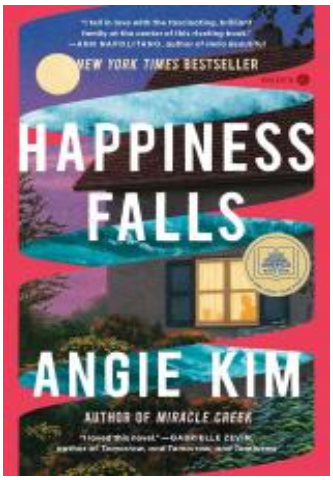
Happiness Falls

by Angie Kim



About the Book

When a father goes missing, his family?s desperate search leads them to question everything they know about him and one another --- both a riveting page-turner and a deeply moving portrait of a family in crisis from the award-winning author of MIRACLE CREEK.

?We didn?t call the police right away.? Those are the electric first words of this extraordinary novel about a biracial Korean American family in Virginia whose lives are upended when their beloved father and husband go missing.

Mia, the irreverent, hyper-analytical 20-year-old daughter, has an explanation for everything --- which is why she isn?t initially concerned when her father and younger brother, Eugene, don?t return from a walk in a nearby park. They must have lost their phone. Or stopped for an errand somewhere. But by the time Mia?s brother runs through the front door bloody and alone, it becomes clear that the father in this tight-knit family is missing and the only witness is Eugene, who has the rare genetic condition Angelman syndrome and cannot speak.

What follows is both a ticking-clock investigation into the whereabouts of a father and an emotionally rich portrait of a family whose most personal secrets just may be at the heart of his disappearance. Full of shocking twists and fascinating questions of love, language and human connection, HAPPINESS FALLS is a mystery, a family drama and a novel of profound philosophical inquiry. With all the powerful storytelling she brought to her award-winning debut, MIRACLE CREEK, Angie Kim turns the missing-person story into something wholly original, creating an indelible tale of a family who must go to remarkable lengths to truly understand one another.

Discussion Guide

1. What were your first impressions of each member of the Parkson family? How did your perceptions evolve over the course of the novel?

2. How would you describe Mia?s voice as a narrator? Is she ?reliable?? How would the book be different if Angie Kim had written it in the third person?

3. How did the structure of the book, including footnotes and charts, influence your reading experience?

4. Discuss the relationships between the Parkson siblings --- and among the three of them. What do they learn about one another? How do you envision their relationships evolving after the events of the book?

5. Do you think it can be more difficult to see the people closest to us as they really are? Why or why not?

6. As Kim explores in HAPPINESS FALLS, we tend to equate oral fluency with intelligence (and vice versa). How did the character of Eugene challenge your assumptions about nonspeaking people?

7. How does race --- including the perceived race of mixed-race characters --- play into the novel? What biases and stereotypes must each character contend with?

8. Discuss Adam?s Happiness Quotient project. Do you agree with his theories? What do you consider your baseline? Do you think it needs adjusting? Do you think it?s possible to intentionally lower it? If so, do you think that would make you happier?

9. Do you think Adam was right to keep Eugene?s progress from the rest of the family? Why or why not?

10. What did you think of the ending? What do you think really happened? Did Eugene repeat parts of John and Mia?s conversation, either subconsciously or intentionally? Was the note real? Do these answers matter?

Author Bio

Angie Kim moved as a preteen from Seoul, South Korea, to the suburbs of Baltimore. After graduating from Interlochen Arts Academy, she studied philosophy at Stanford University and attended Harvard Law School, where she was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review.* Her debut novel, MIRACLE CREEK, won the Edgar Award, the ITW Thriller Award, the Strand Critics? Award and the Pinckley Prize, and was named one of the best books of the year by *Time*, *The Washington Post*, *Kirkus Reviews* and the "Today" show. Kim lives in northern Virginia with her family.

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