



Monika Kim's debut novel, *The Eyes Are the Best Part*, is a riveting journey into the world of psychological horror and body horror, anchored in the experiences of a young Korean-American woman named Ji-Won. This book has captured the attention of many readers and reviewers alike, who have praised its bold narrative and unsettling themes.

## Plot Overview

*The Eyes Are the Best Part* centers around Ji-Won, an eighteen-year-old grappling with the sudden abandonment of her family by her father. This event precipitates a downward spiral in Ji-Won's life, as she contends with her mother's depression and the subsequent arrival of George, her mother's new boyfriend. George's fetishistic and predatory behavior towards Asian women adds another layer of tension and discomfort to Ji-Won's already tumultuous life.

As Ji-Won's world unravels, so does her sanity. She develops a macabre obsession with eyeballs, particularly blue ones, which leads her down a path of grotesque actions and violent outbursts. This obsession is not merely a quirky trait but a manifestation of her deeper psychological turmoil and the intense pressures she faces from both her family and society.



***The Eyes Are the Best Part: By Monika Kim (Book Review)***

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## Themes and Analysis

One of the novel's most compelling aspects is its exploration of female rage and the psychological impacts of racism and misogyny. Ji-Won's interactions with George and other male characters are fraught with power dynamics that highlight the dehumanizing effects of fetishism and cultural stereotyping. These encounters are rendered in chilling detail, contributing to the book's pervasive atmosphere of dread and unease.

Kim's portrayal of Ji-Won's psychological descent is both empathetic and horrifying. The narrative delves into the complexities of mental illness, illustrating how external pressures and internal conflicts can lead to extreme behaviors. Ji-Won's journey is not just a horror story but also a commentary on the struggles of first-generation immigrants, the expectations placed on women, and the societal pressures that can drive individuals to their



breaking points.

## Writing Style and Reception

Monika Kim's writing is lauded for its vivid and unsettling imagery. The descriptions of Ji-Won's actions are both grotesque and strangely compelling, pulling readers into her disturbed psyche. The novel's pacing keeps the tension high, with each chapter revealing new depths to Ji-Won's madness and the horror surrounding her life.

Reviewers have noted that while some plot twists are predictable, the intensity of Ji-Won's perspective and the raw emotional power of her story make the novel a gripping read. The first-person narrative allows readers to experience Ji-Won's thoughts and feelings intimately, making her descent into violence and obsession both tragic and understandable.

## Criticisms

Despite its strengths, some critics have pointed out that certain elements of the plot could have been better developed. For instance, the abrupt shift in the dynamic between Ji-Won and her almost love interest felt somewhat contrived to some readers, making the climax appear rushed and less impactful than it could have been (The Nightingale Reviews). Additionally, the satirical undertones of the novel sometimes clash with its more serious moments, creating a slight confusion in tone (FanFiAddict).

## Conclusion

*The Eyes Are the Best Part* is a provocative and unsettling debut that marks Monika Kim as a bold new voice in horror fiction. The novel's exploration of female rage, cultural identity, and psychological horror is both timely and resonant, offering readers a compelling and disturbing look into the dark corners of the human psyche. For those who appreciate horror that goes beyond mere scares to tackle deeper societal issues, *The Eyes Are the Best Part* is a must-read.

**Also Read: Tangled Up in You: By Christina Lauren (Book Review)**