

**Alliance  
Theatre**

*institute*



*Study Guide*

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's  
Dramaturgy by Students program  
by:

6th Grade Drama students, DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts  
with: Melissa Word, Teaching Artist  
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Written by Lloyd Suh  
Directed by Eric Ting  
March 11 – March 27, 2022  
Coca-Cola Stage



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*Elementary School: Grades 4-5; Middle School: Grades 6-8; High School: Grades 9-10*

### **English Language Arts**

- ELAGSE4RL3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
- ELAGSE4RL5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.
- ELAGSE5RL2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- ELAGSE5RL3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
- ELAGSE5RL5: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.
- ELAGSE6RL3: Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves towards a resolution.
- ELAGSE7RL3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).
- ELAGSE8RL3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- ELAGSE9-10RL3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

## Social Studies

- SS5H5: Discuss the origins and consequences of the Cold War.
  - b. Explain how the United States sought to stop the spread of communism through the... Korean War.
- SS7G9 Locate selected features in Southern and Eastern Asia.
  - b. Locate on a world and regional political-physical map the countries of China, India, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Vietnam.

## Theatre

- TA.RE.1: Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
- TA.RE.2: Critique various aspects of theatre and other media.
- TA.CN.2: Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
  - 6b. Identify and analyze ways in which theatre influences and reflects the culture of a society.
  - 7c. Utilize multi-disciplinary research skills to obtain cultural and historical information to justify artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play).
  - 8d. Discuss theatre's role in reflecting the culture of a society.
- TAHSFT.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.
  - a. Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process.



*Image Credit: Glen Stubbe Photography*



# EDITORIAL STAFF 에디토리얼 스태프



How has this play been meaningful to you?

**Alissa A.** "What Bina goes through is an unfortunate truth for a lot of children. It's important to discuss this topic."



**Ashley B.** "I think we should ask more questions about the past so we don't make the same mistakes in the future. The play gives us information we can learn from."

**Deanna B.** "I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to study this play. Bina went through so much at such a young age!"



**Raelyn G.** "This play is very heart warming and touching to me because Bina is 10 years old and I'm close to her age, and she experienced things I haven't had to."

**Bailee P.** "This play is relevant to me because I know of people who have had to leave their homes because of tragic circumstances."





# SYNOPSIS

## 개요

*Bina's Six Apples* follows the story of a young girl named Bina Moon, and her journey from Geochang to Busan, South Korea at the beginning of the Korean War. She lives on an apple orchard with her family until the war forces them to migrate south. After becoming separated from her family, Bina must survive in a world of war, loss, hunger, and insanity, trying to save the precious cargo she carries—prized apples from her family's farm. She encounters all kinds of people on her path, some helpful, some war-crazed and manipulative, but all from whom she learns valuable lessons. Will Bina find her family? Will she make it to safety? Can her ten-year-old conscience handle the overwhelming feelings of loneliness, fear, and sadness?



# AUTHOR STUDY

## 저자 연구

We had the opportunity to sit down with the playwright of *Bina's Six Apples*, Lloyd Suh, and ask him about the process of writing this play. We wanted to know how he creates characters, if he gets help from others while he writes, how he came up with the concept, and what he does when he experiences writer's block, among other questions. Read on for his insights. But first a little background information on our playwright.

Lloyd Suh was born in Detroit in 1972, the youngest of two children to parents who immigrated from South Korea. He grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana and has spent the majority of his career in New York City as a freelance playwright, organizer of writer's groups and educator. He enjoys writing about forgotten or never widely known moments in Asian history.

In our interview, Lloyd shared that this story comes from a piece of family lore passed down from his dad, who was a little younger than Bina at the time of the Korean War. We learned that his creative process often leads him to write 20 pages at a time and then take long breaks. However, for this play, he wrote the first draft in two days because he already knew the material so deeply. It was very emotional for him to write the script. When asked which characters he relates to the most, he said he relates to all of them in some way, but mostly Bina and the Father. He relates to the Father because of the similar lessons and sentiments he's tried to impart to his own children and to Bina because she experiences growth and expansion that he remembers feeling as a child.

Lloyd has very helpful advice for getting past writer's block. He suggests thinking less about the writing and "more about something going on personally that's stopping [you]." He says that the best thing to do is just write anything. You can write gibberish as a way of checking in and naming the thing that's blocking you. Even if you write a bunch of nonsense, you can see what there is to learn from it.



*"Bina's Six Apples is rooted in family lore. It is inspired by my parents, in what they experienced as children during the Korean War, but it is equally inspired by my kids - not just in the remarkable differences in how they're growing up, but in the similarities, too. My greatest ambition for the play is that it speaks to both generations: their emotions, their imaginations, their sense of discovery and journey towards empathy. The play was written for young audiences, of course - but also for their parents and grandparents."*

-Lloyd Suh



*Clockwise from Left: DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts Students, Playwright Lloyd Suh, and Alliance Theatre Teaching Artist Melissa Word*



Our story takes place in Korea, August 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War.

You may be reading this study guide and seeing the play in Atlanta, Georgia, or perhaps you're streaming the show directly to your classroom or home, but imagine you were transported into rural South Korea in 1950. You would see many farms, large mountains, small valleys, and narrow coastal plains. Korea was an agrarian society before the war, meaning



mostly farmers and herders lived there, particularly in the southern part of the country. Bina's family supported themselves as farmers.

We had the opportunity to speak to Dr. Jenny Wang-Medina, Emory University professor of Korean culture and literature. She shared her knowledge on culture, geography, how Korea came to be separated by the 38th parallel military demarcation, also known as the DMZ—Demilitarized Zone, and the events leading up to the Korean War.

This YouTube video of a modern day Geochang farming family depicts a lifestyle not dissimilar from the life Bina would have known prior to leaving her home.

[FOREIGNER first visit to Korean girlfriend's HOMETOWN - GEOCHANG](#)

If you were to hike in Korea, these are some views you might see. This is the kind of landscape Bina and her family walked through in the play.



Bina's family travels to what is now the economic and cultural hub-city of Southeast Korea, Busan. This is the skyscraper center of Busan where you can look at beautiful views.



This is a beach in Busan where you can play in the sand and have fun.



**HISTORY  
OF THE  
KOREAN  
WAR**

한국전쟁의 역사

The Korean War started June 25, 1950 and ended July 27, 1953. Nearly five million people died in the war.

Before World War II, the Korean Peninsula was a colony of Japan. After the war, following the defeat of the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan), Japan was forced to give up all of its colonial holdings. Korea, left without a centralized government, was immediately occupied by two superpowers and divided in half: the Northern half governed by the Soviet Union and the Southern half governed by the United States. The two sides were divided at the 38th parallel, the latitudinal line running through the middle of the country. The struggle between Korean national leaders regarding the type of political system Korea would adopt became a Cold War proxy battle between the two superpowers.



The Korean War began when the North Korean Communist army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded non-Communist South Korea. On June 27, 1950, the United States joined the war. The United States joined because they wanted to contain communism and prevent the domino effect (i.e. North Korea had taken over South Korea, except Busan). However, China entered the war to support North Korea, and the two sides battled.

Peace talks began in July 1951, but a peace agreement was not signed until July 27, 1953. Although the hostilities ceased when the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed, The Korean War never officially ended. This is because a formal peace treaty was never established. The Armistice was created to end combat and establish the Demilitarized Zone to separate North and South Korea. The North and South Korea boundary extends from the south of the 38th parallel to just north of the parallel on the east. The two sides have been in a stalemate for 70 years.





# CHARACTER ANALYSIS

## 캐릭터 분석

**BINA MOON** - main character, 10 year old girl, youngest of three children in the Moon family; supportive, always willing to help, kind, thoughtful, selfless, scared, strategic, lost, brave

**FATHER** - Protector, family man, family-first mentality, conscientious, willing to do anything for his family

**MOTHER** - Helpful, kind, selfless, protector, been through this hardship before

**YOUNGSOO** - Bina's older sister and twin to Jinsoo, keeps Jinsoo and Bina out of trouble, headstrong, more serious

**JINSOO** - Bina's older brother and twin to Youngsoo; funny, playful, kind, childish

**HAMEE** - Bina's grandmother, the wisest of all; smart, serious, old, has lived through tragedy

**JI HYUN** - Bina's corn husk doll who she leaves behind to make room for carrying more apples for her family. Ji Hyun is also the name of Another Mother's lost child.

**ANOTHER MOTHER** - One of the scared people Bina runs into on her journey. This character is desperate for one of Bina's apples and tries to trick her into giving one up.

**SOLDIER** - A kind stranger who helps Bina in the beginning of her journey. The Soldier is funny, awkward, caring, scared, strategic, and hungry.

BOAT PERSON - Bina receives help from this character, but for a price. He is hungry, serious, has seen some things, and selfish.

MERCHANT - Bina must weigh the value of items needed for her journey with the Merchant. This character is hungry, selfish, wise, real, and has no remorse for the problems of others.

BOY - A young boy waiting for his mother to return to an abandoned, bombed-out village. He is scared, hungry, stern, and lost.

Each of the characters Bina encounters teaches her something about what she values, who she is responsible to, and what kind of grit and determination is required if she is to survive.

### Bina's Six Apples

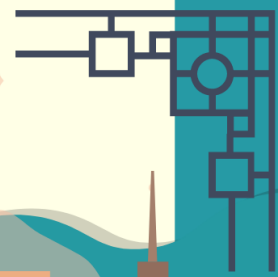


Bina



▲ Costumes by Junghyun Georgia Lee

# VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



## **GEOCHANG** 거창군

Sounds like 'Go-Chong' in English

Geochang is a small town in South Korea. In the play, this is where Bina's family is from and where they grow their prized apples on Moon's Family Orchard.



## **SEOUL** 거창군

Sounds like 'Sowl or Sah-ool' in English  
Seoul is the capital city of South Korea.

Sounds like 'Boo-san'

## **BUSAN** 부산시

Busan is the second most-populous city in South Korea, and is an economic and cultural hub located on the Southeast coast. Bina's family must travel to Busan on foot in order to find safety following the invasion of North Korean soldiers into their village.



## **KIMCHI** 김치

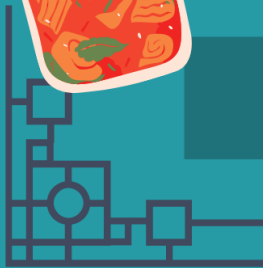
Sounds like 'kim-chee'

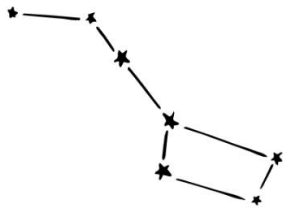
A traditional staple of Korean cuisine. Used as a condiment, it is made of fermented vegetables like napa cabbage and Korean radish. Kimchi is seasoned with a special blend of spices including gochugaru (Korean chili pepper) garlic, ginger, and spring onions, and salted seafood. Fermenting food is an important aspect of Korean cuisine. Foods like Kimchi, soybeans, bean and red pepper paste, and grains are fermented in earthenware jars and traditionally kept out on a special terrace called the Jangdokdae. In Bina's Six Apples, Mother is responsible for carrying the family's supply of Kimchi.



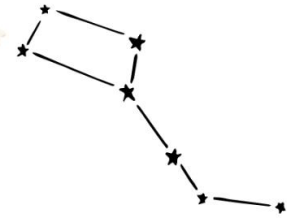
## **APPA** (AH-PA) **아빠** + **UMMA** (UH-MA) **엄마**

Familiar terms for father and mother





# 우리의 배우 OUR ACTORS



**OLIVIA LAMPERT**  
BINA



**SUN MEE  
CHOMET**  
MOTHER, MERCHANT



**SHELLI DELGADO**  
YOUNGSOO, OTHER  
MOTHER



**JOSEPH  
PENDERGRAST**  
JINSOO, SOLDIER



**ALBERT PARK**  
FATHER, BOATPERSON



**ELIZABETH PAN**  
HAMEE



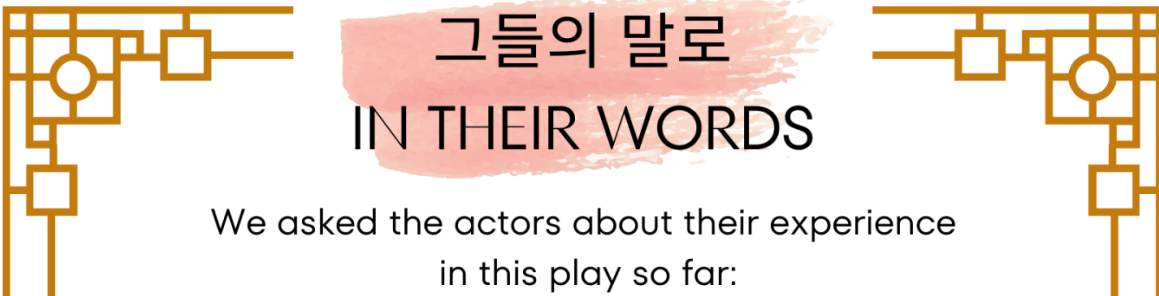
**ALEXANDER  
CHEN**  
BOY



**ERIC TING**  
DIRECTOR

## *Did you know?*

This play is co-produced by the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, GA  
and The Children's Theatre in Minneapolis, MN,  
which means the actors perform this play in both cities.



그들의 말로  
IN THEIR WORDS

We asked the actors about their experience  
in this play so far:

*What aspects of your character feel familiar and easy to relate to, and what has been unfamiliar or challenging?*

Joseph Pendergrast / Jinsoo, Soldier

"The aspects of Jinsoo that feel most familiar are their protectiveness and sense of mischief. Jinsoo is a kind of emotionally sensitive jokester who can get defensive when their jokes don't work out.

The Soldier feels like the same kind of guy, but a little older and under much more harrowing circumstances that turn that sensitivity into anxiety. Desperation and a fight-or-flight type response when their most important goal ( getting home to their sister) is threatened."

Sun Mee Chomet / Mother, Merchant

"For the mother, it feels familiar and easy to love a child and a family. I've always adored children and family is my number one priority in life. So it's easy to relate to being together as a family as the most important thing (more than money or a house or anything).

For the merchant, it's unfamiliar to me to shut out compassion for others in order to make money and survive. The merchant is desperate and has been impacted terribly by the Korean War (lost family members, children, home, etc.) Personally, I have a soft heart. So it's been a challenge to imagine hardening my heart so much to survive and only thinking about my own self-preservation."

Elizabeth Pan / Hamee

"Aspects of my character that are easy to relate to is some of the universality of being in an Asian family. The sense of loyalty to tradition and family while also dealing with grumpy, stoic members of the older generation. Hamee is definitely modeled on some of the older Asian women in my family. It's a very relatable trope for those of us from Asian backgrounds.

What was not as familiar was having to relate to characters who have lived through war and trauma on the scale that these characters have had to go through. For Hamee, she has lived through two of these long walks, forced out of her home due to circumstances beyond her control. That was something that has been very different than my experience so trying to understand where her bitterness and anger comes from was a lot of the work for me as an actor."





## Character Collage

We learned through our interview with the playwright that Bina's story is based on his father's experience as a young boy leaving home with his family at the start of the Korean War. Consider this quote from Lloyd: *"I have three children, and my oldest is ten. Somehow, I didn't realize I was doing this at the time, but looking back on it now, it seems obvious I was imagining what would happen if I put someone like my daughter into that moment of my father's history."*

Let's experiment with Lloyd Suh's approach to story development by blending the qualities and attributes of two people in our lives and inventing a new, fictional character.

Think of a story that's been passed down to you from elders. Who does it involve? What character traits are highlighted in the people within the story?

On a sheet of paper, draw a line down the middle to create two columns (see next page for a template). Choose one person from your family story. Write a list of qualities and character traits that person possesses in the column for "Person A." In the second column, think about someone else in your life, unrelated to the story, and write a list of their qualities and character traits ("Person B").

Now imagine how you might blend these qualities to invent a new character. How do they behave? What is their personality like? What are their interests and motivations in life? What do they dislike? What are they skilled in? How do they dress? Give them a fictional name.

Return to your family story with this new character as the protagonist. How might the details of the story change? How do the events of the original story shape your new hybrid character? Consider rewriting your family story and sharing aloud in pairs.

# CHARACTER COLLAGE

Character traits of Person A:

-----

Character traits of Person B:

-----

Choose a few qualities from both columns to create a new, fictional, hybrid character. Describe them here:

## Follow The Stars

In the play, Bina is offered some very helpful stargazing tips to aid her journey to safety. She encounters a soldier who teaches her to find the Big Dipper which always shows which way is North.

*Excerpt from the play:*

**SOLDIER**

*He points to the stars.*

Look. Up there. See those stars in a pattern, they look kinda like a soup ladle?

**BINA**

what?

**SOLDIER**

Like a handle there, and a spoon there. See it?

**BINA**

Yeah.

**SOLDIER**

Well you look where the end of the spoon is pointing, just go straight up from there and there's another super big star just above it, do you see that one?

**BINA**

Mm-hmm.

**SOLDIER**

That's the North Star. No matter where you are, it's always there and it's always north, so if you want to get to Busan just turn about this much

*He turns, holding his arm out.*

*Rotates from north to southeast.*

That's southeast, exactly the right amount to get you to Busan.

Humans have been using the stars to locate themselves geographically and find their way for millenia. Learning to read the stars in place of GPS, also known as celestial wayfinding, was passed down from generation to generation.

In America's own history, reading the sky to find the North Star was an integral part of the success of the Underground Railroad for enslaved people fleeing from the terror of the South.

*As lore tells it, the North Star played a key role in helping enslaved people to find their way—a beacon to true north and freedom. It could be found by locating the Big Dipper, a well-recognized asterism most visible in the night sky in late winter and spring. As the name implies, its shape resembles a dipping ladle, or drinking gourd. From the gourd's outline, the North Star could be found by extending a straight line five times the distance from the outermost star of the bowl.*

—National Park Services

It can be hard for people who live in cities to see many stars at night due to light pollution. However, you can use this [SKY CHART](#) to see what stars are currently above you, based on your location on the Earth. Type in your city, and see what constellations come up! Can you find the Big Dipper (Ursa Major) or Little Dipper (Ursa Minor)?



## How Much Is Too Much?

In *Bina's 6 Apples*, we see the Moon family fleeing for their lives. The Moon family quickly decides what items to take with them to survive until they reach Busan. Bina is given a backpack filled with six apples. Each family member is responsible for carrying items that are essential to their survival.

### **Class Discussion and Exercise:**

First, brainstorm as a class all the reasons a family might need to flee their home and make it to a safe destination 70 miles away.

Organize students into small pods of 4-5 people to become a family. Each group chooses one reason from the brainstorm list and imagines they are a family experiencing this circumstance.

As a group, discuss what kinds of items you would need to take with you to survive for three days. Each student is able to carry one backpack.

What do you take? What do you leave behind? Consider the weight and inherent value of each item. Can students share the load of what is required? Do you bring sentimental items or only survival items?

Discuss how to preserve items if it is fruit, vegetables, meat, etc.

Discuss distance and how 70 miles looks and feels. Use maps to plan the route and to understand distance.

Discuss modes of transportation other than automobiles, motorcycles, and airplanes.

Find items in magazines, online printouts, or make a list.

Discuss how many ounces they can drink per day for three days if they only have 16 ounces.

Have each family come up with their plan for survival and for safe passage along their journey, including where they are going, how they will get there, and what each student brings.

Teachers, you can find boxes the size of backpacks or use the students' backpacks (emptied out) to determine if each student's proposed items will fit. Adapt this exercise in any way you would like to fit the resources and needs of your class.

## Word Search

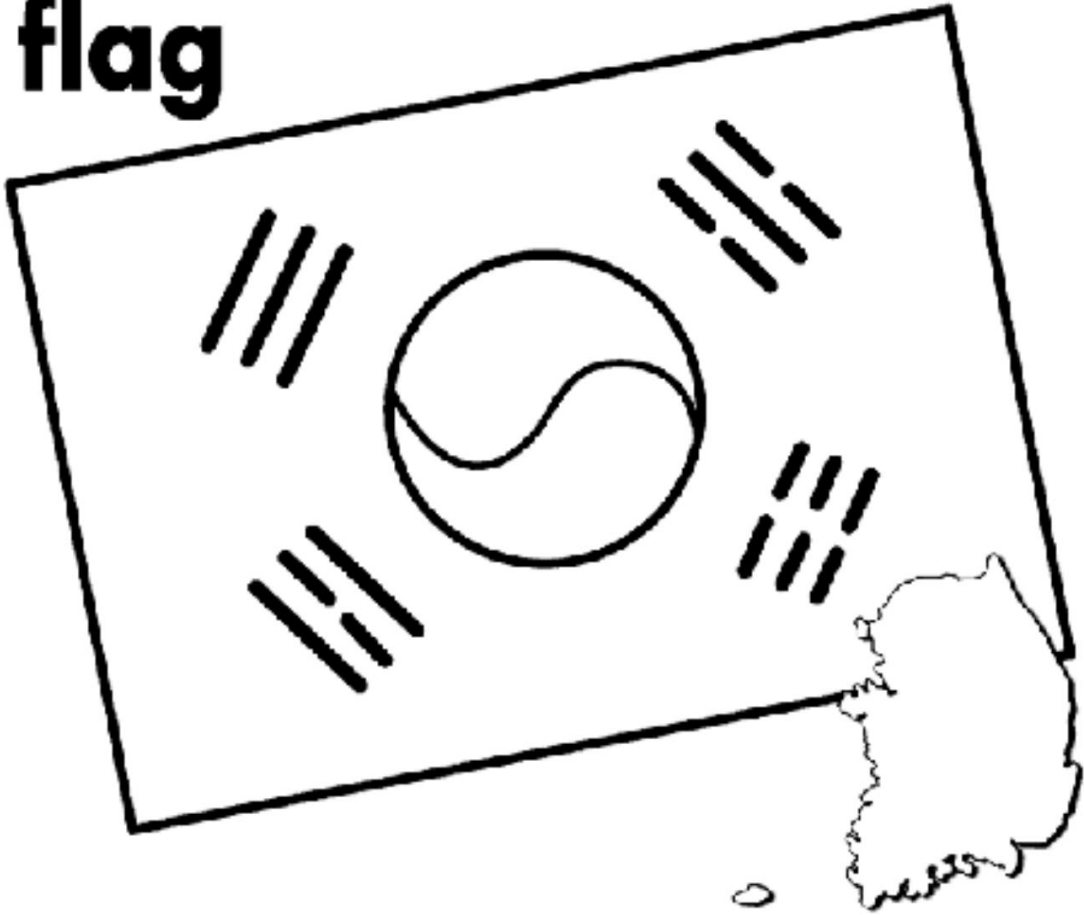
A W A L L I A N C E D I I M I  
P X L G K N M Z T B D A R R N  
P I D R A H C R O I R Z N O I  
L Q J G E O C H A N G M I Z L  
E D N U C N L P T A I T J P L  
N Y Y J C A R N L G A N U R T  
A A Y O S C A D F L H I O Q B  
E X S Q L H K Z L Q B U X O T  
R F D U C L H E I F O H S M M  
O A K R B L T H N P M A D X D  
K P E J X S R A W I N M R P C  
X M I U N I H C M I K E S Z U  
D B X O P J I N S O O E T V L  
R K C E E V J O O S G N U O Y  
H Y V K O U V D S J T W T L E

Alliance  
Apple  
Bina  
Busan  
Constellation  
Geochang

Hamee  
Jinsoo  
Kimchi  
Korea  
Lloyd  
Merchant

Moon  
Orchard  
Suh  
War  
Youngsoo

# SOUTH KOREA flag





# POST-SHOW ACTIVITY

게시물 쇼 활동

## Elders and Mentors Interviews

We asked Lloyd what he hopes people will feel after they see the show. His hope is that people feel more empathetic to their elders and ancestors (or any significant mentor). He wants the audience to feel inspired to learn more about who they come from, their challenges, and the stories of courage and resilience in their own families.

Here is a series of questions to guide you, should you choose to interview your own family members. It is a good idea to start with the oldest members of your family and work forward. People may remember important details or have family heirlooms, records, or photos that can help you. We recommend recording the interview.

One primary question and 20 follow-up questions to consider asking your family members:

*Was there ever a time in your family's history when your family had to flee due to war, natural disaster, or any other reason? Please explain.*

1. Who were the oldest members of your family that you knew personally?
2. Do you know their whole names? Birthdates?
3. Did your caregivers talk about any of their ancestors when you were growing up?
4. Where did you grow up?
5. For how long did your family live in the area(s)?
6. How many siblings did you have? What were their names and ages?
7. What were your siblings like?
8. Did other family members live in the area? If so, who?
9. Did you live on a farm? If so, what kind of crops did you grow?
10. Did you keep livestock or other animals?
11. What was your neighborhood like?



12. What did you do for fun?
13. Do you speak more than one languages?
14. Can you describe the personalities of your family members?
15. Did your family have any traditions?
16. Can you remember any stories that were told to you as a child (fictional, folklore, or real life)?
17. What events stand out to you from your childhood?
18. What was your favorite song?
19. What were your family's favorite meals? Are there any special family recipes?
20. What stories did you tell your children when they were growing up?



We wondered about the kind of music Bina and her family would have listened to and sung together. We learned about the traditional folk song *Arirang*. Each generation and every region of Korea have their own version of this classic. It is one aspect of Korean culture that's shared between the North and the South. *Arirang* is said to be a song sung to oneself as consolation living through hardship and poverty.

An 8-minute documentary on the history of this important cultural folk song:  
[The Story of Arirang](#)

Here is a compilation album of Korean songs written during the Korean War era

[Special Collection of 20 Songs We Want to Hear Again](#)

Various Artists, by Trot, 1981



Here's a playlist of the Korean music we love today–K-POP!

1. [TWICE "The Feels" M/V.](#)
2. [TWICE 「Doughnut」 Music Video](#)
3. [TWICE 「Perfect World」 Music Video](#)
4. [BLACKPINK - 'Kill This Love' M/V](#)
5. [\[MV\] 이달의 소녀/츄 \(LOONA/Chuu\) "Heart Attack"](#)
6. [Red Velvet 레드벨벳 '러시안 룰렛 \(Russian Roulette\)' MV](#)
7. [TWICE 'CRY FOR ME' Choreography - 2](#)
8. [LISA - MONEY \(Clean Version\)](#)

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In pictures: The Korean War - BBC News  
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Tips for Urban Stargazers  
North Star to Freedom \(US National Park Service\)  
<https://www.fourmilab.ch/yoursky/cities.html>](#)

## Special Thanks

We’d like to thank Lloyd Suh and Dr. Jenny Wang-Medina for visiting our class and sharing their knowledge and insights about Korean culture and History. The creation of this study guide is greatly influenced by their vision and generosity.

We hope you enjoy experiencing this play as much as we have!

감사합니다

Thank you,

The 6th Grade Junior Dramaturgs of DeKalb Elementary  
School of the Arts  
February 2022