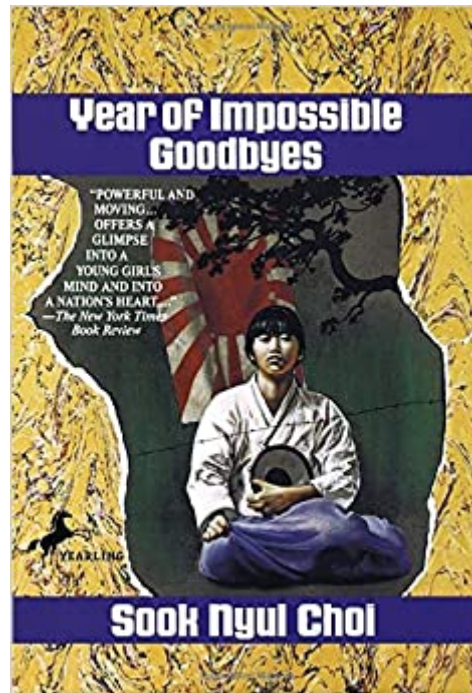




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# Year Of Impossible Goodbyes



## Synopsis

It is 1945, and courageous ten-year-old Sookan and her family must endure the cruelties of the Japanese military occupying Korea. A Police captain Narita does his best to destroy everything of value to the family, but he cannot break their spirit. A Sookan's father is with the resistance movement in Manchuria and her older brothers have been sent away to labor camps. A Her mother is forced to supervise a sock factory and Sookan herself must wear a uniform and attend a Japanese school. Then the war ends. A Out come the colorful Korean silks and bags of white rice. A But Communist Russian troops have taken control of North Korea and once again the family is suppressed. A Sookan and her family know their only hope for freedom lies in a dangerous escape to American-controlled South Korea. Here is the incredible story of one family's love for each other and their determination to risk everything to find freedom.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 74 customer reviews

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

In 1945, 10-year-old Sookan's homeland of North Korea is occupied by the Japanese. Left behind while her resistance-fighter father hides in Manchuria and her older brothers toil in Japanese labor camps, Sookan and her remaining family members run a sock factory for the war effort, bolstered only by the dream that the fighting will soon cease. Sookan watches her people--forced to renounce

their native ways--become increasingly angry and humiliated. When war's end brings only a new type of domination--from the Russian communists--Sookan and her younger brother must make a harrowing escape across the 38th parallel after their mother has been detained at a Russian checkpoint. Drawn partly from Choi's own experiences, her debut novel is a sensitive and honest portrayal of amazing courage. In clear, graceful prose, she describes a sad period of history that is astonishing in its horror and heart-wrenching in its truth. Readers cannot fail to be uplifted by this account of the triumph of the human spirit in an unjust world. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 5-9-- Ten-year-old Sookan tells of her Korean family's experiences during the Japanese occupation as World War II ends. The Japanese commit cruel, fear-provoking acts against this proud, hopeful family and against the young girls who worked in a sweatshop making socks for the Japanese army. Relief, hope, and anticipation of the return of male family members after the Japanese defeat is short lived as the Russians occupy the country, bringing their language, their customs, and communism to the village. Equally as insensitive to the pride and possessions of the Koreans, they are as bad as the Japanese. Plans are made for Sookan, her mother, and younger brother to escape to South Korea. However, their guide betrays them, causing the children to be separated from their mother, and the two begin a daring and frightening journey to cross the 38th parallel to safety. Through Sookan, the author shares an incredible story of the love and determination of her family, the threatening circumstances that they endured during occupations by two totalitarian governments, and the risks they took to escape to freedom. Readers will get a double bonus from this book--a good story, well told, and the reaffirmation of our faith in the human spirit against incredible adversities . -- Lydia Champlin, Beachwood City Schools, OH Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This story is so heart wrenching. The trials of this young, curious, determined girl are beyond what any human should bear, let alone a child. It is just one heartache after another, and as a reader, I felt like I was losing my breath. The young protagonist is able to befriend different individuals who help her on her way to Seoul and freedom. To those older or who have been through times like this, these fleeting friendships point to the inconsistencies of war. This book reads as a true adventure, nonstop action, bravery, and moxie. However, especially in a time where many students have a parent or both parents away fighting and already endure the news and reality of being left behind, this book may be too intense for younger readers, as it is not necessarily a happy ending. It is

autobiographical and as real as a telling of war can get. The brutality may be a bit much for younger readers to absorb and/or deal with. Would depend on the makeup of the class whether this would be included or not.

The book gives a clear picture of how the days in North Korea were when the Japanese and Russians were the boss. You understand how and why the people in North Korea think and follow the leaders. It is not a very exciting book, although it nudges you to read on to see if the children see their mother and father and brothers again. The ending is happy and also not happy, you keep on thinking about the people who stayed behind and who have died.

This was a moving story that was inspirational as well.

I really enjoyed reading this book. It took me awhile to get into it, probably because it was a school assignment, but in the end I was rewarded with a beautiful story of perseverance. I can't give it five stars because the Kindle version is full of typos which at times made it difficult to read. The editor should be ashamed of their work.

I liked how realistic the story was and how suspenseful it makes the reader feel. My classroom was required to read this book and I read ahead because I loved it so much!

This was an engaging story with plenty of action. I didn't know much about this time in history prior to reading this book. Now I'm working on my second book about this time. Sook Nyul Choi brought this era to life for me. I highly recommend this. Can't wait to read it with our kids.

Good book for 7th grade Social studies

This is an amazing book and it is hard to believe it is true it was a real page turner i couldn't put it down i loved every word of this riveting story!!

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Gotta Go, Buffalo: A Silly Book of Fun Goodbyes (BabyLit) Praying Our Goodbyes: A Spiritual

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