

Reading Group Guide

Lia Park and the Heavenly Heirlooms

By Jenna Yoon

About the Book

After years of dreaming about it, Lia Park and her best friend, Joon, are finally students at the International Magic School. But things don't go as Lia had hoped. Her magical powers are behaving oddly, shaking Lia's confidence and making her the laughingstock of her classmates. Even worse, Joon's new friend Victor bullies Lia relentlessly, making Lia feel abandoned and betrayed. But when a priceless magical heirloom is stolen from the school, Lia and Joon must work together to recover the other heavenly heirlooms before the nine-headed monster, Jihagukdaejeok, finds them and plunges the world into eternal darkness. Along with two new friends, Chloe and Eugene, Lia and Joon embark on a dangerous mission to recover the heirlooms and save life as they know it. Can Lia and her friends find the heirlooms before Jihagukdaejeok gets to them? Or will a traitor within the school bring their quest to a horrible end?

Discussion Questions

1. At the start of the book, Lia and Joon start school at the International Magic School. How do things go for Lia at her new school? Have you ever started at a new school? What kind of challenges do you face when starting a new school?
2. On the first day of school, Lia struggles to activate her magic. Joon tries to comfort her, but Lia can't help but feel bad about performing poorly compared to other kids. She even wonders if she is "fake and an imposter." What do you think is wrong with Lia's magic?
3. "Wisdom, benevolence, courage, and strength. Those were the core values that IMS emphasized." (Chapter ten) What is a core value? What do each of these values mean to you? How do Lia and her friends demonstrate these values? If you started a school, what core values would it emphasize?

4. Would you want to attend the International Magic School? Why or why not? What do you think would be best about attending a school of magic? What would be challenging?

5. What are some of the dangers of the magic Lia and her classmates use? How would you justify the risks involved?

6. At school, Lia hides the white streak in her hair that reveals who she is and her past adventures. Why does Lia want to hide who she truly is at her new school? What does she believe others will think of her past?

7. Lia's friend Chloe tells her, "When things get tough, take a deep breath and carry on." (Chapter four) Do you think this is good advice? What other advice would you give Lia about how to handle things when they get tough?

8. Joon's new friend Victor bullies Lia, saying that she's a joke. He even physically attacks her during a competition. How would you have reacted to Victor's behaviors if you were in Lia's shoes? What do you think are the best ways to handle a bully?

9. On a school field trip to Ganghwado, Lia gets scared and freezes up while squeezing through a narrow cave. Joon talks her through the challenge. Describe a time a friend helped you through a challenging moment, or when you helped a friend. In what ways were you able to face your fears?

10. Lia and her friends learn that the monster Jihagukdaejeok, also known as the King of Darkness, is threatening the magical world. What powers does Jihagukdaejeok have? What does he want to do?

11. What are the three heavenly heirlooms? Why are they so important? What will happen if they fall into the wrong hands?

12. How are Lia and her friends chosen to go on the mission for the heavenly heirlooms? What dangers do the friends face? Why do you think it's so important to Lia that she is chosen for the mission to rescue the heavenly heirlooms?

13. Before sending Lia and her friends off on their mission, Ms. Shin says to them, "Don't forget, you

are stronger together.” (Chapter fourteen) What does Ms. Shin mean? In what ways are Lia and her friends stronger together?

14. What trials do Lia and her friends face on their mission to find the heavenly heirlooms? What personality traits and skills help them succeed in these trials?

15. Lia thinks, “Before IMS, I’d resented having to study Korean history while Joon learned magic, but now I thought of it as my second superpower.” (Chapter eighteen) In what way is Lia’s knowledge of Korean history her superpower? What knowledge do you have that makes you powerful? What is your superpower?

16. During the mission to find the heirlooms, a fortune teller tells Lia that the fate of Lia’s team is intertwined with her bully Victor’s team. What does she mean by this? What are some challenges of working with someone you don’t like?

17. This story takes place in Korea. How is the setting important to the story? Do you think this book could have been set anywhere else?

18. What did you learn about Korean culture in this book? Have you ever visited Korea and seen any of the places Lia talks about? If not, which ones would you like to see?

19. The book spends a lot of time describing the Korean foods that Lia enjoys. Why is food so important to Lia? What are your favorite foods?

20. After hearing from the fortune teller that there is a traitor among them, Lia thinks “I wished we had never agreed to do this fortune-telling saju reading. In some ways, maybe ignorance was bliss . . .” (Chapter seventeen) What does the saying “Ignorance is bliss” mean? What are the advantages and disadvantages to ignorance?

21. The author uses snippets of Korean language throughout the novel. Why do you think she does this? What was your experience of encountering these bits of language? How did you figure out what was being said?

22. Lia makes a big mistake at the end of the book and trusts someone she shouldn’t. Why does she

trust this person, and how do they betray Lia? Looking back, can you think of any textual evidence that foreshadowed the traitor's reveal?

23. At the end of the book, Umma tells Lia that she is the owner of the prophecy. What does she mean? What do you think this might mean for Lia and Joon's friendship?

Extension Activities

1. In this book, Lia and her friends go on a quest to seek something important. Spend some time researching quest stories. What are the different parts of a quest story? How is this story a quest? Are there any ways that this story is *not* a traditional quest? Create a poster or online slideshow detailing what you learned.

2. Imagine you are Lia, and write a letter to an advice columnist looking for help with your experience at your new school. Now imagine you are the advice columnist and write a reply to Lia. What advice would you give her?

3. A travelogue is a diary of a person's travels. Create a travelogue of the places Lia and her friends visit in the book. Be sure to include both pictures and descriptions of the places they go. You can also create a map of the locations in Korea, either by hand or with an online mapping program.

4. In *Lia Park and the Heavenly Heirlooms*, Lia and her friends eat a lot of delicious Korean food. Choose one dish from the book and learn about it, from online research, library resources, or people you know. Then find a recipe, and try cooking that dish at home. Bring your dish to school or your book group to share with friends and classmates. (Be sure to get permission from your teacher first, and make known any possible allergens within the recipe.)

5. The International Magic School has elaborate magical buildings, including ones in which it looks like you are walking into the mouth of a dragon. Create a picture album of the school buildings described in the book. You can use pencil, paints, markers, or even make a collage to illustrate the buildings.

6. Create a video "book commercial" for *Lia Park and the Heavenly Heirlooms* to encourage other kids to read it. Share what you liked best about the book, and why you think other kids should read

it too. Be sure to include teasers about Lia's adventures, but don't spoil anything for future readers!

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