1. Some say this book is too violent and disturbing and should not be read for that reason. Others say it’s important we learn about these things happening. After reading this book, how do you feel about how it handles violence? Any thoughts on violence as conveyed or portrayed in the media or society, or what the repercussions of these things might be?

2. The Introduction is titled “Never Heard the Word Love.” Assess the camp culture Shin was raised in. Is love something we learn culturally or is it an innate thing people must do? Do different people have different capacities to love? What role does society play in this?

3. As you work your way through the book, how do you feel about Shin? Do you always believe him? If not, when and why? Do you sometimes feel greater or lesser compassion for him? If so, when and why? If you could ask him one question, what would it be?

4. What did you know about North Korea before you read this book? What new things have you learned?

5. What are recent and current events in North Korea as covered in the media? How do you react to them after reading this book?

6. Is torture ever necessary? If so, when?

7. As a journalist, Blaine Harden needs to check his sources and his facts. Do you think he does a good enough job of that here? Give examples for why you feel the way you do. Do you think all journalists in the news media today are regularly doing this? Can you give any examples or evidence to support the opinions you have about this?

8. During this book, Shin not only endures great physical duress, he also makes some significant cultural shifts. Discuss the cultural shock he experiences. How is his experience in South Korea similar to or different from his experience in America? Do you know anyone who has ever gone through cultural shock or experienced it yourself? How might one prepare oneself to be better prepared for it?

9. What’s your opinion of the Ten Laws of Camp 14?

10. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was passed by the U.N. General Assembly in December of 1948. After taking a look at the animated review of what that historic document suggests (see YouTube link below) and reading this book, do you think that list of basic human rights needs any additions, deletions, or other changes? Is it realistic to strive for these rights for every human on the planet? If so, what responsibility do we have as individuals in dealing with this? Is there anything we should be doing for people in North Korea?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTlrSYbCbHE