

Study Guide for Jean Kwok's *GIRL IN TRANSLATION*
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Hostos Book-of-the-Semester Project
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I. Pre-reading Activities

A. Considering the Title: “Girl in Translation”

Kimberly Chang is Jean Kwok’s “girl in translation.” Kimberly comes to New York from Hong Kong with her mom when she is 11 years old. In this gripping debut novel, Kimberly tells the story of her struggles as an immigrant.

Why do you believe Jean Kwok entitled the novel “Girl in Translation?” What does the title mean to you? What kinds of challenges do you imagine Kimberly had to face in order to merit this “name?”

B. Mapping the Action: From Hong Kong to New York



Map of China

Examine this map of China, and answer these questions:

1. What countries are China’s neighbors? What continent must you visit to go to see these countries?
2. Locate Hong Kong and other famous Chinese cities that you may have heard of. Circle those cities. Where are they located in China? Inland ? On the coast? In the west? In the east? In the north? In the south?

What about Hong Kong? Is Hong Kong in the interior of China? On the coast? In the east? In the north? In the south?

3. Why do you think Hong Kong has been the hub of financial activity and commerce throughout the centuries? How do you believe its geographical location may have contributed to this reputation? Would you say the same thing about New York in this regard?

4. If you travel east, how far is Hong Kong from Hawaii? From California? From New York? Find this information on the Internet.

5. Is physical distance the only kind of “distance” immigrants travel when going from their native to adopted countries? In what other ways does distance play a role in immigrants’ lives? How, in fact, may the children and adults in a family switch their respective roles when the family starts its new life in a new land?

II. Reading Activities

Prologue (pp. 1-2)*

A. General Understanding: True or False?

*Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are **True (T)** or **False (F)**. Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.*

___ 1. The narrator has failed to make a life for herself in her new country.

___ 2. The narrator was once in love with the father of the young girl in the bridal shop.

___ 3. The narrator still loves the father of the girl she sees in the bridal shop.

___ 4. The narrator would not want her child to live the life of the little girl in the bridal shop.

___ 5. Hope and ambition are not important words in the narrator's value system.

B. Working with Quotations

1. Based on what Kimberly says about the fates (p. 1, paragraph 2), what kind of person is she? One who accepts the way the “wind blows,” or one who takes responsibility for her destiny and acts in response to her own self-generated energy?

What kind of person are you?

2. Why is having a “knack for school” (p. 1, paragraph 1) an important “talent?” How do you imagine Kimberly was able to make progress in her new life through “education?” How do you believe she “struggled” with the limited English she spoke, not to mention the other differences she had to reconcile between the Chinese and American cultures?

*All page references in this study guide are made to Jean Kwok's **Girl in Translation** (Riverhead Books, New York, 2010).

Chapter One (pp. 3-21)**A. General Understanding: True or False?**

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

___ 1. Kimberly's Pa died when she was 3 years old.

___ 2. Kimberly's mom had tuberculosis in Hong Kong before she and Kimberly came to America.

___ 3. Kimberly's mom is a violinist.

___ 4. When staying in Aunt Paula's house during their first week in America, Kimberly and her mom are treated royally.

___ 5. Aunt Paula's reference to the "family" (7) convinces Kimberly and her mom that they will be well taken care of.

___ 6. Kimberly's mom has full faith that Aunt Paula has chosen the best possible apartment for them.

___ 7. At first, Kimberly and her mom are under the impression that they will be living in Staten Island with Aunt Paula and her family so that Kimberly's mom will be able to tutor Nelson in Chinese.

___ 8. The apartment that Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob have rented for Kimberly and her mom is in a neighborhood of luxury apartment buildings.

___ 9. Aunt Paula usually speaks to Kimberly in a patient and kind voice.

___ 10. Kimberly's mom is not sure she has done the right thing coming to America.

B. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer these questions.

1. Kimberly's mom tells Kimberly that [they] "owe Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob a great debt" because "they ... brought [them] here to America, the Golden Mountain" (10).

Why does Kimberly's mom refer to America as "the Golden Mountain"? What thoughts about America does this image portray?

2. On more than one occasion, while they are setting themselves up in the apartment Aunt Paula found for them, Kimberly's mom assures Kimberly not to worry:

"It will be all right. You and me, mother and cub" (7).

"Even though this isn't what we'd imagined back home, we will be all right. Mother and Cub" (20).

Why is "mother and cub" the appropriate image for Kimberly's mom to use as a way of reassuring her daughter?

3. Kimberly gives this description of the kitchen in the apartment:

The bathroom was in the kitchen and its door directly faced the stove, which any child knows is terrible *feng shui*. A section of the dark yellow linoleum floor near the sink and refrigerator had been torn away, revealing the misshapen floorboards underneath. The walls were cracked, bulging in places **as if** they had swallowed something, and in some spots, the paint layer had flaked off altogether, exposing the bare plaster **like** flesh under the skin. (p.6, Italics added)

How do the analogies – the phrases starting with "as if" and "like" – expose both Kimberly's and her mom's vulnerability?

4. In her description of the new neighborhood, Kimberly writes:

Garbage was strewn everywhere: broken glass by doorways, old newspapers floating down the sidewalk, carried by the wind. The painted English writing was illegible and **looked like** swirls of pure anger and frenzy. It covered almost everything, even the cars parked on the street. (pp. 15-16, Italics added)

How does Kimberly share her own thinking and the thinking of the residents of the neighborhood through this analogy? Why do you think they have a right to be outraged?

C. Open to Discussion

Discuss these questions in a small group.

1. Kimberly's mom cautions her against saying things directly and honestly. Although Kimberly knows from the way her mom is talking that she is not happy with the way Aunt Paula,

her older sister, has provided for them, she keeps this criticism to herself, “under the skin of polite talk”:

But what Ma really thought of it all, I didn’t know: Ma, who wiped off all the cups and chopsticks in a restaurant with her napkin whenever we went out because she wasn’t sure they were clean enough. For Ma too, something must have been exposed in her relationship with Aunt Paula when she saw the apartment, something naked and throbbing **under the skin of polite talk**. (p. 7, Italics added)

In some cultures, people are taught to express themselves exactly how they feel while in others they are encouraged to keep their feelings to themselves. How have you been taught, and which approach in your interactions with others do you believe is the right way?

2. After they have cleaned the apartment, Kimberly and her mom “set up five altars in the kitchen: to the earth god, the ancestors, the heavens, the kitchen god and Kuan Yin” (19). They pray to each god for different reasons: to be cared for in every way; to live in the apartment in peace; to protect them against troubles and evil; to have enough food to eat; to help them realize their dreams.

What do you do in your culture when you first move into a new place? How do you bless your new home so that you will be able to live a good life there?

D. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing a Summary*: Write a summary of what the members of your group said in response to question 1 in Section C.
2. Write a paragraph about how your family honors a new home after moving into it.
3. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Kimberly. Get it all off your chest. Write in your journal how you feel about your new life in New York. Explain why you do not like Aunt Paula and why you do not believe anything she says.
4. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Kimberly’s mom. As hard as it may be for you, get it all off your chest. Write a letter to Pa, your deceased husband. Tell him why you are disappointed with your sister and why you miss him all the more.

Chapter Two (pp. 23-43)**A. General Understanding: True or False?**

*Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are **True (T)** or **False (F)**. Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.*

___ 1. Kimberly's school is in the neighborhood where she and her mom live.

___ 2. Mr. Bogart, Kimberly's sixth grade teacher, is warm and compassionate, and welcomes Kimberly with open arms to the class.

___ 3. Kimberly thinks the first lunch she has in the student cafeteria is delicious.

___ 4. Kimberly finds her mom waiting for her at the school entrance after her first day in school. Her mom then shows her the way to get to the factory in Chinatown.

___ 5. Kimberly feels at home the first time she walks in Chinatown.

___ 6. Kimberly plays hooky from school during the rest of her first week.

___ 7. Kimberly doesn't kill the roaches in her apartment mainly because of her Buddhist training.

___ 8. Kimberly's grandparents were landowners and intellectuals killed during the Cultural Revolution.

___ 9. Hong Kong was no place to be during the Cultural Revolution.

___ 10. The music from Tosca reminds Kimberly of her mother's sadness and a photograph of herself, her mom, and her father reminds Kimberly of her own personal loss.

B. Addressing an Immigrant’s Language Comprehension Problems

Work with a partner. Try to improve Kimberly’s understanding of the English she hears by rewriting each of the sentences in correct English.

1. “Go *downda* hall, two *figh*ts up, classroom’s *firsdur* left,” she said pointing (24).

2. “Our new student, *eye-prezoom*” (25)?

C. Descriptive Language: Seeing Through the Character’s Lens

Working in a small group, consider these questions.

When Kimberly leaves her mom at the guard’s desk on the first day at school, she looks back and this is what she sees:

I understood only that I had to go that way and so I started slowly down the long hallway. I saw Ma hesitate, unsure whether she was allowed to follow me. She glanced at the security guard, but Ma couldn’t say anything in English. I kept going, and at the staircase, I looked back to see Ma in the distance, a thin, uncertain figure, still standing by the guard’s desk. I hadn’t wished her good luck for her first day at the factory. I hadn’t even said good-bye. I wanted to run back and beg her to take me with her, but instead I turned and made my way up the stairs. (p.24)

How does Kimberly see her mom? In what ways do you believe this first moment of separation in their new life in New York symbolizes the story’s further development? How might these two “positions” – Kimberly’s movement away from her mom and her mom’s stationary stance – remain central to the story line? What kinds of strength and weakness do you see in each character here?

D. Surfing the Internet

Do Internet research on one of these topics and be prepared to give an oral report to the class on your findings.

1. **Sweatshops:** Aunt Paula talks to Kimberly and her mom about the “circle of factory life” (31): “They enter at this table as children and they leave from it as grandmas.”

Aunt Paula does not seem ashamed, but her factory is really a sweatshop. Find out about the abuses experienced by children and adults in **sweatshops** in the past and current centuries. What, if anything, does the society do to make sure that the workers are not unfairly exploited?

2. **The Cultural Revolution:** Kimberly tells us that her maternal grandparents were “landowners and intellectuals” who had been “unfairly sentenced to death during the Cultural

Revolution” (42). What impact did the **Cultural Revolution** have on the history of China towards the end of the 20th century?

3. **Tosca**: Even though they do not have a record player, Kimberly’s mom has kept a 78 rpm record of Caruso singing Cavaradossi’s aria “*E lucevan le stelle*,” from the Italian opera **Tosca**. Find out what the words of the aria mean in English and explain why you believe Ma has tears in her eyes when she listens to Caruso singing it. If possible, listen to the aria being sung by Caruso or another famous opera singer to see what effect the music will have on you.

E. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Point-of-view Writing*: Put yourself in Kimberly’s shoes and write a paragraph about how she must have felt in Mr. Bogart’s class on her first day at school.

2. *Point-of-view Writing*: Put yourself in Ma’s shoes and write a paragraph showing how she must have felt when Kimberly left her to find her classroom on the first day at school.

Chapter Three (pp. 45-65)**A. General Understanding: True or False?**

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

___1. Heat is one thing that Kimberly's school has that her apartment does not have.

___2. The view of the young black woman and her baby in the window of the apartment facing Kimberly's reminds her of the life she and her mom led in Hong Kong.

___3. Kimberly tells Matt that school was open on Thanksgiving Day.

___4. Kimberly's mom does not care if she pays back her debts or not.

___5. Annette is the frizzy-haired girl who tells Kimberly the word for eraser.

___6. The cold is more and more unbearable in the winter because the roaches come out in the cold.

___7. Because of the cold, Kimberly's mom stops playing the violin in the winter.

___8. Kimberly does not seem to be able to tell the difference between Hispanic kids and black kids.

___9. During that first winter, Kimberly manages to never become sick.

___10. Kimberly and her mom measure the value of money according to the number of skirts they finish.

___11. Kimberly starts to lie to her mom for the first time during her first year in school.

___12. Mei Mei, Kimberly's best friend in Hong Kong, was very sad when Kimberly left for New York.

B. Addressing an Immigrant’s Language Comprehension Problems

a. *Work with a partner. Tell Kimberly what the underlined expressions mean.*

1. “I’d hoped Mr. Bogart would start praising me once he saw that science and math were my best subjects, but he didn’t. He seemed to assume that girls couldn’t do these subjects, and often had a half-smile that suggested a girl would be incompetent whenever she went to the board to write down an answer. Then he would make a comment about ‘the fairer sex,’ which I thought had something to do with being more honest” (60).

2. “Annette was shocked that no one had ever told me about ‘the birds and the bees.’ And then, rather than help to enlighten me as usual, she giggled like mad, which made it especially intriguing” (65).

b. *Work with a partner. Try to improve Kimberly’s understanding of the English she hears by rewriting the underlined words correctly in English.*

1. “The first thing Mr. Bogart said to me after we filed into the classroom was, ‘Where’s your accent note?’” (51)?

2. “‘You were born in the get dough, were you not, Tyrone?’ Mr. Bogart asked, pacing back and forth before the blackboard” (63).

C. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer the questions.

Kimberly’s first impressions of Annette and Tyrone are interesting:

a. I was also secretly fascinated by Annette’s coloring. Her skin wasn’t the opaque white of a sheet of paper that I’d thought white skin would be; it was actually transparent, and the red you saw was the color of the blood underneath. She was like an albino frog I’d seen at a market in Hong Kong when I was very small. . . . I thought that her skin had to be very thin and easily torn. She had blue eyes, which I had only seen in Hong Kong in blind people with cataracts. It was as if I could look into her brains, and I found it strange that she could see out of such light eyes as well as I could see from mine. (p. 57, Italics added)

b. “His skin was a matte dark brown, like chocolate dusted in cocoa, and he had thick lashes that curled violently away from his eyes. Mr. Bogart loved him and so did I” (62, Italics added).

Questions:

1. How would you characterize Kimberly's fascination with Annette's and Tyrone's looks? As kindhearted? mean-spirited? ugly? poetic? beautiful? innocent? naïve? prejudiced? If these adjectives do not work for you, give one or two of your own.
2. Do you remember your own reactions when you saw people of a particular race for the first time? What kinds of analogies might you have written to accompany your initial observations?

D. Writing Incentive: Writing an Opinion Essay

Choose one of these topics.

1. Kimberly's mom tells her, "That's what a parent is for, to do whatever is necessary to give her child a good life" (50). In the same conversation, she also says, "Nothing can change how bright you are, whether your current teacher knows it or not. Most important, nobody can change who you are, except for you."

Explain in your own words what Kimberly's mom says. Then write an essay that shows how you agree or disagree with her statements.

2. When Kimberly tells her mom that she could not find out what the expression "the birds and the bees" means, her mom tells her that it probably is not important to know this if it hasn't been taught in class (65).

Do you agree or disagree with Ma? Is it only in school where we learn what we need to know? Write an essay that identifies different kinds of essential knowledge and where and how we are supposed to acquire such knowledge.

3. The day after Kimberly tells Annette that she works in a factory after school, Annette tells her what a silly remark Kimberly must have made since, according to her father, children do not work in factories in America. Although Kimberly is happy about the friendship that she is starting to have with Annette, she begins to "understand that there [is] a part of [her] life that should remain hidden" (65).

What do you think? How do you define friendship? Should we tell our friends everything, or are there areas in our lives that we must keep secret, even from our friends? Write an essay that addresses these questions.

Chapter Four (pp. 67-86)

A. General Understanding: True or False?

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

___ 1. Kimberly does not like Annette's mother when she first meets her.

___ 2. Kimberly's mom does not want her to accept invitations to other people's homes because she is afraid they will have to reciprocate.

___ 3. Some of the employees who work for Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob at the factory do not have green cards.

___ 4. Kimberly does not give Annette a Christmas gift.

___ 5. Mr. Bogart is very appreciative of Kimberly's mother's Christmas gift.

___ 6. Matt is a true friend because he can communicate with Kimberly about the life that they have in common.

___ 7. In Chinese culture, an elephant stands for having a long life.

___ 8. Kimberly and her mom are not resourceful at all about finding ways to keep themselves warm.

___ 9. Circumstances cause Mr. Al to close his business so that he can move down South.

B. Addressing an Immigrant's Language Comprehension Problems

Work with a partner. Try to improve Kimberly's understanding of the English she hears by rewriting each of the sentences in correct English.

1. "Don't be afraid," Mrs. Avery said. "I know they can be overwoman if you're not used to animals but they won't hot you." ... "What you have to do," she said, "is ex-T your hand like this" (69).

2. “No, I’ll drive you home, dear,” she said. “Just tell me where you live. I work part-time as a ***really state*** agent, I can find anyplace ***something***” (72).

3. “Ended. No hope left. The government’s going to build some huge ***compicks*** here. All the buildings on this block and across the street are going to be broken down” (85).

C. Open to Discussion

Discuss these questions in a small group.

1. Kimberly’s mom does not want to let Kimberly socialize too much with her friends and accept invitations to their homes because she is afraid that she will have to reciprocate and invite Kimberly’s friends to their apartment. Do you agree with Ma? Why or why not?
2. Kimberly and her mom owe Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob so much money that they hardly have anything to live on after the hard work they do at the factory every week. What do you think of the situation? It is important to pay back one’s debts, but shouldn’t Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob give Kimberly and her mom a little more leeway? Do you think this is normal behavior for a family? Why or why not?

D. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Kimberly. You like Mrs. Avery and want to thank her for her kindness. Write a letter to Mrs. Avery in which you express your appreciation not only for her hospitality but also for the way in which she treats her children and takes an interest in their friends.
2. *Writing a Summary-and-Response Essay:* Take notes on the information Kimberly gives in regard to how she and her mom celebrate the Chinese New Year (pp. 82-84). Then write a summary-and-response essay. Start with a summary of Kimberly’s description of the Chinese New Year’s celebrations and then write a response, in which you show how the new year’s festivities in your own culture are similar to and different from the Chinese New Year’s celebrations.

Chapter Five (pp. 87-106)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. Kimberly's mom always tries to make excuses for her sister in front of Kimberly even though she cannot possibly believe anything that she says. |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Aunt Paula never gives Kimberly and her mom a date when they would be moving from their apartment because their comfort is not a concern of hers. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Kimberly's mom would be happy to see Matt become Kimberly's boyfriend. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. Mr. Al is a true friend to Kimberly and her mom. |
| Agree/Disagree | 5. Miss Kumar is in many ways like Kimberly's guardian angel at school. |

B. Addressing an Immigrant's Language Comprehension Problems

Work with a partner. Try to improve Kimberly's understanding of the English she hears (and sometimes speaks) by rewriting each of the sentences in correct English.

1. "And I'm not a **telly-tale**" (94).

2. "The results of the national test scores have just arrived. Miss Kumar **noty** yours and asked me to take a look" (97).

3. "A child of your **cola brr** usually gets into one of the specialized high schools for bright children, but your English scores are not high enough yet" (98).

4. "The truth is, Kimberly, I'm worried about what might happen to you if you get thrown into a school without the **faciltees** to help you **nur chore** your abilities. Off the record, I think you should consider a private school. Most of our students wouldn't have a **really stick** chance of getting in or of being able to pay for it, but you might" (98).

5. “Do you want some *recordy shunts*” (99)?

6. “Any school who accepts you, if they do, would have to squeeze you in and their budget may already be *ex-sausaged*” (99).

7. “Your results on the test were so *impersee*, I’d forgotten how young you were. Listen, why don’t you take a tour of the school and we’ll talk again afterwards, all right” (105)?

C. **Open to Discussion**

Discuss these questions in a small group.

1. Kimberly shares the procedure she set up to perfect her English (pp. 90-91). What do you think of her language-learning process? Do you believe it will prove to be an effective one? Why or why not?

2. When Kimberly enters the campus of Harrison Prep on her way to her interview, she hesitates for a moment and thinks about “turning back, going back to who I was” (102).

Why is “going back to who [she] was” not possible for Kimberly at this point in the story? In what ways is “remaining who she is” not necessarily the same as “going back to who [she] was?” That is, how do you believe she should try to preserve her personal identity without being afraid to change at the same time?

D. **Surfing the Internet**

Do Internet research on one of these topics and be prepared to give an oral report to the class on your findings.

1. **Chinese Dynasties:** Kimberly does not shy away from the challenge of fighting Luke after school because, as she says, she is “born from a great line of fighters; [her] ancestor was one of the greatest warriors during the **Tang dynasty**” (96).

The Tang dynasty is only one of the famous Chinese dynasties. Look up the Tang dynasty and at least two others. Find out the historical period during which each dynasty was in power and what specifically characterized each dynasty.

2. **Specialized Public High Schools:** Mrs. LaGuardia wants Kimberly to consider applying to a private school because her English is not good enough yet for her to qualify for entrance into one of the “**specialized public schools** for bright children” (98).

Find out the names of New York's specialized public high schools and the particular focus of each of these schools. Which school would you have liked to attend if you had had the opportunity during your high school years? Why?

E. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Miss Kumar. Write a paragraph that explains why you have decided to have Mrs. LaGuardia, the school principal, look closely at Kimberly's standardized test scores. Why haven't you let Mr. Bogart, Kimberly's teacher, do this himself? What do you see in Kimberly that Mr. Bogart does not seem to see in her?
2. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Kimberly. Write a letter to Dr. Weston at Harrison Prep in which you tell her why you believe you should be accepted to the private school. What qualifications do you believe you have – not only as a student but also as a person – which you believe she should take into account?
3. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Dr. Weston. Explain in a paragraph why you believe Kimberly should be given the opportunity to study at Harrison Prep. How would Kimberly's membership in the student body be beneficial not only for herself but for the other students as well?

Chapter Six (pp. 107-130)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. From the very beginning in their relationship, Annette behaves like a true friend. |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Although Kimberly's mom thinks her daughter is pretty, she does not want her daughter to have an inflated ego. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Aunt Paula is more angry than proud that Kimberly has been accepted to Harrison Prep. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. Kimberly thinks it would be good for her if her mom would allow a friend like Annette to come to her house. |
| Agree/Disagree | 5. Kimberly would be happier if Harrison Prep were composed of Asian students only. |

B. Addressing an Immigrant's Language Comprehension Problems

Work with a partner. Try to improve Kimberly's understanding of the English she hears by rewriting each of the sentences in correct English.

1. "That's how our students *achiff* such *spectales* academic results" (107).

2. "Harrison is one of the best *preparator* schools in the country, comparable in terms of the *facilies* we offer to schools like *Exit* and *Saint Paul*, only with the advantage that you don't need to *bord* here. We are actually a *boring* school without the *boring*" (107).

3. "For the final scholarship decision, I am going to need to *consle* with the financial aid committee but I can tell you now that no school in their right mind would *denee* you *admissee*" (108).

4. "We truly try to recruit children from different backgrounds, but it isn't easy. Harrison is quite expensive, and due to financial *limiteetees*, we cannot ..." (108).

5. “I’m sure we can make an ***excession*** for you. Sometimes we even offer up to fifty percent of the ***twosheen*** costs” (109).

6. “Sometimes, here at P.S. 44, we have students who go on to achieve ***spectacuur*** results despite what may seem to be ***overwoman*** odds” (114).

7. “And Kimberly Chang for being granted a full scholarship to Harrison Prep, an ***un-president-ed*** honor for a student from our school” (114).

8. “Kimberly came to our school barely speaking English and we are very proud of what she has ***ah-cheed*** here” (114).

C. **Writing Incentive**

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing an Essay*: At the elementary school graduation, Mrs. LaGuardia talks about the importance of “laying foundations, good citizenship and bright futures” (113-114).

Question: What do you believe the main objectives of elementary school are? Do you agree or disagree with Mrs. LaGuardia? Why or why not? What other goals do you think need to be met in elementary school so that a child’s full educational career will be a successful one? Write an essay in response to these questions.

2. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Ma. Write a paragraph that starts with these words: “Without my violin, I’d forget who I was” (122). As you continue writing, put in thoughts that you believe Ma would undoubtedly share.

Chapter Seven (pp. 131-157)

A. General Understanding: True or False?

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

___ 1. Gym class poses a particular problem for Kimberly at Harrison Prep.

___ 2. Aside from the lilt in his English, Mr. Jamali's tunic makes Kimberly think he is not originally from the United States.

___ 3. Kimberly asks Kerry, her English tutor, to focus on her writing only.

___ 4. Kimberly's mom wants her to learn the knack of asking questions directly.

___ 5. Kimberly believes that Aunt Paula regards her as a threat.

___ 6. Kimberly takes advantage of the 67 she has received on her last English test in a subsequent conversation with Aunt Paula.

___ 7. At Harrison Prep, Kimberly finds it easy to understand her classmates' use of slang.

___ 8. At the end of her first year at Harrison, Kimberly risks losing her scholarship.

___ 9. Kimberly is made to look like a cheater on the Physical Science test.

___ 10. Kimberly knows how to defend herself and Curt gets her into even more trouble.

B. Translating Chinese Concepts into English

Work with a partner. Examine the underlined words and expressions in these sentences from the text. Then match the Chinese way of saying something with its appropriate English expression.

1. "If Aunt Paula is still **calculating self**, why did she invite us over?" (146)?
2. "You can **release your heart**, older sister" (148).
3. "I am too smart to cheat....It is **under me**" (157).

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| ___ 1. calculating self | a. stop worrying |
| ___ 2. release your heart | b. beneath me |
| ___ 3. under me | c. jealous |

C. Open to Discussion

Working in a small group, consider the questions related to the situation.

When accused of cheating on the science test, Kimberly comes to her own defense and says, “I am too smart to cheat” (157). At the same time, she thinks to herself that “[n]o good Chinese girl” would betray such “arrogance” and say “such a thing about herself.” Yet, Kimberly is compelled to stand up for herself and save face, as any American student would, despite the fact that she is acting out of character.

1. Have you ever seen yourself taking on “American” behavior that made you go against the way you were taught to behave in your own culture? Why did you adopt this behavior? To defend yourself? To fit in? To show contempt for your parents?
2. In what ways does one’s behavior change when a person comes to live in a new country? Is it inevitable that certain standards with which one was raised need to be sacrificed if one wants to live successfully in the new culture? Why or why not?

D. Writing Incentive: Working with Quotations

Choose one of these topics.

1. Kimberly takes a look at her mother when her mother tells her, “No decent girl would look at someone else’s underwear” (134), and this is what she sees:

I stared at Ma’s back, the bony ridges of her spine visible through her thin shirt, and I was suddenly so angry that I wanted to push her into the pile of dresses stacked in front of her on the counter. But then, as I breathed in the factory air, perpetually damp and metallic from the steamers, I felt guilt slice into my anger. Ma hadn’t bought a single thing for herself in the whole time we’d been in America, not even a new coat, which she desperately needed. (p. 135)

Write a paragraph in which you respond to the emotions that Kimberly is sharing with us. What do you want to tell her? What should she do? Should she say anything to her mom? What would you do or say if you were Kimberly?

2. As the only Chinese girl at Harrison Prep, Kimberly wonders if she will ever have any physical appeal:

When we got home, at around nine-thirty that evening, I was finally done with my day. It was the first chance I had to think about everything that had happened. I had spent the entire school day as the only Chinese in a crowd of white people. The ginger-haired boy, Greg, both fascinated and frightened me. It wasn’t only that he’d made fun of me. He looked so alien, with his incredible hair, pale green eyes and veins under his

skin. And the girls in my class, with their blue eyelids and sunken eyes, their thick upswept lashes. I stared in the paint-flecked bathroom mirror at my face. I didn't look anything at all like those girls. If they were pretty, then what was I? (pp. 135-136)

Write a paragraph in which you respond to Kimberly's reflections about her physical features. What can you tell her about a person's physical beauty? In order to be and feel beautiful, is there one absolute template to which we all must conform, or is beauty a relative phenomenon whose characteristics are measured "across races" and according to many different features? Reflect on your own beauty as you respond to Kimberly.

Chapter Eight (pp. 159-182)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. Curt is morally strong. |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Annette understands Kimberly's situation more than Kimberly can imagine. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Aunt Paula is tired of hearing her sister complain about the apartment she and Kimberly are living in. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. Kimberly would like Matt to be her boyfriend. |
| Agree/Disagree | 5. Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob provide for their employees as if they were family. |
| Agree/Disagree | 6. Aunt Paula is a good businesswoman. |
| Agree/Disagree | 7. Matt is as intelligent as Kimberly. |
| Agree/Disagree | 8. Kimberly's mom thinks that Kimberly is sometimes too naïve for her own good. |
| Agree/Disagree | 9. Both Kimberly's mom and Matt's mom think their daughter and son are already a couple. |
| Agree/Disagree | 10. Most of Kimberly's teachers have never had such an outstanding student before. |

B. Translating Chinese Concepts into English

Work with a partner. Examine the underlined words and expressions in these sentences from the text. Then match the Chinese way of saying something with its appropriate English expression.

1. "Now, I wouldn't want to be a lightbulb" (169).
2. "Older sister, I'm sorry. [Kimberly] is an outspoken child."
"No, no," Aunt Paula said. She sighed. "Those bamboo shoots, they're like that. Don't worry about it" (171).
3. I'm a bamboo knot, I wanted to say" (170).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>___ 1. lightbulb</p> <p>___ 2. bamboo shoots</p> <p>___ 3. bamboo knots</p> | <p>a. chaperone</p> <p>b. kids born and raised in America</p> <p>c. kids born in Hong Kong and brought to America young</p> |
|---|---|

C. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing a Dialogue*: Matt asks Kimberly to give his Kuan Yin gold necklace to his mom because it burns his skin while he works on the press. When Kimberly gives the necklace to Matt's mother, Mrs. Wu, she asks: "You going to be nice to my son" (175)? Then, she adds: "And to think I thought you were a boy." As she mutters, "He has a good heart," she also says, "Course, he would give this to you."

Work with a partner. You are Kimberly and Mrs. Wu. Continue the conversation between them. Write a dialogue between you and Mrs. Wu. When you are finished, share it with the class.

2. *Responding to a Quotation*: For Kimberly, the work she does at school is a refuge from the work she does at the factory.

After the dusty, physical work of the factory, the scientific world created a clear and logical paradise where I could feel safe. Just for pleasure, I had started reading library books about subjects we'd touched upon in school: amino acids, mitosis, prokaryotes, DNA forensics, karyotyping, monohybrid crosses, endothermic reactions. And mathematics was the only language I truly understood. It was pure, orderly, and predictable. It gave me great satisfaction to work on mathematical puzzles and forget about my real life at the apartment and the factory. So I might have been the only student who actually looked forward to the placement tests and enjoyed taking them. (pp. 180-181)

Write your reaction to Kimberly's thoughts. First summarize what she says in your own words and then talk about "the only language" that you understand and how your feelings may be similar to or different from Kimberly's.

3. *Point-of-view Writing: Writing a Monologue*

You are Kimberly and you are going to write a monologue that you will present to the class.

- a. In the first paragraph, explain how your mom wants you to communicate with Aunt Paula.
- b. In the second paragraph, explain how you would like to communicate with Aunt Paula.
- c. In the third paragraph, explain the difficulties you have in reconciling these two opposing ways of communicating.

Chapter Nine (pp. 183-203)

A. General Understanding: True or False?

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

___ 1. Kimberly finally opens up to Annette about the details in her life.

___ 2. At age 14 Kimberly has a lot of hope that her mom will pass the naturalization test.

___ 3. Motorcycle magazines are just another item on Kimberly's list of fears.

___ 4. Kimberly finally proves to the science teachers at Harrison that she has exceptional abilities in science and math.

___ 5. Kimberly learns a dark secret about Matt's life.

B. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer these questions.

The night before her oral science exam before the panel of teachers, Kimberly hardly sleeps. When she presents herself at the exam, this is how she describes her state:

The next morning, my entire body was trembling as I stood in front of the blackboard on a stage. Dr. Copeland and the rest of the science and math faculty sat in the first two rows. The rest of the room was empty. **The rounded backs of the vacant chairs formed a field of doubt before me.** I felt **as if** I were a scarecrow in a high wind. At any moment, I could be blown out of balance, all of the pieces that composed me would scatter and I would wake to find nothing left of myself, nothing left of the person I wanted to be. I knew my lack of sleep would affect my concentration. What if I floundered now and led them to think that I'd actually been cheating all along? (pp. 194-195, Italics added)

Why do you think the emptiness of the room creates “a field of doubt before [Kimberly]?” Why do you believe the writer has decided to give “rounded backs” to the “vacant chairs” rather than straight backs? Why is Kimberly's feeling that she is “a scarecrow in a high wind” the perfect image for the situation at hand?

C. **Open to Discussion**

Discuss these questions in a small group.

1. Matt and his family hide the fact that his brother Park is disabled. This is because, at the time the story unfolds, in Chinese culture “having a disability in the family tainted the entire group as if it were contagious” (193).

How do we regard people with disabilities today? What is the attitude of people in your culture towards people with disabilities and their families who see after their needs?

2. Kimberly does not want to tell Annette about her private life because she is afraid that once she does, she will be more vulnerable than she is now. For her, “silence [can] be a great protector” (184).

Which is the preferable route to take – to tell a best friend your problems or to keep them to yourself? Why?

D. **Writing Incentive**

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Point-of-view Writing:* When Kimberly finally tells Annette that she works in the factory after school, Annette asks: “Do you really? Aren’t you too young? Isn’t that illegal” (185)? Kimberly responds firmly: “This is not some abstract idea in your head. This is my life. If you do something to protest, we could lose our job.” Annette assures Kimberly that she “can trust [her]” (186).

You are Annette, a young, caring, socially-conscious teenager from an upper middle class family. Describe in a paragraph how your friendship with Kimberly teaches you that life is not based on “abstract” ideas, but sometimes on desperate realities that often defy that which is deemed “legal” by the society.

2. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Matt. Write a paragraph that explains why you decide to introduce Kimberly to your father.

3. *Writing an Essay:* After Kimberly finally tells Annette part of her secret, that she works in the factory with her mom after school, Matt reveals a big secret to Kimberly by taking her to see his father at the gambling table and revealing the shame that his father brings upon him and his family.

Kimberly says the following about this visit: “Matt never took me there again, but I think it was because I had seen what he’d wanted me to see. He had shown me his shameful secret, and I had accepted it. It seemed a kind of turning point for us, a promise of trust and openness, and maybe even love” (203).

Question: Can love exist without trust and openness in a relationship? Why or why not? What other qualities ensure that a loving relationship will endure? Write an essay in which you

describe the necessary conditions for love between both friends (e.g. Annette) and lovers (e.g. Matt).

Chapter Ten (pp. 205-222)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. For Kimberly respect and jealousy are natural ingredients of friendship. |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Kimberly is too ambitious for her own good. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Curt brings Kimberly into the inner circle. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. Education gives Kimberly the ability to speak up for herself and her mom. |
| Agree/Disagree | 5. Although Vivian likes Kimberly, she is afraid that Matt will end up choosing Kimberly over her. |

B. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer these questions.

1. Kimberly explains her ambivalence about entering into a relationship with Matt:

In a way, I think I was afraid that if the distance between us were bridged, I would be swept away from all I had worked for, everything that I was.

I was a fool. I should have grabbed him when I could have had him all to myself, snatched him up **like** a ripe mango at the market. But how was I to know that this was what love felt like? (p. 209, Italics added)

Why is it not possible for Kimberly to act instinctively about even the most personal matters and “[snatch Matt] up like a ripe mango at the market”? How does her explanation about the hard work she has put into her education reveal her thinking that declaring one’s love for another person cannot simply be a response to feelings alone but to practical matters as well?

In your view, is Kimberly “a fool” or not?

2. Kimberly makes believe that she is calling the police when the man who has come to fix the oven in the apartment charges too much money:

I was afraid Ma would cave in and agree to pay him later. I was sixteen and I had the confidence then of a teenager who’d had to act **like** an adult for too long. I didn’t know enough to be afraid but I did know that I helped earn our money and I wasn’t going to give it up so easily. A hundred dollars was 10,000 skirts, a fortune.

...
“Who are you calling?”

“The police.”

“Hello,” I said in English. “Could you please send someone over to house number --”

At this, the man grabbed his things and ran down the stairs, though not without one last baleful look at me. Time seemed suspended until we heard the door slam downstairs. ...

My heart was still leaping about like a frog in my chest. (pp. 221-221, Italics added)

Is it time to call Kimberly an adult or not? How does Kimberly defend her “adult” status? What propels her into action? How does the analogy at the end of the passage – “My heart was still leaping about like a frog in my chest” – show that Kimberly does “know enough to be afraid”?

C. Surfing the Internet

Do Internet research on this topic and be prepared to give an oral report to the class on your findings.

Annette talks excitedly to Kimberly about Simone de Beauvoir:

She’s writing about how women are excluded when they’re seen as the mysterious Other and how that has led to our male-dominated society. People from different races and cultures can also be classified that way and it has always been done by the group in power. (p. 218)

Find out about Simone de Beauvoir’s philosophy and write a list of her most important books. Consider why it is important in the story for Annette to introduce Kimberly to Simone de Beauvoir. What do you believe the author’s intentions were? Did she want to draw a parallel between Kimberly and Simone de Beauvoir and lay the foundation for Kimberly’s future decisions?

D. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. Writing an Essay: Kimberly considers her flirtatious relationships with the boys at school as a way of finding freedom.

I knew what these boys really wanted – freedom. Freedom from their parents, from their own unsurprising selves, from the heavy weight of the expectations that had been placed upon them. I knew because it was what I wanted too. Boys weren’t my enemy, they were co-conspirators in a mission to flee. My secret was acceptance.

...

The boys at Harrison Prep were merely a dream to me: delightful and delicious but evanescent. The blistering reality was the deafening thunder of sewing machines at the factory, the fierce sting of cold against my skin in our unheated apartment. And Matt. Despite Vivian, Matt was real too. (p. 214)

Use this quotation as a point of departure in an essay. Consider these questions: What is freedom? Why do all teenagers require the kind of freedom that takes them away from the pressures of reality? Despite her difficult life at home and in the factory, how is Kimberly like all teenagers in this regard? How does her need to flee into a dream world that will give her a break from reality explain her anxiety about entering into a relationship with Matt? Does freedom have its drawbacks?

2. *Writing a Dialogue*: Work with a partner. You are Matt and Curt. Write an imaginary conversation between the two of you. Each of you will explain why you are the one who will fulfill Kimberly's needs. In other words, why should Kimberly choose you as her boyfriend?

Chapter Eleven (pp. 223-242)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. When Kimberly sticks up for Park, Matt becomes all the more attracted to her. |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Although Kimberly does not understand this, Curt tells Kimberly that the party is in her honor because he wants her to become his girlfriend. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Matt is correct in his perception that he is not good enough for Kimberly. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. When Aunt Paula sees that Kimberly has received perfect scores on the college admission tests, she is prouder than ever of her niece. |

B. Open to Discussion

Discuss these questions in a small group.

1. Kimberly learns from Matt that he has dropped out of school. Although Kimberly and Matt have a lot in common because of their cultural background and their similar work lives, they are very different from one another in terms of their academic qualifications.

Is this difference important enough that it should discourage the development of a true love relationship between them? Or does each one have impressive qualities that could contribute to the success of a loving relationship?

2. Because of his failing health, Uncle Bob stops coming to the factory every day. Even though Aunt Paula has taken charge of the operation of the factory, “to keep up face” she tells everyone that Uncle Bob is working at home “because it is important for the man to appear to be the breadwinner” (241).

What do you think? In your culture, is it important for the man to be the breadwinner? Should it matter who earns the bacon as long as there is love and happiness in a relationship? Why or why not?

C. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing a Dialogue:* Aunt Paula is the one who points out that Kimberly got perfect scores on the college admissions test.

Work with a partner. You are Kimberly and Aunt Paula. Create a conversation in which you each say exactly what you want to say to one another – things that you haven't said and you don't say because of the generation gap and conventions of common courtesy.

2. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Ma. Write a paragraph that explains the sacrifices you made in coming to New York. Explain why you are starting to believe that these sacrifices have been well worth it.

Chapter Twelve (pp. 243-261)

A. General Understanding: Making Inferences

Working with a partner, read the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Base your arguments on specific references to the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Agree/Disagree | 1. Kimberly really does believe that “brains are beautiful” (243). |
| Agree/Disagree | 2. Kimberly has not only become more self-confident, but she is also more practical and determined to get what she wants. |
| Agree/Disagree | 3. Despite everything that Aunt Paula has done for Kimberly and her mom, Kimberly’s mom is hurt because she feels her sister has mistreated them both. |
| Agree/Disagree | 4. Annette needs to see where Kimberly lives in order to remain friends with her. |
| Agree/Disagree | 5. Matt would have never declared his love to Kimberly if his mom had not died. |

B. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer these questions.

1. When Kimberly implores Annette not to tell her mom about her living conditions, “[the] utter shame of it [bursts] upon [her]...like a garden hose turned on full blast” (252, Italics added).

Why is Kimberly’s shame so intense that it takes a “full blast” of water to extinguish it? Will the water ever succeed in washing the shame away? Why or why not?

2. When Kimberly sees Matt approaching her at Harrison, she is bewildered.

I couldn’t imagine what he would be doing here at Harrison. He was as poorly dressed as usual, in workman’s slacks and a thin wrinkled jacket, but girls walking by still turned their heads at the way he stood there, proud as a young dragon. (p. 257, Italics added)

Why is the analogy “proud as a young dragon” particularly appropriate for Matt? Why also is his pride so apparent despite the manner in which he is dressed? Do you believe Matt ever experiences the “shame” that Kimberly feels, as expressed in the first quote? Why or why not?

C. Open to Discussion

Working in a small group, consider the questions related to the quotation.

In an exchange of ideas about John Updike’s *Rabbit, Run*, Curt and Kimberly discuss what they want from life.

Curt: “Life in a suit, nine-to-five job, that’s not living.”

Kimberly: “What do you want, then?”

Curt: “Greatness. To exalt myself. And to be free.” ... “No one can live an extraordinary life in the suburbs.”

Kimberly: “I don’t need to have such a special life.”

Curt: “You could never be ordinary. That’s why I like you.”

Kimberly: “I wish I were. That’s my dream: a satisfying career, with a nice husband, in a clean house, a kid or two. To achieve that, that would be extraordinary enough for me.”

Curt: “I’ll come visit you in the suburbs, then.”
(p. 233)

Do you believe it is easy to understand the reasons for Curt and Kimberly’s different hopes for the future? Why or why not? Do you believe Kimberly’s dream suits the “girl in translation,” who has already excelled so much in her education and who will undoubtedly far surpass the level that she has thus far attained? Why or why not? Whose dream comes closer to your hopes for the future? Why? What are your hopes for the future?

D. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing a Definition Essay:* Right after Annette surprises Kimberly with a visit to Kimberly’s apartment for the first time, she says: “I don’t want you to stay here one day longer” (251).

Because of Annette’s and Mrs. Avery’s help, Kimberly and her mom eventually move to an apartment in Queens, an apartment that has all the conveniences that an apartment should offer: central heating, electricity, appliances, etc. For Kimberly, Annette is indeed a true friend.

Write an essay in which you define friendship. You may consider the friends you have made in your own life as you give concrete examples to support your point of view, but make sure to think of all the ways in which Annette has been Kimberly’s friend as you give body to your definition.

2. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Annette. Explain in a few paragraphs why your visit to Kimberly’s apartment has made you understand all the more why your friend Kimberly is such a special person.

3. *Point-of-view Writing:* You are Matt. Explain in a few paragraphs why Kimberly is the first person you tell that your mother has died.

4. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Kimberly. Explain in a few paragraphs why you have never been so happy in your life and why making love to Matt for the first time seems to have changed your life forever.

*Study Guide for **Girl in Translation**
Hostos Book-of-the-Semester Project
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Robert F. Cohen, Ph.D.*

Chapter Thirteen (pp. 263-283)

A. General Understanding: True or False?

Work with a partner. Read these statements and decide whether they are True (T) or False (F). Support your answers by making specific references to the text on the lines provided.

- ___ 1. Kimberly is accepted to Harvard on a full scholarship.
- ___ 2. Aunt Paula feels betrayed when Kimberly receives the acceptance letter from the admissions committee.
- ___ 3. Kimberly and her mom break free from Aunt Paula's grip.
- ___ 4. Aunt Paula warns them that she will notify the authorities if they leave.
- ___ 5. The expression "Red beard, blue eyes" tells Chinese cooks that they are preparing dinner for whites.
- ___ 6. Vivian is very angry when she sees Matt and Kimberly walking together past the flower shop.
- ___ 7. Kimberly becomes pregnant with Matt's baby.

B. Descriptive Language: Working with Analogies and Metaphors

Working in a small group, answer these questions.

As Kimberly and her mom break with Aunt Paula (pp. 265-267), and Kimberly takes hold of the conversation, the language is rich on both sides.

1. Aunt Paula to Kimberly and Ma: "Your **hearts** have no **roots**" (265). (You are ungrateful.)
2. Aunt Paula to Ma: "I made myself **an abandoned animal** to open up the route to America for us" (265).
3. Aunt Paula to Kimberly: "Your **teeth** are **sharp** and your **mouth** is **keen**" (265).
4. Kimberly to Aunt Paula: "**Fake kindness, fake etiquette** is all you've shown us" (265).
5. Aunt Paula to Ma: "After everything I've done for you, you speak to me like this. You treat the human heart **like a dog's lung**" (266, Italics added).
6. Kimberly to Aunt Paula: "You should be ashamed of yourself for putting us in that apartment all those years. And for making us work here, under these conditions. **After we fell down a well, you dropped a boulder on top of us**" (266, Italics added).

Questions:

1. What is the metaphor created by "hearts" and "roots?" What kind of tree does the word "roots" make us think of here?
2. Why does Aunt Paula describe herself as "an abandoned animal?" How does the metaphor make the sacrifice she believes she made for her sister seem less than human?

3. How do Kimberly's "sharp teeth" and "keen mouth" pose a threat to Aunt Paula? In what way are her teeth and mouth like weapons?
4. Why does the rhythmic repetition of "fake" in "fake kindness, fake etiquette" make Kimberly's statement all the more effective?
5. How does Aunt Paula return to the status of "an abandoned animal" through the analogy "like a dog's lung?"
6. How does the metaphor of the "well" – with "a boulder [placed] on top of [them]" – explain the depths of despair in which Kimberly and her mom have lived?

C. Open to Discussion: Dramatic Role Plays

Work together in a small group of four or five.

1. Reread the discussion Kimberly and Matt have about their potential life together (pp. 272-277).
2. Take notes under two columns: "Matt's Ideas" and "Kimberly's Ideas."
3. Then practice reviewing their ideas in pairs by performing dramatic role plays.
4. After each role play, discuss whose ideas make more sense to you, Kimberly's or Matt's, and explain why.
5. Summarize in writing the ideas that surfaced in your discussion.

D. Writing Incentive

Choose one of these topics.

1. *Writing a Summary*: In the angry exchange Kimberly and her mom have with Aunt Paula (pp. 265-267), they point out the crimes that Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob have committed as factory bosses. Write a paragraph summarizing what both Aunt Paula and Uncle Bob have done illegally and explain why they would be in a lot of trouble if Kimberly did in fact call the authorities.
2. *Point-of-view Writing*: You are Ma, and now that you know you will be moving to Queens and you will be able to find work elsewhere, you feel free enough to finally get it all off your chest. Write a letter to Aunt Paula, telling her why you are disappointed with her as a sister.
3. *Responding to a Quotation*: Kimberly analyzes her love for Matt.

In those days, I wanted to believe our love was something tangible and permanent like a good luck charm I could always wear around my neck. Now I know that it was more like the wisp of smoke trailing off a stick of incense: most of what I could hold on to was the memory of the burning, the aftermath of its scent. (p. 278)

Explain what Kimberly says about her love for Matt in your own words. Then, based on your understanding of the quotation, write what you believe Kimberly does when she learns that she is carrying Matt's child.

Epilogue (pp. 285-303)**Twelve Years Later****A. General Understanding: Critical Thinking**

Work with a partner. Complete these sentences in a way that makes sense to you by circling one of the two choices appearing in bold in the middle of each sentence. Be prepared to discuss your reasoning with the rest of the class.

1. Kimberly is **a success/a failure** in life.
2. Matt is **a success/a failure** in life.
3. Kimberly's mom is **a success/a failure** in life.
4. Aunt Paula is **a success/a failure** in life.

B. Open to Discussion

Discuss the question in a small group.

Kimberly does not tell Matt that he has a son by the name of Jason when she sees him in Chinatown once again twelve years later. Should Kimberly have told Matt that he has a son? Why or why not?

Choose a recorder to take notes for your group. The recorder will then be prepared to present the points of view of your group members in a full class discussion.

C. Writing Incentive

Write an essay in response to the question framed in Section B (Open to Discussion).

After hearing the different points of view expressed in the class discussion, write an essay that summarizes these different opinions and highlights your thinking on the matter.