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2014-2015 BIC Teaching Guide

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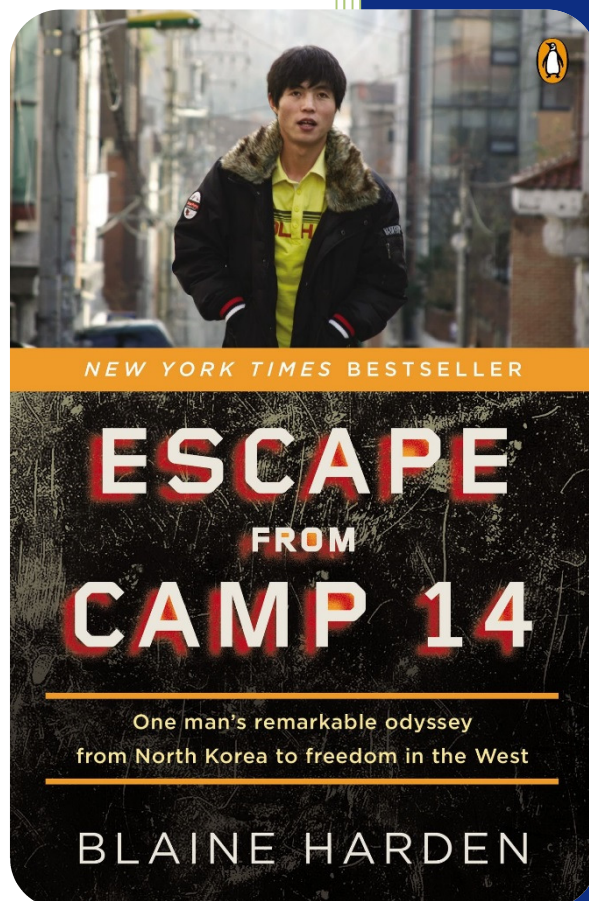
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2014-2015

Teaching Guide

Book-in-Common Committee



2014-2015 Book-in-Common

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General Information

About Blaine Harden

(from <http://www.blaineharden.com/>),



Blaine Harden's most recent book is *Escape from Camp 14*. An international bestseller translated into 27 languages, it's the story of Shin Dong-hyuk, the only person born in a N. Korean prison camp to escape to the West. The book and Shin's testimony pushed the United Nations to create a Commission of Inquiry, which concluded in 2014 that N. Korea has committed crimes against humanity. *Escape* won the 2112 Grand Prix de la Biographie Politique, a French literary award, and was a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

Blaine is working on a second book about North Korea, and contributes to *Foreign Policy* and *The Economist*. For 28 years, he worked for *The Washington Post* as a correspondent in Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, as well as in New York and Seattle. For four years, he was a local and national correspondent for *The New York Times* and a writer for the *Times Magazine*.

Blaine is also the author of *A River Lost*. It's about well-intentioned Americans who dammed and degraded the West's greatest river, the Columbia. An updated edition was published by Norton in 2012 to coincide with a PBS program about Grand Coulee Dam and the Columbia River. Blaine's first book, *Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent*, was described by *The Independent* (London) as the "best contemporary book on Africa."

Journalism awards include the Ernie Pyle Award for coverage of the siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnian War, the American Society of Newspaper Editors Award for Non-Deadline Writing (stories about Africa), and the Livingston Award for International Reporting (stories about Africa).

Blaine lives in Seattle with his wife Jessica and their two children, Lucinda and Arno.

North Korea's Lack of Electrical Infrastructure at Night



<http://www.citylab.com/tech/2012/12/new-highly-detailed-image-north-koreas-lack-electrical-infrastructure/4201/>

Creative Response

Family

Written By

Tonya McMillion

EXT. PRISON PARKING LOT - DAY

A slender DOCTOR gets out of his car and locks it. As he looks around the parking lot he reaches in his pocket and takes out a silver cigarette case. He pulls out a cigarette, lights it and starts walking towards the hospital. He notices a police car is outside the hospital's emergency doors.

INT. PRISON HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A young Korean WOMAN moans because of her contractions. She's in the throes of labor. There are NURSES surrounding her and they all speak English. The Korean woman, SUN, only speaks Korean.

INT. PRISON HOSPITAL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The doctor walks into the lobby and removes his hat.

DOCTOR

Good morning Emma, why are the coppers outside?

EMMA

They brought in another one of the shelter women. By the time she got here the baby was nearly out.

DOCTOR

Well, I don't have any appointments until this afternoon.

EMMA

Good because the lady is in birthing room five.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The doctor walks into his office. He takes off his jacket and puts on his medical coat. He walks into room five and sees the nurses and his patient.

INT. SUN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DOCTOR

Nurse, who is this?

NURSE

We don't know. The police dropped her off. Apparently they found her

behind one of the shelters trying
to pull the baby out herself. She
(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D) walked
in already in labor. She
doesn't speak English so we
can't talk to her.

DOCTOR
She smells like shit.

ALL NURSES
The cops said she defecated when
they picked her up and started
throwing it at the them.

Sun starts screaming as the baby's crown appears.

INT. SUN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Sun holds her young daughter when a FAT NURSE and the
doctor walk into the room. The doctor starts to stitch Sun
up.

FAT NURSE
Doctor, do you think it's wise to
separate a mother and child this
early?

DOCTOR
Nurse, this woman isn't fit to
raise a child. The police said
she's homeless and the father can't
be found anywhere. She doesn't
speak English and we don't have the
type of facilities to take care of
them both.

As the fat nurse and doctor talk Sun takes a scalpel from
the doctor's tray and slides it underneath her pillow.
When the doctor finishes stitching he walks out of the
room. He turns back toward the nurse.

DOCTOR
Get that baby from her, the
midwives will know what to do with
her.

The nurse gives the doctor a pained look. She turns to Sun.

NURSE

I know you don't understand me, but
I need to take your baby. It'll be
better for you... for the baby.

The nurse picks up Sun's baby and walks out of the room. Sun starts wailing. She senses something isn't right, but she can't understand anything. She takes the scalpel from under her pillow. She places it next to her wrist. She starts to carve the Chinese symbol for daughter just as she finishes the Fat Nurse enters the room with Sun's baby. Sun stops sobbing abruptly.

FAT NURSE

I'm taking a terrible risk here
honey, but I thought you should see
your daughter one more time. I
know you don't understand me. I
just...

The nurse hands Sun her baby and tears start to fall from Sun's eyes. The nurse leaves the room.

INT. SUN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

The fat nurse walks in with a camera.

NURSE

What if I take a picture for you?
Do you think that will help?

Sun doesn't understand the nurse, but she recognizes the camera. She cradles her baby in her arms. Underneath the baby's legs you can see the freshly carved tattoo on Sun's forearm. The fat nurse takes the picture, sets the camera down and takes the baby from Sun for the last time. Sun screams.

INT. VICTORIA STATION, LONDON - PRESENT DAY

REEN, an average looking Asian woman in her mid-twenties, walks into Victoria station. She gets on a Heathrow airport bound train. Several PEOPLE are sitting down in their seats. BRIGID, a plump Irish woman, sits down next to Reen.

BRIGID

Excuse me honey is this seat taken?

REEN

No, you're fine

BRIGID

My name's Brigid.

Reen shakes the woman's hand.

REEN

I'm Reen, it's nice to meet you.

BRIGID

Ah, you're American what are you
(MORE)

BRIGID (CONT'D)

doing so far away from home?

REEN

I was looking for my mom

Brigid smiles.

BRIGID

You lost her did you?

REEN

Not exactly I was adopted a long
time ago. I've always thought
about my biological mother. I was
here to try and find her.

Reen shows Brigid a picture of her as a baby with her
mother.

BRIGID

Where did you get that picture?

REEN

My adopted parents said when they
picked me up there was an old nurse
holding me. The nurse told them
that she wasn't sure where my
mother went to, but that she wanted
me to have this picture so I would
never...

Reen starts to silently cry.

REEN (CONT'D)

Forget her.

BRIGID

Did you find her?

REEN

No, I've been in London for a month and I haven't been able to get any information from the hospital. I'm leaving today -- for home.

Brigid pats Reen's arm and hands her a tissue. The TRAIN CONDUCTOR stops at their seat.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR Excuse me, excuse me, due to mechanical problems this train will now leave at 5 P-M. If you are catching a flight please head to

(MORE)

TRAIN CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
the ticket window to exchange your ticket

BRIGID

What are you going to do?

Reen shrugs.

REEN

I don't know, maybe check out the stores. I don't have to be at the airport until 6.

Reen walks past Brigid. The woman grabs her arm and stops her. They look at each other. Reen nods and touches Brigid's shoulder. Brigid lets go of Reen's hand.

INT. BOUTIQUE STORE - DAY

Reen stands at the store counter trying on different types of sunglasses. She spots a MOTHER and DAUGHTER across the store trying on scarves.

MOTHER

Oh, honey that looks so good on you, it brings out the grey in your eyes

DAUGHTER

No it doesn't Mom, I think it looks weird.

The mother and daughter head toward the store counter. Reen takes the picture of her mother out of her purse. She stares at it and slips it back into her purse. She puts the sunglasses back. The mother and daughter approach Reen.

MOTHER

Let's ask her. Excuse ma'am... Yes, what do you think about this scarf on my daughter?

The daughter poses with the scarf. Reen can't answer. She's so filled with jealousy and envy. She jogs out of the store without replying to the women.

INT. VICTORIA STATION KIOSK - DAY

Reen stands in line to get an ice cream cone. After she buys the cone she turns around and a CHINESE WOMAN who resembles the woman in Reen's photo walks by. Reen is startled. She accidentally drops her ice cream on the ELDERLY CHINESE WOMAN standing behind her.

REEN

I am so sorry... I just, I am sorry, I have to, I think I just saw someone I know, I'm really sorry about that.

Reen runs away before the woman can respond. The clock in the train station chimes. It is now 4:30 in the afternoon. Reen has thirty minutes to catch her train. She runs to where she last saw the Chinese woman. Reen can't find her so she decides to take the escalator to the second floor to get a better look.

INT. VICTORIA STATION - UP ESCALATOR - CONTINUOUS

Reen gets on the escalator in the middle of the station. She thinks she'll get a better view from the second floor. When she gets to the top she peers over the side and sees the Chinese woman below. The woman is leaving a store and walking towards the other side of the station. Reen runs to catch the escalator. She's trying to catch the Chinese woman before she leaves the station. Reen knows it would be impossible to catch her if she walks out of the station.

INT. VICTORIA STATION - DOWN ESCALATOR - CONTINUOUS

Reen gets on the escalator and it's packed. She can't move down or get back to the top. She's stuck between a MOTHER, carrying an INFANT, a YOUNG BOY, and a LARGE MAN. Reen strains to see where the Chinese woman went. Suddenly, Reen sees the woman change directions and instead of leaving the building she gets on the opposite escalator. In a few seconds the woman will pass face to face with Reen.

The Chinese woman's escalator is packed. She is also stuck between people, but she is close to the railing. Reen is getting closer and closer to her. Finally, Reen is face to face with the Chinese woman. The woman isn't looking at Reen and Reen abruptly yanks on the woman's arm, lifts up her sleeve and looks at her forearm. The woman turns to look at Reen, for an instance they stare intently into each other's eyes, then the woman quickly draws her arm back.

CHINESE WOMAN

What are you doing?

REEN

I'm sorry, God, I, I, I hoped, I
(MORE)

REEN (CONT'D) mean I
thought you were someone else.

There's no tattoo on the woman's forearm. Reen gets to the bottom of the escalator steps off and walks away.

Reen takes the picture of her mother out of her purse, looks at it one last time and then tosses it in the trash can; the PA announcer announces last call for the 5 o'clock train. She starts to walk to her train.

INT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Reen's sobbing as she gets on the train. She sits next to the window. Tears fall fast down her face into her lap. The train's doors close and it starts to slowly pull out of the station.

INT. VICTORIA STATION TRASH CAN - CONTINUOUS

The elderly woman with an ice cream stain on her shirt looks around and sticks her hand in the trash can and picks

up the picture Reen threw away. As the woman holds the picture up close to her eyes her sleeve rolls down, which reveals the Chinese symbol for daughter on her arm.

FADE TO BLACK.

Study Guides

Study Questions and Prompts for *Escape from Camp 14* by Blaine Harden

Contributed by Kay Mizell

Preparation

1. Are you willing to read this book and learn about the existence of a crime against humanity and be responsible for that knowledge that you gain?
2. What burden did the main character of the story have regarding his knowledge? (13).

Preface

1. What was the teachable moment that Shin witnessed at four and then again at age fourteen? (xii-xiii) .
2. What were the implications of the second event?
3. Shin says he would not admit for fifteen years that he was responsible for the deaths, but why did he think that he was responsible even at age fourteen?(xiv).

Introduction

1. On January 2, 2005, when he was twenty-three years old, Shin “squirmed through an electric fence” to freedom” (1). He comments he changed his name to a South Korean version because he had “to reinvent himself as a free man.” What did that entail?
2. The current ruler of North Korea Kim Jong Eun is approximately the same age as Shin but the author says they “personify the antipodes of privilege and privation” (13). On one account one lives “above the law” and one “lived below the law?” Explain the contrast.
3. A telling sentence, “Love and mercy and family were words without meaning. God did not disappear or die. Shin had never heard of him” (3). Explain the reasoning or implications of this sentence.
4. What are “concentration camp survival” stories? (14), and how was Shin’s different?
5. What are “irredeemables”? (5).
6. What is the estimated number of deaths at the death camps (6).
7. Describe Shin’s inability to look people in the eye (7, 98, 191).
8. What may subsequent generations ask this generation about its apathy? (8, 9).
9. Explain Shin’s trust issues and account for them (10).
10. Why is fact checking impossible regarding Shin’s story? (13).

Chapter 1

1. Shin comments about his mother that he “saw her as competition for survival” (16). Explain his assessment.

2. Explain the concept of “a reward marriage” and the implication for Shin’s parents (17).
3. What was Shin’s relationship to his parents and 9999his feelings toward them? (18). What were “the sins of the mothers and fathers? (18, 27). How was redemption achieved according to the guards? (19).
4. What is “the eating problem,” regarding North Korea (21).
5. Explain the irony concerning the US as the main donor and the most demonized by North Korea (22). What is the “Sunshine Policy”? (23).

Chapter 2

1. What was Shin’s relationship with his first teacher? His second one?
2. Why did Shin think about the beating and killing of a six-year old child for stealing food? (25-26).
3. What view of North Korea and its history was Shin taught? (28-29).

Chapter 3 The Upper Crust

1. Who were the Bowiwons and what did they do to Shin because of their belief in a caste system? (33).
2. Describe the three classes of the caste system, and explain how members move into one class (34-35).
3. Why did the guards teach the prisoners to think of inmates as “dogs and pigs”? (36). Explain the psychology behind the dehumanization of prisoners and relate it to other historical cases.
4. Explain the funneling of currency schemes carried out by North Korean elites (38). By contrast, how does the average elite family live? (41).
5. Explain the hereditary succession of the Kim family (42).

Chapter 4 Mother Tries to Escape

1. Summarize Shin’s first account of his mother’s escape (48-50).
2. Why did Shin hide some things about the real event and in what way was this event in his life a burden he kept inside? (49, 68).
3. Discuss the implications of the question he was afraid people would ask, “Are you even human?” (49). (See essay question).
4. Discuss forgiveness and guilt related to Shin, and the reasons he divulged that he had lied about his mother’s death. (50).

Chapter 5 Mother Tries to Escape Version Two

1. Summarize the second account Shin told of his mother’s escape (51-52).
2. Explain the importance of rice in the North Korean culture (52).
3. Why did Shin feel anger, jealousy, and fear when he heard his brother discuss the plan? (53).
4. How did Shin betray his mother and brother and what was the consequence? (54-55).

Chapter 6 The Son of a B Won’t Do

1. Why had Shin’s family been imprisoned? (57)
2. Describe what happened to Shin in his interrogation and torture (60).
3. How was Shin’s confession confirmed? (61).

Chapter 7 The Sun Shines Even on Mouse Holes

1. Describe Kim Jin Myung’s nursing of Shin (62-63).

2. Besides introducing Shim to kindness, what did “Uncle” do for him long term through his stories? What did Shin feel for him? (64-65).
3. Why had Shin never trusted anyone before and why did he trust “Uncle”? (63).

Chapter 8 Avoiding Mother's Eyes

1. How did Shin know his father Shin Gyung Sub had been tortured in the underground prison? (66).
2. What feelings did Shin have regarding his mother's and brother's execution? (68).

Chapter 9 Reactionary SOB

1. What were the immediate results of his mother's execution for Shin? (69-71).
2. Why did the students bully Shin even more? (71-72).
3. Describe the factors leading to and his self-awareness particularly his loneliness, regret, and self-awareness (73).
4. Why did Shin have such a negative reaction to his father and even to the word? (73-74, 96, 113).
5. Discuss the option of suicide in the prison for others and also for Shin (7-75).
6. Discuss the contrast between those who were born in the camp and those who were not (75).
7. Explain the sentence, “The new teacher did not seem to want Shin to die of malnutrition” (76). Why did Shin think he would have died without his help?

Chapter 10 Working Man

1. At fifteen Shin worked on a hydroelectric dam, where he learned the guards value of life once again. Tell the results of the death of the eight workers (78).
2. Explain the role of propaganda in North Korea's nationalistic image. (80-81).
3. Describe the ways Shin had seen prisoners die in prison and the telling detail he reveals related to finding bodies (81-82).
4. What was the happiest time of Shin's teen years and what did they allow him to regain? (83).

Chapter 11 Napping on the Farm

1. When Shin worked on the pig farm, what was his focus and what did he forego thinking about? (86).
2. Who are the “orphaned sparrows”? (87).
3. Explain the dilemma for the US in its being the largest donor of food for North Korea, but North Korea's insisting on being the sole transporter of it (87).
4. What were the unintended consequences of the donor countries' supplying food? (88).
5. Two-thirds of the children were malnourished and stunted in their growth, according to a 1998 World Food Program survey. Other surveys showed that hunger, stunting, and wasting diseases were three or four times more likely to occur among those in the rural areas than around Pyongyang. Explain the geographic inequity (89). Explain the conditions behind these statistics.
6. What did Shin learn was “missing” when he started partnering with the educated newcomer. (91).

Chapter 12 Sewing and Snitching

1. Describe the hierarchy in the sewing factory among the Bowiwons and the Chongbanjongs (94).
2. What happened to Shin when he dropped a sewing machine? (95).
3. Comment on Shin's avoidance of his eyes after he snitched on Kang Chul Min for stealing a piece of cloth (98)

Chapter 13 Deciding Not to Snitch

1. What did Shin's question to Park, "By the way, where is Pyongyang?" tell Park about Shin? (100)
2. How did Park's month long one-on-one seminar change his life? (100). Mention the concepts of money, food, and a better life.
3. Explain the sentence, "Freedom, in Shin's mind, was just another word for grilled meat." (101)
4. Shin "perhaps made the first decision of his life. He chose not to snitch" (101). This choice showed his new way to survive rather than a new ethical system. Explain the difference (102).
5. Explain the sentence, "Trust was a good way to get shot" (102).
6. Why did Park Yong Chul go back to North Korea and why was he imprisoned? (103).
7. Describe the government's control of lice and Shin's subsequent decision to escape (106).
8. How and why did Shin shift his lifelong from "wariness and betrayal" and how he connected to people? (106).
9. By comparing the Nazi concentration camps and Shin's imprisonment, the author captures Shin's sense of being in a kind of Skinner's box (107), an abhorrent cage (108). Why does he suddenly feel this way?

Chapter 14 Preparing to Run

1. Discuss Shin's trust issue that he has to overcome regarding Park (109).
2. Why does Shin now start feeling fear, not guilt, when he thinks of his mother's death and his own plan to escape? (111)
3. Despite absurd, odd, and poor calculations, Shin considered he had a 90% chance of escaping. Why was he so confident?

Chapter 15 The Fence

1. In what way was life in the camp like that of a cow? ((116).
2. The narrator attributes Shin's escape to "luck." Discuss this account. (118, 121).
3. Why did Shin have no direction once he was free (121). What happened to Park?

Chapter 16 Stealing

1. Why are uniforms prevalent in North Korea? (120)
2. Describe Shin's shock during his first few days outside the camp (123).
3. Describe Camp 14, according to the summary on page 123, and why Shin felt free no matter the terrible status of North Korea compared to other countries.
4. Describe the "wanderers" in North Korea and the economic conditions that produced these numbers (124-125).

5. What factors affect the permeability of the border between North and South Korea? (126). What is true about the number of defectors over the last twenty years?
6. What is the range of costs that defectors pay and the range of the time it takes to get processed? (126-27).
7. How did the “slipstream of smuggling, trading, and petty bribery” help Shin in his escape? (128).

Chapter 17 Riding North

1. Why did the North Korean government fear “insurgent capitalism”? (132).
2. Because political camps, what kind of labor camps did the government build and for what purpose? (132).
3. Describe Shin’s “decompression” in which he learned what normal behavior outside the camp was. (134) How did he get in trouble because of his lack of understanding?
4. Describe the American deserter’s story, his wife, and the end of his strange adventures (136-137).
5. What did Shin steal after his train ride that made him consider China possible again? (139).

Chapter 18 The Border

1. Describe “the window” that allowed Shin to cross the border (142, 144).
2. How did a porous border change lives? (143).
3. What did Shin wonder when he looked back after crossing the border? (145).

Chapter 19 China

1. What allowed Shin to move out of his lifetime of slavery after he was in China? (148).
2. What did Shin receive in exchange for his cheap labor more than monetary gain? (149).
3. What was true about the border or shadow lands inside China regarding the language and ethnicity of the inhabitants? (149). What percentage were ethnic North Koreans? What cultural change did they bring about in North Korea as a result of their living in China? (150).
4. Describe the conflict between international law related to people being allowed to leave their country and the strategic interests of North Korea and China (151).
5. Explain the three reasons China does not want North Korean defectors coming into its borders (151) .

Chapter 20 Asylum

1. Even though Shin had food and a radio at the pig farm, after ten months he decided to leave. What had a great effect on that decision and why did he feel this way? (155).
2. Why did Shin switch from stealing to begging when he arrived in China? (158, 160).
3. What did the journalist offer him? (159).
4. What did Shin do in the Seoul consulate? (161).
5. Explain the contrast between what Shin told the interrogators in South Korea and what other defectors told them? (161).

Chapter 21 K'uredit K'Adus

1. What benefits did Shin receive in South Korea? What adjustment problems did he experience? (162-163).
2. Why did he have to be retaught history? (163).
3. Describe the paranoia for North Koreans during and after captivity (164).
4. What was their cognitive condition when they arrived in South Korea? (165).
5. Harden says, "In addition to being paranoid, confused, and intermittently technophobic, defectors tend to suffer from preventable diseases and conditions" (165). Why did they have these diseases?
6. Describe the "debt anxiety" and the post-traumatic stress disorder that the defectors experienced in South Korean (166).
7. Characterize most defectors (167),
8. What evidence did the investigators in South Korean have to support the claim that Shin's story was true? (168).
9. Explain Shin's self-awareness in his inability to change yet his realization that he was blocking his own adjustment (169).

Chapter 22 South Koreans Are Not So Interested

1. How do you account for South Koreans lack of interest, ("their collective yawn,) in the plight of most North Koreans? (171-172).
2. Why are the South Koreans more interested in the "preserving peace and protecting their living standards" than in addressing the great needs of the North? (172).
4. Discuss South Korea's position on reunification and the rationale (172).
5. What is the "pursuit of the right spec" and why is it so strong in South Korea? 174-175).
6. Discuss the suicide rate and why it is so high in South Korea (172).
7. What became Shin's mission in life? What was his fear but his hope in the US's efforts to prevent it? (177).

Chapter 23 U.S.A.

1. Describe Shin's nightmares (179).
2. Why did Shin feel "a dead space" inside him and how did he describe it? 179-180. Why does he see happiness as selfish? (180).
3. Shin tried to love, laugh, and cry, but he often "had trouble distinguishing between constructive criticism and personal betrayal" (180). Explain this phenomenon.
4. Why did the narrator say that Shin had never been brainwashed? (182).
5. What did the Christian family teach Shin? (182-183).
6. Explain why Shin continues to have guilt and self-loathing as he learns about other families in contrast to the kind of son he was (183).
7. Why was Shin unable to commit to anything? (184).

Epilogue No Escape

1. How does the Epilogue's discussion of "harnessing self-loathing," and "seizing control of the past" relate to Shin's humanization process? (192-193).

Essay Questions

1. Blaine Harden refers to Shin's "luck" on a number of occasions. Discuss these events that came together in what calls "luck," and explain them in that term or in other ways, such as how Shin attributes them to God after he begins to learn about Him (142, 144, 149, 183).
2. Explain Shin's relationship to his father and how the way he thinks of him changes over time.
3. Analyze the effect of Shin's mother's and brother's deaths on him at first, over time, and then finally and account for the shifts.
4. Shin's story concerns his lack of trust. Account for this problem and give the rationale. Did he learn to trust?
5. Shin experienced loneliness more after his escape. Analyze his explanation of this phenomenon.
6. Explain the incidence of suicide inside the camp in North Korea and that outside in the country of South Korea.
7. Contrast North and South Korea in general and their policies toward each other (174-176).
8. Although the story is about Shin, the reader learns about the narrator by what he includes, some of his comments, and his accounting for Shin's successes and difficulties. Discuss the narrator and his telling of the story (throughout, 177).
9. Shin described his transformation by saying, "I am evolving from being an animal, but it is going very slowly" (181). Discuss this self-awareness, possibly mentioning the concepts of "contaminated identity," the PTSD with "profound alternations in their relations with God, with other people, and with themselves," or a comment Andy Kim, a Korean American, made, "He is kind of here and kind of there (181)
10. What does it mean to be human? (192). How does Shin move toward this transformation over time?

Study Guide for *Escape from Camp 14*

Contributed by Professor Joan Kennedy

Close Reading:

1. How does the Preface set the stage for the rest of the book? What events does it describe? What is Shin's attitude toward the events?
2. How do Kim Jong Eun and Shin Dong-hyuk "personify the antipodes of privilege and privation in North Korea"? (2 Compare their lives in this nominally classless society. What is the central irony of the "classless society" ideal? in Camp 14? (2)
4. Explain the conventional narrative of concentration camp survival. How does this contrast with Shin's family life? What mechanism does Shin use to survive? (3-4)
5. Describe the daily life in a North Korean political prison camp. (5-6)
6. How does the Kim family preserve totalitarian repression in North Korea? (7-8)
7. In what way can North Korea refute, contradict, or invalidate the testimony of Shin and other camp survivors about the harsh treatment of prisoners? (11)
8. Analyze the ethos of Blaine Harden as a reporter and of Shin Dong-hyuk as a camp survivor. What is your assessment of the credibility of Shin's story and the credibility of Harden's journalistic reporting? (7-12)
9. Why do you suppose that knowledge of the harsh labor camps in North Korea has not gained widespread attention and concern? (12-13)
10. Describe the marriage process in a North Korean labor camp. What are the implications of this? (4-15)
11. What was Shin's concept of "family life" based on his experience in the labor camp? (Ch. 1)
12. What did Shin and other young boys do to ease their hunger? (20-23)
13. What type of education did Shin receive in the camp? (Ch. 2)
14. Discuss the Ten Laws of Camp 14. What are the implications of these laws for political prisoners like Shin? (193-196)
15. Describe the caste system that the "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung created in North Korea in 1957. What is ironic about Korea calling itself "The Workers' Paradise" and professing allegiance to Communistic Marxist ideals of equality? (34-35)
16. What types of criminal enterprise do the North Korean elite pursue? (38)

17. What are the living conditions for the North Korean dictators, the Kim family dynasty? Kim Jong Il? (41-42)
18. What is the history of the Kim dynasty in North Korea, which began in 1945? (42-43)
19. What was the “unforgivable crime” that Shin’s father had committed to explain why his family had been sent to Camp 14? (55)
20. Discuss the two versions of Shin’s story about his mother’s and brother’s attempt to escape. Why do you think that Shin chose to follow a rule of Camp 14? (ch. 4-5)
21. What do you think is the most dehumanizing event in Shin’s life? Discuss the circumstances in Camp 14 that engendered his actions and perspective. (ch. 8)
22. Discuss the Communist Party’s attitude toward suicide in the prison camp. Why was suicide for Shin “just a passing thought”? (72-73).
23. What were the survival skills that Shin developed? (73)
24. What role has China and Russia played in sustaining the fledgling economy of North Korea? (76-79)
25. Describe the conditions of the period of famine and flood in North Korea in the 1990’s. What was the result of food aid sent by the U.S. and other countries? (84-89)
26. What role did private markets play in alleviating hunger? What was the Communist government’s attitude toward market reform? (87-89)
27. How does Shin slowly begin to gain knowledge about the world outside Camp 14? (ch.7)
28. “Freedom in Shin’s mind was just another word for grilled meat” (99). Explain this perspective. What events shaped it?
29. Discuss the tactics that Shin pursued in order to survive the harsh circumstances of his Communist labor camp. (100)
30. What effect did the friendship with Park Yong Chul have on Shin? (Ch. 13)
31. Explain how Koreans living in NE China have been an “unsung force for cultural change inside North Korea” (148).
32. In the past half century, how have the governments of North Korea and China prevented a flood of North Korean refugees from crossing the border? (148-149)
33. How have the governments of North Korea and China trumped international law on emigration? (149)

34. For the Chinese government, why is an uncontrolled surge of impoverished Korean refugees undesirable? (149)
35. Discuss the effect of Shin's "electric dream-making machine" (151-152).
36. Explain the purpose of Hanawon (House of Unity). (160-161)
37. Discuss the psychological symptom of paranoia and how it manifests itself for North Korean defectors. (162-163)
38. Explain South Korea's attitude toward reunification with North Korea. (171)
39. Reflect on the "dead space" that Shin experiences inside himself. What are the implication of his psychological struggle? How is he still a prisoner? (177-178)
40. Explain the term "Contaminated Identity" coined by Harvard psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman. (179) What are the psychological consequences of political terror for survivors like Shin? (180)
41. How does the Liberty in North Korea (LINK) organization help North Korean refugees? (182)
42. Explain how in his confessional speech before the Korean-American Pentecostal Church that Shin "had seized control of his past" (189-191).

Reflection on the Text:

- I. Should outside forces intervene to put an end to the harsh mistreatment of humans in dictatorships like North Korea? If not, why? If so, why and who should intervene?
- II. Discuss how Shin Dong-Hyuk represents the durability of the human spirit and its ability to survive the harshest conditions.
- III. Explain why Shin did not learn the concept of love while growing up in the labor camp. What are the implications for him?
- IV. Discuss the "dehumanization" process that occurs for prisoners like Shin in the labor camps.

Facts:

Six labor camps exist in North Korea containing approximately 150,000-200,000 prisoners.

Camp 14 holds an estimated 15,000 prisoners and is about 30 miles long and 15 miles wide.

Study Guide Questions for *Escape from Camp 14*

Contributed by Professor Marta Moore

Crimes against Humanity

1. Why does Blaine Harden decide to write and publish *Escape from Camp 14*?
2. Harden spent nearly three decades covering failed states in Africa, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the “slow-motion rot in Burma under generals” (7). How has political implosion become his specialty?
3. Discuss Shin’s unprecedented journey. How does he set out to remake himself as a moral human being after realizing that he had been raised as something less than human?
4. What was the purpose of executions in Camp 14?
5. How did the labor camp use a public killing – and the fear it generated – as a teachable moment?
6. Suzanne Scholte, Seoul Peace Prize Laureate and Chairman of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, commented: *Escape from Camp 14* is both a shocking expose of North Korea’s political prison camps as well as a testament to the human spirit’s ability to dream and hope even in the darkest of hell.” Based on Scholte’s comment, try to define to what genre (or genres) does Harden’s work belong.
7. How does Harden’s book shine a light on an undiscussed issue, an issue on which the West may one day be called into account for its inactivity?
8. How is Shin’s breakout and flight both an action story and a human story?
9. How did Shin’s guards in the camp function as his teachers – and his breeders? (xii).

Historical Context

10. In North Korea, every school boy or girl learns; “Americans are ‘bastards’ scheming to invade and humiliate the homeland. South Korea is the ‘bitch’ of its American master. North Korea is a great country whose brave and brilliant leaders are the envy of the world” (xiii). What did you learn in school about North Korea?
11. Why was Kim Jong Il called the Dear Leader?
12. Who founded North Korea?
13. Research why Kim Il Sung, the great Leader, remains the country’s Eternal President, despite his death in 1994.
14. How did the wife of Kim Jong Eun become a state-approved showpiece? (44).

Family and Career

15. Why did Shin inform on his mother?
16. Did Shin ever fantasize about life on the outside?
17. Was Shin important enough for brainwashing?
18. How was Shin taught to inform on his family and his classmates?
19. Why was Shin angry with his mother and brother for planning to escape?
20. Why did Shin decide to change his name after arriving in South Korea? (1).
21. Stunted by malnutrition, Shin is short and slight. “His arms are bowed from childhood labor. His lower back and buttocks are scarred with burns from the torturer’s fire” (2). How is his body a road map of the hardships of growing up in a labor camp?
22. Why does the North Korean government insist that labor camps are non-existent in North Korea?

23. Shin is roughly the same age as Kim Jong Eun, the chubby third son of Kim Jong Il who took over as leader after his father's death in 2011. How do Shin and Kim personify the antipodes of privilege and privation in North Korea, a nominally classless society?
24. How is it possible that Kim Jong Eun lives above the law?
25. How do breeding and bloodlines decide one's fate in North Korea?
26. What was Shin's state-prescribed career trajectory?
27. Was he responsible for the "crimes" of his father's brothers?

Literature of Atrocity

28. Discuss the "literature of atrocity."
29. Could you name some stories of concentration camp survival?
30. Like Nazi concentration camps, labor camps in North Korea use confinement, hunger and fear to create a kind of Skinner box, a closed, regulated chamber in which guards absolutely control over prisoners. How does Camp 14 differ from Auschwitz? (107).
31. Compare and contrast Shin's perspective with the thirteen-year-old narrator's torment in Elie Wiesel's *Night*. How do Nazi death camps differ from Camp 14?
32. Compare and contrast Nazi concentration camps with the camps in North Korea.
33. Was Shin torn away from a civilized existence and forced to descend into hell in Camp 14?
34. Did Shin have a concept of love, god and family?
35. Why did Shin view his mother as a competitor for food?
36. How did Shin learn to survive by snitching on his relatives?
37. How is it possible that North Korea's labor camps have now existed twice as long as the Soviet Gulag and about twelve times longer than the Nazi concentration camps? (4).
38. How does the Korean Bar Association in Seoul paint a picture of daily life in the camps? (5).
39. Is guilt by association legal in North Korea?
40. Why did Shin blame his mother for his torture in the camp?
41. Why did the concept of forgiveness confuse Shin?
42. How did Shin's story shatter the conventions of reporting from North Korea?
43. How did Lowell and Linda Dye become the parents Shin never had?
44. "Crisis management, usually focused on nuclear weapons and missiles, has dominated American dealings with the North" (12). What happens when North Korea deigns to enter into international diplomacy?

Marriage and Breeding

45. In the camp single men and women slept in dormitories segregated by sex. How did reward marriage become the only safe way around the no sex rule?
46. How did Shin's parents get married? (17)
47. Was Shin able to associate warmth, security, and affection with the words "mother," "father," and "brother"?
48. How could children wash away the 'sins' of their parents?
49. Why did Shin have to go with his mother to an "ideological struggle" meeting, a compulsory gathering for self-criticism? (20).
50. How did catching and roasting rats become a passion for Shin?
51. Why were the masses told to make toibee, a fertilizer in which ash is mixed with human excrement?

School: Crime, and Punishment

52. Compare and contrast Shin's description of his elementary school to your experience.
53. How did collective punishment at school turn classmates against each other? (30).
54. How did Kim Il Sung create a neo-feudal, blood-based pecking order in 1957? (34).
55. How does the core of the core live in North Korea? (37).
56. Why are the privileges of blood uniquely rich in the Kim family? (42).
57. Explain Shin's statement: "I was more faithful to guards than to my family. We were each other's spies" (49).
58. Discuss the importance of rice in North Korean culture (52).
59. Shin had followed camp rules and stopped the escape of his mother and brother. He was an informant. Why was he being interrogated as an accomplice? (56).
60. What was Shin's first exposure to sustained kindness? (63).
61. The shame Shin feels about the executions of his mother and brother has been compounded over the years by the lies he began telling in South Korea. Why did Shin misrepresent his past? (68).
62. How is suicide punished in North Korea? (74).
63. When guards announced a new "rally of endeavor" to build a hydroelectric dam, Shin with thousands of other prisoners marched from factories to makeshift dormitories erected near the bank of the Taedong. How did labor on the dam affect prisoners? (81).
64. Discuss Shin's permanent job at Camp 14's pig farm. (85).
65. Who was the newcomer, schooled in Europe and China, who told Shin about what he was missing? (91).
66. Why did a foreman hack Shin's middle finger off with a kitchen knife? (95).
67. How and why did Shin decide not to snitch? (99).

Escape and Freedom

68. How was Shin able to crawl through the electric fence? (118).
69. Why were conditions for escape relatively good in January 2005? (126).
70. How did Shin steal a uniform after he crawled through the fence? Why did he steal a ten-pound bag of rice?
71. How did activist pastors from South Korean churches invent the escape trade? (127).
72. How did Shin cross over to China? (141).
73. What was Shin's first experience in China? (147).
74. Why is the uncontrollable surge of Korean refugees undesirable for the Chinese Government? (151).
75. How did Shin stumble on a Shanghai-based correspondent for a major South Korean media company? (159).
76. Are South Korean voters concerned about North Korea? (172).
77. How did Shin decide to become a human rights activist in South Korea? (177).
78. What happened after Shin arrived in California? (181).
79. What is LINK's Nomad program? (186).
80. How and why did Shin allow Harden to move around the darkest corners of his past? (189).
81. What was the major focus of Shin's speech at the Korean American Pentecostal Church in Seattle? (191).

Political Questions for *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*

Contributed by Professor Debra St. John

Define Terms:

asylum	Korean Workers' Party	political ideology	a White Paper
capitalism	international law	political prisoner	
communism	labor camps	propaganda	
caste system	malnutrition	reward marriage	
defectors	neo-feudal system	totalitarian state	
Democratic Republic of Korea	North Korean famine	United Nation	
human rights	pecking order	upper crust	

Background

What were the causes the Korean War? Why did the United States support southern Korea? What were the political, geographic results of the war?

Who was Kim Il Sung? What is Kim Il Sung-ism? What is the *Chuch'e* ideology?

Trace the leadership succession from Kim Il Sung to present.

Who controls mass organization and the media in North Korea?

What shapes North Korea's foreign policy? Why is reunification with South Korea difficult?

What are the foreign policy relationships with the former Soviet Union? China? Japan? And the United States?

Appendix

Read the appendix and become familiar with the Ten Laws of Camp 14 requiring memorization in the camp's school and the punishments associated with each of these rules.

Maps, Preface and Introduction

1. What is the capital of North Korea? What river runs through Camp 14? What are the estimated miles travelled by Shin in his escape from Camp 14 to China? What sea borders North Korea on the eastern side of the peninsula? What is the capital of South Korea?

2. What was considered and “teachable moment” in the labor camp? Who was considered “Dear Leader?”
3. What did Shin do in January 2, 2005? How many others are known to have accomplished his act? What is LiNK?
4. Describe the consequences of malnutrition on Shin’s body.
5. South Korea estimates that there are how many prisoners in camps in North Korea? How are camps 15 and 18 used? Who occupy the “complete control district” camps
6. Who are the *Bowibu*? What is the judicial process for those arrested? How many generations are required to eliminate the “Enemies of class” seed? Shin’s story has been vetted by _____ report provided by David Haw, a human rights specialist as well as by the Korean Bar Association who authored “_____” in 2008 developed through extensive interviews.

Chapter 1-5

7. Describe the “model village” living condition in which Shin lived.
8. What was a reward marriage? Why were they granted?
9. The wide spread “eating problem” in North Korea impacts the military in what way? Who is the largest international food aid donor to North Korea?
10. What is subsection three of Camp 14’s third rule?
11. What academic skills were taught in the camp schools? Describe the school dormitory.
12. Identify the three classes in the stratified caste system created by Kim Il Sung.
13. List some of the criminal enterprises in which North Koreans are involved. Where is the hard currency funnelled?
14. According to political scientist Andrei Lankove, the average per capita income in South Korea is how much greater than North Korea? List three countries mentioned in chapter three with higher per capita incomes than North Korea.
15. After Kim Jong Il’s death who was hailed as the “supreme leader” of the party, the “Young General” and is considered a “genius of literary arts?”
16. In 2012, the United Nations estimated what part of the population was malnourished? What remained open? What did the state’s official news agency label defectors?
17. According to chapter four, why did Shin first deny knowledge of his mother’s escape attempt? Why did he turn informant in his mother and brother attempted escape according to chapter five?

Chapters 6-10

18. In chapter six, the family rap sheet indicated Shin’s uncle was guilty of what offenses? What were the crimes of this father? What did the guards do to Shin seeking a confession?

19. In chapter eight, Shin and his father sign a nondisclosure from which stipulated what? What was Shin and his father forced to observe? What was Shins response?
20. Because the urge to commit suicide was “overwhelming” and common in the camp, how did the Party see suicides and what was done to surviving family members according to chapter 9?
21. Chapter ten discusses the manner in which the government enlisted masses in propaganda slogans. Give two examples.

Chapters 11-15

22. Explain what happened as a result of the mid-1990s famine and floods. What did the nutrition survey of children conducted by the World Food Program find? What was revealed by a 2008 food survey? The International nutrition survey found what patterns in remote areas of North Korea?
23. Although, private farming on small plots was legalized in 2002, how did Kim Jon Ill regard such increase in production? What did he believe capitalism caused?
24. In chapter thirteen, explain who Hwang Jang Yop was and why Kim Jong Il was seeking to arrest Hwang who had been a principal architect of North Korea’s ideology?
25. Explain elections in North Korea?

Chapters 16-20

26. Chapter sixteen suggested the people wandering around in North Korea were who? Why were they on the road? What percentage of the men and women had died according to family members? What percent had been arrested? To get out of North Korea what percentage of individuals had bribed officials or bought help from professional smugglers?
27. A minister in Seoul, Chun Ki-won stated that from 2000-2008, he had helped how many people how many people cross from North Korea into China?

Chapters 17-23

28. The “Economic Crime and Punishment in North Korea” report based on more than sixteen hundred refugees interviewed in China and South Korea between 200-2008 disclosed that what new “twist” on labor camps was invented by North Korean security forces?
29. In chapter seventeen, Shin boarded a box car to where? For what was this city known?
30. In chapter eighteen, the author states that the North Korean government had been forced to tolerate a porous border with China. Why? What changed in people’s lives because of the porous border?
31. The largest single mass defection from North Korea occurred in what year? How many North Koreans were flown from Vietnam to Seoul? The U.S. Congress passed a law at this same time which allowed for what? What was North Korea’s response to the United States actions?

32. In chapter nineteen, what does the text say regarding Chinese borderlands and North Koreans? How does China defy its obligation as a signatory to a 1951 international refugee convention? What are the reasons for the Chinese government's view that uncontrolled surge of impoverished Korean refugees as undesirable?
33. Chapter twenty discusses Shin's listening to daily broadcast into North Korea and northeast China. Sponsored by the United States, South Korea and Japan, a mix of world news address what issues regarding North Korea and with what tone? What is the penalty for listening to these stations in North Korea?
34. What had the Beijing government been attempting to do since 2002 in regard to the embassies and consulates?
35. According to chapter twenty-one, what conditions do defectors suffer from?
36. In chapter twenty-two, it is noted that when it comes to making money what can be said about North Korea and South Korea?
37. Why are South Koreans hesitant to unify with North Korea? What was the South Korean government's attitude toward North Korea? How did South Korea's attitude change under President Lee?
38. Harvard Psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman refers to concentration camp survivors' behavior as what? What do these survivors suffer from?
39. The U.S. immigration law grants what in regard to North Koreans?

Afterwards

40. What does Shin do currently?

Discussion and Assignment Ideas

Discussion Considerations for *Escape from Camp 14*

Contributed by Professor Gloria Cockerrell

I. As you read *Escape from Camp 14*, you saw Shin make numerous decisions, ranging from day-to-day actions, to planning for his future. You are given insights into the culture in which Shin lives and into Shin's individual character.

Keeping in mind what you know of Shin and the three primary cultures in which he lives as time goes by, address three elements: **(These questions may be used together, or they may be separated to go along with the introductory statement and used as three completely different topics.)**

A. What seem to be the main types of details that Shin considers when making his decisions? What makes you think as you do? Use details from the book to support your assertions.

B. How do Shin's decisions parallel the way that you think you would make decisions in the same circumstances? In what ways do they differ? The question here is not whether you would make the same decisions; it is if you would make decision in the same manner. Why do you think as you do? Support your assertions with details from the book and from facts about your own culture and life.

C. When you read Chin's story, do you think that the influence of culture is stronger on him, or do you think that his individual personality pressures him more? Why do you think as you do? Use details from the book to support your assertions.

II. **The questions below may be used together, or they may be separated to go along with the introductory statement and used as three completely different topics.**

You live in a world in which people of all generations use technology to communicate with other persons and with businesses, and to stay abreast of what is happening in their own societies and in all others. In what ways do you think Shin's life would have been different if he and his acquaintances had been given access to communication technology

A. to change the perceptions of Shin and his acquaintances about what is important in everyday life?

B. to change Shin's perception of how elements of the world work as they influence and are influenced by one another—politics, religions, reward systems, allegiances to family members, and such?

C. to give Shin a concept of how differently the world outside Camp 14 functions?

Conversation Starters

Contributed by Professor Marta Moore

The Genre of *Escape from Camp 14*

1. *Escape from Camp 14* is a biography. Discuss the characteristics of the genre.
2. While telling an interesting story, good biographies explore and reflect on a central theme. What questions does Harden's biography invite you to explore and reflect on?
3. How does Harden's theme influence which details he includes in the biography. How do details, characterization, and narrative structure reflect the overarching theme of *Escape from Camp 14*?
4. What makes Harden's biography unique? What new perspectives and insights does it offer? Does it present a new understanding or revelation that leads to a moment of growth in the writer and you?
5. Biographies use personal stories to comment on larger social issues. How does Harden's action story set in North Korea help you understand the culture and history of the region in different ways than an encyclopedia entry?
6. Tone refers to the attitude the author takes to the subject matter and the reader. Describe the "tone of voice" of Harden's biography.
7. *Escape from Camp 14* is described as a "riveting new biography...a singular perspective on what goes on inside the rogue regime ...a harrowing tale of endurance and courage." Research the genre of biography. How does Harden combine journalism with Shin's personal experience.

Rhetorical Situation

1. Harden's book explores Shin's unprecedented journey after he "realizes that he has been raised as something less than human." How does Shin set out to remake himself as a moral, feeling human being? What is the rhetorical situation of Harden's biography – that is, the topic, angle, purpose, reader, and context?
2. The Greek word ethos means "character" or "credibility" in English. Ethos could also mean the writer's authority or credibility to support an argument. Highlight places in *Escape from Camp 14* where the author is using his credibility to prove a point.
3. Logos involves appealing to someone else's common sense while pathos uses emotions to influence readers. Highlight uses of logos and pathos in the text.
4. What is the organization of the text? Apply the rhetorical concepts of logos, ethos and pathos to each major section you are analysing.
5. Who is Harden's audience? Is it only people from North Korea? Create an extended reader profile of the biography that will give you a more in-depth view of the reader's expectation, values and attitudes. How does Harden use authority, reasoning, and emotion to persuade his audiences?

Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis of the Korean War Memorial

Contributed by Professor Marta Moore

Shin escaped to South Korea where he found food and freedom. However, had it not been for the sacrifices of the Americans who fought in the Korean War (1950-1953), South Korea might not have existed as a place of refuge. To reflect on this, consider the images below of the Korean War Memorial in Washington D.C and the image of the two Koreas at night. Discuss questions these images raise for you. These questions might include:

- What does the memorial say about the value of Shin's freedom?
- Looking backward in time, what does the freedom enjoyed today by South Koreans today say about the sacrifices made sixty years ago? Was freedom for South Koreans worth dying for?
- What is universal about Shin's experience? What was universal about the experience of those honoured by the memorial?
- Do any situations in the world today merit the sacrifice of American lives?



Assignments for GOVT 2305

Contributed by Professor Tiffany Cartwright

The following are assignments that can pair with the sections normally covered in GOVT 2305. They correspond to the themes and concepts that the book, *Escape from Camp 14*, touches on. Since you're the expert for your course, these assignments are made to be flexible with no particular chapters assigned – that's up to you. They can be done in class or as homework assignments, or you can just post them on Blackboard for students to complete for extra credit over the semester.

Governance and the Constitutional Framework

Questions for discussion:

The book, *Escape from Camp 14*, features a glimpse into a very different type of government than what you may be familiar with.

What type of government does North Korea have? What type of government does the U.S. have?

On a basic level, what do you think the purpose of a government should be? Can governments be set up in different ways but still carry out that same purpose just as well?

Assignment:

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has created and maintained a unique reference guide with basic information about every country around the world, called *The World Factbook*. It's used by students, researchers, policymakers, and corporations alike to find out about the governments around the world. Take a look at how this book breaks down the different types of governments chosen by different countries:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2128.html>

After reading about these different government types, answer the following questions:

What is the definition of a dictatorship?

How does that contrast with the definition of a democracy?

Click here to see the more detailed country profile on North Korea, then click on the section for Government to expand:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html>

What type of government does it say North Korea has?

Look at the information about the constitution and three branches of government. If North Korea also has a constitution, how do you suppose it could still be called a dictatorship rather than a democracy?

When was the last time elections were held for the executive branch? Who won? How did he win?

When was the last time elections were held for the legislative branch? Who won? How did they win?

Do you think elections in the U.S. are conducted in a very different manner in comparison to those held in North Korea? Explain.

The Media

Questions for discussion:

In the U.S., we are used to having a free media where journalists can speak their minds, hold whatever political values they choose, and help keep the public informed on what's going on in their government, good or bad. In contrast, the book shows us a glimpse of a very restricted press that cannot report whatever it wants to. It can only report what the government allows it to report.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of having a free press? Is it important to have a free press in a democratic country? Why or why not? If North Korea were to allow a free press, do you think it would have much of an impact on the country? Why or why not?

Assignment:

The book references the Korean Central News Agency, which is the official news outlet for the entire country of North Korea, but it also mentions that people in North Korea buy black market episodes of South Korean soap operas (p. 150) and hear radio broadcasts from Free North Korea Radio, an organization dedicated to the democratization of North Korea. The government has tried to suppress these outside sources by jamming signals, and they have punished those who have been caught with forced labor. Take a look at the website of the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Click on the link at the top of the page for an "Introduction to KCNA" to find out about this agency:
<http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm>

In contrast, take a few minutes to read over this news article from The Guardian explaining the mission and operation of Free North Korea Radio:
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/01/north-korea-media-outside-world>

After reviewing the news article and reading up on the KCNA, answer the following questions:

Who does the KCNA speak for? What are they in charge of?

Click on one of the current news stories for KCNA (found by click on "Home" at the top of the page). Which story did you pick (please provide a link)? Summarize the news story. Do you believe the story is 100% truthful in its reporting of the event? Why or why not?

Who does Free North Korea Radio, and others like it, speak for? What is their mission?

Do you think Free Korea Radio will have or has already had an impact on those living in North Korea? Why or why not?

Imagine for a moment that the U.S. had something similar to the KCNA instead of a free press. Would it be easier or harder to find out about what's going on in government? Why? How do you think your ability to participate in politics would change?

International Relations and Foreign Policy

Questions for discussion:

What are the goals of U.S. foreign policy? Would you include the protection of human right as one of those goals?

What is the history between the U.S., North Korea, and South Korea?

How has U.S. foreign policy toward North Korea changed over the last few decades? Or has it changed at all?

Assignment:

In the book, you may have noticed that one of the overriding themes is the humanitarian crisis in North Korea which has been building for the last sixty years. Because of its restrictive dictator style of government, people are often sent to prison, forced into labor camps, or executed for crimes that we would not normally think of as crimes, like watching soap operas made in another country or protesting against a political decision. The United Nations, an international organization charged with promoting international cooperation, recently released a report on its findings in an investigation of human rights violations. Click here to take a look at the full report from the UN, but please note that the report is very detailed and graphic in its depictions of what it found, not unlike the stories depicted in *Escape from Camp 14*. Please use your own discretion:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/17_02_14_nkorea_unreport.pdf

The UN found what it is calling an abundance of evidence of prison camps, torture, and public executions. Click here to see the UN announcement of its findings and read about the release of the report: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26220304>

After reviewing the report and reading the BBC News report, answer the following questions:

Are the findings in the report in line with what you read in *Escape from Camp 14*?

What about the findings surprised you the most? Why?

What does the UN's Human Rights Council hope to see done as a result of this report? Has that happened yet? Do you think it will happen soon? Why or why not?

What was North Korea's response to the council's findings? Is that the response you would have expected them to have? Why or why not?

Book-in-Common Assignments for the Dignity Initiative

Contributed by Professor Marta Moore

The Collin College Committee against Gender Violence and Oppression is launching the Dignity Initiative in the fall of 2014 to educate the campus community about five specific elements of violence against women and to empower community members to end the oppression of women.

Book-in-Common assignments for the 2014-2015 phases of the Dignity Initiative include the following:

Phase I: Who were the victimizers of Shin's mother and what roles did they play in perpetuating violence against her and against other women?

Phase II: Discuss the connection between the "breeding" function of women in the camp and the objectification of women.

Online Resources

Escape from Camp 14 Resources

Contributed by Professor Charlene Green

The links below provide valuable resources for you to use in teaching our Book-in-Common, *Escape from Camp 14*. There might be some overlapping of discussions and interviews between the various web sites and films, but I am including multiple sources so you can determine which works best for your classes.

Please note the numbers in parenthesis indicate the run time for film segments in the format (HH:mm:ss). When only two numbers are noted, the format is (mm:ss). All films and interviews can be watched online without the need to register or download anything. For additional information, assistance, or copies of the text, please contact Charlene Green at ext. 1558.

60 Minutes – North Korean Prisoner Escaped after 23 Brutal Years – Shin Dong-hyuk – Interview by Anderson Cooper, with commentary by Blaine Harden – Run Time: 13:54 (original air date: December 2, 2012)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/north-korean-prisoner-escaped-after-23-brutal-years/>

60 Minutes Overtime – Becoming Human: Shin's New Life – Excerpts of follow-up interview by Anderson Cooper with Andy Court (producer); features comments by American couple who adopted Shin – Run Time: 5:42 (original air date: December 2, 2012)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/becoming-human-shins-new-life/>

Television Teaser/Preview: *Three Generations of Punishment*

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/preview-three-generations-of-punishment/>

60 Minutes Overtime – Interview Extras:

- The Choice: Take a Beating or Miss a Meal (2:01)
<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-choice-take-a-beating-or-miss-a-meal/>
- Asking Permission to Eat a Rat (1:54)
<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/asking-permission-to-eat-a-rat/>
- Shin Dong-hyuk's Favorite Food Today (0:59)
<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/shin-dong-hyuks-favorite-food-today/>

Google Tech Talks Interview & Film Series

Speaker: Adrian Hong – Date: May 12, 2008

Guest: Shin Dong-hyuk – *Born and Raised in a Concentration Camp* (1:06:45)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms4NlB6xroc>

Frontline Club (London) Interview with Shin Dong-hyuk & Blaine Harden

April 25, 2012 – *Behind the Wall of Secrecy: Escape from Camp 14* (1:27:50)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AvDSzaEW3g>

Amnesty International Interview with Shin Dong-hyuk

Recorded April 2012 by Amnesty International – UK (translated; 3:54)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqZamsQp2rA>

North Korea's Gulags – North Korea Now

<http://www.northkoreanow.org/the-crisis/north-koreas-gulags/>

Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to

Freedom in the West – The Korea Society – Recorded April 12, 2014 (59:28)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_kTEWbOuDQ

Camp 14: Total Control Zone – A documentary film on North Korea's infamous prison camp – Directed by Mark Weiss (1:40:50)

<http://putlocker.is/watch-camp-14-total-control-zone-online-free-putlocker.html>

Collin Library Guide for the 2014-2015 Book in Common

Contributed by Ellen Davis

This year's Book in Common library guide has a broad variety of resources for students. Instead of providing a long list of books and call numbers, it shows students how to create their own searches for articles, streaming media, and books.

<http://collin.libguides.com/BIC-Escape>

Total Control Zone

Contributed by Ryan Fletcher

This 2012 documentary by Mark Wiese has subtitles and is available for free viewing at this link:

<http://putlocker.is/watch-camp-14-total-control-zone-online-free-putlocker.html>

Online reviews of the documentary are also available:

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/camp_14_total_control_zone/

YouTube Videos for Discussion and/or Writing

Contributed by Ryan Fletcher

Hyeonseo Lee: "My Escape from North Korea"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdxPCeWw75k>

Joseph Kim: "The Family I Lost in North Korea. And the Family I Gained"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLeeTVmVrtA>

1. How are these narratives similar/different to Blaine Harden's in *Escape from Camp 14*?
2. What surprised you most about the narratives in the videos?
3. Does gender determine the different experiences in these videos? If so, how?

4. What strategies and techniques did each speaker use in their presentation?
5. Can you think of any other events, whether political, social, or cultural, that relate to these narratives?
6. Please write a 1-page response to these narratives. What did their stories teach you about survival?

***Escape from Camp 14* Teacher's Guide**

Contributed by Lisa Kirby

This guide written by Michael Brock and published by Penguin is available online at

<https://www.teachervision.com/north-korea/literature-guide/75001.html>

New York Times Book Review

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/12/books/escape-from-camp-14-by-blaine-harden.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

***Escape from Camp 14*, by Blaine Harden**

By JANET MASLIN

Published in the New York Times, April 11, 2012

When Blaine Harden wrote his shocking 2008 profile of Shin Dong-hyuk for The Washington Post, Mr. Shin was living in Seoul, South Korea, and already a published author. He had written, "Escape to the Outside World," a 2007 Korean-language account of his horrific upbringing. Mr. Shin was born in a North Korean forced-labor camp and then found his way to freedom. There were some problems with playing back this account verbatim. So Mr. Harden's dramatic front-page article, "North Korean Prison Camp Escapee Tells of Horrors, Worries About Those Left Behind," took care to include a disclaimer: "Shin's story could not be independently verified, but it has been vetted and vouched for by leading human-rights activists and members of defector organizations in Seoul," The Post article said. Unfortunately, the disclaimer turned out to be necessary. As Mr. Harden now acknowledges in "Escape From Camp 14," his blunt, best-selling book about Mr. Shin's life, Mr. Shin had built his own memoir upon a gigantic lie. In his account, Mr. Shin claimed to have been a helpless innocent witness to the execution of his mother and brother when Mr. Shin was only 14. He had indeed been helpless, and he had the torture marks to prove it.

But, as Mr. Harden discovered about a year into the interviewing process for this book, Mr. Shin's original account omitted a crucial detail: He was responsible for the executions. He had snitched to a prison guard about an escape his mother and brother were planning, knowing full well that escape plans were punishable by death. Mr. Shin admitted to Mr. Harden that he had made this trade-off to get more food and an easier job at school. And he said he had done it without regrets. He thought that his mother and brother deserved to die. "In writing this book, I have sometimes struggled to trust him," Mr. Harden writes understandably in "Escape From Camp 14." Mr. Harden tries to fathom a cryptic, troubled and not entirely sympathetic young man whose circumstances lend themselves to exaggeration.

What's more, the new book uses dialogue borrowed from Mr. Shin's disingenuous 2007 version. "Escape From Camp 14" also includes simple line drawings (as Mr. Shin's book had) that give the most traumatic parts of his story — torture, imprisonment, maiming, executions — the look of action comics. The most benign of these pictures carries this caption: "Children in the camps scavenged constantly for food, eating rats, insects and undigested kernels of corn they found in cow dung."

Readers may well be won over by the sharp, declarative, young-adult style of Mr. Harden's adventure writing. They will respond to urgent concern about conditions in North Korean prison camps, which are now visible via satellite photographs. And most misgivings about "Escape From Camp 14" will be outweighed by the power of a fast, brutal read.

This is not a familiar prison camp story; as Mr. Harden points out, Shin Dong-hyuk is not Elie Wiesel. "God did not disappear or die," Mr. Harden writes. "Shin had never heard of him." Mr. Shin did not spend his imprisonment missing love, joy, civilization or comfort, because he had never experienced such things. As the spawn of a "reward marriage" — considered "the ultimate bonus for hard work and reliable snitching" — he had no real family ties.

The book says that he regarded his mother as a rival for food and was right to do so; she once beat him with a hoe for eating her lunch. As a young child, he saw schoolmates maimed or even killed for minor transgressions and he learned to obey the camp's totalitarian rules.

Much of this book's impact comes from its nonstop parade of ghastly details. Mr. Harden writes of how prisoners harvested frozen human excrement — chipped from toilets — to make up for North Korea's shortage of other fertilizer; how eating rats could help stave off pellagra; how a former North Korean Army officer in another camp, despairing, jumped down a coal mine shaft, hoping to die.

But "Shin's misery never skidded into complete hopelessness," Mr. Harden writes in typically plain, forthright style. "He had no hope to lose, no past to mourn, no pride to defend. He did not find it degrading to lick soup off the floor. He was not ashamed to beg a guard for forgiveness. It didn't trouble his conscience to betray a friend for food. These were merely survival skills, not motives for suicide."

Not even the peremptory chopping off of part of Mr. Shin's middle finger — an event that warrants only two paragraphs in Mr. Harden's parade of horrors — was enough to set

Mr. Shin's escape plans in motion. What did it was the arrival of a worldly prisoner who made him realize what he was missing. "He explained that the world was round," the book says of Park Yong Chul, the first person to tell Mr. Shin about a North Korean city called Pyongyang and about what it was like to eat grilled meat. "He fantasized about escaping with Park because he wanted to eat like Park."

The escape provides one of the book's grisliest stories, which is saying a lot. (Hint: "The human body is unpredictable when it comes to conducting electricity.") And Mr. Shin finds himself outside the camp, alone. "Escape from Camp 14" follows his steps to China, then Seoul, then California and Seattle and on again (he now lives in Seoul and Washington), but it becomes less certain with each step forward. Just as Mr. Shin, "a scrawny, incurious and for the most part friendless child whose one source of certainty was the guards' lectures about redemption through snitching," is not a model prisoner, his is not a model redemption.

The book ends on an uncertain note, with Mr. Shin's delivering a slick, carefully prepared speech about his own ordeal and the urgent need to liberate other North Korean prisoners. "In that speech, if not yet in his life, Shin had seized control of his past," Mr. Harden writes cautiously.

But "Escape From Camp 14" offers no easy answers about how Mr. Shin can deal with a newly guilty conscience, a lack of introspection, a checkered work history and the difficult adjustment to post-traumatic life. He had remarkable powers of endurance against the toughest physical torment. Those powers are being tested still.

Christian Science Monitor Book Review

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Books/Book-Reviews/2012/0402/Escape-from-Camp-14>

Escape from Camp 14

By TERRY HONG

Published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, April 2, 2012

Escape from Camp 14 is the most devastating book I have ever read. Perhaps the resilience of youth got me through the aftermath of learning about slavery, the Holocaust, even Iris Chang's now-classic *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust*, the title I previously held as the most horrific testimony of inhumanity. More recently, I cried through 2010 National Demick's *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* I ignorantly questioned the veracity of the torturous conditions in Adam Johnson's recent, deservedly bestselling novel *The Orphan Master's Son*. I paid attention to headlines about North Korea's potential nuclear threats and the succession of Kim Jong Eun to the mythic Kim Dynasty.

But nothing prepared me for the odyssey of North Korean Shin Dong-Hyuk as told by journalist Blaine Harden, former Washington Post bureau chief for East Asia, Eastern

Europe, and Africa. Shin, who changed his name “after arriving in South Korea, an attempt to reinvent himself as a free man,” is the only known North Korean who was born in a prison camp to have escaped and survived.

Shin’s story is vastly different from that of other survivors; as Blaine chillingly reveals, it doesn’t fit “a conventional narrative arc [of survival]” which includes a loving family, a comfortable home, a sense of community governed by moral principles, from which the protagonist is brutally torn. In utter contrast, Shin began his life barely human: his prisoner parents were arbitrarily paired by guards to breed, whatever offspring they produced would become slaves who would work and die in Camp 14, considered “[b]y reputation ... the toughest” of the country’s six known camps.

Shin experienced no familial bonds. His mother was nothing more than competition for food. He barely saw his older brother and father. He described himself “as a predator who had been bred in the camp to inform on family and friends – and feel no remorse.” Preying equalled survival. Only much later would Shin learn the criminal history of his family: “The unforgivable crime Shin’s father had committed was being the brother of two young men who had fled south during [the Korean War]... Shin’s unforgivable crime was being his father’s son.”