

## **Guiding Questions for *The House on Mango Street***

**Directions:** Use these questions to help you study for the reading check quiz next class. The questions on the quiz will look very similar to these, though not all of the questions will appear there. The quiz will with either be open-ended (requiring short responses) or multiple choice!

### **"The House on Mango Street"**

- \*Who owns the Mango Street house?
- \*How does the narrator (Esperanza) feel about the Mango Street house?
- \*How does the narrator describe the house she wishes she was moving into? What does this reveal about the narrator's desires?
- \*How does the narrator describe the Mango Street house? What does this reveal about the narrator's desires? About her situation in life.
- \*Why does Cisneros include the story about the Loomis Street apartment and the nun? What does this reveal about the narrator's desires and her situation in life?
- \*What does it mean when the narrator says she wants a house she can "point to."

### **"Hairs"**

- \*Why does Cisneros include this description of the characters hair?

### **"Boys & Girls"**

- \*How do the boys and girls act when they are inside the Mango Street house? How does this compare to how the interact outside of the Mango Street house?

### **"My Name"**

- \*What does the narrator's name mean in English? Why might this be significant (why would Cisneros choose to name her this)?
- \*What does the anecdote about the narrator's grandmother reveal about the narrator?
- \*What name does the narrator wish for?

### **"Cathy Queen of Cats"**

- \*Who is Cathy?
- \*What purpose does Cathy's character serve?

### **"Our Good Day"**

- \*Why does Esperanza give Lucy and Rachel five dollars?
- \*How does Cathy feel about Esperanza talking to Lucy and Rachel? Why does Cathy feel this way?
- \*In what manner do the girls finally ride the bike?

### **"Laughter"**

- \*How are Esperanza and Nenny alike?

### **"Gil's Furniture Bought & Sold"**

- \*What type of store is Gil's?
- \*What item does Nenny ask about in Gil's?

### **"Meme Ortiz"**

- \*Who is Meme?

### **"Louie, His Cousin & His Other Cousin"**

- \*What happened when the kids met Louie's other cousin (the one with the Cadillac)? What does this reveal about the setting?

## "Marin"

- \*Who is Marin?
- \*What does Marin possess that is enviable to the other girls?
- \*What advice does Marin give the girls about boys?
- \*What does Marin desire most?

+++++

## "Those Who Don't"

- \*Why are "those who don't know any better" afraid of the neighborhood?
- \*Who are the "we" discussed here and why aren't "we" afraid of the neighborhood?
- \*What are the "we" afraid of?

## "There Was an Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What to Do"

- \*What happened to the father of Rosa Vargas' children?
- \*How are the children described? How do they treat life?
- \*Why do people give up and stop "looking out" for the Vargas kids? What is the deeper significance of the event (consider theme)?

## "Alicia Who Sees Mice"

- \*Why does Cisneros include this vignette? What possible themes might Cisneros be exploring?

## "Darius & the Clouds"

- \*What might the sky represent in the *first paragraph*?
- \*What point of view is the author using to write in the first paragraph? Why?
- \*What does Darius see in the sky? What is the deeper meaning of this (consider theme)?

## "And Some More"

- \*What happens in this chapter? Why does it happen?
- \*Who is listing the names? What are these names naming?

## "The Family of Little Feet"

- \*Why do the men on the corner look at the girls?
- \*What is Mr. Benny's reaction and why does he have this reaction?
- \*What does Rachel tell the "bum man" and why? What happens?
- \*What eventually happens to the shoes? Why don't the girls complain?
- \*What is a possible theme of the vignette?

## "A Rice Sandwich"

- \*Why do some kids eat in the canteen?
- \*What is Esperanza's mother's objection to Esperanza wanting to eat in the canteen?
- \*How does Esperanza convince her mother?
- \*What does Sister Superior do, and why does Esperanza cry?

## "Chanclas"

- \*Why does Esperanza get a new dress?
- \*How does Esperanza initially act at the party and why?
- \*What happens which changes Esperanza's mood at the party?
- \*What is the significance of "the boy who is a man" watching Esperanza dance?

## "Hips"

- \*What are "they" in the statement: "One day you wake up and they are there."
- \*What are the girls directly discussing? What are they actually discussing (indirectly)?
- \*What physical activity are the girls doing throughout the chapter?

\*Esperanza says that Nenny "is in a world we don't belong to anymore" (52). What world is this and why don't Esperanza, Rachel, or Lucy belong to this world anymore?

+++++

**"The First Job"**

- \*Why does Esperanza get a job, and what is the importance of the job to her?
- \*What happens while she is at work?
- \*Where does she work?

**"Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark"**

- \*Why does Papa cry?

**"Born Bad"**

- \*Describe Aunt Lupe.
- \*What do the kids do that is "wrong"? Do they intend to be malicious? Why do they do this?

**"Elenita, Cards, Palm, Water"**

- \*What is Esperanza looking for when she comes to see Elenita?

**"Geraldo No Last Name"**

- \*What happens to Geraldo? Why is this chapter included?

**"Edna's Ruthie"**

- \*Who is Ruthie? How is she described? Why is this chapter included?

**"The Earl of Tennessee"**

- \*Who is Earl? How is he described? Why is this chapter included?

**"Sire"**

- \*Who is Sire? What does Esperanza feel for/about him?

**"Four Skinny Trees"**

- \*What might the four skinny trees symbolize?

**"No Speak English"**

- \*Who is Mamacita? How is she described? What do the characters in this chapter hunger for?

**"Rafaela Who Drinks Coconut & Papaya Juice on Tuesdays"**

- \*Who is Rafaela? How is she described? What does she hunger for?

**"Sally"**

- \*What does Sally want?

**"Minerva Writes Poems"**

- \*What is Minerva's relationship with her husband like? What does this reveal?

**"Bums in the Attic"**

- \*What does Esperanza want to offer the bums? What would this symbolize to her?

**"Beautiful and Cruel"**

- \*What desires does Esperanza express in this chapter?

**"A Smart Cookie"**

\*What caused Esperanza's mother to quit school and why?

**"What Sally Said"**

\*What happens to Sally? What does Sally claim happens? Why is there a discrepancy between these two things?

+++++

**"The Monkey Garden"**

\*What happens in the Monkey Garden?

\*What might the garden symbolize to Esperanza? For the readers?

**"Red Clowns"**

\*What happens to Esperanza?

\*Who does Esperanza feel betrayed by and why?

**"Linoleum Roses"**

\*What is Sally's marriage like?

**"The Three Sisters"**

\*What do the three sisters tell Esperanza? Why is this chapter included?

**"Alicia & I Talking on Edna's Steps"**

\*What are Alicia and Esperanza discussing? Why is this chapter included?

**"A House of My Own"**

\*For Esperanza, what is the significance of having a house of her own?

**"Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes"**

\*Why does Esperanza write stories?

\*Why/how will Esperanza come back to Mango Street?