

Six Four Discussion Questions

by Hideo Yokoyama

Author Bio: (from Wikipedia & Fantastic Fiction)

Hideo Yokoyama is Japanese novelist specializing in Mystery fiction. Hideo Yokoyama worked as an investigative reporter with a regional newspaper north of Tokyo for 12 years before striking out on his own as a fiction writer. He made his literary debut in 1998 when his collection of police stories *Kage no kisetsu* (Season of Shadows) won the Matsumoto Seicho Prize; the volume was also short-listed for the Naoki Prize.



Six Four (original title: 64 Rokuyon) was translated by Jonathan Lloyd-Davies in 2016.

Characters:

- **Yoshinobu Mikami** – (46) – Superintendent of Media Relations, press director, and inspector. Previous assistant chief of second division in Criminal Investigations. His beautiful wife, Minako, is a former police officer. His 16 year old daughter, Ayumi, has been missing for 3 months.
- **Akama** – (41) – Director of Administrative Affairs. Prefectural HQ's second in command.
- **Akikawa** – (29) – Press chief for the Toyo, the most prominent Tokyo newspaper. De facto leader of the HQ Press club.
- **Yoshio Amamiya** – Local businessman whose 7 year old daughter, Shoko, was kidnapped in the Six Four case 14 years earlier. Case is unsolved. Wife, Toshiko, is deceased.
- **Arakida** – Director of Criminal Investigations.
- **Ashida (Goggle Eyes)** – Criminal Investigations section chief. Organized Crime.
- **Shinji Futawartari** – Inspector. Administrative Affairs. In charge of personnel transfers.
- **Koichiro Hiyoshe** – In the physical evidence lab during the Six Four investigation. Resigns and becomes a recluse.
- **Ikoma** – Division Chief. Internal Affairs. Administrative Affairs.
- **Inomata** – Criminal Investigations. Head of Forensics.
- **Ishii** – Division chief. Administrative Affairs. Secretariat. Not a friend to Mikami.
- **Kazuki Kodo** – Member of the Six Four home unit. Left the force 6 months after the kidnapping. Put out a memo.
- **Hanako Kikunishi** – Pregnant woman involved in a car accident.
- **Kozuka** – Commissioner General of the National Police Agency in Tokyo. Has dominion over 260,000 police officers.
- **Kuramae** – Media relations subchief.
- **Kusano** – Former detective. Had been a part of the Six Four investigation.

- **Katsutoshi Matsuoka** – Criminal Investigations chief of first division. Potential next director of Criminal Investigations. On the front lines in the Six Four kidnapping. His wife is a friend of Minako, Mikami's wife.
- **Royji Meikawa** – A pensioner killed in an automobile accident.
- **Matsato Mesaki** – Businessman with a missing teenage daughter, Kasumi.
- **Mikura** – Criminal Investigations assistant chief of First Division.
- **Mikumo** – (23) – Female officer in Media Relations. Recent transfer from Transport. Very good natured.
- **Minegishi** – Criminal Investigations detective. Special Investigations.
- **Mizuki Murakushi** – Former police officer. Part of the Six Four home team. Retired.
- **Toshikazu Nonomura** – Head of the Toyo's local press branch.
- **Ogata** – Detective in Criminal Investigations. In Violent Crime first division.
- **Michio Osakabe** – Former director of Criminal Investigations. Had never failed to close a case.
- **Satake** – In Forensics and fingerprinting as part of Criminal Investigations.
- **Shiratori (Burly)** – Criminal Investigations detective. First Division.
- **Shirota** – Division Chief. Administrative Affairs.
- **Suwa** – In Media Relations. Section Chief and assistant inspector. Has been in media relations for 3 years. Quick witted. Good with the press.
- **Takeshi Tsuchigane** – Criminal Investigations police inspector. Acting subleader of the Six Four investigation.
- **Kinji Tsujiuchi** – (44) – Captain of the Prefectural HQ. Favorite to succeed the Commissioner General.

Six Four – Shoko Amamiya kidnapping and murder case. Unsolved after 14 years. One of the precinct's biggest failures. Kidnapper got away with 20 million yen. Name is based on the year the girl disappeared.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Six Four was translated from Japanese to English. Did you find it challenging? Did you like the look into a different culture? Why or why not?
3. What do you think the title, "Six Four?"
4. Were you interested by the different ways/methods/traditions of the Japanese police verses the American police force? Why do you think the two traditions are so different?
5. Are the press and police automatically on different/opposite side of an investigation? Why or why not?
6. Why was the cover up of the Six Four investigation such a blow to Mikami?

7. When the cover up of the Six Four investigation mistake occurred, who was the real culprit? The investigators? Urushibara, the man in charge of the Home Team? Director Seitaro Kyuma, the man in charge of Criminal investigations at the time? Why?
8. How does Mikami's home life affect his interaction with the Six Four investigation?
9. Why do you think it was so hard for Mikami and his wife to see and respond to his daughter's, Ayumi's, mental issues?
10. Mikami does not know how to deal with his wife, Mikami's, anxiety over Ayumi. What would have been the proper response? Is there one?
11. If you had a child who refused to leave his/her room or communicate with the outside, how would you handle it? How long would you let it go on?
12. One of the themes in this book is finding "someone else" to help those whose family cannot meet their needs. Have you ever met a "someone else" or have you ever been a "someone else" for a stranger?
13. Which is better – centralized control of a police force or regional control? Why do you think that?
14. Yoshio Amamiya worked relentlessly to find his daughter's kidnapper. Do you think he got what he really wanted in the end?
15. Do you think the police will eventually arrest the Shoko Amamiya kidnapper?
16. What do you think should happen to Amamiya and Kodo? Should they be punished for their actions?
17. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story? If you could change it, what would you do to make it better?
18. Yokoyama has written two other books that have been translated into English. Will you read any of them?

References:

- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/y/hideo-yokoyama/>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/book/similar/21990167-64>
- Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hideo_Yokoyama

Hideo Yokoyama Books

Stand Alone Novels

- Six Four (2016)
- Seventeen (2018)
- Prefecture D (2019)

If you liked Six Four, try...

- The Silent Dead – Tetsuya Honda
 - Master Key – Masako Togawa
 - A Midsummer's Equation – Keigo Higashino
 - Winter Sleep – Kenzo Kitakata
 - Parade – Shūichi Yoshida
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