another's thoughts and dreams and memories.

Hana, the older sister begins her telling in 1943, when at sixteen she has learned her mother's skill as a "haenyeo", a diver, a fisher woman. In spite of the Japanese occupation, their life on this small island off the coast of southern Korea has remained quiet yet vigilant while fearing the Japanese soldiers. Her story of brutal and vicious treatment cuts to the core. What happens to Hana is not for the faint of heart. Hana's chapters alternate with her younger sister Emi's when years later in 2011, Emi recounts the past that she has kept from her family, not telling them of the day her sister is taken by a Japanese soldier, as Hana tried to save her little sister from this fate. Emi, though not taken by the Japanese soldier relives the horrific times that she endures. Grief and guilt and love of family, the burdens of the past prey on Emi and she finally tells her children of her losses, her sorrow, the awful things that happened to her village and her family.

It's a work of fiction but it holds the truth of the past as a good work of historical fiction can do. This appears to be well researched and I read several articles confirming what happened during this time to the Koreans. It seems cliche to say this is heartbreaking and gut wrenching but it is difficult to find anything other than these ordinary words. The thing is - there nothing ordinary about this book. Mary Lynn Bracht in her note says "Of those tens of thousands of women and girls enslaved by the Japanese military, only forty-four South Korean survivors are still alive (at the writing of this book) to tell the world what happened during their captivity, how they survived, and how they returned home. We will never know what happened to the other women and girls who perished before getting the chance to let the world know what they suffered." With this novel she has given them a voice. I'm not sure why I originally gave it 4.5 stars. It is deserving of all the stars.

I received an advanced copy of this book from G.P. Putnam's Sons / Penguin through Edelweiss.

Karen says

Subject matter in this novel was heartbreakingly sad to read but paints a legitimate picture of the suffering of Koreans by the Japanese during WWII and post-war. The story alternatively told from Hana and Emi's perspectives, sisters who were ripped apart from one another at a young age is powerful. Hana's story begins in 1943 as a young girl taken by Japanese soldiers to be used as a sex slave; Emi's story in 2011, as an older woman carrying the guilt of Hana's disappearance and trying to come to terms with the past.

The sisters' interwoven narratives relating to this historic atrocity are a sobering reminder of sins of the past and relevance to the present.. This is a book that will be put in a prominent place on my bookshelf, one that has influenced me to reflect on the good life I've been given. I am grateful Mary Lynn Bracht chose a topic that I was unfamiliar with. She brilliantly captures the essence of human endurance and spirit. A must read.

Side note: I wondered if any of these women were still alive so did a web search. Very few are. I discovered South Korea passed legislation in Nov 2017 creating a holiday on August 14 each year to recognize the thousands of sex slaves, or "comfort women," used by the Japanese military during World War II. Aug 14 is the anniversary of a 1991 news conference given by victim Kim Hak-soon, the first to publicly testify about her experience as a comfort woman.

Nada says

This book should come with a warning sign that says "stock up on tissue boxes before reading."

I would definitely place White Chrysanthemum on a book list for tear-jerkers. It was just so sad. I had to pause a few times, take a breather because I just couldn't endure the sufferings.

A historical fiction, set in Korea 1943 during the WW2, two sisters, Hana and Emi were separated when Hana was taken by the Japanese army. Told alternatively between the sisters, it was really hard for me to choose which sister's story I enjoyed more. Both were heartbreakingly beautiful.

I had no idea about the war history between Korea and Japan, and the things Korean people had to deal with at those times. This was such an enlightenment for me and it was one of the things I have loved most about the book.

I would warn you though, some events in the book could be defined as quite horrific. As much as I have enjoyed most of it; it was a bit brutal for my taste. I don't think I handled it well and I don't think I could read it again and undergo through all those triggered emotions – not all splendid, mind you.

But recommend I would. It's a really captivating story. The writing style is just impeccable and you can't help but fall in love with the traditions of the Haenyeo women who make their living as divers in the Korean sea.

Jen says

I love when a story takes me to a place I've never heard of, especially an exotic location in the South Korean sea. But in 1943, that beauty was shadowed by the horrid history of war. Taking hundreds of thousands of lives - not just soldiers, but women who were kidnapped and offered up to soldiers to be 'comfort women': to be raped, humiliated and often murdered all in the name of supporting the Japanese war efforts.

This story starts on Jeju island which sits on the map just south of Korea. It's isolated from the mainland, but not far enough from being impacted by the war. The island is occupied by the Japanese military. Two sisters and their mother are haenyeo: divers of the sea. Hana, the eldest, is taken one day by the Japanese as she finishes a swim and is forced into the life of sacrifice to save her younger sister.

Fast forward to 2011. Emi, the youngest, now 77, is still haunted by that day Hana was taken. The pain of remembrance and her own sufferings follow her as she heads toward her own final fate.

To those women who were courageous in their survival and their circumstances, may we never forget the pain of your confinement; the suffering of your so many losses. This one made me weep. An awesome read. 5??

Karen says

I received this from netgalley.com in exchange for a review.

Korea, 1943. Hana, age 16 has lived her entire life under Japanese occupation. South Korea, 2011. Emi, her now elderly sister.

As the story progresses, we understand the heart-breaking ordeals each of the sisters endured but they never forgot the love they had for each other.

Very good book. This is the first book I've read where I was equally interested and invested in both timelines.

4?
