

Title: *The Red Palace*

Author: June Hur

Genre: Murder Mystery, Young Adult Fiction, Historical Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Joyce L., 9th grade

Date Reviewed: June 16, 2023

“The Red Palace” by June Hur sets place in 1758. The 18th century of Joseon, Korea, in the city of Hanyang, the capital of Joseon. A murder takes place in the story, a palace nurse named Hyeon, and a royal investigator named Eojin team up to investigate the case. They investigate the case of the murder of 4 nurses at a public medical office. We follow Hyeon, a palace nurse, who is a hardworking and intelligent person. Hyeon is more determined because she was a former nurse in this medical office. Her motivation is to catch the murderer. But to also earn her father’s acceptance through hard work and protect her mentor, from the police interrogations. Nurse Jeongsu, Hyeon’s mentor, is the main suspect in the case, hence why Hyeon wants to protect her. As she and Eojin investigate, the list of suspects grows bigger. The longer they investigate, they go into the rabbit hole of the case. Will they or they not catch the killer?

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

The plot of the book keeps me interested. The way Hur wrote the book constantly made me feel intrigued of the book. The plot thickens with every chapter, causing tension in the story. Hur makes sure the reader of the book also knows “everyone is listening in the palace” quoted from the book. Creating more tension, for the reader as they continue to read the adventure that Hyeon takes.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pacing of the book was in the middle of just right and slow, keeping the reader constantly on mysteries revealing after another, keeping the reader intrigued. As I said in the previous question, the way Hur writes the book keeps the reader intrigued in the book. The plot thickens with each chapter with mysteries continuing to reveal themselves. The reason I say slow is because Hur makes sure we absorb the information given to us.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

The appropriate age for this book would be 13+ or 7th grade and up due to the maturity of the book and because of the detail that the book has. Including the murder scene of the book.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

The types of readers I would recommend this book to readers who love murder mysteries, fiction, history, and a royal setting. The book takes more of the historic fiction murder mystery genre.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

Hur does a great job of capturing the essence of 18th-century Joseon, Korea. Making the patriarchal restrictions and the tension of court life obvious to the reader so they know the cost and tension throughout the book.

The rate of the book I give this book is 4.5 stars it was both “I’m really glad I read this book; it was awesome” and “I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.” I loved the plot of the book. The genre of the book itself is intriguing to me. The reason I take 0.5 off is that I personally have a short attention span and I took some time reading this book. Causing me to lose some interest in the book. Despite the intriguing plot and writing. I was just bored at some of the chapters of the book. The book itself is a great read, but I personally didn’t really find it as “I need to read this book at every waking moment.” I saw this book as a time to kill time or find something interesting to do.