

THE FOREST OF STOLEN GIRLS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE BOOK

1426, Joseon dynasty, Korea. Hwani's family has never been the same since she and her younger sister went missing and were later found unconscious in the forest near a gruesome crime scene.

Years later, Detective Min—Hwani's father—learns that thirteen girls have recently disappeared from the same forest that nearly stole his daughters. He travels to their hometown on Jeju Island to investigate . . . only to vanish as well.

Determined to find her father and solve the case that tore their family apart, Hwani returns home to pick up the trail. As she digs into the secrets of the small village—and collides with her now estranged sister, Maewol—Hwani comes to realize that the answer could lie within her own buried memories of what happened in the forest all those years ago.

AUTHOR BIO

June Hur was born in South Korea and raised in Canada, except for the time when she moved back to Korea and attended high school there. She studied history and literature at the University of Toronto, and began writing her debut novel, *The Silence of Bones*, after obsessing over books about the Joseon dynasty. When she's not writing, she can be found wandering through nature or journaling at a coffee shop. June Hur lives in Toronto with her husband and daughter.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the title reveal about the story to follow?
2. Describe Hwani and Maewol's relationship. Why did they grow apart? Why is it sometimes so difficult to love a family member?
3. How important is memory in the novel? What are the events in your life that have shaped who you are? Can you imagine what it might be like if you couldn't remember them? How would you be different as a person?
4. What role did Detective Min play in the horrifying forest incident? What does he do to make up for his wrongdoing? Do you sympathize with him? Why or why not?
5. One of the themes in the novel is not letting your past define you. How does each character try to break free from the past? Do you think they are successful?
6. Maewol tells Hwani, "A father can be both your protector and your worst enemy." How true do you think this is? Discuss the ways in which the fathers in this novel act as both protectors of and enemies to their children.
7. Were you surprised when the villain was revealed? Why or why not?
8. What is the human tribute system? How does this system reflect how women were viewed during the Joseon dynasty? How differently or similarly are women of today treated and perceived?
9. After reading this novel, do you think justice was served? If not, how do you think justice may have been served better?
10. What did you learn about Jeju Island? What did you find interesting?

