

Kwon Yeo-sun is an author from Andong, South Korea, now living in Seoul. She is known for writing novels and short stories, all having received many literary awards. Her debut novel, *Niche of Green* was awarded the Sangsang Literary Award in 1996. Other awards include—but are not limited to—the Hankook Ilbo Literary Award, Yi Sang Literary Prize, and the Oh Yeong-su Literary Award. *Lemon* is her first novel that has been translated into English. The translation of *Lemon* was done by Janet Hong.

*Lemon* is a novel that revolves around the murder of an eighteen-year-old girl, Kim Hae-on. Despite the rise of two potential suspects, the case becomes stagnant when one alibi checks out, and there isn't sufficient evidence to connect the murder to the other. Seventeen years later, the story continues from the shifting perspectives of Da-on; Hae-on's younger sister, Taerim; a jealous classmate, and Sanghui; another classmate who's acquaintances with Da-on. Contrary to what general structure comes with murder mysteries and detective tales, the main objective in *Lemon* isn't to solve the crime. Instead, Kwon Yeo-sun weaves a tale that explores what it's like going through trauma, dealing with grief, jealousy, identity, as well as putting an intriguing spin on life and death.

While the thrilling allure of suspenseful crime is—indeed—very prominent in this novel, what makes *Lemon* such an enthralling read is the amount of exploration and insight when it comes to other topics. Grief, privilege, and perhaps the most intense of all; identity are all incredibly deep things to delve into. However, Kwon Yeo-sun manages to showcase them in a real, raw state, while also managing to keep her writing dignified and concise. The following excerpt comes in the midst of Da-on dealing with the repercussions of having lost her sister and turning to plastic surgery in an attempt to cope—or perhaps bring a piece of her back.

“I jumped to my feet and hurled the toilet paper on the floor and stepped on it. The roll flattened and the eye closed at last. It died. I'd killed it. It was my sister, and it was also me. We'd both died. I was no longer Da-on. Maybe I was Chae-on or Ta-on someone or other, but I wasn't Da-on, not on the outside, not on the inside.”

In a heart wrenching realization, Da-on realizes how far she's strayed from her own personality—the recognition of her lost identity followed by similar instances of hallucinations and the haunting phantom stares. A strikingly different appearance from the one that Da-on puts on when she's out and about with other people, one that reveals the dark, twisted reality of dealing with trauma.

Through a similarly striking style of writing, another interaction between Da-on and Sanghui, Kwon Yeo-sun lays forth an incredibly powerful outlook on the lines between life and death. “The dead are over there and the rest of us are over here. When someone dies, no matter how great they were, it's like drawing a permanent line between that person and the rest of

humanity. If birth means begging to join the side of the living, then death has the power to kick everyone out.”

“The dead are over there and the rest of us are over here. When someone dies, no matter how great they were, it’s like drawing a permanent line between that person and the rest of humanity. If birth means begging to join the side of the living, then death has the power to kick everyone out.”

Though *Lemon* is told from the perspective of three unique individuals, their connections to the murder and Hae-on lead them each to have varying reactions and mental states, but it doesn’t dismiss the depth and severity that it had on each of them. Kwon Yeo-sun showcases a multitude of extraordinary uses of craft elements through her storytelling, with scenes described with vivid diction that allows readers to imagine the story as it plays out—the suspense always leaving you wondering what new information will be revealed next. *Lemon* is an enticing, chilling psychological crime story that wields deeper and darker themes at its core, sure to keep readers hooked till the very end.