



THE GIRL WITH

SEVEN NAMES

A North Korean Defector's Story

HYEONSEO LEE

with David John

THE GIRL WITH SEVEN NAMES

A North Korean Defector's Story

Hyeonseo Lee

With David John



Copyright

William Collins
An imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9GF

WilliamCollinsBooks.com

This eBook first published in Great Britain by William Collins in 2015

Copyright © Hyeonseo Lee 2015

Hyeonseo Lee asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Maps by John Gilkes

Cover photograph by kind permission of the author.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins.

Source ISBN: 9780007554836

Ebook Edition © July 2015 ISBN: 9780007554867
Version: 2015-05-15

Praise

‘I have spoken with countless numbers of defectors over the years. When I first met Hyeonseo Lee, the unflinching manner in which she told her story, although full of sadness and hurt, was inspirational. That is the story now written in this book.

As a young girl living on the North Korea–China border, she had grown up aware of two different worlds – the monochrome of her homeland and the bright, vibrant colours of another world just across the river. Her act of escape marked a new chapter in her life. But once she crossed the border, she learned that the warm glow of China’s alluring lights was not meant for her.

She experienced hunger, coldness, fear, terror, threats and pursuit. All this she had to endure simply for being a North Korean refugee. Every time she navigated treacherous terrain and overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles, she had to change her name to protect her new identity. She became the Girl with Seven Names.

But one thing that she held on to was her humanity, ever stronger as she continuously sublimated her hardships into hope. This is a sad and beautiful story of a girl who could not even keep her name, yet overcame all with the identity of what it is to be human.’

Jang Jin-sung, founder of New Focus International and author of *Dear Leader: Poet, Spy, Escapee – A Look Inside North Korea*

‘This is a powerful story of an escapee from North Korea. In the hallowed meeting rooms of the United Nations in New York, ambassadors from North Korea recently sought to shout down stories like this. But these voices will not be silenced. Eventually freedom will be restored. History will vindicate Hyeonseo Lee and those like her for the risks they ran so that

their bodies and their minds could be free. And so that we could know the truth.'

The Honourable Michael Kirby, Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Abuses in North Korea, 2013–14

CONTENTS

[COVER](#)

[TITLE PAGE](#)

[COPYRIGHT](#)

[PRAISE](#)

[MAPS](#)

[AUTHOR'S NOTE](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[PROLOGUE](#)

[Part One: The Greatest Nation on Earth](#)

[1. A train through the mountains](#)

[2. The city at the edge of the world](#)

[3. The eyes on the wall](#)

[4. The lady in black](#)

[5. The man beneath the bridge](#)

[6. The red shoes](#)

[7. Boomtown](#)

[8. The secret photograph](#)

[9. To be a good communist](#)

[10. 'Rocky island'](#)

[11. 'The house is cursed'](#)

[12. Tragedy at the bridge](#)

[13. Sunlight on dark water](#)

[14. 'The great heart has stopped beating'](#)

[15. Girlfriend of a hoodlum](#)

[16. 'By the time you read this, the five of us will no longer exist in this world'](#)

17. The lights of Changbai

18. Over the ice

Part Two: To the Heart of the Dragon

19. A Visit to Mr Ahn

20. Home truths

21. The suitor

22. The wedding trap

23. Shenyang.girl

24. Guilt call

25. The men from the South

26. Interrogation

27. The plan

28. The gang

29. The comfort of moonlight

30. The biggest, brashest city in Asia

31. Career woman

32. A connection to Hyesan

33. The teddy-bear conversations

34. The tormenting of Min-ho

35. The love shock

36. Destination Seoul

Part Three: Journey into Darkness

37. 'Welcome to Korea'

38. The women

39. House of Unity

40. The learning race

41. Waiting for

[42. A place of ghosts and wild dogs](#)

[43. An impossible dilemma](#)

[44. Journey into night](#)

[45. Under a vast Asian sky](#)

[46. Lost in Laos](#)

[47. Whatever it takes](#)

[48. The kindness of strangers](#)

[49. Shuttle diplomacy](#)

[50. Long wait for freedom](#)

[51. A series of small miracles](#)

[52. 'I am prepared to die'](#)

[53. The beauty of a free mind](#)

[EPILOGUE](#)

[LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS](#)

[PICTURE SECTION](#)

[INDEX](#)

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS](#)

[ABOUT THE PUBLISHER](#)

