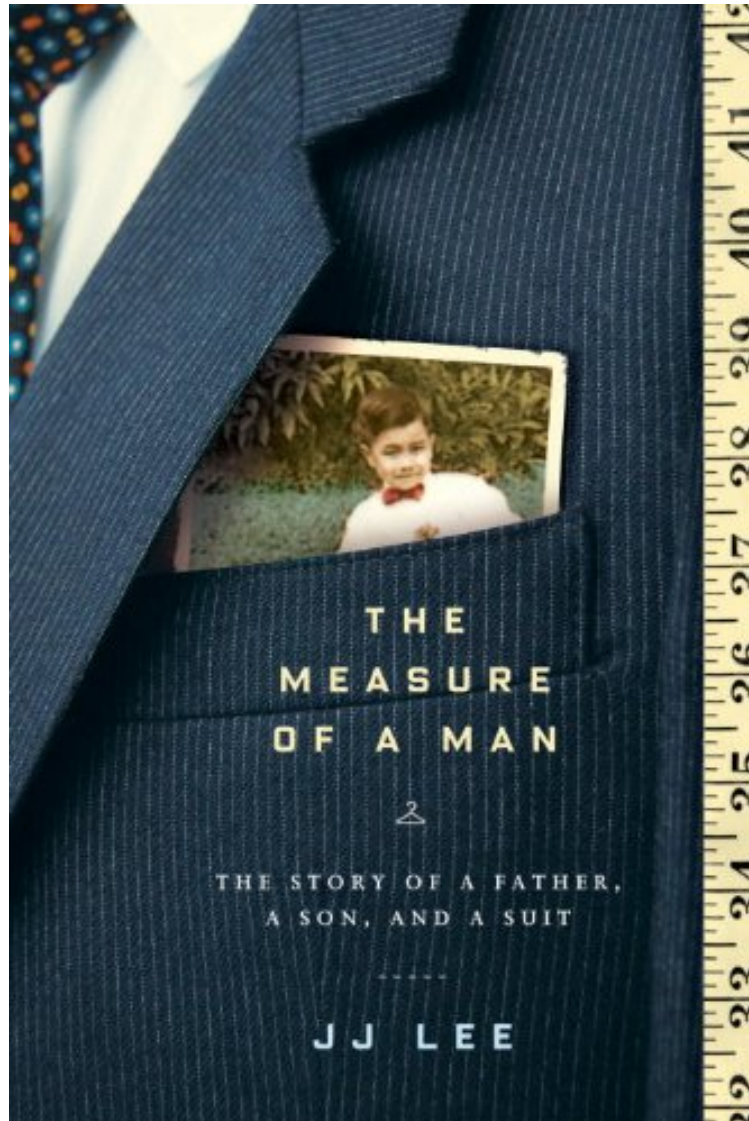


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The Measure of a Man: The Story of a Father, a Son, and a Suit

JJ Lee

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JJ Lee : The Measure of a Man: The Story of a Father, a Son, and a Suit before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Measure of a Man: The Story of a Father, a Son, and a Suit:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Men's suits and a man who looked good in themBy IsisJJ Lee's father was elegant, complex, and sometimes troubled. From him JJ got his first sense of men's fashion. His memoir of life with his father is interspersed with fascinating chapters on suits. Did you know that today's business suit owes something to suits of armour?Until I read this book I had no idea of what went into the making of a suit or why some suit wearers look great - think David Beckham. I would like to give this book to every man who is thinking of buying

a suit, and it's a must-read for anyone who is interested in men's fashion. However, this is not just a book about men's clothing. Lee's memoir of his father is told with exceptional honesty and compassion. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Magnificent! By Sure Enough Most enjoyable book I have read in a very long time. Loved historical tidbits as well as style notes. Even suit etiquette is covered. Story of relationships between people; relationships between master and student, and relationships between us humans and our clothing. Absolutely loved this book! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting but contrived: By Catharine Although I learned a lot about the art of tailoring and the false bravado with which the immigrant father fakes his way into the glamour of the restaurant world, the remaking of the father's suit in order to learn the practice of tailoring and in the process understand him is often strained. The author is trying to hard to make this metaphor work and also to like his father, who in the end has little human decency to offer the son.

FINALIST - Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction (2012) FINALIST - Governor General's Literary Award - Non-Fiction (2012) FINALIST - BC Book Prize's Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize (2012) A son's decision to alter his father's last surviving suit for himself is the launching point for this powerful book — part personal memoir, part social history of the man's suit — about fathers and sons, love and forgiveness, and learning what it means to be a man. For years, journalist and amateur tailor JJ Lee tried to ignore the suit hanging at the back of his closet. It was his father's suit. But when JJ decides to make the suit his own, little does he know he is about to embark on a journey to understand his own past. As JJ cuts into the jacket, he begins to piece together the story of his relationship with his father, a charismatic but troubled Montreal restaurateur whose demons brought tumult upon his family. JJ also recounts his own ups and downs during the year he spent as an apprentice at Modernize Tailors — the last of the great Chinatown suitmakers in Vancouver — where, under the tutelage of his octogenarian master tailor, he learns invaluable lessons about life. Woven throughout JJ's tale are stories of the suit's own evolution, illuminating how this humble garment has, for centuries, been the surprising battleground for the war between generations. Written with great wit, bracing honesty, and narrative verve, and featuring line drawings throughout by the author, *The Measure of a Man* is an unforgettable story of love, forgiveness, and discovering what it means to be your own man.

A Globe and Mail Best Book "A personal yet universal story about a son's quest to understand his father. This beautiful, cleverly executed story gets to the very heart of the most basic masculine bond, and how even through disappointment, abandonment, anger, confusion and pain, a son can love, honour and protect his father." —Globe and Mail "Beautifully crafted, Leers's memoir is a heartbreaking page-turner about a family, an abusive father, and men's fashion. Who could have thought these themes could work together? In his first book, Lee has shown us how." —Jury citation, Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction "Lee seamlessly weaves together elements of painful personal experience, fashion history, and his modern-day quest to learn the art of tailoring and find a place for himself in the world. . . . An intimate and thoughtful rumination on what it means to be a son, a father, and a man." —Schema Magazine "An exquisite book." —Maclean's "Touching and inquisitive . . . [A] striking and accomplished blend of humour, information and pathos. . . . [A] thoughtful and intermittently provocative memoir." —National Post "A deftly crafted memoir. . . ." —Montreal Gazette "At times incredibly witty and wry, and at other times endearing and touching . . . *The Measure of a Man* is a great read." —Tenth to the Fraser "An often heartbreaking yet humorous and compelling memoir. . . ." —Calgary Herald "Takes us into the nearly vanished world of exquisite, made-to-measure suit tailoring, and on his personal journey to understand his late father's life and the sometimes-tormented relationship the two shared. . . . His tender, sometimes funny and often achingly sad story revolves around a suit left behind after his father's death, and his desire to remake it into something that would fit him. I loved this book for its honest tone as well as for the spicy tidbits of suit-making history with which he seasons his story. . . ." —Chronicle Herald (Halifax) "Leers's book skillfully weaves a personal struggle to understand his estranged father after his death through the process of repurposing his dad's suit to fit his smaller frame. . . . Truly inspires." —Gear Patrol "A graceful, compelling memoir. . . . A thoughtful, loving and honest narrative, elegant in its clarity and observation." —Minneapolis-Saint Paul Star Tribune About the Author JJ LEE is the menswear columnist for the Vancouver Sun and broadcasts a weekly fashion column for CBC Radio in Vancouver. He spent a year as an apprentice at Modernize Tailors and was featured in the award-winning film about the shop, *Tailor Made: The Last Tailor Shop in Chinatown*. In 2007, he wrote and presented an hour-length radio documentary on the social history of suits, entitled *The Measure of Man*, for CBC Radio's Ideas. Lee lives in New Westminster, where he works as a creative consultant for a design firm. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. There is a suit in the back of my closet. Over the years dust has gathered on its shoulders. I own other, better suits but I hold on to this one because, for me at least, it is special. The suit attracts and repels me. It came to me under the saddest of circumstances, and I've dared to wear it in public only once. I wore it to test myself, to see if it would fit and;

not only in its cut and dimensions, but to prove to myself I could bear the mantle and wear it without feeling like an impostor, a boy posing as a man. Most of the time I try to ignore it, and so years can go by without my touching it. But even so, I always know it's there. Once in a while, I feel compelled to run my hand along its lapels and think of the man who wore it. I see the line of his jaw, his broad torso and its incipient roundness. I see the pores on his fleshy, bulbous nose. I remember the feel of his thick skin and the dryness of his hands, and I wonder if I look like him. This is my father's suit. The coat is single-breasted with a notch lapel. A boy would say it is black; in fact, it is dark navy. I lift the hanger off the rod and turn the suit this way and that in the morning sun breaking through the blinds. When the angle is just right, the colour has more depth than I remember, flashing with casts of royal and cerulean blue. Perhaps it is only my imagination, or a trick of the light. Even without putting the jacket on, I can tell it won't fit me, although I have grown heavier and thicker over the years. The chest is too full and the shoulders are too wide. My father was always the bigger man, but the exaggerated proportions are as much a by-product of dated tastes as the measuring tape. The button placement is low and swaying, evidence of Giorgio Armani's early louche influence on menswear. It has been decades since it was considered stylish to button jackets below the natural belt line (think of the days of Miami Vice). Contemporary fashion dictates the crucial fastening point must be closer to the sternum, far above the belly button. (The higher "button stance" creates the illusion of longer legs.) In nearly every detail — the broad shoulders, the low notch on the wide lapel, the two heavy brass buttons hanging at a low, testicular altitude — the suit is old, outmoded. Why does it matter? If it doesn't fit, why not throw the suit out and buy a new one? Outside of a Konica camera he gave me as a wedding present and a pair of metal eyeglass frames I found in his apartment after his death, this suit is the only thing I have from my father. Though I have been tempted to abandon it by the back door of the Salvation Army store down the hill, the suit won't let me. A suit is never just a suit.