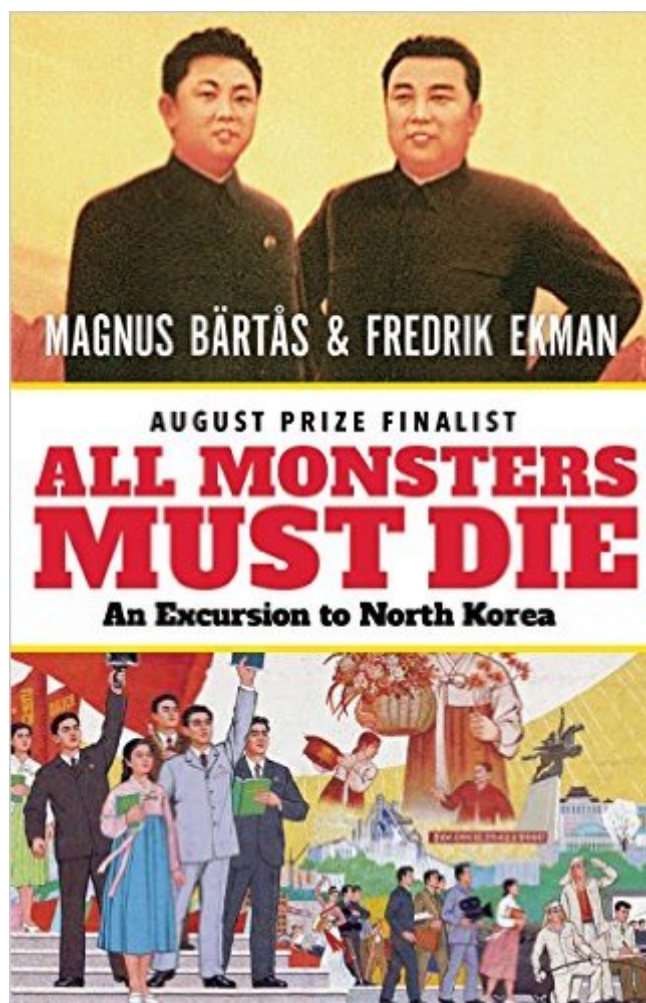


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All Monsters Must Die: An Excursion To North Korea



Synopsis

A finalist for the prestigious August Prize, *All Monsters Must Die* is the story of North Korea, past and present, offering a rare and fascinating window into the most isolated country in the world. In 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is founded by General Kim Il-sung. In 1978, North Korea celebrates the 30th anniversary of its founding, and Kim Jong-il, who at the time is the head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department, orders the kidnapping of the greatest South Korean movie star, the actress Madame Choi, and her ex-husband, the famous film director Shin Sang-ok. In 2008, North Korea celebrates its 60th anniversary, and authors Magnus Bærtun and Fredrik Ekman take a bizarre, heavily guided tour to the world's most isolated country. Bærtun and Ekman weave together these three stories to create a mosaic of North Korea, past and present: from the Japanese occupation to the demarcation of the border at the 38th parallel and the Korean War, the development of North Korean Juche ideology, the establishment of the Kim dynasty's cult of personality, and the aggressive manufacturing of political propaganda, which motivated the kidnapping of South Korea's most famous film couple.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

All Monsters Must Die: An Excursion to North Korea by Magnus Bærtun and Fredrik Ekman (translated by Saskia Vogel) is about two Swedes' visit to the DPRK in 2008. Bærtun and Ekman spent eight days in the North and this is their brief travel diary. I recalled everything about their trip from my own time there. Since I spent eighteen days in the North I feel spoiled by the things I got to see that the authors didn't, and while I certainly shared laughs over the same

experiences (and I am convinced the authors and I encountered some of the same officials and tour guides on our respective trips) I felt I could have done a better job writing a travel story. An eight-day trip was too short to get into because it's over before you know it. BÃ¼rtÃ¶fÂ¥s and Ekman and I shared the same experiences with disobedient fellow travellers threatening the travel plans for the entire group. In my small group of sixteen, there were four who were under the watchful eye of the guides for taking unauthorized photos. Most of us, however, had proved our obedience to the rules, and were able to photograph whatever we wanted. However, when BÃ¼rtÃ¶fÂ¥s and Ekman's group left the DPRK: "The agents rummage through our luggage. Our camera is inspected. The customs officers look at all the pictures on the digital cameras. Pictures that are not suitable are deleted, but it happens randomly. No one gets to keep pictures of ox-drawn carts--that might imply the country is behind in its development." So I suppose no one got to keep the oxcart picture such as the ones that I took. You may find these pictures on my own DPRK travel blog. The authors raved about Guy Delisle's graphic novel *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea* and I'm glad they gave a plug for his book.

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