

Chapter Questions: The Joy Luck Club

If you find that you are having a hard time comprehending the main ideas in each chapter, then use these questions to bolster your understanding. The following is a list of suggestions for use:

Preview the questions before you read: Use the questions to clue yourself in on what main ideas or events to be looking for while you read.

Quiz yourself after you read: After you read the chapter, see if you can answer each of the questions. If you can't, go back and look for the answer to strengthen your understanding of the chapter.

Take notes and reflect: You may also notice that some of the questions included in this packet will clue you in on important themes and symbols. Use the questions as a resource of ideas for your chapter annotations.

***REMEMBER...your personal responses to the text are most important. So, don't let these questions get in the way of your own creative thought and interpretation.**

希望

DO NOT ANXIOUSLY HOPE FOR THAT WHICH IS NOT YET COME;
DO NOT VAINLY REGRET WHAT IS ALREADY PAST.

Hope

SECTION 1 - FEATHERS FROM A THOUSAND LI AWAY

The Joy Luck Club told by Jing-mei Woo

1. Why was Jing-mei taking part in the Joy Luck Club?
2. How many Joy Luck Clubs have there been?
3. Why did Jing-mei's mother form the Joy Luck Club in Kweilin?
4. Why did the women in the club call it Joy Luck?
5. What surprising information did Jing-mei finally learn from her mother's story about leaving Kweilin?
6. How do the people at the San Francisco Joy Luck Club eat?
7. Why did "the aunties" give Jing-mei \$1200 in an envelope?
8. What do "the aunties" want Jing-mei to tell her sisters in China?
9. What surprising thing does Jing-mei tell her "aunties" about her own mother?
10. What does Jing-mei promise "the aunties" at the end of the story?

Scar told by An-Mei Hsu

1. What did An-mei's mother do to become a ghost?
2. What did it mean in An-mei's family to become a ghost?
3. Why did An-mei's grandmother say bad things about her own grandchildren?
4. What happened to the greedy girl in An-mei's grandmother's story?
5. In An-mei's grandmother's story, what happened to the little girl who refused to listen to her elders?
6. Why was An-mei told never to say her mother's name?
7. In Scar, what is the definition of shou?
8. What is An-mei's "know-nothing face"?
9. What does An-mei remember about her mother from when An-mei was four?
10. After An-mei was burned, what did her grandmother tell her that made her get better fast?
11. What does An-mei's mother do to show her love and respect for her own mother?
12. In the story, what does An-mei learn from her own mother?

The Red Candle told by Lindo Jong

1. How did Lindo Jong become engaged to her future husband, Tyan-yu?
2. How did Lindo first become a member of the Huang household?
3. What gift did Lindo's mother give to Lindo as the family moved away?
4. How did Tyan-yu make Lindo cry the first night she lived in his house?
5. What did Lindo's mother-in-law instruct the servants to teach Lindo?
6. What promise did Lindo make to herself on her wedding day?
7. Why was Lindo unafraid while she was led down a path on her wedding day?
8. What was the red candle's significance and what was supposed to happen to it?
9. What lie did the matchmaker's servant tell?
10. What mark on Tyan-yu did Lindo use to "prove" her marriage was rotting?
11. How did Lindo escape from the marriage to Tyan-yu?
12. What is the significance in the story of the Festival of Pure Brightness?

The Moon Lady told by Ying-ying St. Clair

1. What does Ying-yin say her earliest recollection is?
2. Why does the Amah tell Ying-ying that she must keep her wishes secret?
3. How did Ying-ying wind up in the water?
4. What is the ultimate fate of the Moon Lady?
5. What was the effect on Ying-ying of listening to the Moon Lady's story?
6. What does the Moon Lady represent for Ying-ying?
7. What wish did Ying-ying ask for from the Moon Lady?
8. How does Ying-ying's story reflect her life and that of her daughter?

SECTION 2 - THE TWENTY-SIX MALIGNANT GATES

Rules of the Game told by Waverly Jong

1. What was "the art of invisible strength" that Waverly's mother taught her?
2. How did Waverly's mother demonstrate the art of invisible strength?
3. How did Waverly learn to play expert chess?
4. What would Waverly's mother say when she attended Waverly's chess exhibition games outdoors?
5. Why did Waverly run away?
6. How did Waverly's mother treat her when she returned home after running away?
7. What was Waverly's mother's view of "rules"?
8. At the end of the story, who is Waverly's imaginary chess opponent?

The Voice from the Wall told by Lena St. Clair

1. What does the dead beggar say when he returns?
2. How did the American immigration authorities categorize Lena's mother?
3. Why does Lena want to know "the worst possible thing that can happen" to her?
4. Why did Lena start telling lies?
5. What was Lena's great hope when the family moved out of Oakland?
6. What did Lena hear through the wall of the new apartment?
7. Why did the girl from next door leave her own apartment?
8. How did the girl from next door get out of Lena's bedroom?
9. What happened later that night after the girl and her mother had argued?
10. What hope did Lena have after watching the girl next door with her mother?

Half and Half told by Rose Hsu Jordan

1. What did Rose's mother use to carry to church services at the First Chinese Baptist Church?
2. What makes Rose sure that her mother knows the Bible is still under a table leg in her kitchen?
3. How did the decision making start and then change in Rose's marriage?
4. What did Rose find out "faith" was?
5. What was the name of Rose's mother's little Chinese book and what was in it?
6. What did Rose and her mother do early on the morning after Rose's brother drowned?
7. Why did Rose's mother throw her blue sapphire ring into the water?
8. Why did Rose's mother throw an inner tube attached to a fishing pole into the water?
9. When Rose took the Bible out from under the table leg, what did she find written in it?
10. Why was Bing's name written in pencil?

Two Kinds told by Jing-mei Woo

1. What made Jing-mei's mother think that Jing-mei could be a prodigy?
2. What did Jing-mei's mother lose in China?
3. How did Jing-mei first envision herself as a prodigy?
4. What would perfection have meant for Jing-mei while she was waiting to become a prodigy?
5. Why did Jing-mei's mother read so many magazines?
6. What happened to all of Jing-mei's mother's early efforts to find out what kind of prodigy Jing-mei should be?
7. What was wrong with Jing-mei's piano teacher and how did his defect affect her playing?
8. What piece did Jing-mei select for the talent show in the church hall?
9. Who was the only person in the church hall who thought Jing-mei's performance was good?
10. What did Jing-mei realize after she had played both "Pleading Child" and "Perfectly Contented" a few times?

SECTION 3 - AMERICAN TRANSLATION

Rice Husband told by Lena St. Clair

1. What does the saying, "If the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold," mean?
2. What does Lena's mother see?
3. What are the three things that Lena's mother predicted that came true?
4. What does Lena think her mother will see during her visit with her and Harold?
5. What physical aspect of Lena's house does her mother connect with a feeling?
6. What food does Harold not realize that Lena doesn't eat?
7. Why does Harold hate it when Lena cries?
8. When Lena says, "I knew it would happen," what question does her mother ask?
9. Why does the marble end table collapse?

Four Directions told by Waverly Jong

1. What did Waverly want to tell her mother at lunch?
2. What did Waverly's mother do when she found that Waverly had eloped with her first husband?
3. Why did Waverly first stop playing chess as a child?
4. What special thing could Waverly's mother do to change Waverly's view of a person?
5. What mistake did Rich make about the wine at the dinner with Waverly's family?
6. Why was Waverly so anxious that her mother was the queen while she, Waverly, was the pawn?
7. In what way was Waverly confused about where her mother came from?
8. What trip is Waverly contemplating at the end of the story and with whom would she travel?

Without Wood told by Rose Hsu Jordan

1. When Rose was little, what did she believe?
2. Why did Rose's mother say that Rose was "without wood"?
3. Why did Rose stay in bed for three days?
4. Where did Rose tell Ted she was going to live?
5. When Rose says that Ted is **hulihudu**, what does she mean?
6. What does Rose's mother plan in Rose's garden?

Best Quality by Jing-mei Woo

1. What is Jing-mei's "life's importance" gift from her mother?
2. Why did Jing-mei's mother not want to keep the crab that had lost a leg?
3. Why did Jing-mei leave the room while the crabs were being steamed?
4. How do Jing-mei and her mother disagree in regard to Waverly Jong?
5. How did Waverly insult Jing-mei professionally?
6. Who got the crab with the missing leg?

SECTION 4 - QUEEN MOTHER OF THE WESTERN SKIES

Magpies told by An-mei Hsu

1. In what way does An-mei say that all people born girls are alike?
2. What did it mean to An-mei to be raised "the Chinese way"?
3. How did An-mei's mother dishonor her widowhood?
4. What did the turtle in the pond do to An-mei's tears?
5. What happened to the eggs that poured out of the turtle's beak?
6. What emotion described the magpies?
7. What did the story of the turtles and the magpies teach An-mei's mother to do?
8. How did An-mei learn not to listen to something meaningless calling to her?
9. Why did An-mei's mother send An-mei out of their bedroom at night?
10. Why did An-mei's mother become Wu Tsing's concubine?
11. How did An-mei's mother die?
12. What promise did Wu Tsing make to An-mei's mother after she died?
13. What does An-mei say that her daughter's psychiatrist is?
14. How did the tired Chinese peasants get rid of the birds that were drinking their tears and eating their seeds?

Waiting Between the Trees told by Ying-ying St. Clair

1. How has Lena St. Clair unknowingly insulted her mother by giving her the guest bedroom in her home?
2. What did Lena do when she was born?
3. When Ying-ying was a young girl in Wushi, she was **lihai**. What does that mean?
4. When did Ying-ying begin to know things before they happened?
5. What sign happened to convince Ying-ying that she would marry the man who was a guest at her house?
6. Why did Ying-ying's husband leave her?
7. What is the difference between what Lena sees in her mother and what her mother really is?
8. Why, according to Ying-ying, is the tiger gold and black?
9. Why does Ying-ying abort her first child?
10. What did Ying-ying do for ten years at the country home of her cousin's family?
11. What did Ying-ying give up when she married St. Clair?
12. At the end of the story, what does Ying-ying want to do for her daughter?

Double Face told by Lindo Jong

1. Why does Waverly Jong want to go to China?
2. Why does Waverly especially want to be Chinese?
3. Why could Lindo's children not have American circumstances and Chinese character?
4. Who first taught Lindo about America?
5. What kind of job did Lindo get in the cookie factory?
6. What was the fortune inside the cookie that Lindo gave to Tin?
7. Why does Waverly like the fact that she and her mother have crooked noses?
8. At the end of the story, what is Lindo wondering about?

A Pair of Tickets told by Jing-mei Woo

1. Why does Jing-mei feel different as her train leaves the Hong Kong border and enters Shenzhen, China?
2. Where is Jing-mei meeting her two half-sisters?
3. How did the half-sisters learn that their mother was dead?
4. How did Jing-mei learn the details of what happened to her half-sisters?
5. Why did Jing-mei's mother actually leave the babies?
6. Who found the babies?
7. What are the two different Chinese meanings of Suyuan, Jing-mei's mother's name?
8. What are the meanings of Jing-mei's name?

MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

1. Which story is your favorite and why? Do you prefer the stories set in China or California?
2. How are the notions of balance (yin and yang) and energy flow (feng shui) an important theme in the novel?
3. Does the Chinese notion of balance and flow translate to the characters' lives in America?
4. *The Joy Luck Club* was written as a collection of short stories. Is the order important? Could this have been told as a single story? What would that change?
5. By telling a story from the perspective of Chinese immigrants and first-generation Americans, what does the book reveal about American culture?
6. Although June is not sure why her mother gives her the jade necklace, she assumes it's because of her humiliation by Waverly. Is she right?
7. How do the struggles of the daughters mirror the tragedies of their mothers? What does this suggest about the relationships between parents and children?
8. Ying-ying sees herself as both a tiger and a ghost. Why does she use these characterizations? How would Lena? How would they be different?
9. The "broken English" of the mothers is often more colorful than the "perfect English" of their daughters. How does the way the mothers choose to express themselves reflect their identities? What is lost in translation?
10. How do the mothers decide to use their mahjong winnings? Does this show assimilation? Why, or why not?
11. The ritual of mahjong is central to the story. What rituals do American women perform that reflect culture and identity?