

DISCUSSION GUIDE

LOST BOY,  
LOST GIRL

WORLD LITERATURE

**PART I**

PEACE

“

THE STRONGEST  
FIGHTERS ARE THOSE  
WHO KEEP TWO RULES.  
FIRST, THEY NEVER,  
EVER GIVE  
UP...SECOND, LIKE THE  
LIONS, THEY WORK  
TOGETHER.

JOHN BUL DAU

# JOHN'S

CHILDHOOD

01

## Lions

What does it mean to "bring the lion"? Why does John start his story this way?

02

## Family

Describe John's family. Why was his father so strict? What was his mother like?

03

## "The What" and Traditions

What is "the what"? Describe John's childhood. What did he learn? How? Was he happy? How can you tell? Why does he end this chapter with a description of a typical night in his parents' home?

“

**I GREW UP IN JUBA, THE  
MOST IMPORTANT CITY  
IN SOUTHERN SUDAN.**

**MARTHA ARUAL AKECH**

# MARTHA'S

## CHILDHOOD

01

### Play

Martha begins with a description of the play she and her friends engaged in. What did they do for fun?

02

### Family

Describe Martha's family. Is it as large as John's? What is their religion?

03

### History of South Sudan

Martha includes a brief description of the conflict in Sudan at the end of this chapter. What does she say?

There is definitely some foreshadowing at the end of this chapter...

**PART II**  
WAR

# JOHN'S

## INTRODUCTION TO WAR

01

### Omens

What signs told the Dinka that war was on its way?

02

### History

John provides more detail about conflict in Sudan here. What does he share?

03

### Boom! Boom! Boom! Quiet, quiet, quiet.

How does John survive? Where do he and the other boys go?

Which details stood out to you?



“

I WAS A LITTLE GIRL,  
NOT EVEN SIX YEARS  
OLD, WHEN THE HAPPY  
DAYS WITH MY FAMILY  
IN JUBA DISAPPEARED  
FOREVER.

MARTHA ARUAL AKECH

# MARTHA'S

## INTRODUCTION TO WAR

01

### Country Life

Why does Martha move to the country? What differences does she find?

02

### Murle

Why did Martha and Tabitha run? Who guided them? What did Martha fear most?

03

### Malaria, Murle, and Millet

Describe Martha's illness.

What happened when the Murle attacked?

Who gave them milk, millet, and sorghum?

**PART III**  
REFUGE

“

**MORE THAN A QUARTER  
MILLION REFUGEES FROM  
SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR  
POURED INTO PINYUDU  
AND THREE OTHER CAMPS  
IN ETHIOPIA IN 1988.**

**JOHN BUL DAU**

# JOHN'S

EXPERIENCE  
IN PINYUDU

## 01 Boys

Why were most of the survivors boys? What happened to everyone else?

## 02 News

Why didn't the world pay more attention? Why were the boys called Lost Boys?

## 03 Supervisor at 13

Why do the boys stay by themselves?

What did John oversee? How did he try to keep things fair?

How did they handle death and disease?

“

FOR MONTHS TABITHA AND  
I LIVED IN THE WILDS OF  
SOUTHERN SUDAN.

MARTHA ARUAL AKECH

# MARTHA'S

EXPERIENCE  
IN PINYUDU

01

Food

How do the refugees  
respond to the UN's food?

02

Field

Is Pinyudu really a camp?  
Describe it.

03

Yar

Why was Yar? What did she do for Martha?

What does Martha think of Church?

pp. 61-62 are so sad...

**PART IV**  
WAR



“

TABITHA WAS SIX NOW,  
OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW  
THAT SOMETHING WAS  
HAPPENING.

MARTHA ARUAL AKECH

# MARTHA'S

TREK TOWARD  
KENYA

01

## Pinyudu

When do Martha and  
Tabitha leave?

Describe their journey.

02

## Pochala

What are the challenges in  
Pochala?

How long do they stay?

03

## On Toward Kenya

For a while, they journey toward Kapoeta.

Do she and Tabitha stay in Kapoeta at all?

How do they manage to get a ride toward Kenya?

“

I WAS NOT A GOOD  
SWIMMER.

OF THE ROUGHLY 20,000  
SUDANESE WHO WENT  
INTO THE GILO RIVER,  
MAYBE 2,000 TO 3,000  
DIED IN THE ATTEMPT TO  
GET ACROSS.

JOHN BUL DAU

# JOHN'S

TREK TOWARD  
KENYA

01

## Home

Will John ever return to Duk  
Payuel? Explain.

Describe Pochala.

02

## Food vs. Bombs

Why does John leave Pochala?

Where do they go?

03

## On Toward Kenya

How long is this part of John's journey?

What challenges do they face?

How do they survive?

**PART V**  
REFUGE

“

**OUR SPIRITS ROSE AS  
WE REALIZED THE  
SOLDIERS WOULD NOT  
FOLLOW US.**

**JOHN BUL DAU**

# JOHN'S

T I M E I N K E N Y A

01

## School

Describe John's education.

What surprised you?

02

## Initiation

John laments the fact that he did not become a man in the traditional Dinka way. Why?

03

## On Toward America

What does John think of Martha?

Why does he hope to go to America?

Is he prepared for such a journey? Explain.

“

STICKING WITH MY  
PLAN TO BE A STRONG,  
EDUCATED WOMAN  
BECAME MUCH HARDER  
WHEN I GOT TO BE  
FOURTEEN OR FIFTEEN.

MARTHA ARUAL AKECH



# MARTHA'S

T I M E I N K E N Y A

01

## Kakuma

Describe Martha's  
experience.

Who are the Turkana?

02

## Education

Is Martha encouraged to learn?

Does she want to learn?

03

## On Toward America

Why does Martha decide to try to go to America?

What challenges does she face?

Is she prepared for this journey?

**PART VI**  
PEACE

“

THE DAY WE LEFT  
KAKUMA FOREVER, I  
HAD TO SNEAK AWAY  
FROM MY OLD LIFE.

MARTHA ARUAL AKECH

# MARTHA'S

EXPERIENCE IN  
AMERICA

01

## Welcome Home

Describe Martha's foster family. What do they do to make her feel welcome?

02

## Education

What does Martha think of school? How far does she take her education?

03

## Socialization

Is it difficult for Martha to adjust to American life? Provide examples.

How does she reconnect with John? What happens between them?

How does she reconnect with her lost family members? Describe their reunion.

“

I INTRODUCED MYSELF  
TO THE MAN IN  
CHARGE. HE TURNED  
OUT TO BE AN  
AMERICAN  
DOCUMENTARY  
FILMMAKER NAMED  
CHRISTOPHER QUINN.

JOHN BUL DAU

# JOHN'S

EXPERIENCE IN  
AMERICA

01

## Work

How does John make money in America?

02

## Family

How does John reconnect with his lost family?

How does he create a new family for himself in America?

03

## Legacy

Describe the wedding and marriage customs to which John and Martha must adhere.

What has John done to help the people of South Sudan?