

STUDY GUIDE

Questions for discussion:

1. Why does Nini feel that the foreign girls at the international school treat her as if she was the foreigner in China?
2. It's easy to identify with Ma's confusion about how a small island nation could occupy a large country like China. Why do you think Japan waited until the bombing of Pearl Harbor to take over the foreign-controlled areas in China?
3. What do oranges and airplanes represent in Nini's imagination? What do snakes and frogs represent? Along this same line, why did Sun give a puppy to Mei-mei?
4. When Nini was quarantined with the whopping cough, she felt like all of China was quarantined from the rest of the world. Can you describe your feelings during the Covid-19 pandemic?
5. Chiyoko is a fictional character but what do you think happened to her after the war ended?
6. In this story, there are many examples of the need for one person to forgive another person. Name those you can think of. Why is the theme of forgiveness important to war?
7. The principal at Nini's school blamed America for China's troubles and compared Americans to devils who wanted to "chop off children's heads." Nini knew this was not true, and yet she was still treated badly. Later she learned the word *propaganda*. How can you distinguish between what is true and what is propaganda in times of war or other crises?