



Hidden Moon: An Inspector O Novel

James Church

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"*Hidden Moon* reads more like a spy novel by a Korean Kafka. Final word: Fascinating." ?*Rocky Mountain News*

In *A Corpse in the Koryo*, James Church introduced readers to one of the most unique detectives to appear on page in years---the elusive Inspector O. The stunning mystery was named one of the best mystery/thrillers of 2006 by the *Chicago Tribune* for its beautifully spare prose and layered descriptions of a terrain Church knows by heart.

And now the Inspector is back.

In *Hidden Moon*, Inspector O returns from a mission abroad to find his new police commander waiting at his office door. There has been a bank robbery---the first ever in Pyongyang---and the commander demands action, and quickly. But is this urgency for real? Somewhere, someone in the North Korean leadership doesn't want Inspector O to complete his investigation. And why not? What if the robbery leads to the highest levels of the regime? What if power, not a need for cash, is the real reason behind the heist at the Gold Star Bank?

Given a choice, this isn't a trail a detective in the Pyongyang police would want to follow all the way to the end, even a trail marked with monogrammed silk stockings. "I'm not sure I know where the bank is," is O's laconic observation as the warning bells go off in his head. A Scottish policeman sent to provide security for a visiting British official, a sultry Kazakh bank manager, and a mournful fellow detective all combine to put O in the middle of a spiderweb of conspiracies that becomes more tangled, and dangerous, the more he pulls on the threads.

Once again, as he did in *A Corpse in the Koryo*, James Church opens a window onto a society where nothing is quite as it seems. The story serves as the reader's flashlight, illuminating a place that outsiders imagine is always dark and too far away to know. Church's descriptions of the country and its people are spare and starkly beautiful; the dialogue is lean, every thought weighed and measured before it is spoken. Not a word is wasted, because in this place no one can afford to be misunderstood.

Praise for *Hidden Moon*:

"The book's often sharp repartee is reminiscent of Raymond Chandler's dialogue, while the corrupt North Korean bureaucracy provides an exotic but entirely convincing noir backdrop. . . . Like Marlowe and Spade before him, Inspector O navigates the shadows and, every now and then, finds truth in the half-light." ?*The Wall Street Journal*

"[*Hidden Moon*] . . . is like nothing else I've ever read. Church creates an utterly convincing, internally consistent world of the absurd where orders mean the opposite of what they say and paperwork routinely gets routed to oblivion." ?Hallie Ephron, *The Boston Globe*

"Church uses his years of intelligence work to excellent advantage here, delivering one duplicitous plot twist after another . . . the author's affection for the landscape and people of Korea is abundantly evident. [A] stunning conclusion." ?*The Washington Post*

"...the real pleasure of *Hidden Moon* is its conversations, loaded down with layers of secrecy and suspicion that surface words are meaningless in the face of buried intention. Thanks to Church, mystery readers are

learning about the minds and hearts of North Koreans--and putting a human face on a world so far away."
--*The Baltimore Sun*

Critical Acclaim for *A Corpse in the Koryo*:

"*A Corpse in the Koryo* is a crackling good mystery novel, filled with unusual characters involved in a complex plot that keeps you guessing to the end." --Glenn Kessler, *The Washington Post*

"The best unclassified account of how North Korea works and why it has survived . . . This novel should be required bedtime reading for President Bush and his national security team." --Peter Hayes, executive director of the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development

"A new offering that reminds you of why you started reading mysteries and thrillers in the first place."
--*Chicago Tribune*

"What's perhaps most remarkable---and appealing---about *A Corpse in the Koryo* is the tremendously clever complexity (and deceptions) of the plot. The reader is left to marvel at the author's ability to keep his readers on their intellectual toes for almost three hundred pages. We can only hope that Church has many more novels up his sleeve." --*Tampa Tribune*

"An impressive debut that calls to mind such mystery thrillers as Martin Cruz Smith's *Gorky Park*."
--*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"In Inspector O, the author has crafted a complex character with rough charm to spare, and in eternally static North Korea, he has a setting that will fascinate readers for sequels to come." --*Time* magazine (Asia edition)

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Gavin Wilkins:

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Edgar Workman:

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Joshua Stpierre:

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