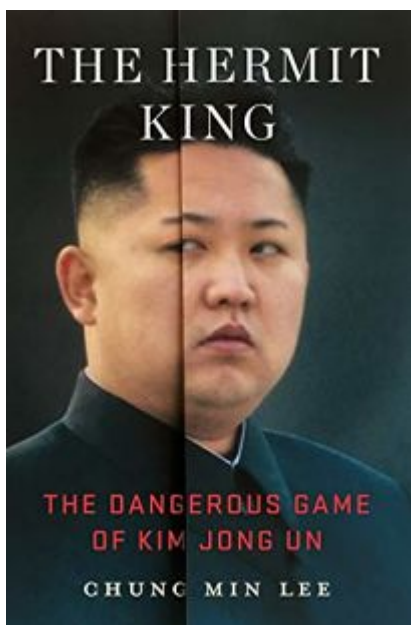




BEST
BOOKS

AUTHORS

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



BUY THIS BOOK

★ The Hermit King: The Dangerous Game of Kim Jong Un

Chung Min Lee. *All Points*, \$28.99 (304p) ISBN 978-1-250-20282-6

Korea analyst Chung Min Lee (*Fault Lines in a Rising Asia*) delivers a crisp examination of the rise and reign of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. According to Lee, the “ruthless and smart” Kim wants to do the impossible: Modernize North Korea’s economy without sacrificing his supremacy or the nation’s growing nuclear arsenal. Lee’s insightful précis of the Kim clan’s violent history reveals the extent to which the family has relied on executions, forced labor, and torture as tools of political oppression, and his breakdown of the current power structure is vital to any genuine understanding of the regime. Even as Kim scores prestige points domestically and internationally for his summit meetings with President Trump, Lee writes, the infallibility of the Kim dynasty has largely vanished from the hearts and minds of North Korea’s elites, who have learned to fend for themselves in the country’s informal *jangmadang*, or free market, system. Gaming out scenarios for the collapse or survival of the regime, Lee cogently assesses the political and military interests of the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia, and Japan. Though he sees President Trump’s overtures to Kim as doing more harm than good, Lee believes that “freedom and democracy” are “the weapons of mass destruction Kim Jong Un fears most.” This is an excellent summation of one of the world’s most complex geopolitical flash points. (Nov.)

DETAILS