



# Ten Thousand Sorrows

*Elizabeth Kim*

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## **Ten Thousand Sorrows** Elizabeth Kim

They called it an "honor killing," but to Elizabeth Kim, the night she watched her grandfather and uncle hang her mother from the wooden rafter in the corner of their small Korean hut, it was cold-blooded murder. Her Omma had committed the sin of lying with an American soldier, and producing not just a bastard but a *honhyol*--a mixed-race child, considered worth less than nothing.

Left at a Christian orphanage in postwar Seoul like garbage, bleeding and terrified, Kim unwittingly embarked on the next phase of her extraordinary life when she was adopted by a childless Fundamentalist pastor and his wife in the United States. Unfamiliar with Western customs and language, but terrified that she would be sent back to the orphanage, or even killed, Kim trained herself to be the perfect child. But just as her Western features doomed her in Korea, so her Asian features served as a constant reminder that she wasn't good enough for her new, all-white environment.

After escaping her adoptive parents' home, only to find herself in an abusive and controlling marriage, Kim finally made a break for herself by having a daughter and running away with her to a safer haven--something Omma could not do for her.

Unflinching in her narration, Kim tells of her sorrows with a steady and riveting voice, and ultimately transcends them by laying claim to all the joys to which she is entitled.

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