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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Joy Luck Club

by Amy Tan

written by Rhonda Carwell

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ISBN 978-1-60389-967-6
Reorder No. 304202

The Joy Luck Club

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the use of storytelling techniques in the novel.
2. trace the development of various motifs in the novel:
 - control over one's destiny;
 - sacrifices for love;
 - resistance to expectations;
 - cultural obstacles.
3. analyze the development of cultural identity in relation to character development throughout the novel.
4. analyze the importance of perspective in relation to story development.
5. analyze the title of the novel in relation to the themes.
6. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
7. respond to free response items similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
8. offer a close reading of *The Joy Luck Club* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

Introduction Lecture

AUTHOR NOTES

Amy Tan is the American-born daughter of Chinese immigrants whose life and storytelling techniques were greatly affected by the history of her family, particularly her mother. Throughout her life, she struggled with her own identity and the clashing of two distinctly different cultures: American and Chinese. Through her writing, Tan has worked to bring balance to the conflicting strictness of her Chinese heritage and the more relaxed notions of her American upbringing. Her writing has worked to bring a greater understanding of her mother and her history and the impact each had on her throughout her life.

Tan's mother had a strong desire to raise her children with "American circumstances and Chinese culture," a notion that is mirrored in the character of Lindo Jong. Tan stated in an interview, "My parents told me I would become a doctor and then in my spare time I would become a concert pianist." The expectations for her life were set by her parents at an early age, and Tan did not easily accept their notions for what she should be since she had been raised surrounded by the American idea that mediocrity was perfectly acceptable. As a result, Tan often felt that her own sense of worth was strongly based on what others thought of her. She viewed her mother as having been raised in fear, and this was a tactic that was employed in rearing her own children.

As she grew older, Tan explored and stressed the importance of an individual's being able to have her own ideas and self-worth. Some of these beliefs may be instilled, but, in order for one to fully embrace them, she must understand the background circumstances that served to form those beliefs and ideas. Thus, Tan worked to understand her mother better to develop a better sense of her heritage.

Tan has expressed that, to her, the American Dream is really, "...the freedom to create your own identity." She feels that, "...In no other country do you have that opportunity. It's not to say that everything will happen fairly and the way you want...this is a country where that opportunity... to be as wild as you want, as generous as you want, as crazy as you want, as artistic as you want, that all of that, the whole range exists...it is that self-determination of your identity, to define what it means to be an American and that nobody defines that for you."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA IN RELATION TO *THE JOY LUCK CLUB*

The history of China's government is a long and complicated one. Controlled by dynasties beginning in the 2400th century B.C.E., each dynasty is marked with great historical contributions and political and/or religious discord. China's history is punctuated with periods of rebellion and war.

Before the 1800s the western powers of North America and Europe had little effect on China. Trade was very limited and restricted to one main port. Western merchant interaction with local Chinese was very limited and controlled. However, resourceful merchants desired to increase trade and achieved that end by supplying opium to China. Eventually the Chinese government outlawed the drug only to have foreign merchants and some Chinese find a way to smuggle it in. Eventually, China went to war against Great Britain in an attempt to end the devastation that opium had wrought in the country. Western powers no longer had little effect on China. Wars with western nations led to repeated defeats and loss of Chinese territory to western countries.

In the 1840s, many Chinese, along with others, had rushed to the western coasts of the United States due to prospects of gold brought on by the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. The temptation was great, and the idea of a new, wealthy life tempted many to leave their homelands and travel to better circumstances. The year 1860 saw another rush of Chinese immigration when work was available on the Transcontinental Railroad, which supplied employment opportunities to many of Asian descent. Tolerance for Chinese immigrants was adequate until gold became harder to find and competition increased. Animosity towards immigrants forced the Chinese from mines, and they attempted to settle into groups within cities such as San Francisco.

Japan also had considerable interest in China. Wars with Japan in 1894 and 1895 resulted in China's loss of Korea and Taiwan. The seemingly constant battles with other nations weakened the Chinese empire, and it seemed likely that China would quickly dissolve into individual colonies, which would be ruled by foreign powers. In some Chinese, however, a strong feeling of unity and nationalism was growing.

By 1905, several revolutionary organizations were insisting that China become a Republic. These organizations banded together and elected Sun Yat-sen a provisional president. His successor, Yuan Shikai, began to act more like a despot than a lawfully-elected president, so the revolutionaries formed the Kuomintang, also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party, again electing Sun Yat-sen as their leader. Their attempted revolt of 1913 failed, and Sun Yat-sen fled to Japan. The Kuomintang eventually gained greater control of China with help from the Soviet Union. Eventually, though, they had to fight to expel communist members from its ranks. By 1922, civil war between the communists and nationalists was widespread. While the Chinese government fought communism within its ranks, Japan seized the opportunity to attack. By 1938, Japan controlled most of eastern China despite efforts of the Chinese government to fight against them. World War II offered assistance in the form of the Allied Powers as long as China agreed to support the Allied efforts. China was unable to offer much assistance to the fight, having had its resources and strength exhausted in the struggle with Japan. It was during this time period that many of the older characters in *The Joy Luck Club* fled their native land to find a new home in America.

The experience of the Chinese immigrants landing at Angel Island was described as vastly different from the immigrant experience at Ellis Island. Chinese immigrants often arrived in much greater numbers, and due to restrictions established in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, were detained longer, and turned away more often than their European counterparts. The walls of Angel Island are covered with poems and words of frustration and encouragement left by those who patiently waited for entrance into the United States.

Some of the ideas explored in Tan's writing in *The Joy Luck Club* mirror those that true immigrants spoke of when they traveled to the United States and what they experienced in their native land, which made them seek a different life.

GENRE: SHORT STORY CYCLE

The Joy Luck Club can ambiguously be considered both a novel and a collection of short stories. Each chapter is a vignette that can stand alone as an independent piece—like a short story—but the total collection of stories can be seen to follow the typical story and character arcs of a novel. The book is, therefore, most accurately classified as a “short story cycle.”

Practice Free Response Items

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 1

The genre of a piece of literature is more than merely its medium of delivery. Indeed, an author's choice of genre is at the very core of the literary experience he or she is composing for the reader/audience, affecting structure, voice, character presentation, even meaning. In a well-written essay, analyze the impact of Amy Tan's choice of short story cycle as the genre for *The Joy Luck Club*.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 2

Well-developed characters are as often revealed by their interactions with other characters as they are by their own words and actions. In a well-written essay, choose a character from Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and analyze how the reader's impression of her is colored by her interactions with one or more other character(s) from the novel.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 3

Even more than providing exposition and backstory, exploring a character's past experiences and relationships often provides a clarity and an understanding to that character's current situation. Select a character from Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and analyze how the past impacts his or her present behavior and circumstances. Do not merely summarize the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 4

Read the passage from the chapter, *Lindo Jong: The Red Candle*, that begins, "The Japanese showed up as uninvited guests," and ends, "I heard later she was so stuck with this miracle of marrying Tyan-yu she became a very religious person who ordered servants to sweep the ancestors' graves not just once a year, but once a day." Then, in a well-organized essay, examine the techniques Tan uses to suggest one of the main themes of the novel. Avoid plot summary.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 5

Read the passage from the chapter, *Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game* that begins, “I was six when my mother taught me the art of invisible strength,” and ends, “She had no words for me, just sharp silence.” In a well-organized essay, examine the methods Tan uses in the passage to depict the opposing cultures that collide and cause the conflict of this episode.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 6

Read the passage from the chapter, *Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between the Trees* that begins, “When I was a young girl in Wushi, I was *lihai*,” and ends, “Now I was a tiger that neither pounced nor lay waiting between the trees. I became an unseen spirit.” In a well-organized essay, examine how the author uses point-of-view and tone to portray the events of Ying-Ying St. Clair’s past and how these events contribute to the overall meaning of the novel.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 1 - 9

Carefully read the passage from the opening of “Feather’s From a Thousand Li” and continues in “Jing-mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club” beginning with “The old woman remembered a swan she had bought many years ago in Shanghai for a foolish sum,” and ends, “And that made us laugh harder, to think a thousand-*yuan* note wasn’t even good enough to rub on our bottoms.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow:

1. Which of the following statements best illustrates the idea of the two diverse cultures the woman is in contact with?
 - A. “The old woman remembered a swan she had bought many years ago in Shanghai for a foolish sum.”
 - B. “But over there nobody will say her worth is measured by the loudness of her husband’s belch, because I will make her speak only perfect American English.”
 - C. “And then she had to fill out so many forms she forgot why she had come and what she had left behind.”
 - D. “In America I will have a daughter just like me.”
 - E. “She will know my meaning, because I will give her this swan- a creature that was more than what was hoped for.”
2. This sentence, “And she waited year after year for the day she could tell her daughter this in perfect American English,” best illustrates which of the following?
 - A. A problem associated with cultural identity.
 - B. The lack of control felt by the speaker.
 - C. The woman’s ignorance of her new culture.
 - D. The daughter’s unwillingness to listen to her mother.
 - E. The daughter’s inability to understand her cultural heritage.
3. The swan best illustrates which of the following concepts?
 - A. Chinese culture collides with American culture.
 - B. The wealth from which the lady came.
 - C. Difficulties faced with the immigration process.
 - D. Expectations always overcome hope.
 - E. Hope can overcome expectations.
4. What does the tone at the end of the passage imply about the speaker?
 - A. Her daughter never understood her.
 - B. She was unsuccessful in her desires.
 - C. She regretted making the journey.
 - D. Her daughter was ungrateful.
 - E. Her hopes were too high.

5. June ends her reminiscence about her mother making soup by saying that she never remembers things that she could not understand to begin with. This statement supports the theme of
- A. resistance to expectations.
 - B. sacrifices one must make for love.
 - C. mother-daughter relationships are difficult and unpredictable.
 - D. hope can conquer any difficulty.
 - E. lack of understanding hampers cultural identity.
6. Based on the following quote, which of the following best describes June's mother, Suyuan?
- “But to despair was to wish back for something that was already lost. Or to prolong what was already unbearable.”
- A. antagonistic
 - B. pessimistic
 - C. propitious
 - D. inauspicious
 - E. benevolent
7. When Suyuan's story tells about the origins of the Joy Luck Club in China, which of the following themes is best illustrated by Suyuan's behavior?
- A. cultural obstacles
 - B. sacrifices for love
 - C. cultural identity
 - D. control over one's destiny
 - E. resistance to expectations
8. What does the food symbolize within Suyuan's tale?
- A. love
 - B. expectations
 - C. hope
 - D. poverty
 - E. wealth
9. The use of the title of “Joy Luck” for the club indicates that Suyuan was
- A. optimistic.
 - B. pessimistic.
 - C. egocentric.
 - D. self-confident.
 - E. savvy

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 10 - 15

Carefully read the passage from the chapter entitled “Ying-ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady” of Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*, beginning with “During the morning meal nobody seemed in a hurry to go to the lake” and ending, “They looked at me wide-eyed, pointed to me, and then laughed and scampered off.” Then select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

10. Based on the language, tone, and details in the passage, the reader must assume that Ying-ying’s mother
 - A. cared nothing for Ying-ying.
 - B. held a high status in the household.
 - C. was another concubine.
 - D. was a servant within the household.
 - E. had given Ying-ying up at birth.
11. The way in which Ying-ying’s mother “disciplines” her for her behavior suggests that the mother
 - A. had more important matters to deal with.
 - B. did not care for Ying-ying at all.
 - C. was cruel and manipulative.
 - D. was a gentle person.
 - E. lacked the intelligence to make a decision.
12. Ying-ying’s shadow is most likely meant to symbolize her
 - A. control over the future.
 - B. inner dark side.
 - C. missing half.
 - D. resistance to expectations.
 - E. sacrifice of her dreams.
13. Ying-ying’s comparison of Amah to a “fan” or a “heater” —a blessing that is appreciated only after it is no longer there—suggests that she
 - A. is destined for failure.
 - B. behaves arrogantly and selfishly.
 - C. loves Amah more than her own mother.
 - D. acts unruly and wild.
 - E. treasures Amah.

14. While watching the boys fish using the bird, which of the following themes can be seen regarding Ying-ying?
- A. sacrifice for love
 - B. control over one's destiny
 - C. the yin and yang nature of people
 - D. cultural identity
 - E. resistance to expectations
15. Ying-ying expects her mother to come scold her, but she does not. What can the reader assume?
- A. Amah did not tell her.
 - B. Ying-ying's mother did not care about her.
 - C. Ying-ying's sisters kept her mother from coming.
 - D. Amah could not find Ying-ying's mother.
 - E. Ying-ying's mother was too important for discipline.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16 - 23

Carefully read the passage from the chapter entitled “Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game” from Amy Tan’s, *The Joy Luck Club* that begins, “I was six when my mother taught me the art of invisible strength,” and ends, “Winston and Vincent decided they were more interested in roaming the streets after school in their Hopalong Cassidy cowboy hats.” Then, select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions below.

16. Waverly’s mother, Lindo, imparts the wisdom that the “strongest wind cannot be seen” implying which of the following ideas for lifelong learning?
 - A. parental authority
 - B. expectations for womanly behavior
 - C. how to be properly Chinese
 - D. acceptable behavior for school
 - E. control over one’s destiny
17. The “invisible strength” Waverly describes her mother possessing suggests that her mother is skilled at which of the following?
 - A. delusion
 - B. manipulation
 - C. compliance
 - D. docility
 - E. animosity
18. The narrator mentions the sign by the turtles in the fish shop in order to illustrate her notion that
 - A. Chinese people have unique tastes.
 - B. Chinese people have a strange sense of humor.
 - C. Americans would never shop in a Chinese fish market.
 - D. Americans do not understand the Chinese culture.
 - E. Chinese people want to offend American patrons.
19. What is Waverly suggesting when she notes the restaurant whose menu is printed only in Chinese?
 - A. There is a prejudice against Americans held by some Chinese.
 - B. Americans have no desire to eat in a Chinese restaurant.
 - C. The restaurant was a “front” for an illegal business.
 - D. The owners of the restaurant did not speak English.
 - E. Americans would never be able to interpret Chinese.

20. Lindo's response to Waverly's question concerning Chinese torture best illustrates which of the following?
- A. Lindo is ignorant of American culture.
 - B. Waverly has no pride in her heritage.
 - C. Lindo's main desire is for Waverly to be the best in school.
 - D. Waverly has no understanding of her mother.
 - E. Lindo has no pride in her own culture.
21. Waverly's confusion about her age—seven by the American formula, eight by Chinese—is an example of which motif?
- A. control over one's destiny
 - B. resistance to expectations
 - C. sacrifices for love
 - D. development of cultural identity
 - E. cultural obstacle
22. Lindo telling Waverly to learn the "American Rules" herself indicates she thinks Waverly
- A. has no control of her destiny.
 - B. will never be able to master chess.
 - C. should be strong and independent despite the expectations.
 - D. will not be able to overcome cultural obstacles.
 - E. should not resist the expectations established for her.
23. What conclusion may the reader draw when Waverly applies her knowledge of "invisible strength," as taught by her mother, to chess?
- A. There is no hope for a daughter who challenges her mother.
 - B. Lindo has no effect on her daughter.
 - C. Waverly's brothers are not as smart as she is.
 - D. The best lessons learned are those directly taught.
 - E. Lindo has great influence on her daughter.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 24 - 29

Carefully read the passage from the chapter entitled “Jing-mei Woo: Two Kinds” from Amy Tan’s, *The Joy Luck Club*, beginning, “I assumed my talent-show fiasco meant I never had to play the piano again,” and ending, “And after I played them both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song.” Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

24. Given the tone of the passage, which of the following best describes how June feels about herself?
- A. jubilant
 - B. disconsolate
 - C. disappointed
 - D. arrogant
 - E. indignant
25. Which of the following best describes the conflict between June and her mother?
- A. two cultures colliding
 - B. control over destiny
 - C. lack of understanding
 - D. miscommunication about expectations
 - E. sacrifices made for love
26. June’s memory of Suyuan’s words when she attempts to give June the piano indicates that Suyuan
- A. is disappointed in June.
 - B. is tired of fighting.
 - C. was despondent over the conflict.
 - D. has given up all hope for June.
 - E. always believed in her daughter.
27. The piano is a symbol of June’s
- A. failure in life.
 - B. ability to manipulate her mother.
 - C. regret of the past.
 - D. mother’s love and approval.
 - E. inability to conquer her disappointment.

28. The care with which June handles her mother's possessions near the end of the passage indicates her
- A. anger at her mother's death.
 - B. inability to move forward with her life.
 - C. hate of her mother.
 - D. disappointment in her failures.
 - E. love for her mother.
29. The tone of the passage transitions from
- A. angry to nostalgic.
 - B. hopeful to depressing.
 - C. optimistic to pessimistic.
 - D. vindictive to pleading.
 - E. indignant to ireful.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 30 - 40

Carefully read the passage from the chapter entitled “Jing-mei Woo: Best Quality” from Amy Tan’s novel *The Joy Luck Club*, beginning, “For our New Year celebration, my mother had invited her longtime friends Lindo and Tin Jong,” and ending, “It is very a very light color now, but if you wear it every day it will become more green.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

30. Which of the following best describes June’s feelings towards the Jong family, particularly Waverly?
- A. envy
 - B. querulousness
 - C. antipathy
 - D. idolization
 - E. appreciation
31. In paragraph 5, June states, “That’s the way Chinese mothers show they love their children, not through hugs and kisses but with stern offerings of steamed dumplings, duck’s gizzards, and crab.” This quote best illustrates which of the following themes?
- A. resistance to expectations
 - B. sacrifices for love
 - C. cultural obstacles
 - D. control over one’s destiny
 - E. cultural identity
32. June’s vivid description of the Jongs’ making their crab choices implies that she perceives them as
- A. impudent.
 - B. demure.
 - C. egocentric.
 - D. assertive.
 - E. arrogant.
33. The way in which Waverly and Rich react to Lindo explaining the “right way” to eat crab demonstrates their problems with which of the following themes?
- A. cultural identity
 - B. resistance to expectations
 - C. sacrifices for love
 - D. control over one’s destiny
 - E. yin and yang

34. The tone of the interactions between Waverly and June indicate that June
- A. is envious of Waverly.
 - B. feels superior to Waverly.
 - C. is more tactful than Waverly.
 - D. believes she is inferior to Waverly.
 - E. is less opportunistic than Waverly.
35. The primary reason that June questions Waverly about the work she has done is because she wants to
- A. be paid for her work.
 - B. flaunt her cleverness to the group.
 - C. show her mother her importance.
 - D. prove Waverly wrong.
 - E. feel superior to Waverly for once.
36. This quotation indicates that Suyuan
- “True, cannot teach style. June not sophisticate like you. Must be born this way.”
- A. is very disappointed in June.
 - B. feels that Waverly is a shallow person.
 - C. sees the importance of assimilation.
 - D. accepts her own culpability for June’s life.
 - E. wants June to be more like Waverly.
37. June’s misunderstanding of her mother’s words is an indication of which of the following?
- A. misunderstanding of her mother
 - B. resistance to her mother’s expectations
 - C. lack of control over her life
 - D. obstacles she encounters
 - E. sacrifices she makes
38. Suyuan’s quotation indicates that June
- “Only *you* pick that crab. Nobody else take it. I already know this. Everybody else want best quality. You thinking different.”
- A. is too obtuse to know a good crab from a bad one.
 - B. can never aspire to be like Waverly.
 - C. is a disappointment.
 - D. will never understand her mother.
 - E. always thinks less of herself for others’ sake.

39. Suyuan's pendant is a symbol of
- A. family wealth.
 - B. cultural heritage.
 - C. disappointment in June.
 - D. unwavering love.
 - E. joy through possessions.
40. Suyuan chose this day to give June the necklace because June needed
- A. the reminder of her Chinese heritage.
 - B. to know she would receive no other gifts.
 - C. to feel more important than Waverly.
 - D. to know her mother was proud of her always.
 - E. a reminder of her lost sisters.

Multiple-Choice Answers with Explanations

1. Although the notion of buying a swan in Shanghai (A) and later giving it to her daughter to explain what she means (E), then filling out forms, forgetting why she made the trip in the first place (C), as well as indicating that the woman will be in America (D) all indicate that the passage will speak of two cultures, the idea of the culture the woman comes from is best expressed with **(B), the idea that the worth of a woman is measured by how loud her husband can belch**. This idea is not one that is held in America.
2. The passage indicates that the daughter grew up knowing only English and not understanding the circumstances from which her mother came. This does not mean that the daughter was *unwilling* to listen to her mother (D). The mother was also comfortable with her own culture, just not the one she had come to, since she could not speak English very well. Also, there is no indication that the daughter was unable to understand her own heritage (E) only that she grew up in a different way. This indicates that she did not have difficulty with cultural identity (A). Although the woman may have felt a lack of control (B) since her daughter was not learning what she wanted her to, the best answer is **(C) the woman's ignorance of the culture to which she now belonged**. The woman was not stupid, she was just not able to grasp the language well enough to express her meaning so that her American daughter could understand.
3. The swan illustrates the idea that **(E) hope can overcome expectations**. The woman has traveled to America with the hope of a better life for herself and her future daughter. Just as the swan was said to be a duck that tried to be a goose but instead became a beautiful swan by trying to stretch its neck farther than it should, the woman wished the same for her daughter. In America, expectations would not overcome hope (D). Chinese culture would surely collide with American culture (A), but this would not be indicated by a swan, a creature not specific to Chinese culture. Although not everyone could afford a swan, this detail alone is not sufficient to assume the woman came from wealth (B). And although the swan was taken from the woman at the immigration station, there were other factors, such as the forms, which would make immigration difficult (C). The swan is not an exclusive indication of immigration difficulty.
4. The passage ends with a description of the woman waiting day after day for the time she could explain to her daughter in "perfect American English." The last paragraph begins with the detail that the woman is now old. Therefore, the reader has no other clues to suggest that her daughter was ungrateful (C) or that the daughter could not understand her (A) because she never tried to explain. There was no indication that the woman regretted her journey (D), and because her hopes were only for a better life and that she could explain to her daughter her intentions, there is no reason to believe her hopes were too high (E). However, because the passage states "she waited, year after year," **the reader may assume that she was unsuccessful in explaining to her daughter (B)**.

5. June states within the passage that she does not understand Chinese expressions. This does not mean that she is resistant to expectations (A) nor that hope can conquer difficulties (D) because she did not understand what her mother meant. It is obvious that June's relationship with her mother was different, but there was no indication from this portion of the selection to indicate that their relationship was unpredictable (C). Although there must have been some sacrifices made, June's giving up and not trying to understand do not mean that she made those sacrifices for love (B). **June's lack of understanding of what was meant by her mother's actions and by the Chinese expression was creating an obstacle to her understanding and development of her cultural identity (E), which was being Chinese.**
6. Antagonistic (A) would indicate that Suyuan was angry about her situation. Pessimistic (B) would indicate that Suyuan did not have hope for a better life, which is disputed by her establishment of the Joy Luck Club to begin with. Inauspicious (D) would indicate that she did not see luck or good fortune in anything, again disputed by her words and action. Benevolent (E) would indicate that Suyuan's intentions were to help others to a better situation. Suyuan did not create the club with the intention of "doing good," rather helping others with their issues was a side benefit from the establishment of the club, not the reason. **Propitious (C)** is the best description of Suyuan given that she states that already things were bad and it would not help to "prolong the unbearable" nor wish for something you could not get back.
7. Suyuan establishes the Joy Luck Club despite the fact that others view celebrating in the face of danger to be inappropriate. Although she is trying to take control of her life, she still has no control over her destiny (D). She is not sacrificing anything for love (C) because she gains nothing from the club except a little joy for a period of time. **Suyuan is fighting against expectations (A)** because everyone expects her and her friends to behave one way, yet they do not. This has nothing to do with cultural identity (B) nor cultural obstacles (E) which the friends have no difficulty with.
8. Suyuan and her friends bring food to the meetings of the Joy Luck Club, despite the fact that they have little food that is worth sharing. Food symbolizes the **hope (C)** that they have for a better life. For a while at least, they can pretend that the food is better than it is. It is the poor quality and scarce quantity of the food that establish that the food cannot symbolize their wealth (E). The quality and quantity of the food would likewise be insufficient to symbolize of their love (A) or their expectations (B) both of which surpass the food. Although their poverty (D) could be expressed through their food, in actuality they are much better off than many others in the city.

9. Joy Luck was chosen for the club because it was an indication of the small joys the friends found in once a week sharing hope that things would get better. This idea would be that of an **optimistic person (A)**. Suyuan looked at the brighter side of things; she did not worry about how awful it was and would continue to be, such as a pessimistic person (B) would do. She did not think only of herself, as indicated by her willingness to form the group in the first place, so she was not egocentric (C). Although she did have the confidence to not worry about what others thought enough to stop the group, self-confident (D) is not the most prominent character trait in this passage. Savvy (E) indicates that Suyuan used her knowledge based on experience to make a decision. She did not. She did, however, seize an opportunity to provide some measure of joy to herself and a few friends in a period of strife.
10. Ying-ying had Amah to care for her needs instead of her mother. She was given beautiful clothes to wear to the festival, which are a mirror of her mother's colors. Also, she refers to her sisters as Numbers two and three, which shows her status in relation to them. These details do not lead us to believe that her mother was a concubine (C), nor a servant (D). Her mother had stitched her clothing so it is also assumed that she did not give her up at birth (E), and this would indicate her care for Ying-ying which would eliminate answer (A), rather that **her mother held a high status within the household (B)**.
11. Ying-ying is unruly and wild and does as she pleases, much to the dismay of Amah. Her mother does not speak harshly to her for having her clothes and hair out of place; rather, she speaks softly and intrigues Ying-ying by explaining how to catch a dragonfly. This actually makes Ying-ying behave in a manner that is more respectful. This use of distraction shows Amah's intelligence, thus eliminating answer (E). Obviously, Ying-ying's mother cares for her, or she would not acknowledge her behavior, or she would speak to Ying-ying in a harsher manner. This would rule out choices (B) and (A), which indicate that Ying-ying's mother had no time for her. **Ying-ying's mother was gentle when she spoke to her and fixed her hair (D)**, which would negate the possibility of her being cruel and manipulative (C).
12. Ying-ying discovers her shadow while trying to catch a dragonfly following her mother's instructions. She loves that it follows her, does what she does, and disappears quickly without notice. The shadow does not indicate her control over the future (A) because she cannot totally control the future the way she can her shadow. Ying-ying is not a bad child, just rambunctious, so the playful shadow is not her "dark side" (B). Ying-ying does not feel as if she is missing or lacking something, so this is not her missing half (C). She also spends time chasing it and indicates her love of the shadow. The other details of the passage contribute to the idea that Ying-ying is quite privileged in the household, so this does not imply that she makes sacrifices (E). However, she states that she loves her shadow that has her same "restless nature." The shadow's playfulness and its unwillingness to be caught would indicate that the shadow symbolizes her **resistance to the expectations (D)** placed on her due to her sex and position in society.

13. Ying-ying likens Amah to a fan in the summer and a heater in the winter. Although her view that Amah exists to make Ying-ying comfortable does show **Ying-ying's arrogance and self-centeredness (B)**, it does not suggest that she will fail at her future endeavors (A) nor that she loves Amah more than her mother (C). In fact, it might indicate an insensitive lack of affection. Indeed, Ying-ying runs from Amah to be with her mother. Ying-ying has already established herself as a spoiled child, but to call someone a convenience does not indicate that she is wild or unruly (D), only that she cannot think of others. Although the two items she speaks of would be luxuries in some households, this comparison is not necessarily flattering and suggests convenience and comfort—often taken for granted—more than luxuries to be treasured (E).
14. The boys using the bird to catch fish is an example of the Chinese culture (D) but not a reflection of Ying-ying. Also, no sacrifice is being made (A) while watching the boys. She is only curious, which leads her to disregard the rules expected of her, thus indicating that she is **resistant to expectations (E)**. This has nothing to do with controlling her destiny (B). The boys' fishing is also not a light and dark side of nature as indicated by yin and yang (C). The boys were only doing as they were instructed to do.
15. When Ying-ying is found covered in blood, Amah is very upset with her, scolding her and saying she looks and smells like evil things. Ying-ying's mother did care about her (B), so she probably would have at least checked in on her to make sure she was all right. The reader also knows from previous information that Ying-ying's mother would discipline her when needed, so she was not too important to do so (E). Although there were many people on the boat, it did not seem too big for Amah not to find her (D). Also, Ying-ying's sisters laughed at her, but there was no indication that they had any interactions with Ying-ying's mother (C). Therefore, the reader must assume that **Amah did not tell Ying-ying's mother (A)** for fear of being punished herself for not watching Ying-ying more closely.
16. When telling Waverly about the strongest wind being invisible, Lindo is telling her that she cannot have the plums; but this is not about parental authority (A). If it were, Lindo could have just said "no." Although whining would be frowned upon in school (D), this too is not the point. Lindo does expect obedient children, but has never indicated that she expects perfect *Chinese* children (C); rather, she only wants the best for Waverly. Wind is not a construct that can be easily controlled and manipulated, so the comparison to control over one's destiny (E) cannot be made with this statement. Thus, she teaches her what she has learned: **that a strong woman gets what she wants by being silent and waiting for the opportunity (B)**.

17. Delusion (A) would indicate that Lindo deliberately works to deceive people. She does not. She only twists situations to her advantage, using others' weaknesses against them. This skill is synonymous with **manipulation (B)** rather than compliance (C), which is not what Lindo does best. Although Lindo is in no way aggressive, her invisible strength indicates that she does not give in easily, which would not lead the reader to the idea of docility (D). Animosity (E) indicates anger towards others. Lindo never gave the indication that anger was a way to achieve goals. Descriptions of Lindo lead one to believe that she is the strong silent type, not letting her anger be known.
18. The idea that Chinese people have unique tastes (A) would be more of an opinion given the person involved. Some Americans may like turtle. The turtles were meant for food, so this would not be a sign of Chinese humor (B). The need for the sign was apparent, indicating that Americans had frequented the shop on occasion (C). And, although most Americans would not be able to understand this unique taste, it does not indicate they would be offended (E). However, having to explain that the turtles were food would indicate **the Americans' lack of understanding for this aspect of Chinese culture (D)**.
19. If Hong Sing's, the Chinese restaurant in Waverly's neighborhood, only prints its menu in Chinese, it is catering to a specific group of people: those who speak Chinese. Otherwise, they would have the menu in other languages. Waverly does not describe the owners, so we do not know whether or not they speak English (D). Also, Americans do stop at the restaurant so we have to assume they are curious and would like to eat there (B). Although Waverly and her brothers speculate that bad men exit from a door marked "Tradesmen," this is only childish speculation, not really an indication of an illegal business (C). Americans' not being able to interpret Chinese (E) implies that they would never have the ability, even if trained properly which is simply untrue. The best explanation for the menu is that **there is a prejudice against Americans (A)** and the owners of the restaurant do not make an effort to attract them to their business.
20. Lindo always wants the best of everything for Waverly but does not understand everything that Waverly tells her. Her declarations concerning Chinese culture indicate that she does have pride in her heritage, negating (E), **but she does not realize that American references to Chinese torture is a stereotype and an insult (A)** and not something to be proud of. She does understand Chinese culture the best (D) and wants Waverly to always be successful (C) and probably does desire Waverly to have a sense of pride for her heritage, but these cannot be taken to suggest that Waverly does not already have pride (B). However, in highlighting her own culture, Lindo does not acknowledge or understand that the Caucasian students are using her culture to tease Waverly.

21. Waverly is confused about how to answer the Santa Claus when he asks what her birthday is because she has been taught both the American calendar and the Chinese one. Her birth date is different for each calendar, and she is unsure of the answer he would like to hear. Her confusion is not an example of control over one's destiny (A) because, already Waverly is struggling to know what others want to hear. Likewise, it is not a resistance to expectations (B) because this is part of Waverly's problem—she tries to be what others want. Developing her cultural identity (D) would not be an issue in this case since Waverly's problem is with this obstacle of **misunderstanding that is caused by her culture** (E), the obstacle being receiving mixed messages from adults and searching for the answer that is correct. Waverly's experience is a result of confusion, not sacrifice (C).
22. When Lindo speaks about the “American rules” and the difficulties that are associated with not knowing them, she is obviously speaking of her past. Lindo has taken control of her destiny and wants to pass on to Waverly that she can as well, which eliminates (A) as an answer. Lindo has high expectations for her daughter and confidence that she can complete anything, so she will surely be able to master chess; she just wants Waverly to discover the rules on her own. This eliminates answers (B) and (D). Already it has been established that she wants Waverly to do what she can to be the best, even if that means resisting expectations (E). So, **Lindo is most likely trying to teach Waverly to be strong and independent and not get consumed by the expectations which are placed on her unfairly** (C).
23. Waverly opens the chapter with the idea that her mother taught her the art of invisible strength. Through Waverly's perspective, the reader begins to see that Lindo did not teach directly, rather used wise sayings and chose moments when her daughter would listen best, which eliminates answer (D). Sometimes it worked, sometimes it did not, but Lindo did have an effect on her daughter, which eliminates (B). Waverly's brothers were smart enough to figure out how to play chess on their own but became disinterested after a time. There is no other indication that they were not smart (C). Waverly is successful in chess and recognizes that this comes from her mother and that she can challenge her mother (A) as long as she is silent and careful in her manipulation. **Lindo's methods of teaching indicate that she did influence her daughter** (E) since Waverly used the strategies she learned from her mother in chess and in battles with her mother.
24. The tone of the passage suggests that June was **disappointed** (C) in herself. Her mother fights to get her to practice piano, make straight A's, be the best she can be; but June sees herself as falling short every time. It is so ingrained in her to fail, that June's response is “I can't” almost every time. This response would not suggest that she is jubilant (A) or arrogant (D), and although she may be disconsolate (B) and is indignant (E) at the beginning of the passage, her mother does give her the piano later. June feels hope that she is not such a disappointment after all, so the overall tone suggests that June does feel disappointment, but still hope that her mother loves her.

25. June expects that she performed so poorly in the talent show, Suyuan would not want to bring more shame to the family by having the situation continue. June does not understand how her mother really feels and does not understand that if she does not do as her mother says, this is a bigger disappointment. **The argument is an example of two cultures colliding (A)** because Suyuan's Chinese expectation of obedience is clashing with June's American expectation of individual choice to fail or succeed. There is not a great lack of understanding (C) or a miscommunication of expectations (D) because both June and Suyuan make their understanding clear during the argument. And although June is fighting for control of her destiny (B), she really does not win because she does not know what her destiny will be, given that she fights so hard to be a failure. She does not make a sacrifice for love (E) because if she sacrificed, she would not have challenged her mother to begin with.
26. Suyuan's statement that June was not trying indicates that **she always believed in her daughter (E)**. She was disappointed in the outcomes and the fact that June did not try, but she was not disappointed in her daughter (A). She did fight some with June, but not in an angry way, for June to take the piano, so she was not just giving up the fight (B), nor had she given up hope (D). June also recognizes that her mother was not sad (C). She just wanted June to try; surely somewhere inside, June would find the strength to be successful.
27. The piano becomes a **symbol of her mother's love and approval (D)** because June realizes that her mother still holds hope for her and is proud of her. The piano is not her life's failure (A) and not a sign of her ability to manipulate her mother (B) because she was not able to do this. June does not seem to regret the past (C); she only reflects on what she remembers and tries to understand her mother and her intentions more. June is able to accept the piano and does play a song she remembers indicating that she can move beyond her disappointments (E).
28. June goes to her parents' house to help her father care for the things that belonged to her mother. She handles the jewelry carefully and even packs up the sweaters—with the colors she hated—in boxes to protect them. She decides to take a few things home with her after hugging them close. All of these actions indicate that **she loved her mother very much (E)** and wanted to remember her. If she were angry (A) or hated her mother (C), she would not have taken the care she did with the mother's belongings. Also, her ability to pack things away indicates that she was moving on with her life (B). She was not dwelling on the disappointments in herself (D) because she remembered the moments spent with her mother in which Suyuan indicated June was not a disappointment to her ever.

29. June begins the passage with the description of her mother and her fight with June over piano practice. In anger, June shouts that she wishes she were dead like the babies in China. When June is older, her mother tells her to take the piano—that it was always hers and always would be. With this, June realizes that her mother will always love her and be proud of her, despite her failures. This is not a hopeful to depressing (B) or optimistic to pessimistic (C) passage. Nor is June vindictive then pleading (D). She does not set out to intentionally hurt her mother. In anger, her words tumble out. She does not plead for forgiveness, rather is surprised when it just happens. Also, although at first June is indignant, she does not remain angry or hurt (E). Rather, she recognizes her mother's acceptance of her. **Angry to nostalgic (A)** best describes how the passage evolves, as June remembers her mother and the things she left.
30. June is specific in her descriptions of the Jong children: Vincent who is thirty-eight and still living at home, Waverly, a tax attorney, and her daughter, Shoshana, who may be bored and wants to bring a movie. She remembers that her mother did not count Shoshana as one who would need a crab, but Waverly may not see it the same way. She also recounts that the Jongs pick the best crabs for themselves first with no regard for the others. June is not envious (A) of them, and she does not whine about them, only gives the details of their behavior, so she is not querulous (B). Idolization (D) indicates that she wants to be like them, and her fight with Waverly later indicates that she does not. She just does not want to feel like less of a person. All of these feelings would not suggest appreciation of the Jongs (E). Mostly, **one gets a sense that June feels antipathy (C)** towards them, particularly in her interactions with Waverly, who is the master of indirect insults.
31. Chinese showing their love through food is an indication of **cultural identity (E)**; it is specific to the culture as explained within the story. There is no resistance to expectations (A), nor a way to control destiny (D), and there is no sacrifice involved (B) so these choices are not appropriate. Again, this is not an obstacle (C), just something recognized as specific to the Chinese culture.
32. June clearly specifies who chooses the best crabs first: the Jongs. This implies that she sees the Jongs as **impudent (A)** because they want the best for themselves with no regard for others. Impudent does imply that the Jongs are arrogant (E), but their lack of regard for others makes impudent a better choice. Egocentric (B) implies a self concern as well, but they do not focus on the self as much as on the family. Demure (C) implies that they are not bold in their actions, which is definitely not the case. And although they are assertive (D) in their actions, the word choice indicates impudence more than assertiveness.

33. Waverly and Rich are disgusted when Lindo says they are not eating the best part of the crab, the brain, which she digs out with her chopsticks while they watch. Their grimace is seen by others, which means they do not care who notices their reaction. This would not indicate a sacrifice for love (C) or control over destiny (D). Resistance to expectations (B) is not appropriate either because they act the way they feel they should. This is also not an indication of the natural way of opposites in nature- yin and yang (E). **Cultural identity (A)** is the best choice showing their lack of understanding for Lindo and the way she behaves.
34. Waverly and June's interactions begin with a comment about June's hair and her hairdresser—Waverly's implying that her hairdresser is better but perhaps too expensive for June. June tries to get Waverly back by bringing up the work she completed for Waverly's firm, but this backfires and Waverly indicates that June has failed once again. The interactions between the two would not indicate that June feels superior to Waverly (B) or that she is more tactful than Waverly (C) because she started the discussion. Although it would seem that June is envious of Waverly (A) because it seems that Waverly is doing so much better, June is happy with her job and work until Waverly criticizes her. Also, June does not indicate that she is less opportunistic (E) because she seizes the opportunity to attack Waverly in front of her family. June tries to climb out on top by making Waverly seem small but is unsuccessful. It is obvious that **June feels inferior to Waverly (D)**.
35. The primary reason June begins the argument over her work is because she wants to make Waverly feel small **so she can feel superior for once (E)**. She does want to be paid (A), and she *does* want to show her importance (C), and she *does* want to prove that Waverly is wrong (D); but her primary motivation is to boost her own confidence while diminishing Waverly. Her cleverness cannot be shown because her attempt fails, thus making (B) an inappropriate choice.
36. Suyuan ends up giving her daughter a prized Jade necklace and tells her that she should not listen to Waverly. The implication is not that Suyuan is disappointed in June (A) nor that she thinks June should conform to Waverly's expectations (C) or be like Waverly (E). Suyuan does not see that anything is wrong with June's life, so she would not accept some blame for the outcome (D). Suyuan is indicating that she is able to see through **Waverly's true, shallow nature (B)**.
37. June does misunderstand her mother's meaning—that June was not as sophisticated as Waverly. She is hurt and takes a deep look at her life and realizes that Waverly is, to a certain extent, correct. This awareness hurts June even more. Her misunderstanding is not a result of resistance to expectations (B), nor does she suffer from lack of control (C) because she has the control; she simply controls her life in the wrong directions. Not attempting to understand, as she frequently does, means that she is not sacrificing for love (E). She also does not suffer from obstacles involving her lack of education (D), **yet her misunderstanding is a lack of understanding of her mother (A)**. She does not understand her mother and the expressions she uses and the things she says, which leads to hurt feelings.

38. Suyuan tells June that only she would pick that bad crab, no one else. Although taken out of context it, could mean that June was too obtuse to pick a good crab (A). Suyuan's further explanation that June was thinking differently in not wanting "best quality" like the others, indicates that she knows June can pick a crab. June is not a disappointment (C), as indicated by the gift of the necklace. Also, Suyuan tells June not to listen to Waverly, which means she has no desire for June to be like Waverly (B). With the gift of the necklace, June begins to understand her mother, eliminating choice (D). **Her meaning is that June thinks less of herself for the sake of others (E).** She recognizes the special characteristic of her daughter to think of others first, not last, as Waverly does.
39. Suyuan gives the pendant to June, saying that it was against her skin and that when June wears it against hers, she will understand what her mother is trying to tell her about what is important. The pendant would not be wealth (A) or joy in possessions (E) because Suyuan has never indicated this was important to her, as Lindo does. The pendant is also not a symbol of cultural heritage (B) because the gift of a necklace could occur in many cultures—it is not Chinese specific. Suyuan is not disappointed in June (C), as indicated by the entire passage and others in the book. The pendant is meant to be a reminder to June that **her mother has always loved her and approved of her (D)** no matter what difficulties they faced in the past.
40. Suyuan has had the necklace for some time and chooses this day to give it to her daughter because **this is the day that June most needs to know how proud her mother is of her (D)**, particularly after the altercation with Waverly. Suyuan recognizes her that daughter is hurt and responds. It is not a symbol of their heritage (A). Based on what we know of Suyuan, she would have given her daughter anything, so it is not an indication that she could get nothing better (B). Suyuan has told June not to worry about what Waverly thought or said, so she would not care to make June feel more important (C). June knew little of her sisters while her mother was alive, so the necklace would not symbolize them either (E).

The Joy Luck Club

“Feathers From a Thousand Li Away”

1. The novel opens in which type of mood?

The woman is searching for a life that is different from her own, thus the novel begins on a hopeful note. She wants more for her daughter than she had. The mood changes somewhat when the woman arrives, and her swan is taken away. Yet, she remains hopeful that she will accomplish her goal, signified by her retaining the swan feather to give to her daughter. Unfortunately, we feel that the woman did not achieve her goal—perhaps she waited too long for just the right moment, because the passage ends with her as an old woman, still waiting.

2. What is the purpose of this short opening to the novel?

The short opening serves to establish the story-telling style of the novel. It also serves to introduce the reader to the mother-daughter dynamics portrayed in the story.

“Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club”

1. What purpose does the First Chinese Baptist Church serve for the Woos, Hsus, Jongs, and St. Clairs?

The church is an area of common ground for the families. It serves to assist them with their immigrant identity and give them a sense of familiarity with their native China.

2. Why would Suyuan Woo not tell the whole story of her life in China to her daughter when she was younger?

Suyuan's story was not a pleasant, happy one. The end is unpleasant and perhaps something that Suyuan was not ready to relive. She may also have felt that June was not yet ready to hear the full truth.

3. What evidence can the reader find of prejudice in Suyuan's story?

Suyuan speaks of traveling to live in the city of Kweilin and what it was like being mixed up as a “city of leftovers.” She describes the city dwellers as looking down on someone else, even though they too were suffering. She hated the Americans who spoke to her disrespectfully and felt that the northern peasants had dirty diseases and were pushy.

4. What irony can be seen in the establishment of the original Joy Luck Club?

The women who were in the original Joy Luck Club were poor and had little food and poorer prospects. They did not know what would happen to them or their families. They were surrounded by the smell of sewer and screams that split the night; they lived in almost constant fear of the bombs. There was no Joy and seemingly no Luck in their circumstances.

5. What can be intimated about Suyuan's personality from the following quotation:

"But to despair was to wish back for something already lost or prolong what was already unbearable."

Suyuan does not dwell in the past. She lives for the present and hopes for a future that will be better.

6. When Suyuan would not speak of the babies, except to say, "You are not those babies," what does one assume?

It is implied that the babies are dead. Even if not dead, something terrible has happened to them which Suyuan does not want to speak of.

7. What does this quotation show about June and her mother?

"These clothes were too fancy for real Chinese people, I thought, and too strange for American parties."

The cultural obstacles that prevented June and her mother from understanding each other occurred early in their life. June had misconceptions about her mother and her friends, but had no way to clear them up, other than to construct a falsehood in her mind to explain that which she did not understand.

8. In present time, how does June remember her mother while at the Joy Luck Club?

June recalls her mother criticizing everyone and everything. Nothing seemed good enough to her mother.

9. What characteristic is revealed about Auntie Lin when she chatters about her family still in China?

It seems that Auntie Lin is bragging when she speaks of her family. She wants to show her own importance and seems to disregard the feelings of the others in the group, despite the fact they have been friends for a long time.

10. What is the overall feeling of June's relationship with her mother based on the memories she shares in this chapter?

June reveals that she feels she was a disappointment to her mother.

11. What does June's trip to China symbolize to the mothers?

June's trip is a symbol of the mothers' relationships with their own daughters. If June can complete the trip her mother wanted to take, and complete the task her mother had left unfinished, then they can still pass on their meaning, culture, and hopes to their daughters. June's completion of this task means that the mothers still have a chance and are not failures.

"An-Mei Hsu: Scar"

1. An-mei calls her mother a "ghost." What does this reveal about her mother?

An-mei speaks of her mother as a ghost and indicates that from an early age she was not supposed to acknowledge her mother's existence, even though An-mei knew her mother was very much alive. This indicates that her mother must somehow have disgraced the family.

2. In what ways did Popo declare her love for the children and why is this ironic?

At times, Popo would make declarations about An-mei and her brother such as they fell out of the "bowels of a stupid goose, two eggs that nobody wanted, not even good enough to crack over rice porridge." An-mei remembers that this was to chase the ghosts away that stole children, so Popo must have loved them. This is ironic because these are insults. Insults would not encourage small children to feel love. Understanding of the purpose of these insults would have to come with age and experience, or perhaps not at all.

3. How could one describe the way in which An-mei was raised by her mother's family?

The tone of the chapter and the details revealed indicate that An-mei was raised in fear. Popo regaled her with stories about how greedy girls would have winter melons growing in them, and those who did not listen would have their brains leak from their heads. She was also warned not to speak of her mother, and she watched as her aunt spoke terribly to her brother about their mother. An-mei lived in fear of her behavior and the repercussions of said behavior.

4. In what way does Popo help An-mei heal after she is scarred by the scalding soup?

Popo takes care of An-mei after her mother leaves, pouring water over her wound as she speaks to her of death. She scares An-mei by speaking of An-mei's death not being important enough to grieve over and finally tells An-mei that even her mother has left because she had used up her tears over so short a life. She scares An-mei by saying that her mother will forget her easily.

5. An-mei's mother does return to Popo's death bed, and An-mei witnesses her mother's slicing her arm and putting it in a healing soup. What does this signify about the nature of a mother-daughter relationship?

Popo and An-mei's uncle and aunt have treated her mother very poorly every time she has returned home. They speak poorly of her and refuse to accept her expressions of remorse. Despite all of this, An-mei witnesses her mother's one last gesture to honor her mother. Despite everything that has happened, An-mei's mother is obviously saddened by her mother's sickness and imminent death.

"Lindo Jong: The Red Candle"

1. What is the significant difference Lindo sees between American ways and Chinese ways?

Lindo's experience has taught her that Americans promise, but then renege on their promises. Americans promise with a value of something that is truly not valuable but Chinese know the true worth of something. Also, Lindo sees that Americans may say what they want to get what they desire. Their words are essentially meaningless.

2. In what way is a female baby valuable in China?

A female baby gains value in relation to her promises of a worthy marriage. Her family holds value in what she can bring to the family from an advantageous marriage arrangement.

3. What characteristics of Lindo's future husband make him undesirable to her?

Lindo does not have much interaction with her husband before her marriage. However, during the times she is around him, she sees him cry like a small child when he does not get his way. She sees him sit on his grandmother's lap, despite his age and the obvious discomfort his weight causes the grandmother. She also watches him turn his nose up to food that is offered no matter what it is. In short, he is spoiled.

4. What details from the story suggest that Lindo has no control over her destiny?

Lindo's life was chosen for her at an early age. Her marriage was arranged when she was still a toddler. She could not get out of the arrangement even if it was disagreeable to her, because to do so would bring disgrace to her family, and she could not do this. Later, she is forced to leave her natural family due to floods that destroy her home. She is made to travel to the home of her future husband, where she must obey her new mother-in-law, even when she is asked to complete tasks that usually servants do. Lindo has to do all of these things and keep a smile on her face as though this were what she desired in life and knew she was lucky to have what she did.

5. In what ways is Lindo like the wind?

The wind is very powerful. It can do great damage and cause great harm to people and property. Yet, the wind cannot be seen. Lindo is like this as well. She has a strength inside that she must control and keep invisible. She knows she must use her mind and power in an invisible way. She hides her strength until she can use them to her advantage. To display her strength would make her less powerful because then others would be able to plan how to deal with her.

6. How does the red candle relate to Lindo's feelings about her life?

The red candle is supposed to represent her marriage to Tyan-yu. To Lindo, it represents the lack of control she has in her life. All the decisions are made for her. She tries to take control and be the invisible wind, but she is tricked. The servant and the matchmaker conspire to hide the fact that the candle has gone out in order to protect their own decisions and words. Again, Lindo lacks the control she fights to have in her life.

7. Why would Lindo be blamed for the fact that no children have been conceived?

Tyan-yu had already been described as spoiled. He would not be blamed for any problems in the marriage. Also, blaming Lindo for the problems with conception would be in standing with the idea that women have less value than men in Chinese society. If it were known that Tyan-yu was making no effort to have a child, he would be disgraced, and that could not be allowed to happen. Therefore, Lindo had to take the blame.

8. Which characteristic helps Lindo gain her freedom from her marriage?

Lindo possesses a great deal of strength and self-confidence, despite her rearing to be obedient. She learns that she can use her invisible strength and resourcefulness to manipulate the powers that restrain her and cause her unhappiness, without bringing disgrace to her family. By observing and being silent, she is able to use the superstitions of her new family to gain her freedom.

“Ying-Ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady”

1. What mood is set by the first four paragraphs of this chapter?

The opening mood of this chapter is depressing and foreboding. Ying-ying begins by saying that she has kept her true nature hidden and that she is lost, unseen, unheard, and unknown. She feels that her daughter is this way as well. This leads one to suspect that their relationship is not a good one and that something bad must have happened in the past for this to occur.

2. How did Ying-ying fight the expectations for her life?

As a child, Ying-ying remembers that she questioned everything, driving her Amah insane with all her questions. She did not want to stand still, she ran, and dirtied her clothes, and mussed her own hair. She did not always follow directions of the adults, or if she did, she quickly did what she wanted to.

3. What is the implication of Ying-ying's referring to her sisters as Number Two and Number Three?

In Chinese culture, men were able to have a “first wife” then wives after that who were named by the order in which they arrived in the family. These women were really concubines through which the man tried to increase his chances of having a male heir. Since Ying-ying did not seem to recall her half-sisters' names, their mother must have had very little status in the family and they held little importance in her life.

4. Based on the details provided in the chapter, what is the nature of Ying-ying's relationship with Amah?

Amah cares for the daily aspects of Ying-ying's life. Ying-ying does not listen well to her and torments Amah by trying to fall off the chair as her hair is being combed. Amah has given up her own children to care for Ying-ying, indicating that she does care a great deal for her. However, Ying-ying sees Amah as a convenience. She pays little thought to her unless she is needed and cannot be found.

5. How do the fishermen know that Ying-ying is not a beggar from the streets?

Ying-ying's feet are too soft and her skin is too pale to indicate that she has anything but a life of luxury.

6. What does the Moon Lady's story indicate about women in Chinese society?

The Moon Lady tells the story of her husband and how he saved the world with an arrow which destroyed nine suns. His gift for doing this act was a peach of everlasting life. The Moon Lady eats the peach as soon as her husband leaves, and she has to rise to the moon away from him forever. The story indicates that women have to rely on men to temper their desires and men have the mind to make the appropriate decisions for women. Women cannot be trusted to do what is right without a man to guide them. The story reinforces the idea that the status of women is lower than men.

7. What does this quotation imply about life and human nature?

"But now I am old, moving every year closer to the end of my life, I also feel closer to the beginning. And I remember everything that happened that day because it has happened many times in my life. The same innocence, trust, restlessness, the wonder, fear, and loneliness. How I lost myself."

The quotation implies that Ying-ying continued to experience many of the same feelings throughout her life and that she made many of the same mistakes. It implies that humans are doomed to repeat the mistakes they make in life over and over.

"The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates"

1. What is the purpose of the short opening to this section of the novel?

The story tells of a daughter who wants to ride her bicycle where her mother cannot see her. She does not want to listen to her mother when her mother says, "no," and she wants to know why she should obey. When her mother replies it is in a book written in Chinese that the daughter is protected from evil as long as she is near the house, the daughter becomes angry and shouts at her mother about her ignorance and rides away anyway—resulting in a minor bike accident. This short story shows the differences that exist in cultures and beliefs. The daughter has been raised in an entirely different culture, one in which she wants proof for the things which she is asked to believe. The mother expects obedience simply because she is the mother. Some of the differences in expectation may be from the difference in age between the two people. However, the cultural obstacles that need to be tackled in order to bring an understanding between the two are difficult to tackle, and the mother seems resistant to teaching her daughter. She expects blind obedience as she was taught.

“Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game”

1. In what way did Lindo's childhood affect Waverly?

Lindo learned at a young age that the best way to get what you want is to stay silent, watch, and wait for an opportunity which can be manipulated to your advantage. She tried to teach Waverly the same thing. She was teaching her obedience, and expectations while telling her that she can have a mind of her own as well, as long as she does not show her strength.

2. Why would Waverly not know that their family was poor?

Waverly was used to her surroundings and was familiar with those in the neighborhood. She remembers that they always had food and this is an important distinction between the well-off and the poor. Her life was similar to the others in the neighborhood, therefore she had no frame of reference.

3. What signs of prejudice can be seen in the opening paragraphs of Waverly's story?

The Chinese neighborhood in which Waverly lived was a strong reflection of the home many of the inhabitants left. It reflected their ideals and culture in many ways. Thus, evidence of prejudice against Americans is everywhere. The fish store has a sign printed in English to warn that the turtles and animals found in the store are food, not pets, a clear illustration of cultural differences and misunderstanding that often result in bias. Hong Sing's restaurant's menu is printed only in Chinese, not English, apparently to discourage tourists from dining there. An example of American prejudice is the tourist who wants to snap photographs of the little Chinese girls in front of the restaurant with whole ducks hanging in the window. He not only considers the Chinese food an oddity, but he speaks to the children in a condescending manner.

4. Why was Waverly confused by a seemingly easy question about her birthday?

Because a child's birthday and age are reckoned differently in the Chinese and Western calendars, Waverly is not certain which “version” of her birthday she is being asked to provide.

5. What does the way in which Waverly chooses her present tell us about her?

Waverly spends some time observing others and seeing that not all of the gifts are good ones. So she waits and comes up with a plan. Once she gets to choose, she takes her time, feeling the presents and trying to guess at their contents, although she does this quickly so that it does not seem that this is what she is doing. Her present choosing gives reader the indication that she is shrewd.

6. What can one assume about Lindo's immigration experience, based on her ideas of chess rules?

Lindo compares chess with life and realizes that, just as one must figure out the "rules" for herself in life, Waverly will have to figure out the rules of chess. Lindo must have experienced some difficulties immigrating to America because she mistakenly states that, if one violates the rules of chess—a game—she will be "sent back," deported back to her native land.

7. How did Waverly use chess skill with her mother?

Waverly was able to apply what her mother had taught her and her skills at strategizing in chess to plan a silent attack against her mother. She used manipulation making sure not to show what she truly desired before hand, in order to obtain what she wished. She also used her mother's vanity and pride with the threat of shame to the family for losing, although she knew that she was good at chess so this was unlikely. The thought of the prestige Waverly would bring to the family was too great for her mother to ignore.

8. How does Lindo's ignorance of chess affect Waverly?

Lindo sees success in numbers, counting the number of pieces that Waverly loses in a game rather than looking at the final result. When Waverly loses fewer pieces, Lindo is proud and feels she has contributed to Waverly's success. However, this only serves to annoy Waverly. She tries to explain to her mother the rules, but is unable to break down the barrier to understanding.

9. How does Lindo use Waverly?

After Waverly becomes chess champion, she has to travel to the market with her mother on Saturdays. There, Lindo would visit shops and announce that this was her daughter, Waverly Jong, knowing the patrons would recognize the chess champion of little Chinatown. Lindo used Waverly to show-off and gain prestige.

10. Why did Lindo not discipline Waverly in an open and strict way when she returned home following the incident in the market?

Lindo did not believe in showing her strength for all to see. She knew that a better way to achieve her goals was to use her invisible strength and patience, even with her daughter.

“Lena St. Clair: The Voice From the Wall”

1. Why did Lena search for answers to questions?

Lena was terrified of the unknown. This was the scariest threat she could imagine- not knowing what was to come. Thus, she searched for the answers so that she could know.

2. How did Lena’s mother establish control?

Ying-ying used fear to control Lena. She told stories of men who would attack her and hurt her.

3. How does Lena rationalize her fear of everything?

Lena makes herself believe that her fears are from her Chinese self. Lena sees herself as pieces from a Chinese side and American side, brought together by her parents. The fears must be part of her Chinese side because the other American children did not seem to have these same fears.

4. It seems that many of the fearful stories Ying-ying tells Lena involve children and child bearing in some way. What does this imply?

Ying-ying’s stories, used to control Lena, usually mention childbirth in some form: The man in the basement will plant five babies in her and then eat all of them; a woman on the street who was obviously sick had met a bad man and had a baby she did not want; a man can grab Lena off the street and make her have a baby that she would kill and stuff in a garbage can. In all of the stories, the implication is that having babies is a punishment, or something that is forced on the unwilling mother. This could clearly imply that Lena may not have been a “wanted” child, that Ying-ying did not conceive willingly.

5. How does Lena use her mother’s ignorance of the English language and American customs against her?

Lena is an obedient daughter because she translates for her mother. However, when she does not like the message or is embarrassed, she will change the true meaning and make up another translation so her mother does not know the truth. On one occasion she used her mother’s ignorance to get something she desired: a metal lunchbox.

6. Why does Lena see danger coming instead of joy?

Ying-ying begins to see the house and items as out of balance and begins to change the furniture and placement of the accessories to help restore balance. Eventually Lena realizes that really her mother is pregnant. However, Lena is worried because her mother does not acknowledge the baby in any way. Instead, she complains of a heaviness about her, and she bumps into things, suggesting that she is in denial.

7. What glimpse does Lena get of her mother's past and fear of babies?

When Ying-ying is in the hospital following the birth of her son who died in childbirth, she begins to rant to Lena in Chinese about another child. She seems delirious in her declarations that she killed this child because she had killed one previously as well.

8. How did Teresa's story help Lena?

Lena had heard the fights between Teresa and her mother through the walls of the apartment and was certain that Teresa was being killed, only to see her the next day on the street. She never could understand until Teresa visited her house and used Lena's window to enter her own bedroom. Lena then heard mother and daughter reconcile and knew that despite the occasional anger, there was still a great deal of love. Lena was able to see that there could be an end to pain and suffering and that eventually the problems with her own mother could be resolved.

"Rose Hsu Jordan: Half and Half"

1. Did An-mei truly lose her faith in God? How does the reader know?

An-mei used to carry her Bible back and forth to church. After she lost her faith, she placed the Bible under a table leg in the kitchen. Although this would seem disrespectful and be an indication that she did lose her faith, she always kept the Bible clean during the twenty years it rested under the table.

2. What characteristics did Rose see in Ted that attracted him to her? Why would they seem appealing?

Ted was brash and outspoken. He was sure of himself and his future and most importantly, he was not from China. Rose was only used to Chinese ways and culture, despite having been raised in America. She saw in Ted all of the desires she had for herself but was not able to achieve.

3. Why did Rose succumb so easily to Ted's decision making?

It was easier for Rose to let Ted make the decisions since he was so much more sure of himself. Also, Rose compared their relationship to one in a fairy tale. Something in her was drawn to his "hero" nature, and her "damsel in distress" nature appealed to him.

4. What distinction is made between faith, fate, and hope when Rose begins her story of the beach trip where they lost her little brother?

An-mei believes that faith in God has made the blessings in her family possible. Rose's young ears hear "fate" instead, because her mother could not make the "th" sound. Later, Rose comes to the conclusion that faith helps people believe that they are in control, but really the decision is already made by fate. Hope just allows for the belief that God knows what he is doing and will chose the correct way.

5. Is Rose's description of her little brothers as "anchors" positive or negative? What does she mean by the comparison?

The "anchor" represents the weight of responsibility. Rose is asked to watch her little brothers while her father goes to fish, and her older sisters travel down the beach to find their own adventure. She is made responsible for her brothers so that she can learn to appreciate her family and what they do for her, having been the "anchor" to her sisters years before. Although Rose recognizes this responsibility, she feels that the weight of the responsibility ties her down and prevents her from seeking adventure and having fun. The comparison is clearly negative.

6. What was the underlying cause of An-mei's fears, as seen through Rose's perspective?

Rose knows that her mother bases many of her fears for her children on The Twenty-six Malignant Gates, a Chinese book that describes terrible dangers that await children on their Chinese birthday. An-mei has never been able to figure out how the Chinese dates corresponded to the American calendar, thus she worried every day about how to keep her children protected. The underlying cause of her fear is her ignorance of the American culture and the barriers created by not understanding.

7. Everyone in Rose's family accepts some blame for Bing's death, despite the fact that Rose was supposed to be watching him. What does this tell the reader about her family?

They were very strong and supportive.

8. Why does An-mei return to the sea the morning following the accident?

An-mei had a strong faith in God and truly believed that her faith gave her family luck. She wanted to prove her dedication and humble herself before God, hoping that God would forgive her and send Bing back.

9. What role does faith play in Rose's life?

Rose feels that fate is expectation. Even when you see the signs and ignore them, there is still hope to change. Faith is the hope that you can undo those expectations established by fate.

“Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds”

1. What is ironic about Suyuan’s idea that June must be a “prodigy”?

Suyuan has no evidence to suggest that her daughter is a prodigy at anything; she simply arrives at the conclusion that June is a prodigy. Also, she introduces June to activities almost at random, certainly with no thought to June’s interests, talents, or desires, and believes that somehow June will prove to be a prodigy at one of them.

2. What is so painful for June about her mother’s insistence?

June seems willing to “be a prodigy” at first and certainly wants to please her mother and have her mother be proud of her. When it turns out that she is not a prodigy, however, the entire episode becomes just another example of her disappointing her mother.

3. Why does June resort to acting bored rather than excited about the tests her mother puts her through?

June realizes that her mother will not give up her notion that June can be a child prodigy. She is tired of disappointing her mother. She knows she will never get the answers correct, so she decides that she will be correct in the opposite way: being incorrect and oppositional. At least that she can get right.

4. What is ambiguous about June’s failure to put forth real effort in the parade of activities her mother exposes her to?

On the one hand, Suyuan chooses activities at random, with little or no thought to where June’s interests or talents might lie. Therefore, there is no real motivation for June to put forth any effort—except, perhaps, to please her mother. On the other hand, had June really tried, she may have found that actually she enjoyed one or more of the activities. She may have found that she had some talent—even if she wasn’t a full-blown prodigy.

5. How, again, do the Chinese and American cultures collide in this vignette?

The Chinese mother expects absolute obedience from her daughter. If Suyuan says that June is a prodigy, then she is a prodigy. It does not even occur to the mother that she would need to consider her daughter’s feelings or desires in the matter. The American daughter, however, has developed a more individual and independent spirit. She does not need to work at anything she does not want to work at.

“American Translation”

1. What difference between American and Chinese culture does this vignette illustrate?

Based on the passage, one can see that much of the Chinese culture focuses on omens and bad luck. Placing a piece of furniture or accessory in a certain place has severe implications for the future. Everything one does has meaning and purpose. In America, furniture just goes where it fits and looks best.

“Lena St. Clair: Rice Husband”

1. In what ways could Lena’s mother predict the future?

Ying-ying saw signs everywhere that had serious implications for the future. She could not predict the weather or anything very specific, but her vague predictions seemed to play out in life.

2. Why did Lena let her relationship progress with Harold the way it did?

Lena insisted that they share expenses of lunches and dinners, and occasionally, she paid for Harold. She felt that she did not deserve Harold and thus had to make it up to him for being with her. She thought that Harold’s feelings were more valuable than her own.

3. What kind of person was Harold?

Harold took advantage of Lena. He played on her weak self-confidence to use her intelligence and ideas but gave her no credit for her contributions to the home or to the work place.

4. Why are Lena’s unspoken excuses—“eliminate false dependencies... be equals... love without obligation”—ironic?

Harold and Lena have created a relationship and life in which each is very dependent on the other for survival. Harold relies on Lena’s money to create the life that he desires, making her believe that these are her desires as well. Harold does not treat Lena as an equal, although he expects her to give an equal amount to the relationship. She only owns a small portion of the house so that he has control.

5. What is Ying-ying really asking when she asks her daughter, “Then why you don’t stop it?” at the end of the chapter?

Ying-ying recognizes that her daughter sees the disaster that her marriage is. Ying-ying simply challenges her daughter to take some action to end the inequalities in the marriage.

“Waverly Jong: Four Directions”

1. What makes Waverly’s mother so disagreeable to be around?

Lindo complains about most things and criticizes the rest.

2. What is Waverly’s real purpose for taking her mother to her apartment?

Waverly is unable to tell her mother the truth about her relationship with Rich. So she wants her mother to infer it for herself. She takes her to the apartment so that her mother cannot deny that Rich is a part of Waverly’s life since his belongings are all over the apartment.

3. How does Waverly describe her relationship with her mother?

Waverly likens her relationship with her mother as the ultimate chess match. She sees her mother as the opponent, each battling to “one-up” the other.

4. At ten, Waverly tries to outmaneuver her mother by first yelling at her in public, then declaring that she will not play chess. What is the ultimately the outcome of her rebellion?

Waverly loses her self-confidence. She becomes aware of her weaknesses and thus allows others to see her weaknesses as well. Before, winning the game was inevitable. Now, winning was a relief for which she was grateful. Soon she was not able to beat even those she had easily beaten before.

5. Waverly blames her mother for ruining her adult relationships. What is the truth?

Waverly cares a great deal what others think of her, particularly her mother. She does not trust on her own thoughts and judgments about situations and people. She is easily influenced by her mother’s feelings and thus reacts to them, ending relationships then later blaming her mother.

6. What is the real problem with the dinner at Lindo’s which is ruined by Rich?

Rich does not understand the clash of cultures in the household. This misunderstanding causes Rich to make missteps that could have been avoided had Waverly been more outspoken and less manipulative.

7. How does Rich deal with Lindo much to Waverly’s horror?

Rich accepts her criticism with a smile and teases her about her outspokenness.

“Rose Hsu Jordan: Without Wood”

1. What is Rose’s mother attempting to teach Rose when she told her to listen only to her mother, no one else?

An-mei is attempting to teach Rose how to be an obedient daughter.

2. Why does Rose make different excuses for her dissolving marriage to different people?

Rose truly believes that the stories she tells everyone are the truth, or at least part of it. She is trying to make a decision within herself. She is also trying to please others, telling them what she thinks they want to hear.

3. Which cultural decisions does Rose value more- Chinese or American, and why?

Rose learns that decisions can be divided into Chinese and American decisions. She did begin to see that the American version always seemed to have better options. However, with the better versions also comes more choices and that makes decision making harder. It is more difficult to choose the right thing when there are so many options.

4. What finally makes Rose make a decision she can live with?

Rose decides to tell Ted that she will stay in the house she loves, and she will not just be put aside so he can follow his own desires. Rose decides that it is time to stand for what she believes and that what is best is to shock Ted and make him the one who is weak.

“Jing-Mei Woo: Best Quality”

1. June encounters a man who wears a necklace similar to hers, and she asks where he got it. She states, “I asked him why, which is a nosy question that only one Chinese person can ask another; in a crowd of Caucasians, two Chinese people are already like family.” Why would this be?

June is describing a phenomenon that occurs among minorities in a society. Even strangers know that they have a certain body of shared experience: including difficulties within their own culture, balancing two cultures, and difficulties assimilating to the dominant culture.

2. June realizes that Waverly still speaks in the same tone she used as a child. What does this imply about her personality?

If her tone of voice is still the same, then she probably has not grown up at all.

3. How does Waverly make June feel?

June feels worthless and stupid around Waverly.

4. Why does June bring up the subject of her work that has not been paid for?

June is used to Waverly making indirect insults. Although the insults are not flagrant, they are insults none-the-less. June attempts to do the same only to have it turned around. She is hoping to make Waverly feel like the underdog for once.

5. June thinks her mother is siding with Waverly when she states that Waverly's "style," is innate and cannot be taught. What indication is there that Suyuan does not agree with Waverly?

June feels as if she is a disappointment to her mother, and Suyuan's words affirm this in her mind. She expects to be chastised but instead learns that her mother knows she thinks differently from everyone else. Suyuan gives June her prized jade necklace as a remembrance that her mother loves her. She also compares Waverly to a crab that walks sideways, not straight ahead. Suyuan does not agree with Waverly. Her words at the dinner table are critical of Waverly. Suyuan is not impressed with Waverly's behavior.

6. What is Suyuan telling June when she says, "Only you pick that crab. Nobody else take it. I already know this. Everybody else want best quality. You thinking different"?

Suyuan sees that June does not always put herself first as the Jongs did at dinner. June is not selfish and wants what is best for others before herself.

7. What is June's "life's importance?"

June's life's importance is understanding that her mother does know who she is and is proud of her. Suyuan's gift of the necklace was to help June remember that her mother loved her no matter what.

"Queen Mother of the Western Skies"

1. What is the purpose of the opening passage for the section "Queen Mother of the Western Skies"?

The grandmother is speaking to her new granddaughter about her laughter. She is questioning whether or not one can learn from her mistakes or is the next generation doomed to the same destiny? Regardless of what the answer is, the grandmother senses that hope is the key—hope that the future can change.

“An-mei Hsu: Magpies”

1. Explain the importance of the turtle story from An-mei's perspective.

An-mei's mother returns to her home in order to honor her dead mother. She is speaking to An-mei to explain that she does understand her pain, because she too has been in the same place. Yet, she wants An-mei to understand that the tears do not achieve anything for the person who sheds them. An-mei's mother is trying to give An-mei the courage and strength to face the future, whatever that future may be.

2. What would happen to An-mei if she went with her mother?

An-mei's mother lives as a fourth wife to a man in a distant city. She is no better than a concubine in reality, even with the title of wife. Her family has disowned her for the shame she has brought to them. If An-mei goes with her, she will be disgraced as well. She would take on her mother's shame and be disowned by her family. Her prospects for the future would be dim.

3. Why do An-mei and her mother dress differently and act differently from the custom of the day?

Wu Tsing, the husband to An-mei's mother, is very wealthy. He made his money from Westerners and thus he took on their style to show his appreciation. His house was in the British Concession of Tientsin which was the best place to live and the closest to the Westerners. His wives and children would be expected to dress and act accordingly.

4. Why does An-mei think that being a fourth wife should not be shameful?

The house in which An-mei lives with her mother is beautiful with the most modern accommodations, such as indoor plumbing. The bedroom is plush and An-mei is able to indulge herself with new delicacies. Servants are everywhere, and she and her mother are treated well.

5. What can be assumed by the reader when the Second wife enters the story?

Second Wife returns home and the servants rush to meet her. Everyone lines up outside to greet her and the returning children. An-mei's mother stiffens when Second Wife emerges from the car and she tells An-mei to call this woman “Big Mother.” As Second Wife makes her way towards An-mei, she gives instructions to servants and An-mei's mother has to back down when Second Wife insists that An-mei keeps the pearl necklace as a gift. It can be assumed that Second Wife has a great position of power within this house.

6. Why is Second Wife so powerful when by law and custom, her rights should belong to First Wife?

First Wife is described as a ghost of a woman who spent her time traveling to Buddhist temples to study. She gave Wu Tsing only daughters. Second Wife is the only wife thus far who has given Wu Tsing a son—an heir to carry on the family name. Thus she holds the power in the household.

7. What was ironic about An-mei's mother's being a disgrace to the family?

An-mei's mother was tricked by Second Wife and raped by Wu Tsing while she was on a journey to honor her first husband. She never intentionally sought the position she was in, but her family's treatment of her caused her to have to accept Wu Tsing's terms for the rest of her life. She had nowhere else to go.

8. What ambivalent position does An-mei find herself in?

An-mei sees and understands more than what the adults think a child can understand. She wants action and justice for her mother. She wants to right the wrongs of the past, yet because of her age, she is powerless to do so and has little understanding of the reasons for why her mother cannot stand up for her own rights.

9. How does An-mei's mother's suicide cause a change in circumstance?

Wu Tsing is very superstitious, especially terrified of ghosts. He is afraid of those who are dead and whom he wronged while they were alive, fearing they may try to settle their grudge against him as ghosts. Therefore, he wants to make things right with An-mei and her brother. By honoring An-mei's mother as a first wife, he would raise the status of both children, and hopefully appease her spirit so that she would not bring misfortune to him.

"Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between Trees"

1. Ying-ying thinks her daughter's job is a dirty word. What does this show about her?

Thinking that "architect" is a dirty word shows Ying-ying's ignorance brought on by the cultural obstacles she faces. Her knowledge of the country and the language is limited, thus she misunderstands and draws the wrong conclusions.

2. What similarities can be drawn between Yin-ying and her mother and Ying-ying and her own daughter?

In remembering the past, Ying-ying's perspective reveals that she did not discipline Lena as strictly as she should have, or thinks now she should have. She felt that her own mother did the same to her. She describes herself as wild and stubborn and wasteful.

3. When Ying-ying tells about her childhood, what does one assume about her as a child?

Ying-ying describes her family as wealthy. They have the finest of everything, such as jars made just for fancy cigarettes. She also tells how she is wasteful and unappreciative of the fine things in her life. She wears holes in her shoes and throws them away. She steals the jar of cigarettes and throws them on the street. She paints a picture of herself as spoiled, self-centered, and unappreciative.

4. What is the cause of Ying-ying's unhappiness?

Ying-ying lived in a fancy house with fancy things where she was allowed to do pretty much as she pleased. She was drawn into a marriage with a man who promised love, but then ran off with other women. Ying-ying punished herself, thinking she was punishing this cruel man, by destroying the child they had conceived.

5. Although Ying-ying's story is sad, her tale has a different tone altogether. What is this tone and what details from the chapter reveal it?

Overall, the tone of Ying-ying's story is arrogant and angry. She seems angry over what has happened to her and uses the anger to attack others. She considers herself attractive and believes that other women try to imitate her. The way she describes her interactions with Lena's father indicate that she really did not like him, only tolerated him because she thought it was her fate. She felt the gifts he gave her were beneath her, but she accepted them anyway. Overall, she seems to think a lot of herself despite the fact that she also describes herself as a ghost of a woman.

"Lindo Jong: Double Face"

1. What is ironic about the way her mother assuages her fears about being kept in China?

Lindo insists that Waverly will not be held in China because no one would ever take her for a native-born Chinese. Waverly's anger and offense are ironic because, for her entire life, Waverly has looked down upon and denied her Chinese heritage. She has intentionally made herself American and now is offended that she would not be taken for Chinese.

2. What does Lindo mean when she states, "I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character. How could I know these two things do not mix?"

Lindo is realizing that one's character is often determined by one's circumstances, that the "Chinese character" she desired for her children was probably the result of the lack of resources and individual freedom in China. A child might as well be obedient to her parents because there was nothing at all to be gained by disobedience. "American circumstances," however, provide more opportunities: for education, employment, a more diverse pool of potential spouses. Faced with these opportunities, the child who develops the "typical" Chinese obedience and humility that Lindo seems to value is actually handicapped.

3. In what ways does Waverly disgrace her mother?

Waverly takes her mother to her own hairdresser to get her hair done before the wedding. When she is there, she treats her mother like the child, asking questions, but then answering for her, speaking as if Lindo cannot hear, and acting as if she has to translate for her.

4. Lindo pays someone to help her with forms and learning what she needs to know so she can stay in America. What does this show about her?

Lindo is resourceful. She is a survivor and knows how to fight for what she wants, even if she is not open about it.

5. Lindo sees a sign that says, "Save Today for Tomorrow, at Bank of America" and thinks this is where American people worship. What is Lindo's opinion of Americans?

Lindo recognizes that Americans hold great value in money.

6. What distinction does Lindo make between her sons and Waverly?

When Lindo named her sons, she chose the names thinking that in some way, with her accented English, the names sounded as if they had something to do with money. At each boy's birth, she had an interest in money for different reasons. By the time Waverly was born, Lindo saw herself in the baby and changed her hopes. She wanted everything to be the best for her daughter, so she could live vicariously through Waverly.

7. Waverly describes being two-faced to her mother stating that, "It means we're looking one way, while following another. We're for one side and also the other. We mean what we say, but our intentions are different." How does Waverly see the idea of being two-faced?

Waverly sees being two-faced as an asset. She knows that it means being manipulative and sometimes underhanded, but all is forgivable if one's needs and wishes are met. In Waverly's eyes, the means definitely justify the end.

“Jing-Mei Woo: A Pair of Tickets”

1. June resists being Chinese despite the disagreements with her mother when Suyuan states that being Chinese is genetic. Why does June later regret these disagreements?

Once Suyuan is dead, June realizes that the one person who could explain many things about being Chinese to her is now gone. She has missed her opportunity to learn from her mother because she was resistant to learning her cultural identity.

2. Why does June insist that her aunts tell her sisters the truth about their mother despite the fact that they may hate her?

June realizes that her sisters in China believe that their mother is alive, since her aunts have not told them otherwise in their letters. June feels that it is unfair for her to have to break this news to them in person.

3. Despite fearing what her sisters will think, June makes the trip to China. What does this illustrate?

June is willing to tackle her own fears and make sacrifices for her love for her mother. Even though her mother is gone, June will honor her by fulfilling her life's desire, finding her missing children.

4. Why is June concerned about the hotel?

June is afraid to give the wrong impression to the relatives she has just met. She does not want to be considered a “rich American” who cannot stand to be in anything other than luxury even for one night.

5. June expects many things when she goes to China. What happens to these expectations?

June is surprised when she goes to China. She sees a city that looks like many American cities, and the hotel is excellent for a very cheap price. She expects her first meal to be classically Chinese, yet her family insists on something American. Her American upbringing has not prepared her for this cultural journey. Her expectations are based solely on ideas that are from people who have never been to China.

6. How is June's Chinese name significant to the person she is and the relationship she held with her mother?

“Jing” means something pure and best quality. “Mei” means “younger sister.” Her name indicates all the things her mother wished for her, since the mother could not be with her other daughters. Jing-mei was the best quality younger sister. It was a way to remember her other daughters. June struggles with this idea because she continues to fear that she was a disappointment to her mother.

7. Why was abandoning her children not a disgraceful act for Suyuan?

Suyuan believed that she was going to die. She was very sick when she was trying to get her children to safety. Chinese superstition believed that, if Suyuan died beside her infant daughters, her spirit would haunt them, and no one would want to care for them. Abandoning them was a gift, not a disgrace.

8. What does the reader assume happens once June finds her sisters?

One may assume that June and her sisters develop a lasting relationship in remembering their mother. June is able to bring their mother to life for them, sharing what she knows. The sisters are overjoyed to see June, not angry. This indicates that they continue the relationship happily.

The Joy Luck Club

“Feathers From a Thousand Li Away”

1. The novel opens in which type of mood?

2. What is the purpose of this short opening to the novel?

“Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club”

1. What purpose does the First Chinese Baptist Church serve for the Woos, Hsus, Jongs, and St. Clairs?

2. Why would Suyuan Woo not tell the whole story of her life in China to her daughter when she was younger?

3. What evidence can the reader find of prejudice in Suyuan’s story?

4. What irony can be seen in the establishment of the original Joy Luck Club?

5. What can be intimated about Suyuan’s personality from the following quotation:

“But to despair was to wish back for something already lost or prolong what was already unbearable.”

6. When Suyuan would not speak of the babies, except to say, “You are not those babies,” what does one assume?

7. What does this quotation show about June and her mother?

“These clothes were too fancy for real Chinese people, I thought, and too strange for American parties.”

8. In present time, how does June remember her mother while at the Joy Luck Club?

9. What characteristic is revealed about Auntie Lin when she chatters about her family still in China?

10. What is the overall feeling of June’s relationship with her mother based on the memories she shares in this chapter?

11. What does June’s trip to China symbolize to the mothers?

“An-Mei Hsu: Scar”

1. An-mei calls her mother a “ghost.” What does this reveal about her mother?

2. In what ways did Popo declare her love for the children and why is this ironic?

3. How could one describe the way in which An-mei was raised by her mother’s family?

4. In what way does Popo help An-mei heal after she is scarred by the scalding soup?

5. An-mei’s mother does return to Popo’s death bed, and An-mei witnesses her mother’s slicing her arm and putting it in a healing soup. What does this signify about the nature of a mother-daughter relationship?

“Lindo Jong: The Red Candle”

1. What is the significant difference Lindo sees between American ways and Chinese ways?

2. In what way is a female baby valuable in China?

3. What characteristics of Lindo's future husband make him undesirable to her?

4. What details from the story suggest that Lindo has no control over her destiny?

5. In what ways is Lindo like the wind?

6. How does the red candle relate to Lindo's feelings about her life?

7. Why would Lindo be blamed for the fact that no children have been conceived?

8. Which characteristic helps Lindo gain her freedom from her marriage?

“Ying-Ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady”

1. What mood is set by the first four paragraphs of this chapter?

2. How did Ying-ying fight the expectations for her life?

3. What is the implication of Ying-ying's referring to her sisters as Number Two and Number Three?

4. Based on the details provided in the chapter, what is the nature of Ying-ying's relationship with Amah?

5. How do the fishermen know that Ying-ying is not a beggar from the streets?

6. What does the Moon Lady's story indicate about women in Chinese society?

7. What does this quotation imply about life and human nature?

“But now I am old, moving every year closer to the end of my life, I also feel closer to the beginning. And I remember everything that happened that day because it has happened many times in my life. The same innocence, trust, restlessness, the wonder, fear, and loneliness. How I lost myself.”

“The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates”

1. What is the purpose of the short opening to this section of the novel?

“Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game”

1. In what way did Lindo’s childhood affect Waverly?

2. Why would Waverly not know that their family was poor?

3. What signs of prejudice can be seen in the opening paragraphs of Waverly’s story?

4. Why was Waverly confused by a seemingly easy question about her birthday?

5. What does the way in which Waverly chooses her present tell us about her?

6. What can one assume about Lindo's immigration experience, based on her ideas of chess rules?

7. How did Waverly use chess skill with her mother?

8. How does Lindo's ignorance of chess affect Waverly?

9. How does Lindo use Waverly?

10. Why did Lindo not discipline Waverly in an open and strict way when she returned home following the incident in the market?

“Lena St. Clair: The Voice From the Wall”

1. Why did Lena search for answers to questions?

2. How did Lena’s mother establish control?

3. How does Lena rationalize her fear of everything?

4. It seems that many of the fearful stories Ying-ying tells Lena involve children and child bearing in some way. What does this imply?

5. How does Lena use her mother's ignorance of the English language and American customs against her?

6. Why does Lena see danger coming instead of joy?

7. What glimpse does Lena get of her mother's past and fear of babies?

8. How did Teresa's story help Lena?

“Rose Hsu Jordan: Half and Half”

1. Did An-mei truly lose her faith in God? How does the reader know?

2. What characteristics did Rose see in Ted that attracted him to her? Why would they seem appealing?

3. Why did Rose succumb so easily to Ted's decision making?

4. What distinction is made between faith, fate, and hope when Rose begins her story of the beach trip where they lost her little brother?

5. Is Rose's description of her little brothers as "anchors" positive or negative? What does she mean by the comparison?

[illegible]

6. What was the underlying cause of An-mei's fears, as seen through Rose's perspective?

[illegible]

7. Everyone in Rose's family accepts some blame for Bing's death, despite the fact that Rose was supposed to be watching him. What does this tell the reader about her family?

[illegible]

8. Why does An-mei return to the sea the morning following the accident?

[illegible]

9. What role does faith play in Rose's life?

[illegible]

“Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds”

1. What is ironic about Suyuan’s idea that June must be a “prodigy”?

2. What is so painful for June about her mother’s insistence?

3. Why does June resort to acting bored rather than excited about the tests her mother puts her through?

4. What is ambiguous about June’s failure to put forth real effort in the parade of activities her mother exposes her to?

5. How, again, do the Chinese and American cultures collide in this vignette?

“American Translation”

1. What difference between American and Chinese culture does this vignette illustrate?

“Lena St. Clair: Rice Husband”

1. In what ways could Lena’s mother predict the future?

2. Why did Lena let her relationship progress with Harold the way it did?

3. What kind of person was Harold?

4. Why are Lena’s unspoken excuses—“eliminate false dependencies... be equals... love without obligation”—ironic?

5. What is Ying-ying really asking when she asks her daughter, “Then why you don’t stop it?” at the end of the chapter?

“Waverly Jong: Four Directions”

1. What makes Waverly’s mother so disagreeable to be around?

2. What is Waverly’s real purpose for taking her mother to her apartment?

3. How does Waverly describe her relationship with her mother?

4. At ten, Waverly tries to outmaneuver her mother by first yelling at her in public, then declaring that she will not play chess. What is the ultimately the outcome of her rebellion?

5. Waverly blames her mother for ruining her adult relationships. What is the truth?

6. What is the real problem with the dinner at Lindo’s which is ruined by Rich?

7. How does Rich deal with Lindo much to Waverly’s horror?

“Rose Hsu Jordan: Without Wood”

1. What is Rose’s mother attempting to teach Rose when she told her to listen only to her mother, no one else?

2. Why does Rose make different excuses for her dissolving marriage to different people?

3. Which cultural decisions does Rose value more- Chinese or American, and why?

4. What finally makes Rose make a decision she can live with?

“Jing-Mei Woo: Best Quality”

1. June encounters a man who wears a necklace similar to hers, and she asks where he got it. She states, “I asked him why, which is a nosy question that only one Chinese person can ask another; in a crowd of Caucasians, two Chinese people are already like family.” Why would this be?

2. June realizes that Waverly still speaks in the same tone she used as a child. What does this imply about her personality?

3. How does Waverly make June feel?

4. Why does June bring up the subject of her work that has not been paid for?

5. June thinks her mother is siding with Waverly when she states that Waverly's "style," is innate and cannot be taught. What indication is there that Suyuan does not agree with Waverly?

6. What is Suyuan telling June when she says, "Only you pick that crab. Nobody else take it. I already know this. Everybody else want best quality. You thinking different"?

7. What is June's "life's importance?"

“Queen Mother of the Western Skies”

1. What is the purpose of the opening passage for the section “Queen Mother of the Western Skies”?

“An-meí Hsu: Magpies”

1. Explain the importance of the turtle story from An-meí’s perspective.

2. What would happen to An-meí if she went with her mother?

3. Why do An-meí and her mother dress differently and act differently from the custom of the day?

4. Why does An-meí think that being a fourth wife should not be shameful?

5. What can be assumed by the reader when the Second wife enters the story?

6. Why is Second Wife so powerful when by law and custom, her rights should belong to First Wife?

7. What was ironic about An-mei's mother's being a disgrace to the family?

8. What ambivalent position does An-mei find herself in?

9. How does An-mei's mother's suicide cause a change in circumstance?

“Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between Trees”

1. Ying-ying thinks her daughter’s job is a dirty word. What does this show about her?

2. What similarities can be drawn between Yin-ying and her mother and Ying-ying and her own daughter?

3. When Ying-ying tells about her childhood, what does one assume about her as a child?

4. What is the cause of Ying-ying’s unhappiness?

5. Although Ying-ying’s story is sad, her tale has a different tone altogether. What is this tone and what details from the chapter reveal it?

“Lindo Jong: Double Face”

1. What is ironic about the way her mother assuages her fears about being kept in China?

2. What does Lindo mean when she states, “I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character. How could I know these two things do not mix?”

3. In what ways does Waverly disgrace her mother?

4. Lindo pays someone to help her with forms and learning what she needs to know so she can stay in America. What does this show about her?

5. Lindo sees a sign that says, "Save Today for Tomorrow, at Bank of America" and thinks this is where American people worship. What is Lindo's opinion of Americans?

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7. Why was abandoning her children not a disgraceful act for Suyuan?

8. What does the reader assume happens once June finds her sisters?

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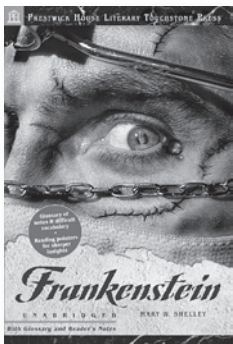
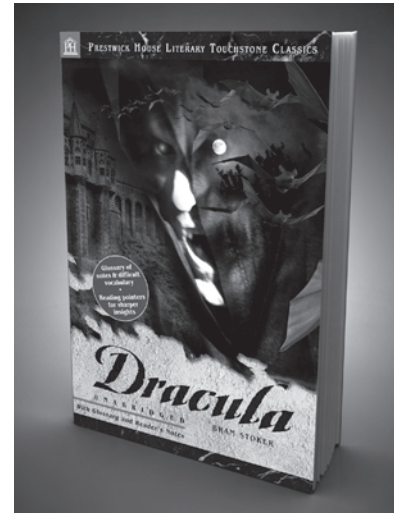
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