

“Little Forest” starring Tae-ri Kim, Jun-Yeol Ryu, So-Ri Moon, 2018, PG-13, 103 minutes

Major themes:

- Home
- Abandonment
- Rural life
- Friendship
- Nature
- Food
- Beauty
- Joy
- Time
- Seasons
- Emotional healing
- Avoidance
- Mother-daughter relationships
- Unanswered questions

Major characters:

- Song Hye-won
- Lee Jae-ha (male childhood friend)
- Joo Eun-sook (female childhood friend)
- Mom
- Hoon-yi
- Fivo (dog)

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- This film is based on a Manga series of the same name. Manga are comics or graphic novels, most of which conform to a style developed in Japan in the late 19th century. The word "*manga*" comes from a Japanese word with two parts meaning "*whimsical or impromptu*" and "*pictures*".
- Sujebi, or hand-pulled dough soup, or Korean-style pasta soup, is a Korean traditional soup consisting of dough flakes roughly torn by hand, with various vegetables. It is commonly considered a dish to consume on rainy days, along with bindae-tteok. The broth for sujebi is usually made with dried anchovies, shellfish, and kelp. In order to obtain a rich, umami flavor, the ingredients should be simmered for many hours. Added to this broth are soft noodles and various vegetables or kimchi, most often zucchini and potatoes.
- Mujigae-tteok or rainbow rice cake is a layered tteok (rice cake) of different colors resembling a rainbow. It is used for special occasions.
- Dried persimmon is a type of traditional dried fruit snack known as gotgam in Korean. It is traditionally made in the winter, by air drying Oriental persimmons and is also used to make wine and in creating other desserts. Persimmons, when fully ripe, are thin-skinned, soft and sweet. Persimmons used to create dried persimmons are harvested when they are under-ripe, firm, astringent, and bitter.
- Makgeolli (raw rice wine) is a Korean alcoholic beverage. The milky, off-white and lightly sparkling rice wine has a slight viscosity that tastes slightly sweet, tangy, bitter, and astringent. Chalky sediment gives it a cloudy appearance. It is often considered a happy, communal beverage.

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Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV) – *“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens”*

John 4:34-38 (ESV) – *“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, “There are yet four months, then comes the harvest”? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”*

James 5:7-8 (NLT) – *“Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord’s return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.”*

Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV) – *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Psalms 27:10 (NLT) – *“Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.”*

Psalms 12:5 (The Message) – *“Into the hovels of the poor, into the dark streets where the homeless groan, God speaks: ‘I’ve had enough; I’m on my way to heal the ache in the heart of the wretched.”*

Psalms 147:1, 3 (NIV) – *“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! . . . He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

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Discussion points:

1. What aspect of the simple life do you want to incorporate into your life and your journey after viewing this film?
2. What can we learn from the advice given that we have to wait to taste the best food, and that onions that endure winter are sweeter than spring onions?
3. Hye-won describes nature, cooking, and her mother's love for her as her mother's "*little forest*." Do you have a "*little forest*"? If so, how would you describe it?
4. How much of doing things at the right or appropriate time in life do you think has to do with waiting? What is it about waiting that many people do not like?
5. How can relationships be nurtured by food?
6. What lessons can we learn from the seasons and cycles of nature?
7. One character remarked, "*It's your freedom to read it or not, but I must deliver it.*" What message do you feel compelled to deliver in this season of your life, whether or not the message is received?