

Land of Broken Promises

Educator's Guide



1

In the beginning of *Land of Broken Promises*, the main character Anna states, "It's important to be just like everyone else, with only one thing different" Do you believe this statement is true? Why or why not?

2

Anna states that her friend Tiffany is a "real American". What do you think Anna means by that? Research the different ways one can become an American.

3

In Mr. Hollander's art class, Anna learns about colors and their classification. Conduct an internet search on "Werner's Nomenclature" and pick three colors listed in that catalog. Come up with your own names and descriptions for those colors.

4

As the school year nears to an end, Anna is increasingly anxious about her summer, especially as she listens to classmates talk about their plans. Compare and contrast Anna's summer with what she perceives will be the experience of other kids in her class.

5

In an interview, Jane Kuo, the author, has stated that a person likened the experience of reading one of her poems to "getting punched in the face". Does this statement ring true to you? If so, which poem in this verse novel feels like a punch and why?

6

Anna reveals that her Chinese name is Ai Shi and that her parents didn't pick her name out of a baby name book, but instead "considered the entire language and chose two words to be my name." Anna goes on to say, "Telling someone your Chinese name is giving them a glimpse into the hopes and dreams your parents had when they named you." Write about the meaning and history of your name and include any stories you may have been told by family members about the origin story of your name.

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Mrs. Matthews, Anna's English teacher, assigns the task of writing a poem "addressed to Ms. Lazarus as if you were having a conversation with her." Write a poem addressed to Ms. Kuo, the author of *Land of Broken Promises*.

8

An adage is "a folksy saying that's been passed around for so long that it doesn't even matter if it's true anymore." Anna quotes two of her father's adages, "Money makes the world go around" and "There are problems even money can't solve." What are some adages that are said among the people in your community? Cite three examples and comment on whether or not you believe the adages to be true.

9

In the Afterword, Ms. Kuo states that *Land of Broken Promises* is based on her experience growing up as an undocumented immigrant in America in the 1980s. Read the article "The Birth of Illegal Immigration". Cite three facts from the article about the history of U.S. immigration that surprised you.

10

Ms. Kuo's family eventually became American citizens after a 1986 law passed allowing undocumented immigrants to apply for residency after paying a fine. Conduct an internet search on what it's like to live as an undocumented person in the United States today, especially focusing on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients. What is this policy and who are the people affected by it? Read about the life experience of a DACA recipient and in your own words, tell their story.