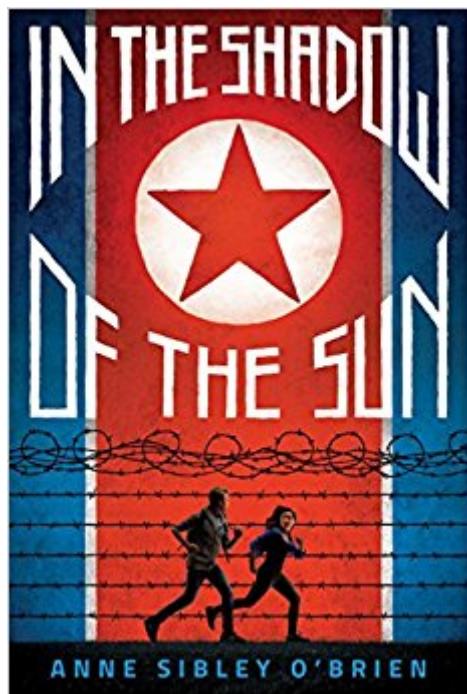


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# In The Shadow Of The Sun



## **Synopsis**

North Korea is known as the most repressive country on Earth, with a dictatorial leader, a starving population, and harsh punishment for rebellion. Not the best place for a family vacation. Yet that's exactly where Mia Andrews finds herself, on a tour with her aid-worker father and fractious older brother, Simon. Mia was adopted from South Korea as a baby, and the trip raises tough questions about where she really belongs. Then her dad is arrested for spying, just as forbidden photographs of North Korean slave-labor camps fall into Mia's hands. The only way to save Dad: get the pictures out of the country. Thus Mia and Simon set off on a harrowing journey to the border, without food, money, or shelter, in a land where anyone who sees them might turn them in, and getting caught could mean prison -- or worse. An exciting adventure that offers a rare glimpse into a compelling, complicated nation, *In the Shadow of the Sun* is an unforgettable novel of courage and survival.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 700 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 336 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #90,468 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption #88 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #3242 in Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Praise for *In the Shadow of the Sun*: iBooks Best Books of June "A thrilling and immersive experience reminiscent of the best spy and wilderness adventure stories.... A riveting work that will appeal to a wide range of readers." -- Kirkus Reviews "Thought-provoking....This fast-paced and tense survivalist thriller, made all the more compelling for its fascinating setting, should find broad

appeal." -- Booklist "A nuanced portrayal of North Korea; the government is restrictive and the police force divided, but the citizens' complex perspectives and attitudes are revealed in thoughtful, interspersed dispatches." -- Publishers Weekly 'O'Brien draws from a deep well of personal experience in her first novel... 'In the Shadow of the Sun' is a compelling thriller...but is also an incisive and insightful portrait of a closed society that is largely unknown to the world...Fascinating and illuminating." -- Maine Sunday Telegram

Anne Sibley O'Brien grew up in South Korea as the bilingual and bicultural daughter of medical missionaries. She has written or illustrated thirty-five picture books, and frequently speaks in classrooms across the country and in international schools around the world. In the Shadow of the Sun is her first novel. Anne lives on Peaks Island in Maine, and can be found online at her website, [www.annesibleyobrien.com](http://www.annesibleyobrien.com); her blog, [www.coloringbetweenthelines.com](http://www.coloringbetweenthelines.com); and on Twitter at @AnneSibleyOBrien.

At a time when North Korea has emerged as the most dangerous nation in the world, this exciting novel by Anne Sibley O'Brien is more than timely. The action takes place in North Korea when Mia Andrews and her brother Simon are on a guided tour with their father who is on a food-aid mission. During their visit, someone has surreptitiously slipped a camera containing horrific photos of starving people, dead babies, tortured prisoners into Mia's belongings. She feels a responsibility to get these forbidden photographs out to the free world. When their father is arrested for spying, Mia and Simon decide to make a run for it. The novel is the story of the incredible hardships they face as they make their way through the North Korean countryside. But the lack of food, water and shelter is not their only challenge. Mia is the adopted Korean daughter of this American family and Simon is her older brother with whom she has a strained relationship. The theme of this troubled relationship plays out while the two depend on each other in making their break for freedom. What is remarkable about this exciting novel is that it is a realistic presentation of the political and cultural conditions that shape the lives of the people of North Korea. You feel that you are reading about a contemporary event, stripped from the pages of today's newspaper. The writer, Anne Sibley O'Brien, is the daughter of medical missionaries who were serving in South Korea. She grew up in Korea, is fluent in Korean, and has written and illustrated 35 children's books. I highly recommend this novel for adults and young adults alike. Both my wife and my daughter couldn't put it down.

This young adult novel is many things, all wonderful:- a suspenseful tale of survival and adventure-

a deeply researched, compassionate and complex portrayal of North Korea and North Koreans- a nuanced exploration of sibling and family dynamics- an empowering story of racial identity development and coming of ageI really enjoyed it as a reader. I really admired it as a writer. And I'm recommending it to all my teacher-friends for their classrooms!

It's been a while since I read a book, YA or adult, that captured me so thoroughly that I didn't want to stop reading, and that I couldn't stop thinking about until I finished reading it. IN THE SHADOW OF THE SUN was such a book. It follows Korean adoptee Mia Andrews and her brother Simon on a tour gone terribly wrong that devolves into a frightening and thrilling journey in one of the most closed countries on earth, North Korea. The author, who grew up in South Korea, has done thorough homework•the story feels authentic and the details ring with the truth of cultural accuracy and historical veracity. The book has a unique structure that includes a smart introduction to North Korea via a "travel guide," and short interludes of voices of certain North Korean characters whom the youth encounter, if only briefly, on their harrowing journey. This combination brings a wider perspective on Mia and Simon's dilemma, and gives valuable glimpses of a varied and complex North Korean society and daily life. While the action is a page-turner, Mia's inner journey of identity and courage, as well as Simon's, and the shift in their brother-and-sister relationship is equally authentic and compelling. Mirroring today's political dilemma with issues of trust with North Korea, Mia and Simon are constantly confronted with questions about who to trust, and their instincts and choices are a lesson for us all. A terrific book about how a girl's daunting journey enriches her inner journey, and a story and setting that expands one's understanding of this country that is often in the news, and about which little is known.

What a rare topic, incorporating a wide range of important issues, complex characters, a heart-pounding plot, and intense family relationships. O'Brien's personal history, professional focus, and obvious research combine to create a novel unlike any other. The central character and voice, Mia, rings true throughout her journey from tightly-packed, self-contained early teen to find herself more capable and direct than she imagined she could be. There is no separating the story from the reality of North Korea, and there shouldn't be. This story turns a "trope" or political flashpoint into a complex reality filled with humanity, intrigue, and mystery.

Thanks to the @kidlitexchange network for the review copy of this book - all opinions are my own. In the Shadow of the Sun was unlike any other book I'd read before. Set in North Korea, it follows Mia, a Korean girl who was adopted by an American family. On a trip with her brother and father to North Korea, she stumbles upon a phone with photos of North Korean labor camps. Then, her dad is mysteriously arrested, and Mia and her brother set off on a race across the North Korean countryside, trying to outrun the infamous North Korean police. Along the way, they meet native North Koreans, whose stories are interspersed with the narrative. In the Shadow of the Sun combines adventure and survival with messages of family and finding yourself.

It's also a story that is diverse in several ways, with a female, adopted, Asian main character, and set in a country that is all but missing from children's literature. I recommend this book for students in sixth grade and up!

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