



# A Step From Heaven

By An Na

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When four-year-old Young Ju Park first hears the words Mi Gook -- Korean for "America" -- she is sure that they mean "Heaven." But when her family moves to Southern California the following year, she finds the transition from life in Korea far from easy. The countless unexpected challenges -- from learning English, to finding work, to attending school -- put more and more pressure on the Park family until its fragile construction begins to splinter. Yet as Young Ju grows from child to adolescent in her new home she finds a surprising new voice -- neither Korean nor American, but uniquely her own. That voice allows her to make sense of her world, and gives her the strength to succeed. *A Step from Heaven* is the stunning debut of an equally unique writer.

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## A Step From Heaven By An Na Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Oh's appropriately girlish voice and measured reading bring to life Young Ju, quiet heroine of debut novelist Na's dark tale of a family of Korean immigrants, which just won the ALA's Printz Award for teenage literature. At age four, Young Ju is not happy to be leaving her Korean home and loving Halmoni (grandmother) to move with her parents to Mi Gook (America), believed to be the land of great promise. Through Young Ju's experiences, listeners hear the family unravel as difficulties mount for them in the States. Young Ju's parents struggle with several low-paying jobs, handicapped by their language barrier. Young Ju's alcoholic and bitter father abuses his wife and children and forbids Young Ju to socialize with American friends. And when her father crosses a frightening line in his cruelty, Young Ju bravely takes action that sets her mother, younger brother and herself on the path to yet another new life in America. Oh's characterization, which realistically captures this powerful contemporary story and gives authentic crispness to Korean words and phrases, will keep listeners in its grip. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up-An Na's 2002 Printz winning novel (*Front St.*, 2001) is brought to full effect in this reading by Jina Oh. Young Ju emigrates from Korea with her parents when she is four. A few months later, they live in a shabby apartment in Southern California, their family expanded to include a newborn baby boy. The parents work long hours at multiple jobs, and Young Ju struggles first to understand what is going on in school and then to be permitted to participate in typically American schoolgirl activities. The pressures of immigration, language difficulties, and oppositional cultural expectations lead Young Ju's father to become a bitter and often drunk man, physically abusive of his wife and, eventually, his daughter. The stresses of the disintegrating family work on each of its members, sending Young Ju's mother into a religious foray and her brother into middle school truancy. By the time Young Ju is ready to leave for college, her father has returned to Korea and her mother has been able to establish the family in their own American home. Each of the chapters in this emotionally succinct novel might be read as a short story, although the plot-the acclimation of one young girl to a new culture and to her own family-is steady and at times suspenseful. Young Ju's narrative voice matures as she does: in early childhood, she is unclear about identity and place, later she becomes impatient with the limitations placed on her by both culture and her own understanding of what is needed, and at last she matures to a young woman who can appreciate the fact that individuals must admit to their strengths and weaknesses in order to enjoy life's possibilities. The language is rich, studded with Korean words made intelligible both by context and the reader's easy pronunciation. Tunes are sung gently and well, and there is dramatic differentiation made among the cast of characters, making this audio version an enrichment of an already superb text.

*Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Gr. 9-12. Young Ju's parents don't want her to become too American, and Young Ju is ashamed of them. It's the classic immigrant child conflict, told here in the present tense with the immediacy of the girl's voice, from the time she's a toddler in a small Korean village wondering why the adults talk about America as "heaven." Then there's her bewilderment as a first-grader in the U.S. trying to learn the rules and understand the words and the accents. Each chapter is a story in itself, with dramatic surprise or quiet reversal. The tales blend together into a beautiful first novel that takes Ju through her teenage years until she's an A-student ready to leave for college. The focus is on family and what happens at home. Her

father, furious at having to work two laboring jobs and grief-stricken at his mother's death in Korea, becomes an increasingly violent alcoholic. He forbids Young Ju from seeing her best friend. She disobeys him, but she's careful never to bring her friends to her shabby home. Most moving is the chapter about her visit with her father to the Immigration Office. He's distrustful, enraged that he's so helpless and that she's in control; she's embarrassed by his behavior even as she feels his anguish. Young Ju's mother is a strong figure in the background until the girl suddenly sees her as a person, who tells her, "In America, women have choices." This isn't a quick read, especially at the beginning when the child is trying to decipher American words and customs, but the coming-of-age drama will grab teens and make them think of their own conflicts between home and outside. As in the best writing, the particulars make the story universal. Steer teens who like this on to Amy Tan's adult book *The Joy Luck Club* (1989). *Hazel Rochman*  
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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Richard Delarosa:**

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important act, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled A Step From Heaven. Try to stumble through book A Step From Heaven as your pal. It means that it can being your friend when you really feel alone and beside that course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated for yourself. The book makes you far more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , let us make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

#### **Brian Crowe:**

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book you just read? May be the book with the subject A Step From Heaven suitable to you? Often the book was written by famous writer in this era. Typically the book untitled A Step From Heavenis one of several books that everyone read now. This book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this reserve you will enter the new age that you ever know just before. The author explained their plan in the simple way, consequently all of people can easily to recognise the core of this book. This book will give you a lot of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world with this book.

#### **Brenda Hedstrom:**

Reading a guide can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book and so. There are a lot of reasons why people like it. First reading a publication will give you a lot of new info. When you read a publication you will get new information because book is one of a number of ways to share the information or even their idea. Second, examining a book will make an individual more imaginative. When you examining a book especially hype book the author will bring someone to imagine the story how the personas do it anything. Third, it is possible to share your knowledge to other folks. When you read this A Step From Heaven, you are able to tells your family, friends as well as soon about yours book. Your knowledge can inspire others, make them reading a reserve.

**Nancy Stever:**

The reason why? Because this A Step From Heaven is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will jolt you with the secret it inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of gains than the other book have got such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I had been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

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