

# HIDE

A Ferris wheel silhouette is centered in the background against a solid yellow background. The word "HIDE" is written in large, bold, red, serif capital letters across the top, with the Ferris wheel's structure visible through the letters. Below the wheel, the words "BOOK CLUB KIT" are written in white, bold, serif capital letters. In the foreground, there are dark, intricate silhouettes of trees and branches, with a few red leaves visible at the bottom center.

BOOK CLUB KIT

# DEAR READER:

I TURN TO HORROR when I need comforting. During periods when my life is the most overwhelming, I love escaping into something far more terrible than I will ever experience.

I also love mythology. I love the stories we tell to understand ourselves—at our best, at our worst. And few stories have been ringing truer for me lately than the story of the Minotaur. In case it's been a while since your middle school unit on Greek mythology, it goes like this:

King Minos asked for a favor from the gods, but instead took advantage of their generosity. So, since gods are dicks, they punished his *wife*, making her have sex with a bull. She gave birth to a monster. King Minos thought—hey, as a result of my selfishness, we've got this monster who survives by eating humans. Better build a labyrinth and stick him in the middle.

Then he had an even better idea. His neighbors the Athenians had killed his son. So, as punishment, he demanded that every seven years they send seven young men and seven young women to be eaten by the Minotaur as payment for what their country had done.

And the Athenians were like, “That’s an acceptable price for our safety.”

No one, at any point, in either country, thought . . . maybe we should just kill the man-eating monster in the middle of the labyrinth? Or maybe we should deal with these problems we've created by ourselves, rather than continuing to sacrifice the next generations for our own sins? It took Theseus, one of the doomed youth, to end the cycle by killing the Minotaur.

But.

The Minotaur was a monster by birth. It didn't choose to be one, it just was. And the person who created that monster as a result of his selfishness, and the two countries that allowed children to be sacrificed to it?

They continued on.

We tell the same stories because we live the same stories. We still want *more*—money, safety, privilege, power—and we pass the cost along in struggle and suffering and death to the next generations.

So I've been thinking a lot about the Minotaur. I've also been thinking a lot about the article I read a few years ago on an international hide and seek tournament held in an abandoned resort town, and how absolutely *murderly* that sounded. How if you chose people without social safety nets, without families or stability or someone who would miss them if they were gone, how maybe they could go somewhere to hide and never be found again.

And then the two lines of thinking became one.

A decaying, labyrinthine amusement park. Fourteen people deemed disposable. A monster, literal, and monsters, figurative. And, of course, money and the hope that just a little might change everything.

It's a very American fairy tale, isn't it? Thanks for reading, and I hope you get lost in it. . . .

XOXO  
Kiersten White



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. One of the contestants says of Mack, “You’re my dark horse. Even when you’re next to me, I get the feeling you’re not really there.” How do you view Mack at the beginning of the book? How does your view change over the course of the novel?
2. The story is told from many perspectives. Do you identify with any of the contestants? Which one and why?
3. Could you imagine the Hide & Seek contest premise, as explained at the beginning of the book, existing in the real world? Do you see some examples out there already? Perhaps in reality television? If so, which shows?
4. How do you think you would fare in the Hide & Seek contest? What skills do you bring?
5. What compels Jaden, her fellow competitor, to reveal Mack’s horrific past to everyone? Does this information affect or change how contestants play the game?
6. Discuss the writing. What kind of atmosphere does Kiersten White create?
7. *Hide* conveys many themes—survival, guilt, trauma. Did any particular theme stand out to you? Which and why?
8. What did you think of the ending? Were you surprised? What do you think happens to the characters and to the town after the story ends?



# ASTERION AMAZEMENT PARK

Get  
Lost  
in the  
Fun!

SUCKS!

Hobart Keck  
was  
RIGHT

R.I.R.  
LITTLE  
PATTY  
STRATTON

K+M

ELWIRA  
WAS  
HERE!



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:  
THE ASTERION CITY COUNCIL  
FRYE TECHNOLOGIES: BUILDING THE FUTURE!  
STRATTON ENGINEERING

# THE PLAYLIST



- 1. Little Lies You're Told**  
Joywave
- 2. Buy American**  
Joywave
- 3. Eye**  
Smashing Pumpkins
- 4. Bullet With Butterfly Wings**  
Smashing Pumpkins
- 5. everything i wanted**  
Billie Eilish
- 6. I Will Follow You Into The Dark**  
Miya Folick

- 7. Virgin**  
Manchester Orchestra
- 8. Smile**  
Wolf Alice
- 9. Easier Than Lying**  
Halsey

[Click here to  
listen on Spotify!](#)



# BRINGING THE AMAZEMENT PARK TO LIFE

WHEN TRYING TO GET a feel for what I wanted the Amazement Park to be like, I did a lot of research on old theme parks—particularly Coney Island. I knew I wanted a Hell Ride (which have fascinating histories, included in parks as a “moral education” so they could be open on Sundays), and discovered that the only detailed account of the infamous Hellgate in Coney Island’s Dreamland was written by Maxim Gorky, a Russian dissident who . . . really was not a fan of American excess. I highly recommend [his essay](#) on his trip there, during which he was only happy when imagining the entire thing engulfed in flames.

Ironically, the Hellgate did, in fact, end up burning down the Dreamland portion of Coney Island. That’s another strange and sad [tale worth reading](#).

Both of these articles note my favorite absolutely bizarre and intriguing fact about old amusement parks that I wasn’t able to include in **HIDE**: the presence of “Infant Incubator” attractions, which were buildings

that housed premature babies in incubators that park-goers could pay money to go in and see. While it seems predatory, [the history is much more complex](#) and led to critical advancements in American NICU treatment and availability.

Finally, if you, like me, love stuffing excess and amusement turned to rot and decay into your eyeballs, I have a selection of some of my favorite abandoned amusement park photos on this, [my one and only Pinterest Board](#).

All these things informed my theme park, but nothing could have prepared me for the greatest thing ever: an actual map of the Amazement Park, complete with punny ride names. Cattle Run, anyone? You wouldn’t have to prod me to go on it . . .

I’ll see myself out.