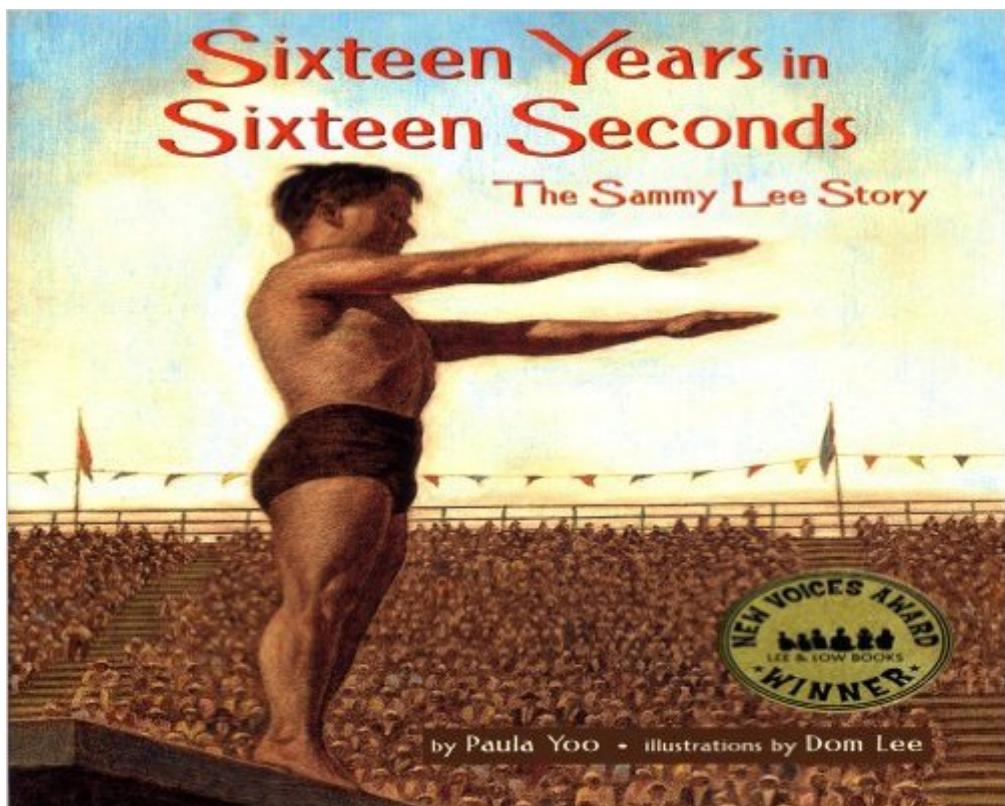


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Sixteen Years In Sixteen Seconds: The Sammy Lee Story



Synopsis

The inspirational true story of Sammy Lee, a Korean American who overcame discrimination to realize both his father's desire that he become a doctor and his own dream of becoming an Olympic champion diver.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 880 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #798,378 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Olympics #184 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports #295 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

Customer Reviews

Did you know that in 1932, a sign on a public swimming pool that read "Members Only" really meant that only whites were permitted to enter except on certain days? That year, Sammy Lee, the twelve-year-old son of Korean immigrants who ran a restaurant in Highland Park, CA, stood outside the swimming pool fence one hot summer day and saw a boy diving high in the air and breaking the water with hardly a splash. Sammy decided that he wanted to learn how to do that. The following Wednesday, when people of color were allowed to use the pool, his African American friend Hart Crum showed him how to dive doing somersaults. With the summer Olympics being held in nearby Los Angeles that year, Sammy dreamed of becoming an Olympic champion diver. However, Sammy's father wanted him to become a doctor rather than an athlete. Six years later, when he was eighteen, Sammy was attending a swim and diving competition, and between meets, he sneaked into the pool area to practice. Jim Ryan saw him and agreed to become his coach. Sammy

managed to keep his grades up while practicing diving, becoming the first nonwhite elected student body president in his high school and being offered a full scholarship at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Yet, he still faced discrimination, and his grades fell during his first year of college because he spent more time diving than studying. After seeing a rude customer berating his father in the restaurant and his father responding without losing his temper, Sammy understood why his father wanted him to do well in school. They struck a deal that Sammy could continue diving as long as his grades were good enough for medical school. The 1940 Olympics were cancelled because of World War II, and Sammy thought his Olympic dreams were dead.

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