**Part 1:**

At the beginning of the book, the setting is Hyun Sook’s parent’s steak place in the city. Later in the beginning it also mentions that this is the only steak restaurant in her city. This city is located in South Korea. During the 1980s South Korea was under a repressive and brutal dictatorship. Another place included in the book's first part was Anjeon University, which is the college that Hyun Sook is going to for her studies. There are other smaller locations such as Suji’s apartment, where the banned book club takes place in the book's first part. Other places mentioned are the bookstore where Hyun Sook picks up a banned book and the cafeteria where they watch the German newscasting.

I would say that one of the major events in the book is at the very beginning of the book. At the beginning of the book Hyun Sook is having a conversation with her mother. I feel that this really gives us a lot of information and sets the tone for the rest of the book. In this conversation, Hyun Sook’s mother mentions that all that happens on campuses is protests. Which then becomes an integral part of the remainder of the story.

I feel that this conversation also spreads more light on the culture in South Korea at the time, especially surrounding the issues of women and how they were viewed by society. It mentions that Hyun Sook’s mother is more traditional, we can see that when she says “I told you if you think college is so important why not get a job and save money so your brother can go?” It is also revealed to us in this conversation that her mother might be hiding some jealousy because she wasn’t even allowed to go to High School and instead had to take care of her siblings. This compares to old American culture as well. In the 1950s women were viewed in much the same way. That way is that they didn’t really need to be educated and their primary job was to get married and have kids and take care of their husbands. It is very similar to that just at a later time period.

**Part 2:**

In the middle of the book, many things happen. One major conflict that occurs during the middle of the book is Jihoo getting arrested. This occurrence really caused a lot of internal struggles for the group. It caused Hoon to “disband” the group because he didn’t want people to be in more danger than they already were. In stories, there always seems to be this point where the main characters are at odds with each other or seem to have given up hope that their cause is important enough to continue. I feel that this moment is the time when this happens in the plot. I would classify this as an internal struggle among the group. Where we see Jihoo in jail in a compromising situation, Hoon wants to disband the group, Gundo wants to trade himself for Jihoo potentially having more members of the club captured, and Suji and Yuni are together in keeping the club together although Suji got thrown out of her mom’s house. This leaves Hyun Sook in the middle of it all.

The banned book club is written in a third-person view. Meaning that we are seeing it as though we ourselves were there but invisible only to observe what happens. In this book, we mostly follow the main character, Hyun Sook. However, there are times when we switch perspectives to other people. For instance, when Jihoo is being interrogated by Agent Ok, we are witnessing that even though Hyun Sook is not there at that time. I think that the third-person is a good perspective to choose for this kind of book. It gives more flexibility on what we can witness and whom we are viewing. Typically, in a first-person perspective, you would only see the perspective of the main character or characters. In the third-person, you can be wherever the story needs you to be. So overall I think it is a good choice for this book.

A quote that I found significant to this part of the story was “everyone has a right to the truth.” This line is said by Yuni while telling a brief version of why she started the book club, whilst being pestered about not sharing the real story of why she herself thought it was a good idea to start the club. However, I do feel like this states the mission of the book club in a simple way. The purpose of the book club is to spread the truth that everyone is entitled to. I feel that in the book we kind of infer the purpose of the book club, however, now we have confirmation of what the purpose of this club is. This is why I think it is important to the story.

**Part 3:**

I would say that the main themes of the book were governmental censorship and oppression and finding the truth even when it is hidden. It is expressed throughout the book that South Korea at this time is an oppressed country. We can see this because there is the police force that is brutally interrogating people for anything that they deem is related to communism. Many books and publications are banned and the penalty for carrying one of these items is severe. That brings us to the second theme set of the book. Our main characters in the book are directly opposing the South Korean government at this time, which as mentioned before is a crime with harsh consequences. They do it in the hope that the government gets reformed, and that the truth can be spread instead of censored and hidden from the public. As this is a true story it fits in with the timeline because we do know that South Korea was under authoritarian rule in the 1980s. It fits in with the rest of the world because there are still many places that are like South Korea in the 1980s such as North Korea, which is arguably worse than South Korea ever was.

I believe that the climax of the book is near the end when they are protesting for the release of Jihoo. To me, this seems like the last major conflict that occurs and also the biggest conflict that occurs during the book. I think it kind of reached this point because of several things. I think the biggest factor was most likely the arrest of Jihoo and the publication of the illegal newspaper that Hoon published about Jihoo’s arrest. I feel that this is the moment where Hyun Sook finally and fully joins the fight against the oppressive regime. Before we see that she is often hesitant to defy the authorities. I also think we see the last of her hesitance leaving when she confronts a student about reporting the illegal newspaper to the authorities where we see her say this line, “If you want to walk up to those men with guns and wave blacklisted material, you be my guest. But you’d better be sure you’re right about who the good guys are.” After this moment the rest of the story winds down and we see the aftermath of what happened to each of the main characters 33 years later.

I learned a lot of things from this book. I was not very familiar with the history of South Korea during this time period. I always thought that South Korea had been a free state and that North Korea was the one with all the problems. I mostly thought this because North Korea is more known for its authoritarian government style and also because South Korea is currently free. I also got to learn more about South Korean culture. Overall, this book was a fun read and taught me a lot about a country that I wasn’t overtly familiar with.