

This reading guide must be completed on the first day of class. Use complete sentences to respond to the questions; additionally, the responses should be typed. Bring two copies to class: one to submit for grading and another for notes and discussion.

1. Briefly describe the setting of the novel.
2. As the novel begins, what important day is it?
3. What was O-lan's occupation before her marriage to Wang Lung?
4. In one succinct sentence, describe the role of women in China at this time.
5. Describe O-lan's plans to return to the House of Hwang.
6. What major purchase does Wang Lung make from the Old Mistress?
7. Why is Wang Lung forced to lend money to his uncle?
8. What is the attitude of the Chinese toward the birth of a daughter?
9. What tragedy befalls Wang Lung after lending money to his uncle and the birth of his daughter?
10. Despite the situation, Wang Lung uses his remaining money to buy more land. Why?
11. What gender was Wang Lung's fourth child and what happened to it?
12. How do Wang Lung and his family get enough money to take the train south?
13. In the south, how do Wang Lung and his family support themselves?
14. When there is no work or poor kitchens for food, what idea enters Wang Lung's mind briefly to get money?
15. What enables Wang Lung and his family to return to their land?
16. What does O-lan wish to keep for herself?
17. What is odd about the girl child?
18. Whom does Wang Lung hire as a steward for his new lands?
19. Why does Wang Lung send his two sons to school?
20. What happens when O-lan gives birth a 5<sup>th</sup> time?
21. What happens that gives Wang Lung idle time?
22. How does Wang Lung's attitude toward O-lan change?
23. Where does Wang Lung spend most of his idle time?
24. What young woman does Wang Lung desire for himself?
25. What two times has Cuckoo appeared in the novel?
26. What special gift does Wang Lung give his new love?
27. What does Wang Lung decide to do with his eldest son because of his moodiness and restlessness?
28. Why does Wang Lung angrily send him to the South?
29. What does Wang Lung do with his second son?
30. Why does Wang Lung allow his uncle and his family to do as they please in his house?
31. How does O-lan describe her sickness?
32. It seems as if O-lan waits until what event happens before she dies?
33. Who else dies?

34. How does Wang Lung and his son plan to “handle” the uncle and his family?
35. As Wang Lung’s household problems increase, he finds comfort in several things. What are they?
36. What occupations does Wang Lung decide on for his three sons?
37. What two disasters affect Wang Lung’s land?
38. What happened to the magistrate who was entrusted with the flood prevention money?
39. What major move does Wang Lung make?
40. What happens to the uncle’s son?
41. What gender was Wang Lung’s first grandchild?
42. What differences does Wang Lung note about the birth of this child and his own children?
43. What changes does Wang Lung make in the management of his land?
44. In what way was Wang Lung’s eldest son very demanding?
45. Why is Wang Lung’s 3<sup>rd</sup> son a problem to him?
46. Who becomes Wang Lung’s 3<sup>rd</sup> woman?
47. What important job does he entrust to her?
48. What happens to the 3<sup>rd</sup> son?
49. At the end of the novel, it is clear that Wang Lung’s sons will do what?
50. Succinctly, describe Wang Lung’s last days.