Instructors from all disciplines are welcome to utilize this interactive study guide. The guide includes discussion/essay prompts, activities, and links to websites, news sources, videos, and more. In order to enhance reading comprehension and critical thinking, the guide is split into before, during, and after learning activities. This structure will enable students to draw on their background knowledge, build new understandings of real-life and abstract concepts, and then apply their new insights to learning activities both in and outside the classroom.

BEFORE READING:

1. **Art/English/Reading**
   Carefully examine the cover of *Prayers for the Stolen*. Take a close look at the following artistic choices: color, light, space (centering, foreground, background), gender, facial expression, objects, animals, plants, etc. Brainstorm on their literal/non-literal meanings. Now, based on your cover brainstorming, make some predictions on how these visual elements fit in with the plot description on the back of the book. What are some other novels (or plays, movies, television shows, etc.) that have used color in literal and symbolic ways? The following website gives some insights into some possible meanings of certain colors: [http://www.livescience.com/33523-color-symbolism-meanings.html](http://www.livescience.com/33523-color-symbolism-meanings.html)
2. **Political Science/Geography**
   According to the plot description on the back of the book, the novel takes place in the mountains of Guerrero, Mexico and also in the city of Acapulco. What comes to mind when you think of Mexico? Or, more specifically, what comes to mind when you think of rural/urban communities in Mexico and/or rural/urban communities in the U.S.? Why do you think these thoughts come to mind? Are they based on personal experience, news stories, research, etc.? Use a graphic organizer to compare and contrast your ideas regarding Mexico and the United States.

3. **History**
   Form a group of 2-4 people and research the history of Guerrero. Each group will do a specific historical era: early (7th century – early 1500s), middle (mid 1500s - early 1800s), recent (mid 1800s - now). Another option: Instead of historical periods, student groups can research factors like natural resources, education, political system, crime rate and relate them to the most recent history of the country. The following website can be a starting point for the research:
   [http://www.history.com/topics/mexico/guerrero](http://www.history.com/topics/mexico/guerrero)

4. **Psychology/Sociology**
   The main character of the novel (Ladydi) is born and raised in a rural part of Mexico and then moves in order to work in Acapulco (a city known for its tourist industry). How much of an impact do you think Ladydi’s rural upbringing might have on the formation of her viewpoints, mannerisms, and general behavior/character? Do children who grow up in rural areas think/act differently than those who grow up in urban and/or suburban areas? Does a person’s environment determine an individual’s character?

5. **English/Reading/Linguistics**
   According to the back cover, the main character’s name is Ladydi Garcia Martinez. Use a graphic organizer and jot down some thoughts pertaining to this unusual combination of names. Why would a parent or parents give a child a name like this? What could these names say about the character? What do you know about Lady Diana? Do names have meanings? Who should decide on a name? How important is a person’s name? What are your thoughts on your own name? What does your name say about you, your family background, and your life experiences?

6. **Criminal Justice**
   Work in a group of 2-4 people to brainstorm on drugs and violence. How are the two related? Do you feel like the current laws in the U.S. are effectively addressing these two issues? Do you think this issue is essentially the same south of the border in Mexico? Why or why not? Watch the video “Why the Violence in Mexico is Getting Worse.” As
you watch the video, add to your notes. After the video is over, talk to your group, and then elect one person to report out to the class.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3Oq1A4QQ0o

7. **Business/Tourism**  
Work in a group of 2-4 people to brainstorm on the idea of business and tourism. How important should the tourism industry be to a community? Should everyone in the immediate and surrounding community pay taxes to support the tourist industry? How important should the maintenance of the infrastructure (roads, water, law enforcement, etc.) be in tourist and non-tourist areas? The following video touches upon some of these issues.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOIYsdeiCJI

**DURING READING:**

**Chapter 1:**

8. **Sociology/ Gender Studies**  
At one point, Ladydi’s mother (Rita) says, “Now we make you ugly” (Clement 3). Why would a mother deliberately make her daughter unattractive? In many societies, a girl’s appearance is considered a type of currency. It allows her a certain degree of power and often enables her to move up the social ladder. Why is this the case? Do you think this happens in both developing and developed countries? Does this occur with males as well?

9. **Media Studies/ Gender Studies**  
What is beauty? What are some characteristics of supposed male and female beauty promoted by the media? Conduct some research on the concept of beauty and then create some type of visual that analyzes these attributes.  
Suggestions: PowerPoint Collage, Pinterest Board, Glogster Poster, or a traditional collage with magazine pictures

10. **Sociology/ Criminal Justice**  
Ladydi’s mother (Rita) describes Guerrero, Mexico by saying, “This is where we are proud to be the angriest and meanest people in the world” (Clement 4). How do you think she feels about her region’s reputation? Why do you think she feels this way? Is this similar or different from people in the United States who live in rough areas? Explain.
11. Math/Criminal Justice
Conduct some research on the crime rate of Mexico and the United States OR on Guerrero and a specific state in the U.S. Create a graph that gives a visual representation of the crime rate in the two places. Include factors that contribute to the crime rate. The following two websites can start you on your research:

12. Geography/Economics
“The author states, “This was the state of Guerrero. A hot land of rubber plans, snakes, iguanas, and scorpions . . . Guerrero had more spiders than any place in the world” (Clement 4). Conduct research on the plants, animals, etc. in the state of Guerrero. What is truth? What has been exaggerated and why? What natural resources does Guerrero have, and what implications does it have for the economy?

13. English/Reading/Drama
-Why do you think the author uses so much natural (animal) imagery? What symbolic meanings might these images have? How do these images and symbols affect the tone and mood of the story? How do they affect the reader? Consider the following:
“The state of Guerrero was turning into a rabbit warren.” (Clement 4)
“That girl smelled her way home to her mother.” (Clement 5)
“She thought the [BMW] was a bull or some animal that had run away.” (Clement 7)
The following link connects to an interactive page with basic information on some different types of symbolism.
http://www.studyzone.org/mtestprep/ela8/a/lsymbolism.cfm

-If you were doing a play of Prayers for the Stolen, how would you incorporate imagery into the staging?

14. Psychology
After Paula returns, she “never spoke a word about what had happened to her. What we knew was that Paula’s mother fed her from a bottle, gave her a milk bottle, actually sat her on her lap and gave her a baby bottle” (Clement 5). What effect did the kidnapping have on Paula? What are the most common effects of human trafficking? Where does this happen and why? The following website gives some insight into this issue:
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/mentalhealth/index.shtml
15. English/Reading
Clement writes, “Those black Cadillac Escalades with four doors and black windows filled with narcos and machine guns were like the Trojan Horse” (7). What was the Trojan Horse? Why do you think the author decided to use this literary allusion? What point was she making? Do you feel like this allusion achieved what the author hoped to accomplish?

16. Media Studies
Ladydi says, “The one and only thing my father ever bought [my mother] when he came back from the United States was a small satellite dish antenna” (Clement 7). Why do you think Ladydi’s father bought this for his wife? What does it say about his interests and priorities? Do you think this is a typical mindset for individuals living in rural areas? What effect does American television have on Ladydi’s mother? What is the effect of American (western) television on other nations?

17. Philosophy/Religious Studies/Drama
-Why do you think the author includes so many religious ideas/images in her book? What literal/non-literal meanings and/or life lessons is she trying to convey? Consider the following quotes:
“In my house there was an altar to Oprah beside the one she had for the Virgin of Guadalupe.” (Clement 8)
“Our men crossed the river to the United States . . . in that river, they shed their woman and their children and walked into the great big USA cemetery.” (Clement 8)
“Every since I was a child my mother had told me to say a prayer for something.” (Clement 12)
“If God hears what you really want, He will not give it to you.” (Clement 12)
-If you were doing a play of Prayers for the Stolen, which religious images would you include in the staging? Explain your choices.

18. Gender Studies
Clement writes, “My father . . . was a bartender at a hotel before he left for the United States. He came back to Mexico a few times to visit us but then he never came back. My mother knew that it was the last time when the last time came” (9). In this region of Mexico, why do many of the men leave their wife and children? Is this similar to some men in the United States? Is this type of behavior restricted to men, or do women display this behavior as well? In the story, Ladydi’s mother senses her husband is about to leave. Is this typical? Can someone sense when a person in a relationship is about to leave?
19. **Child Development/Psychology**
Clement writes, “You and your mama are too good for me. I don’t deserve you” (10). What is the father thinking when he says this? Why does he leave his wife and daughter? When a parent deserts his/her family, what effects does this have on the children when they are young and then later on when they become adults? The following video gives some insight into the issue of absentee fathers. 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpJ5aKUCFEE

20. **Math/Sociology**
Conduct some research on the desertion rate of fathers in Mexico and the United States OR on Guerrero and a specific state in the U.S. Create a graph that gives a visual representation of the desertion rate in the two places.

21. **Psychology**
Clement writes, “My mother believed that she was a borrower but I knew she never gave anything back” (11). Why does Ladydi’s mother (Rita) steal? How does this affect her daughter? Why do some people develop a compulsive need to steal? How does this compulsive need affect the people around the individual? Can this behavior be “cured”? The following videos give some insight into the issue of compulsive stealing:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trB1TH_NP0k
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUuNv3W_bKU

22. **Drama**
Form a group of 2-3 people and create a 1-2 minute skit of one of the scenes below. Include original dialogue and realistic movement in your skit.
- Ladydi’s mother’s interaction with her daughter as she makes her ugly
- The drug traffickers discussing their strategy to steal Paula
- Concha’s reaction to Paula’s return
- Ladydi’s reaction when she realizes her mother is a compulsive thief

**Chapter 2:**

23. **Education/Math**
Conduct research on the literacy rates in Mexico and the United States. Create a graph that gives a visual representation of the literacy rate (&/or general education level) in the two places. Include factors that contribute to this rate: gender, socioeconomic level, race, religion, political identity, etc. The following video gives some insight into the literacy issue in the United States: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pvymf8nbOeo
24. Education/History
Clement writes, “Some years teachers never showed up because they were scared to come to this part of the country” (13). What motivates some people to teach in another region or country? What are the pros and cons for the teachers? What are the pros and cons for the students? Historically, what have been some positive and negative effects of teachers from outside a community coming in to instruct young people? What types of agendas (both overt and covert) have they sometimes had? What were the consequences?

25. Political Science/Criminal Justice/Math
Clement writes, “My mother said that every person was a drug dealer including the police . . . the mayor . . . and the president of the country” (13). Why do you think she thinks this? Is her view accurate? How much criminal activity do you think the police, local/state/federal politicians participate in Mexico? Or in the United States? Create a survey of ten questions that pertain to criminal activity and corruption by those in law enforcement and government. Take two or three days to give your survey to at least 20 people. Then create a graph that displays this information.

26. Psychology/Health
The author states, “Maria was born with a harelip and so her parents were not worried that she would be stolen” (Clement 14). What exactly is a harelip? How does Maria’s harelip affect her self-perception, behavior, and social interaction? How does the harelip affect the way her close friends and family, the people in her community, and the human traffickers and drug smugglers view her?

27. English/Reading/Drama
-The author writes, “Estefani had the blackest skin ever . . . when you grow up in Guerrero you learn that anything that is red is dangerous and so we knew that the snake was bad” (Clement 14). How does the author use color symbolism in the aforementioned quote? Does she give a traditional interpretation of these colors or a nontraditional one? What are some other works of literature that use color in this way?
-If you were doing a play of Prayers for the Stolen, how would you incorporate color in the staging, costume, etc?

28. Sociology
Clement writes, “My mother liked to tell everyone what they should do . . . she walked down the mountain and took a bus to the clinic in Chilpancingo and registered the birth of Maria. This was done so that the local clinics would know which children in the rural area needed these kinds of operations” (14-15). What do you think of her actions? Is she interfering or helping? Some people think it takes a village to raise a child. What do you
think? Should people in a community give unsolicited advice and take action to help one another even if the help has not been requested?

29. **Health/Education**

The author writes, “We had volunteer teachers, social workers, doctors and nurses. They came as part of their required social work training. After a while we learned not to get too attached to these people who, as my mother said, come and go like salespeople with nothing to sell except the words you must” (16). What do you think of the relationship between the community members (parents, children, students, etc.) and the educators, social workers, and nurses? Do these relationships exist on an equal footing? Why or why not? Is it beneficial to require professionals to complete their training in a needy area?

30. **History**

Ladydi’s mother (Rita) does not like the idea of outsiders telling them what to do in their community and says she wouldn’t go to the city and tell them what to do. She says, “It’s all just like the damn Roman Empire” (16). What does the Roman Empire have to do with this situation? Why does she make this historical allusion?

31. **Gender Studies**

Maria says, “A boy is never going to want to love me and that’s that” (Clement 17). Maria also says her “mother told her she would never get married or have children because no man would ever love her” (17). How big a factor’s is a woman’s appearance in a relationship? Does it determine how much a man can/will love her? How important is it that a girl grows up and be able to have children? Apply these questions to different types of communities: rural, urban, American, Mexican, developed, developing, etc.

32. **Psychology/Sociology**

The author says, “Life was not worth anything. My mother used to say that all the time” (18). Why does Ladydi’s mother (Rita) say this? What aspects of her upbringing and/or life experiences possibly caused her to develop this outlook? Why do people sometimes act as if they think life isn’t worth anything? If there are significant portions of a community that think in this way, how does this affect their behavior, especially towards one another or even towards outsiders?

33. **Child Development/Psychology**

Clement writes, “My mother said that she believed in revenge. It was a threat over my head, but it was also a lesson” (18). How does this lesson affect Ladydi? In general, how could such a lesson affect a child’s development as well as his/her relationship with a parent?
34. Gender Studies
Clement describes Maria’s brother, Mike, by saying that “At twelve he seemed grown-up
to me. He wore leather cuffs, like bracelets, on his wrists . . . and he’d shaved his head”
(20). Do you view Mike as a boy or as a young man? Why do you see him this way?
What are some ways males show they are adults? Do they try to look, talk, and act a
certain way because of an internal need, or is it because of certain social, media, or other
pressures? How is masculinity expressed in different communities and cultures?
The following video explores the way in which movies can sometimes shape a person’s
view of manhood: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueOqYebVhtc

35. Health
Clement writes, “The truth was we knew the cause behind the deformities on our
mountain. Everyone knew that the spraying of poisons to kill the crops of marijuana and
poppies was harming our people” (21). If most people knew the deformities were caused
by the poisonous sprays, why wasn’t anything done to stop the situation from continuing?
What’s motivating people to keep spraying? What can be done to solve this problem?
What are some health problems that continue to occur even though many people know
about them? Relate this to local, regional, national, and international communities. Click
on the following links to find out more about spraying and birth defects.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY16uNiHzKk

36. Psychology/Sociology
Clement writes, “Ruth was a garbage baby” (22). What are the literal and non-literal
meanings of this term? What does it say about their reasoning skills and morals? Why do
some girls/women throw their babies in the trash? What does this say about the society
they grow up in? Does this happen more in rural or urban communities? Conduct some
research on this phenomenon in Mexico and in the United States.

37. English/Reading
Ruth says, “I opened this beauty parlor fifteen years ago and what did I call it? I called it
The Illusion” (Clement 24). Why does Ruth call her beauty parlor The Illusion? Why does
this name end up being ironic? What type of irony is this? Verbal, situational, or
dramatic? Explain.

38. English/Reading
Why does the author incorporate so much natural imagery in her writing? What effect
does this have on the atmosphere of the story? How does it affect the reader? Conduct
some research on the possible symbolic meanings of the following:
Rabbits Snakes Spiders Iguanas Ants
Lizards Dogs Scorpions Chicken Vultures
Chapter 3:

39. Psychology/Child Development
Ladydi spends a great deal of time with her mother. Ladydi goes to work with her mother because her mother has no one she can leave her with. Sometimes she even ties Ladydi to a bed with a rope in order to ensure her safety. At other times, Ladydi helps her mother at work by spraying insecticide. When they find a body in the jungle, her mother has Ladydi help her bury it. What is your opinion of this mother/daughter relationship? Is it close, too close, or not close enough? What effect might this time together have on Ladydi as she grows into adulthood?

40. Math/History
Conduct some research to answer some of the following questions. Try to relate the questions to the United States and to another country. Then work independently or in a small group to create graphs that give a visual representation of the data.
Which herbicides have proven the most successful in agricultural areas?
When were herbicides first invented?
How much have herbicides increased productivity?
How much herbicide is used for which crops?
How much does herbicide cost?
Who pays for herbicides? Farmers? Local governments? Federal governments?

41. Child Development/Psychology
After Ladydi’s mother steals several items from her place of employment, she tells her daughter, “Here, I took these for you” (Clement 28). Why does she say/do this? What effects could these thefts and comments have on Ladydi’s character and behavior?

42. Criminal Justice
When Ladydi’s mother sees the dead body, she notices that “His hands had been cut off and white and blue veins threaded out from his bloody wrists into the dirt like bloated worms” (Clement 30). Why would this individual’s hands have been cut off? Who would mete out this type of punishment? What message were they trying to send? Discuss the similarities/differences between this scene in the book and real-life crime in the United States.
43. English/Reading
The note pinned on the dead boy says, “Paula and two girls” (Clement 30). What does this note foreshadow? Why do you think the author included this information in this way?

44. Science/Sociology
Clement writes, “The police and drug traffickers kept an eye out for vultures . . . the birds were the best informants around” (30). Conduct some research on vultures. Find out about their appearance, eating habits, behavior, and on their place on the food chain. Then find out about the way in which they are often viewed by society (or by different societies).

45. English/Reading
At one point in the story, Ladydi says, “I looked at my hands. The dirt had been pushed way deep under my nails and no washing was going to get it out. Not for weeks.” (Clement 30). Discuss the literal and figurative meanings of this quote. Do you think the author is intentionally making an allusion to other written works? Explain.

46. Psychology
“Once, when my mother was about twenty years old, she went to Acapulco and paid a fortune-teller to tell her about what was going to happen in her life” (Clement 31). What exactly is fortune telling? Why do some people believe in it? Why do some people ridicule it? Read the following article to get some insight into fortune telling.


47. Psychology/Child Development
The author writes, “There’s nothing worse than a fatherless daughter . . . the world just eats those girls alive” (Clement 32). Why would the author say this? Do you agree/disagree? How is a girl’s upbringing affected by the absence of a father? Are the issues different for girls than for boys? The following video explores some of the effects the absence of a father can have on a girl.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HdhmicFycY

Chapter 4:

48. English/Reading
Do you consider Prayers for the Stolen to be a work of magical realism? Conduct some research on this literary genre and then decide if the novel qualifies.

http://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml
49. Sociology
Clement writes, “Estefani’s family had a real house. They had three bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room” (34). Why does the author say this is a real house? Is this according to the standards of societies in developed countries? In developing countries? How do people develop ideas regarding what is an acceptable house that is up to society’s standards?

50. Sociology/Political Science
Clement writes, “Thanks to [Estefani’s father] there was electricity on our mountain as he’d paid someone a lot of money to get that done” (34). What does this quote say about the infrastructure of Guerrero? What services do the citizens have/not have? What are the reasons for this? What does it say about pay-offs and other types of corruption in this community? How does it compare to local corruption in the United States? Discuss overt and covert corruption in general and then try to relate it to different places (local communities, states, countries, etc.). In your discussion, make sure to talk about the reasons for pay-offs/corruption and the far-reaching effects of it as well.

51. Biology
Ladydi’s mother often complains when her daughter does something “wrong”. It is at these moments that she usually attributes all her daughter’s “faults” to the fact that she is her father’s daughter. She says, “Everything is his fault . . . If I broke something like a water glass, I was as clumsy as he was. If I talked too much, I was exactly like him, I never shut up. If I was quiet, I was just like him, I thought I was better than everyone else” (Clement 35). Do you believe someone’s personality and actions are determined by their genetic background (i.e. nature)? Or do you think someone’s personality and actions are determined by their upbringing (i.e. nurture)? Or is it a mix of both?

52. Anthropology/Sociology
At one point, Ladydi says, “A teacher had once told us that the people of Guerrero were Afro-Indian” (Clement 36). Do you think the teacher was right? What do you think the teacher was basing his/her comments on? Appearance? Behavior? Language? Other aspects? Is Afro-Indian a race? A culture? An ethnicity? Conduct some research on the demographics on Mexico. The following websites can start you on your research:
http://www.indexmundi.com/mexico/demographics_profile.html
http://www.afromexico.com/
http://www.mexonline.com/history-blacks.htm
53. Health
Clement writes, “Those crooks are paid, paid by the drug traffickers, not to drop that damn Paraquat on the poppies and so they drop it wherever else on the mountain.” (37). What exactly is paraquat? Conduct some research on this substance. The following links can start you on your research. As you continue your research, pay special attention to the source of the information and be alert for possible bias.
http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/paraquat/basics/facts.asp
http://paraquat.com/knowledge-bank/paraquat-fact-sheet

54. English/Reading/Psychology
Clement writes, “In Estefani’s room we all promised that this would be our secret” (38). What do you think of this decision to keep the discovery of the poppy field a secret? What motivated them to keep it a secret? What could be the far-reaching effects of keeping it a secret from their parents and others in their community? Why do people keep secrets?

55. Criminal Justice
Ladydi says, “Maria and I already had a secret. It had to do with her older brother Mike. He had a gun” (Clement 38). Why do you think Mike decides to hold onto the gun and to also keep it a secret? Why do people often keep weapons a secret? Are people who own weapons more prone to violence and to crime in general? Why/why not? Discuss your viewpoints and then click on the following links to find out more on this controversial issue.
http://www.nationalmemo.com/people-are-more-likely-to-kill-when-they-have-a-gun/


http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/493636.html
56. English/Reading
Ladydi says, “I knew you could find anything in garbage bags” (Clement 38). Why do you think the author chooses to end chapter 4 in this way? When/why did she mention garbage bags earlier in the story? What could she be hinting at? How would you compare the contents of the garbage earlier in the story to the contents of the garbage bag in chapter 4?

Chapter 5:

57. English/Reading/Drama/Music
-Ladydi says her father was “always singing about something” (Clement 39). The father himself also says, “Why talk if you can sing?” (Clement 39). Why would Clement include this as one of the characteristics of Ladydi’s father? How would you characterize people who incorporate singing into their daily lives? Some people think the arts truly allow individuals to express themselves freely and to honestly communicate joy and other emotions. What do you think? Explain.
-If you were doing a play of Prayers for the Stolen, what type of songs would you have Ladydi’s father sing? Would you include background music as he sang? Explain your choices.

58. Music
Create a song or rap from the perspective of one of the characters in Prayers for the Stolen. Your song/rap should reflect the character, viewpoints, and life experiences of the individual. Some suggestions include:
Ladydi’s mother (Rita) Ladydi Paula
Ladydi’s father Estefani Maria

59. Art
The author writes, “He always had a cigarette between two fingers, a beer in one hand, and a straw hat with a short brim on his head. He hated to wear a baseball cap like everyone else” (Clement 39).
Create a visual representation of Ladydi’s father. As you create your visual, consider how the author has characterized him. Has she drawn him as a stereotypical day laborer? Or has she given him more individuality? How could you explain the author’s creative choices?
60. Gender Studies
Analyze the behavior of Ladydi’s mother (Rita) towards her husband when he returns home. Why does the author write that Ladydi’s mother would “step down hard on [Ladydi’s] foot, push [her] back, or even trip [her] before she’d let [her] get to him first” (Clement 40). How would you describe this relationship? Do Ladydi’s parents view each other as equals? Why or why not? Are all the members of the household equal? Why/why not? Do you think this is typical of most homes? Explain.

61. Psychology/Child Development/Math
Conduct some research on the subject of alcohol consumption. Why do people consume alcohol? Why do many people develop a destructive relationship with alcohol and become addicted to this substance? Do the laws encourage/discourage alcohol consumption? Is it abused by men and women equally? What is the rate of alcoholism among men, women, children in the United States? Use your research to help you understand Ladydi and her mother’s relationship to alcohol.

62. English/Reading/Gender Studies
In chapter 5, Ladydi’s mother (Rita) talks about the fact that her husband has slept with several women in the community (including her close friends). Why do you think the author has him exhibit this behavior? How does this affect the reader’s view of him? Does it make him more/less likable? Realistic/stereotypical? Write a character sketch of this individual. Make sure to include text details and quotes in your sketch.

63. English/Reading/Child Development
Why does the author say, “What she did know . . . was that she’d just killed my daddy for me. She might as well have shot a bullet through his Daddy-loves-only-me heart” (Clement 41). Why do you think the mother (Rita) talks so frankly to her daughter (especially about issues such as these?) What is her motivation? What are the results?

64. Geography/Math
Ladydi says, “Two months later we heard from the USA-to-Mexico rumor mill that he’d gone to the border and managed to get across the river in Tijuana, at the San Ysidro port of entry, hidden in the back of a truck under a false floor between the wheels and the bumper. Then he went down Interstate 5 and into the United States” (Clement 43).
Groupwork options:
A.) Conduct some research on illegal crossings between Mexico and the United States. Work as a group to create a map with at least 3 of the routes used.
B.) Conduct some research on the approximate number of illegal crossings between Mexico and the United States over the past five years. Work as a group to make a chart with this information.
C.) Conduct some research on the illegal crossings of children/minors from Mexico to the United States.

65. English/Reading/Geography
   - As a class, discuss the broad concept of irony. Then discuss the difference between situational, verbal, and dramatic irony.
   - Form a small group and work to explain the irony in the following quote. In your explanation, make sure you explain what type of irony it is and why it exemplifies this type of irony. Ladydi says, “The money my father had wired did not come from one of those glamorous-sounding places in Florida like Miami, Orlando, or Palm Beach but from a town called Boca Raton . . . This was just too much for my mother. She said, He left this place to go to the Rat’s Mouth?” (44).
   - In your group, brainstorm the ironic names of other places in the United States. Find out the origin of the places. Be ready to report your findings to the class.

Chapter 6:

66. Gender Studies/Psychology
   Why do people sometimes change their behavior and appearance when an attractive person is nearby? Do girls and boys do this, or is it just one gender? How do Ladydi and her friends Paula, Maria, and Estefani act when the young and attractive Jose Rosa comes to teach at their school? Analyze the different reactions of the girls.

67. Health/Math
   Conduct some research on the transference of AIDS among married couples. Who is often the carrier? What is often the origin of the AIDS passed along by these individuals? What are the far-reaching effects? Are there ways to prevent this from happening? Which cultural factors sometimes impede the efforts of health experts to stem the tide of AIDS? Here are some possible groupwork mini projects. Work as a group to create a graph analyzing:
   A.) Estimated rate of infection in the United States
   B.) Estimated HIV/AIDS diagnosis by sex/transition route in the United States
   C.) Estimated HIV/AIDS diagnosis by ethnicity/race in the United States
   D.) Estimated HIV/AIDS diagnosis by gender in the United States
   E.) Estimated HIV/AIDS diagnosis by age in the United States

The following websites can start you on your research:

http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/basics/atataglance.html
http://www.avert.org/usa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm
68. Drama/English
Create a short skit of one of the following scenes:
A.) Estefani’s mother talks to her husband about her diagnosis.
B.) Estefani meets Jose Rosa for the first time.
C.) Jose Rosa has dinner at Ladydi’s house and spends time talking with the two of them.

69. English/Reading
Why does Ladydi’s mother say, “Well, Ladydi, we’d better start digging a hole for him too!” What is she hinting about Jose Rosa? What is she saying about the violence in their community?

70. Health/English/Reading
How does Estefani’s father react when his wife’s illness is diagnosed? Do you think his reaction is typical or atypical of men in their community? Explain.

71. English/Reading
Do a close reading of chapter 6 and then write a character sketch of Jose Rosa. Describe and analyze his appearance, mannerisms, comments, and actions. Hypothesize why he thinks/acts the way he does.

72. Art
Create a visual representation of Jose Rosa. Use what you know of his character to envision his face, clothing, posture, etc. Be prepared to discuss the reasons for your artistic choices with the class.

73. English/Reading
Use your imagination to write a back story of Jose Rosa. Who is he? What kind of area did he come from? What motivated him to go teach in a rural area? Was this a personal decision or was it mandated?

74. Education
How would you characterize the education system in the United States? Conduct research on the education system in Mexico.
The following website can start you on your research.
75. **Science**
Describe the scene with Paula and the paraquat. Why does she act the way she does? How do her friends respond? Was their response wise and/or effective? Explain. Conduct some research on paraquat. What is it made from? What are its effects? How safe is it? Why is it used? Who tends to use it? Do most countries have the same regulations regarding paraquat?

76. **Psychology/Child Development**
Ladydi’s mother (Rita) drinks to excess and talks too much when Jose Rosa visits them. Ladydi feels very awkward, and the following day after her mother wakes up, she feels deeply embarrassed. Write about a time when your parent or an adult in your life did something to make you feel awkward and embarrassed.

77. **Sociology/Education**
Jose Rosa is very uninformed about life in Guerrero, and while he is at Ladydi’s house, he asks several questions that reveal his total ignorance. If he is a teacher, why do you think he has a total lack of knowledge regarding this region and its inhabitants? Why do you think sometimes people have a difficult time accepting the mindset and behaviors of people who live in another region, country, or place? Is there a way to decrease the ignorance and misunderstandings?

78. **Health/Child Development/English**
Why do you think the author mentions the girls’ menstruation at the end of the chapter? What do you think caused it? What do the following people view as the cause of the menstruation: Estefani’s mother, Ladydi’s mother, Ladydi and her friends. Discuss the literal and symbolic meanings of this event.

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**Chapter 7:**

79. **Psychology**
The author writes that Ladydi’s mother (Rita) “was struggling between wanting to take Maria into her arms and kiss her and wanting to slap her hard across the face (Clement 57). How would you explain her conflicted feelings regarding Maria? How would you feel in her situation? Explain.

80. **English**
Write a character sketch in which you compare and contrast Ladydi and Maria. How do they think and act? What motivates some of their comments and actions? How would you describe their relationship?
81. English/Reading
Ladydi divides this year of her life into certain events. The events she lists involve Jose Rosa, the beer cemetery, the paraquat rain on Paula, her mother’s blond hair growing out, the closing of the beauty salon, and a kiss. Why do you think she chose the events she did? If you had to divide your childhood (or adulthood) into five events, what would they be? How would you choose the events? Explain your choices.

82. History
Conduct some research on the Virgin of Guadalupe’s day (December 12th). What do people do on this day? Why do they do they take these actions? What belief system are their actions based on?

83. Sociology/Criminal Justice
One day, Ruth disappears from their community. Ladydi and the others believe she was stolen and became a victim of human trafficking. Conduct some research on human trafficking. Find out how common it is in Mexico as compared to the United States. Is this more common in rural or urban areas? What is the survival rate? How common is it for the victim of trafficking to return home?

84. Sociology/Criminal Justice
When Ruth disappears, Jose Rosa reacts by repeatedly calling lawyers, policemen, and judges in the hopes of convincing them to investigate the disappearance. What do these actions of his say about his character (his life experiences, belief system, behavior, etc.)? Why don’t the people in the community try to contact anyone? Is this similar or different to the way in which people in some American communities act when a crime has been committed? Explain.

85. English/Reading
Ladydi says, “My mother named the place Delphi, after a documentary she’d seen on Greek history” (Clement 59). Conduct some research on Delphi. Why do you think the author use this literary allusion? How does it add a new layer of meaning to the story?

86. Gender Studies
Estefani’s grandmother (Sofia) says, “A missing woman is just another leaf that goes down the gutter in a rainstorm. (Clement 59). Ladydi’s mother (Rita) says, “No one cares about Ruth . . . she was stolen like a car” (Clement 60). What do these comments reveal about the mindset of people in this community? How do you think these women came by these viewpoints? Do you think some people in the United States view women in this way? Why or why not?
87. English/Reading
Why do you think Jose Rosa kisses Ladydi? What do you think is going through his mind before, during, and after the kiss? What do you think is going through Ladydi’s mind before, during, and after the kiss? How would you characterize their friendship/relationship?

Chapter 8:

88. Sociology
What motivates the human traffickers to behave with violence and act the way they do? What do you think set them off on this path of human trafficking? In chapter 8, Ladydi notes that the traffickers are from a different region of Mexico. Why do you think this is the case? Do traffickers steal people from their own areas or other areas? The following websites can give you some insight on the issue of trafficking:
http://freethegirls.org/blog/resources/why-human-trafficking/
http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview

89. English/Reading
Ladydi’s mother (Rita) says, “Those scorpions showed you more mercy than any human being ever will” (Clement 63). Why do you think the author adds this to the story? What point is she making about society and the way people often treat each other? Discuss the idea of the natural world and manmade society. Do you think one is more merciful than the other? Explain.

90. English/Reading
Ladydi’s mother (Rita) says, “Mercy is not a two-way street” (Clement 64). Do you agree or disagree? Explain your viewpoint.

91. English/Reading
One of the drug traffickers has serious asthma. Why do you think the author included this in his characterization? Does it make him more/less human? Does it make the reader feel more/less compassion for him?
92. Sociology/Media Studies
Explore the way in which the author uses modern westernized media and communication techniques in the story. Are cell phones, televisions, iPods, appliances, and social media, seen as positive, negative, or something in between? Is she saying something about modern media and/or western society? How does the television lead to Paula’s kidnapping? Why did the author have the natural protectors (the dogs) prove incapable of defending the women and their home?

93. Criminal Justice/Sociology
In chapter 8, the author mentions that Mike has become a marijuana dealer. How is this seen in his community? Is he looked at approvingly or disapprovingly? Why? How can “criminal” behavior be seen differently depending on the community/society? Is his behavior deviant? Explain.

94. Gender Studies
How does Mike – the lone male on the mountain - respond when Paula is taken? Why does he respond in this way? Do you think he was feeling/thinking any differently than the girls and women in the community?

95. Art
Create a visual representation of Mike. How do you picture his face, mannerisms, posture, and attire? Use what you know about Mike, his viewpoints and behaviors, as you create your visual. Make sure your artistic decisions reflect Mike’s character. Be prepared to explain your work.

Chapter 9:

96. Education/Psychology
The author writes, “Our new teacher, Rafael de la Cruz, didn’t care. All he wanted to do was to get his year of social service over and done with and go back to Guadalajara” (Clement 67).
Discuss the impact a teacher’s mindset can have on a student. Does it matter if the teacher cares about his/her students? Should teachers be the primary motivators in a student’s education, or should each student motivate him/herself? Or should it be 50/50? Explore the pros and cons of each approach.
97. Music/Psychology
The author writes, “Instead of having lessons, we’d sit in class and listen to music . . . we had never listened to classical music before” (Clement 67).
Why does the teacher choose to fill the time with music instead of lessons? What is motivating him to behave in this way? What type of effect do you think music has on him? What type of effect do you think music has on his students (who had never heard this type of music before)? In general, how does music affect people?

98. Gender Studies
When Ladydi’s mother (Rita) finds out that the new teacher just plays music all day, she says, “He must be a homosexual!” (Clement 68). Why do you think she says this? Are certain types of music associated with certain types of sexual orientation or cultural background? Explain.

99. Music/Psychology
Ladydi says, “The new teacher had no interest in us. I liked him. He came to school, played music, and went back to his little one-room house and never came out of that room until the next day. But, in that schoolroom, for four or five hours, he made us cross our arms on our white plastic desks and lay our heads down, close our eyes, and listen” (Clement 68).
Why does Ladydi like a teacher who has no interest in her? How do she and her friends each respond to the music? Explain the possible reasons for their varying responses.

100. Education
Although all the parents know that their children aren’t getting any lessons when they go to school, no one is bothered by this or complains. Why is this? What does their passivity and acceptance say about their view towards education? What does it say about their view of the future and the opportunities available to their children? Compare and contrast their behavior to the behavior of some parents in the United States. Why do some parents assert themselves when it comes to their children’s education while other parents leave the responsibility for their children’s education totally in the teachers’ hands? Also, consider the timing of when some parents choose to assert themselves. Before, during, after the school day, interim, semester, year, years?
101. Education
Ladydi states that Mr. de la Cruz “announced that there would be no final exams and he signed the diplomas and got out of there as fast as he could. I was sure he thought it was a great success to have left our part of the world without a bullet hole in his body” (Clement 69). Do you think Mr. de la Cruz has a right to feel the way he does? Compare and contrast his views and behaviors to those of teachers in rough communities in the United States.

102. Psychology
Paula survives her kidnapping and returns to the community. What do you think is going through her mind as she struggles to adapt to her new life? How does her mother handle her return? How do her friends handle her return?

103. Child Development
After graduating from primary school, Rita (Ladydi’s mother) tells her daughter what she is not going to do. She goes through an entire list of actions her daughter is forbidden to take. Why does Rita take this approach? Why doesn’t she give her daughter some options of things that she can do? What is your opinion of Rita’s parenting style? Compare and contrast this parenting style to the parenting style of individuals in the United States.

104. Economics/Sociology/Math
Conduct some research on rural areas in Mexico and rural areas in the United States. Each small student group can create a visual representation that reflects one of the following:
A.) The approximate employment rate in rural Mexico and in the rural United States
B.) The types of employment in rural Mexico and in the rural United States
C.) The approximate income level in rural Mexico and in the rural United States
D.) The approximate age level of people living in rural Mexican and rural American communities

105. Economics/Psychology
Mike offers Ladydi a job as a nanny in Acapulco. Explore the reasons Mike, Rita, and Ladydi think this is a good idea. Are there hidden reasons in addition to the stated reasons? Compare/contrast this job to those taken by many teenagers in the United States.
106. **History**  
Many people believe slavery is a practice from the past. What do you think? Is human trafficking a type of slavery? Compare and contrast human trafficking to slavery. What are the similarities and differences? What motivates people to participate in human trafficking? What motivated people to participate in the slave trade? Why do many people ignore the issue of human trafficking rather than fight to end it? Why did many people ignore the issue of slavery rather than fight to end it?

107. **English/Reading**  
Do a close reading of the part of the text where Paula tells her story to Ladydi. Paula was the most beautiful girl in Mexico. Discuss the literal and symbolic significance of fire/burning and specifically Paula’s cigarette burns.

108. **Media Studies**  
Why does the author decide to have Paula’s kidnapper choose the nickname McClane (a character from the movie *Die Hard*)? What is the kidnapper’s motivation in choosing this name? What does it show about his background and exposure to American culture?

109. **Economics/Criminal Studies**  
Compare and contrast the income level and spending patterns of the human traffickers and their family members to those of individuals in Ladydi’s community. Who has what and why? What motivates them to spend money on the things they do? Is this similar or different than the spending habits of individuals involved in crime in impoverished areas in the United States?

**Chapter 10:**

110. **Psychology**  
What were your thoughts as you read the scene where Rita and Ladydi rummage through Paula and Concha’s belongings? Do you view this behavior as appropriate or inappropriate? Respectful or disrespectful? Explain your viewpoint carefully.

111. **English/Reading**  
Explore the literal and symbolic significance of the refrigerator in chapter 10. Why is it so important in Ladydi’s community? What greater meaning could the author be attaching to it?
112. Gender Studies
The author writes, “On the television they were talking about a magazine that is publishing an issue about what it is to be a woman!” (Clement 82). Why do you think the author included this in the story? What do you think it means to be a woman? What are five or six issues that primarily women deal with? Do these issues pertain to women worldwide, or are they specific to certain nations or regions? Explain.

113. Media Studies/Psychology
Ladydi says, “My mother watched television because it was the only way out of our mountain” (Clement 83). What does Ladydi mean when she says this? Do you ever use the media to distance yourself from real life? What are the pros and cons of using television, cell phones, social media, etc. as a form of escapism? Do you think this technique of escapism has increased or decreased in popularity over the last few years? Why?

114. English/Reading
Examine the biblical references in chapter 10. Why do you think the author included them in the story? Is she making a statement about certain issues? What effect do the biblical references have on the tone/mood of the story? What effect do they have on the reader?

115. English/Reading/Psychology
Why do you think some people are habitual liars? Do certain life experiences cause them to develop this tendency? Or are some people born with this habit? In the book, Rita’s philosophy is as follows: “Why should one tell the truth about something, if you can lie instead?” (Clement 85). Why does she think in this unusual way? Were there certain life situations that might have caused her to develop this mentality?

116. English/Reading/Sociology
Ladydi says, “We built with the dream of a second floor. But, instead of second floors, we all had parabolic antennas” (Clement 86). Why do the residents decide to forgo building a second floor and instead install antennas? What does this quote reflect about the priorities of the community members? What do they view as important? How does this compare to communities you know? On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think access to modern technology and media is?
117. **Criminal Studies**

In chapter 10, Maria is shot. How does this happen? What are some reasons people accidentally shoot someone? Discuss some of the following factors and then split into small groups to conduct some research on accidental shootings.

A.) Gender of the shooter  
B.) Age of the shooter  
C.) Place of origin (urban, suburban, rural?)  
D.) Alcohol as a factor  
E.) Illegal substances as a factor  
(Note: These factors can relate to the United States or to another country.)

118. **Music**

Conduct some research on Juan Gabriel and Luis Miguel. How would you characterize the love songs written by these men? What genre do these songs belong to? Which instruments are used? Compare/contrast these songs to romantic songs today.

119. **Gender Studies/Media Studies**

Ladydi mentions that her mother is skinny and that this aspect of her physical appearance did not please her father. According to Ladydi’s father, what is female beauty? Do you think his thinking is typical of most Hispanic men? Or is this too broad of a generalization? According mainstream American media, what is considered “beautiful” when it comes to women? Do these beauty “standards” hold true for women across America or only to certain populations?

120. **Psychology/Reading/English**

How would you characterize the taxi driver? What motivates him to make certain comments to Ladydi? How would you describe Ladydi’s interaction with him? Does she have a right to feel/act the way she does? Explain.

121. **Sociology/Gender Studies**

Ladydi speaks casually about her parents’ argument and the resulting bite mark on her father’s arm. Do you view this as an example of domestic violence? Why or why not?

122. **Psychology**

According to Rita, dreams are very important, and people should follow what they say. What do you think about dreams? Do they reveal the truth? Are they a source of guidance? Should they be taken literally or viewed as a general source of guidance? Or should they be ignored in entirety?
123. **Health**
The author writes, “As soon as they see a gunshot wound in the emergency room the doctors there, you know, well, they have to notify the police. That’s a law” (Clement 91). What are the pros and cons of a policy like this? Do we have a similar policy in the emergency rooms here in the United States? Why or why not?

124. **Film Studies/English/Reading**
Ladydi says, “In the movies, my mother would have had a huge realization after shooting Maria, which would have made her quit drinking . . . But this was not the movies” (Clement 98). What comment is Ladydi making about American movies and the way they often end? Do you agree/disagree with her opinion of American movies? Why or why not?

**Chapter 11:**

125. **Child Development**
Analyze the relationship between Ladydi and her mother (Rita). Who do you view as the caregiver in the relationship? Who is taking care of whom? What is your opinion of the roles they have chosen?

126. **English/Reading**
Why does Ladydi take Paula’s notebook and bring it home? What is the significance of the lists in the notebook?

127. **History/English/Reading**
Conduct some research on the history of bullfights. How/when did this practice originate? Why is this custom somewhat controversial? Ladydi says her mother had stopped watching bullfights years ago because she disliked them. Why exactly did she dislike about them? Why does she change her mind and watch a bullfight the day after the shooting of Maria? Is there a connection between bullfights and the shooting?

128. **Psychology/English/Reading**
What do you think is going through Rita’s mind after the shooting? What is she thinking/feeling, and what does she do to cope with these thoughts/feelings? How are her thoughts/feelings connected to the idea of her husband?
129. **English/Reading**  
Brainstorm some possible meanings for the last sentence of chapter 11. What do you think the author is trying to say?

**Chapter 12:**

130. **Psychology/English/Reading**  
What are some ways that people react to violence committed against a family member? What do you think motivates them to act in this way? How do Ladydi and Mike react after the shooting of Maria? Why do you think they act this way? What do you think they are thinking/feeling?

131. **Sociology**  
How can a highway destroy a community? Is this similar/different to the idea of eminent domain in the United States? Explain.

132. **Criminal Justice**  
Conduct research on the drug cartels in Mexico. When and why did they develop? What steps are being taken to decrease their hold on the population? Who is (or isn’t) taking steps to stop the drug cartels?

133. **Sociology/History**  
Why does Rita tell Ladydi to keep herself ugly? Why does she tell her to stay out of the sun? Have you ever heard this “stay out of the sun” advice applied to other populations? Do you think this advice (to stay out of the sun) is given as frequently as it was in previous eras? Why or why not?

134. **English/Reading**  
The author writes, “I looked at the pink stone of our mountain that had been cut to make way for the road. It seemed exposed like scraped, raw skin” (Clement 108). What is the author saying here? How does she use figurative language to get her point across?
Chapter 13:

135. Psychology
Ladydi says, “I looked out the window drinking beer and watching television and felt so ashamed of myself because I knew all I wanted to do on this big, round blue planet was find my father (Clement 109).
Why do you think Ladydi is so focused on her father at this point in her life? Why would someone want to look for a parent who had deserted his/her family?

136. English/Reading
At one point in the story, Mike tells Ladydi to stay in the car while he engages in a drug sale. What would you have done if you were Ladydi? Explain.

137. English/Reading
Explore the literal and possible symbolic meanings of the uniquely contrasting imagery/figurative language in chapter 13. Here are some examples to start you off:
Three black Escalades
Two Rottweillers . . . panting hard . . . their dark red tongues hung out of their mouths
Fleshy elongated leaves
Narrow twig arms
Pink, circus cotton-candy flavor
White dress
The rose on his arm

138. English/Reading/Gender Studies
In chapter 13, Ladydi explains the significance of her name to the reader. Do you think Rita was right to give her daughter this name? Do you think her name gives her a special connection/kinship to other women? Why/why not? What does Ladydi think/feel about her name? What type of impact does her name have on Ladydi’s life (especially when meeting new people)?

139. History/Media Studies/Journalism
Conduct some research to get a little background information on Lady Diana. When the press first heard of her existence, what types of things did they say? As time went on, and Lady Diana married and then divorced Prince Charles, what types of things did the media say? Throughout the years, were there certain aspects of Lady Diana that the press emphasized or deemphasized? How would you describe her personality, comments, behavior, and appearance? Nowadays, when people hear Lady Diana’s name, what do they usually think? Compare/contrast Lady Diana and Ladydi.
140. **English/Reading**
Ladydi says, “Over the years [my father] bought me several Princess Diana dolls” (Clement 112). Carefully read the previous quote and then explain the irony.

141. **Psychology**
Ladydi says, “For example, the person you were avenging did not need to know about the acts of revenge as in the case of my father and my name” (Clement 113). What do you think of this strategy? If someone wants revenge, should they let the person know or not? Is one type of revenge more powerful than another type of revenge? Explain.

142. **English/Reading**
The author writes, “Now I knew that blood could smell like roses” (Clement 113). What is the author saying here? Why does she use such contrasting images in one sentence? What effect does it have on the reader?

143. **History**
Conduct some research on the city of Acapulco. When was Acapulco founded and who was it founded by? Over the years, which social classes existed in Acapulco? How did their housing structures reflect these socioeconomic differences? In your research, try to find out about the mansions from the 1940s and 1950s. Also, try to find a picture of the mountainside above the Caleta and Caletilla beaches and also a picture of Roqueta Island. What impression do you think these pictures have on most viewers?

144. **Gender Studies**
Out of the blue, Mike mentions to Ladydi that her father still sends money to her mother. What is his motivation in telling Ladydi this? Why do you think Ladydi’s father sends money to Maria’s mother but not to Rita? What effect does this knowledge have on Ladydi? Why do you think this conversation ends so abruptly without Mike giving Ladydi any further motivation about the possible reasons her father continued to send the money?

145. **Criminal Justice**
Mike tells Ladydi to hold his package of drugs and then leaves. What are the possible consequences of someone being an accessory to a drug deal? Conduct some research to find out if the penalties are the same in the United States as they are in Mexico.
146. **English/Reading**
Ladydi says, “I obeyed. I obeyed. I obeyed” (Clement 114). Why does the author write in this way? What ideas is she trying to convey? Do you think her stylistic choices are successful or unsuccessful in conveying this idea? Explain.

147. **Psychology**
Do you think some people are born passive, while others are born assertive? Or do you think these traits are a direct result of interaction with family members and of various life experiences? Do you view Ladydi as a passive person who allows people to manipulate her or as an assertive person who takes charge of most situations? Or is she somewhere in between?

148. **Psychology/Biology**
Mike tells Ladydi, “Don’t steal anything . . . you’re your mother’s daughter” (Clement 114). Why do you think he says this? What effect do these comments have on Ladydi? Do you think most people inherit the behaviors of their parents? What is your opinion on the nature vs. nurture debate?

149. **English/Reading**
The author writes, “I was also standing in front of a ghost, or what my mother called ‘a Mexico ghost.’ . . . Over the years, my mother and I only had to say ‘ghost’ and we knew exactly what we meant” (Clement 115). In your own words, explain what a “Mexico ghost” is. Why do you think Rita chose these words to express this concept? What does it say about their relationship that Ladydi and her mother know what each other is talking about when the word “ghost” is mentioned? Discuss a word or phrase that you and someone else use to refer to an idea or experience only the two of you know about.

150. **English/Reading**
In chapter 13, the author introduces the character of Jacaranda. Work independently or in a small group to write a character sketch of Jacaranda. Include details regarding her appearance, comments, mannerisms, behaviors, etc. In addition, discuss the possibility that the author has used her as a symbol or literary allusion.

151. **English/Reading**
In chapter 13, Ladydi’s mother is not physically present in the Domingo house, but she is in fact present in Ladydi’s mind. How is this so? Earlier, Ladydi acted like she was eager to get some space between herself and her mother. Is Ladydi consciously bringing her mother back into her thinking? If so, why would she do this? If not, how is Rita almost constantly invading Ladydi’s mind as she walks through the Domingo house?
152. **Psychology**
In life, most people have experiences when they interact with at least one individual with an extremely forceful and controlling personality. This person may be a parent, relative, friend, co-worker, etc. Take a moment and reflect on your own life experiences. Then write a description of a forceful and controlling person you know or once knew. Explain what you think might have motivated this individual to become so forceful and controlling. Finally, analyze the impact this person had or has on your own thinking and behavior.

153. **Sociology**
Compare and contrast the standards of living of the wealthy homeowners and their servants in Acapulco. Mention the physical housing structures, amenities, utilities, nutrition choices, etc. in your analysis.

154. **English/Reading/Psychology**
When Rita calls Ladydi on the phone, why does she lie to her and say she dislikes her new living situation? What is she thinking/feeling in this part of the story? What does she want her mother to think/feel? Why do you think children sometimes lie to their parents?

155. **Business**
The author writes, “The phone went dead. This always happened and meant that you had to dial back again and again. We all knew it was the reason Carlos Slim, the man who owned the phone company, was the richest man in the world. He made sure everyone in Mexico always had to call back” (Clement 116). How/why are some people able to make money by using unethical business practices? Why are some of them successful, while others are unsuccessful in their attempts?

156. **English/Reading/Gender Studies**
Jacaranda says, “Most people are kind . . . and most women are unfaithful to their men . . . men get caught and women don’t” (Clement 117). Compare and contrast Jacaranda’s views to those of Rita (Ladydi’s mother). Discuss some possible reasons for the similarities/differences of their viewpoints.

157. **History**
Historically, how was long hair (among females) viewed among many cultures? How is it viewed today? Has the public opinion on long hair changed or remained the same? What are some of the possible reasons many girls/women do not grow their hair long nowadays? Compare/contrast the selling/buying of long hair in Jacaranda’s day to current times.
158. English/Reading
Ladydi states, “One door in the bedroom was closed and we didn’t look inside. Jacaranda explained that was the dressing room where they kept their clothes . . . That door is locked, [Jacaranda] said” (Clement 119). Compare/contrast this locked door to other locked doors in literature/mythology. What idea might the author be trying to convey?

159. Media Studies
What are some of the effects of television on viewers? What impact does television have on viewers who might be of a low socioeconomic level? What does Ladydi mean when she says, “I had seen the house on television” (Clement 120)?

160. Psychology
Some people, after witnessing a crime or having knowledge of a crime, do nothing about it. What do you think this often occurs? Do you think people should take action if they know a crime has been committed? What are some of the factors that influence people to either remain quiet and do nothing or talk to someone and take action? After seeing Mike’s blood-splattered clothes, what does Ladydi say/do? Why?

Chapter 14:

161. English/Reading
Write a description of Ladydi’s new living quarters. What is your opinion of her living situation? What are the pros and cons? Now compare/contrast Ladydi’s living situation with one of the following:
- your own home
- Ladydi’s home with her mother in Guerrero
- Estefani’s house in Guerrero

162. Health
Ladydi says, “A smell of gasoline filled my room,” and, “The house smelled like rotten lemons from constant fumigations” (Clement 122). What do you think of the air quality in Ladydi’s living quarters? How can these factors affect a person’s health? Take a look at the following video/article. Compare/contrast the article/video to the book.
163. **Psychology**

On Ladydi’s first night in Acapulco, her mind is filled with worries and questions. What exactly is she thinking/feeling? If you were in her situation, would you be thinking/feeling these things? Write about a time when you couldn’t stop thinking/worrying about something.

164. **Criminal Justice**

Ladydi states that she is in possession of a brick of heroin made up of fifty bags. What is the penalty for selling this quantity of heroin? What is the penalty for holding this quantity of heroin? Are the penalties the same or different in Mexico than they are in the United States? What is your opinion of these penalties?

**Chapter 15:**

165. **Gender Studies**

As soon as Ladydi meets Julio, she says, “He walked right into my body” (Clement 124). Later, she says, “I spent the morning following him around the garden” (Clement 124). How would you describe her interaction with Julio? Why do you think she behaves in this way? Would you consider this behavior typical, stereotypical, normal, etc. behavior of a teenage girl? Have you or someone you have known ever behaved in this way? Does this behavior occur more in one gender than the other? Why/why not?

166. **English/Reading**

Trace the use of simile in chapter 15. Why does the author rely so heavily on this type of figurative language? Write a short poem about someone (or something) you care deeply about. Include 5-10 similes in your poem. Be ready to explain your poem to the class.

167. **Psychology/Communication Studies**

At one point in chapter 15, Rita calls Ladydi on the telephone and accuses her of stealing something, but she never says exactly what she supposedly stole. Why do you think she does this? Is her lack of explanation intentional/unintentional? What are some reasons why communication sometimes fails in families (and in general)?
168. Psychology/Sociology
Jacaranda says her employers were only supposed to have been gone for a weekend, yet they have been gone for over a week. How would you characterize Jacaranda’s response to her employers’ absence? Does she seem worried or concerned? Why or why not?
Analyze Jacaranda’s reaction to her employers’ absence. In your analysis, make sure to include the socioeconomic status of each person involved and how that acts as a possible factor.

169. History/Sociology
The Domingo family has set up a ranch with animals for wealthy individuals to hunt. Why do you think people would pay to go on a hunt like this? What’s the difference between hunting animals in the wild and hunting “pre-caught” animals at a ranch? Do the two hunting “set-ups” appeal to different types of hunters? How long have these types of hunting ranches existed? Besides Mexico, where else are they popular and why?

170. English/Reading/Gender Studies
In chapter 15, the reader learn about Mr. Domingo and Mrs. Domingo. Write a character sketch in which you compare and contrast these two people. In your writing, mention each person’s gender and if their behavior is “typical” for this gender. Include the following details in your work:
- place of origin
- family background
- social class
- hobbies
- duties
- communication style

171. Psychology
Do you believe in love at first sight? Why/why not? How can a person tell if what he/she feels for someone is love or lust? Do you think what Ladydi feels for Julio is love?
At one point in chapter 15, Ladydi says, “I loved [Julio] and wanted him and no one had ever prepared me for this devotion . . . I longed for an order, for him to say, Bring me a glass of water” (Clement 129). What do these quotes reveal about Ladydi? What do these quotes reveal about Julio? What do you think of their “relationship” so far?

172. Communication Studies/Media Studies
How does the author address the concept of communication in the story? In previous chapters, she wrote about the use of cell phones in “Delphi” (in Guerrero). In chapter 15, the Domingo family has disappeared, but for a long time, no one communicates to anyone about their whereabouts. How does Jacaranda eventually find out about the whereabouts of the Domingo family? How does the communication in the book compare to communication in your life?
173. **Psychology/Gender Studies**

What do you think about the way in which the relationship between Ladydi and Julio progresses? Why do you think they become physical with one another? Was this due to affection or something else? Do you think Ladydi and Julio are both equal participants in the relationship? Why or why not?

174. **English/Reading**

Analyze the similarities between the homes of the Domingo family, Estefani, and Paula. What do you think these homes look like? How do they reflect their owners? Who ends up leaving the homes and why? How do people react once the owners leave?

175. **English/Reading**

Write a character sketch of Julio. What does he look like? What types of things does he say? How would you describe his behavior? Why do you think the writer made the creative decisions she did? If you were creating a movie of this book, which actor would you cast as Julio? Why?

176. **Criminal Studies**

The author writes, “Julio killed a US Border Patrol guard. This was why he was a gardener in Acapulco and not a gardener in California” (Clement 131). What is the penalty for killing a government law enforcement officer? Compare and contrast the penalties in Mexico and in the United States. What about the level of enforcement of the penalty?

177. **English/Reading**

Ladydi says, “I decided not to tell him why my mother named me after Ladydi because I did not want to break my own heart” (Clement 131). Why does Ladydi say this? What does she mean about breaking her own heart? Why not Julio’s? Explain.

178. **Geography/History**

Research the Rio Grande and Rio Bravo. Historically, why are they so important?

179. **Psychology**

Why does Julio like to pretend Ladydi is a little girl? How does Ladydi feel about this behavior?

180. **English/Reading**

Compare and contrast Ladydi and Julio’s names. Who decided on these names and why? Who decided on your own name? What was their reasoning?
181. **Geography**
Compare and contrast the regions where Ladydi and Julio are from. What type of impact do these regions have on their character development?

Chapter 16:

182. **Math/Health**
Conduct research on the number of children orphaned due to AIDS. Compare and contrast statistics from Mexico and the United States.

183. **English/Reading**
How would you describe the relationship Ladydi has with her mother? At this point in the story, has this relationship changed for the better, for the worse, or has it just stayed the same? Explain.

Chapter 17:

184. **Sociology**
When some people acquire an education or a job, they do not want to return to their home community. Why do they do this? Do you think they are justified in thinking in this way? Why or why not? Have you ever met someone who left his/her community and did not want to return? Explain. How does Ladydi feel about returning to Guerrero? Explain.

185. **English/Reading**
What does the word loyalty mean to you? How loyal do you think people should be to their family members? Friends? Neighbors? Others? Do you think Ladydi should show loyalty to Mike and go help him once he is arrested? Explain.

186. **Criminal Justice**
Describe/analyze the arrival and general behavior of the police officers at the Domingo house. How does this compare to the behavior of police officers in the United States? In situations such as this, what procedure are American police officers supposed to follow? Do you think they follow it? Why/why not?
187. **Criminal Justice**
In the United States, what is the penalty for being a witness and accomplice to murder? Is the penalty the same in Mexico? In both cases, does it matter who the victim was? Or who the perpetrators were?

188. **Media Studies/English/Reading**
How often do you watch the news? Do you prefer to find out about the news by television, computer, radio, etc.? Do you think it is important to try to find out about current events on a daily basis? How did Rita and Ladydi learn about what was going on in their country? What happens to Ladydi’s television viewing habits once she moves to Acapulco and becomes involved with Julio?

**Chapter 18:**

189. **Gender Studies**
Describe/analyze the interaction between Ladydi and the guard in the helicopter. How does the guard behave? What types of comments does he make? Why do you think he makes the comments he does? Would he have acted the same if his prisoner had been male?

190. **Gender Studies**
The guard in the helicopter seems to think that all women are materialistic. Why does he say this? Do you think women tend to be materialistic? What types of things do women tend to spend money on? What types of things do men tend to spend money on? If you had to rate both genders on materialism, what rating would you give to women? To men?

191. **Health/Wellness**
While in the helicopter, Ladydi is thinking about the self-defense advice given to her by her mother. What do you think of this advice? Do you think mothers should give their daughters self-defense advice when they are young? Why or why not?
Chapter 19:

192. **Journalism/Media Studies**
Ladydi says, “In Mexico City, before I was formally booked and taken to jail, I was paraded for the press in a room at the airport” (Clement 144). Why is this done? Is this part of the official procedure? Do you think it is fair/unfair? Why? How does this compare to the procedure in the United States?

193. **Drama**
Form a small group and create a short skit of Ladydi’s experience with the press. Make sure to include questions from the press, specific body language, and narration.

194. **Psychology**
What do you think is going through Ladydi’s mind when the press is frantically asking her questions? How does she initially respond? Why does she ultimately change her body language? Do you think this makes sense? Why/why not?

Chapter 20:

195. **Criminal Justice/Math**
Conduct some research on children who reside with their mothers in prison. Why are these women raising children in prison? How long will they be allowed to keep their children with them? How does the presence of their children affect their behavior during and after prison? Work independently or as a group to create graphs to represent this data. The following four websites can start you on your research:
http://www.hlntv.com/article/2013/05/10/prison-nursery
http://www.takepart.com/article/2012/05/28/what-happens-babies-born-jail

196. **Criminal Justice/Math**
What are the top 3 reasons women go to prison? Is this the same in the United States as it is in Mexico? Are certain races, ethnic groups, regions, religions, socioeconomic status represented more than others? Conduct some research to find answers to these questions. Then work independently or as a group to create graphs to represent this data.
197. **Criminal Justice/Math**
How are people placed inside a prison? Where do the men go? Where do the women go? Is the procedure different for people who have committed (or who have allegedly committed) more serious crimes? Is the procedure any different in the United States than it is in Mexico? Conduct some research to find answers to these questions. Then work independently or as a group to create graphs to represent this data.

198. **English/Reading**
Ladydi says, “Since the moment I had been taken from the house in Acapulco and brought to the jail, I could not hear my mother’s voice. It had almost been forty-eight hours of silence” (Clement 151). What does Ladydi mean by these words? Do you perceive a positive, negative, or neutral tone in her words when she says this? Does she miss hearing her mother, or does she feel relieved that she doesn’t hear her anymore? Have you ever had the experience where you “heard” the voice of someone important in your life in your head? Was this a comfort or an annoyance (or something in between)?

199. **English/Reading**
Write a character sketch of Luna. What does she look like? How would you describe her behavior, comments, and overall personality? What crimes did she commit (or allegedly commit)? Why do you think the author created this character to be Ladydi’s cellmate?

200. **English/Reading/Psychology**
Write a character sketch of Violeta. What does she look like? How would you describe her behavior, comments, and overall personality? What crimes did she commit (or allegedly commit)? Why do you think the author created this character to be in the prison with Ladydi? Do you think Violeta is an accurate representation of a female prisoner? What are the main reasons some women commit violent crimes specifically against men?

201. **Art/History**
Conduct some history of the use of tattoos, especially in prison. Why is tattooing so common in prison? What significance do tattoos have in and out of prison? What are some common tattoos found in American prisons? What about in Mexican prisons?

202. **History**
Ladydi says, “We were just two pages from the continent’s history books. You could tear us out and roll us into a ball and throw us in the trash” (Clement 153). What is the author saying here? What could she be saying about the history of the people in her country? How were they treated? What status was conveyed upon them and why?
203. **English/Reading**
Ladydi says, “I also knew that even though we were proud to be the angriest and meanest people in Mexico, my mother could not stop crying because her daughter was in jail. The flies were drinking her tears” (Clement 154). How would you describe the tone in these words? What effect do they have on the reader? Analyze the strong word choice in this sentence: proud, angriest, meanest, could not stop crying.

204. **Psychology**
Why do some people do “random acts of kindness” on a daily basis? Are there certain factors that motivate them? Perhaps specific life experiences or people who influenced them and their behavior? Or is it a certain personality type that a person is born with? Why do you think Luna is kind to Ladydi?

205. **English/Reading**
There have been several occasions when the author has described something or someone as being “inside out.” Why would she say this? What type of idea is she getting at? At the end of chapter 20, for example, she has Ladydi say that “being in jail was like wearing a dress inside out” (Clement 154). What is she saying about life in jail? Do you agree/disagree? Explain.

**Chapter 21:**

206. **History**
What exactly is *The Beast*? Why do you think it is called this? Do you think it is an accurate description? Go online and find out more about *The Beast* (its origin, how it evolved into what it is today, its current status and perception by people in Mexico and in the United States. The following four websites can start you off on your research.

207. **Art/English/Reading**
Click on one of the following links to look at the photographs of *The Beast*. Work independently or in a small group to analyze the composition of a specific photograph. What idea was the photographer going for? What feeling was he/she trying to convey? Do you think the photographer was successful in conveying a certain idea/feeling? Who do you think the intended audience of the photograph is?

http://www.thebeastdoc.com/documentary/The_Beast_Photos.html
http://www.politico.com/magazine/gallery/2014/04/the-train-of-death/001756-024914.html#.VSU1fPYtFjo

208. **History**
What exactly is a national anthem? Why are they written? Do you think they achieve their purpose? What is the American national anthem? Who wrote it and what inspired him to choose the words he did? How familiar are you with the American national anthem? Could you sing it if you had to? Do you think singing the anthem is a valid test of citizenship? Explain.

209. **History**
What is the name of the Mexican national anthem? Who wrote it and what inspired him to choose the words he did? What ideas/feelings is the anthem supposed to convey? Have you ever heard the Mexican anthem? How familiar do you think most Mexicans are with the American national anthem? How does the author incorporate the Mexican national anthem in this part of the story? Do you think singing the anthem is a valid test of citizenship? Explain.

210. **English/Reading**
Luna says, “Money is a car race. Money is speed” (Clement 157). What does Luna mean when she says this? Do you agree? Do you think this is right, wrong, moral, immoral, fair, unfair, etc.? Write about an experience you had (or heard of) when money acted in this way.

211. **English/Reading**
Write a character sketch of Aurora. What does she look like? How would you describe her behavior, comments, and overall personality? What crimes did she commit (or allegedly commit)? Why do you think the author created this character to be in the prison with Ladydi? Do you think Aurora is an accurate representation of a certain type of female prisoner? Why do you think the author created her character and inserted her into this part of the story? Why do you think the author chose the name Aurora?
212. **Science/English/Reading**

Why do you think the author mentions insecticide so frequently throughout the book? How does she use insecticide in chapter 21? Is it similar/different to the ways in which she has used this idea in other parts of the story? How is the insecticide affecting Aurora physically? Psychologically?

213. **Art/English/Reading**

How do you envision the Mural of Hearts? What colors do you envision? Which artistic style or styles would be used? How big would the mural be? Whose perspective would it represent? Which ideas would it promote? Create your own mini Mural of Hearts.
Options: Sketch/paint a mini mural OR create an electronic poster (Glogster, Pinterest, PowerPoint).

214. **History**

Work independently or in a small group to conduct some research on at least one of the following women: Sor Juana, Emma Godoy, Elena Garro, Frida Kahlo, and Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez. Why were these women important figures in Mexican history? Why would inmates of a prison want them to be a part of a mural?

215. **English/Reading/Sociology**

What type of role does religion play in mainstream society? Why is it important to so many people? Why do some people have no interest in religion? What type of role could religion play in prison society? Many people who feel strongly about their religion decide to become missionaries. What is their motivation for doing this? Why would missionaries be interested in prison inmates?

216. **Gender Studies/Psychology**

Luna says, “I really don’t want a man, I want a baby. I want someone to love” (Clement 160). When Ladydi points out that the prison only allows women to keep their baby in the prison for six years, she says, “It’s six years of love at least . . . And then you can have another” (Clement 161). What do you think of Luna’s comments? Have you ever known a woman who has a similar mindset to this and has a need for someone to love? Why do you think some women have a strong need to have a baby to love?
217. **English/Reading**
Write a character sketch of Georgia. What does she look like? How would you describe her behavior, comments, and overall personality? What crimes did she commit (or allegedly commit)? Why do you think the author created this character to be in the prison with Ladydi? Do you think Georgia is an accurate representation of a certain type of female prisoner? Why do you think the author created her character and inserted her into this part of the story? Why do you think the author chose the name Georgia?

218. **English/Reading**
At one point in this chapter, Ladydi thinks about two towns on her mountain called Kilometer Thirty and Eden. How would you characterize these towns? Why is she thinking about them after Luna points Georgia out to her? Are these real towns or fictional ones created by the author?

219. **English/Reading**
Why do people give one another nicknames? In chapter 21, Ladydi finds out about Luna’s nickname. What is her nickname, and how did she get it? What are some other nicknames that have been mentioned in the book? What is their origin? Have you ever had a nickname? Why or why not?

220. **Criminal Studies**
Do you think prisons should provide enrichment activities and educational opportunities to inmates? Why or why not? What are some activities provided to the inmates in Ladydi’s prison? What are the objectives of these activities?

221. **Psychology**
Analyze the conversation between Ladydi and her mother. Does Ladydi hesitate to call her mother? Why or why not? What does this say about their relationship? How does her mother respond? Explain.

Chapter 22:

222. **Criminal Justice/Sociology**
According to Ladydi, there are seventy-seven children being raised in the prison. What are the circumstances under which their mothers became pregnant? What is your opinion of these circumstances? Are they ethical/unethical? Do some of the same circumstances occur in American prisons? Why or why not?
223. **English/Reading**
Why is Mr. Roma an important person to the women at the prison? How would you describe him? What are his comments and behavior like? Do you think outside of the prison that Mr. Roma would have as much significance in the lives of these women? Why or why not?

224. **English/Reading/History**
Who is Lourdes Rivas? Why does the author create this character and insert her into the story at this point? What do the other prisoners think/feel about her? By creating this character, what could the author be saying about Mexico? Or is she saying something about human beings in general? Which real-life person (from today or from modern history) could you compare Lourdes Rivas to? Explain.

225. **Gender Studies/History**
Historically, females are often undervalued in many societies. Why do you think this is often the case? During the collage-making, how do Luna’s comments reflect this viewpoint?

226. **Art**
Why do you think Ladydi is unable to create a collage like the other inmates are doing? What thoughts/feelings could be holding her back? If you were Ladydi, what type of a collage would you make? Work independently or in a small group to create a collage of Ladydi’s life.

227. **English/Reading**
What is the connection between Aurora and Paula? What clues tell Ladydi that there’s a connection? What does Aurora say? What is her motivation for telling the story? How does Aurora’s story affect Ladydi?

228. **Gender Studies**
How do the prisoners view Georgia’s father? Why do they view him this way? Do they have a biased/unbiased opinion of him? How do their life experiences influence their view of him?

229. **Criminal Justice/Psychology**
Although Luna has been in the prison for numerous years, she hasn’t been extradited or sentenced. Why is this the case? What is the reason (or reasons) for her lack of action?
Chapter 23:

230. **Reading/English/History**
Describe the procedure followed at McClane’s ranch. How did the women get there? How were they captured? What measures did the traffickers take to make the women stay? Compare/contrast this to slavery.

231. **Reading/English**
What does it mean to be a cannibal? How is this word used in the story? Analyze the literal and symbolic meanings of this word. In your analysis, explore the role of gender in the use of this word.

232. **Reading/English**
How does the author use tattoos in the novel? What significance do they have? Compare and contrast Paula’s tattoos and McClane’s tattoos.

233. **Criminal Justice**
Describe/analyze Aurora’s crime. Was she justified in taking the action she did? Why or why not? Would her punishment have been the same if she had been in the United States?

234. **Criminal Justice**
Compare and contrast the crimes of Luna, Aurora, and Violeta. What do their cases say about the status of women in Mexico? What do their cases say about the justice system in Mexico?

Chapter 24:

235. **Reading/English**
Describe/analyze the way in which the friendship between Ladydi and Luna develops in the story. Why do they have such a connection to one another?

236. **Health**
Conduct some research into the health conditions and treatment in prisons. Compare and contrast the healthcare in Mexican and American prisons. How does this information provide the reader with more insight into why Aurora is determined to continue fumigating even though it affects her health negatively?
237. **Reading/English**
What shocking bit of information does Aurora give Ladydi? How does this affect Ladydi? Do you think Aurora believes Ladydi when she says she did not do the shooting? Explain.

238. **Music**
Why does the author include a ballad to McClane? What is the ballad’s actual name? Who probably wrote it? Who was its intended audience? Do you think it achieved its aim? Why or why not?

**Chapter 25:**

239. **Criminal Justice**
What is the usual procedure for visitors’ day at a prison? In the book, what’s the difference between visitors’ day at the women’s prison and visitors’ day at the men’s prison? What are the implications of these differences? Who has more visitors and why?

240. **English/Reading**
Describe Ladydi’s experience on visitors’ day. Why do you think the author makes the reader think for a moment that her father has come to visit her? What effect does this have on the reader? What do you think Ladydi is thinking and feeling during this experience? Why do you think the writer delays Ladydi’s reunion with her mother?

241. **Gender Studies**
The author does not mention male visitors at the women’s prison. Why is this? Do you think this is true to life? Why doesn’t Julio visit Ladydi at the prison? Is it solely because he is afraid of getting arrested? If he weren’t wanted by law enforcement, do you think he would visit Ladydi? Why or why not?

242. **English/Reading**
Explain the significance of the holes in the earth used to hide the women. Is it that the women are going back to the earth? Going back to nature? To the womb? How does this pertain to what happened to Maria’s mother? What ultimate sacrifice does she make on Maria’s behalf?
243. **Geography/History**
Conduct a little research on the Popocatepetl volcano. Where is this volcano? How often does it erupt? Historically, how is it looked at by the citizens in the surrounding communities? Why do you think the author incorporated the eruption of this volcano in the story?

**Chapter 26:**

244. **English/Reading**
What does Maria mean when she says, “They’ll find us” (Clement 206). Who exactly is she talking about finding them? Why would these individuals go to the trouble of looking for them and finding them?

245. **Criminal Justice**
How is Ladydi’s age a factor in her sentencing? How will her mother and Maria use this loophole as a way to get away and start a new life? What is the policy in the United States for individuals in this age range? Which laws do you think are more reasonable/fair? Explain.

246. **English/Reading/Psychology**
Maria tells Ladydi, “[Your mother ] told me to tell you that love is not a feeling. It’s a sacrifice” (Clement 207). What does she mean by this comment? Do you agree/disagree? Explain.

247. **English/Reading/Psychology**
Why does Ladydi ask Maria for her earrings? What is Maria’s response? What does her response say about her character?

**Chapter 27:**

248. **English/Reading**
As soon as Rita sees her daughter, she says, “The gods were angrier than we thought” (Clement 208). Why does she say this instead of just greeting her? What does this comment say about her philosophy of life?
249. **English/Reading**
Why does Rita take off her daughter’s flip flops and exchange them for tennis shoes? What could be the literal and symbolic significance of this act? Is the author making a literary allusion here?

250. **English/Reading/Criminal Justice**
What does Rita plan to do now that she has her daughter back? Do you think she is justified in taking this action?

251. **Psychology**
After her mother picks her up from the prison, what does Ladydi say and do? Does she do this to show gratitude? Out of guilt? To show love? Or because of some other motivation?

252. **English/Reading**
How does the author end the book? What do you think of the last page? Does it tie up all the loose ends of the story? Why/why not? Were you surprised by Ladydi’s “news”? Why/why not? If you had to write the next chapter, what would you write?

**AFTER READING:**

253. **Gender Studies/English/Reading**
How are female relationships portrayed in the novel? When you read about the relationship between Ladydi and Rita, did you feel this was a healthy or unhealthy relationship? What about the relationship between Ladydi and Maria? Choose one relationship between two female characters and explore the way in which it develops throughout the novel.

254. **Gender Studies/English/Reading**
How are relationships between men and women portrayed in the novel? How do these relationships compare to single-gender relationships? What do you think the writer could be saying about relationships when people of the same gender or people of different genders are involved? Write a paper in which you examine at least one of these issues. In your paper, include issues such as, communication styles, problem solving, trust, affection/love, loyalty, and permanency.
255. **History**

Conduct some research on corruption in Mexico today. Write a paper in which you identify some of its underlying roots, the way it affects the general population on a daily basis, and some ways the situation can be improved. The following websites can start you on your research:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/claudiolomnitz/mexico-corruption-causes_b_6186682.html

256. **Criminal Justice**

Research the drug cartels in Mexico. Which cartels control which areas? How long have they been in power? How do they stay in power? What steps is the Mexican government taking to control or stop the actions of these cartels? The following websites can start you on your research:

http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/world/americas/mexico-drug-war-fast-facts/
http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Mexico#sthash.Tn2I1IP0.dpbs
http://www.greenewave.com/hell-on-earth-mexican-drug-war-yields-49-headless-bodies/

257. **Criminal Justice/Geography**

Conduct some research on the growth of illegal substances in Mexico. Which drugs are grown and produced in which regions? How are the crops maintained? Which population actually farms the land, and which population actually processes the plants and turns them into drugs? The following websites can start you on your research:

http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/01/drugs-displace-maize-mexicos-small-farms/
http://www.abqjournal.com/news/drugs/1drug4-7.htm

258. **Psychology/Health and Human Services**

What kind of impact does human trafficking have on a person? How can the experience with trafficking make it difficult for a survivor to deal with issues such as trust, affection, intimacy, etc.? What type of treatment can help a person effectively cope with the after-effects of human trafficking? Take a look at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website to find out more about this issue.

http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/mentalhealth/index.shtml
259. **Criminal Studies**
How do girls and women fall into the trap of human trafficking? What factors make them more susceptible to becoming exploited by traffickers? How do they fight their way out of this “system” of abuse? What advice do survivors of trafficking give to others in the hopes that they do not fall into this trap? Click on some of the following links to hear human trafficking survivors discuss their experience.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl0KOK1R0To
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3Yhlzp1RNU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-d6S422B3s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFX31NRwKY4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InPTWjiVc64

260. **Global Studies/Geography**
Where does human trafficking occur? Why does it continue to exist? How are different countries trying to deal with this issue? Take a look at some of the following videos to find out more about this issue.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEtJq8SA1tA
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsqwGeSy0vA
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=529fbGKBSKY

261. **Urban Studies/Geography**
Many people do not know that human trafficking has occurred and continues to occur in Baltimore. How can this be? What makes Baltimore such an appealing place for traffickers? What steps are local authorities taking to stop human trafficking? Take a look at some of the following videos to get some insight into this issue.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laKKxls0ctg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG5E1ms2GiI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl0KOK1R0To
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bopFbiQtuAU
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