**Escape from Camp 14 Reading questions**

**Preface and Intro**

1. Why begin the book with a quote from the Korean Central News Agency (**an epigraph**) and several maps?
2. How does Harden appeal to logos in the introduction? Find at least two examples.
3. How does Harden suggest that this is a story worth reading? Comment on his writing style and the content he chooses to include right at the start of his book.

**Chapter One**

Harden is writing a true story but using techniques of fiction writing.

* How does he use description to establish the **setting**? List 4-5 details he includes so that we can ‘see’ the camp in our mind.
* How does he ‘show’ us Shin as a **character**? What scenes does he show from Shin’s early life? Why does he include these details?

**Chapter Two**

**Tone** refers to the author’s point of view or opinion on the subject. (Think about how tone of voice usually hints at what people are thinking or feeling). What is Harden’s tone as he retells the story of the child killed at school? How does it affect you as a reader? Why is it effective/not effective?

**Chapter Three**

1. How does Harden use **imagery** to ‘show’ Shin’s story? What scenes do we see in this chapter? How does this style of narrative story telling make this different from traditional journalism?
2. Manipulation/Persuasion: How is Kim Jong Eun’s cult of personality developed? How does this propaganda help to keep him in power?

**Chapters Four & Five**

1. **Narrative structure**: Why tell the story twice, in two separate chapters?
2. Why does Harden trust Shin’s story? He goes to lengths to say it’s unverifiable, and yet stands by his book. Do you trust Shin’s story? Does it matter that nonfiction books be totally true?

**Chapters 6, 7, & 8**

1. **Characterization**: Uncle says to Shin “The sun shines even on mouse holes” (63). What does he mean? What connections can you draw to help make sense of this proverb? How does this dialogue help shape Uncle into a ‘character’ in this non-fiction narrative?
2. **Theme**: Shin finally talks about love, in this case his love for Uncle.
   1. How does he begin to feel love? Why is it noteworthy?
   2. How is it contrasted with his interactions with his parents through these chapters?
3. These chapters include several graphic **descriptions** of violence and pain.
   1. What do you notice about how Harden writes these scenes?
   2. Do you think Harden handles these emotional moments well?
   3. Why include these scenes of torture and death?
4. **Conflict**: Shin says “there is nothing in my life to compare with this burden.”(68). Is Shin to blame?

**Chapters 9, 10, & 11**

Harden blends scenes of Shin’s life with discussion of the wider problems in North Korea, including interviews and research he has done to give the context for Shin’s story.

Through his discussion of Shin’s teenage years, including his work experiences, Harden weaves in description of the problems in North Korea, including mental health, economics, and nutrition.  
  
Complete a brief close reading of one extended passage:

* 1. Choose one passage where Harden writes about factual/bigger picture topics in NK
  2. Read it over and consider the style of his writing in this passage.
  3. Make jot notes about WHAT information he provides about this topic.
  4. Make note of HOW he shares this information. Identify **at least three elements of form/style/rhetorical devices** typical of narrative non-fiction.
  5. Offer two or three conclusions as to WHY he writes the passage in this way.

**Chapter 12**

1. How has Shin learned to survive as an adult in the camp? How does Harden show his evolution as the main character of this story?
2. Shin refers to his attendance at the “meeting of ideological struggle, a mandatory session of self-criticism”(98).
   1. Define euphemism
   2. List five other examples of common euphemisms
   3. Why are euphemisms effective as a means of psychological control?

**Chapter 13**

1. Harden writes that “Freedom, in Shin’s mind, was just another word for grilled meat”(101). Explain what he means. How is food used as a motif/pattern throughout the story?

**Chapter 14**

1. How does Harden emphasize the riskiness and improbability of Shin and Park’s escape? Reread this section and analyze Harden’s writing style. Include a few quotes.
2. Why is Shin still disconnected from his father?

**Images**

1. What do the images of Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung reveal about North Korean propaganda? Choose one image and explain why it is effectively persuasive.
2. Harden includes images from a graphic novel version of Shin’s story. How is seeing the cartoon renderings of Shin’s story different from reading the story? How does the form change the content?

**Chapters 15-20**

1. How does Harden use **sensory detail** to heighten the scenes of Shin’s escape? Record three sentences that use specific sensory details (senses: see, smell, taste, touch, hear)
2. Harden quotes one North Korean defector who says “movies were how I started to learn what was going on in the world”(143).
   1. What would watching Hollywood movies and South Korean soap operas (150) allow North Korean people to learn? What expectations would they have? How might they be misled?
   2. Why would Kim Jong Il arrest people for watching them?
   3. Why would South Korea, America, and Japan provide funding for radio broadcasts into North Korea? (153-155)
3. Opinion: What is the biggest contributing factor to Shin’s survival in China and arrival in South Korea? Is it luck? Or some trait he possesses? Why does he make it when so many others have failed? Use evidence to support your answer.

**Chapter 21**

1. Harden quotes a settlement worker who has observed that “everyone who defects has adjustment problems”(162).
   1. List the common problems experienced by defectors. How does South Korea try to help?
   2. What is PTSD? What are the common causes and symptoms? Why does Shin experience PTSD?

**Chapter 22**

1. a. In general, how do South Koreans think about the issue of North Korea?  
   b. Harden uses several metaphors to describe this sentiment. Find, record, and explain two

metaphors he uses.

1. What is the ‘right spec’? (174) What have been the advantages and disadvantages of this mindset?
2. Harden barely mentions Shin at all in this chapter. Why?

**Chapter 23, Epilogue, and Afterword**

1. What is a “contaminated identity”(181)? How does Shin show signs of this?
2. Why does Harden emphasize the scene of Shin speaking at his church? (191-193) How does Harden use these last chapters to create an ‘ending’ for Shin’s story?