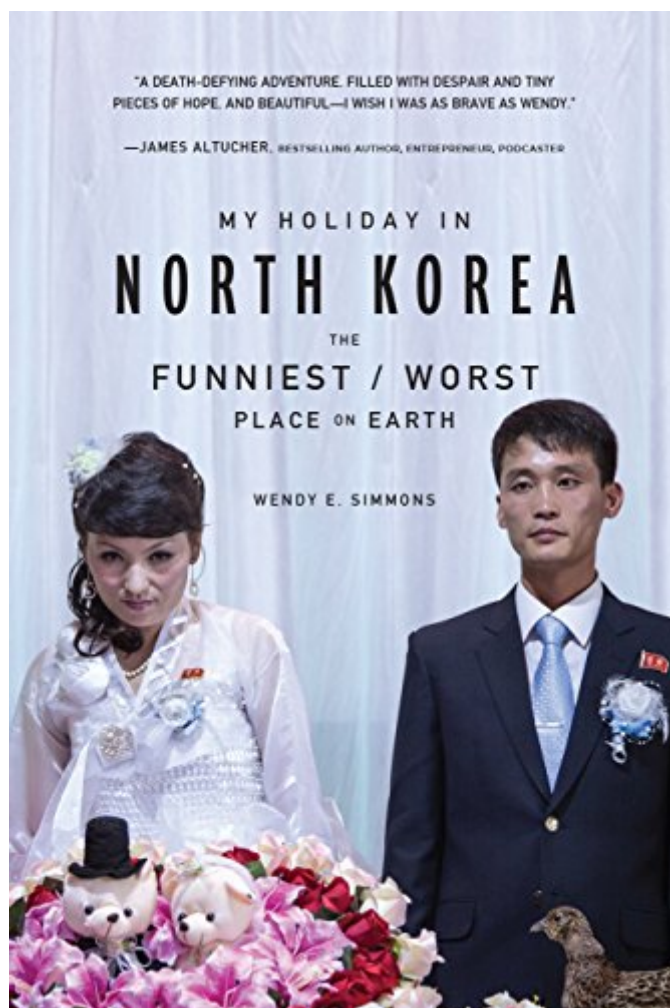


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My Holiday In North Korea: The Funniest/Worst Place On Earth



Synopsis

Most people want out of North Korea. Wendy Simmons wanted in. In *My Holiday in North Korea: The Funniest/Worst Place on Earth*, Wendy shares a glimpse of North Korea as it's never been seen before. Even though it's the scariest place on Earth, somehow Wendy forgot to check her sense of humor at the border. But Wendy's initial amusement and bewilderment soon turned to frustration and growing paranoia. Before long, she learned the essential conundrum of tourism in North Korea: Travel is truly a love affair. But, just like love, it's a two-way street. And North Korea deprives you of all this. They want you to fall in love with the singular vision of the country they're willing to show you and nothing more. Through poignant, laugh-out-loud essays and 92 never-before-published color photographs of North Korea, Wendy chronicles one of the strangest vacations ever. Along the way, she bares all while undergoing an inner journey as convoluted as the country itself.

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Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed this book, the author is not a scholar of Korea but an excellent observer of human nature and events. She was amused, frustrated, and handled well the minders and hurdles she

experienced in her travel in North Korea. She experienced about all you can experience there, never alone or in touch with average Koreans. She handled the label Imperialist well! I particularly enjoyed the thoughts in her head during frustrating times, like a voice over in a movie. It was sad her last encounters with the driver and Young Minder. My only concern was what happened, if anything, to the young woman after the NK authorities read the book, as I am sure they have. The angry bride on the cover? Read the book to find out why!

I'll admit I didn't know much about North Korea 2 days ago, and now 2 days later I still don't but I feel I do understand them a little bit. Wendy's 10 day vacation (???) to North Korea wasn't just brave (I would classify it as immensely brave) but also interesting beyond all comprehension! Wendy went places and saw things that very few people, let alone imperialist American people, will ever see. My knowledge/ understanding of this enigma of a country consisted entirely of reports from CNN and other world news channels. Wendy's laugh out loud observations, interactions and verbal sparring with older handler illustrated how similar we all are, and how no matter who you are or where your at if you ask too many questions you will probably pass people off, and if you don't want to answer any questions acting like you didn't hear the question will also puss people off.

This book is funny for sure. But I'm a bit worried about her two "minders" and if they will suffer any repercussions as a result of this book. Although she didn't identify them by name I'm sure the NKs can figure out who these women were easily enough. Really don't know why anyone would risk their freedom going to North Korea but I guess if you get a book out of it - okay. Aside from being entertained by Wendy's humorous writing style, I didn't really learn anything new about North Korea. There's a fine line between laughing at someone and laughing with someone and it seemed to me Wendy wasn't too sure where that line was. Sure, it's a light and funny quick read. But since it's written on the backs of 24 million captive brain-washed humans - er, not so sure if I should be laughing or crying.

A very educational look and easy to read book on a country most of us have no inkling on. I was shocked, surprised and in awe of Wendy traveling by herself to such a place. After all that is happening in this world, I decided to take a look. Many of us have no idea people live like this, and people I have talked to never heard of having handlers to be able to see a country. She told the story with humor but not meanness of the people who lived there, as that is all they know with no way out. Loved her style.

I love/hate when I read a book this quickly. I didn't want it to end but so wanted Wendy to leave this experience. I felt gratitude to not live in such a country and truly mourn those that are imprisoned in such a country for no other reason than where they were born. A timely read considering the current events of our two baby men warring in words that could escalate to something horrific. Wendy is a master of words for an experience that couldn't quite be described in any other way. A great read, as uncomfortable as it all was/is.

This is a happy/sad book. It is quite entertaining, but at the same time sad because it shows how amazingly dysfunctional North Korean society seems to be. A lot of fun to read, but if you are looking for something to read to lift your spirits on a cold gray day, you may want to pick another book.

The book starts out well with predictable direction: why she picked to go to North Korea and what she saw there and heard from her handler. As a reader, I felt her isolation and frustration due to her handlers being an impenetrable wall. She was stuck there for 9 days. Her use of the word, fuxx, was a little disturbing, but I probably could not describe my feelings without it either.

This is a quick, funny read and all the same totally disturbing... and somewhat normal. Simmons details the extreme version of what every country does: put its best and most patriotic foot forward in front of foreigners. North Korea certainly takes it to extremes. It's eerie how "a huge swarm of people" usually hundreds arrive on command for football games and other "activities." Everything is staged! Simmons's quips (read: "Driver nearly knocked Fresh Handler over for the girlie [pair of sunglasses]) throughout the book keep the dark subject matter light. As her pseudo-relationships with Older Handler, Fresh Handler and Driver unfold and come unraveled into truth at the end, the reader hangs on every word. How CAN an entire country be so robotic? I loved it straight through the end and fully felt the writer's pain: "...I could never stop wondering what kind of people my handlers could or would have been had they been born anywhere else. Or the person I might be had I been born there."

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