

## PULLOUT

Figure 1. **Discussion Questions and Quotations: Power, Authority, and Governance**

### Discussion Questions

- What did Mia think about America before she arrived? How did her attitude change throughout the book?
- How does Mr. Yao treat Mia, her family, and the weeklies such as Hank?
- What systems existed that allowed loan sharks and employers to prey on immigrants in *Front Desk*?
- What role did unfair wages and unsafe working conditions play in the power of exploitation held by Mr. Yao?
- How does Mia use her power of writing and language to help Hank's situation with his job?
- Privilege is an idea that only a group of people receive an opportunity. A person can be in a place of privilege due to their race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. What are some examples of privilege shown in the book? Mia and Lupe lie to their class about their home life. Why do they do this, and how does this relate to the idea of privilege?
- What is the Cultural Revolution that Mia's parents talked about on page 211? How does this help Mia understand why they chose to come to America, despite all the obstacles they faced?

### Quotations

Mr. Yao berates Jason saying, "Your math isn't even as good as the girl's" (p. 103).

"That's not what we agreed to," I heard my mom say. "Says right there in the contract, terms may change from time to time," Mr. Yao replied. "But it's only been two days!" my mom said. (pp. 26-27)

"I'm terribly sorry, but we are going to need a new washing machine," my dad said.

What did you do? Did you break it?" Mr. Yao asked, annoyed. "You idiot!"

"You're paying for it. And guess what? They are not cheap," Mr. Yao said. (p. 40)

"Oh, you'll never get Mr. Yao to buy that," Lupe said. "You're lucky if he pays for the electricity."

"But he has so much money! Have you seen his house? It is enormous!" I said.

"Being rich doesn't mean you are generous. I've gone with my dad to some of the nicest homes in LA. You should see some of these rich people! They have so much money, but they are so mean to us—"

"Just because we are poorer than them" I finished the sentence.

"And because we are brown," she said quietly. (p. 81)

## Graphic Organizer

**Overarching Questions:** How do these sources illustrate the rich daily lives and traditions common in Chinese American culture? How do Chinese Americans disrupt a monolithic stereotype?



*Image 1*

Where do you think this picture was taken? What is one thing that stands out to you? What do you imagine the children in this photo are doing?



*Image 2*

What do you notice about the clothing in this picture? What do you wonder?



*Image 3*

What do you notice about the clothing in this picture? How can you compare and contrast this photo with the first photo?



*Image 4*

What do you notice about the surroundings and objects around the people?



*Image 5*

What do you notice? How does this photo add to what you know about rich daily lives and traditions of Chinese Americans?



*Image 6 (top) and Image 7 (bottom)*

What do you notice about these two photos of Manhattan's Chinatown? What rich community and cultural values of Chinese Americans are found in Chinatowns in cities across the United States?

**Closing Discussion:** Across these photos, what can you learn about the daily lives of the individuals and families?

**Photo Credits**

1. Collins, Marjory, photographer. "New York, New York. Chinese-American girl playing hopscotch with American Friends outsider her home in Flatbush." From Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017835800/>.
2. "Chinese-American man walking with son, Chinatown, New York City." From Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001704342/>
3. Ford, Ed, photographer. "Americanized Chinese gals on Mott St. / World Telegram & Sun photo by Ed Ford." From Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95505467/>
4. Collins, Marjory, photographer. "New York, New York. Mr. Fing, a Chinese-American merchant, and his wife in their Flatbush home. Notice the rubber tire ashtrays" From Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017835794/>
5. *Stephen Cheng and the Dragon Seeds*, ca. 1971. Photograph taken by Emile Bocian. Courtesy of Emile Bocian, Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) Collection.
6. Highsmith, Carol M., photographer. "Scene in Lower Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood in New York City." 10 July 2018. Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018699995/>.
7. Rizzuto, Angelo, photographer. "Pell St. on Sunday." 21 August 1949. Anthony Angel Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2020635573/>.

Figure 2. Discussion Questions and Quotations: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

<b>Discussion Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students in Mia’s class tease her about always wearing the same pants. What form of prejudice is this?</li><li>• Who do the police and Mr. Yao blame when Mr. Lorenz’s car gets taken in the middle of the night? How do they treat Hank, and what does this have to do with racism?</li><li>• When the police discover that Mr. Lorenz tried to sell his own “stolen” car, how do they treat Hank? Hank says, “Don’t be sorry. Be better. Next time you accuse a black man, stop and think.” Discuss what this means.</li><li>• Throughout the book, Yang includes many examples of the Chinese immigrant community supporting one another. Talk in small groups about the experiences of Chinese immigrants and how they supported one another in the United States.</li><li>• How does the Tang family’s socioeconomic and immigrant status affect their visit to the hospital after Mia’s mother was attacked?</li></ul>
<b>Quotations</b>
<p>“Hank!” I said loudly. “You have to fight this!”</p> <p>“You don’t get it, kid,” he said. “I’ve been fighting my whole life. I’m done. It’s no use fighting—people are gonna be the way they’re gonna be.” (pp. 104-105)</p> <p>“Any idiot knows—black people are dangerous,” Mr. Yao. (p. 96)</p> <p>“If you really believe that, you’re even dumber than I thought,” he said. “Clearly you have no idea of how this country works.” (p. 96)</p> <p>“It turned out, there were doctors. Just not for us.” (p. 56)</p>

Figure 3. Discussion Questions and Quotations: Individual Development and Identity

<b>Discussion Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does Mia’s mom mean when she tells Mia she will be a “bicycle among cars”?</li><li>• Individuals and families have many reasons for moving, including to another country. What are some of the reasons a family might move to a new country?</li><li>• What does identity mean? List words or phrases that represent you and your identity.</li><li>• Mia and Lupe develop a strong friendship. Why does Mia feel comfortable talking to Lupe about her life at the motel? Lupe talks about a metaphorical rollercoaster that people go on in life. How does this affect Mia’s understanding of herself, and how does she try to change which rollercoaster she is on?</li><li>• Mia discovers a key piece of her identity through her passion of writing. What are your passions or hobbies, and how are those passions or hobbies part of your identity?</li><li>• How does Jason’s character evolve throughout the book? Why do you think he bullied Mia? Do you think he learned from his actions and understood why they were hurtful toward Mia at the end?</li></ul>
<b>Quotations</b>
<p>“I put my head down at my desk, wondering if I looked more like the other kids in my class—if I had blond hair and blue eyes—then would it be okay if I sucked at math?” (p. 142)</p> <p>“But when I put my pencil down onto the paper, do you know what marched onto the page? Puppies and houses.” (p. 55)</p> <p>“Why can’t I learn piano?” I asked him. “What, do you think only rich people get to do stuff?” (p. 66)</p> <p>“You’re Chinese. You’re supposed to be good at math!” (p. 141)</p> <p>“When everybody finished signing their names and Mr. Yao officially handed my parents the keys, Lupe and I jumped up and down, screaming. “We did it! We did it! We did it!” (p. 285)</p>