



# Native Speaker

By Chang-rae Lee



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Native Speaker By Chang-rae Lee

The debut novel from critically-acclaimed and New York Times–bestselling author of *On Such a Full Sea*.



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In *Native Speaker*, author Chang-rae Lee introduces readers to Henry Park. Park has spent his entire life trying to become a true American—a native speaker. But even as the essence of his adopted country continues to elude him, his Korean heritage seems to drift further and further away.

Park's harsh Korean upbringing has taught him to hide his emotions, to remember everything he learns, and most of all to feel an overwhelming sense of alienation. In other words, it has shaped him as a natural spy.

But the very attributes that help him to excel in his profession put a strain on his marriage to his American wife and stand in the way of his coming to terms with his young son's death. When he is assigned to spy on a rising Korean-American politician, his very identity is tested, and he must figure out who he is amid not only the conflicts within himself but also within the ethnic and political tensions of the New York City streets.

*Native Speaker* is a story of cultural alienation. It is about fathers and sons, about the desire to connect with the world rather than stand apart from it, about loyalty and betrayal, about the alien in all of us and who we finally are.



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Amazon.com Review**

Korean-American Henry Park is "surreptitious, B+ student of life, illegal alien, emotional alien, Yellow peril: neo-American, stranger, follower, traitor, spy ..." or so says his wife, in the list she writes upon leaving him. Henry is forever uncertain of his place, a perpetual outsider looking at American culture from a distance. As a man of two worlds, he is beginning to fear that he has betrayed both -- and belongs to neither.

### **From Publishers Weekly**

Espionage acts as a metaphor for the uneasy relationship of Amerasians to American society in this eloquent, thought-provoking tale of a young Korean-American's struggle to conjoin the fragments of his personality in culturally diverse New York City. Raised in a family and culture valuing careful control of emotions and appearances, narrator Henry Park, son of a successful Korean-American grocer, works as an undercover operative for a vaguely sinister private intelligence agency. He and his "American wife," Lelia, are estranged, partly as a result of Henry's stoical way of coping with the recent death of their young son. Henry is also having trouble at work, becoming emotionally attached to the people he should be investigating. Ruminating on his upbringing, he traces the path that has led to his present sorrow; as he infiltrates the staff of a popular Korean-American city councilman, he discovers the broader, societal context of the issues he has been grappling with personally. Writing in a precise yet freewheeling prose that takes us deep into Henry's head, first-novelist Lee packs this story, whose intrigue is well measured and compelling, with insights into both current political events and timeless questions of love, culture, family bonds and identity. This is an auspicious debut for Riverhead Books, Putnam's new division. First serial to Granta; QPB selection; audio rights to Brilliance; author tour.  
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### **From Library Journal**

Assigned to spy on a fellow Korean American, Henry Park faces an acute crisis of cultural conscience. LJ's reviewer found Henry a "wonderful, honest creation."  
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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Donna Jennings:**

The book Native Speaker make one feel enjoy for your spare time. You may use to make your capable considerably more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make reading through a book Native Speaker to be your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your knowledge about some or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like start and read a reserve Native Speaker. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science publication or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this guide?

**Jose Suh:**

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**Edward Upton:**

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**Todd Porter:**

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