



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**THE ISLAND OF SEA WOMEN BY LISA SEE
IS 2020 ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK SELECTION**

Maryland Humanities' Statewide Reading and Discussion Program Enters Thirteenth Year

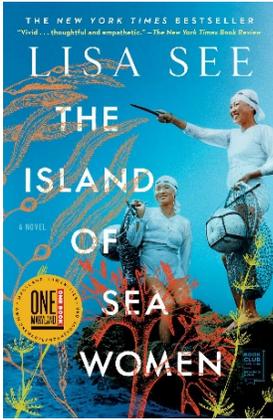
(Baltimore, MD)—Maryland Humanities is pleased to announce the selection of ***The Island of Sea Women: A Novel by Lisa See*** for the 2020 One Maryland One Book program. The novel follows the decades-long friendship of two *haenyeo* (female divers) from Jeju Island in Korea. The book was chosen by a committee of librarians, educators, authors, and bibliophiles in February from more than 165 titles suggested last fall by readers across the state for the theme, "Friendship." In 2019, *The Island of Sea Women* made the *New York Times'* list of best sellers.

"For the past 12 years, One Maryland One Book has generated frank conversations about urgent issues explored through literature—including refugees and migrants, conflicts with police, and most recently the Flint water crisis," says Aaron Heinsman, Acting Executive Director at Maryland Humanities. "I'm excited to see what new perspectives Lisa See's novel surfaces for readers."

See says: "I'm thrilled and honored that *The Island of Sea Women* has been chosen as the 2020 One Maryland One Book selection. This has been a trying year and some of us have sustained terrible losses. I'm proud of the way we've had to come together in our families, communities, and states. Books have always given me joy, solace, and courage. Now we have the opportunity to come together to have a shared reading experience. I hope the sea women that I wrote about—their physical and emotional bravery—are as inspiring to all of you as they have been to me. I'm so looking forward to our events and meeting all of you. We're going to have fun!"

As our One Maryland One Book programming takes place in the fall, we do not as yet anticipate any impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the Book



The Island of Sea Women by *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa See chronicles the lives and friendship between Young-sook and Mi-ja, two girls living on the Korean island of Jeju. They become the closest of friends. However, their differences are impossible to ignore: Young-sook was born into a long line of *haenyeo* and will inherit her mother's position of leading the divers; whereas Mi-ja is the daughter of a Japanese collaborator and will forever carry that mark. From the Japanese occupation of the 1930s and 1940s to World War II to the Korean War, events will push their seemingly unbreakable bond to its breaking point. This beautifully written and thoughtful novel shines a light on the

remarkable *haenyeo* culture and two women who are a part of it. Readers won't soon forget the journey of Young-sook and Mi-ja's friendship.

About the Author



In her beloved *New York Times* bestsellers, which include *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, *Peony in Love*, *Shanghai Girls*, *Dreams of Joy*, *China Dolls*, and *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, Lisa See brilliantly illuminates the immigrant experience and the indissoluble bonds between women. Her newest novel is a story of family secrets and female friendship on a remote Korean Island. *The Island of Sea Women* introduces readers to the fierce and unforgettable women divers of Jeju Island and the dramatic history that shaped their lives. Her first

book, the national bestseller and *New York Times* Notable Book, *On Gold Mountain: The One Hundred Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*, traces the journey of her great-grandfather, Fong See, who overcame obstacles at every step to become the 100-year-old godfather of Los Angeles's Chinatown and the patriarch of a sprawling family. See was the *Publishers Weekly* West Coast correspondent for thirteen years, and her articles have appeared in *Vogue*, *Self*, and *More*.

About One Maryland One Book



When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience and talk about it with others. That's one of the joys of reading.

In that spirit, through our Maryland Center for the Book program, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book (OMOB) to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book. We invite readers to participate in book-centered discussions and related programs at public libraries, high schools, colleges, museums, bookstores, and community and senior centers around the state.

OMOB programs, including an author tour, take place each year in the fall. A calendar of free public events—including the Author Tour—will be available online beginning this summer.

One Maryland One Book is presented in partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library and is sponsored by The Institute of Museum and Library Services via the Maryland State Library as well as PNC Foundation and BGE, with additional support from M&T Bank, an anonymous donor, and the Citizens of Baltimore County.

About Maryland Center for the Book

The Maryland Center for the Book (MCFB)—an affiliate of the national Center for the Book in the Library of Congress—develops and supports literary programs and outreach activities that engage citizens across Maryland in literature and reading. As a program of Maryland Humanities, MCFB highlights our region’s literary heritage and calls attention to the importance of books, reading, literacy, and libraries.



Want to discuss the book now or get updates on upcoming events? Join the conversation on the [Maryland Center for the Book page](#).

About Maryland Humanities



Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations such as The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios, www.BakerArtist.org; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).