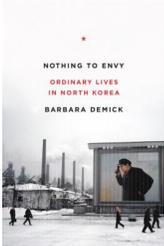


Books by the Stack



Nothing to Envy by Barbara Demick

Follows the lives of six North Koreans over fifteen years, a chaotic period that saw the rise to power of Kim Jong Il and the devastation of a famine that killed one-fifth of the population, illustrating what it means to live under the most repressive totalitarian regime today.

Why you'll like it: Totalitarianism. Historical. Captivating. Moving personal journeys.

About the Author: Barbara Demick is Beijing bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times and author of *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. The book won the U.K.'s top non-fiction prize, the Samuel Johnson award, in 2010 and was a finalist for both the National Book Awards and a National Book Critics Circle Awards. Demick's earlier book, *Logavina Street: Life and Death in a Sarajevo Neighborhood* is to be republished in 2012 by Granta.

Questions for Discussion

1. Demick follows the lives of six North Koreans. Whose story do you find most compelling, disturbing, horrific—or inspiring?
2. Talk about what happens to those who manage to defect. How do they manage life outside North Korea? What are the difficulties— both practical and psychological—they confront in their new lives?
3. Demick describes North Korea, not as an undeveloped country, but as "a country that has fallen out of the developed world." What does she mean? What would it be like for any of us to live under the conditions in North Korea? What would be most difficult for you? What shocked or angered you most about the book's descriptions of life in the DPRK?
4. Discuss the history of North Korea and its descent into deprivation. How did a formerly wealthy, industrialized country—which attracted Chinese from across the border—deteriorate into its present state?
5. What does it take to survive in North Korea? How do some get around the restrictive laws?
6. Do Koreans love their "dear leader" as much as they claim?

7. How does one explain the disparity between North and South Korea?

8. Talk about your experience reading this book? Was it hard to get through...or did you find yourself unable to put the book down? Were you depressed, angered, outraged, thankful for your own life...or all of the above?

(Questions by LitLovers)



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