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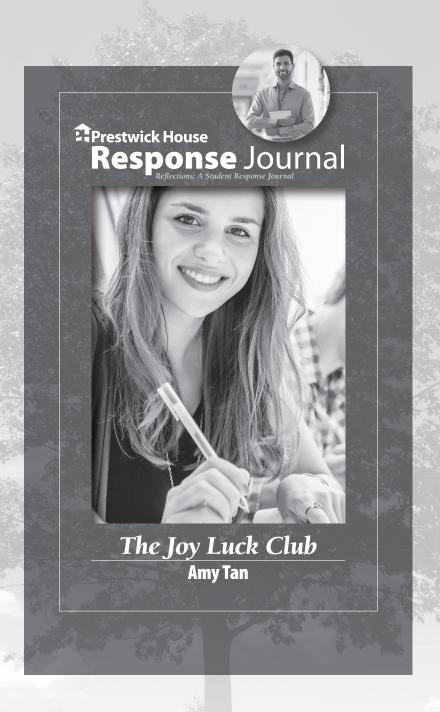
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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter One

Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club

- 1. Suyuan finds the city of Kweilin more beautiful than she had anticipated. Relate a time you looked forward to an event or to visiting a place, and it turned out better than you expected.
- 2. Kweilin becomes overcrowded as thousands of people from various countries and religions enter the city to escape the Japanese. Consider the different reasons why many people immigrated to America during the late nineteenth century. Write a paragraph comparing the hopes and fears of American immigrants and the refugees in Kweilin.
- 3. As the people of Kweilin hide in caves during bombing raids, they are surrounded by fear of the bombs outside and the caves collapsing inside. Write a diary entry about a time that you were afraid of something beyond your control. How did you deal with your fear?
- 4. The Joy Luck Club began as way for the women to escape the despair of war by bringing some happiness to their lives. Explain an effective method you, a friend, or someone you know, uses to cheer up when feeling sad.
- 5. Create a list of as many countries as you know about in which wars are going on today. What does this tell you anything about human nature? Do you believe war is ever justifiable?
- 6. When the Hsu family travels to China, their relatives demand expensive gifts. By the time the Hsus leave, they find "themselves depleted of some nine thousand dollars' worth of goodwill." Relate an incident from a book, movie, or real life in which a trusted person takes advantage of someone.

The Joy Luck Club

13. Marrying Tyan-yu causes the servant girl to become a very religious person. Relate an incident from the media or a movie that created a complete change in someone. Do you think you would react the same way?

Chapter Four

Ying-Ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady

- 14. As we have read, boys and girls are taught to behave differently in Chinese culture. Make a list of at least ten ways you see boys and girls treated differently in home, school, and society in America. Organize the list from the worst differences to the least.
- 15. Ying-ying takes Amah for granted, and sees her as "a blessing you appreciate and love only when it is no longer there." Create a diary entry discussing someone or something you feel you have taken for granted.
- 16. Separated from her family and lost, Ying-ying feels fear and excitement. Describe a time in your life when you felt two conflicting feelings at the same time. Write about this time to your imaginary grandchild.
- 17. After being found, Ying-ying says, "I never believed my family found the same girl." Explain what you think she means by this statement.

Chapter Five

Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game

- 18. Waverly learns from her mother how to win respect from others through "the art of invisible strength." Explain the statement to a friend who cannot follow what it means.
- 19. Waverly discovers she has a natural talent for playing chess. Think about a talent or skill you possess. Write a congratulatory letter to yourself about your talent, as if the letter came from someone else.

The Joy Luck Club

- 25. Lena's parents have trouble communicating because they speak different languages. Describe a time you had to communicate with someone who didn't speak your language. Was it frustrating? If you have never had that experience, write about how you think it would feel to try communicating with a foreign speaker.
- 26. Unhappy at home, Lena finds comfort in the thought that the "girl next door had a more unhappy life." What is your opinion about Lena's source of comfort? Write her a letter explaining how you feel.

Chapter Seven

Rose Hsu Jordan: Half and Half

- 27. Rose and Ted face challenges because they are from two different cultures. Despite family warnings, they get married. Make a list of three advantages and three disadvantages of a mixed marriage.
- 28. Mrs. Jordan insults Rose with a discussion of minorities and standards. Have you or someone you know ever experienced discrimination because of your age, gender, or race? Write a letter to the person who was prejudiced toward you explaining your feelings.
- 29. Rose encourages Ted to make all the decisions in the marriage. As a result, she loses her individuality. Pretend you are Rose's friend. Write a letter to her explaining why submitting completely to Ted is a poor decision. How will it hurt her, and how will it hurt the marriage?
- 30. The beach the Hsu family visits is described as "a terrible place, full of wet shadows that chilled us and invisible specks that flew into our eyes and made it hard for us to see." Write a paragraph about either your best or worst experience with nature.

The Joy Luck Club

Chapter Fourteen

Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between the Trees

- 58. Lena tells her mother that she wants to have a career instead of children. What are your plans for the future? Do you want children, a career, or both? Write a letter to your guidance counselor explaining what you envision your future to be.
- 59. While they are dating, Ying-ying receives gifts from Saint. She considers the trinkets worthless, but accepts them "graciously, always protesting just enough, not too little, not too much." Have you, or a friend, ever received a gift you didn't like or want? In your opinion, what is the best way to handle the situation?
- 60. The Chinese calendar associates certain animals to a person's year of birth. What animal do you see yourself most related to and why? Write a diary entry that might begin:

Dear Diary,

It occurred to me today that I am very much like a ...

Chapter Fifteen

Lindo Jong: Double Face

61. Lindo says Waverly will not blend in when she goes to China. She tells her daughter, "Just watching the way you walk, the way you carry your face. They know you do not belong." Relate an incident from your life in which you felt out-of-place. What could you have done to try to fit in?