





Teacher Edition • Grade 7

# *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative



**Amplify** ELA

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## Icon Key:


 Steps: Indicates the order of activities in a lesson

 Audio


 Close Reading

 Differentiation


 Digital App

 Exit Ticket

 Highlight/Annotate

 Image

 Materials

 On-the-Fly

 Pair Activity

 PDF

 Poll


 Projection


 Share

 Spotlight

 Student Edition

 Student Groups

 Teacher-Led Discussion

 Teacher Only

 Teacher Speech

 Video

 Warm-Up

 Wrap-Up

 Writing Journal

# *Red Scarf Girl & Narrative*

Students begin with narrative writing to quickly boost their writing production, to learn the foundational skill of Focus, and to become comfortable with the key classroom habits and routines they will use all year. After exploring the details of how they describe their own experiences and emotions, students pay the same kind of close attention to analyzing the details presented in the unit's core text: Ji-li Jiang's *Red Scarf Girl*, her memoir of growing up during China's Cultural Revolution.

**Essay Prompt:** How does Ji-li change over the course of her story?



## Welcome!

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON • DIGITAL ONLY



## Get Started

SUB-UNIT 2 • 12 LESSONS



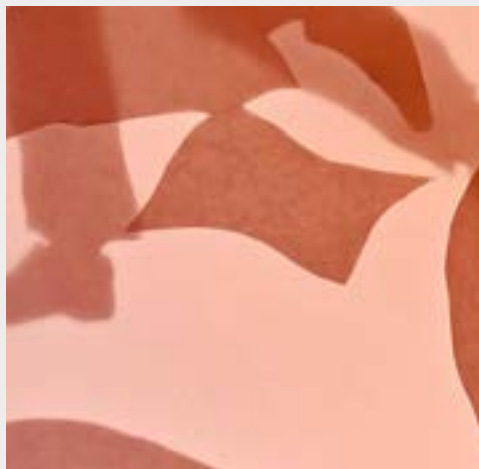
## Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution

SUB-UNIT 3 • 12 LESSONS



## Write an Essay

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



## Red Scarf Girl & Narrative Unit Reading Assessment

1 LESSON

Assessment and print materials in digital curriculum.

# Get Started



Why begin a curriculum that brags about boosting students' reading skills with narrative writing? Shouldn't we simply do a deep dive into text on day one?

On the contrary. It is because we need to challenge students to engage deeply with complex texts that we begin with narrative writing.

People who can read and analyze well do not see the text as an indistinguishable whole; rather, they can focus on specific elements. They can accurately describe what they notice and begin to draw meaning from those observations. They see the particular moves writers make and can logically unpack those moves.

Narrative writing can jump-start these three skills. Students writing about their own experiences are experts in their subjects in a way they cannot initially be with complex texts. Thus, they can be more easily coached to focus on particular moments and to analyze the elements of language that make their descriptions engaging.

In other words, students are willing to experiment with skills that will be crucial to text analysis because the results in narrative writing are so pleasing to them. Practicing these skills in their own narrative writing helps students recognize these skills when Ji-li Jiang employs them in the first text, *Red Scarf Girl*.

Finally, narrative writing allows you, as the teacher, to be a wonderfully engaged reader of the students' own writing, marveling at their observations, letting them know what you responded to, and showing them a clear way to further engage their reader. Like a good reader, you crack open the cover, get deeply absorbed, and take notes on what delights you.

## Sub-Unit 2



### Lesson 1:

The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten



### Lesson 2:

Giving and Getting Feedback



### Lesson 3:

Zooming In: The Power of Focus



### Lesson 4:

Choosing Your Moment



### Lesson 5:

The Impact of Showing



### Lesson 6:

Getting the Verb Right



### Lesson 7:

Experiments in Revision



### Lesson 8:

Focusing on the Details



### Lesson 9:

The Role Played by Setting



### Lesson 10:

A Picture Made of Words: Focusing on an Object



### Lesson 11:

Showing What You've Told



### Lesson 12:

Paint a Picture in the Reader's Mind: Revisions

# Sub-Unit 2 at a Glance

## Lesson Objective

### Lesson 1: The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten

**Skill Practice:** Students will identify the precise observations that convey their point of view about an experience.

**Speaking & Listening:** Students will analyze ideas and supporting details presented in images and explain how these images enhance their understanding.

**Writing:** Students will use precise observations to focus on one moment when they ate something disgusting and convey their point of view.

### Lesson 2: Giving and Getting Feedback

**Skill Practice:** Students will identify the skill of Focus and the use of vivid details that allow them to infer a writer's point of view in a narrative description.

**Writing:** Students will focus on one brief moment to convey their precise observations.

### Lesson 3: Zooming In: The Power of Focus

**Skill Practice:** Students will practice the skill of Focus by selecting one moment and identifying vivid details to fully develop that one moment.

**Writing:** Students will apply the skill of Focus by revisiting the prompt from the previous lesson and using vivid details to fully develop one small moment from that experience.

### Lesson 4: Choosing Your Moment

**Skill Practice:** Students will practice writing a variety of vivid details to convey an overall perspective.

**Writing:** Students will apply the skill of Focus by writing about one moment and using vivid details to develop their point of view.

### Lesson 5: The Impact of Showing

**Skill Practice:** Students will compare and contrast showing and telling an emotion and revise sentences to show or tell.

**Writing:** Students will use descriptive details and precise verbs to focus and develop one moment when they felt a strong emotion.

### Lesson 6: Getting the Verb Right

**Skill Practice:** Students will identify and analyze the impact of strong verbs.

**Writing:** Students will write about one funny moment, using strong verbs to capture the image, emotion, and impact of the action.

## Reading

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

Describe a moment when you ate a disgusting food. Use specific details to help your reader imagine how the food looked, tasted, and smelled—and what your face looked like when you ate it.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.K12.EE.4.1  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3

Describe in detail one *brief* moment when you were finally able to do something you'd never been able to do before.

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1**  
**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3

Think about that moment when you were finally able to do this thing. Write two or three additional vivid details that will create a picture of this moment for your reader.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.K12.EE.6.1  
ELA.7.C.1.5  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3

Describe your *most* boring moment.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.K12.EE.6.1  
ELA.7.C.1.5  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3

Write about a *brief* moment when you felt a strong emotion.

**Extra:** Challenge Writing available in the digital lesson.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.K12.EE.6.1  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3

Think about a funny moment that lasted for fewer than three minutes. Use strong verbs to show what happened.

**Extra:** Challenge Writing available in the digital lesson.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**  
ELA.K12.EE.6.1  
ELA.7.C.1.5  
ELA.7.V.1.1  
ELA.7.V.1.3



## Lesson Objective

### Lesson 7: Experiments in Revision

**Revision:** Students will revise their writing by adding precise details to strengthen the focus of the moment and then assess the impact of these changes.

**Writing:** Students will apply the skills of focus and showing to write about one moment when they were exhausted.

### Lesson 8: Focusing on the Details

**Skill Practice:** Students will practice the skill of Focus by zeroing in on, and describing, the small details within a larger painting.

**Writing:** Students will apply the idea of “painting a picture for the reader” by using focus and showing to describe a moment when they ate outside.

### Lesson 9: The Role Played by Setting

**Skill Practice:** Students will identify their precise observations about one setting to analyze the impact of using vivid details to convey setting.

**Writing:** Students will write about one moment in a specific setting, using vivid details to convey the setting clearly for the reader.

**Connections to Other Lessons:** Later in the unit, students will explore how the feel of a single setting—Ji-li’s home—changes dramatically in response to what happens in her story.

### Lesson 10: A Picture Made of Words: Focusing on an Object

**Skill Practice:** Students will identify one object and describe that object using vivid details.

**Writing:** Students will develop a description of an object they made, using vivid details to create a picture of this object for the reader.

### Lesson 11: Showing What You’ve Told

**Writing:** Students will focus on one moment when they were uncomfortable, using the skill of showing (strong verbs, dialogue, and sensory details) to develop the emotion of that moment.

**Revision:** Students will revise the piece of writing they just wrote, experimenting with narrative techniques like dialogue and sensory detail to strengthen the tone and communicate the experience.

### Lesson 12: Paint a Picture in the Reader’s Mind: Revisions

**Revision:** Students will complete their work in developing one focused moment by revising a piece of their writing, adding vivid details to further develop the focus on one moment and paint a picture for the reader.

**Audio:**

 Red Scarf Girl: Audio Teaser 1



## Reading

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

Write about a moment when you were exhausted. *Show* the reader how exhausted you were.

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

ELA.7.C.1.2

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

Write about a *brief* moment when you ate outside.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

ELA.7.C.1.5

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

Write about a *brief* moment that happened in a kitchen, using specific details to describe the kitchen and what you were doing.

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.2**

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

Describe something that you made. Use vivid details that will help your reader picture the object you're describing.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**

ELA.K12.EE.4.1

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

Write about a moment when you felt uncomfortable.

**ELA.7.C.1.2**

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

ELA.7.C.1.5

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

### Solo:

- *Red Scarf Girl*: Prologue (1–7)

**REVISE:** Describe your *most* boring moment. (from Lesson 4)

OR

**REVISE:** Write about a *brief* moment when you ate outside. (from Lesson 8)

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

ELA.7.C.1.2

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

# Sub-Unit 2 Preparation Checklist

## Lesson 1

- ☐ Review the materials available in the digital curriculum.
- ☐ Review the On-the-Fly feedback in this lesson and all lessons with a Writing Activity to support students during writing.

*Note that lesson Solos can be completed in the digital curriculum, through the Amplify Mobile Solos app, or in print. Solo Activities PDFs can be found in the Materials section of the digital Unit Guide, along with a Solo Answer Key.*

A B  
C D  
E

Pages 13–17

## Lesson 2

- ☐ Prepare 3 or 4 Spotlights of student writing as described in the last Teacher Activity in digital Lesson 1. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider selecting 3 or 4 samples of writing from journals to use as examples.
- ☐ Review the Lesson Tips.

F G  
H I

Pages 18–21

## Lesson 3

- ☐ Prepare 3 or 4 Spotlights of student writing.

J K  
L M  
N

Pages 22–27

## Lesson 4

- ☐ Choose 2 or 3 Spotlights to post using the Spotlight app. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider selecting samples of student writing from their journals to use as examples.
- ☐ Before Lesson 7, comment on and prepare revisions for the writing from this lesson. Look in the last Teacher Activity for instructions.

O P  
Q R

Pages 28–29

## Lesson 5

*You will need to assess, comment on, and prepare revisions for the writing from Lesson 4 before teaching Lesson 7.*

S T  
U V  
W

Pages 30–32

## Lesson 6

- ☐ Comment on and prepare revisions on the writing from Lesson 4 before teaching Lesson 7. Based on your assessment, direct your class to Lesson 7 or Lesson 12. Look in Before Next Lesson for instructions.
- ☐ Choose excerpts of students' work that contain strong verbs to use in a Spotlight.
- ☐ Select three students for a class demonstration. Privately, tell the first student to tiptoe across the room, tell the second student to dash across the room, and tell the third student to shuffle across the room.
- ☐ Preview the rules for the Strong Verbs Charades game.

X Y  
Z A<sup>2</sup>  
B<sup>2</sup> C<sup>2</sup>

Pages 33–35



## Lesson 7

- Assess, comment on, and prepare revisions on the writing from Lesson 4 before teaching Lesson 7. Based on your assessment, direct your class to Lesson 7 or Lesson 12. Look in Before Next Lesson in Lesson 6 for instructions.
- Students will be doing a Revision Assignment on a writing piece from a previous lesson. Mark a section for them to revise before class begins.

D<sup>2</sup> E<sup>2</sup>  
F<sup>2</sup> G<sup>2</sup>  
H<sup>2</sup>

Pages 36–38

## Lesson 8

- Use the Spotlight app to choose samples of focused writing.
- Rules for Writing need to be posted on the wall.
- Prepare to project the painting “The Hunters in the Snow.”

I<sup>2</sup> J<sup>2</sup>  
K<sup>2</sup>

Pages 39–40

## Lesson 9

- Distribute pens and paper to students.
- Assign each student a partner.

L<sup>2</sup> M<sup>2</sup>  
N<sup>2</sup> O<sup>2</sup>  
P<sup>2</sup>

Pages 41–42

## Lesson 10

- Comment on and prepare revisions on the writing from Lesson 8 before teaching Lesson 12. Look in Before Next Lesson for instruction.

Q<sup>2</sup> R<sup>2</sup>  
S<sup>2</sup>

Page 43

## Lesson 11

- Comment on and prepare revisions for the writing from Lesson 8 before teaching Lesson 12. Look in Before Next Lesson for instruction.

T<sup>2</sup> U<sup>2</sup>  
V<sup>2</sup> W<sup>2</sup>

Pages 44–45

## Lesson 12

- Prepare for the Revision Assignment.

X<sup>2</sup> Y<sup>2</sup>  
Z<sup>2</sup>

Pages 46–47

*If students skipped Lessons 7–11, they will revise writing from Lesson 4.*

*If students completed Lessons 7–11, they will revise writing from Lesson 8. Review the Teacher Activity to direct your students to the correct revision activity.*

**Note:** There may be activities in these lessons that students will revise or refer to in a subsequent lesson. By keeping track of lessons that students complete in a print format, you can have students refer to their print work when they reach these activities. In addition, your students will need to copy any Writing Prompts completed in a print lesson into the corresponding digital writing space if you want that writing to be included in Productivity and other reports.

# Get Started

4

## Overview

Let's talk about you, shall we? Remember the incredible tension you felt when somebody passed you the ball during those final seconds of the basketball game? What about the flash of joy you felt when you figured out the one math problem that was driving you crazy? At the time, the details from that experience probably slipped right by as you moved on to the next thing. Now, given a little focus, these are exactly the details and the moments that can make your audience laugh, gasp, and maybe even cry a little bit. All you need to do is take a deep breath, focus, and write about what grabbed your attention.

## Suggested Reading

Read one of the hundreds of books in the Amplify Library!

A

# Lesson 1—The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten

With a partner, complete the following activities:

- 1. Tell your partner if you think eating fish is delicious, okay, or disgusting.
- 2. Share two details from your experience eating fish to support your answer.
- 3. Based on your responses, does fish taste the same to both of you or different?

B





Think about the last food you ate that was really disgusting.



Go to page 8 in your Writing Journal and complete the writing activities to describe what made this food so disgusting.



## Lesson 1 Materials

-  Rules for Writing
-  Rules for Sharing
-  The Student's Mindset
-  Word Cloud Image

Ensure that headphones are available for students to hear the audio of the text in order to provide accessibility.

A

## Lesson 1: The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten

**Introduce:** Students identify their perspective about one food to begin to understand a writer's point of view.



Introduce individual perspective.



This year, one thing we will consider as we read and write is point of view.



Before we do that, we are going to practice developing our own point of view—our own perspective.



Assign partners to students.



Partners complete Activities 1–3 on page 5 of the Student Edition.



Ask students to state details that describe the taste of fish as either disgusting or delicious. Write responses for each in two columns on the board.



Each of you has a unique point of view. When you learn to use precise observations to describe what you are noticing and thinking, it can have a powerful impact on your audience and your learning.

B

## Lesson 1 (continued)

**Try It On:** Students note details they find disgusting to explore their point of view.



Discuss student points of view on foods they don't like.



Everyone seems to have their own point of view about food they don't like.








**Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 1 and 2 on page 8.

## C Lesson 1 (continued)

**Discuss:** Students examine a photo to identify the precise details that show point of view.

2 min

-  Direct students to the photo on page 6 of the Student Edition.
-  Discuss the picture using questions 1 and 2 in the Student Edition.
-  This person just ate something she found disgusting. How can you tell?
-  What are the specific details that show her point of view? What is she feeling?
-  Push students to describe exactly what they see.

C

## Lesson 1—The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten (continued)



Shutterstock

Be prepared to share with the class your responses to the following questions:

1. Did the person in the photo just eat something she found delicious or disgusting?
2. Share three specific details from the photograph that show her point of view—what she's feeling.

D

1. Picture the most disgusting food you've ever tasted.
  - Did you spit it out?
  - Did you try to swallow it...with tears in your eyes?
  - Did you smile as you ate it because you needed to pretend to like it?
2. Make a "disgusted face" while your partner writes down five observations/details about that facial expression on page 9 in your Writing Journal.
3. Now, switch and have your partner make a "disgusted face" while you write down five observations/details about their facial expression in your partner's journal.





Go to page 9 in your partner's journal and record the details you observed in their facial expression.


## D Lesson 1 (continued)


**Work Visually:** Students make faces of disgust and analyze physical details to convey disgust in their writing.


 Assign partners.

 Direct students to Activities 1–3 on page 7 of the Student Edition.

 Partners take turns posing with a disgusted face while the other writes 5 observations/details about their partner's facial expression.

 Find 5 details in your partner's expression that shows just how disgusted they are. Write these down in their journal. They will write in your journal. You will use these in your writing today.

 **Writing Journal:** Students record their observations on page 9.


 Work with your partner to analyze your notes to find specific details that convey your feelings. Discuss the details and explain why you think those details convey a certain feeling.


3 min


## E Lesson 1 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2


**Write & Share:** Students use the precise observations they've identified to convey their "disgusted" point of view.


 Read aloud and discuss the Rules for Writing on page 8 of the Student Edition.


 **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.


 Remind students they can use Warm-Up suggestions on page 9 of the Student Edition.

 Direct students to the Word Cloud on page 9 in the Student Edition to give students some ideas for words to use.

 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 10.

 **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

 **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

End of Lesson 1

E

## Lesson 1—The Most Disgusting Food You've Ever Eaten (continued)

### Rules for Writing


1. Use the whole time to write.
2. Ask for help once, if necessary, then continue writing.
3. Keep focused on your own work—don't distract your classmates.
4. NO: talking, trips for water, or surfing.



1. Review the Rules for Writing with your teacher.
2. Review the observations you have made about the experience of eating food you think tastes disgusting.



Go to page 10 in your Writing Journal to write about a moment when you ate a disgusting food. Use the suggestions on page 9 to help you begin your writing if needed.

 8 Red Scarf Girl & Narrative • Lesson 1



### Differentiation: Step E

If students struggle to write in coherent sentences, have them orally describe their disgusting food to a teacher or partner before beginning to write.



### Differentiation: Step E

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt has students brainstorm five descriptive words to use and provides sentence starters.



## Before You Begin Lesson 2:

**Prepare 3 or 4 Spotlights of student writing, as described in the last Teacher Activity in today's lesson if completed digitally. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider looking through students' journals and selecting 3 or 4 samples of student writing to use as examples of using specific observations to develop point of view in the next lesson.**

Take note of any of the following that apply:


- You can picture what your face looked like when you were eating your disgusting food.
- You can think of some words to describe what the disgusting food felt and tasted like in your mouth.
- You can remember what you said or did when you were eating the disgusting food.
- You can write a description so that your reader can really understand your point of view about how gross this food was.


## Word Cloud





## F Lesson 2: Giving and Getting Feedback


**Spotlight:** Students note their peers' specific observations to develop point of view and practice The Student's Mindset.


 Include this Spotlight activity if you have collected samples of student writing in previous digital lessons.


 If students did not complete previous writing digitally, you can also share student writing by reading pre-selected pieces within their Writing Journals.


 Direct students to page 10 in the Student Edition.

 We are going to look at some Spotlights from the class and see how each writer used precise observations to convey "disgust."

 Look carefully to see how the writer used details to try to describe what he or she observed about that moment.

 **Project:** Spotlight App and read the 3 or 4 pieces prepared or allow students to read their writing.

 Ask 2 or 3 volunteers to note specific details.

 **Project:** The Student's Mindset from the digital lesson and discuss observing closely.

6 min

## F Lesson 2—Giving and Getting Feedback

Listen as your teacher reads your classmates' writing.

Raise your hand to respond to the writing by answering this question:

What is one vivid detail the writer used to capture the "disgusted" point of view?






### Vivid Details: Some Examples

**Sensory Details:** How something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels

**Actions:** What someone (or something) does

**Dialogue:** What someone says

### Lesson 2 Materials

-  Response Starters Speech Bubbles
-  The Student's Mindset
-  Response Sentence Starters
-  Teacher Comment Sample
-  Rules for Writing

G

Read the paragraph.

**Sample Writing: 7th Grade Mile Run**

"One more lap to go!" I barely heard the words of Ms. Strauss over the sound of my desperate breathing and my legs screaming "Stop!" "Stop!" "Stop!" to my numb brain. Kids whizzed by me barely sweating, looking like they run all the time, looking like their shoes have rocket boosters. Meanwhile, the bones in my feet must have turned into some kind of rock, because it became impossible to lift them more than two inches off the track. I was not running; I was doing a zombie shuffle. "What would happen if my pounding heart actually bursts through my chest?" I wondered. "Would I still have to finish the required one mile run?"

Notice the vivid details the writer uses to develop his point of view.









Go to page 11 of your Writing Journal and note some of the specific details the writer uses.

G

**Lesson 2** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Select Details:** Students note vivid details in the sample writing to consider how precise observations help communicate a unique point of view.

- 7 min
-  Read aloud the sample writing on page 11 of Student Edition.
  -  Direct students to follow along in the text as you read.
  -  **Project:** Poll 1. Ask students to indicate the writer's point of view.
  -  **Writing Journal:** Students complete Activities 1–3 on page 11.
  -  Ask 2 or 3 students to share the detail the writer used that helped them understand the writer's point of view.
  -  Closely observing the world around you and sharing those observations in your writing will help your reader to see your point of view about that experience.


**Differentiation: Step G**


● *ELL(Dev)*: The idiom "a piece of cake" may be unfamiliar to readers who are below grade level in reading or ELL students. You may choose to explain that it means "a task that is very easy to do."


**H Lesson 2** (continued)

**Discuss:** Students review the Rules for Writing so that they understand the expectations for the writing activities.

5 min

 Discuss the Rules for Writing on page 12 of the Student Edition.

 Students read the list of distractions in Activity 2 on page 12 of the Student Edition.

 Discuss with students which distraction gets in their way the most and why.

**H****Lesson 2—Giving and Getting Feedback** (continued)


**Rules for Writing**

1. Use the whole time to write.
2. Ask for help once, if necessary, then continue writing.
3. Keep focused on your own work—don't distract your classmates.
4. NO: talking, trips for water, or surfing.

1. Review the Rules for Writing with your teacher.
2. Think about the things that usually keep you from getting your work done. Share with your teacher which of the following distracts you the most:
  - A. Talking with your friends
  - B. Getting up to do something like get a drink of water
  - C. Stopping work before time is up
  - D. Asking the teacher questions—instead of figuring out what to do on your own
  - E. Surfing the Internet
  - F. Other

I

Think of a moment in which you were finally able to do something you'd never been able to do before.



Go to page 12 in your Writing Journal and write about this moment.

I

## Lesson 2 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.K12.EE.4.1, ELA.7.C.1.2

**Write & Share:** Students write about one moment and use precise observations to convey the experience and their perspective.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 12.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

End of Lesson 2



### Differentiation: Step I

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides fill-in-the-blank questions and a sentence starter.

### Before You Begin Lesson 3:

Prepare 3 or 4 Spotlights of student writing, as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider looking through students' journals and selecting 2–4 samples of student writing to use as examples of the skill of focus in the next lesson.

## J Lesson 3: Zooming In: The Power of Focus

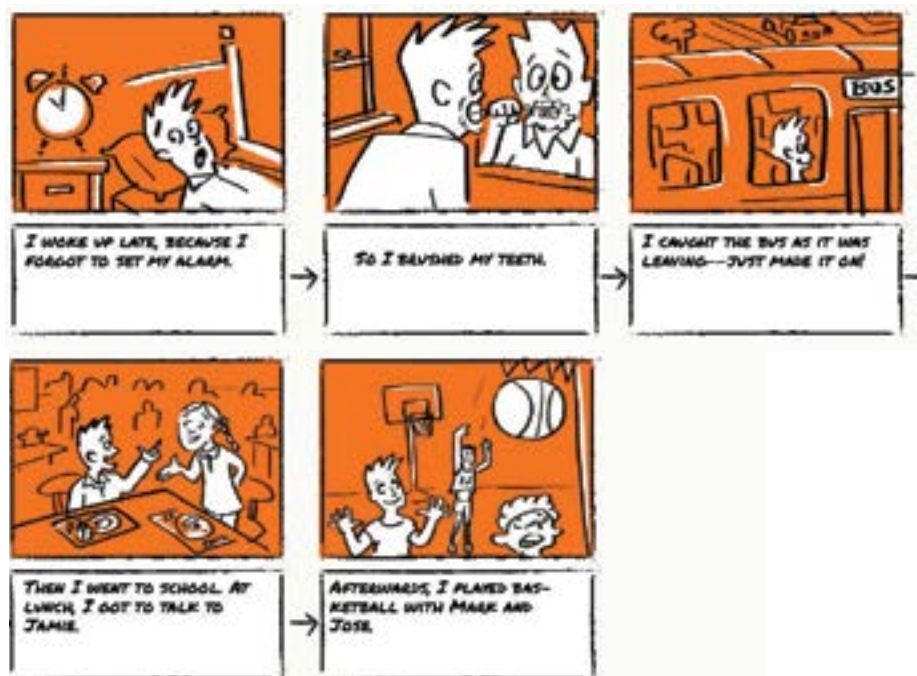
**Present:** Teacher presents an unfocused narrative to demonstrate the need for focus.

- Ask a student to tell you the story of his or her day.
- Make a list of all the events, e.g., "I got up, got dressed, went to school."
- Repeat with another student, and write the second list right next to the first one.
- What do you notice about these lists?
- If we each listed all the events in our day, they'd probably look pretty similar—get up, go to school, etc. And they'd likely all be pretty boring.
- S** Students look at the cartoon on page 14 of the Student Edition.
- Discuss how the cartoonist just skims across a series of moments.
- But if we each picked just one part of our day and focused in on just one small moment, then every single one of us could find some fascinating details in it.
- That is what we are going to practice today—the skill of Focus.

3 min

## J Lesson 3—Zooming In: The Power of Focus (continued)

Look at this cartoon. Discuss how the cartoonist skims across moments.



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### Lesson 3 Materials

- Image of Cartoon of Someone's Day
- Image of Focused Cartoon (Toothbrushing), Part 2
- Definition of Focus
- The Student's Mindset

## K Lesson 3 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Discuss:** Students learn the difference between listing moments and focusing on particular moments to develop detail and organize a sequence of events.

**S** Students look at the first cartoon on page 14 of the Student Edition.

What's the first move the cartoonist made?

**C** Discuss how the cartoon is not focused.

**S** Students look at the second cartoon on page 15 of the Student Edition.

What move did the cartoonist make here?

**S** Students consider the question in Activity 2 in the Student Edition.

**C** Discuss how and why this cartoon is focused.

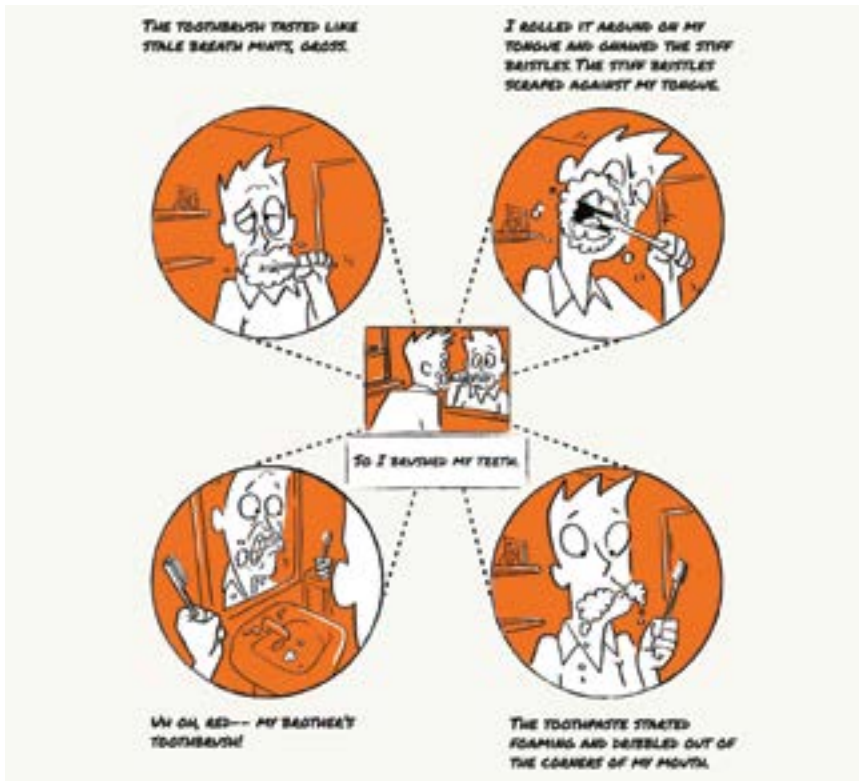
When you put together a narrative, you can create a sequence of these focused moments.

Let's look at some examples of how classmates are beginning to do this in their own narrative writing, and then you will have a chance to practice.

8 min

K

- Look at this second cartoon. Compare it to the first cartoon.



- What does the cartoonist do when he creates the second cartoon? Consider all that apply:
  - He decides to focus on just one small moment.
  - He observes the moment closely with precise details.
  - He uses the details from his point of view—how he experienced and felt about this moment.



### Differentiation: Step K

If students are struggling to read this text, read the comic strip and passages aloud first and then have students reread to determine what is happening in the scene.



## K Lesson 3 (continued)

- S** Students complete Activities 3 and 4 in the Student Edition to look at the first sample writing.
- MC** Discuss how the writing is not focused.
- MC** Point out the different moments in the paragraph.
- Q** Let's see how a writer did the same thing the cartoonist did. Out of a "list" of possible moments to write about, the writer picked just one to focus on.
- S** Students complete Activities 5 and 6 in the Student Edition to look at the second sample writing.
- MC** Discuss the definition of Focus on page 17 of the Student Edition with the class.
- MC** Discuss how the writing is focused.
- Q** What do you notice about this version?
- Q** Which gives you a stronger picture of what the writer was experiencing? Why?
- Q** A great writer isn't somebody who has more interesting experiences. A great writer is somebody who knows how to make ordinary experiences interesting.

8 min

K

## Lesson 3—Zooming In: The Power of Focus (continued)

3. Read the first sample writing.

### Sample Writing: 7th Grade Mile Run

I have never run a mile before, but I felt okay for the first three laps. "Maybe this won't be so bad," I was thinking. But the fourth lap was brutal, and I barely made it. I almost had to crawl over the line. But it was sweet to finish! My friends huddled around to congratulate me. Now I know I can run a mile!

4. How many different moments did the writer describe?

5. In the second sample writing below, the writer took one moment from the sample writing above and added more detail. Read the revised writing.

### Sample Writing: 7th Grade Mile Run

Moment selected for focus: But the fourth lap was brutal, and I barely made it.

"One more lap to go!" I barely heard the words of Ms. Strauss over the sound of my desperate breathing and my legs screaming "Stop!" "Stop!" "Stop!" to my numb brain. Kids whizzed by me barely sweating, looking like they run all the time, looking like their shoes have rocket boosters. Meanwhile, the bones in my feet must have turned into some kind of rock, because it became impossible to lift them more than two inches off the track. I was not running; I was doing a zombie shuffle. "What would happen if my pounding heart actually bursts through my chest?" I wondered. "Would I still have to finish the required one mile run?"

6. Think about which moment from the first sample writing the writer described in more detail.



K

7. Read the definition of Focus:

**Definition of Focus**

To focus is to write exclusively about one moment or idea in order to fully develop it.

L

Listen as your teacher reads your classmates' writing.

Share in the class discussion any examples you see of focused writing in your classmates' writing.

L

**Lesson 3** (continued)

**Spotlight Focus:** Students discuss Spotlight models using precise observations to focus on one moment to prepare for revision.



**Project:** Spotlight App and read the 2–4 pieces prepared or allow students to read their writing.



Ask 2 or 3 volunteers to note the range of moments on which each writer chose to focus.

5 min



## Lesson 3 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Select:** Students work with peers to reread their writing from the previous lesson and note how many moments occur in their writing.



Assign students partners.



Partners complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 18 of the Student Edition.



Direct students to review the Vivid Details Chart on page 10 of the Student Edition as a reminder of the types of details to use.



Often a narrative is made up of a few moments.



A writer focuses on each key moment and develops it using detail so the reader can picture the experience.



Partners complete Activities 3–4 on page 18 of the Student Edition.



Discuss student observations of their writing.



**Writing Journal:** Students write 2 or 3 vivid details that create a picture of the moment on page 13.

8 min

## Zooming In: The Power of Focus



## Lesson 3—Zooming In: The Power of Focus (continued)

1. Read your writing from Lesson 2 on page 12 of our Writing Journal with your partner.
2. Tell your partner how many moments you wrote about.
3. Identify a Moment:
  - If you focused on more than one moment, underline one moment where you can use additional vivid details to develop your focus.
  - If you already focused on just one moment, identify a moment before or after this moment that you can develop.
4. Observe Closely: Decide which two or three vivid details create a picture of the moment you identified for your reader.



On page 13 of your Writing Journal, write about these vivid details.



N

Zoom in on the moment in which you were finally able to do something you'd never done before.



Describe this moment in detail on page 14 of your Writing Journal.

N

## Lesson 3 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Write & Share:** Students use precise details to develop their focus on one moment.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 14.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

End of Lesson 3



### Differentiation: Step N



● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides students with a list of details to add.

### Before You Begin Lesson 4:

Comment on student writing as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If student writing was completed digitally, create comments online with the Gradebook feature. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider commenting on student work inside their writing journals with the suggested format described in the last Teacher Activity.








## O Lesson 4: Choosing Your Moment

**Introduce:** Students read teacher's written comments to consider one place they used the skill of Focus or vivid details to make an impact on an audience.

- 5 min
-  Review the goal of your written comments.
    - Understand students' ideas and help them communicate those ideas.
    - Find a place where a student used a skill in a way that made an impact.
    - Describe the skill and the impact.
  -  Give students 5 minutes to read comments you recently made either digitally or physically in Writing Journals.

## P Lesson 4 (continued)

**Discuss:** Students identify vivid "boring" details to practice focusing.

- 10 min
-  Certain moments just "jump out" and are easy to focus on. Writers who are observant start to notice what is interesting in the everyday things. They can use these details to focus on even a "boring" moment and develop a vivid picture for the reader.
  -  Assign students to groups of 2–4.
  -  **Project:** Vivid Details Chart.
  -  Students can also access the Vivid Details Chart on page 10 of the Student Edition.
  -  Partners/groups work together to complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 20 of the Student Edition.
  -  **Writing Journal:** Partners/groups complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 15.
  -  Stop activity after 5 minutes—it's okay if some students have not completed the chart.

## O Lesson 4—Choosing Your Moment

Review the comments your teacher made on a recent piece of your writing.

P


Complete the following activities with your assigned partner or group.

- Share with your group what you notice when you're bored and time moves slowly.
- Work with your partner/group to imagine and add one or more additional vivid details for each boring moment.

Use the Vivid Details Chart on page 10 if needed.



Complete the chart and Activity 2 on page 15 of your Writing Journal.

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## Lesson 4 Materials



Vivid Details Chart

Q

What was the most boring moment in your life?



Complete questions 1 and 2 on page 16 of your Writing Journal.

R

Now that you've listed several ideas about your most boring moment, you're ready to write about it.



Go to page 17 in your Writing Journal and describe your most boring moment.



### Differentiation: Step R

● *ELL(Dev)*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides guiding questions and a sentence starter.

■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides ideas of details to add and a sentence starter.



## Lesson 4 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Try It On:** Students select their own "boring" moment and brainstorm precise details to prepare to write.



What about the boring moments in your life?



What sounds, actions, feelings, and sights can you think of to describe your one boring moment?



Now close your eyes and picture that boring moment. Look at it very, very closely. Turn it around in your mind and notice everything you can about it.



**Writing Journal:** Students complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 16.

5 min



## Lesson 4 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Write & Share:** Students choose the most boring moment from their day and describe it in detail.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 17.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

22 min

End of Lesson 4

## S Lesson 5: The Impact of Showing

**Present:** Students experience the difference between showing and telling by watching the teacher enact them both.

Prepare to act out being angry in two ways. In the first scene, you tell your students you're angry; in the second, you show them!

Watch me.

Step outside of the classroom. When you return, look at the class with a neutral facial expression and say very flatly, "I'm angry."

Step outside of the classroom a second time.

When you return show the students what angry looks like in an exaggerated way. Tear a piece of paper apart, scowl, take loud breaths. Be dramatic, but don't tell your students that you're angry. Let your actions do the talking!

Discuss the performance with the class.

Which of my 2 performances felt angrier to you? Which made you believe that I was really angry? Why?

3 min

## T Lesson 5 (continued)

**Work Visually:** Students list their observations from each performance of being *angry* to note the distinction between the *telling* and *showing* performances.

Assign partners.

**Writing Journal:** Partners complete the T-chart on page 19.

Discuss student responses.

Raise your hand if you listed more details in the "Performance 2" column.

Imagine you were reading these details in a description of a character in a book.

Which list of details would paint a clearer picture in your mind? Which list is more interesting to read?

4 min

## T Lesson 5—The Impact of Showing

Work with your partner to record the differences between telling and showing.



Record your observations on page 19 of your Writing Journal.

U

### Emotion Chart



#### Version A

1a. The man was angry.

2a. I felt calm.

3a. I was so confused.

#### Version B

1b. The man stomped into the room, and spit out between gritted teeth, "I just can't take it anymore." He banged his fist on the desk, knocking a stack of papers to the ground.

2b. I sat very still and closed my eyes as the soft, sweet air swept across my skin and gently lifted the hair off my forehead.

3b. I was so confused. Where is the exit to this parking garage? Where is my parking ticket? Where did I park my car? My eyes started to blur as I stared out over rows and rows of cars that all looked the same.



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### Lesson 5 Materials

- Preparing for a Revision Assignment
- Emotion Chart



### Differentiation: Step T

● **ELL(Dev):** Plan how to assign pairs for this activity. ELL students should be assigned to work with non-ELL students or ELL students at a different level.



**Definition of Showing**










To show is to use descriptive details and precise verbs to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind.

Read these sentences. Share in the class discussion if these sentences are showing or telling.

1. Valentina looked straight at me, grabbed my ice cream cone out of my hands, and dropped it deliberately on the sidewalk, her mouth a hard straight line.
2. "N-nice to meet you," Delmar stuttered, his eyes on his shoes.
3. The boys in the back of the truck were excited.
4. Kanya nibbled on her thumbnail and then wiped her palms across her skirt, taking in a shallow, shaky breath.
5. Jamal felt proud of his academic awards and accomplishments.
6. My grandmother was upset that she lost her keys.

**U Lesson 5** (continued)

**Introduce:** Students encounter a series of examples of telling and showing—then start to describe the difference between them.

-  Direct students who need help identifying what the different emotions look like to the Emotion Chart on page 22 of the Student Edition.
-  Students read the Version A and Version B sentences in the box on page 22 of the Student Edition.
-  Discuss the differences in the sentences and note distinctions between telling and showing sentences.
-  What's the difference between the sentences on the left and those on the right?
-  Which sentences are more interesting to read? How come?
-  Ask for volunteers to share their responses.
-  Read aloud the definition of "showing" on page 23 of the Student Edition, and connect the definition to the work students just completed.
-  When a writer wants to present a very clear picture for the reader, they will include details of what something looked, sounded, smelled, and acted like.
-  Read aloud sentences 1–6 on page 23 of the Student Edition. Ask students if each sentence is showing or telling.

6 min


**Differentiation: Step U**


If students struggle to see the impact of using showing details in writing, act out or have volunteers act out the scenarios in Version B.


## V Lesson 5 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2


**Try It On:** Students practice revising sentences to *show* or *tell* and consider the distinct impact of each mode of description.


 **Project:** Emotion Chart to support student answers.


 **Writing Journal:** Students complete Activities 1–3 on page 20.

 Call on 3 volunteers to share the sentences they added. Ask the class to explain how the new sentences differ from the old ones.

 If nobody chooses the last sentence, you might work on it as a whole class to show that Jada feels “devastated.”

 **Writing Journal:** Students complete Activities 4–6 on page 21.

 Call on 2 volunteers to share their revisions with the class.


 How do your revisions compare to the originals? What did you have to leave out?


6 min

## W Lesson 5 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2


**Write & Share:** Students practice showing by writing about a moment when they felt a strong emotion.

 **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 22.

 **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

 **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

 **Wrap-Up:** Project.

19 min

End of Lesson 5

## The Impact of Showing

V

### Lesson 5—The Impact of Showing (continued)

Practice revising sentences to *show* and *tell* a distinct impact when describing something.



On page 20 of your Writing Journal complete Activities 1–3.



On page 21 of your Writing Journal complete Activities 4–6.

W

Think about a time when you felt a strong emotion.



Go to page 22 in your Writing Journal, and write about a brief moment when you felt a strong emotion.



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#### Differentiation: Step V

If students are struggling to include showing details in their writing, pair students to act out the telling sentences.



#### Differentiation: Step W

● *ELL(Dev)*: Alternate Writing Prompt uses simplified language and provides guiding questions and a chart of emotions.

■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides a list of ideas to think about and a chart of emotions.





X

## Lesson 6—Getting the Verb Right

Review the comments your teacher made on a recent piece of your writing.

Y

### Strong Verbs Charades!

1. Choose one strong verb from the list your teacher created on the board, but don't tell anyone which one you chose.
2. Your teacher will call on several students to act out a verb on the list. When it is your turn, move across the front of the room in the way your chosen verb suggests. See if the class can guess your verb by your movements.
3. You score a point if your class can guess within two tries the verb you acted out.

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X

## Lesson 6: Getting the Verb Right

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Present:** Students read teacher's written comments to consider the impact their skills made on an audience.



Give students 5 minutes to read comments you recently made either digitally or physically in Writing Journals.



Students can find your digital comments by going to My Work.



Tell students they will be revising this piece in a few lessons.

5 min

Y

## Lesson 6 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Student Presentation:** By watching someone act out a strong verb, students see for themselves the power of describing an action precisely.



Ask for a volunteer and secretly instruct him to tiptoe across the room, while the rest of the class watches.



What did you just see him do?



Possible responses:

- He tiptoed across the room.



Repeat the process by having other volunteers dash and shuffle across the room.



We just saw some very different ways of moving across the room.



What are some other ways you could move across the room?



Create a list of suggestions on the board.



If students suggest vague verbs like "moved," push them to come up with more precise verbs.



Read aloud the description for the charades game on page 25 of the Student Edition. Ask students to choose a verb from the list recorded earlier on the board.



Lead students in playing the charades game as explained on page 25 of the Student Edition.

10 min

### Before You Begin Lesson 6:

Comment on student writing in Lesson 4 for the upcoming Revision Lesson as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If student writing was completed digitally, create comments online with the Gradebook feature. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider commenting on student work inside their writing journals with the suggested format described in the last Teacher Activity in digital lesson.



### Lesson 6 Materials

No materials.

**Z Lesson 6** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Introduce:** Students learn the meaning of strong verbs.

2 min

- Discuss the definition of strong verbs on page 26 of Student Edition.

**A<sup>2</sup> Lesson 6** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Discuss:** Students see how they can change the meaning of a whole sentence just by choosing a different verb.

9 min

- Assign partners.
- Partners work together to complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 26 of Student Edition to see how the meaning of a sentence can change with the verb choice.
- Discuss student responses.

**Lesson 6—Getting the Verb Right** (continued)**Definition of Strong Verbs**

Strong verbs describe actions precisely. They can capture the image, emotion, and impact of the action.

**Weak Verbs:** The student **put** his backpack onto his shoulder and **closed** the door.

**Strong Verbs:** The student **yanked** his backpack onto his shoulder and **slammed** the door.

**Strong Verbs That Show Emotion**

A strong verb can describe precisely what someone does in a way that shows the emotion the person feels.

- Read each telling sentence on page 27.
- Tell your partner which sentence in each pair contains the verb that best shows the emotion stated in the telling sentence.

**Differentiation: Step Z**

● *ELL(Dev)*: If students are struggling to understand strong verbs or if you have a class with several ELL students ask one volunteer to act out “put his backpack onto his shoulder” and another volunteer to act out “yanked his backpack onto his shoulder.”

**Differentiation: Step A<sup>2</sup>**

● *ELL(Dev)*: To help students understand unfamiliar verbs in the short answer activity, act them out. Or, add an explanatory clause to the middle of the sentence: How do you think Natasha was feeling when she was fiddling, or playing with, the loose threads on her jacket?

A<sup>2</sup>**Sentences**

Telling: Natasha was angry.

- Natasha fiddled with the loose threads on her jacket.
- Natasha yanked on the loose threads on her jacket.

Telling: Jamal and Dani were very hungry.

- Jamal and Dani gobbled the appetizers.
- Jamal and Dani sampled the appetizers.

Telling: The fish heads were disgusting.

- The fish heads were stacked in the old trash barrel.
- The fish heads were rotting in the old trash barrel.

B<sup>2</sup>

Listen as your teacher reads your classmates' writing.

Share in the class discussion any examples you see of strong verbs in your classmates' writing.

C<sup>2</sup>

Think about a funny moment that lasted for less than three minutes.



Turn to page 23 in your Writing Journal and write about this moment.

**B<sup>2</sup> Lesson 6** (continued)

**Present:** Show students their own writing samples in which they have used strong verbs so they can see the real impact these verbs can make on their classmates.



**Project:** Spotlight samples of student writing using strong verbs.



Read aloud the excerpts you chose from your students' writing in the Spotlight app, or have students read their own work to the class.



What makes these verbs strong?

**C<sup>2</sup> Lesson 6** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Write & Share:** Students write about a moment from their own experience, using strong verbs to make their writing more precise and powerful.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 23.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

End of Lesson 6

**Differentiation: Step C<sup>2</sup>**

● ELL(Dev), ■ Moderate:  
Alternate Writing Prompt  
provides a sentence starter.

**Before You Begin Lesson 7:**

Lesson 7 is a Revision Lesson. Students work to revise an existing piece of writing that you have selected and highlighted to strengthen the focus of the moment and assess the impact of these changes. Please see instructions in the digital lesson.

## D<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7: Experiments in Revision

### Review Telling and Showing:

Students contrast a telling sentence with a showing sentence and revise their writing to show, not tell.

- 8 min
- Direct students to page 28 of the Student Edition.
  - Students complete the activity in the Student Edition.
  - What is the writer of the first sentence doing differently from the writer of the second sentence?
  - Writing Journal:** Students rewrite the sentence on page 24.
  - Discuss responses.

## E<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7 (continued)

### Introduce the Revision

**Assignment:** Students learn how to do Revision Assignments.

- 2 min
- Direct students to page 28 of the Student Edition.
  - Today, we'll be learning about Revision Assignments—short writing experiments that give you a way to practice specific skills.
  - You'll be working on the skill of focus—writing about one, small moment.
  - Discuss the Revision Assignment process in the Student Edition.

## Lesson 7—Experiments in Revision

Which of these descriptions creates a more vivid image in your mind? Share your thoughts in the class discussion.

- It was so windy, and I was really, really cold.
- I bit down hard to stop my teeth from chattering as the icy wind forced its way under the collar of my jacket.



Go to page 24 in your Writing Journal to practice showing by rewriting a sentence.

E<sup>2</sup>

Review the Revision Assignment process below with your teacher.

1. Teacher (or student) marks a part of the student writing for the student to experiment with.

2. Student completes RA below the original writing response.

3. Student compares the original version to the revised version to see if they like the sentences they added.

You really sound like you didn't like this! Can you show me why it was gross, so I can feel it too?

One day when I was at home, my parents decided I should learn how to make a cake from scratch. Mama got me all the stuff I would need and let me go. I started it and mixed it and put it in the oven. One hour later it was finally done! I lifted it out of the oven, but when I took a bite it was gross. I wanted to throw the cake away, but in that moment my uncle came downstairs. He really wanted a bite. He took a bite and nearly threw up on the spot. So that's why I don't make cakes anymore.

Word Count: 148

One day when I was at home, my parents decided I should learn how to make a cake from scratch. Mama got me all the stuff I would need and let me go. I started it and mixed it and put it in the oven. One hour later it was finally done! I lifted it out of the oven, but when I took a bite it was gross. I wanted to throw the cake away, but in that moment my uncle came downstairs. He really wanted a bite. He took a bite and nearly threw up on the spot. So that's why I don't make cakes anymore.

It tasted like swimming in the ocean with your mouth open and tons of trash filtering in. It smelled like rotting garbage, too. The inside of it was pale gray and had pockets of uncooked flour falling out of the middle.

### Lesson 7 Materials

- Revision Assignment Comment
- Sample Student Writing for Practicing Revising
- Revision Assignment Instructions

**Lesson 7** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.5

**Practice Revising:** Students practice revising by adding details to a given writing sample.



Now it's your chance to try the same Revision Assignment. Pretend you were the student who wrote the original version. Add 2 sentences of your own that show what made that bite so gross.



Direct students to page 29 of the Student Edition.



Students complete Activities 1 and 2 in the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students add two sentences to the sample writing on page 24.



Discuss responses.

3 min

P2

- Below is a sample of a student's writing with a teacher comment. Take a look at the part that's highlighted.

You really sound like you didn't like this! Can you show me why it was gross, so I can feel it too?

One day when I was at home, my parents decided I should learn how to make a cake from scratch. Mama got me all the stuff I would need and let me go. I started it and mixed it and put it in the oven. One hour later it was finally done! I lifted it out of the oven, but when I took a bite it was gross. I wanted to throw the cake away, but in that moment my uncle came downstairs. He really wanted a bite. He took a bite and nearly threw up on the spot. So that's why I don't make cakes anymore.

- Add two sentences to this writing that show why the bite was gross.



Go to page 24 in your Writing Journal to add two sentences.

## G<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.5

**Revise for Focus:** Students revise their own writing by adding specific details to focus in on one small moment they'd begun to describe.

Now try a Revision Assignment in your own writing.

I've highlighted a section in one of your recent pieces that I'd like you to revise.

Students complete Activities 1 and 2 in the Student Edition.

**Writing Journal:** Students make revisions to Lesson 4's writing on page 18.

Lead a class discussion for Activity 3 in the Student Edition.

## H<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7 (continued)

**Write & Share:** Students write about a moment when they were tired, keeping in mind the importance of showing—not just telling.

**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 25.

**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

End of Lesson 7

## Experiments in Revision

G<sup>2</sup>

### Lesson 7—Experiments in Revision (continued)

1. Look at the place in your writing your teacher highlighted in Lesson 4. This is a place where you focus on one moment but could develop that moment further.
2. Write three or four more sentences to focus on just this highlighted moment, using precise details so that your reader can picture it. Skip a line and write your new sentences below your original response.



Go to page 18 in your Writing Journal to add the revisions highlighted by your teacher in Lesson 4.

3. Share your thoughts on the following questions in the class discussion.

- Which of your versions does a better job of focusing: your original version or your new version?
- Which do you think will create a clearer picture of this precise moment in your reader's mind?

H<sup>2</sup>

Think of a time were you were exhausted.



On page 25 of your Writing Journal write about this moment by showing, not just telling.

30 Red Scarf Girl & Narrative • Lesson 7



### Differentiation: Step H<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt has explicit guiding questions and sentence starters.

### Before You Begin Lesson 8:

Prepare 3–4 Spotlights of student writing, as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider looking through students' journals and selecting 3 or 4 samples of student writing to use as examples of the skill of focus in Lesson 8.



I<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8—Focusing on the Details

Listen as your teacher reads your classmates' writing.

Share in the class discussion any examples you see of focused details in your classmates' writing.

J<sup>2</sup>

1. Look at the image below and notice the details the artist included to create this moment.



The Hunters in the Snow, 1565, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

I<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8: Focusing on the Details

**Spotlight on Student Work:** Show students excerpts of their own focused writing, so they can see some real examples of the impact that focus can make.



**Project:** Spotlight samples of student writing demonstrating focus.



Read aloud the excerpts you chose from your students' writing or have students read their own work to the class.



**Discuss:** What makes these pieces strong?

7 min

J<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Work Visually:** Students zoom in on a small section of a painting and describe it deeply, practicing the same kind of close attention they'll apply to their writing later in the lesson.



Assign partners.



Partners complete Activities 1–4 on pages 31–32 of the Student Edition to focus on the vivid details in the image.



**Writing Journal:** Students write 4 or 5 sentences on page 26 that focus on the moment.

9 min



### Lesson 8 Materials




"The Hunters in the Snow" (1565),  
Pieter Bruegel the Elder





## K<sup>2</sup> Lesson 8 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2


**Write & Share:** Students practice using focus to describe a moment when they ate outdoors.


 Review the Rules for Writing on page 32 of the Student Edition.

 Remember why we focus:


 The things around us can feel so familiar that we no longer really see them. But when we get up close, we see that each of these ordinary things is made up of tons of tiny details.


 Those details are what make writing interesting and unique. When you focus on the details you give your readers a clear picture, and they want to know more about what you're seeing.

 **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 27.

 **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

 **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

**End of Lesson 8**

### Focusing on the Details

J<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8—Focusing on the Details (continued)

2. Notice four specific details from the image that you could use to describe what's happening in this scene.
3. Share with a partner some of the details you notice about this scene.
4. Write about this image using details that vividly describe the moment so that your reader can picture exactly what is happening.



Go to page 26 in your Writing Journal and write about this image.

K<sup>2</sup>

Review the Rules for Writing

### Rules for Writing

1. Use the whole time to write.
2. Ask for help once, if necessary, then continue writing.
3. Keep focused on your own work—don't distract your classmates.
4. NO: talking, trips for water, or surfing.

Think of a brief moment when you ate outside.



On page 27 of your Writing Journal write about this moment.



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### Differentiation: Step K<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides guiding questions and sentence starters.

### Before You Begin Lesson 9:

Comment on student writing as described in the last Teacher Activity in today's lesson. If student writing was completed digitally, create comments online with the Gradebook feature. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider commenting on student work inside their writing journals with the suggested format described in the last Teacher Activity.





L<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 9—The Role Played by Setting

Work Visually: Drawing a Setting

### “A Farm Picture” by Walt Whitman

Through the ample open door of the peaceful country barn,  
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,  
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.

Draw a picture of the setting described in Whitman's poem on the paper your teacher provided. When you're finished, share your drawing with a partner.

M<sup>2</sup>

Read the following text and think about the following questions:

#### Two Friends, Version 1

Their feet pounded as they chased each other.

“You're it!” She tapped her friend's shoulder and took off in the opposite direction to avoid being caught.

Where are they?

#### Two Friends, Version 2

Their feet pounded against the shiny hardwood floors as they chased each other. The squeak of their sneakers echoed through the palatial room full of marble statues.

“You're it!” She tapped on her friend's shoulder and took off in the opposite direction to avoid being caught. She darted to the right of a cracked marble bust surrounded by burgundy velvet ropes.






Compare the two versions.

Get Started • Lesson 9 **33**

L<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 9: The Role Played by Setting

**Work Visually:** Students draw the described setting to see how Whitman creates a vivid sense of setting in the minds of his readers.





-  Assign partners. Hand out drawing materials.
-  Students read the poem, “A Farm Picture” by Walt Whitman and complete the activity on page 33 of the Student Edition.
-  Students draw a picture of the setting described in Whitman's poem on the paper you provided. Partners then share their drawings as described on page 33 of the Student Edition.
-  Discuss drawings.
-  When you looked at your partner's drawing, which words did you think he or she captured best?

5 min

M<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 9 (continued)



**Introduce:** Students compare writing with, and without, setting details to consider how these details impact a reader's understanding of the described situation.

-  Read aloud the first version of “Two Friends” and discuss the question on page 33 of the Student Edition.
-  Since no setting is described, readers may have a hard time visualizing one.
-  Read aloud “Two Friends, Version 2” on page 33 of Student Edition.
-  Where do you think they are now? What changed?

4 min



### Lesson 9 Materials

-  Sensory Details Chart
-  “A Farm Picture” by Walt Whitman



### Differentiation: Step L<sup>2</sup>


- *ELL(Dev)*: Plan how to assign pairs for this activity. ELL students should be assigned to work with non-ELL students or ELL students at a different level.


## N<sup>2</sup> Lesson 9 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Discuss:** Students come up with precise words and phrases and sensory details to describe a specific setting (a kitchen).

 **Project:** Sensory Details chart.

 Students complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 34 of the Student Edition.


 Ask students for details that could describe a kitchen, and fill in the projected chart with their responses.


 Students don't need to fill in the entire chart with details.

## O<sup>2</sup> Lesson 9 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Select Text:** Students will complete this short writing activity that focuses on a specific setting to prepare them to choose vivid details when they write in response to the prompt.


 Students complete the thinking exercise on page 34 of the Student Edition.


 **Writing Journal:** Students complete a short writing activity that focuses on this specific setting on page 29.

## P<sup>2</sup> Lesson 9 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2


**Write & Share:** Students capture the vivid details of a memorable moment they experienced in a specific setting.

 **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 30.

 **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

 **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

End of Lesson 9

## The Role Played by Setting

N<sup>2</sup>

### Lesson 9—The Role Played by Setting (continued)

1. Picture yourself in a kitchen. It could be a kitchen in your home or someone else's home.
2. Using the chart below, brainstorm sensory details that describe a kitchen. You don't need to write in the chart. Your teacher will ask for your ideas and include them on the class chart on the board.

See	Taste	Touch	Smell	Hear
Example: Breadcrumbs on the counter			Example: Smoky smell of bacon grease	

O<sup>2</sup>

Imagine that you are standing in the middle of a kitchen you know really well.

What does the kitchen look like, smell like, and what is happening? Describe it clearly so that someone could picture it.




On page 29 of your Writing Journal make a list of details about this kitchen.

P<sup>2</sup>

Now that you've listed your details describing this kitchen, write about a brief moment that happened in this kitchen.



On page 30 of your Writing Journal describe this moment.

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### Differentiation: Step N<sup>2</sup>

If students are using vague details to describe a kitchen, have them close their eyes, picture a kitchen, and describe it to you—what is in it, the colors, the size, if it's clean or dirty, etc.

### Differentiation: Step P<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides a sentence starter.

### Before You Begin Lesson 10:

Comment on student writing as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If student writing was completed digitally, create comments online with the Gradebook feature. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider commenting on student work inside their writing journals with the suggested format described in the last Teacher Activity.



Q<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10—A Picture Made of Words: Focusing on an Object

Review the comments your teacher made on a recent piece of your writing.

R<sup>2</sup>

Telling	Showing
My sneakers are pretty worn out.	It may be time for me and these boots to part ways. The right sole hangs freely from the front of my toes and looks like some crazy kid who just won't shut up as it flaps up and down while I hurry between classes.

1. Read the telling and showing sentences above that describe the state of the writer's sneakers. Think about one detail the writer uses to show what his sneakers look like.
2. Identify one object that you can see clearly up close (perhaps your backpack, sneakers, or jacket).



Complete Activities 1–4 on page 31 of your Writing Journal.

S<sup>2</sup>

Picture something that you made. Use vivid details to describe this item, so that your reader can picture the object.



On page 32 of your Writing Journal describe the object.

Get Started • Lesson 10 35

Q<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10: A Picture Made of Words: Focusing on an Object

**Present:** Students read teacher's written comments to consider the impact their skills made on an audience.

5 min

- Give students 5 minutes to read comments you recently made either digitally or physically in Writing Journals.

R<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Try It On:** Students choose an object to describe. The objects help students focus in on details they may not have noticed otherwise.

12 min

- Students choose one object that's near enough to them to be able to write about it in great detail. (perhaps their own backpack or jacket).
- Students complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 35 of the Student Edition.
- Writing Journal:** Students complete Activities 1–4 on page 31.
- Ask volunteers to share their writing and listeners to guess the objects described.

S<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Write & Share:** Students practice using details precisely to make their writing vivid and distinctive.

20 min

- Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.
- Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 32.
- Differentiation:** Digital PDF.
- On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.
- Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

End of Lesson 10



### Lesson 10 Materials

No materials.



### Differentiation: Step S<sup>2</sup>

- **ELL(Dev):** Alternate Writing Prompt provides explicit guiding questions to plan details and sentence starters.
- **Moderate:** Alternate Writing Prompt provides guiding questions to plan details and sentence starters.

### Before You Begin Lesson 11:

Comment on student writing in Lesson 8 for the upcoming Revision Lesson as described in the last Teacher Activity in the digital lesson. If student writing was completed digitally, create comments online with the Gradebook feature. If students did not complete writing digitally, consider commenting on student work inside their writing journals with the suggested format described in the last Teacher Activity.

## T<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11: Showing What You've Told

**Present:** Students read teacher's written comments to consider the impact their skills made on an audience.

5 min  
Give students 5 minutes to read comments you recently made either digitally or physically in Writing Journals.

## U<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Discuss:** Students practice revising to show, not tell.

Students highlight vivid details in Activities 1 and 2 on page 36 of the Student Edition.

Call on volunteers to explain how the writer of sentence B gives readers a vivid mental picture.

Ask students to share the sentences they highlighted with the rest of the class.

Ask listeners to identify the ways writers show—for example, by adding dialogue or by adding sensory details.

What's the impact of these different kinds of changes? How do the showing descriptions change the feel of the telling descriptions?

**Writing Journal:** Students rewrite sentences to use precise details on page 33.

When you reread your writing, look for places where you could focus on and develop this one small moment in the sequence, using some of these details.

## Showing What You've Told

## T<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11—Showing What You've Told

Review the comments your teacher made on a recent piece of your writing.

- U<sup>2</sup>
1. Read the sentences in the chart below. In group A, the writer tells you the emotion or what is happening in that moment. In group B, the writer uses precise details to show the same thing.
  2. Read each sentence in group B and highlight all the details that help you picture the moment in your mind.

Group A	Group B
I was so bored at my cousin's wedding reception.	I lined the pastel, sugar-coated almonds up in a row, fiddled with the toothpicks sticking out of my meatballs, and took a deep, slow breath— <i>two more hours to go</i> .
The death metal music was very loud, and he hated it.	"SCREEEEWAWWWAWAWA!" it blared in his ear, like a buzz saw combined with an electric drill, only far, far worse.
My aunt said good-bye quickly before she left our lives for good.	"Good-bye," Aunt Rosa choked, her eyes shining with tears.



On page 33 in your Writing Journal rewrite the sentences to include precise details.

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## Lesson 11 Materials



Vivid Details Chart

V<sup>2</sup>

Think about a time when you were very uncomfortable.



Turn to page 34 of your Writing Journal and write about this moment.

W<sup>2</sup>

Reread your writing and look for a place to add 3–5 more sentences to show how uncomfortable you felt, using a different method than before.

You might add...

- dialogue.
- what you were thinking.
- sensory details.



Go to page 35 in your Writing Journal to write 3–5 more sentences about how uncomfortable you felt.

Get Started • Lesson 11 37



### Differentiation: Step V<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides explicit guiding questions and a sentence starter.

■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt provides guiding questions and a sentence starter.

### Before You Begin Lesson 12:

**Lesson 12 is a Revision Lesson.** If you have not commented on and highlighted a place for revision in their writing from Lesson 8, you must do so now. If you decided to have your students skip lesson 7–11 you will need to comment on and highlight a place in their writing from Lesson 4.

V<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 11 (continued)

**Write & Share:** Students practice using the types of details that create a vivid mental picture in the reader's mind.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 34.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

17 min

W<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 11 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.2

**Revise:** Students review what they've just written, then add narrative techniques like dialogue, sensory details, or internal dialogue to show the reader how uncomfortable they felt.



Now you have another chance to add even more detail to show your reader how uncomfortable you felt. Try to experiment with a different narrative technique and make it a different type of detail than before.



**Project:** Vivid Details chart.



What's the impact of these kinds of changes? How do the showing descriptions change the feel of the telling descriptions?



Direct students to the activity on page 37 of the Student Edition.



When you reread your writing, look for places where you could focus on and develop one small moment.



If you used dialogue the first time you wrote, try adding sensory details: what you saw, heard, tasted, smelled, or touched. Or if you used sensory details the first time, try adding thoughts or action.



**Writing Journal:** Students write 3–5 more sentences on page 35.

7 min

End of Lesson 11

## X<sup>2</sup> Lesson 12: Paint a Picture in the Reader's Mind: Revisions

### Present Written Comments:

Students read your written comments to consider the impact their skills made on an audience.

5 min  
Give students 5 minutes to read comments you recently made either digitally or physically in Writing Journals.

## Y<sup>2</sup> Lesson 12 (continued)

### Discuss Comparing Sentences:

Students compare sentences and discuss the impact of showing with different types of details that give the reader a vivid picture of what's being described.

19 min  
Direct students to page 38 in the Student Edition.  
Lead a class discussion for Activity 1 in the Student Edition.  
Which words did the writer use to help you imagine this moment?  
Lead a class discussion for Activity 2 in the Student Edition.  
How does the second example give you a mental image? Which details help you "see" and "hear" her happiness?

## X<sup>2</sup> Lesson 12—Paint a Picture in the Reader's Mind: Revisions

Review the comments your teacher made on a recent piece of your writing.

- Y<sup>2</sup>
1. Which sentence below is stronger? Share your thoughts in the class discussion.
    - Every click of the roller coaster car up the track made my stomach wiggle harder.
    - I felt nervous as the roller coaster went up the track.
  2. Which example below gives you a mental image of someone being happy? Share your thoughts in the class discussion.
    - She was very happy about being chosen to play the lead in the school play.
    - "Oh my gosh, I can't believe I was chosen for the lead in the school play! This is my dream come true!" she shrieked, her cheeks flushing and a wide smile spreading across her face.

### Lesson 12 Materials

Red Scarf Girl: Audio Teaser 1

Z<sup>2</sup>

Your teacher has highlighted a place in your writing from either Lesson 4 or Lesson 8 to work with in today's Revision Assignment.

1. Look at the place in your writing that your teacher highlighted. This is a place where you focused on one moment but could develop that moment further.
2. Write three or four more sentences to focus on just this highlighted moment, using precise details so that your reader can picture it. Skip a line and write your new sentences below your original response.



Go to page 18 or 28 in your Writing Journal to revise the areas highlighted by your teacher in Lesson 4 or Lesson 8.

Z<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 12 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.5

**Revise & Share:** Students experiment with their writing by adding specific details to focus further on one small moment.



Explain to students that you have read and commented on their Writing Response from either Lesson 4 or Lesson 8.



Explain that you have also highlighted a place in the writing where the students began to focus on one moment but could add more details.



Students complete Activities 1 and 2 in the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students make revisions to their writing in Lesson 4 or Lesson 8 on page 18 or 28.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Play Red Scarf Girl, Audio Teaser 1.

20 min

End of Lesson 12

# Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution



by Ji-li Jiang

At the center of the unit is Ji-li Jiang's memoir of growing up in the midst of China's Cultural Revolution. Set against a vast landscape of dramatic events, Ji-li's story makes these society-shaking upheavals feel human-sized by tracing out their impact on the experience of an ordinary young woman. Middle school students connect to Ji-li in a range of ways; these are some of the most powerful:

## 1. The heroine's difficult journey through a world gone wrong

Throughout her story, Ji-li is drawn in different directions by a range of conflicting forces: her desire to join the revolution and replace the corrupt old world with a pure new one; her empathy for the people who are damaged and destroyed by this cleansing; her longing to escape the shadow cast by her family's history; and her love for her family. As Ji-li is pulled between these competing forces, her thoughts and feelings shift dramatically—and often veer from hope to anger to compassion to despair within the course of a single scene. These sharp, rapid changes offer students an excellent opportunity to practice some of the fundamental work of close reading:

- Identifying those moments that reveal shifts in Ji-li's emotional state
- Unpacking the significance of these moments
- Tracking the change in her feelings and motivations over time
- Drawing together these elements into a coherent understanding of Ji-li's character

## 2. A good student who's denied the chance to be a good student

Students often read Ji-li's memoir in a way that moves politics and history into the background and focuses instead on the simpler, smaller story of a young woman who has been playing by the rules all her life, and who discovers—just as she's about to start winning—that those rules have turned upside down.

Part of what makes Ji-li's account so powerful is how sharply she restricts the narrator's point of view to the things a 12-year-old would see and think and care about. And for this young narrator telling the story, the enormous upheaval caused by Mao's revolution matters less than the frustration that a child feels when the world turns suddenly, horribly unfair. One way to read this book is as the story of a young woman who slams into a world-gone-wrong—where all the things that used to get her the respect of her teachers, the affection of her parents, and status among her peers no longer get her what she deserves.



### 3. *Lord of the Flies*...the memoir

Ji-li describes a universe much like the dystopian fantasies so popular among our young adults: Something has happened to turn the world upside down, and the promise of a perfect world has warped into something cruel, ugly, and evil. The Cultural Revolution that Ji-li describes is a certain kind of adolescent fantasy made real, a place where young people are given unrestricted power over those adults who've been telling them what to do since they were born. In *Red Scarf Girl*, the old world is corrupt and in need of destruction; traditional customs, ideas, and hierarchies all must be eliminated—and children are given much of the responsibility for cleaning out this corruption and bringing forth the new world envisioned by Chairman Mao, their near-divine leader.

Throughout the unit, students move between direct work with the text of *Red Scarf Girl* and with a curated set of propaganda posters like those that surrounded Ji-li during the time of her story. These powerful images serve two primary purposes in the unit:

- **To give students a chance to discover what made Mao's propaganda so compelling.** By seeing firsthand the images and messages that Ji-li encountered all around her, students gain a clearer sense of what drew Ji-li—and so many of the people around her—toward Mao and his revolutionary project.
- **To develop students' ability to read images closely.** Because they were so deliberately designed to influence the people who saw them, the propaganda posters give students a vivid example of how artists can include specific details in their work to create a particular impact on their audience. Interpreting images is often easier for students, too: middle school students typically enjoy looking closely at a poster or a painting, noticing the key details, considering their interconnections, and exploring their impact. As they practice “close reading” images, students also develop the core skills they use in their interpretive work with texts.

## Sub-Unit 3



**Lesson 1:**  
The World of  
*Red Scarf Girl*



**Lesson 2:**  
Ji-li's Troubles Begin



**Lesson 3:**  
Destroy the Four  
Olds!



**Lesson 4:**  
The Pull of  
Compassion



**Lesson 5:**  
Revolution in the  
Classroom



**Lesson 6:**  
Revising to Go  
Deeper



**Lesson 7:**  
The Election of the  
Red Successors



**Lesson 8:**  
Reading Ji-li's  
Thoughts



**Lesson 9:**  
The Revolution Hits  
Home



**Lesson 10:**  
The Moves a Writer  
Makes



**Lesson 11:**  
What's In a Name?



**Lesson 12:**  
A Dramatic Ending



# Sub-Unit 3 at a Glance

## Lesson Objective


### Lesson 1: The World of *Red Scarf Girl*

**Reading:** Students will analyze a series of propaganda images, describing concrete details to support inferences about the intent of the images and to build an understanding of the setting and context for *Red Scarf Girl*.

**Writing:** Students will use concrete details from the opening passage of *Red Scarf Girl* to support a claim about the narrator's emotional tone.

**Connections to Other Lessons:** This is one of three lessons in the unit in which students closely study propaganda images.

**Videos:**

 Video of Mao

 Video of Ji-li reading the Prologue

### Lesson 2: Ji-li's Troubles Begin

**Reading:** Students will act out a scene from *Red Scarf Girl* to examine how the writer uses detail to reveal emotion. They will then compare and contrast two passages from the scene, selecting concrete details from each passage to infer, discuss, and refine an understanding of the narrator's emotion at each point in the scene.

**Speaking & Listening:** Students will practice using emphasis and intonation to convey the emotions in each passage as they read. They will also practice adapting their speech to the text as they read, demonstrating a command of formal English.

**Connections to Other Lessons:** In this lesson, students graph Ji-li's level of hopefulness in two scenes from the first chapter. They will continue to examine and graph her level of hopefulness—and see how her hopes are dashed again and again—in future lessons. They will also use an app called the “Hope-o-meter” to identify places in the text where she feels particularly hopeful or hopeless.

**Audio:**

 Cinderella

**Module:**

 Author's Purpose and Perspective

### Lesson 3: Destroy the Four Olds!

**Reading:** Students will act out a scene to express their understanding of the characters' emotions and identify what they find confusing. Students will also analyze a poster depicting a similar scene, and compare and contrast it with the text to develop a deeper understanding of the historical context.

## Reading

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

**Red Scarf Girl:**

- Prologue (1–7)

**Solo:**

- “The Liberation Army Dancer” (1–15)

How hopeful do you think Ji-li is at this moment in her story? Which details in the Prologue lead you to think so?

**ELA.K12.EE.3.1**

**ELA.7.R.2.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.2.1

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

**Red Scarf Girl:**

- “The Liberation Army Dancer” (1–15, 16–41)

**Solo:**

- “The Liberation Army Dancer” (43–76)

No analytical writing prompt.

**ELA.K12.EE.6.1**

**ELA.7.R.2.3**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.K12.EE.4.1

ELA.7.R.2.1

ELA.7.R.2.2

**Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Destroy the Four Olds” (8–29)

**Solo:**

- “Destroy the Four Olds” (54–74)

No analytical writing prompt.

**ELA.K12.EE.2.1**

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1**

ELA.7.R.2.1

ELA.7.R.2.2

# Lesson Objective

## Lesson 4: The Pull of Compassion

**Reading:** Students will closely read one scene from *Red Scarf Girl* by breaking the scene into four sections and selecting details from each section to build an understanding of a character's feelings at each point in the scene.


**Writing:** Students will develop a claim about Ji-li's complex feelings at the end of the scene, selecting and describing concrete details from the text to develop this claim.

## Lesson 5: Revolution in the Classroom

**Reading:** Students will reread a scene and select specific details and evidence from the text that helps them summarize and analyze and interpret how Ji-li and her classmates felt about the *da-zi-bao*.

**Writing:** Students will write a summary of the tension between Ji-li's and her classmates' attitudes towards the *da-zi-bao*, using some of the details they highlighted.

**Video:**


 Writing *Da-Zi-Bao* Video

## Lesson 6: Revising to Go Deeper

**Revision:** Students will revise a portion of their writing to strengthen their use of evidence and elaborate on their ideas. They will evaluate the results of their revision to determine if it is successful.

**Reading:** Students will closely read another scene that shows Ji-li's internal conflict about the Cultural Revolution and compare her reaction to her classmates'.

**Audio:**


 Audio of Trailer "The Red Successors"

## Lesson 7: The Election of the Red Successors

**Reading:** Students will act out the various emotions and tensions in one scene from *Red Scarf Girl* by breaking the scene into four sections, and then they will analyze Ji-li's feelings in each section by selecting, graphing, and comparing the specific text details that reveal her emotions.

**Writing:** Students will select and describe evidence about Du Hai's actions to analyze and explain how a different character is impacted by the Cultural Revolution.

**App:**

 Hope-o-Meter App



We highly recommend students have access to the digital lesson in order to rate and reflect on Ji-li's changing feelings with the Hope-o-Meter app.

## Reading

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Destroy the Four Olds!” (54–74)

### **Solo:**

- “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” (2–22)

In this last moment of the scene, Ji-li feels a mix of emotions. Describe the different emotions that you think are going on inside her.

**ELA.K12.EE.1.1**

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

ELA.7.R.2.1

ELA.7.R.2.3

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” (1–22)

### **Solo:**

- *Red Scarf Girl*: “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” (23–61)

Most of Ji-li’s classmates had no trouble writing *da-zi-bao* that criticize their teachers, but Ji-li couldn’t. Why were some of her classmates so eager to write *da-zi-bao*? Why was it so hard for Ji-li? How did Ji-li’s position differ from those around her? Write an objective summary that answers these questions.

**Extra:** Challenge Writing available in the digital lesson.

**ELA.K12.EE.1.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.7.R.2.1

ELA.7.R.2.3

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” (1–22, 23–36)

### **Solo:**

- “The Red Successors” (1–45)

**REVISE:** Most of Ji-li’s classmates had no trouble writing *da-zi-bao* that criticize their teachers, but Ji-li couldn’t. Why were some of her classmates so eager to write *da-zi-bao*? Why was it so hard for Ji-li? How did Ji-li’s position differ from those around her? Write an objective summary that answers these questions. (From Lesson 5)

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

**ELA.7.R.2.3**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “The Red Successors” (1–45)

### **Solo:**

- “The Red Successors” (46–108)

How do Du Hai’s feelings change during this scene? Why does he feel the way he does?

**ELA.7.R.2.3**

**ELA.7.C.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.K12.EE.4.1

ELA.K12.EE.6.1



## Lesson Objective

### Lesson 8: Reading Ji-li's Thoughts

**Reading:** Students will consider inner narration as they act out the tension and emotion as Ji-li speaks to her teacher, and then they will select specific text details to describe Ji-li's point of view.

**Writing:** Students will use evidence from the text, including inner narration, to develop their claim about Ji-li's internal conflict toward her teacher.

**Audio:**

 Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 3

### Lesson 9: The Revolution Hits Home

**Reading:** Students will compare and contrast descriptions of the same setting from two moments, selecting specific details from each moment to analyze how the writer conveys the atmosphere and the narrator's state of mind.

**Writing:** Students will select and connect text details from each setting description to develop a claim about Ji-li's state of mind in each moment in the memoir.

**Audio:**

 Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 4

### Lesson 10: The Moves a Writer Makes

**Reading:** Students will consider mood (how authors make choices to evoke emotion in readers) and will select specific details from three passages and explain how the author's choices convey mood.

**Writing:** Students will analyze specific text evidence to develop a claim about the mood of a passage, and then they will revise their writing by strengthening their use of evidence to elaborate on their claim.

**Audio:**

 Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 5

### Lesson 11: What's In a Name?


**Reading:** Students will close read a scene in two sections, selecting concrete details that convey mood, and collaborating to analyze what those details reveal about Ji-li's internal conflict between her commitment to family and to the Cultural Revolution.

**Writing:** Students will select and analyze specific evidence from the scene to develop an explanation for Ji-li's actions.


### Lesson 12: A Dramatic Ending

**Reading:** Students will closely read a climactic scene to identify the forces shaping Ji-li's changing motivations, then work in pairs to discuss collaboratively and analyze how Ji-li has changed by selecting specific details from the final scene and connecting those details to their understanding of the narrator.

**App:**

 Hope-o-Meter App

**Module:**

 Central Idea



## Reading

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “The Liberation Army Dancer” (16–17)
- “Graduation” (8–25)

### **Solo:**

- “A Search in Passing” (1–121)

Why do you think Ji-li's voice broke when she looked in Teacher Gu's eyes? Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.

**ELA.K12.EE.1.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.7.R.2.3

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “The Liberation Army Dancer” (64–70)
- “A Search in Passing” (119–121)

### **Solo:**

- “Fate” (1–104)
- “Junior High School at Last” (77–91)

Compare how Ji-li felt in her home at the beginning of the story to how she felt after the Red Guards searched her home. Use details from the setting to support your ideas.

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.7.R.2.3

ELA.7.V.1.3

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Locked Up” (44–67)

### **Solo:**

- “An Educable Child”

What kind of day was Ji-li's birthday (sad, exciting, scary, disappointing)? Describe how the details she includes about the day create a feeling for you as a reader.

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

**ELA.7.V.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

ELA.7.C.1.4

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “Half-City Jiangs” (35–64)

### **Solo:**

- “The Class Education Exhibition” (1–59)

Why didn't Ji-li go through with her plan to change her name? Think of one or two reasons and explain them using details from the text.

**ELA.7.R.2.3**

**ELA.7.C.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- “The Class Education Exhibition” (1–59)
- “The Incriminating Letter” (2–11, 12–28, 42–67, 68–77)
- “Sweeping” (11–20)

### **Solo:**

- Epilogue

No analytical writing prompt.

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1**

**ELA.7.R.2.2**

ELA.K12.EE.1.1

ELA.K12.EE.3.1



# Sub-Unit 3 Preparation Checklist

## Lesson 1

*Note that lesson Solos can be completed in the digital curriculum, through the Amplify Mobile Solos app, or in print. Solo Activities PDFs can be found in the Materials section of the digital Unit Guide, along with a Solo Answer Key.*

A B  
C D  
E F  
G

Pages 168–171

## Lesson 2

- ❑ Read the scene from “The Liberation Army Dancer” so that you can narrate it aloud during class.
- ❑ Students will do a dramatic reading of the scene from “The Liberation Army Dancer.” Choose six volunteers to act, four of whom will have speaking parts.
- ❑ You will project the Hopefulness graph on a whiteboard. If you do not have a whiteboard on which you can project, draw the graph on a board. The graph can be found in the Materials list and is used in the Hope-o-Meter app.
- ❑ The B.E.S.T. Module: Author's Purpose and Perspective, available in the digital lesson, provides an introduction to the Reading Benchmark ELA.7.R.2.3 and can be used to prepare students for this lesson.

H I  
J K  
L M

Pages 172–175

## Lesson 3

- ❑ Create a cardboard ax and a shop sign that reads “GREAT PROSPERITY MARKET” for students to use as props during their performance.
- ❑ Assign roles for acting out the scene. Three students will have speaking roles: Crowd member 1, Crowd member 2, Man with an ax.
- ❑ Print out one copy of the script for actors to use while acting out the scene. Be prepared to read the part of the narrator.
- ❑ Students will work in groups of 3 or 4 when they analyze the image “Eliminating the Four Olds.”

N O  
P Q

Pages 176–178

## Lesson 4

- ❑ An empty bottle can be a powerful prop for students to use when acting out the scene.

R S

Pages 179–180

## Lesson 5

*No additional prep.*

T U  
V W  
X

Pages 181–183

## Lesson 6

*No additional prep.*

Y Z

Pages 184–185

## Lesson 7

- ❑ Print out one copy of the script for acting, which contains scripts for each speaking role. Prepare to assign five students—one for each speaking role. Distribute each role to the designated actor for use in Activities 3 and 4.
- ❑ Project or draw the Hopefulness Graph on a board or on chart paper for use in Step C<sup>2</sup>.

*We highly recommend that students have access to the digital lesson in order to rate and reflect on Ji-li's changing feelings with the Hope-o-Meter app.*

A<sup>2</sup> B<sup>2</sup>  
C<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup>

Pages 186–188

## Lesson 8

- ❑ Assign roles for acting out the scene. Three students will have speaking roles: Ji-li, Teacher Gu, and the narrator.
- ❑ Print out one copy of the script for actors to use while acting out the scene.

E<sup>2</sup> F<sup>2</sup>  
G<sup>2</sup> H<sup>2</sup>

Pages 189–191

## Lesson 9

*No additional prep.*

I<sup>2</sup> J<sup>2</sup>  
K<sup>2</sup> L<sup>2</sup>

Pages 192–195

## Lesson 10

*No additional prep.*

M<sup>2</sup> N<sup>2</sup>  
O<sup>2</sup>

Pages 196–197

## Lesson 11

- ❑ Use masking tape to create a long line on the floor, running from one side of the classroom to the other. Hang a sign that reads “Chairman Mao” at one end of the line and “Family” at the other end. This line will be used in Lesson 12 (the next lesson), so make sure to preserve it.

P<sup>2</sup> Q<sup>2</sup>  
R<sup>2</sup> S<sup>2</sup>

Pages 198–199

## Lesson 12

- ❑ Make sure the Conflict Line is still up in the classroom.
- ❑ Plan to put students in pairs for part of this lesson.
- ❑ The B.E.S.T. Module: Central Idea, available in the digital lesson, provides an introduction to the Reading Benchmark ELA.7.R.2.2 and can be used to prepare students for this lesson.

T<sup>2</sup> U<sup>2</sup>  
V<sup>2</sup>

Pages 200–201

**Note:** There may be activities in these lessons that students will revise or refer to in a subsequent lesson. By keeping track of lessons that students complete in a print format, you can have students refer to their print work when they reach these activities. In addition, your students will need to copy any Writing Prompts completed in a print lesson into the corresponding digital writing space if you want that writing to be included in Productivity and other reports.

# Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution

Ji-li Jiang

40

## Overview

This story takes place in a world that is very different from your own, though similar in ways that you're sure to recognize: there's love within families; struggle between classmates; uncertain relationships among neighbors. The events of China's Cultural Revolution took place in a faraway world and time—but you'll learn about them through the eyes of a girl who was just about your age when she had to face a world that was turning upside down all around her.

This memoir tells the story of a time in the author's life when her love for her family clashed with her devotion to her own country; when being a "good student" meant denouncing her teachers; and when many of the rules she'd grown up believing about right and wrong were suddenly reversed. This is Ji-li Jiang's story, and through it all, you'll see a girl becoming a young woman as she makes hard choices that will change her life's direction forever.

## Suggested Reading

In *My Name Is Number 4* (1997), author Ting-xing Ye is sent to a prison camp after losing her parents. *Snow Falling in Spring* (2008) by Moying Li begins during the Cultural Revolution and follows its narrator all the way to college in America. And for a glimpse of China before the Cultural Revolution, try the award-winning *Homesick* (1982) by Jean Fritz, the memoir of an American girl growing up in China during the 1920s.

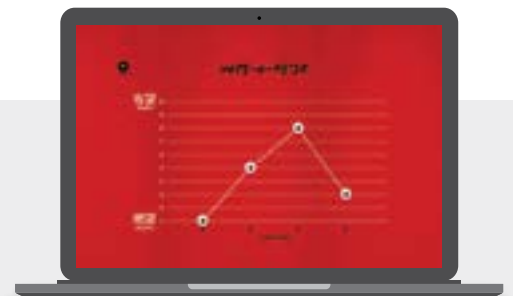
## Apps in this Sub-Unit



Hope-O-Meter

Use the Hope-o-meter app to determine and rate Ji-li's level of hopefulness based on a passage you have highlighted. "Hopefulness" is a way to measure Ji-li's feelings. But you'll find that it encompasses a range of other interesting emotions, which you'll name more precisely. By tracking Ji-li's level of hopefulness, you'll uncover the complexity of her emotions. Going back to the text will help you figure out what she's feeling at this moment and how it is different from what she was just feeling at another.

Image Credit:  
Katelgnatenko/iStockphoto (RSG - Cover Background Image)





# *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*

*Ji-li Jiang*

# Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution

by Ji-li Jiang

## Prologue

- <sup>1</sup> I was born on Chinese New Year.
  - <sup>2</sup> Carefully, my parents chose my name: Ji-li, meaning lucky and beautiful. They hoped that I would be the happiest girl in the world.
  - <sup>3</sup> And I was.
  - <sup>4</sup> I was happy because I was always loved and respected. I was proud because I was able to **excel** and always expected to succeed. I was trusting, too. I never doubted what I was told: "Heaven and earth are great, but greater still is the kindness of the Communist Party; father and mother are dear, but dearer still is Chairman Mao."
  - <sup>5</sup> With my red scarf, the **emblem** of the Young Pioneers, tied around my neck, and my heart bursting with joy, I achieved and grew every day until that fateful year, 1966.
  - <sup>6</sup> That year I was twelve years old, in sixth grade.
  - <sup>7</sup> That year the Cultural Revolution started.
- 

**excel:** to do better  
than most

**emblem:** symbol

# The Liberation Army Dancer

## Paragraphs 1-76

- <sup>1</sup> Chairman Mao, our beloved leader, smiled down at us from his place above the blackboard. The sounds and smells of the **tantalizing** May afternoon drifted in through the window. The sweet breeze carried the scent of new leaves and tender young grass and rippled the paper slogan below Chairman Mao's picture: **STUDY HARD AND ADVANCE** everyday. In the corner behind me the breeze also rustled the papers hanging from the Students' Garden, a beautifully decorated piece of cardboard that displayed exemplary work. One of them was my latest perfect math test.
- <sup>2</sup> We were having music class, but we couldn't keep our minds on the teacher's directions. We were all confused by the two-part harmony of the Young Pioneers' Anthem. "We are Young Pioneers, **successors** to Communism. Our red scarves flutter on our chests," we sang over and over, trying to get the timing right. The old black pump organ wheezed and squeaked as impatiently as we did. We made another start, but Wang Dayong burst out a beat early, and the whole class broke into laughter.
- <sup>3</sup> Just then Principal Long appeared at the door. She walked in, looking less serious than usual, and behind her was a stranger, a beautiful young woman dressed in the People's Liberation Army uniform. A Liberation Army soldier! She was slim and stood straight as a reed. Her eyes sparkled, and her long braids, tied with red ribbons, swung at her waist. There was not a sound in the classroom as all forty of us stared at her in awe.
- <sup>4</sup> Principal Long told us to stand up. The woman soldier smiled but did not speak. She walked up and down the aisles, looking at us one by one. When she finished, she spoke quietly with Principal Long. "Tong Chao and Jiang Ji-li," Principal Long announced. "Come with us to the gym." A murmur rose behind us as we left the room. Tong Chao looked at me and I looked at him in wonder as we followed the swinging braids.
- <sup>5</sup> The gym was empty.
- <sup>6</sup> "I want to see how flexible you are. Let me lift your leg," the Liberation Army woman said in her gentle voice. She raised my right leg over my head in front of me. "Very good! Now I'll support you. Lean over backward as far as you can." That was easy. I bent backward until I could grab my ankles like an acrobat. "That's great!" she said, and her braids swung with excitement.

**tantalizing:**  
tempting

**successors:** people  
that replace those  
leaving their jobs

- <sup>7</sup> “This is Jiang Ji-li.” Principal Long leaned forward proudly. “She’s been studying martial arts since the second grade. She was on the Municipal Children’s Martial Arts Team. Their demonstration was even filmed.”
- <sup>8</sup> The Liberation Army woman smiled sweetly. “That was very good. Now you may go back to your classroom.” She patted me on my head before she turned back to test Tong Chao.
- <sup>9</sup> I went back to class, but I could not remember the song we were singing. What did the Liberation Army woman want? Could she want to choose me for something? It was too much to contemplate. I hardly moved when the bell rang to end school. Someone told me that the principal wanted to see me. I walked slowly down the hall, surrounded by my shouting and jostling classmates, seeing only the beautiful soldier, feeling only the electric tingle of her soft touch on my head.
- <sup>10</sup> The office door was heavy. I pushed it open cautiously. Some students from the other sixth-grade classes were there already. I recognized Wang Qi, a girl in class two, and one of the boys, You Xiao-fan of class four. I didn’t know the other boy. The three of them sat nervously and respectfully opposite Principal Long. I slipped into a chair next to them.
- <sup>11</sup> Principal Long leaned forward from her big desk. “I know you must be wondering about the Liberation Army soldier,” she said. She sounded cheerful and excited. “Why did she come? Why did she want you to do back bends?” She looked at us one by one and then took a long sip from her tea mug as if she wanted to keep us guessing, “She was Comrade Li from the Central Liberation Army Arts Academy.”
- <sup>12</sup> I slowly took a deep breath.
- <sup>13</sup> “She is recruiting students for the dance training class. She selected you four to audition. It’s a great honor for Xin Er Primary School. I’m very proud of all of you, and I know you’ll do your best.”
- <sup>14</sup> I did not hear the rest of her words. I saw myself in a new Liberation Army uniform, slim and standing straight as a reed, long braids swinging at my waist. A Liberation Army soldier! One of the heroes admired by all, who helped Chairman Mao liberate China from oppression and defeated the Americans in Korea. And a performer, just like my mother used to be, touring the country, the world, to tell everyone about the New China that Chairman Mao had built and how it was becoming stronger and stronger.



- 15 I couldn't help giving Wang Qi a silly smile.
- 16 "Mom! Dad! Grandma!" I panted up the steep, dark stairs, in too much of a hurry to turn on the light, and tripped over some pots stored on the steps. I couldn't wait to tell them my news. I knew they would all be as excited as I was.
- 17 Our apartment was bright and warm and welcoming. **Burgundy** curtains shut the darkness outside and made the one big room even cozier. In front of the tall French window our square **mahogany** table was covered with steaming dishes and surrounded by my family, who were laughing and chattering when I rushed in. They all looked up expectantly.
- 18 "Everybody, guess what! Today a Liberation Army woman came to school and she tested me and she wants me to audition for the Central Liberation Army Arts Academy. Just think! I could be in the Liberation Army! And I could be a performer, too! Isn't it great?" I picked up our cat, Little White, and gave her a big kiss.
- 19 "It's lucky I studied martial arts for so long. When the Liberation Army woman saw my back bend, she just loved it." I twirled around on my toes and snapped my heels together in a salute. "Comrade Grandma, Jiang Ji-li reporting!"
- 20 My younger brother, Ji-yong, jumped up from the table and saluted me. My little sister, Ji-yun, started to twirl around as I had done, but she slipped and fell. We jumped to the floor with her and rolled around together.
- 21 "Ji-li," I heard Dad call. I looked up. Mom and Dad and Grandma were looking at each other **solemnly**. "It might be better not to do the audition." Dad spoke slowly, but his tone was serious, very serious.
- 22 "What?"
- 23 "Don't do the audition, Ji-li." He looked straight at me this time, and sounded much more forceful.
- 24 "Don't do the audition? Why not?"
- 25 Dad shook his head.
- 26 I grabbed Mom's arm. "Mom, why not?"
- 27 She squeezed my hand and looked at me worriedly. "Your father means that the recruitment requirements are very strict."

**burgundy:** deep red

**mahogany:** deep brown, wooden

**solemnly:** seriously

- 28 “Wow. You really scared me, Dad.” I laughed with relief. “I know that. Principal Long told us it would be very competitive. I know it’s just an audition, but who knows? I might be lucky, right?” I picked up a steamed bun and took a bite.
- 29 “I’m not just talking about talent,” Dad said. “There are more important requirements, political considerations...”
- 30 “Oh, Dad, that’s no problem.” I took another big bite of the bun. I was an Outstanding Student, an Excellent Young Pioneer, and even the *da-dui-zhang*, the student chairman of the whole school. What more could they want? My mouth was full, so I stretched out my arm to show Dad my *da-dui-zhang* badge, a plastic tag with three red stripes.
- 31 I saw a pain in Dad’s eyes that I had never seen before.
- 32 “The problem isn’t with you yourself, Ji-li. What I mean is that the political background investigations at these academies are very severe.”
- 33 “Political background investigation? What’s that?”
- 34 “That is an investigation into the class **status** of your ancestors and all members of your family.” He leaned back in his chair, and the lampshade put his face in shadow. “Ji-li, the fact is that our family will not be able to pass these investigations,” he said slowly. “And you will not be allowed to be a member of a Liberation Army performing troupe.”
- 35 For a long time I did not speak. “Why?” I whispered at last.
- 36 He started to say something but stopped. He leaned forward again, and I could see the sorrow on his face. “It’s very complicated, and you wouldn’t understand it now even if I told you. Maybe we should wait until you’re grown up. The point is that I don’t think you’ll be admitted. So just drop it, all right?”
- 37 I did not say anything. Putting down the half-eaten bun, I walked to the mirror on the big wardrobe that divided the room and pressed my forehead against its cool surface. I could not hold back any longer. I burst out crying.
- 38 “I want to do it. I want to try. What will I tell Principal Long? And my classmates?” I wailed.

**status:** position

39 “Maybe we should let her try. She probably won’t be chosen anyway.”  
Grandma looked at Dad.

40 Dad stood up, heaving a deep sigh. “This is for her own good. Her classmates and teachers will just be surprised if she says that her father won’t let her go. But what if she passes the audition and can’t pass the political background investigation? Then everybody will know that the family has a political problem.” Dad’s voice grew louder and louder as he went on.

41 Ji-yong and Ji-yun were looking up at Dad, wide-eyed. I bit my lip to force myself to stop crying and went to bed without saying another word.

42 \* \* \*

43 The hallway outside the principal’s office was very quiet. It was noon, and nearly everyone was home for lunch. The big red characters PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE made me nervous. I put my hand on the knob, hesitated, and lowered it. I walked back to the stairs, trembling and covered with sweat.

44 I rehearsed the words I was going to say one more time. Then I rushed back to the office door and pushed it open.

45 Principal Long was reading a newspaper. She raised her head and peered through her glasses to see who had interrupted her. “Principal Long, here is a note from my father.” Hastily I gave her the note, damp with sweat from my palm. I hurried out of the office before she could look at it or ask me any questions. I ran down the hallway, **colliding** with someone and running blindly on, thinking only that she must be very disappointed.

46 At one o’clock when the bell finally rang to start class, I heaved a long sigh and walked out of the library. My best friend, An Yi, and our homeroom teacher were standing outside the main building. As soon as they saw me, An Yi shouted, “Where have you been? Aren’t you supposed to go to the audition at one? Hurry up! You’re going to be late.”

47 I opened my mouth but couldn’t say a word.

48 “Why, what’s wrong?” Teacher Gu asked.

49 “I... I’m not going.” I bowed my head and twisted my fingers in my red scarf.

50 “What? Are you crazy? This is the chance of a lifetime!”

51 I did not raise my head. I didn’t want to see An Yi’s face.

**colliding:** crashing

- 52 “Really? Why not?” Teacher Gu sounded concerned.
- 53 I tried hard not to cry. “Father wouldn’t let me....”
- 54 An Yi was about to say something else, but Teacher Gu cut her off. “All right. This is her family’s decision. We won’t talk about it any further.” She put her hand on my shoulder and gave me a little squeeze. Then she went away with An Yi without another word.
- 55 Across the yard I saw Principal Long, Wang Qi, and the two boys coming out of the gym. I dodged behind a tree and heard them chatting and laughing as they went by. They were going to the audition. I could have been going with them. My eyes blurred with tears.
- 56 I thought of the way Teacher Gu had looked at me. There had been a mixture of disappointment, doubt, and **inquiry** in her eyes. I was sure that Principal Long must have looked the same way after she read Dad’s note. So must Wang Qi, You Xiao-fan, and all my classmates.
- 57 I didn’t want to think any longer. I just wished that I could find a place to hide, so I wouldn’t have to see their faces.
- 58 Until that spring I believed that my life and my family were nearly perfect.
- 59 My father was a stage actor, six feet tall and slightly stoop shouldered. Because of his height and his serious face he usually played the villain at the children’s theater where he worked. He was the vicious landlord, the foolish king. But at home he was our humorous, kind, and wise Dad. He loved reading, and he loved including the whole family in his discoveries. He demonstrated the exercises of the great acting teacher Stanislavsky, he imitated Charlie Chaplin’s funny walk, and when he was reading about **calculus**, he explained Zeno’s paradox and the infinite series. We thought Dad knew everything.
- 60 Mom had been an actress when she met Dad, and she was still as pretty as an actress. When I was little, she stopped acting and worked in a sports-equipment store. Every evening we eagerly waited for her to come home from work. We rushed out to greet her and opened her handbag, where there was sure to be a treat for us. Mom spoiled us, Grandma said.
- 61 Grandma was truly amazing. She had graduated from a modern-style high school in 1914, a time when very few girls went to school at all. After Liberation she had helped to found Xin Er Primary School—my school—

**inquiry:**  
questioning  
**calculus:** a type  
of mathematics

and become its vice-principal. She retired from teaching when I was born so that she could take care of me while Mom worked. But whenever we met her old students, now adults, they still bowed respectfully and called her Teacher Cao, which made me so proud.

<sup>62</sup> Ji-yong was eleven, one year younger than me, and Ji-yun was one year younger than Ji-yong. Once Mom told me that she had her three children in three years because she wanted to finish the duty of having babies sooner, so she could devote herself wholeheartedly to the revolution. While I was tall and thin, like Dad, Ji-yong and Ji-yun were shorter and plumper, like Mom. Ji-yong was nicknamed Iron-Ball because he was dark skinned and sturdy. He liked to play in the alley and paid little attention to his studies. Ji-yun had two dimples, which gave her an especially sweet smile. She was easygoing and did not always strive to be the best, as I did. But I had learned that she could be very stubborn.

<sup>63</sup> And then there was Song Po-po. She had originally been our nanny. When we grew up, she stayed and became our housekeeper. As long as I could remember, she had been living in the small room downstairs. She had raised the three of us, and we all felt she was like another grandmother. She was as dear to us as we were to her.

<sup>64</sup> We lived in a big building in one of Shanghai's nicer neighborhoods. My Fourth Aunt, who had been married to Dad's half-brother, lived downstairs with her daughter, my cousin You-mei, and You-mei's daughter, a lovely baby called Hua-hua. My uncle had died in Hong Kong a few years before. You-mei's husband had a job in another city and was allowed to visit Shanghai only twice a year.

<sup>65</sup> Song Po-po told us our extended family used to occupy two whole buildings, ten rooms all together. "Then they all moved away, and only your family and your Fourth Aunt's family were left. Your family only has one room now. It's just too bad." She shook her head sadly.

<sup>66</sup> But I didn't feel that way at all. I loved our top-floor room. A huge French window and a high ceiling made it bright all year round, warmer during the winter and cooler in summer. The kitchen on the landing outside the room was small, but I didn't mind. Our room was ten times as big as many of my classmates' homes, and a hundred times brighter. Best of all, we had a private bathroom, a full-size room with a sink, a toilet, and a tub. It was almost as large as some families' entire homes. Many did not

have a bathroom at all, or even a flush toilet, and very few had a full-size bathroom that they did not have to share with other families.

<sup>67</sup> My family was also special in another way.

<sup>68</sup> Sometimes on Saturday evenings some of Dad's **colleagues** would visit. They called these gatherings "Jiang's salon." I did not know what salon meant, but I loved them; they were wonderful parties. Mom would make her famous beef soup, and Grandma would make her steamed buns. We children would help Song Po-po polish the mahogany table and Grandma's four prized red-and-gold dowry trunks until we could see our reflections in the wood and leather. When the guests arrived, we would greet them as "Uncle" and "Aunt" as a sign of respect and bring tea to each of them. Most of them were actors from Dad's theater, and they were all talented. There was Uncle Zhu, a young actor who had excellent handwriting. Every time he came, he would take some time to help me with my calligraphy. There were Uncle Tian and Aunt Wu, so young and handsome and well dressed that the neighbors noticed every time they rolled up to our building on their new bicycles, and called them the "beautiful couple." There was Uncle Fan, who had been Dad's friend since college. When he arrived, the discussions immediately became more interesting. His enthusiasm about whatever movie or play he had seen recently was contagious. And there was Uncle Bao, a playwright, who smoked cigars and let me sit on his lap. Although he spoke less than the others, his comments were always worth waiting for.

<sup>69</sup> Conversation flowed, so fascinating that we did not want to go to bed, no matter how late they stayed.

<sup>70</sup> Until the audition I felt like the luckiest girl in the world.

<sup>71</sup> An Yi said that I seemed to have changed into a different person. Between classes I would avoid my classmates. After school I would stay in the library until it closed, just to elude the family's overconcerned looks.

<sup>72</sup> One time our cat, Little White, cut her leg deeply on a piece of glass. We all rushed to find bandages to bind up the wound, but Little White ran into the attic and hid there for days, licking her wounds by herself. Just like Little White, I wanted to be left alone.

**colleagues:**  
coworkers

- <sup>73</sup> None of the other three students passed the audition, but this did not make me feel better. It had not been just an audition for me. I was afraid that the rest of my life would not be what I had imagined.
- <sup>74</sup> I had had many beautiful dreams. I dreamed of being a doctor in a white coat, with a stethoscope dangling from my neck, saving lives one after another. I dreamed of being an architect, designing the most beautiful bridges in the world. I dreamed of being an actress, holding bunches of flowers, bowing again and again to answer curtain calls. Until now I had never doubted that I could achieve anything I wanted. The future had been full of infinite possibilities. Now I was no longer sure that was still true.
- <sup>75</sup> One afternoon, a week after the audition, I came home from school and saw a boy blowing big, splendid soap bubbles that shimmered with colors in the sunlight. One by one they drifted away and burst. In a few seconds they were all gone.
- <sup>76</sup> I thought about my beautiful dreams and wondered if they would drift away just like those lovely soap bubbles.
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# Destroy the Four Olds!

## Paragraphs 8–29

- <sup>8</sup> Our beloved Chairman Mao had started the Cultural Revolution in May. Every day since then on the radio we heard about the need to end the evil and **pernicious** influences of the “Four Olds”: old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. Chairman Mao told us we would never succeed at building a strong socialist country until we destroyed the “Four Olds” and established the “Four News.” The names of many shops still stank of old culture, so the signs had to be smashed to make way for the coming of new ideas.
- <sup>9</sup> The Great **Prosperity** Market was on Nanjing Road, Shanghai’s busiest shopping street, only two blocks from our alley. Nanjing Road was lined with big stores, and always bustled with activity. The street was full of bicycles and pedicabs and trolleys, and the sidewalks were so crowded with shoppers, they spilled off the sidewalk into the street. We were still quite a distance away when we heard the hubbub and ran faster.
- <sup>10</sup> A big crowd had gathered outside the Great Prosperity Market, one of the most successful food stores in the city. It was full of good things to eat, with rare **delicacies** from other **provinces** and delicious items like dried duck **gizzards** strung up in its window. But today the window was bare. The store was deserted. All eyes were riveted on a dense ring of people in the street. Some young men were cheering excitedly for the people inside the circle, but half the crowd were merely craning their necks and watching.
- <sup>11</sup> We wriggled our way between the bodies.
- <sup>12</sup> Lying on the dirty ground inside the circle was a huge wooden sign, at least twelve feet long. It was still impressive, although the large golden characters GREAT PROSPERITY MARKET had lost their usual shine and looked dull and lifeless on the red background.
- <sup>13</sup> Two muscular young men in undershirts, probably salesmen from the store, were gasping next to it.
- <sup>14</sup> “Come on. Try again!” shouted the taller of the two.
- <sup>15</sup> He spat into his palms and rubbed them together. Then, with the help of the other, he lifted the board to shoulder height. “One, two, three!” They threw the board to the ground.
- <sup>16</sup> The board bounced twice but did not break. The two men threw the board again. Nothing happened.

**pernicious:**  
sneakily harmful

**prosperity:**  
good fortune  
and success

**delicacies:**  
valuable and  
special food

**provinces:**  
counties or states  
of a country

**gizzards:** stomach  
parts



- 17 "Put one end on the curb. Stamp on it. That's bound to work," someone suggested.
- 18 "Good idea!"
- 19 "Come on! Try it!"
- 20 **Amid** a clamor of support, the two men moved the board half onto the sidewalk. Then they jumped onto it. "One... two... three..." We heard their shoes strike the hard wood. But the board did not yield.
- 21 "Damn! This fourolds is really hard. Hey! Come on. Let's do it together!" the tall fellow shouted at the crowd.
- 22 I looked at An Yi to see if she would like to join me, but while I was hesitating, the board became fully occupied. Ji-yong had moved faster and was one of the dozen people on it. They stamped, bounced, and jumped with excitement. One stepped on another's shoes. Hips and shoulders bumped. We all laughed.
- 23 The board refused to break. Even under a thousand pounds it did not give way. The crowd became irritated and started shouting suggestions.
- 24 "Take it to a carpenter and let him use it for something!"
- 25 "Let's get a truck and drive over it!"
- 26 Someone started pushing through the circle.
- 27 "Hey, I've got an ax. Let me through! I've got an ax!"
- 28 We stood back to give the man room. He lifted the ax to his shoulder and paused. The blade flashed in the sunlight as it began to move faster and faster in a shining arc until it crashed into the sign. The wood groaned with the impact, and we all cheered. The man gave the sign another blow, and another. At last the sign gave way. With another groan and a crack it broke in two.
- 29 Everyone cheered. People rushed forward to stamp on what remained of the sign. An Yi and I had found a few classmates in the crowd, and we all embraced, jumped, and shouted. Although what we had smashed was no more than a piece of wood, we felt we had won a victory in a real battle.

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**amid:** in the middle of  
**clamor:** noise

# Destroy the Four Olds!

## Paragraphs 54–74

- <sup>54</sup> The sight of some high school students distracted me. Two boys and a pigtailed girl were walking toward us. They were young, no more than three or four years older than me. They walked slowly through the bustling crowd, looking closely at people's pants and shoes. My sister and I stared at them with admiration. We knew they must be student inspectors. The newspapers had pointed out that the fourolds were also reflected in clothing, and now high school students had taken responsibility for eliminating such dress. For example, any pants with a leg narrower than eight inches for women or nine inches for men would be considered fourolds.
- <sup>55</sup> A bus pulled up at the bus stop behind us. Quite a few people got on and off. As the bus pulled away, we saw a crowd gathered at the curb. "Oh boy, they found a target." I took Ji-yun by the hand and dashed over.
- <sup>56</sup> "... tight pants and pointed shoes are what the Western bourgeoisie admire. For us proletarians they are neither good-looking nor comfortable. What's more, they are detrimental to the revolution, so we must oppose them resolutely." One of the boys, the one who was wearing glasses, was just finishing his speech.
- <sup>57</sup> The guilty person was a very handsome man in his early thirties. He wore dark-framed glasses, a cream-colored jacket with the zipper half open, and a pair of sharply creased light-brown pants. He had also been wearing fashionable two-tone shoes, "champagne shoes" we called them, of cream and light-brown leather. They were lying on the ground next to him as he stood with one foot on the ground and the other resting in the lap of the student measuring his pants.
- <sup>58</sup> The man kept arching his foot as if the pebbles on the sidewalk hurt him. He looked nervous, standing in his white socks while the inspectors surrounded him, holding his hands submissively along his trouser seams. Occasionally he raised his hands a little to balance himself. His handsome face blushed scarlet, then turned pale. A few times he bit his lips.
- <sup>59</sup> One of the boys was trying to squeeze an empty beer bottle up the man's trouser leg. This was a newly invented measurement. If the bottle could not be stuffed into the trouser leg, the pants were considered fourolds and treated with "revolutionary operations"—cut open.

- <sup>60</sup> The boy tried twice. The girl waved her scissors with unconcealed delight. “Look! Another pair of too-tight pants. Now let’s get rid of the fourolds!” She raised the scissors and deftly cut the pants leg open. Then, with both hands, she tore the pants to the knee so the man’s pale calf was exposed.
- <sup>61</sup> The crowd stirred. Some people pushed forward to have a closer look, some nervously left the circle when they saw the scissors used, and some glanced at their own pants. As the girl started on the other leg of the trousers, the boy with the glasses picked up the man’s shoes and waved them to the crowd. “Pointed shoes! Fourolds!” he shouted.
- <sup>62</sup> “But I bought them in the Number One Department Store here. It’s run by the government. How can they be fourolds?” the man cried out in despair.
- <sup>63</sup> “What makes you think that government-owned stores are free of fourolds? That statement itself is fourolds. Didn’t you see all the shop signs that were knocked down? Most of those stores belonged to the government.” With a snort the boy dropped the man’s foot and stood up. The man lost his balance and nearly fell over.
- <sup>64</sup> The crowd gave a burst of appreciative laughter.
- <sup>65</sup> Encouraged, the three students enthusiastically began cutting open the shoes. All eyes were focused on them. No one paid any attention to their owner. I looked at the man.
- <sup>66</sup> He stood on the sidewalk, awkward and humiliated, trouser legs flapping around his ankles, socks falling down. A tuft of hair hung over his forehead. He looked at his pants, pushed up his glasses nervously, and quickly glanced around. Our eyes met. Immediately he turned away.
- <sup>67</sup> The students cheered and triumphantly threw the mutilated shoes into the air.
- <sup>68</sup> The man quivered. Suddenly he turned around and began to walk away.
- <sup>69</sup> “Wait.” One boy picked up the shoes and threw them at the man. “Take your fourolds with you. Go home and thoroughly remold your ideology.”
- <sup>70</sup> The man took his broken shoes in hand and made his way out of the crowd, his cut pants flapping.
- <sup>71</sup> Someone chortled. “He’ll have holes in his socks when he gets home.”

<sup>72</sup> I watched the spectators disperse. The students strutted proudly down the street.

<sup>73</sup> Ji-yun tugged on my arm. "Come on. It's over."

<sup>74</sup> I took her hand and we headed home in silence. "That poor guy," I finally said. "He should know better than to dress that way, but I'd just die if somebody cut my pants open in front of everybody like that."

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# Writing Da-Zi-Bao

## Paragraphs 2-61

- <sup>2</sup> One Monday, all school classes were suspended indefinitely. All students were directed instead to participate in the movement by writing big posters, *da-zi-bao*, criticizing the educational system. Rolls of white paper, dozens of brushes, and many bottles of red and black ink were brought into the classrooms. The teachers were nowhere to be seen.
- <sup>3</sup> The classrooms buzzed with revolutionary **fervor**. Students spread large sheets of paper on desks and gathered around, eagerly shouting suggestions. Some roamed the rooms, reading comments aloud over people's shoulders, calling to others. Girls and boys ran outside to put up their *da-zi-bao* and ran back in to write more. Desks, Ping-Pong tables, and even the floor were taken over for writing *da-zi-bao*. When the white paper was gone, the students used old newspaper instead. *Da-zi-bao* were everywhere: in classrooms, along the hallways, and even on the brick walls of the school yard. The row of tall parasol trees that lined the inside of the school yard was **festooned** with more *da-zi-bao*, hanging like flowers from the branches. Long ropes strung across the playground were covered with still more *da-zi-bao*, looking like laundry hung out to dry.
- <sup>4</sup> I stared at the large sheet of paper spread out in front of me, wondering what to write. It was strange. When I had read the newspaper, I had been **enraged** by the revisionist educational system that had been poisoning our youth for so many years. But now that I actually had to criticize the teachers who taught us every day, I could not find anything really bad to say about any of them.
- <sup>5</sup> I went over to An Yi's desk. Just as I guessed, the papers in front of her and her seatmate, Zhang Jie, were also blank.
- <sup>6</sup> "I just can't think of anything to write," I complained.
- <sup>7</sup> "Neither can we. I might as well just give up." An Yi put her brush down and stretched.
- <sup>8</sup> "Hey, everybody has to write something. You're no exception. Do you want everyone to think you have a bad political attitude?" Zhang Jie was joking, but it made us think.

**fervor:** intense feeling

**festooned:** decorated

**enraged:** angry

**Pauper:**  
a nickname that is  
a word that means  
poor

**insidious:** sneakily  
dangerous

**corrupt:** evil

**sole:** only

**denounce:**  
publicly express  
disapproval

**flabbergasted:**  
shocked

- 9 “Why don’t we go out to the playground to see what everybody else is writing?” Zhang Jie went on. “It’s better to copy something than not to write anything at all. What do you say?”
- 10 We walked out to the school yard. The classroom had been crowded, but there were even more students outside. Du Hai was shouting, “Hey, this is great! Everybody, look at what **Pauper**’s done. She put the principal’s name upside down.”
- 11 Ragged-looking Pauper smiled with satisfaction. “I saw my big sister writing one last night. She wrote the name upside down and then put a big red X over it. She said that’s what the court used to do to criminals.”
- 12 The three of us stopped before a *da-zi-bao* signed “An Antirevisionist.” An Yi read aloud, “Although teachers do not hold bombs or knives, they are still dangerous enemies. They fill us with **insidious** revisionist ideas. They teach us that scholars are superior to workers. They promote personal ambition by encouraging competition for the highest grades. All these things are intended to change good young socialists into **corrupt** revisionists. They are invisible knives that are even more dangerous than real knives or guns. For example, a student from Yu-cai High School killed himself because he failed the university entrance examination. Brainwashed by his teachers, he believed his **sole** aim in life was to enter a famous university and become a scientist—”
- 13 “Hey!” I stopped her in surprise. “This was all copied from the *Youth Post*. I read it the other day.”
- 14 “So what? It’s always okay to copy *da-zi-bao*,” Zhang Jie said. She turned to another *da-zi-bao*. “Look! This one is by Yin Lan-lan.”
- 15 Yin Lan-lan had written, “As one of its victims, I **denounce** the revisionist educational system. Being from a working-class family, I have to do a lot more housework than students from rich families. So I have difficulty passing exams. I was forced to repeat grades three times. And I was not allowed to be a Young Pioneer or to participate in the school choir. The teachers think only of grades when evaluating a student. They forget that we, the working class, are the masters of our socialist country.”
- 16 “Yin Lan-lan? A victim?” I was **flabbergasted**. Yin Lan-lan had flunked three times. She rarely spoke up in class. When she was asked to answer a question, she would just stand there without saying a word. She was not very bright.

- 17 “She failed three courses out of five. How could she blame the teachers for that?” An Yi sneered.
- 18 Zhang Jie slumped her shoulders and bowed her head in imitation of Yin Lan-lan. We burst out laughing and immediately looked around to see if anyone was watching us. Zhang Jie made a face.
- 19 Sheet after sheet, article after article, each *da-zi-bao* was a bitter accusation. One was titled, “Teacher Li, Abuser of the Young.” The student had failed to hand in her homework on time, and Teacher Li had told her to copy the assignment over five times as punishment. Another student said his teacher had deliberately ruined his students’ eyesight by making them read a lot, so they could not join the Liberation Army. Still another accused Teacher Wang of attempting to corrupt a young revolutionary by buying her some bread when he learned that she had not eaten lunch.
- 20 The more I read, the more puzzled I became. Did the teachers really intend to ruin our health and corrupt our minds? If so, why hadn’t I ever noticed? Was I so badly taken in that I was unable to see them for what they really were? I remembered Du Hai’s **taunt**. You “*teachers’ obedient little lamb*.” I thought of Teacher Gu, who was like a **stern** but loving mother to me. I thought of An Yi’s mother, Teacher Wei, who had won so many Model Teacher awards because of her dedication to her work. No matter how I tried, I just could not relate them to the villains described in the *da-zi-bao*.
- 21 To fulfill my responsibility as a revolutionary, I listed all my teachers. One by one, I considered them carefully. Unfortunately, none of them seemed to hate the Party or oppose Chairman Mao. I could not write a *da-zi-bao* about any of them.
- 22 Finally I decided to copy an article from the newspaper instead.
- 23 A few days later, when I got to school, I was told we were going to post *da-zi-bao* on the houses of some of the bourgeoisie living near the school. The class was divided into two groups. One was going to confront Old Qian, a stern and frightening man who stalked our alleys speaking to no one. The other group was going to challenge Jiang Xi-wen, an unpleasant woman who lived in a house behind the school yard. I was assigned to the group going to Jiang Xi-wen’s house. Of course, this was not coincidence, not at all. They all knew that she was my relative.

**taunt:** insult  
**obedient:**  
cooperative and  
order-following  
**stern:** strict

**affront:** insult  
**dawdled:** delayed  
leaving  
**aback:** surprised

- <sup>24</sup> Aunt Xi-wen was really my father's cousin, but I always called her Aunt. She was at least fifty years old, but she dressed stylishly and wore makeup, so she looked closer to thirty. I knew my classmates did not like her one bit. "What makes her think she's so wonderful?" they sneered. "Just look at those clothes she got from her sister in America. Look at her makeup. Bourgeois! Disgusting!" I had always disapproved of her too. Chairman Mao taught us that "inner beauty is much more valuable than outward appearance." How could she ignore what Chairman Mao said? Song Po-po had told me that even Aunt Xi-wen's youngest son often grumbled about his mother's behavior.
- <sup>25</sup> Just a few weeks earlier Aunt Xi-wen had complained to the school because some students had climbed into her yard to pick mulberry leaves for their silkworms. This latest **affront** was too much for the students to bear.
- <sup>26</sup> About twenty of us formed a straggling column. Yin Lan-lan was first in line. She carried the *da-zi-bao*, and Du Hai, carrying a brush and a bucket of paste, followed her. Behind them two students struck a gong and beat a drum.
- <sup>27</sup> "Let's go!" Yin Lan-lan waved her arm vigorously, and the group marched off.
- <sup>28</sup> I watched her with interest. Yin Lan-lan had changed a great deal. No longer hesitant and clumsy, she had become vocal, aggressive, and confident. She stood up straight and threw out her chest, whereas before she had always slouched. She and Du Hai had taken the leading roles in this movement. The usual leaders of the class, including me, were holding back for some reason. Yu Jian, chairman of the class and one of the best students, was somewhere in the middle of the line, while I dawdled so that I could be in the back of the group. I didn't want Aunt Xi-wen to see me. Although I did not approve of her, and although I supported today's revolutionary action, she was still my relative. But I dared not ask to switch to the other group. I would certainly be criticized for letting my family relationships interfere with my political principles. I had no choice but to go.
- <sup>29</sup> Someone rang the bell. We waited in the narrow passageway outside the door, whispering among ourselves. Before long Aunt Xi-wen came to the door. She was not wearing makeup, and she looked older and less attractive than usual. She seemed taken **aback** at the sight of us. Her welcoming expression turned into one of nervous surprise.



- 30 Du Hai took the lead. "Down with the bourgeois Jiang Xi-wen! Long live Mao Ze-dong Thought!" he shouted. We repeated the **slogans**. Then Yin Lan-lan recited, "Our great leader, Chairman Mao, has taught us, 'Every reactionary is the same; if you do not hit him, he will not fall. This is also like sweeping the floor; as a rule, where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish by itself.'" Her voice was loud and forceful. "Today, we proletarian revolutionary young guards have come to revolt against you bourgeoisie. Jiang Xi-wen, this is our *da-zi-bao*. You are to post it on your door now." She shook the white paper in front of Aunt Xi-wen's nose.
- 31 Aunt Xi-wen tried to smile to show her support of the proletarian revolutionary young guards, but the smile froze before it was fully formed. It was hard to tell whether she was smiling or crying.
- 32 "Yes, yes, I will," she said repeatedly. She took the paste and began to brush it on the door. I could see the brush quivering in her hand. It was an unusually hot and **humid** day, and with the twenty of us crowded into her entryway, it felt even hotter. Aunt Xi-wen gave the door a few more good swipes of paste before she stopped and wiped the sweat off her forehead. Then she took the *da-zi-bao* and stuck it to the door, smoothing it out without hesitation in spite of the ink that blacked her hands.
- 33 "Now read it out loud," Yin Lan-lan shouted as soon as Aunt Xi-wen finished.
- 34 Aunt Xi-wen had not expected this. She **gaped** at us in alarm. She did not want to read the terrible things written about her, but she did not dare refuse. Her face was ugly with **distress**. She knew that no one would challenge anything we revolutionaries did to her.
- 35 I did not want her to see me. I bent down and pretended to tie my shoelaces. But I could not block out her voice, dry, hoarse, and trembling: "... refusal to let students pick mulberry leaves was an attack on proletarian students.... The more you try to improve your outward appearance, the filthier your heart becomes.... Your black bourgeois bones are clearly visible to our proletarian eyes.... Remold yourself **conscientiously**...." I kept my eyes on my shoelaces and tried not to listen.
- 36 "Hey, what's the matter with you?" Someone pushed me and I realized that it was over.

**slogans:** short memorable phrases

**humid:** damp and hot

**gaped:** stared with mouth open

**distress:** pain and suffering

**conscientiously:** with care

**propagating:**  
spreading  
**frantically:**  
anxiously and  
excitedly

- 37 On the way back to school everyone joked and laughed at Aunt Xi-wen's humiliation. "Jiang Ji-li, your aunt really lost face today, didn't she?" Du Hai shouted. I could feel every classmate staring at me. I raised my head and said loudly, "It serves her right." I made an effort to laugh and joke along with the others.
- 38 "Look at that!" someone said with surprise. I raised my head. The door of Grandpa Hong's bookstall had been sealed with several *da-zi-bao*. It was too far away to read them. All I could make out were a few words from the titles of the posters: "**Propagating** Feudal, Capitalistic, and Revisionist Ideals"; "Poisoning our Youth." My mind was full of all the stories I had read there. Now the stories were finished. They were part of the bad system that was going to destroy socialism. I shook my head hard, as if to shake all the evil stories out of my mind.
- 39 "Ji-li, come on. Come to school right now. Someone's written a *da-zi-bao* about you. Come on, let's go." An Yi dashed into our apartment, full of alarm. She dragged me to my feet and pulled me to the stairs.
- 40 "Wait." I shook off her grasp. "Hold on. What did you say?"
- 41 "Your name appeared in a *da-zi-bao*."
- 42 I could not believe it. "My name? Why? I'm not a teacher. Why would they write a *da-zi-bao* about me?" I could feel my heart race.
- 43 "I don't know. But I saw it with my own eyes. Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan and a couple of others were writing it. I couldn't read it, but I saw your name in the title." She wheezed heavily and looked at me, wide-eyed.
- 44 We hurried off to the school playground, where the newest *da-zi-bao* were posted, and searched **frantically**. "There it is!" Suddenly I caught sight of it.
- 45 The large red characters were like blood on the poster.
- 46 "Let's Look at the Relationship Between Ke Cheng-li and His Favorite Student, Jiang Ji-li."
- 47 I suddenly felt dizzy. Relationship? Me? A relationship with a male teacher? The whole world faded before my eyes. The only things I could see were the name *Jiang Ji-li* and the word *relationship*. A shaft of evening sunlight flashed on my name. The characters danced before my eyes, growing larger and redder, almost swallowing me up.

48 An Yi was shaking me. Her eyes were full of tears and she was staring at me anxiously. I could not speak. I grabbed her arm and we ran out of the school yard.

49 We stopped at the back door of a small cigarette shop nearby. An Yi tried to say something, but I wouldn't let her. We leaned against the wall for a long time without saying a word.

50 "Let's go home." An Yi touched me softly on the elbow. It was getting dark.

51 "You go ahead. I'm going to read the—" The word "*da-zi-bao*" stuck in my throat.

52 An Yi nodded worriedly and left.

53 A half-moon brightened the sky, and the school yard was laced with the ghostly shadows of the parasol trees. I picked my way through the shadows and found the *da-zi-bao* again.

54 Now, under the cover of darkness, I could let myself cry. I wiped the tears away with my hand, but the more I wiped, the more they came. I pressed my handkerchief to my face. Finally my eyes cleared enough to see.

55 "Ke Cheng-li doesn't like working-class kids. He only likes rich kids. He made Jiang Ji-li the teacher's assistant for math class and gave her higher grades, and he also let her win all the math contests and awarded her a lot of notebooks. We have to ask the question, What is the relationship between them after all?"

56 The blood rushed into my head. I felt like throwing up. I leaned against the wall and rested my head on it.

57 A shadow approached. I tensed and got ready to run. The shadow called out, "Ji-li, it's me. I came back. I was getting worried."

58 An Yi's voice made the tears gush out of my eyes again. "Oh, An Yi. How could they say these things? How could they say them? A relationship between Teacher Ke and me? It's all lies." My voice was hoarse. "It... it... it's so unfair. I have never gotten one point, not a single point, that I didn't deserve. And I spent so much time helping Yin Lan-lan and the others with their arithmetic, and now they go and insult me like this. It's disgusting. I—" I could not go on. I bit my handkerchief to hold back my sobs.

- <sup>59</sup> An Yi kept silent for a while. She walked beside me with her hand tightly clasping my shoulder. “There were a lot of *da-zi-bao* about my mom, too,” she said at last in a soft voice. “They said she was a monster and a class enemy.”
- <sup>60</sup> I stopped. I was afraid to look at her. Her hand squeezed my shoulder, and I felt her sobbing quietly.
- <sup>61</sup> We stood together like that for a long time, in the darkness and the silence.
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# The Red Successors

## Paragraphs 1-108

- <sup>1</sup> When Mom and Dad heard about the *da-zi-bao*, they immediately suggested that I stay home from school for a few days. Since there were no classes, other students were staying home too. Nobody would connect my absence with the *da-zi-bao*.
- <sup>2</sup> As it turned out, I came down with a fever and stayed home for ten days.
- <sup>3</sup> I lay in bed all day and watched Grandma and Song Po-po work around the house. I was too tired and too depressed to do any more than watch them and watch a patch of sunlight as it moved across the room. As the fever subsided, I began to feel better, but Grandma said I should stay home a few more days to make sure I was completely well. For the first time in my life I was happy to miss school.
- <sup>4</sup> Both Song Po-po and Grandma tried their best to cheer me up. Song Po-po combed my hair and made me treats. Grandma sat by my bed, took out my stamp collection, and tried to get me to take an interest in it. Finally, Grandma bought some lovely soft gray wool for me and taught me how to knit a sweater for Dad. I worked on it every day while the others were in school, but slowly, with many pauses, while I stared out the window.
- <sup>5</sup> Why would anyone say such terrible things about me? Why did Yin Llan and Du Hai hate me? What had I ever done to hurt them? I asked myself these questions again and again, but I never found an answer.
- <sup>6</sup> Every day An Yi came to visit me, sometimes bringing me a bowl of sweet green bean soup from her grandmother. Every day she told me what was happening at school. Classes had started again. They were studying Chairman Mao's latest directives and related documents from the Central Committee. There would be one more month of school before graduation. An Yi said that not many of our classmates had seen the *da-zi-bao* about me. And there were now so many *da-zi-bao*, posted one on top of another, that no one was likely to find mine.
- <sup>7</sup> Red Guards were everywhere. Since the newspapers had praised them as the pioneers of the Cultural Revolution, every high school and college had organized Red Guards to rebel against the old system. When the Central Committee had announced that Red Guards could travel free to other provinces to "establish revolutionary ties" with other Red Guards, An Yi

told me, our entire school had gone into an uproar. Most of the students had never been out of Shanghai, so this was terribly exciting news. A large crowd of students from our school had gathered outside the school committee offices and shouted nonstop: “We—want—to be—Red Guards! We—want—to establish—revolutionary ties!” Only college and high school students were allowed to be Red Guards, but our school district had finally granted our school permission to establish the Red Successors. Just as the name indicated, the Red Successors were the next generation of revolutionaries, and when they were old enough, they would become Red Guards. Ten Red Successors were to be elected from each class. An Yi brought me a note from Teacher Gu saying she hoped I was feeling better and would come back to school for the election on Saturday.

- <sup>8</sup> Friday afternoon a thunderstorm struck. The darkness gathered until I could not see my book. The first flash of lightning drew me to the window as the downpour began. I sat on a porcelain stool, leaning my forehead against the cool windowpane. The torrent overflowed the gutters, and a curtain of rainwater leaped off the roof. Wind-blown spray blurred the window. The alley was washed clean. Dirt and trash were swept away by the flood. I stared at the downpour and pictured all the *da-zi-bao* in the school yard. I opened the window and shivered with delight as the clean chill air swept over me.
- <sup>9</sup> A blast soaked my face and I laughed. From behind me a hand reached out to pull the window shut. Grandma smiled down at me. She knew exactly what I was thinking. She gently wrapped my robe around my shoulders. I lay **contentedly** in her arms as the rain washed away my humiliation and shame.
- <sup>10</sup> By morning the storm had passed.
- <sup>11</sup> When we got to school, we found that all the *da-zi-bao* were gone. **Sodden** fragments littered the school yard, with only a few torn and illegible **remnants** dangling on the ropes. The paper with my name on it had disappeared. I sighed with relief and went to class feeling better than I had in a long time.
- <sup>12</sup> During the time I was home, summer had arrived. The windows of the classroom were all open, and the fragrance from the oleander bushes outside filled the air, heavy, rich, and warm. The classroom itself looked nicer. All the *da-zi-bao* had been taken down and replaced by

**contentedly:**  
happily

**sodden:** soggy

**remnants:** leftover  
pieces

other things. A big color poster, at least six feet by three feet, hung in the middle of the back wall. It showed a big red flag with Chairman Mao's picture and a long line of people marching under the flag. On the right side of the room, the slogan LONG LIVE THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION covered almost the entire wall. I was cheered by the revolutionary atmosphere.

<sup>13</sup> Teacher Gu walked in, and the election for the Red Successors began.

<sup>14</sup> I lowered my head and pretended to check my nails. I wanted everyone to see that I did not care if I was not chosen. My parents and Grandma had warned me against disappointment, so I was prepared. And anyway, the Red Successors were not nearly as glorious as the Red Guards.

<sup>15</sup> Yu Jian, the chairman of our class, was the first one nominated. Then I heard my name called. My heart raced and I held my breath. I could hardly believe it. I was nominated! After everything that had happened, I was still regarded as somebody in the class! Now I could admit it to myself: I had never wanted anything as much as I wanted to win this election.

<sup>16</sup> I looked gratefully at the student who had nominated me.

<sup>17</sup> Teacher Gu was about to write the names of all the candidates on the blackboard when Yin Lan-lan raised her hand. "When the Red Guards were elected at my sister's school, the class status of the candidates was taken into account. Shouldn't we do the same?"

<sup>18</sup> "Right! Those who don't have good class backgrounds shouldn't be elected," somebody else agreed.

<sup>19</sup> My heart fell. Class status. There was that phrase again.

<sup>20</sup> At a loss for anything to say, I turned around and looked at Yu Jian.

<sup>21</sup> Yu Jian stood up without hesitation. "My class status is office worker. But before Liberation my father used to be an apprentice. He had to work at the shop counter when he was in his teens, and he suffered all kinds of **exploitation** by the owner. My father is a member of the Communist Party now, and my mother will join pretty soon." All hands were raised to elect him a Red Successor.

<sup>22</sup> It was my turn now. My mind was blank. I did not know what to say. I stood up slowly, the back of my blouse suddenly soaked with sweat.

**exploitation:** acts of taking advantage of others

- <sup>23</sup> “My class status is also office worker. My father is an actor....” I stumbled, trying to remember what Yu Jian had said. “He... is not a Party member, and neither is my mother. And... I don’t know what else.” I sat down.
- <sup>24</sup> “Jiang Ji-li, what is your father’s class status?” a loud voice asked.
- <sup>25</sup> I slowly stood back up and looked around. Du Hai was staring at me. He sat sideways, one arm resting on the desk behind him.
- <sup>26</sup> “My father’s class status...?” I did not see what Du Hai meant at first. “You mean what did my grandfather do? I don’t know. I only know that he died when my father was seven.”
- <sup>27</sup> There was a trace of a grin on Du Hai’s face. He stood up lazily and faced the class.
- <sup>28</sup> “I know what her grandfather was.” He paused dramatically, sweeping his eyes across the class. “He was a—LANDLORD.”
- <sup>29</sup> “Landlord!” The whole class erupted.
- <sup>30</sup> “What’s more, her father is a—RIGHTIST.”
- <sup>31</sup> “Rightist!” The class was in **pandemonium**.
- <sup>32</sup> I was numb. Landlord! One of the bloodsuckers who exploited the farmers! The number-one enemies, the worst of the “Five Black Categories,” even worse than criminals or counterrevolutionaries! My grandfather? And Dad, a rightist? One of the reactionary intellectuals who attacked the Party and socialism? No, I could not believe it.
- <sup>33</sup> “You’re lying! You don’t know anything!” I **retorted**.
- <sup>34</sup> “Of course I know.” Du Hai smirked openly. “My mother is the Neighborhood Party Committee Secretary. She knows everything.”
- <sup>35</sup> I could say nothing now. Through my tears I could see everyone staring at me. I wished I had never been born. I pushed the desk out of my way and ran out of the classroom.
- <sup>36</sup> Outside, it was so bright that I could barely see. Shading my eyes with my hand, I jumped blindly into the dazzling sunshine and ran home.
- <sup>37</sup> Grandma was frightened by the tears streaming down my face. “What happened, sweetie? Are you hurt?” She put her spatula down and grasped my hand, asking again and again.

**pandemonium:**  
noisy, confusing  
disorder

**retorted:** answered  
harshly



38 At first I couldn't answer. Finally, still sobbing, I managed to tell her what had happened.

39 "It isn't true, is it?" I sobbed. "Grandpa wasn't a landlord, was he? Dad isn't a rightist, is he?"

40 "Of course your father is not a rightist. Don't listen to your classmates," Grandma said immediately, but she sounded nervous.

41 "And Grandpa wasn't a landlord either, right?" I looked straight into Grandma's eyes.

42 Grandma heaved a sigh and hugged me to her chest.

43 "Whatever he was, it doesn't have anything to do with you. He's been dead for over thirty years."

44 It was true, then. Grandpa was a landlord.

45 I did not want to listen anymore. I turned away.

46 When I opened my eyes the next morning, Dad was standing by the bed.

47 "Get up, Ji-li. I'm taking the three of you for a walk." He patted my cheek.

48 "I don't feel like going." I rolled over and faced the wall, my eyes swollen and my head heavy and aching.

49 "You must come. I have something to tell you," he said gently but firmly.

50 Ji-yong and Ji-yun each took one of Dad's hands, while I listlessly followed. Mom and Dad had spent a long time talking in the bathroom last night, the only place in our home where they could have a private conversation, and I was sure this walk had something to do with what happened to me yesterday.

51 It was Sunday. The workday streams of people and bicycles were gone, and the street was quiet and peaceful.

52 We stopped at the China-Soviet Friendship Mansion. The square in front of the mansion was empty except for the white doves, cooing and chasing each other around the fountain.

53 We sat on the broad steps in front of the entrance. I leaned against a pillar.

**vast:** very large

**extravagance:**  
overspending

**liberated:** free

**bedridden:** kept  
in bed

**exploit:** take  
advantage

- 54 Dad came right to the point. “Grandma told me that Ji-li wasn’t elected a Red Successor because her classmates asked about our family class status.” He turned and looked straight at me.
- 55 I bowed my head and fiddled with my red scarf.
- 56 “Things like that will probably happen again because of this Cultural Revolution, so I want to tell you something about our family.” Dad’s voice, like his face, was calm.
- 57 He had been born into a large, wealthy family, he told us, with five generations, more than a hundred people, living together in one big compound. The family had once owned **vast** amounts of land, many businesses, and other kinds of property. By the time Dad was born, most of the money was lost to **extravagance** and bad luck, and soon the big family was broken up. When Dad was only seven, his father died, and Dad and Grandma lived by themselves. There was not much money left. Dad went to St. John’s University in Shanghai on a scholarship, and he tutored some private students to make money, but even so Grandma had to sell some of her jewelry to pay for their daily expenses. When Dad graduated from St. John’s in 1949, the Communist Party had just **liberated** China from Chiang Kai-shek’s rule, and Dad was appointed a vice-principal of a primary school.
- 58 “This is the true family background,” Dad said. “I am not a rightist, and anyone who says I am can go to my work unit and confirm it. As for your Grandpa, he was a businessman and a landlord.”
- 59 “Dad,” Ji-yong asked suddenly, “did Grandpa whip the farmers if they couldn’t pay their rent?”
- 60 “Or make their daughters be his maids?” Ji-yun added.
- 61 Dad looked into their horrified eyes and slowly shook his head. “Grandpa lived in Shanghai all his life and was never in charge of finances. He was already sick when he married Grandma, and he was **bedridden** until he died eight years later. Of course, I’m not saying that he wasn’t guilty. All landlords **exploit**, and that is certainly a crime....”
- 62 “Why did Grandpa want to **exploit** people?” I interrupted. I just had to know.

63 Dad looked at me and did not answer. After a moment's silence he took all of us in his arms and said, "Now listen. What I want you to know is, whether or not your Grandpa was a landlord or an **exploiter**, it isn't your responsibility. Even I don't have a clear memory of him, so it doesn't have to matter to you at all. *You can still hold your heads up.* Understand?"

64 "But it's still true that because of him I can't be a Red Successor."

65 "Yes. Your classmates may talk, and our neighbors may talk. We can't help that. You may not be able to join the Red Successors. We can't do anything about that, either. But you don't have to be ashamed, because it isn't your fault. You didn't do anything wrong. Do you see that?"

66 Looking at Dad's tender eyes, I felt a little better.

67 In a few weeks I would graduate. I would enter an elite school and study even harder. Maybe I had a bad class status, but I would have good grades. No one could take those away from me.

68 "It's not my fault," I repeated to myself. "It's not my fault."

69 The ten Red Successors were elected, Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan among them. Immediately after the election the two of them strutted around with their red armbands **prominently** displayed, giving orders to the rest of the class. Du Hai squinted more than ever to show that he should be taken seriously. Yin Lan-lan rushed everywhere, with her head up and her chest thrust out proudly. Yang Fan was elected too, and now she echoed everything Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan said. Yu Jian was also part of the group, though his class background was not red. But he seemed uncomfortable following Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan.

70 I became more quiet and pretended to have no interest at all in their activities.

71 One afternoon after a class I was hurrying to erase the blackboard. "Come on, Pauper!" I called to my partner, Deng Yi-yi. It was our turn to be classroom assistants. "We'll be late getting the tools for Handicrafts."

72 "Hey! Don't call people by nicknames!" someone barked. I turned around. Yang Fan was standing in the doorway right behind me.

73 "Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot. I promise I'll never call you that again," I told Deng Yi-yi with an apologetic smile.

**exploiter:**  
someone who  
takes advantage  
of others

**prominently:** very  
visibly

**haughty:**  
self-important  
**sneer:**  
disrespectful look  
**content:** happy  
**reflect:** think about  
and look back on  
**ideology:** belief  
system

- 74 Yang Fan gave a **haughty sneer** but seemed **content** with my response.
- 75 “It isn’t simply a matter of calling people by nicknames. It’s a matter of your looking down on working-class people.” Yin Lan-lan and two other Red Successors appeared in the doorway behind Yang Fan, all wearing stern expressions. The classroom was suddenly dead quiet.
- 76 “Deng Yi-yi is from a poor family and she isn’t neatly dressed, so you look down on her and call her Pauper. This is connected with your class standing, Jiang Ji-li. You should **reflect** on your class origin and thoroughly remold your **ideology**.”
- 77 “It wasn’t I who gave her that nickname. Everybody calls her that! And I already apologized.” I struggled to control my anger.
- 78 “What other people do is a totally different question,” said Ying Lan-lan. “Other people don’t have a landlord grandfather and a rightist father. They don’t need to remold themselves.”
- 79 “Shut up! Don’t you dare say my father is a rightist! Who says he’s a rightist? Why don’t you go to my father’s work unit and ask them?”
- 80 Yin Lan-lan was shocked. I was so confident, she could tell I was not lying. “Well... what about your grandfather then?”
- 81 “What about him? He died when my father was just seven. I never even saw him. Why do I have to remold myself? What does he have to do with me?”
- 82 “What? Your grandfather was a landlord and you don’t need to remold yourself?” Raising her voice and waving her arm with the new Red Successor armband, she screamed almost hysterically to the whole classroom, “Hey, listen everybody! Jiang Ji-li just said that she had nothing to do with her landlord grandfather and she doesn’t need to remold herself! She’s denying the existence of class struggle!”
- 83 She turned back to me, still shouting. “Chairman Mao said, ‘In a class society everyone is a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a particular class.’ There is no doubt that your grandfather’s reactionary class standing had a bad influence on your father’s thoughts, and he naturally passed them on to you. And your grandmother is a landlord’s wife. She tells everybody how much she loves you, and she must have a bad influence on you too. And you say you don’t need to remold yourself?”

84 A large crowd was watching from the doorway. I opened my mouth, but no words would come out. The bell rang to begin class. Du Hai, who had been watching the whole time, suddenly announced, “Jiang Ji-li, stay after school. We Red Successors want to talk with you.”

85 “Uh-oh,” I heard someone say.

86 For the next two periods I did not hear anything the teacher said. The terrible words “landlord” and “class standing,” Yin Lan-lan’s cold face, Du Hai’s sly, squinty eyes, spun in my mind. I had always been a school leader, a role model. How could I have suddenly become so bad that I needed to be remolded thoroughly? I had never even met my grandfather. My head ached, and I pressed my fingers hard on my temples.

87 I walked into the gym. Yu Jian stood by the parallel bars, discussing something with Yang Fan and Yin Lan-lan, who were sitting on the balance beam. Du Hai was beside them, bending over and writing something. Several other Red Successors leaned over his shoulder. When they saw me, they all stopped. Everybody looked at me seriously but hesitantly, as if they did not know how to start.

88 “Jiang Ji-li,” said Du Hai at last, in long, drawn-out tones, “the purpose of our talk today is to point out your problems.” He tilted his head slightly, trying to seem very experienced.

89 I suddenly remembered one day when he had had to stand in the front of the classroom. He was being punished for tying a piece of paper to a cat’s tail and setting it on fire.

90 “Your problems are very serious, you know. For instance...” He looked at the paper in his hand. “You and your grandmother often take a pedicab, which reveals your **extravagant** bourgeois lifestyle. And your family has a housekeeper. That’s definitely exploitation. And you never do any housework—”

91 “Yes, we sometimes take a pedicab instead of a bus, but only when someone is sick and has to see the doctor.” Timidly, I tried to explain. “And I’ve had several talks with my mother about Song Po-po, but she said that Song Po-po doesn’t have any other job, so she needs to work for us.”

92 “Shut up!” Yin Lan-lan cut me off with a ruthless wave of her hand. “Today we are going to talk to you, not the other way round. Nobody asked you to talk. So just listen. Understand?”

**extravagant:**  
wasteful

- 93 I went numb. I stared at her, unable to hear another word. Was this the person I knew? I had helped Yin Lan-lan with her math three times a week for years, explaining each problem to her over and over until she got it right. And Yang Fan. My friends and I had carried her on our backs to and from school for three months when she had broken her leg two years ago. And all of them. What had I ever done to them? Why were they suddenly treating me like an enemy?
- 94 One after another they continued to criticize me. I stared at their moving lips, understanding nothing.
- 95 Was it my fault that my family was a little better off than theirs? Many a time I had wished that my parents were workers in a textile mill and that we were poor. I had always begged Mom to let me wear patched pants. I had insisted on washing my own clothes even though we had a housekeeper. When my class did **collective** labor every week, I always volunteered for the heaviest jobs. Hadn't Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan ever noticed that? Suddenly I wished that I had been born into a different family. I hated Grandpa for being a landlord.
- 96 "Why won't you answer?" Yin Lan-lan jumped up from the balance beam and roared at me.
- 97 "What?" I looked timidly into the enraged circle of faces in front of me.
- 98 The Red Successors exploded.
- 99 "You weren't even listening, were you?" shouted Yin Lan-lan. "I tell you, Jiang Ji-li, you'd better stop thinking you're the *da-dui-zhang*. It's the Cultural Revolution now, and there are no *da-dui-zhangs* anymore. You're not the chair of anything now."
- 100 "It's different now. The teachers won't be protecting you anymore."
- 101 "No wonder you didn't write any *da-zi-bao* criticizing the teachers. You have serious problems with your class standing."
- 102 "Your grandfather was a big landlord, and you'd better watch out. We won't put up with any of your landlord tricks."
- 103 It was so unfair. I was being punished for something I had not done. "No tears. Not now," I told myself, but I could not hold them back. I started to cry.

collective: shared

- <sup>104</sup> The Red Successors did not know what to do. They looked at one another and did not say anything. After a minute Du Hai said in a softer voice, “You can go home now. We’ll talk later. You’d better think seriously about your problems.”
- <sup>105</sup> I walked out of the gym, my mind made up. We were going to graduate in a few weeks, and I would never speak another word to any of them.
- <sup>106</sup> Alone in the corner of the school yard I saw a little wildflower. She had six delicate petals, each as big as the nail of my little finger. They were white at the center and shaded blue at the edges.
- <sup>107</sup> She was as lonely as I was.
- <sup>108</sup> I did not know her name. Softly I stroked her petals, thinking that I would take care of her, as I wished someone would take care of me.
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## Graduation

### Paragraphs 8–25

8 “Good morning, Teacher Gu.”

9 I met her in the hallway, but I tried to avoid any more than a polite greeting.

10 “Ji-li, wait a minute.” She would not let me go.

11 I avoided her eyes as I waited for her to speak.

12 Teacher Gu had been our homeroom teacher for two years. In those two years she had been more than a teacher to us; she had been a **devoted** friend. I knew that she had a daughter just my age, and I often felt she was like a mother to me, too.

13 Before the Cultural Revolution she had been a Model Teacher. Now she was the subject of many *da-zi-bao* calling her an **opportunist**, a black executioner, a **corruptor** of the young. Even though I did not believe these accusations, I did not want to be seen with her. I did not want to give the Red Successors another excuse to attack me. Besides, I was ashamed of my own black background. For nearly a month I had tried to avoid her.

14 “Ji-li, don’t be so unhappy.”

15 “I’m not unhappy,” I tried to say, but when my eyes met hers, my voice broke. I turned away. I did not know how to face her after all my recent humiliations.

16 “I have some good news for you.” She gently turned my face toward her.

17 My eyes darted down the hall to make sure no Red Successor saw us together.

18 “You know the junior high school admissions policy has been changed,” Teacher Gu said. “Instead of an entrance exam, teachers are assigning students to their schools.” She paused. “Ji-li, all the sixth-grade teachers agreed to assign you to Shi-yi Junior High.”

19 “Shi-yi...?” My dream! In spite of everything it was coming true!

20 “That’s right,” she said. “You looked like you needed some good news to cheer you up.” She patted me on the head and turned toward the office building.

**devoted:** loyal

**opportunist:**  
someone who  
takes unfair  
advantage of other  
people or situations

**corruptor:** ruiner



- <sup>21</sup> I could not move as I watched her walk away. Shi-yi! Even though I could not be a Red Successor, I would go to Shi-yi! I saw the badge of Shi-yi Junior High sparkling on my blouse. I had almost given up, but my teachers had not. The lonely flower had not been forgotten after all. I was happier than I had been for weeks.
- <sup>22</sup> Then I felt myself blush. I had tried to avoid Teacher Gu. I had not wanted anyone to see me talking to her. I had not supported her as she had supported me.
- <sup>23</sup> “Teacher Gu!” I called after her. “Thank you!” She turned and smiled at me, and I thought of something else. “Teacher Gu, what school was An Yi assigned to?” Seeing her hesitate I added, “She’s been sick. She needs some good news too.”
- <sup>24</sup> “The same as you. Don’t tell anyone, okay?”
- <sup>25</sup> I ran all the way to An Yi’s house. People turned to look at me as I raced by, but I could not stop grinning. I would always work hard, I told myself. I would never let my teachers down.
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## A Search in Passing

### Paragraphs 1–121

- <sup>1</sup> It was already past eight o'clock when Dad's colleagues Uncle Tian and his wife, Aunt Wu, came to visit. They had not come for several months, and things were very different now. Mom did not make her famous beef soup, and Grandma did not make steamed buns. They barely greeted us children when they came in. Instead of loud, lively chatter and **jovial** laughter, their conversation was all hushed whispers. As soon as they mentioned "the current situation," Dad told us to go downstairs to play with my little cousin Hua-hua.
- <sup>2</sup> We went reluctantly. Hua-hua was sleepy and did not want to play patty-cake or any of our usual games, but we stayed at my Fourth Aunt's apartment until we heard the footsteps going down the stairs.
- <sup>3</sup> It was late. We were getting ready for bed when Dad talked to us.
- <sup>4</sup> "Children, tomorrow I want you to go to the park with Grandma. You'll have to take something for lunch."
- <sup>5</sup> Grandma's been sick, I thought. Is this so she can rest?
- <sup>6</sup> "A picnic!" Ji-yun shouted. "Oh boy!"
- <sup>7</sup> "That's right," Dad answered. "A picnic." His voice sounded odd somehow. "You all go and have a good time."
- <sup>8</sup> The morning was still **relatively** cool when we set off for the park, but the sun was bright and it was sure to be hot before long. I carried a book and a bag that rattled with the dishes we had packed for lunch. Ji-yong and Ji-yun skipped ahead and were already running across the grass by the time Grandma and I arrived.
- <sup>9</sup> The park was almost empty. A few old men sat on benches playing chess, and in the shady places some old people did *tai-chi* exercises. We strolled around the lawn, and then Grandma picked a shaded bench and pulled out her knitting. "You go ahead and play," she said. "I'll be right here."
- <sup>10</sup> "Let's play tag," Ji-yun said excitedly. We had not been to the park in ages, and the three of us raced around the nearly deserted paths having a wonderful time. We were evenly matched. Ji-yun may have been the youngest, but she was very fast.

**jovial:** cheerful  
**relatively:** more  
or less

<sup>11</sup> Grandma called us to lunch. It was hot now. We gladly rested in the shade while she unpacked hard-boiled eggs and made sandwiches for us. We ate and shared a bottle of juice. We laughed about a trip the whole family had taken to another park last spring, when Ji-yong had dropped the knife out of a rowboat so we had to eat our apples without peeling them. Finally Ji-yong and Ji-yun lay down on some benches and went to sleep. I helped Grandma tidy up before sitting down to read my book. Grandma took out her knitting again but did not set to work. Instead she sighed and stared into space. Her face was pale.

<sup>12</sup> I put my hand on her shoulder.

<sup>13</sup> She turned to me and smiled a little. "Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I've just been worrying too much." She took my hand and patted it gently. "Every time I hear drums and gongs, I'm afraid that they're coming to our house. My heart starts racing, and the closer they come, the worse it gets.

<sup>14</sup> "Now, after seeing poor Old Qian kneeling on that washboard, I haven't been able to sleep. As soon as I close my eyes, I see the Red Guards coming in. I couldn't bear it if they made me kneel like that. Or if they beat me...." She smiled sadly. "Your father and Uncle Tian thought this would help me relax. I can sit in the park all day, and then even if the Red Guards come, I'll be safe here."

<sup>15</sup> "But what if the Red Guards are at our house when we get back?"

<sup>16</sup> "Your father thought of that too. Did you see the mop on the balcony? That's our sign. If the Red Guards come, the mop won't be there and I'll know not to go in."

<sup>17</sup> I was intrigued by the idea of secret signs, but I was scared too. I glanced around to see if someone was watching us.

<sup>18</sup> "It's really not much of a solution," Grandma went on. "I can't stay here all night, and I can't even stay in the park every day for months. Really, I just hope that I'll get used to the situation and won't have to come here anymore." She shook her head sadly.

<sup>19</sup> The breeze blew a strand of hair over her ear, and I gently patted it back into place. She had more gray in her hair, I noticed. And more wrinkles on her face.

- <sup>20</sup> She doesn't seem like a landlord's wife, I suddenly thought. In the movies the landlord's wife was ugly, cruel, and stupid. Grandma was beautiful, kind, and smart.
- <sup>21</sup> I remembered coming home from kindergarten and showing Grandma the songs and dances we had learned. Grandma sat before us with her knitting, nodding her head in time to the music. Sometimes we insisted that she sing with us, and she would join in with an unsteady pitch and heavy Tianjin accent, wagging her head and moving her arms just as we did.
- <sup>22</sup> When we tired of singing, we would pester Grandma to show us her feet. When she was young it was the custom to tightly bind girls' feet in bandages to make them as small as possible—sometimes as small as three inches long. This was considered the height of a woman's beauty. Grandma's feet were half bound, and when she was only seven she fought to have them released. As a result her feet were smaller than natural feet but larger than bound ones. We loved to touch them and play with them. If she refused to let us, we would tickle her until she panted with laughter.
- <sup>23</sup> All my friends loved coming to our home because she was so friendly. She had lived in our alley for over thirty years without a single disagreement with any of the neighbors. Everyone loved her and respected her.
- <sup>24</sup> Dad had said that she had never been classified as a landlord's wife. She couldn't be, I told myself.
- <sup>25</sup> Mom got home from work that evening looking nervous. She whispered to Dad and Grandma, and as soon as we finished dinner, she told us to go outside and play.
- <sup>26</sup> "We have something to take care of," she said. I knew this had something to do with the Cultural Revolution. I wished she would just say so. We were too old to be fooled like little children. But I didn't say anything and went outside with the others.
- <sup>27</sup> When it was nearly dark, Ji-yun and I went back home, leaving Ji-yong with his friends.
- <sup>28</sup> As we entered the apartment, I smelled smoke, **acrid** and choking. I looked around in alarm. But Grandma was sitting alone in the main room, showing no sign of worry.

**acrid:** strongly bitter

- 29 “Grandma, is there a fire?” we shouted anxiously. “Don’t you smell the smoke?”
- 30 “Hush, hush!” Grandma pulled us to her quickly. “It’s nothing. They’re just burning some pictures.” We looked puzzled. “Your mother heard today that photos of people in old-fashioned long gowns and **mandarin** jackets are considered fourolds. So your parents are burning them in the bathroom.”
- 31 “Can we go watch?” I loved looking at pictures, especially pictures of all those uncles and aunts I had never met.
- 32 Grandma shook her head. I winked at Ji-yun, and we both threw ourselves into her arms, begging and pleading. As always, she gave in, and went to the bathroom door to ask Mom and Dad.
- 33 Mom opened the door a crack and let us in.
- 34 The bathroom was filled with thick smoke that burned our eyes and made us cough. Dad passed us a glass of water. “We can’t open the window any wider,” he said. “The neighbors might notice the smoke and report us.”
- 35 Mom and Dad were sitting on small wooden stools. On the floor was a tin washbowl full of ashes and a few pictures disappearing into flames. At Dad’s side was a stack of old photo albums, their black covers stained and faded with age. Dad was looking through the albums, page by page, tearing out any pictures that might be fourolds. He put them in a pile next to Mom, who put them into the fire.
- 36 I picked up one of the pictures. It was of Dad, sitting on a camel, when he was about six or seven years old. He was wearing a wool hat and pants with suspenders, and he was laughing. Grandma, looking very young and beautiful and wearing a fur coat, was standing beside him.
- 37 “Mom, this one doesn’t have long gowns or anything,” Ji-yun said. “Can’t we keep it?”
- 38 “The Red Guards might say that only a rich child could ride a camel. And besides, Grandma’s wearing a fur coat.” She threw it into the fire.
- 39 Mom was right, I thought. A picture like that was fourolds.
- 40 The flames licked around the edges of the picture. The corners curled up, then turned brown. The brown spread quickly toward the center, swallowing Grandma, then the camel, and finally Dad’s woolen hat.

**mandarin:** round-collared silk

- 41 Picture after picture was thrown into the fire. Each in turn curled, melted, and disappeared. The ashes in the washbowl grew deeper. Finally there were no more pictures left. Mom poured the ashes into the toilet and flushed them away.
- 42 That night I dreamed that the house was on fire.
- 43 By the third day Ji-yong and Ji-yun had tired of spending their days in the park, so they stayed home with our Fourth Aunt. I was bored too, but I wanted to keep Grandma company. So I brought a book and bought a **pomegranate**. Pomegranates had so many seeds that they took a good long time to eat, and I had plenty of time to spare.
- 44 I sat on our usual bench, prying the juicy red seeds out of the fruit and slowly sucking on them one by one, staring at the fleecy white clouds. One cloud looked like a two-humped camel, and another looked like an old man whose long, white beard nearly reached the ground. The camel was leading the old man slowly past.
- 45 Grandma coughed and I looked at her, but she was staring into the distance.
- 46 In the three months since the Cultural Revolution had started, changes had been so constant that I often felt lost. One day the Conservative **faction** were revolutionaries that defended Chairman Mao's ideas; the next day, the opposite Rebel faction became the heroes of the Cultural Revolution. I heard that even Chairman of the Nation Liu Shao-qi and General Secretary Deng Xiao-ping were having problems. No one knew what would happen tomorrow.
- 47 I wondered what I would be doing if I had been born into a red family instead of a black one. Searching people's houses? Hating landlords and rightists? Of course I would hate them; I hated them even now. I hated my grandfather, just as I hated all of Chairman Mao's enemies. But I had felt sorry for Old Qian even though he was wrong. And I did not know if I could hate Grandma if she was officially classified as a landlord's wife. The harder I tried to figure things out, the more confused I felt. I wished I had been born into a red family so I could do my revolutionary duties without worrying.
- 48 When we got home, the mop was still hanging from the balcony.

**pomegranate:** red seed-filled fruit

**faction:** smaller group that disagrees with other groups

49 A week had passed, and still nothing had happened. I waited anxiously, not knowing what I waited for.

50 It was late in the afternoon.

51 “Ji-yong’s been fighting again,” Ji-yun announced as soon as she saw him walk in. His T-shirt was covered with dirt, and one sleeve was half torn off. He carried a broken-strapped sandal.

52 “What happened?” Grandma rushed in from the kitchen.

53 “They robbed me! They took my army cap.” He wiped his face with his sleeve and angrily threw his sandal on the floor.

54 “Robbed you? You must have done something to upset them,” I scolded. “Why would anybody just grab your cap for no reason? You shouldn’t be so **ornery** to people. Don’t go making more trouble for us.”

55 “How can you say that? I was just minding my own business, looking for crickets. They wanted to trade a cricket for my cap, and when I said no, they just took it.”

56 “Who were they? Do you know them?”

57 Ji-yong nodded grimly. “They won’t get away with this, I swear!”

58 The army cap was one of Ji-yong’s treasures. It wasn’t one of the ordinary olive-green caps you could buy in a store. It was a real army cap that he had gotten from his friend Ming-ming’s father, a Liberation Army veteran. It had been washed and sun bleached until it was nearly white, and anybody could see at a glance that it was the real thing. All the boys envied his cap. No wonder he was so angry.

59 “Well, it’s only a hat. Forget about it. It’s not worth stirring up trouble.” Grandma took out her sewing kit to mend his shirt.

60 “Just wait, I’ll get it back,” he said, more to himself than to us. “Chairman Mao didn’t say that I can’t wear an army cap.”

61 I turned to him attentively. “What do you mean? Who said that you couldn’t?”

62 “They said it. They said, ‘What’s a black **whelp** like you doing with a real army cap?’” His eyes flashed with anger.

**ornery:**  
bad-tempered

**whelp:** an insulting term for a child of a family belonging to any one of the “Five Black Categories”

- <sup>63</sup> Now I understood. Calling him a black whelp was the real cause of the incident.
- <sup>64</sup> Of course a boy like Ji-yong would rather fight than take an insult like that. I wished I could protect him, but there was nothing I could do. I suddenly remembered that An Yi's uncle used to be a mechanic in the army. Maybe he would still have an old cap. I decided to ask An Yi about it.
- <sup>65</sup> In a little while Ji-yong disappeared. I was sure he had gone to find his buddies, Xiao-cheng and Ming-ming.
- <sup>66</sup> Xiao-cheng and Ming-ming were our neighbors. Despite the fact that they were both three years older than Ji-yong and all three of them attended different schools, the three boys were close friends. In our alley they were known as "the three musketeers" because they were always together.
- <sup>67</sup> Xiao-cheng's father had been our District Superintendent. Now he was suspended and under investigation for being a capitalist follower. Ming-ming's father had been the Party Secretary of the Shanghai Institute of Political Science and Law, and had been under arrest at the Institute for several weeks. He had been accused of being a traitor.
- <sup>68</sup> Their family problems drew the three black whelps together more than ever.
- <sup>69</sup> The next afternoon when Grandma and I came back from the park, Ji-yong was not at home. He was not home at dinnertime, either. I went to Xiao-cheng's and Ming-ming's houses, but none of the boys were there.
- <sup>70</sup> "Where did he go?" Grandma scolded. "How could he miss dinner?"
- <sup>71</sup> I was worried. I was sure that he and his friends had gone to get the cap back. I should have mentioned An Yi's uncle, I thought, but I knew it would not have made any difference. If Ji-yong decided to do something, nothing I said would stop him. He was going to get hurt, and probably get the family in more trouble.
- <sup>72</sup> At eight thirty he came in. He had a black eye, and he was limping, but he had a smile on his face.
- <sup>73</sup> "Were you fighting again?" Mom snapped. "Don't you think we have enough to worry about without you fighting too?"
- <sup>74</sup> "We got my cap back!" He raised it triumphantly.



75 “Look, the brim’s been torn off.” Ji-yun snatched the cap out of his hand.

76 “You got a black eye for a rag like this?” I asked.

77 “It was worth it,” he said. “They won’t dare push me around anymore.”

78 I bit back the scolding I wanted to give him and got him a cold towel for his eye.

79 Early in the morning Song Po-po rushed upstairs to tell us the news. All the neighbors were saying that a knife had been found in the **communal** garbage bin. The Neighborhood Dictatorship Group had declared this to be an illegal weapon, so the entire bin had been searched and some incompletely burned pictures found. In one of them they recognized my Fourth Aunt. Because my Fourth Uncle had fled to Hong Kong right before Liberation, her family was on the Neighborhood Party Committee’s list of black families. The weapon was automatically associated with the pictures, and that was enough for Six-Fingers to report to the powerful Neighborhood Party Committee.

80 All day we were terrified. Grandma and the three of us went to the park immediately after breakfast. This time none of us wanted to play. We just sat together on Grandma’s bench.

81 “Will the Red Guards come?” Ji-yun asked.

82 “Maybe they will, sweetie,” Grandma answered. “We just don’t know.”

83 She took out her knitting. I tried to do the same, but I kept finding myself staring into space with no idea of where I was in the pattern. Ji-yun and Ji-yong ran off to play but always came back to the bench after a few minutes. At four o’clock Grandma sent me to see if anything was happening at home.

84 I cautiously walked into the alley, alert for anything unusual, but there was no sound of drums or gongs or noise at all. The mop was still on the balcony. I looked into our lane. There were no trucks. Everything seemed calm, and I told Grandma it was safe to go home.

85 Mom and Dad both came home earlier than usual. Dinner was short and nearly silent. Soon after dinner we turned the lights off and got into bed, hoping that the day would end peacefully after all. I lay for a long while without sleeping but finally drifted into a restless doze. When I heard pounding on the door downstairs, I was not sure whether it was real or a dream.

communal: shared

- 86 It was real.
- 87 I heard my cousin You-mei ask bravely, "Who's there?"
- 88 Six-Fingers's voice replied, "The Red Guards. They're here to search your house. Open up!"
- 89 They rushed into Fourth Aunt's apartment downstairs.
- 90 At first we could not hear much. Then we heard more: doors slamming, a cry from Hua-hua, crash after crash of dishes breaking overhead, and the **indistinct** voices of the Red Guards.
- 91 By this time we were all awake, but no one turned on a light or said anything. We all lay and held our breaths and listened, trying to determine what was going on downstairs. No one even dared to turn over. My whole body was tense. Every sound from my Fourth Aunt's room made me stiffen with dread.
- 92 Thirty minutes passed, then an hour. In spite of the fear I began to feel sleepy again.
- 93 I was jolted awake by shouts and thunderous knocks. Someone was shouting Dad's name. "Jiang Xi-reng! Get up! Jiang Xi-reng!"
- 94 Dad went to the door. "What do you want?"
- 95 "Open up!" Six-Fingers shouted. "This is a search in passing! The Red Guards are going to search your home in passing."
- 96 We often asked somebody to buy something in passing or get information in passing, but I had never heard of searching a house in passing.
- 97 Dad opened the door.
- 98 The first one in was Six-Fingers, wearing an undershirt and dirty blue shorts and flip-flops. Behind him were about a dozen teenaged Red Guards. Though the weather was still quite warm, they all wore tightly belted army uniforms. Their leader was a zealous, loud-voiced girl with short hair and large eyes.
- 99 "What's your relationship with the Jiangs living downstairs?" the girl yelled, her hand aggressively on her hip.
- 100 "He is her brother-in-law," Six-Fingers answered before Dad could open his mouth.

**indistinct:** unclear

<sup>101</sup> “Oh, so you’re a close relative,” she said, as if she only now realized that.  
“**Leniency** for confession, **severity** for resistance! Hand over your weapons now, or we will be forced to search the house.” She stood up straight and stared at Dad.

<sup>102</sup> “What weapons?” Dad asked calmly. “We have no—”

<sup>103</sup> “Search!” She cut Dad off with a shouted order and shoved him aside. At the wave of her arm the Red Guards behind her stormed in. Without speaking to each other, they split into three groups and charged toward our drawers, cabinets, and chests. The floor was instantly strewn with their contents.

<sup>104</sup> They demanded that Mom and Dad open anything that was locked, while we children sat on our beds, staring in paralyzed fascination. To my surprise, it was not as frightening as I had imagined through the weeks of waiting. Only Little White was panicked by the crowd and the noise. She scurried among the open chests until she was kicked by a Red Guard. Then she ran up into the attic and did not come down.

<sup>105</sup> I watched one boy going through the wardrobe. He took each piece of clothing off its hanger and threw it onto the floor behind him. He went carefully through a drawer and unrolled the neatly paired socks, tossing them over his shoulder one by one.

<sup>106</sup> I turned my head and saw another boy opening my desk drawer. He swept his hand through it and jumbled everything together before removing the drawer and turning it upside down on the floor. Before he could examine the contents, another one called him away to help move a chest.

<sup>107</sup> All my treasures were scattered on the floor. The butterfly fell out of its glass box; one wing was crushed under a bottle of glass beads. My collection of candy wrappers had fallen out of their notebook and were crumpled under my stamp album.

<sup>108</sup> My stamp album! It had been a birthday gift from Grandma when I started school, and it was my dearest treasure. For six years I had been getting canceled stamps from my friends, carefully soaking them to get every bit of envelope paper off. I had collected them one by one until I had complete sets. I had even bought some inexpensive sets with my own allowance. I loved my collection, even though I knew I should not. With the start of the Cultural Revolution all the stamp shops were closed

**leniency:** mercy

**severity:**  
harshness

down, because stamp collecting was considered bourgeois. Now I just knew something terrible was going to happen to it.

<sup>109</sup> I looked at the Red Guards. They were still busy moving the chest. I slipped off the bed and tiptoed across the room. If I could hide it before they saw me... I stooped down and reached for the book.

<sup>110</sup> "Hey, what are you doing?" a voice demanded. I spun around in alarm. It was the Red Guard leader.

<sup>111</sup> "I... I didn't do anything," I said guiltily, my eyes straying toward the stamp album.

<sup>112</sup> "A stamp album." She picked it up. "Is this yours?"

<sup>113</sup> I nodded fearfully.

<sup>114</sup> "You've got a lot of fourolds for a kid," she sneered as she flipped through it. "Foreign stamps too," she remarked. "You little **xenophile**."

<sup>115</sup> "I... I'm not..." I blushed as I fumbled for words.

<sup>116</sup> The girl looked at Ji-yong and Ji-yun, who were still sitting on their beds, watching, and she turned to another Red Guard. "Get the kids into the bathroom so they don't get in the way of the revolution." She threw the stamp album casually into the bag of things to be **confiscated** and went back downstairs. She didn't even look at me.

<sup>117</sup> Inside the bathroom we could still hear the banging of furniture and the shouting of the Red Guards. Ji-yun lay with her head in my lap, quietly sobbing, and Ji-yong sat in silence.

<sup>118</sup> After a long time the noise died down. Dad opened the bathroom door, and we fearfully came out.

<sup>119</sup> The apartment was a mess. The middle of the floor was strewn with the contents of the overturned chests and drawers. Half of the clothes had been taken away. The rest were scattered on the floor along with some old copper coins. The chests themselves had been thrown on top of each other when the Red Guards decided to check the walls for holes where weapons could be hidden. Grandma's German clock lay upside down on the floor with the little door on its back torn off.

**xenophile:**  
person who loves  
foreign countries  
and cultures

**confiscated:** taken  
away by force

<sup>120</sup> I looked for my things. The wing of the butterfly had been completely knocked off the body. The bottle holding the glass beads had smashed, and beads were rolling all over the floor. The trampled candy wrappers looked like trash.

<sup>121</sup> And the stamp album was gone forever.

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# Fate

## Paragraphs 1-104

- <sup>1</sup> A new campaign, “Return to class to promote the revolution,” finally took Ji-yong and Ji-yun back to school. Although classes had not gone back to normal, my brother and sister were in school, and that was something.
- <sup>2</sup> I was not so lucky. It was almost November, but the junior high school teachers were still out of the city establishing revolutionary ties, and no one could enroll us new students.
- <sup>3</sup> I was bored. After finishing the marketing, I read, practiced calligraphy, knitted, and spent a lot of time with An Yi. I was bored, but I never stopped being frightened. I worried about Dad, I worried about Grandma. I worried about An Yi’s mother, too. Teacher Wei’s situation was very bad. She was a junior high school math teacher, and before the Cultural Revolution she had been a Model Teacher. Her study wall was covered with certificates of merit. Now she was called a black model, and because her father was a capitalist and her mother had committed suicide, she was criticized all the more. The Red Guards at her school held struggle meetings to criticize her almost every day. During those struggle meetings they beat her and whipped her with their belts.
- <sup>4</sup> I had seen her coming home, surrounded by an escort of six or seven shouting Red Guards. Her head was bowed down by a sign that read, reactionary monster wei dong-li. She beat a gong and shouted, “I am a reactionary teacher. I am a reactionary monster.” While I watched, she stopped shouting and tried to catch her breath. Immediately one of the Red Guards kicked her. Another cuffed her, and she began to croak out her chant once more.
- <sup>5</sup> No matter what I did and where I went, the Cultural Revolution followed me.
- <sup>6</sup> One cold, windy afternoon I saw Aunt Xi-wen sweeping the street.
- <sup>7</sup> She seemed ten years older than the last time I had seen her. Her cheeks were hollow, and she had big bags beneath her eyes. Her once long and curled hair had been cut short and straight, like a country woman’s. Outside her padded coat she wore an old blue blouse, loose and faded, with a big patch on the elbow.
- <sup>8</sup> She kept her eyes on her work and moved the big broom back and forth **laboriously**. A gust of wind threatened to scatter the pile of trash she had

**laboriously:** in a hard-working way

collected, and she scurried to cover it with her broom to keep it from being blown away. Somehow she tripped over the broom and fell.

- <sup>9</sup> It looked like a serious fall. She moved her hand and struggled to get up, but she couldn't seem to stand. I was about to go to help her when I saw her youngest son, my cousin Shan-shan, walking toward us. Shan-shan would help her, and I didn't want to embarrass her by making her realize that I had seen her sweeping the alley. I drew back and walked around them quietly.
- <sup>10</sup> After a few steps I turned around to see if they were all right. I could hardly believe my eyes. Shan-shan had walked right past his mother! She was lying there, injured, and he had not stopped to help her. He couldn't possibly have missed her. He must not have wanted to expose himself to criticism by helping someone from a black category.
- <sup>11</sup> What a son! I took a step toward Aunt Xi-wen and stopped. Maybe I shouldn't help her either. People would probably say something if they saw me, especially since I was from a black family too... .
- <sup>12</sup> Before I could decide, Old Mrs. Wang passed by and saw Aunt Xi-wen on the ground. Mrs. Wang hurried over and helped Aunt Xi-wen up. Then Mrs. Wang picked up the broom and dustpan and helped Aunt Xi-wen walk home.
- <sup>13</sup> Now I remembered that Shan-shan had written a *da-zi-bao* after their house had been searched, formally breaking relations with his mother. I had admired him for his courage and firmness then.
- <sup>14</sup> It was not easy to break with your mother. I could not imagine actually doing it. They had to live in the same room. Would he eat the food she had cooked? Would he speak to her at all?
- <sup>15</sup> And what could it be like for Aunt Xi-wen?
- <sup>16</sup> One December afternoon when An Yi and I came home from a walk, we saw a big crowd gathered in the middle of our alley. An Yi turned pale and ran to the crowd, dragging me with her.
- <sup>17</sup> People, mostly neighbors from the alley, were standing in neat circles, almost as if they had formed ranks intentionally. An oddly familiar voice was shouting, "Down with the oppressor Sang Hong-zhen! Down with the

black executioner!" Sang Hong-zhen? Du Hai's mother? The Neighborhood Party Committee Secretary? I looked at An Yi in amazement.

- <sup>18</sup> An Yi's whole body relaxed, and she even smiled. "Oh, I was so scared! I thought they were from my mother's school." We squirmed into the crowd.
- <sup>19</sup> Du Hai's mother was standing on a stool, her head lowered to her chest. Two torn shoes, the symbol of immorality, were hung around her neck, along with a sign that read, sang hong-zhen, oppressor of the young, deserves ten thousand deaths. Her disheveled hair dangled around her shocked, gray face. I hardly recognized the once-powerful Neighborhood Party Committee Secretary.
- <sup>20</sup> A short man was standing in front of her, shouting so angrily that saliva foamed over his lips. "This damned executioner conned me into going to Xinjiang!" He turned his face toward us. It was a coarse face, and I recognized it at once. He was Xu A-san, who used to live next to Six-Fingers and moved far away to Xinjiang a few years ago. No wonder the voice was familiar.
- <sup>21</sup> "She lied to me! She told me Xinjiang was like a flower garden. She said we would live comfortably and eat well. And then what did we find when we got there? Nothing! Not a damned thing! Not even a building to live in. Not even lumber or bricks. We had to build a lousy hut out of dirt. I fell off the roof when we were building it, and now I'm a cripple."
- <sup>22</sup> Xu A-san slapped his leg heavily and continued. "When I wrote to her to ask if she could help me come back, she sent my letter to my boss in Xinjiang. They stopped my salary for six months and forced me to write a self-criticism to admit that I was wrong.
- <sup>23</sup> "She fooled us into going to Xinjiang and then didn't care whether we lived or died. Is that any way to treat a sixteen-year-old boy? While I was sick and begging for my food in Xinjiang, what was she doing here? She was running around with men and having a good time." The blue veins on his neck stood out, and his pointing finger almost touched her nose. "Thank heaven for the Cultural Revolution. Now I've come back to expose this damned woman and bring the revolution here to our own neighborhood!"
- <sup>24</sup> Many of the crowd were moved to tears by Xu A-san's story. I had never liked him or trusted him, but if what he said was true, she was really



wicked. Besides, she was Du Hai's mother. What did I care about her problems? Xu A-san was still shouting slogans, but An Yi and I pushed our way out of the struggle meeting.

25 "I wish I could see Du Hai's face now," I couldn't help gloating.

26 "Well, you know the old saying. 'The wheel of fate makes a full turn every sixty years,'" An Yi said. "It's their turn to suffer now."

27 "Does that mean soon it will be our turn to be on top?" I asked thoughtfully.

28 We walked on in silence. I watched our feet on the pavement. They were perfectly in step.

29 "Maybe it's really true." It seemed clear to me all of a sudden. "It's just because of fate that we're being hurt. It's just fate that made us be born into black families. And now the wheel of fate is turning. Maybe our families will be free of trouble soon."

30 When I looked around me, fate seemed to be the only explanation for what was happening.

31 A few days later Ji-yun was already home from school when I got back from shopping. I tiptoed up behind her and suddenly put my hand in front of her eyes, holding the colored handkerchief I had just bought for her. "Ta-dah!"

32 To my surprise she did not jump up or cry out with joy.

33 "Don't you like it? Look at these kittens. Aren't they cute? It's for you." Collecting colored handkerchiefs was her favorite hobby.

34 She still did not move.

35 I went in front of her and was about to tickle her when I saw her face. She had been crying. Her eyes were red and swollen, and she had a balled-up handkerchief in her hand.

36 "What's the matter?"

37 She did not say a word.

38 "Why were you crying?"

39 There was still no answer.

40 She must be having one of her fits of temper. Ever since she was little she would cry and refuse to say why. I knew how to deal with that.

41 "I'm going to go ask your teacher." I turned around as if to go.

42 "No! Don't." She pulled at my clothes.

43 "Well then, what's wrong?"

44 "I... My... schoolbag is gone."

45 "You lost your schoolbag? What happened?"

46 She began crying again.

47 "For goodness' sake, stop crying and tell me what happened." She kept crying, and I got angry. "You're really a big girl now, aren't you? You can't even take care of your schoolbag, and then you just cry about it."

48 She started wailing, her chest heaving. Grandma rushed in and asked me what was wrong.

49 "I don't know. She just told me that she lost her schoolbag and then she started crying," I said as I threw the handkerchief angrily onto the table.

50 "I didn't lose it... It's in the school yard right under the classroom window," Ji-yun said through her sobs.

51 "What?" Grandma and I asked together. "Why didn't you pick it up?"

52 "No. I'm not going to pick it up. Some boys in my class threw it out the window. They called me a black whelp. They stood on my desk and said if I stared at them, they would dig my eyes out. They threw it out the window and told me to go pick it up. I won't go."

53 I did not know what to say. I wished I had not scolded her.

54 "Why didn't you tell your teacher? She'd make them bring it back," Grandma said.

55 "That would only make it worse. Last week they were pushing Wei-wei and me around and she told her mother, and she told the teacher, and they were punished. But then they just bullied her even more, and now she has to stay home." Ji-yun's voice was calmer. She had almost stopped crying.

56 "You should have told Mom and Dad," I said at last. "They would have done something about this."

57 “No! They’d just make it worse.”

58 I looked at her with a bad feeling growing inside me. I noticed her lumpy and clumsy braids and felt guilty. She had done them herself. I suddenly felt that I had been too hard on her. I was more like a *da-dui-zhang* than a sister. When I took her to her piano lesson, I scolded her if she did not play well. If she was playing at a friend’s house after school, I made her come home and do her homework. In spite of this she trusted me and relied on me for everything. She would ask my advice on what to do or what to wear. If she went to a movie, she wanted me to go with her.

59 Now she had to learn to take care of herself. It didn’t seem fair. She was only ten years old, and too small to protect herself.

60 I took out the new schoolbag and pencil box I had bought for junior high school. “Here.” I put them into her hand. “Let me braid your hair first, and then we’ll figure out what else you need and go shopping.”

61 I pondered Ji-yun’s fate. She was so little. Why did she have to suffer? And now that the wheel of fate was turning, why hadn’t her fate improved?

62 It had to change soon.

63 \* \* \*

64 A subdued Chinese New Year had passed. So had my thirteenth birthday, which came and went without any celebration. There was a chill to the air that cut into the skin and numbed the body.

65 I could see Ji-yong and Xiao-cheng standing at the entrance to the alley. They did not seem to feel the cold. Xiao-cheng leaned against a green mailbox, gesturing to Ji-yong. Even at this distance I could feel the confidence in his movements.

66 Ji-yong had told us that Xiao-cheng’s father was having a very difficult time now. Almost every day he was criticized in struggle meetings. In addition, as the highest official of our district before the Cultural Revolution, he was often taken as a companion target to struggle meetings against his junior officers. It could not have been easy for Xiao-cheng to appear so calm.

67 As I approached them, a row of big trucks came slowly down the street and stopped in front of us.

**dunce:** fool's

- <sup>68</sup> We were all shocked. Xiao-cheng's father was standing in the first truck.
- <sup>69</sup> He was wearing a tall **dunce** cap covered with red X's, the sign for a criminal. His wrists were tied together behind his back, and his arms were lifted high behind him. His head had been forced down so that we could not see his face. Around his neck was a heavy wooden sign: capitalist executioner shan yi-dan. The name had been written in black ink and crossed out in red paint.
- <sup>70</sup> We stood there, speechless. The people on the truck shouted slogans, and the trucks moved on. I didn't dare to turn my head and look at Xiao-cheng. I knew that he was very close to his father. I searched for something to say to comfort him, but he spoke first.
- <sup>71</sup> "Well, I guess the old man came out to greet his public again."
- <sup>72</sup> I stared at him in astonishment. Xiao-cheng's eyes were still following the departing trucks. His lips were set in a mocking smile. I turned and went home without a word.
- <sup>73</sup> Was he really used to seeing his father treated like this? Surely he was just hiding his real feelings? I leaned against the balcony railing, trying to clear my head in the chilly air. I didn't notice Ji-yong until he leaned on the railing next to me. His face looked very strained.
- <sup>74</sup> "Ming-ming's father is dead," he said weakly.
- <sup>75</sup> "What?" I shivered.
- <sup>76</sup> "The Institute called his mother early this morning. They said that he hanged himself."
- <sup>77</sup> "Hanged himself?"
- <sup>78</sup> Ji-yong nodded. "The Institute didn't even let her see the body except through a window. Then they had the body cremated. Xiao-cheng was saying that they probably beat him to death before he 'hanged himself.'... There's Ming-ming. I've got to go."
- <sup>79</sup> Ming-ming and Xiao-cheng were waiting down in the alley. When Ji-yong got there, the three of them walked off together.
- <sup>80</sup> I went inside, but I still felt very cold.
- <sup>81</sup> An Yi opened the door. Before I could mention Ming-ming's father, I noticed her eyes. They were red and swollen.

82 “What happened?”

83 She went back inside their apartment without answering, leaving the door open for me.

84 I had not been inside their apartment for a long time. Since Grandma had died, her ninety-year-old sister sat blankly in front of the window all day and never left the room. The mahogany furniture that had filled the place was gone, confiscated. The room seemed larger, and our steps echoed. An Yi and I sat by the window on the old stools that were now their only seats.

85 “What’s wrong?” I asked again.

86 “My mom...” She dropped her eyes.

87 “Beaten again?”

88 “Worse than that. Yesterday the teachers who were under investigation had to climb the factory chimney.” She choked and could not continue.

89 “Climb the chimney?” I was aghast. “What kind of remolding is that? Did she... did she do it?”

90 “She didn’t dare not to. That would be resisting the revolution—she would have been beaten to...” An Yi choked again. “Luckily the factory was off yesterday. You know how hot... the chimney gets... . She couldn’t have...”

91 I couldn’t say a word.

92 “I’m really afraid, Ji-li.” An Yi looked straight into my eyes. “If Mom is a little late coming back from school, we’re so worried. Dad paces up and down, and I just can’t do anything. Sometimes Dad can’t stand it anymore, and he goes to school to meet her. I’m so scared. I don’t know what’ll happen next. Ji-li, sometimes I’m really afraid to go home.” The expression in her eyes made me want to cry.

93 I saw her mother clinging to the high chimney. I shivered. I saw her grandma standing by the window in her black clothes; Old Qian, collapsed at the foot of the propaganda wall; Xiao-cheng’s father, arms wrenched behind his back; Ming-ming’s father, dangling in the air, his tongue dangling out of his bruised, purple face.

94 Fate.

- <sup>95</sup> An Yi dried her tears. We sat in silence for a long time before I asked, "Did... do you ever blame your mother for all this?"
- <sup>96</sup> "I don't know. Sometimes I think she's just too pushy, like when she dismissed her students' Lei Feng Study Group. That's what first made them call her a reactionary. It made trouble for all of us. But she really did do it for her students' own good. That Lei Feng Study Group was a joke. They didn't study his good deeds. They just fooled around every day, and their grades got worse and worse. She wasn't reactionary at all."
- <sup>97</sup> "I hate my grandfather!" I said suddenly. "If he hadn't been a landlord, none of this would have happened to me... . But I guess the only thing I can do is stop thinking about it. It's just my fate that I was born in these times."
- <sup>98</sup> "That's it," An Yi agreed. "But why doesn't our fate change?"
- <sup>99</sup> I had an idea. "Listen, let's predict the future. My cousin told me how to do it. We write different things on different pieces of paper and put them on the windowsill. The first one to blow off will come true."
- <sup>100</sup> Predicting the future was fourfolds, but we could not help doing it anyway. We prepared three pieces of paper: everything will get better, bad luck will continue, and some good and some bad things will happen. We folded them, put a little water on each one, and then stuck them on the sill.
- <sup>101</sup> We waited for the wind to blow from heaven while I prayed silently, "May Allah bless us. May Allah bless us. May Allah bless us." A breeze rustled the folded papers, but none blew off. Another breeze came. One of the papers blew off the sill. An Yi caught it before it hit the floor.
- <sup>102</sup> "Which one?" I asked. "Which one?"
- <sup>103</sup> She unfolded the paper. "Some good and some bad."
- <sup>104</sup> We looked at each other, and neither of us said anything.
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## Junior High School at Last

Paragraphs 77–91

- 77 Time always passed too quickly in math class. Teacher Li was closing her notebook when she remembered a note that was in it.
- 78 “Oh, there’s a message. Jiang Ji-li and Bai Shan, please stay after class. Teacher Zhang would like to speak with you.” She put the note back in her book and turned to clean the blackboard.
- 79 Suddenly I felt nervous again. Had I done something wrong? Did this have something to do with my class status?
- 80 My classmates were also uneasy. They all turned their eyes toward Teacher Li. The whole room felt tense.
- 81 Teacher Li finished erasing the blackboard and turned around, brushing her right sleeve with her left hand. “What’s wrong?” she asked in surprise.
- 82 No one said anything. Chang Hong glanced anxiously at me and twisted her pencil.
- 83 “Oh, are you worried about Teacher Zhang seeing Jiang Ji-li and Bai Shan? It’s nothing bad. He just wants to talk to them about joining the propaganda group for the blackboard newspaper, because they both have beautiful handwriting.”
- 84 The class burst out laughing. I laughed with them, at Teacher Li who had not made the message clear, at my own fears, at the whole false alarm.
- 85 I saw several classmates turning to look at me. Bai Shan’s deskmate whispered in his ear and got a joking punch in return.
- 86 Then I stopped laughing.
- 87 I remembered primary school, the praises and the honors. But what had I gotten in the end? People were jealous because I was favored. I remembered the humiliating talk with the Red Successors, the terrible accusations of the *da-zi-bao*. Why should I go through that again? High grades, propaganda group—and then what? When they found out about my family background, they would treat me just as Du Hai and Yin Lan-lan had. And Bai Shan and I were conspicuous enough in class. If we did the blackboard newspaper together, people would start to gossip about us.

<sup>88</sup> Class was over. I grabbed Chang Hong's arm as she was leaving.

<sup>89</sup> "Will you do me a favor? Tell Teacher Zhang that I couldn't wait to see him."

<sup>90</sup> "Why not?" She looked surprised.

<sup>91</sup> "I have to go home and make dinner, and I have a lot of housework to do every day. I don't have time to do the blackboard newspaper." Without waking for her response, I picked up my schoolbag and headed for the door.

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## Locked Up

Paragraphs 1–111

- <sup>1</sup> Winter vacation had started, and we children all stayed at home.
- <sup>2</sup> At eleven o'clock one night Mom and Dad were still in the bathroom, where they had been talking ever since Dad had come home from work. Ji-yong and Ji-yun were asleep, and Grandma was in bed reading the newspaper. I was trying to finish *Jane Eyre*.
- <sup>3</sup> Someone knocked softly on the door. I listened, and it came again: two soft taps, followed by a whispered, "Lao Jiang! Lao Jiang!" Only Dad's friends from the theater called him that.
- <sup>4</sup> "Who is it?" I walked to the door and called quietly.
- <sup>5</sup> "It's me, Fan Wen-chong."
- <sup>6</sup> I opened the door, happy to see him. "Uncle Fan, it's so late— Oh my!" I stopped when I saw his face. It was swollen, bruised, and bloody. Standing in the dark doorway, he looked like a monster. He swayed back and forth weakly, and as I stared, his face crumpled into tears. I turned away and ran to my bed.
- <sup>7</sup> The whole family was startled by my cry. Grandma was trembling as she got out of bed and pulled him into the bathroom to wash his bruises. Ji-yong and Ji-yun huddled together at the bathroom door, while Mom and Dad went downstairs to bring his bicycle into the building before the neighbors could see it.
- <sup>8</sup> I huddled on a corner of the bed, not wanting to look at him again, not wanting to see his humiliation. I thought of his expressive face, handsome and vigorous. I remembered his huge success in many shows, the flowers and admirers. His students and other actors used to defer to him so respectfully. Where were his dignity and authority now? Where was Uncle Fan?
- <sup>9</sup> I curled up as if I were the one being showered with blows.
- <sup>10</sup> "Come on, get back into bed. Children shouldn't be so nosy." Grandma dragged Ji-yong and Ji-yun back into the room.
- <sup>11</sup> "Grandma, how's Uncle Fan?" I whispered.

- <sup>12</sup> “He’s all right.” She looked very tired. “You go to sleep now. Don’t mention this to anyone, anyone at all. Understand?” Grandma tucked our quilts around us, then turned out the light and went back to the bathroom.
- <sup>13</sup> The frequent tossing and turning told me that no one had gone back to sleep.
- <sup>14</sup> “Ji-li, Uncle Fan groaned when Grandma washed his face.” Ji-yun broke the silence.
- <sup>15</sup> “His hands were shaking,” Ji-yong said after a while.
- <sup>16</sup> “Grandma told you to go to sleep and not be so nosy. Why don’t you just shut up?” I did not know why I was suddenly so angry.
- <sup>17</sup> Lying in the darkness, I could hear the faint voices in the bathroom. I tried to close my eyes, but when I did, all I could see was Uncle Fan’s deformed face. Suddenly the voices in the bathroom grew louder. I held my breath and listened closely.
- <sup>18</sup> “That’s nonsense! How could you do that?” Dad said.
- <sup>19</sup> “You know. They use psychological pressure.”
- <sup>20</sup> “That doesn’t mean that you should make up a story about something you never did!” Dad’s voice grew still louder.
- <sup>21</sup> “So what if I never listened to foreign radio broadcasts? They’ll stop beating me if I confess to it, won’t they? ‘Leniency to those who confess, and severity to those who resist.’ Look at my face, Lao Jiang. I can’t stand it anymore...”
- <sup>22</sup> The voice trailed off, and I thought I heard sobbing.
- <sup>23</sup> I pulled my quilt over my head and tried to block out the sounds. This was not my Uncle Fan. My Uncle Fan would not listen to foreign radio broadcasts or worry about psychological pressure. Most of all, I knew that my Uncle Fan would never cry.
- <sup>24</sup> I began crying to myself under the quilt. I did not know why
- <sup>25</sup> Three days after he had come to our house, Uncle Fan had been detained. Since then, every evening, Mom and Grandma had fidgeted, going to the kitchen on the landing, finding something to do on the roof, unable to relax as they waited for Dad to come home.

- <sup>26</sup> It was getting darker and darker. Ji-yun sat under the light doing her math homework. I worked on the sweater I was knitting for Dad, sharing the sofa with Ji-yong, who was intent on making a periscope.
- <sup>27</sup> My fingers moved mechanically. My mind was far away from what I was doing.
- <sup>28</sup> I had just read an article in the paper. It told of a “historical counterrevolutionary,” who as a local official before Liberation had killed two Communist guerrillas. The paper explained that because he had confessed and had a positive attitude, he was pardoned. Meanwhile an “active counterrevolutionary” was convicted of slandering the Red Guards. He refused to confess and was imprisoned.
- <sup>29</sup> So this was their policy of psychological pressure. No wonder Uncle Fan thought he should confess to something he had not done. Had he confessed to listening to foreign broadcasts? If he had, why hadn’t he been treated with leniency? Why had he been detained? I could not figure it out.
- <sup>30</sup> Finally we heard steps on the stairs, and we all held our breaths while we watched the door. It opened, and there was Dad. I looked at his face, body, and legs. No bruises. We all sighed with relief.
- <sup>31</sup> “I can’t take it anymore. Today at the meeting they were obviously referring to me.” As soon as he walked in the door, Dad started talking excitedly and nervously to Mom and Grandma, not even caring that we children were listening. “They stressed again and again that they already had enough information and they would give the person one last chance to confess. If he continued to hold back, they would have to name him publicly, and he would lose his chance at leniency.”
- <sup>32</sup> The adults went into the bathroom together and closed the door, but we could still hear them talking.
- <sup>33</sup> “Well, do you want to confess then? It might be better than being punished.” Grandma’s voice sounded unusually old.
- <sup>34</sup> “But I have no idea what they want me to confess.”
- <sup>35</sup> After a pause Mom’s voice said, “How about leaving the Party—”
- <sup>36</sup> Dad cut her short. “No. I did nothing wrong. How can I confess?”

- 37 I stopped knitting and looked up in alarm. Leaving the Party? What was that? Ji-yong and Ji-yun had tilted their heads to hear better.
- 38 “What about Fan Wen-chong coming to our house?” Mom asked. “He might have confessed he visited us. Maybe that’s what they meant when they said they already had the information... . They could say we were establishing counterrevolutionary ties.”
- 39 “Of course you won’t mention that. That would be betraying a friend.” Grandma was firm. “We promised not to tell anyone. Wen-chong has been a friend for over thirty years, and he certainly won’t say anything. We won’t say anything either.”
- 40 “But what if the theater decides to punish him?” Mom asked.
- 41 There was no answer. I could hear Dad pacing around the room, and I could smell the cigarette smoke coming through the crack under the door.
- 42 I started to knit again. It was the same story day after day: restlessness, anxiety, the adults’ arguments. It was nearly Chinese New Year, and no one even mentioned it.
- 43 I wanted to know what was going on, but I was afraid to hear any more bad news. I suddenly wished I could live at school. Then I could forget what was happening, and I could laugh again. I wished that I had been born into a trouble-free family.
- 44 Very early on Chinese New Year’s morning Grandma shook me awake. She was in tears.
- 45 “Your dad never came home last night. He’s been locked up.” Grandma laid her head on my pillow and continued to weep.
- 46 I stared at Grandma’s face, and my fingers tightened on the sleeve of my pajamas. He had not come home for the New Year’s Eve dinner, though we had waited until ten o’clock. We had gone to bed hoping that he would come later.
- 47 “He knew that he would be **detained** sooner or later. He told me not to worry too much.” Grandma’s voice was steady, but her tears kept dropping on my hand. Now I began crying too.
- 48 “Why?” Ji-yong was awake too. “What did they lock him up for?”

**detained:** kept in  
police custody

- 49 “I have no idea. I’m sure your father hasn’t done anything wrong,”  
Grandma said.
- 50 Mom’s weak voice was calling me. I jumped out of bed, threw on my  
padded coat, and ran over to her. Dad’s side of the quilt was untouched  
and the pillow was smooth. Mom lay in bed with her eyes tightly shut, her  
face a waxy yellow. I knew what that meant. She was having an attack of  
**Mènière’s** disease. She had had it for years, and an attack could come on at  
any time. The world would spin around her and she would feel weak and  
**nauseous**. Even opening her eyes would make her helplessly dizzy.
- 51 “How are you feeling, Mom?” I gently stroked the hand that was outside  
the quilt. “Would you like some soy milk? I’ll tell Ji-yong to go buy some.”
- 52 “No, no. I want you to give Uncle Tian a call. He might know what  
happened to your dad.” Mom fumbled under her pillow for her address  
book and handed it to me.
- 53 A little before seven I bundled up and dashed out into the cold.
- 54 In other years on New Year’s morning the streets would be littered with  
shreds of colored firecracker paper. Soon after breakfast people loaded  
with gifts would begin to stream out of their homes to wish friends and  
relatives a happy New Year. This year firecrackers were fourolds, and few  
people were in the mood to celebrate. Streets were so quiet that the city  
seemed almost deserted.
- 55 Following Mom’s instructions, I went to a telephone **kiosk** a few blocks  
from our alley so the neighbors would not overhear me asking about Dad.  
I waited, shivering, for the workers in Uncle Tian’s kiosk to fetch him.
- 56 “Uncle Tian, it’s me, Ji-li,” I said eagerly as soon as he got to the phone.
- 57 “Oh, Ji—” He stopped abruptly. “How are you?” he asked in his actor’s  
voice. I could tell he was afraid people at his phone kiosk were listening.
- 58 “Mom asked me to call to wish you Happy New Year, and to ask about  
things at work, and about Dad and all.” He was so guarded that I wanted to  
be vague too.
- 59 “Yesterday at the meeting they mentioned his name. He’s stubborn, you  
know. He wouldn’t talk about radio or establishing ties, so they lost  
patience. He— I’ve got to go. ’Bye.” He hung up.

**Mènière’s:** a  
disease of the  
inner ear that  
affects hearing  
and balance

**nauseous:** sick to  
one’s stomach

**kiosk:** booth

- <sup>60</sup> Strong gusts of wind blew against me. I lowered my head and leaned forward to fight my way home.
- <sup>61</sup> Grandma was waiting for me on the stairs. Inside, I told Mom and Grandma what Uncle Tian had said. Mom looked even paler.
- <sup>62</sup> “Establishing counterrevolutionary ties and listening to foreign radio? It must be Fan Wen-chong who told them,” Grandma said slowly. “It must be. The radio was his idea, and he’s the only one who’s come here.” Her voice grew indignant. “Foreign radio! How could we listen to foreign radio? We haven’t had a short-wave radio for thirty years, since the Japanese invaded. Fan’s lying!”
- <sup>63</sup> “Mother, Mother. Calm down.” Mom patted Grandma **feebly**. “We don’t want the neighbors to hear. Don’t worry too much. When I feel better, I’ll go to the theater and ask.”
- <sup>64</sup> I went out to the kitchen to be alone.
- <sup>65</sup> It was freezing cold, and there was no food prepared, not even hot water. The frost patterns on the window were as beautiful as always, but I could not appreciate them. Every other New Year’s morning the kitchen would be bustling. Mom and Grandma would be making dumplings and my birthday noodles; we kids would be running in and out in our new clothes. Every guest who came to our home on New Year’s Day would also bring me a birthday gift. I always felt the whole country was celebrating my birthday.
- <sup>66</sup> Today I was fourteen. I started to write “Happy Birthday” on the frosted windows. The melted ice dripped down the window slowly and crookedly, like tears.
- <sup>67</sup> Late that evening I woke up and saw Grandma on her knees, mumbling quietly. “May Allah protect my son,” I heard her say. Then she wearily climbed into bed.
- <sup>68</sup> I sat on a bench outside the conference room of the district office of Mom’s store. Nervously, I fiddled with my coat buttons. On our way here Mom had been so still and quiet that I was frightened too. She had fainted again yesterday. She was really too weak to go out, but still her office had called to insist that she come. And Grandma had insisted that she take me with her.

**feebly:** weakly

- <sup>69</sup> Mom's office was in a building that had been a big house before Liberation. The narrow hallway was painted white, but the paint showed some stains. I stared at them. I could not hear what they were saying inside, but I knew it would not be anything good since they had received Mom so coldly and treated me so brusquely.
- <sup>70</sup> I could not help thinking of Dad. We had not seen him for days. I pictured him stubbornly refusing to confess. What was he supposed to confess? Uncle Fan's visit? Was that a crime? I was frightened. They would probably beat him, I thought. I saw Uncle Fan's battered face. And the terrible image of a still, dangling shape... Ming-ming's father....
- <sup>71</sup> I heard a man's voice raised above the others, and the words "your husband." They were talking about Dad! Without thinking, I slid down the bench to hear better. "Your refusal to help us is a very bad sign. Your husband's unit would not take such a step without very good evidence, and it is not likely that he could do it without your knowing. Your own position is very tenuous, you know."
- <sup>72</sup> A woman's voice was speaking, and I strained to hear. "... if you're as stubborn as your husband, we may have to take stronger actions. I'm sure you don't want that any more than we do.
- <sup>73</sup> I could not hear Mom's reply. I leaned even closer to the door. Mom's voice was only the faintest murmur.
- <sup>74</sup> The man's voice, even louder than before, was like an assault.
- <sup>75</sup> "Then there is nothing more to say until you decide to be reasonable. I'm sure your husband's unit will resume paying his salary when he confesses, and we will return yours to its former level when you decide to cooperate. I'm sure we will speak again soon." The door banged open and a cold-faced man strode out. He did not even glance at me. Two women also walked out of the room. One of them looked straight at me and sneered before she turned back to her companion.
- <sup>76</sup> Mom did not come out. I peeked in the door. She had collapsed on the table. "Mom! Mom!" I shouted in panic as I ran to her. Her eyes were closed tightly and her forehead was covered with beads of sweat despite the cold weather. "How are you feeling, Mom? Do you want some water?" I wiped her forehead with my handkerchief and stroked her back gently. Finally, without raising her head, she said weakly, "Don't worry, I'm all right."

77 Mom sat silently on my bike luggage rack, weak and pale. She bent over my seat and rested her arm on my shoulder. I clenched the handlebar tightly and walked the bike very slowly. I heard the distant whistle of a passing train, and I wished I could get on it and go far away, to a place without struggle meetings, without class status, without confessions.

78

\* \* \*

79 We had not seen or heard from Dad in a week since he had been detained. Mom asked me to take some clothes to him.

80 The Children's Art Theater was on Hua-shan Road, in a neighborhood that hardly seemed part of the city. Before Liberation only the wealthiest had lived here, in grand mansions set back from the street behind sturdy walls. Two rows of trees stretched their branches toward the sky, reaching across the trolley wires and holding hands with their sisters on the other side, giving the street a huge green parasol in the summertime.

81 I had always liked visiting Dad's theater. I enjoyed walking on the beautiful street, and I loved poking around inside the building, with its fascinating secrets.

82 But today the trees were bare. Not a soul could be seen on the street, and the theater seemed like a dark cave that waited to swallow anyone who dared approach.

83 When I left home, I tried to seem relaxed. I did not want Mom and Grandma to worry. But inside I was trembling. I did not want to go. But Grandma had been married to a landlord and Mom was in trouble because of Dad. I did not dare imagine what might happen if they went.

84 I stopped outside the office to gather my courage once more. Finally I tiptoed up to the reception desk. It was tall, almost too tall for me to see over. I raised my head and looked timidly at the receptionist.

85 "What do you want?" he asked without any expression.

86 "I came to see my father, Jiang Xi-reng." I held up the parcel Grandma had packed.

87 "Oh, Jiang Xi-reng's daughter." Neither his face nor his voice showed any emotion at all. "You're not allowed to see him. Leave your things here."

88 I hesitated for a second. Then I struggled to raise my package to the counter.



- 89 He emptied it onto the desk and quickly sorted through it: a few clothes, a woolen sweater I had just finished knitting, toothpaste, soap, a towel, and a jar of Grandma's fresh beef chili sauce. He put everything back in the bag except the chili sauce.
- 90 "No food is allowed." His cold tone told me no discussion was allowed either.
- 91 I took the still-warm jar in my hands and bit my lips. "Please, can I see my dad? Just for a moment? I won't say anything to him, I promise."
- 92 "I said no!" he snapped. "That's the rule."
- 93 "What's the matter?" Someone came out of the door behind the desk: a short, thin man with closely cropped hair. I did not know his name, but I recognized him as the foreman of the scene shop.
- 94 "This is Jiang Xi-reng's daughter. She's pestering me to see her father."
- 95 "Jiang Xi-reng..." He narrowed his eyes and looked at me with a calculating expression. His face was so thin that the skin seemed stretched over his cheekbones. His eyes were not large, but they were fierce and penetrating.
- 96 He frightened me. I stepped back from the desk and turned to go.
- 97 "All right. Follow me." His answer stunned me and astonished the receptionist. I followed close behind him into a hallway, hoping that he would not change his mind.
- 98 We went up and down and made several turns before we finally reached the dance studio. Three walls of the huge hall were covered by mirrors. The fourth contained a row of French windows looking out onto the spacious theater grounds below. The man pointed out the window.
- 99 There was Dad.
- 100 Even at a distance and in the poor light I recognized him immediately. He was carrying a large concrete pipe on his shoulder with Uncle Fan and two other men. His back was more stooped than I remembered, and he was awkwardly using his hands to take the weight of the pipe off his shoulder.
- 101 I wiped the tears away from my eyes and pressed my forehead against the window, trying to see more clearly.

- <sup>102</sup> At least he was still alive. At least he was still able to work. He wasn't lying on the floor, bruised and cut from beatings, as Grandma had imagined. But it was cold, and he was wearing only his old coffee-colored jacket. I hoped they would let him wear the new sweater I had brought him.
- <sup>103</sup> "All right, you've seen your father." The thin man's voice was cold. "Now I want to have a talk with you."
- <sup>104</sup> He led me into the small conference room next door and motioned for me to sit down across the table from him
- <sup>105</sup> "You saw your father. He is being remolded through labor. We have evidence that he has committed a serious counterrevolutionary crime." He paused and fixed me with his eyes. "But he is very stubborn and refuses to confess. And your mother. Humph. She's another despicable thing!"
- <sup>106</sup> "She's not a thing, she's a human being," I wanted to scream, but I knew that I should not provoke him. He could have me arrested, he could never let me see Dad again, he could beat Dad... I stared at the table.
- <sup>107</sup> "You are different from your parents. You were born and raised in New China. You are a child of Chairman Mao. You can choose your own destiny: You can make a clean break with your parents and follow Chairman Mao, and have a bright future; or you can follow your parents, and then... you will not come to a good end." As he spoke the last phrase, he paused meaningfully after each word.
- <sup>108</sup> I nodded. I could hardly breathe. All I wanted was to get away from there as fast as I could.
- <sup>109</sup> "Do you have anything to say?"
- <sup>110</sup> I shook my head quickly.
- <sup>111</sup> "You think it over. If you think of something, you can always come to talk to us," he said.
-

# An Educable Child

## Paragraphs 1-100

- <sup>1</sup> Grandma cried whenever she thought about Dad, and Mom was not getting any better, so I stayed home to help. While Ji-yong and Ji-yun were in school during the day, I shopped and sewed and worried. It was hard for me to keep my mind off Dad and the scene-shop foreman's threats.
- <sup>2</sup> The German clock struck four times. I was finishing the last sleeve of a jacket for Ji-yun before starting to make dinner when I heard a soft voice calling me from the alley. Who could it be? An Yi always came directly upstairs, and none of my junior high school friends knew where I lived. I put down the sleeve and went to the French window.
- <sup>3</sup> It was Lin-lin, eye-catching in her yellow corduroy jacket. She was shivering in the freezing wind. After a false spring the weather had turned cold again.
- <sup>4</sup> "This is a surprise," I said as I led her inside. "How did you get my address?"
- <sup>5</sup> "From Teacher Zhang. He wanted somebody to bring you a message about a meeting at school tomorrow, and I volunteered. You haven't been to school for days. I wondered if you were sick or something." She gave me her shy smile and fidgeted with the fringe of her scarf as if expecting a reproach.
- <sup>6</sup> I gave her a glass of hot water to warm her up.
- <sup>7</sup> "You're sewing?" she said when she saw the patterns and cloth spread all over the bed and table.
- <sup>8</sup> "Uh-huh." I smiled and nodded.
- <sup>9</sup> "You can sew? Did you make all these? Did your mom teach you how?"
- <sup>10</sup> I laughed. "No one taught me." I showed her the instruction book that I had found in a bookstore. "I learned from here. I just make a paper pattern, and when it looks right I pin it to the cloth and cut."
- <sup>11</sup> "That's great! I tried to learn once, but I just couldn't do it. I tried so hard to make a dress, but in the end I had to ask my mother to finish it for me."
- <sup>12</sup> My shoulders were aching from bending over the sewing machine all day, and I swung my arms back and forth to relax them. "If you had to do it,

you'd learn." I meant what I said. If Lin-lin's family had to live on just sixty **yuan** a month, and half of their clothes had been confiscated, she would learn to sew too.

<sup>13</sup> She blinked her eyes and changed the subject. "Why haven't you come to school all this time?"

<sup>14</sup> "My mom's been sick."

<sup>15</sup> "Is it serious?"

<sup>16</sup> "Yes. She has Mènière's syndrome. Sometimes she gets so dizzy that she passes out."

<sup>17</sup> "My mother has intestinal **angina**. When she gets an attack, her belly hurts so much that she rolls around on her bed."

<sup>18</sup> Before I could answer, Ji-yong walked in, with Grandma following him eagerly.

<sup>19</sup> "How was it? Did you see your dad?" Grandma did not even notice our presence.

<sup>20</sup> Ji-yong gloomily shook his head. "In the reception room they were packing apples to sell to the staff, and I asked them if I could buy some for Dad. One of them said, 'Buy apples for your father? You think he's in the hospital or something?' and they all laughed. I'm never going back there."

<sup>21</sup> I looked at Lin-lin with embarrassment. She immediately stood up and said, "It's late. I'd better be going."

<sup>22</sup> I went downstairs to see her off. Neither of us spoke.

<sup>23</sup> "Thanks for coming." I opened the door for her.

<sup>24</sup> "Oh, I almost forgot. Here is your math exercise notebook. I put the assignment sheet in it. Don't forget the meeting tomorrow. Four o'clock in the auditorium."

<sup>25</sup> My hand was still on the doorknob. Suddenly, without thinking, I said, "My dad has been detained for interrogation."

<sup>26</sup> I surprised myself when I said it. I had not meant to tell her, and I did not know why I trusted her so much after such a short time.

<sup>27</sup> We looked at each other for a while. Finally she said softly, "I understand. Our house was searched too."

**yuan:** units of Chinese money

**angina:** disorder that causes pain in a specific part of the body

- <sup>28</sup> She turned and walked away. I watched her doll-like figure retreating through the cold wind, and somehow I felt much warmer.
- <sup>29</sup> The meeting had already begun when I arrived at the auditorium. I sat down right by the door. The leader of the school Revolutionary Committee, Chairman Jin, was making a speech on the current revolutionary situation. On the stage beside him were Teacher Hou, a Revolutionary Committee member, and, to my surprise, Chang Hong.
- <sup>30</sup> What sort of meeting was this? I looked around to see who was there. There were several Red Guard Committee members and key people from the propaganda group, along with several members of the Revolutionary Performance Team and the Mao Ze-dong Thought Study Group. Bai Shan was sitting near the door, bending over the paper in his lap.
- <sup>31</sup> Was this about the propaganda group again? I had told Chang Hong once already that I wouldn't join. No, that would not require such a formal meeting. While I was still guessing, Chairman Jin finished his summary of the steadily improving revolutionary situation.
- <sup>32</sup> "Comrades." He suddenly raised the pitch of his voice. "In order to support the Cultural Revolution and promote class struggle, our school's Red Guard Committee has decided to make a Class Education Exhibition to expose the class enemies' evil and remind us of the misery of the old society and our happiness today. This will inspire our students' revolutionary enthusiasm and further promote the Cultural Revolution in our school.
- <sup>33</sup> "Every student here today was handpicked for both academic and political excellence. You will represent all the teachers and students of our school when we celebrate the Communist Party Birthday on July first...."
- <sup>34</sup> Academic and political excellence? There must have been a mistake. Even though my classmates didn't know me very well, the teachers certainly knew about my family background. My personal file recorded everything. I imagined the sneers. "Political excellence? A black whelp criticizing landlords?"
- <sup>35</sup> In the middle of Chang Hong's speech on behalf of the Red Guard Committee, I slipped unnoticed out of the auditorium and headed for Teacher Zhang's office.

- 36 The stairway in the old office building was dark and narrow. At a landing I almost bumped into someone coming down. It was Teacher Zhang himself.
- 37 “Teacher Zhang,” I stammered, caught unprepared. “I... I was coming to see you.”
- 38 “Oh? Is there something I can help you with? Would you like to come to my office?”
- 39 “That’s all right. It won’t take long.” I swallowed and calmed down a little. “I was told to attend the meeting about the exhibition. Did you know that?” I started cautiously.
- 40 “I was the one who suggested your name. Did you go? How was it?” he asked lightly.
- 41 “Oh. The meeting was fine, but... but...” I struggled to find the appropriate words. “But I’m not really a leader, am I?” I shook my head slightly and tried to smile.
- 42 He didn’t answer my question. “I was told you were in the Children’s Arts Troupe. Is that true?”
- 43 “Um...”
- 44 “Your **Mandarin** is excellent, and you won several speech contests. Is that right?”
- 45 “Well, that was in primary school, a long time ago.... How did you know?” I felt like he was cornering me.
- 46 “I think you’re the perfect one to represent our class as a guide at the exhibition.”
- 47 “Oh, no, no!” I blurted out. My own grandfather was a landlord. How could I condemn the evil landlords of the old society? What if Yin Lan-lan or Du Hai saw me?
- 48 “Teacher Zhang, I’m sure there’s someone in our class who can do a better job. You’d better find someone else.”
- 49 “I’ve thought it over. I think you are the best one. Jiang Ji-li, this is an important political assignment. I hope you will accept it and try to win honor for our class. All right?”

- 50 I almost lost the courage to refuse again, but I thought of my landlord grandfather, of Dad detained at the theater.
- 51 “Teacher Zhang, did... did you ever look at my file?” It took an effort to ask the question. If he knew about the speech contests, then he must know about Grandpa and about the Red Guards searching our apartment.
- 52 His face was expressionless as he moved his hand from the railing and put it in his pocket. He did not reply immediately.
- 53 “We cannot choose our families or our class status. But we can choose our own futures.” He spoke very slowly and clearly. “No, you are not a leader, but you are still an ‘educable child.’ You can overcome your family background.” He paused. “You have self-esteem, and you always try to excel. That’s why I believe you are brave enough to face and eventually overcome the difficulties of life.”
- 54 It was very dark on the stairs. Everything appeared dim except for his piercing, shining eyes. I felt an older brother’s sincerity and trust in his look. “‘Brave enough to face and eventually overcome the difficulties of life,’” I repeated to myself, and felt something catch in my throat.
- 55 “I’ll do it,” I said simply, and walked away. I was afraid I would cry if I said another word.
- 56 The sun was setting, and the western sky was a sheet of gold and rose. I stopped, my heart full of awe at the **immensity** of the world.
- 57 I had wanted to give up. I had almost stopped trying to be brave, to be an educable child. I saw another part of myself, a part full of fear that I had to struggle against. I would not allow myself to stop trying to follow Chairman Mao. Whatever my family background was, I would overcome all difficulties. My future would be bright.
- 58 As it grew dark, the whole city seemed to slow down. The school, too, was no longer its bustling daytime self. Only the propaganda group office was ablaze with light, like a brightly lit cabin in the middle of a dark and silent forest.
- 59 On the other side of the room Bai Shan and some other boys were painting a picture in preparation for the Class Education Exhibition. We girls were sitting around a big table, gluing dyed **millet** grains onto a huge sheet of paper to make a portrait of Chairman Mao.

**immensity:**  
hugeness

**millet:** kind of  
seeded plant

**squabbling:**  
pointless arguing

- <sup>60</sup> “It’s taken us six hours just to finish two eyebrows and the ears. This is going to be a long job!” a girl said. She spoke quickly and loudly, sounding just like her nickname, Ducky.
- <sup>61</sup> “If I’d known that it was going to take this long, I would have said let’s just draw something,” Fang Fang grumbled.
- <sup>62</sup> “Come on, we all agreed to do this.” Chang Hong moved quickly to put down the disagreement. She pointed at Ducky with her tweezers. “You said that we should do something new and different.” She turned to Fang Fang. “And you said that the three-dimensional millet grains would look better and show our loyalty to Chairman Mao better than a drawing. Do you remember?”
- <sup>63</sup> “I didn’t say I wanted to quit. I just said it’s slow,” Ducky said sulkily.
- <sup>64</sup> “We’d better stop arguing and get back to work,” I said. “Otherwise we’ll never finish.” I looked up at the boys’ table and hoped that they were not laughing at our **squabbling**.
- <sup>65</sup> “Let’s take a break,” Chang Hong suggested. “Have some steamed buns while I go make some tea. If we just march on resolutely, we are bound to succeed.” She threw a bag of buns on the table and ran out.
- <sup>66</sup> No one said anything. Ducky took a bun and bit into it.
- <sup>67</sup> That afternoon we couldn’t wait to start. We had all bustled around boiling water and dying millet and getting snacks. The enthusiasm had reminded me of the glorious revolutionary activities that I had seen in the movies. We were proud to be part of the revolution, excited to be doing such an important job. Now, only a few hours later, the enthusiasm had completely disappeared. We had not anticipated that the job would take so long. Now it seemed that we would have to work all night to finish before tomorrow’s meeting.
- <sup>68</sup> I couldn’t help yawning. This would be the fourth time I had worked all night since we had started to prepare the exhibition. Although it was months away, there were so many things to do, so many deadlines to meet: deciding on the contents of the exhibition, writing the script, designing the layout, decorating the exhibition hall... I was amazed at how I could do so much and still leave time for study and housework.
- <sup>69</sup> “Jiang Ji-li,” one of the boys called me. I was surprised to find that it was



Bai Shan. It was the first time that I had ever heard him call me by name. "The painting is done. When Chang Hong comes back, tell her we've gone home." He started to go, then stopped and gestured toward the painting. "Don't touch it. It's not dry yet."

70 As soon as the boys left, we rushed to look at their picture. It was a Chinese ink painting. The rising sun was spreading its rays and a rooster was crowing loudly and joyfully.

71 "'The Rooster Sings, for the East Is Turning Red,'" Ducky read loudly. "Wow, what a great picture!"

72 "And the handwriting is so beautiful too," I added. "Bai Shan is really talented, isn't he? He does everything so well."

73 "You like him, don't you, Ji-li? I think he likes you too. He's always looking at you," Ducky said suddenly.

74 "Don't be so childish," I snapped. Having my name connected with a boy's was the last thing I needed. Things were hard enough as it was. "Spare me your dirty gossip, all right?"

75 Just in time, Chang Hong came rushing in. "Here's the tea. What's up? Oh, they're finished? Let me have a look." She elbowed her way to the front.

76 "What do you think? It's really wonderful, isn't it?" Ducky gushed.

77 "Hmm..." Chang Hong considered. "Why isn't the sun painted red? Since the title is 'The Rooster Sings, for the East Is Turning Red,' the sun should be red, shouldn't it?" Her hand was almost touching the painting.

78 Ever since Bai Shan had left self-study class that day, Chang Hong had seemed to disapprove of him. She was, after all, a Red Guard Committee member, and she suspected him of disrespect toward Chairman Mao.

79 I gently moved her hand away. "This is an ink painting. It only uses black ink."

80 By three o'clock in the morning we could hardly stay awake. Tea and snacks could no longer stimulate our exhausted minds. We yawned in turn, as if we were counting off in formation. As soon as Chang Hong suggested that we take turns sleeping, Ducky and Fang Fang leaned their heads on the table and fell fast asleep. Chang Hong and I washed our faces in cold water and soldiered on toward Chairman Mao's collar

**epilepsy:** a disorder that can be marked by sudden violent uncontrollable movement and loss of awareness

<sup>81</sup> Outside our office the world seemed to disappear. The dark silence seemed to gradually thicken, until even time could not move as usual. Each minute seemed endless. My eyes were dry and heavy, and I could not control my hands. I had to try over and over to pick up each grain of millet. I wished I could go home to sleep under my own warm quilt.

<sup>82</sup> Home... I sighed.

<sup>83</sup> There was still no news about Dad. Mom had secretly asked Uncle Tian for information, but all we knew was that Dad still refused to confess and had been the victim of several struggle meetings. I could not think of those meetings without thinking of the scene-shop foreman's icy stare. I could not help wondering what Dad had done.

<sup>84</sup> I sighed again.

<sup>85</sup> "What's the matter?" Chang Hong raised her sleepy eyes.

<sup>85</sup> "Oh, I'm just sleepy I guess."

<sup>87</sup> A moment later Chang Hong said to me softly, "Ji-li, I envy you so much."

<sup>88</sup> "Envy me? Why?" I was surprised beyond politeness.

<sup>89</sup> "You're so good in school, and so talented—"

<sup>90</sup> "Oh, that doesn't mean anything." Looking into her earnest eyes, I blurted out, "I envy you. You have such a good family, and such a good political status."

<sup>91</sup> She looked down at the table blankly. After a long while she spoke again, slowly and softly. "My brother has **epilepsy**. He's eleven, but he can't dress himself or feed himself." She paused. "He has seizures every day, at least one or two, sometimes more."

<sup>92</sup> "That's terrible!" I could say nothing more.

<sup>93</sup> "I love him very much." She raised her eyes again to look at me. "I'm his favorite. Sometimes he won't eat when my mother tries to feed him, but if I do it, he will."

<sup>94</sup> I could hardly believe that this person was the revolutionary Chang Hong I knew.

<sup>95</sup> "Will he... will he die?" I could not stop myself from asking.

- <sup>96</sup> She looked down at the table again. It seemed like a long time before she answered. “The doctors say he won’t live past his teens. We just don’t know. He’s not in very good shape these days.”
- <sup>97</sup> “Why don’t you stay home with him? In case...”
- <sup>98</sup> “I’ve thought about that.” She looked away from my face to the litter on the table. “But we can’t allow personal matters to interfere with revolutionary duties. Especially for an important political assignment like the exhibition.”
- <sup>99</sup> Watching her sincere and earnest eyes, I completely forgot that she was a Red Guard Committee member. Through the quiet of the early morning we talked and talked, like friends or sisters.
- <sup>100</sup> By the time our classmates arrived at school the next morning, we had finally completed the picture—made with thousands of millet grains and thousands of yawns. But we could not enjoy our accomplishment or the praise of teachers and classmates. We put our heads on the table and fell fast asleep.
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# Half-City Jiangs

## Paragraphs 35–64

- <sup>35</sup> I heard Pudge's snide voice again. "Jiang Ji-li, is your family related to Chiang Kai-shek too?" My other classmates had stood in excited knots, looking at me over their shoulders, before turning back to their gossip. I remembered the **jeering** chant of the neighborhood boys who had followed me down the alley: "*Half-City Jiangs! Half-City Jiangs! Down with the landlord Half-City Jiangs!*"
- <sup>36</sup> No! I did not want to have this damned name anymore! I had had enough. All my bad luck and humiliation came from the name Jiang. I had seen stories in the paper about people who had changed their names. They had started life anew. If I just dropped my family name, I could be named Ji Li and be lucky, just as it meant.
- <sup>37</sup> I stepped forward. "Comrade?" I called toward the dark reception room. No one answered.
- <sup>38</sup> I looked at the directory and headed up the stairs to the household registration office.
- <sup>39</sup> The sign on the door said, RESIDENCE REGISTRATION, and below that was an even larger sign that said, NO ENTRANCE WITHOUT PERMISSION. There was a barred window about two feet square and a huge slogan, which occupied one whole wall: CLASS STRUGGLE IS THE KEY.
- <sup>40</sup> I looked through the window. The office was empty, but the lights were on, and I could hear a radio playing behind a plywood **partition**.
- <sup>41</sup> "Comrade."
- <sup>42</sup> There was no answer.
- <sup>43</sup> "Comrade?" I raised my voice and knocked loudly on the counter.
- <sup>44</sup> A chair moved inside the office, and a man came out from behind the plywood partition. It was Officer Ma, the policeman in charge of residence registration for our neighborhood.
- <sup>45</sup> "What do you want?" he asked impatiently before he even looked at me. "Can't you let me have lunch in peace?" He waved his chopsticks at me.

**jeering:** unkind,  
teasing

**partition:** divider

46 “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m terribly sorry,” I said, shrinking back with my schoolbag in front of me like a shield.

47 “What is it?” He stared down at me through the window, picking his teeth with his finger.

48 “I can wait until you’ve finished lunch,” I said apologetically.

49 “I asked you what you want, but I don’t care if you don’t want to tell me.” He turned around.

50 “Wait! I... I want to change my name,” I said timidly.

51 “What?”

52 “I want to change my name.”

53 “Change your name? Why?” He picked his teeth again.

54 “I... I don’t have a good class status. So I want to change my family name.”

55 He took his finger out of his mouth and began to pay attention. “Good. Revolutionary action.” He opened the door. “Come in, come in. I’ll be ready in no time.”

56 I looked at him nervously. When he came into our alley, he held his head high and spoke in **domineering** tones. He seemed to swagger, and enjoyed having power. I did not trust this sudden friendliness.

57 He pointed me to a chair. “Making a clean break with your black family, that’s good. We absolutely support you.”

58 Break with my family? I did not understand him.

59 “Chairman Mao says you can’t choose your class status but you can choose your future. You couldn’t choose the family you were born into, but now that you’ve grown up, it’s time for you to choose your future. You can tell your parents you’ll follow Chairman Mao, not them. If they give you any trouble, just come here and tell us. We’ll go to their work units and hold struggle meetings against them... ”

60 He went on and on, waving his chopsticks. I was totally confused. I had only wanted to break with all those landlords in my family, not with Mom and Dad. Would changing my name mean breaking off relations with them? I thought of Aunt Xi-wen lying in the alley, and Shan-shan walking right past her.

**domineering:**  
forceful and bossy

- <sup>61</sup> “Well, I’ll go wash my hands and be back to register you in a minute.”  
He walked out of the office.
- <sup>62</sup> I sat in the empty room, picturing telling Mom and Dad that I had  
changed my name.
- <sup>63</sup> I jumped up and ran out. The street was still the same. The sun was  
shining warmly, and there were few people in sight. I slowly loosened my  
fist from the strap of my schoolbag. It was dripping with sweat.
- <sup>64</sup> The street was still the same. The sun was shining warmly, and there  
were few people in sight. I slowly loosened my fist from the strap of my  
schoolbag. It was dripping with sweat.
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# The Class Education Exhibition

## Paragraphs 1-59

- <sup>1</sup> The mournful sound of a Chinese fiddle echoed around the booths in the school exhibition hall.
- <sup>2</sup> It's only a preview, I thought. I was a veteran of many speech contests and I should not have been so nervous. But the school leaders and district leaders were coming to evaluate us, and because of that article in the *Workers' Revolt*, the preview became especially important to me.
- <sup>3</sup> The article had been like a bomb blowing holes in my life. In our alley, at school, and at Mom's office people gossiped about our family. I had thought I was going to be kicked out of the exhibition. Each night as I lay in bed, I told myself that I would rather quit than be rejected; I would talk to Chang Hong the next day. Then each day in school I had been seized by a new determination not to give in to pressure. I knew that I could represent the class better than anyone else. Why should I quit? Why let those old landlords ruin my life? Finally I had decided. Everyone already knew the worst about me. Let them think what they would. I would do an excellent job to prove myself. I had to win my honor back.
- <sup>4</sup> The exhibition hall seemed like a new building. The partitions between the cafeteria and the gym had been taken down, and the space had been redivided into twelve booths. The pictures, photos, drawings, and clay statues displayed in each booth gave the hall a strong serious atmosphere. I was narrating the part on the horrors of the old China.
- <sup>5</sup> "Now let's look at two more of Liu Wen-cai's slaves," I said, gesturing to the statues of the infamous landlord and his victims.
- <sup>6</sup> "This is the blind old grandfather. Every day, in bitter cold or in scorching sun, his little granddaughter led him out to beg for their food. With the little food that he managed to receive, how could he repay his debt to the landlord? Each year the debt increased. Finally, Liu Wen-cai forced him to give his granddaughter in payment. How could he do that? She was his eyes, his whole life. But what else could he do to escape from this brutal landlord? With tears in his sightless eyes, he said to her, 'My dearest, you must go with Mr. Liu. It is not because I do not love you, it is that black-hearted landlord who is tearing us apart.'" My voice trembled slightly, and I became more and more emotional as I spoke.

**flustered:**  
confused and  
nervous

- 7 “The poor granddaughter had never been separated from her grandfather before. He was the one who tucked her quilt around her each night, and he was the one who comforted her when she cried.” I pointed to the statues. “Look at her, crying piteously as she is pulled away by the landlord, her hand stretching out to her grandfather....”
- 8 I was nearly in tears as I finished my presentation. Dozens of evaluators were wiping their eyes as Teacher Yu moved them on to the next booth. Even Bai Shan, who was in charge of the exhibit’s design and had heard my presentation several times in rehearsal, was blinking back tears.
- 9 I heaved a long sigh and collapsed onto my stool. I wiped my sweaty hands on my pants and picked up a book to fan myself.
- 10 “Ji-li.” I heard someone outside the window calling me. I raised the bamboo blind and saw An Yi and Lin-lin.
- 11 “What are you doing here?”
- 12 “We wanted to see your presentation, but they wouldn’t let us in. We had to stand here and listen to you. You did a terrific job!” An Yi’s face was glowing.
- 13 “It’s true. You were very good.” Lin-lin was more reserved but just as sincere.
- 14 “Well, it’s such a touching story that anyone could make it work.” I leaned farther out the window.
- 15 Someone patted me on the back.
- 16 “What are you doing? Get in here! Chairman Jin is coming.”
- 17 Hastily I drew back inside. The visitors who had just left were standing in front of me again. Chang Hong whispered to me, “Chairman Jin wants to talk to you.”
- 18 I shivered. I knew this would happen, I thought. Now he was going to say I was a landlord’s granddaughter, and humiliate me in front of everyone. I should have quit after all. I should have—I was so **flustered** that I knocked over a stool as I approached Chairman Jin.
- 19 Chairman Jin towered over me. I looked up into his serious eyes and immediately lowered mine.
- 20 “This Class Education Exhibition is a very powerful weapon,” he said. “Appropriately used, it can strengthen class identification and deepen the



hatred of class enemies. Your presentation was very emotional, and the audience was deeply affected. I hope you can help the others to improve their presentations, and make the exhibition a success.”

21 I was puzzled. Was he praising me? I looked around the group and saw nothing but approval in their eyes.

22 “By the way, I suggest you add a quotation from Chairman Mao’s works to the end of the presentation, so you can finish on an inspiring note.” Chairman Jin clasped his hands behind his back and looked at the others as if he were asking for their opinions. Everyone nodded. Chang Hong was taking notes with a proud smile on her face.

23 They went on to another booth to make their suggestions. I slowly sat down, shouting to myself, “I did it!”

24 During Math class a few days later, Teacher Hou from the Revolutionary Committee popped his head into my classroom. He barely glanced at Teacher Li before saying **curtly**, “Jiang Ji-li, come to our office right away. Someone wants to talk to you.”

25 I stood up nervously, wondering what it could be. I felt my classmates’ piercing eyes as I mechanically left the classroom. Teacher Hou walked ahead of me without seeming to notice my presence. I followed silently.

26 I tried not to panic. Maybe it was not bad. Maybe it was about the exhibition. Maybe Chairman Jin wanted me to help the others with their presentations. At the end of the long, dark hallway Teacher Hou silently motioned me into the office and then walked away.

27 I wiped my hands on my trousers and slowly opened the door. The thin-faced foreman from Dad’s theater was right in front of me.

28 My face must have shown my **dismay**.

29 “Sit down, sit down. Don’t be afraid.” Chairman Jin pointed to the empty chair. “These comrades from your father’s work unit are just here to have a study session with you. It’s nothing to worry about.”

30 I sat down dumbly.

31 I had thought about their coming to my home but never imagined this. They were going to expose my family in front of my teachers and classmates. I would have no pride left. I would never be an educable child again.

**curtly**: briefly and rudely

**dismay**: fear and disappointment

- <sup>32</sup> Thin-Face sat opposite me, with a woman I had never seen before. Teacher Zhang was there too, his eyes encouraging me.
- <sup>33</sup> Thin-Face came straight to the point. “Your father’s problems are very serious.” His cold eyes nailed me to my seat. “You may have read the article in the *Workers’ Revolt* that exposed your family’s filthy past.” I slumped down in my chair without taking my eyes off his face. “In addition to coming from a landlord family, your father committed some serious mistakes during the Antirightist Movement several years ago, but he still obstinately refuses to confess.” His cold manner became a little more animated. “Of course we won’t tolerate this. We have decided to make an example of him. We are going to have a struggle meeting of the entire theater system to criticize him and force him to confess.” He suddenly pounded the table with his fist. The cups on the table rattled.
- <sup>34</sup> I tore my eyes away from him and stared at a cup instead.
- <sup>35</sup> “As I told you before, you are your own person. If you want to make a clean break with your black family, then you can be an educable child and we will welcome you to our revolutionary ranks.” He gave Chairman Jin a look, and Chairman Jin chimed in, “That’s right, we welcome you.”
- <sup>36</sup> “Jiang Ji-li has always done well at school. In addition to doing very well in her studies, she participates in educational reform,” Teacher Zhang added.
- <sup>37</sup> “That’s very good. We knew that you had more sense than to follow your father,” Thin-Face said with a brief, frozen smile. “Now you can show your revolutionary determination.” He paused. “We want you to testify against your father at the struggle meeting.”
- <sup>38</sup> I closed my eyes. I saw Dad standing on a stage, his head bowed, his name written in large black letters, and then crossed out in red ink, on a sign hanging from his neck. I saw myself standing in the middle of the stage, facing thousands of people, **condemning** Dad for his crimes, raising my fist to lead the chant, “Down with Jiang Xi-reng.” I saw Dad looking at me hopelessly, tears on his face.
- <sup>39</sup> “I... I...” I looked at Teacher Zhang for help. He looked away.
- <sup>40</sup> The woman from the theater spoke. “It’s really not such a hard thing to do. The key is your class stance. The daughter of our former Party Secretary resolved to make a clean break with her mother. When she went onstage

**condemning:**  
harshly criticizing

to condemn her mother, she actually slapped her face. Of course, we don't mean that you have to slap your father's face. The point is that as long as you have the correct class stance, it will be easy to testify." Her voice grated on my ears.

41 "There is something you can do to prove you are truly Chairman Mao's child." Thin-Face spoke again. "I am sure you can tell us some things your father said and did that show his landlord and rightist mentality." I stared at the table, but I could feel his eyes boring into me. "What can you tell us?"

42 "But I don't know anything," I whispered. "I don't know—"

43 "I am sure you can remember something if you think about it," Thin-Face said. "A man like him could not hide his true beliefs from a child as smart as you. He must have made comments critical of Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution. I am sure you are loyal to Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. Tell us!"

44 "But my father never said anything against Chairman Mao," I protested weakly. "I would tell you if he did." My voice grew stronger with conviction. "He never said anything against the Party."

45 "Now, you have to choose between two roads." Thin-Face looked straight into my eyes. "You can break with your family and follow Chairman Mao, or you can follow your father and become an enemy of the people." His voice grew more severe. "In that case we would have many more study sessions, with your brother and sister too, and the Red Guard Committee and the school leaders. Think about it. We will come back to talk to you again."

46 Thin-Face and the woman left, saying they would be back to get my statement. Without knowing how I got there, I found myself in a narrow passageway between the school building and the school-yard wall. The gray concrete walls closed around me, and a slow drizzle dampened my cheeks. I could not go back to the classroom, and I could not go home. I felt like a small animal that had fallen into a trap, alone and helpless, and sure that the hunter was coming.

47 All night I hardly slept. I saw Thin-Face's hard eyes, and I saw tears on Dad's cheeks. In the early morning I finally fell into a troubled sleep. I awoke just half an hour before I had to report to the exhibition. I washed and dressed and ran out the door, still rubbing my swollen eyes.

- <sup>48</sup> I pushed yesterday's events out of my mind. Today was the opening of the exhibition, and I was determined to do a good job.
- <sup>49</sup> I approached the exhibition hall. Through the open door I could see everyone sitting in a circle. The briefing had already started. I broke into a run. Someone stepped toward me from the shadow of the holly bush beside the door: Bai Shan.
- <sup>50</sup> I knew he had been taking an interest in me, but I had never showed I noticed. I did not want to be gossiped about. I ran by, wondering what he was doing there.
- <sup>51</sup> "Jiang Ji-li," he said softly. "Brace yourself."
- <sup>52</sup> I paused, but I was already inside. Chairman Jin looked up at me. Following his eyes, all the students turned toward me as well. Chairman Jin stared at me, and I stopped, rooted to the floor. For an eternity I was surrounded by a deafening silence.
- <sup>53</sup> "Jiang Ji-li," Chairman Jin said at last. "Yesterday we—that is the Revolutionary Committee—discussed your situation. Because of your political situation we decided to let Fang Fang replace you. You can go home now. I'll talk to you later."
- <sup>54</sup> His face was cold and closed. I looked at the others, those who had laughed and joked and prepared the presentation with me for months. Some looked sympathetic, and some turned their eyes away. I could not bear to see any more. I ran out of the hall.
- <sup>55</sup> "Jiang Ji-li!" I heard someone calling my name, but I just lowered my head and kept running.
- <sup>56</sup> "Jiang Ji-li!" Someone passed and stopped in front of me: Bai Shan again.
- <sup>57</sup> I turned my eyes away. I struggled to look calm, to keep him from seeing my shame. I did not want his pity.
- <sup>58</sup> He looked at me for a few seconds before he spoke. "Here, this is yours." He handed me something. It was dark green. A book. A dictionary, with "Jiang" written in the corner. I had left it in the exhibition booth.
- <sup>59</sup> I did not say a word. I did not look at him. I did not take the book. I just ran away.
-

# The Incriminating Letter

## Paragraphs 2-77

- 2 Someone knocked very softly at the door: two knocks, a pause, and three more. Mom opened the door without even asking who was there, and I heard Uncle Tian's voice. He and Mom disappeared into the bathroom.
- 3 Before long the bathroom door opened again and Mom showed Uncle Tian out. "I'll let you know when I've finished revising it." She closed the door behind him and came back in. "It's late. Go to sleep," she said to me softly. She put some pieces of paper onto her nightstand and went back into the bathroom.
- 4 I turned off the light and closed my eyes. What were those papers? Why had she said, "I'll let you know when it's finished"? What was going on?
- 5 It was very quiet in the room. Ji-yong and Ji-yun had fallen asleep a while ago. Grandma was dozing on her bed, with her glasses on her nose and the newspaper on her chest. I heard Mom washing and knew she would be in the bathroom for at least fifteen minutes. Impulsively I slipped out of bed and, without even putting on my slippers, tiptoed over to Mom's bed.
- 6 Several sheets of paper were folded together on the nightstand. I picked up the one on top and held it under the soft light of Mom's bedside lamp. I held my breath as I read the first words: "Respected Comrades of the Municipal Party Committee."
- 7 I pressed the letter against my chest. The beginning of it made me too nervous to read any further. I heard Mom turning the water tap and looked guiltily over my shoulder. Then I read the rest of the letter as fast as I could.
- 8 The letter complained about the situation in the theater. The faction in power, the Rebels, did whatever they wanted, ignoring the **policy** directives from the Central Committee of the Party, the letter said. They treated people with nonpolitical problems, like Aunt Wu, as class enemies, and they had humiliated her, shaving half of her head in a yin-yang hairdo. They frequently beat their prisoners and had already beaten two to death. They even recorded the screams and moans of the prisoners being tortured, and played the tapes to frighten other prisoners under interrogation.
- 9 "We urgently hope," the letter concluded, "that the Municipal Party

**policy:** set of rules

Committee will investigate this situation and correct it before it is too late." The letter was signed, "The Revolutionary Masses."

- <sup>10</sup> I tiptoed back to bed. My heart pounded inside my chest. Although the letter was merely reporting facts to a superior, it was a complaint about the Rebels at the theater. If they found out about it, Mom and Uncle Tian would be in serious trouble. And what would happen to Dad and Aunt Wu? What if Thin-Face found out? Would he blame me for not telling him?
- <sup>11</sup> I heard Mom go to bed. Lying in the darkness with my eyes open, I could not stop imagining all the horrors that could result from this letter. I was scared, and I did not know what to do.
- <sup>12</sup> It was dusk. I was shelling soybeans. Ji-yun and her classmate Xiao Hong-yin were laughing and chatting in the room and Ji-yong was busy making a slingshot. Running water was gurgling from the roof. Grandma was washing clothes. Mom had gone to answer a telephone call.
- <sup>13</sup> The kitchen was getting dark, but I did not bother to turn the light on. I stared out the window. Another day had passed, and still Thin Face had not shown up. What was he waiting for? What should I say when he came? What would he do to me?
- <sup>14</sup> I sighed and shelled more beans.
- <sup>15</sup> How was Dad? Surely they must have struggled with him enough. Had they beaten him? Since I had read Mom's letter two days ago, I had seen Dad in my mind, not just carrying concrete pipes and wiping away tears, but being tortured.
- <sup>16</sup> Had he really done something wrong? Why wouldn't he confess if he had? Was he really a rightist as they said?...
- <sup>17</sup> Suddenly pounding feet on the stairs jerked me back to reality. Mom ran up the stairs panic-stricken, yelling, "The letter, the letter." Grandma and I followed Mom into the room.
- <sup>18</sup> "The theater people are coming to search the house. The Dictatorship Group is watching the entrance to the alley. They wouldn't even let me answer the phone." We all stared at her as she reached under her pillow. "Quick!" Mom thrust a letter into my hand. "Hide this. We can't let them find it. I'll try to slow them down." She staggered downstairs. Xiao Hong-yin hurried out behind her.

- <sup>19</sup> I stood there dumbly. Searches were not allowed now without permission of the police. How could they be searching us? We had already been searched once before.
- <sup>20</sup> The loud voices on the stairs shook me awake. I looked at the letter—the thick, heavy letter that Mom and Uncle Tian had written to the Municipal Party Committee. My hand began to shake.
- <sup>21</sup> I rushed into the room and looked around desperately. No, the room would be thoroughly ransacked. I ran back out to the kitchen. Behind the sink? No. I dashed into the bathroom. Toilet tank? No. Where? Where should I hide it? I could not think. I could feel the blood throbbing in my temples.
- <sup>22</sup> Suddenly I remembered Little White's litter box. I dashed up to the roof. By the time I had smoothed out the ashes and walked downstairs, the searchers were already at the door.
- <sup>23</sup> Mom stood in the doorway, trying to keep Thin-Face from rushing in. "The Municipal Party Committee has directed that no searches are allowed without permission of the police."
- <sup>24</sup> Thin-Face sneered. He fished a piece of paper out of his pocket and thrust it in front of Mom's nose. "Read this. The authorities have determined that Jiang Xi-reng is a landlord who has escaped detection and gone unpunished. You're a damned landlord's wife." He threw the paper in Mom's face and rushed into the room with his crew.
- <sup>25</sup> What a ransacking!
- <sup>26</sup> They had brought big lights and thick wires from the theater and strung them through the room and on the roof and balcony. The whole apartment blazed like a movie set. We could hear the hubbub from the crowd of spectators outside in the alley.
- <sup>27</sup> Thin-Face and his crew were methodical and thorough. They emptied every trunk and every drawer, tore the beds and sofa apart, and even searched the dusty attic carefully.
- <sup>28</sup> One woman found the rags cut from Grandma's old gowns. "We can piece these together and use them for the Landlord Jiang Xi-reng's struggle meeting. It is excellent proof of his luxurious lifestyle," she said excitedly, and the whole box was carried away. Someone else saw the round



porcelain stool under the window. It was cracked, so we had not been able to sell it like the other one. "This is a valuable antique from the Qian-long period," he said. The stool was taken away.

29

\* \* \*

30 The search went on and on. Ji-yun, Ji-yong, and I sat in a corner of the room, trembling at the slamming of the wardrobe and the chests. My mind was entirely on the letter under the ashes. Suddenly Ji-yong stood up and walked toward one of the ransackers.

31 "I borrowed that book." He pointed toward a pile that the man was going to carry away.

32 "What? What did you say?" The young man turned around and arrogantly looked down on Ji-yong.

33 "I borrowed that book. I need to return it."

34 The young man pulled the book out of the pile. "The Wild Animals I Have Raised," he read aloud. He scrutinized the book and then looked back at Ji-yong.

35 "Do you know what kind of book this is?"

36 "No. What kind is it?"

37 "It's a translation that propagates the bourgeois theory of humanitarism."

38 "I don't care what it propagates. I borrowed it and I have to return it tomorrow." Ji-yong was feeling obstinate.

39 "You've got some nerve for a little black bastard. How dare you plead for this damned revisionist book?" He held the book in front of Ji-yong's face and very slowly began tearing the cover off.

40 Ji-yong rushed toward him and tried to grab the book. The man grabbed Ji-yong's collar and pulled my brother toward him, and then suddenly pushed away. Ji-yong staggered several steps backward and fell on a heap of clothes. He tried to stand up and rush at the man again, but Ji-yun and I jumped on him and held him down.

41 "He hit me! Let me go! Let me go!" His eyes were filled with tears. He struggled violently under our arms. I could feel his gasps against my face.



- 42 While we were struggling to hold Ji-yong down, Six-Fingers bustled in. He pulled Thin-Face into a corner and whispered something, then left.
- 43 Thin-Face watched us struggling like a hunter watching the animals in his trap. Ji-yong stopped fighting, and I straightened up.
- 44 “We’ve seen a lot of each other lately, haven’t we?” He gave a grimace meant to suggest a smile. “According to reliable sources, you hid a very important letter just before we arrived.” He paused and examined our reactions carefully. “Here is the opportunity for you to help Chairman Mao’s revolution. Who can win the most honor by telling us first?”
- 45 I felt an intense rush of heat, as if my whole body were flushed.
- 46 “This was reported by a member of the revolutionary masses.” He was talking only to me now. “We even know where it was hidden, but before I go get it, I’ll give you one last chance to prove your loyalty to Chairman Mao. And then...”
- 47 It must have been Ji-yun’s classmate Xiao Hong-yin, I thought. She was there when Mom gave me the letter. She must have reported it. But she didn’t see me hide the letter. They couldn’t know where it was.
- 48 Seeing that there was no response, Thin-Face took off his smiling mask. He stepped in front of me, bent over, and suddenly shouted in my face, “Don’t you know, or is it just that you don’t want to talk?”
- 49 I shivered. Ji-yun grasped my shirt and buried her face in my back. Thin-Face’s head was only inches from mine. His bloodshot eyes bulged out so much that the whites seemed much larger than usual. His skin was red with rage. He looked so savage that I shrank back, sure that he was going to hit me. I shut my eyes and clenched my teeth. “I don’t know.”
- 50 My heart pounded. I waited. Nothing happened. I opened my eyes.
- 51 “So you don’t want to talk,” he snarled. “I think I can figure out a way to help you.” He straightened up and shouted to the young man who had torn the book. “Bring the two landlords’ wives in here!”
- 52 Grandma was leaning heavily on Mom as they came into the room.
- 53 Thin-Face was in front of them immediately. “Leniency for those who confess, severity for those who resist. I’m sure you remember that. Now. Where did you hide the letter? Confess!”

- 54 Mom's face changed color. Grandma looked at him and replied timidly, "Letter? What letter?"
- 55 "Damn you!" Thin-Face slapped her face with all his strength. Grandma staggered into Mom's arms.
- 56 "Grandma!" We all sprang to our feet and rushed to Grandma.
- 57 "She's over seventy, you— How could you?" Shielding Grandma with her own body, Mom shouted back at Thin-Face.
- 58 "Over seventy! So what? Damned old landlord's wife!" Thin-Face held his hand. He must have hurt it when he slapped Grandma. "Old landlord's wife, kneel down and face the wall. Stay there until you confess. You—" He turned to the rest of us. "You all sit here and watch. Don't go near her. If you care about her, confess. Otherwise she'll stay there forever. We'll see who's stronger." He walked out.
- 59 Grandma knelt down facing the wall. I could see the red marks of Thin-Face's fingers on her face. Her whole body was trembling so violently that I could see her linen shirt shaking.
- 60 "Grandma..." Ji-yun cried out suddenly. Tears were rolling down my cheeks too.
- 61 "Don't you cry for her. She's an exploiting landlord's wife." The young man stepped up to Ji-yun. "If you keep crying, I'll make your mother kneel down too."
- 62 I looked at Mom. Her face was terribly **haggard**. She looked as if she were about to faint. She took out her handkerchief and wiped Ji-yun's face. "Don't cry, dear, don't cry. Everything will be all right," she said softly.
- 63 Grandma was sitting limply on her legs now, supporting her weight on her hands just like Old Qian had that day. A few white hairs clung to her red cheek.
- 64 Maybe I should tell, I thought frantically. Grandma was so frail... But then would we all get into bigger trouble? What should I do? What should I do, Mom? I stole several glances at Mom, but she hung her head and stared at the ground.
- 65 After a long while the young man went into the bathroom. No one else was watching us. Mom whispered in my ear, "Where's the letter?"

**haggard:** tired and looking unwell

- 66 "In Little White's litter box. Are you going to tell them?"
- 67 Mom shook her head hesitantly. She looked at Grandma and murmured, "I'm afraid she can't stand any more. It looks like they won't give up till they find it."
- 68 We were interrupted by a hubbub. Heavy footsteps rushed up to the roof. For a few minutes there was silence. Then suddenly we heard a crowd of people pounding down the stairs, roaring with coarse laughter.
- 69 "The cat did a great job. We should give her a reward."
- 70 "But the letter stinks of cat piss."
- 71 The letter!
- 72 I sagged weakly to the chair. Little White must have revealed the letter by raking up the ashes after she had used her box.
- 73 Thin-Face dashed into the room, his face lit with a sinister smile of victory. "What did I say? Who won? Who was stronger, you or the iron fist of the Proletarian Dictatorship? Humph!" He waved the letter in Mom's face. "So you thought you could reverse the verdict, did you? Hah!" he grunted in satisfaction. "Chen Ying, tomorrow you will report to your work unit that you are a landlord's wife now. We will inform them of what happened today, and will invite you as a companion to your husband's struggle meeting."
- 74 He stood over Grandma, who was still on the floor. "Old landlord's wife, starting tomorrow you will sweep the alley like the other landlords' wives. You have been lucky that we didn't expose you earlier. Go register at the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group at eight."
- 75 He turned and was about to walk out when he saw me.
- 76 "You," he snorted. Even in his elation his eyes froze me. "You have just missed your opportunity to be an educable child. Too bad. We will let your school know all about your firm class stance."
- 77 It was now four thirty in the morning. The alley was deserted. The huge truck, loaded with most of our possessions, blew its horn in the deadly silence and triumphantly left.
-

## Sweeping

### Paragraphs 11–20

- <sup>11</sup> Five days after the ransack, Mom was still very sick. I was helping her wash her hair.
- <sup>12</sup> “Ji-li,” Mom said suddenly. “If anything happens to your Grandma and me, remember, you’re the oldest. Make sure you take good care of your brother and sister.”
- <sup>13</sup> I felt tears in my eyes. “Mom, what are you talking about?”
- <sup>14</sup> Mom sat up straight and opened her eyes. “You know our situation. Anything can happen.” She paused before she said, “Maybe we should let my sister adopt Ji-yun. Your aunt’s family has no bad connections. Maybe Ji-yun would be better off—”
- <sup>15</sup> “No!” The cry jerked out before I knew it. “Mom, don’t. Please. I will take care of both of them. I promise.”
- <sup>16</sup> As soon as I said it, I realized that I had made my promise to them—to everyone in my family—long ago. I had promised during the days that Grandma and I had hidden in the park; I had promised when I had not testified against Dad; I had promised when I had hidden the letter. I would never do anything to hurt my family, and I would do everything I could to take care of them. My family was too precious to forget, and too rare to replace.
- <sup>17</sup> Grandma lifted her head and stretched her back. I ducked behind the curtain so that she wouldn’t see me. Every day I watched until she was finished. When I was seven, Grandma watched and waited for me at this very window when I walked back from school every afternoon. Now it was my turn to watch her and take care of her. I no longer worried that she was a landlord’s wife. She was my grandmother.
- <sup>18</sup> Once my life had been defined by my goals: to be a *da-dui-zhang*, to participate in the exhibition, to be a Red Guard. They seemed unimportant to me now. Now my life was defined by my responsibilities. I had promised to take care of my family, and I would renew that promise every day. I could not give up or withdraw, no matter how hard life became. I would hide my tears and my fear for Mom and Grandma’s sake. It was my turn to take care of them.

- <sup>19</sup> The clouds **dispersed** and the sky lightened a bit. Grandma picked up her broom and turned stiffly around to come home.
- <sup>20</sup> "Another day." I took a deep breath and shook my head. "I will do my job. I will."
- 

**dispersed:**  
scattered

## Epilogue

- <sup>1</sup> Many friends have asked me why, after all I went through, I did not hate Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution in those years. The answer is simple: We were all brainwashed.
- <sup>2</sup> To us Chairman Mao was God. He controlled everything we read, everything we heard, and everything we learned in school. We believed everything he said. Naturally, we knew only good things about Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution. Anything bad had to be the fault of others. Mao was blameless.
- <sup>3</sup> When I started to write this book, I asked An Yi's mother if she had hated Mao when she was forced to climb the factory chimney. "I didn't hate him," she told me. "I believed that the Cultural Revolution was necessary to prevent revisionism and capitalism from taking over China. I knew that I was wronged, but mistakes happen under any system. If the country was better for the movement that persecuted me, I was still in favor of it. It was only after Mao's death that I knew I was deceived."
- <sup>4</sup> It was only after Mao's death in 1976 that people woke up. We finally learned that the whole Cultural Revolution had been part of a power struggle at the highest levels of the Party. Our leader had taken advantage of our trust and loyalty to **manipulate** the whole country. This is the most frightening lesson of the Cultural Revolution: Without a sound legal system, a small group or even a single person can take control of an entire country. This is as true now as it was then.
- <sup>5</sup> Thirty years have passed since I was the little girl with the red scarf who believed she would always succeed at everything. I grew up and moved to the United States, but still, whatever I did, wherever I went, vivid memories of my childhood kept coming back to me. After thinking so much about that time, I wanted to do something for the little girl I had been, and for all the children who lost their childhoods as I did. This book is the result.
- <sup>6</sup> This book tells of my experiences between the ages of twelve and fourteen. I have presented my family as it was, but in order to protect the privacy of friends and neighbors mentioned in the story, I have changed their names and some details of their stories.
- <sup>7</sup> And what happened since then?

**manipulate:**  
control

- 8 A few months after our **ransack** the revolutionary situation in the theater changed again. The Rebels who had taken control lost power to a new group. Most of those who had been detained were released, including Uncle Fan, Aunt Wu, and Uncle Tian, who was detained right after our ransack because of the letter. Dad finally returned home too. He was still considered a landlord, and was put to work as a janitor; Mom still had to write self-criticism reports because she would not break with Dad; and Grandma still had to sweep the alley twice a day, but at least we were all together again.
- 9 Our class status continued to hold us back. Because of our political background I was denied another opportunity to become a stage actress, just as Ji-yong was not allowed to become a trumpeter nor Ji-yun a singer. But we never gave up. When the schools reopened after the Cultural Revolution, we all went to universities to finish our education. Both Ji-yun and I became teachers, while Ji-yong worked in a watch factory.
- 10 In 1980 my father was finally cleared. Not only was the charge that he was an “escaped landlord” dropped, but an old decision made during the Antirightist Movement was reversed as well. Only then did I learn the whole story. As a university student Dad had risked his life by joining the Communist Party when it was still an illegal, underground organization. During the Antirightist Movement of 1958, Dad had expressed some disagreement with Party policies, and as a result he was forced to resign from the Party. Although he was never officially classified as a rightist, he was denied promotions and major roles, and his career was ruined. In 1980 he was “rehabilitated” and appointed Vice President of the Children’s Art Theater. I looked at his gray hair and felt sad rather than happy. I knew he loved acting more than anything, and knew that nothing could make up for all the years he had lost.
- 11 The years of disappointments finally made me move to the United States. Now the whole family is here, except for Grandma, who died in 1992 at the age of ninety-eight. Ji-yong lives in Seattle, where he works in the tourist industry. Ji-yun teaches in a community college nearby, and my parents live with her family and enjoy the company of their two grandsons. And at long last my father has been able to do some acting.
- 12 Song Po-po died of a stroke not long after I came to America.

**ransack:** a sudden attack of a place, in search of things to take or steal

**contemporaries:**

people of the same age

**primitive:** simple, basic, and rough

**ironically:** unexpectedly

**fervently:** intensely

- <sup>13</sup> Sometimes when I think of all we went through, I can't help feeling that it was only by the grace of God that we were saved. My parents and Grandma all admitted that at times during those dark years they contemplated suicide. Without God's blessing they could never have survived.
- <sup>14</sup> As for the others in my story, in the early 1970s nearly all of my **contemporaries** were sent to the countryside for "reeducation." According to Mao, this was supposed to benefit both the young students and the farmers. The students would learn to respect the working masses, and the farmers would learn new technology from the students. Like the Cultural Revolution, this did not work out as it was supposed to. After ten years of sacrifice in the **primitive** countryside most of these young people returned to the city with little education, few skills, and no beliefs. All regretted the waste of their youth, and all have struggled to start over again.
- <sup>15</sup> Chang Hong worked for many years on a state-run farm near Mongolia. Her brother died while she was there. At the farm she met her husband. **Ironically**, he was a black whelp, the son of a former capitalist. Eventually they returned to Shanghai, where Chang Hong was able to move into a factory job.
- <sup>16</sup> An Yi's asthma prevented her from being sent to the countryside, and all these years she has been working in a small factory. Bai Shan spent years in the remote countryside near the Russian border, but now he is the business manager of the Shanghai branch of a foreign company. Lin-lin went back to school and became a doctor at a factory clinic. In the recent economic upheavals her factory closed, and the last time I saw her she was still unemployed. Du Hai is working in a factory near our childhood homes, and I saw him once at a distance. I've never heard what happened to Yin Lan-lan.
- <sup>17</sup> Except for a few who actually killed people, hardly any "revolutionaries" have been punished for what they did during the Cultural Revolution. Those who persecuted others, even beat or tortured them, were victims too, after all. They all believed they were doing it for Chairman Mao. In fact, many were caught on the wrong side in the power struggles and were persecuted in their turn, just as Du Hai's mother was.
- <sup>18</sup> I once **fervently** believed in Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. After all the experiences I have told about in this story, and many more painful and frustrating experiences afterward, I left China and moved to the



United States in 1984. I was thirty years old. I started at the bottom. I had no money, no friends, and hardly any English. I was willing to take on the struggle to establish myself in a new country because I knew that was the price I would have to pay for the freedom to think, speak, and write whatever I pleased.

<sup>19</sup> During my first few years in the United States I was continually astonished at the freedom Americans enjoy. One Halloween evening I was watching the parade at Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. I was amazed to see that all the celebrators were enjoying themselves so freely. They had no fear of being criticized by their bosses or arrested by the government for expressing themselves, even if they criticized or mocked the president.

<sup>20</sup> After my graduation from the University of Hawaii in 1987 I worked for a hotel and resort chain for several years, then for a health care company. Despite my success and promotions, I was not entirely happy. I realized that although I have adopted a new country, I cannot forget China. I wonder about China's present, and I worry about her future. I have realized that despite all my suffering, I cannot stop loving the country where I was born and raised. Feeling as I do, it seemed natural for me to start my own company, East West Exchange, to promote cultural exchanges between the United States and China. If I can help Americans to understand China, and the Chinese to learn about the United States, even a little, I will feel very rewarded. I will have contributed something to my country, China, and my home, America.

<sup>21</sup> I hope this book will be part of that mission.

Grateful acknowledgment is made for permission to reprint excerpts from: *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang

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•

**displayed:** showed  
**severe:** harsh  
**occupy:** take up space in  
**splendid:** beautiful and excellent  
**riveted:** fixed  
**merely:** only

**indefinitely:** for an unlimited amount of time  
**parasol:** umbrella used to shield from the sun  
**elite:** best  
**classified:** labeled

**dread:** fear  
**gesturing:** motioning  
**contemplated:** thought about  
**astonished:** surprised  
**mission:** important goal

••

**tender:** delicate  
**slogan:** short memorable phrase  
**rustled:** noisily fluttered or stirred  
**exemplary:** the best of its kind  
**fateful:** important and life-changing  
**Revolution:** act of major political change  
**Anthem:** uplifting song associated with the group  
**organ:** piano-like instrument  
**aisles:** rows  
**murmur:** unclear speaking sound  
**contemplate:** think about  
**jostling:** rough-pushing  
**cautiously:** carefully  
**comrade:** fellow member or friend  
**liberate:** free  
**oppression:** cruel and unjust control

**expectantly:** hopefully  
**tone:** way of speaking  
**recruitment:** sign-up  
**competitive:** hard to achieve because of the difficulty caused by other people with the same goal  
**political:** government-related  
**troupe:** artistic group  
**wailed:** cried in pain  
**characters:** word symbols  
**Hastily:** quickly  
**heaved:** breathed deeply  
**vicious:** cruel  
**humorous:** funny  
**devote:** give over every part of  
**strive:** try  
**dowry:** gift given by a family for marriage  
**calligraphy:** artistic or decorative handwriting  
**contagious:** easily spread from person to person  
**elude:** escape from

**stethoscope:** instrument used to listen to heartbeats or breathing  
**customs:** traditions  
**established:** set up  
**bustled:** moved noisily  
**pedicabs:** carriages powered by bicycles  
**hubbub:** noise  
**yield:** give in to pressure  
**occupied:** taken up  
**irritated:** annoyed  
**impact:** hit  
**bustling:** energetic and noisy  
**detrimental:** harmful  
**oppose:** go against  
**resolutely:** firmly  
**submissively:** in a show of weakness  
**trouser:** pants  
**seams:** stitching  
**scarlet:** red  
**unconcealed:** plainly visible

•• (continued)

**deftly:** skillfully  
**exposed:** shown  
**trousers:** pants  
**appreciative:** thankful  
**tuft:** patch  
**triumphantly:** in a winning manner  
**mutilated:** seriously damaged  
**quivered:** shook  
**remold:** re-shape  
**chortled:** laughed  
**spectators:** watchers  
**disperse:** leave  
**strutted:** confidently walked  
**suspended:** stopped  
**roamed:** wandered  
**exception:** change from the norm  
**Ragged:** poor  
**intended:** done for the purpose of  
**deliberately:** purposefully  
**intend:** want  
**taken:** misled  
**stalked:** threateningly walked  
**coincidence:** events that happen at the same time by accident, but seem to have a connection  
**vigorously:** energetically  
**recited:** repeated aloud  
**quivering:** shaking  
**shaft:** long narrow shape  
**subsided:** quieted down

**directives:** orders  
**porcelain:** hard, white ceramic  
**illegible:** unreadable  
**fragrance:** pleasant scent  
**regarded:** thought of  
**apprentice:** person learning a trade from a skilled expert  
**listlessly:** without energy  
**fiddled:** nervously touched  
**compound:** shared group of buildings  
**sly:** sneaky  
**remolded:** reshaped  
**temples:** the areas of the head between the eyes and ears  
**Timidly:** shyly  
**ruthless:** cruel  
**labor:** work  
**timidly:** shyly  
**executioner:** person who carries out the legal punishment of death  
**pester:** constantly annoy  
**flushed:** turned red  
**to spare:** left over  
**prying:** forcefully pulling  
**fleecy:** woolly  
**scolded:** show disapproval to  
**grimly:** seriously and harshly  
**veteran:** former soldier  
**stirring:** exciting and emotional  
**zealous:** passionate  
**strewn:** spread messily

**scurried:** moved in short hurried movements  
**casually:** in a careless or unplanned way  
**escort:** accompanying group  
**cuffed:** hit  
**croak:** deeply and roughly speak  
**expose:** show the truth about  
**formally:** officially  
**relations:** ties  
**ranks:** organizations of military soldiers  
**intentionally:** on purpose  
**oppressor:** person who tries to unfairly control others  
**disheveled:** messy  
**saliva:** spit  
**conned:** tricked  
**coarse:** rough  
**cripple:** disabled person  
**gloating:** taking pleasure in his misfortune  
**pondered:** wondered  
**subdued:** quiet or less intense  
**companion:** partner  
**cremated:** burned into ashes  
**aghast:** shocked  
**remolding:** re-shaping  
**conspicuous:** easily visible  
**vague:** unclear  
**indignant:** hurt and angry  
**short-wave:** long distance communicating  
**wearily:** tiredly

•• (continued)

**fringe:** edge

**reproach:** statement of disapproval

**presence:** being present

**reception:** receiving

**retreating:** moving away

**steadily:** continuously and evenly

**Comrades:** fellow members or friends

**Exhibition:** show

**sneers:** disrespectful looks

**stammered:** spoke with uncontrolled pauses

**condemn:** disapprove of

**piercing:** sharp and deep

**sincerity:** honesty

**ablaze:** burning

**sulkily:** quietly and angrily

**stimulate:** excite

**earnest:** serious

**seizures:** violent uncontrollable movement and loss of awareness

**directory:** informational list

**plywood:** type of thin wood

**units:** teams

**partitions:** dividers

**infamous:** famous for bad behavior

**brutal:** harsh or cruel

**piteously:** in a heartbreaking way

**evaluators:** judges

**reserved:** quiet and unexcitable

**affected:** emotionally moved

**obstinately:** stubbornly

**animated:** lively

**stance:** position and attitude

**former:** past

**resolved:** decided

**grated:** was unpleasant

**mentality:** way of thinking

**critical:** showing the faults

**conviction:** belief

**dampened:** wet

**briefing:** informational meeting

**Impulsively:** automatically and without thought

**urgently:** with a sense of emergency

**Masses:** large groups of people

**ransacked:** messily searched through

**detection:** getting caught

**methodical:** orderly

**grimace:** pained look

**sources:** providers of information

**clenched:** tightened

**exploiting:** unfairly making use of

**sinister:** evil

**verdict:** decision

**elation:** joy

**testified:** given proof in a court

**precious:** valued

**persecuted:** punished and mistreated

**deceived:** lied to

**vivid:** clear

**policies:** rules and actions

**resign:** quit

**rehabilitated:** fixed

**reeducation:** working "with the farmers as part of their education"

**asthma:** a disease that causes difficulty in breathing

**upheavals:** disruptions

**mocked:** made fun of

**formal:** official

**foreman:** leader

...

**excel:** to do better than most**emblem:** symbol**tantalizing:** tempting**successors:** people that replace those leaving their jobs**burgundy:** deep red**mahogany:** deep brown, wooden**solemnly:** seriously**status:** position**colliding:** crashing**inquiry:** questioning**calculus:** a type of mathematics**colleagues:** coworkers**pernicious:** sneakily harmful**prosperity:** good fortune and success**delicacies:** valuable and special food**provinces:** counties or states of a country**gizzards:** stomach parts**amid:** in the middle of**clamor:** noise**fervor:** intense feeling**festooned:** decorated**enraged:** angry**Pauper:** a nickname that is a word that means poor**insidious:** sneakily dangerous**corrupt:** evil**sole:** only**denounce:** publicly express disapproval**flabbergasted:** shocked**taunt:** insult**obedient:** cooperative and order-following**stern:** strict**affront:** insult**dawdled:** delayed leaving**aback:** surprised**slogans:** short memorable phrases**humid:** damp and hot**gaped:** stared with mouth open**distress:** pain and suffering**conscientiously:** with care**propagating:** spreading**frantically:** anxiously and excitedly**contentedly:** happily**sodden:** soggy**remnants:** leftover pieces**exploitation:** acts of taking advantage of others**pandemonium:** noisy, confusing disorder**retorted:** answered harshly**vast:** very large**extravagance:** overspending**liberated:** free**bedridden:** kept in bed**exploit:** take advantage**exploiter:** someone who takes advantage of others**prominently:** very visibly**haughty:** self-important**sneer:** disrespectful look**content:** happy**reflect:** think about and look back on**ideology:** belief system**extravagant:** wasteful**collective:** shared**devoted:** loyal**opportunist:** someone who takes unfair advantage of other people or situations**executioner:** person who carries out the legal punishment of death**corruptor:** ruiner**jovial:** cheerful**relatively:** more or less**acrid:** strongly bitter**mandarin:** round-collared silk**pomegranate:** red seed-filled fruit**faction:** smaller group that disagrees with other groups**ornery:** bad-tempered**whelp:** an insulting term for a child of a family belonging to any one of the "Five Black Categories"**communal:** shared**indistinct:** unclear**leniency:** mercy**severity:** harshness**xenophile:** person who loves foreign countries and cultures

... (continued)

**confiscated:** taken away by force

**laboriously:** in a hard-working way

**dunce:** fool's

**detained:** kept in police custody

**Mènière's:** a disease of the inner ear that affects hearing and balance

**nauseous:** sick to one's stomach

**kiosk:** booth

**feebly:** weakly

**yuan:** units of Chinese money

**angina:** disorder that causes pain in a specific part of the body

**Mandarin:** Chinese dialect

**immensity:** hugeness

**millet:** kind of seeded plant

**squabbling:** pointless arguing

**epilepsy:** a disorder that can be marked by sudden violent uncontrollable movement and loss of awareness

**partition:** divider

**domineering:** forceful and bossy

**flustered:** confused and nervous

**curtly:** briefly and rudely

**dismay:** fear and disappointment

**condemning:** harshly criticizing

**policy:** set of rules

**haggard:** tired and looking unwell

**dispersed:** scattered

**manipulate:** control

**ransack:** a sudden attack of a place, in search of things to take or steal

**contemporaries:** people of the same age

**primitive:** simple, basic, and rough

**ironically:** unexpectedly

**fervently:** intensely




Use the Vocab App to play mini games related to the words in this lesson.





## A Lesson 1: The World of Red Scarf Girl


**Introduce:** Use these propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution to draw students into the world of the novel they are about to read.

 **Project & Play:** Video of Mao.

 Discuss video.

 These posters were hung in public spaces across China during the 1960s and 1970s and filled the world of the book we're about to start reading, *Red Scarf Girl*. The narrator of the book, Ji-li Jiang, saw posters like these all the time.

 **Project:** Book cover of *Red Scarf Girl*.

 Today we start *Red Scarf Girl*, by Ji-li Jiang. She writes about her experiences during the Cultural Revolution in China, which ran from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.

 Discuss:

- Students have been writing about their own real-life experiences—just like Ji-li is doing.
- The subtitle of the book—*A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*—marks it as non-fiction.
- Ji-li was around your students' age when these events took place.

3 min

A

## Lesson 1—The World of *Red Scarf Girl*






Watch the video your teacher will present to understand the world of the novel you are about to read.



From the Collection of Dennis Hickey; IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections (Propaganda Reel)



### Lesson 1 Materials

-  Video of Mao
-  Mao as the Sun
-  Mao with the Young Pioneers
-  Video of Ji-li reading the Prologue
-  Book cover of *Red Scarf Girl*



B

1. Look carefully at the following poster.



Mao Ze-dong was the leader of China's Communist Party while Ji-li was growing up. Posters like this one of Chairman Mao were all around her.

2. Tell your partner what you think the artist wanted people to feel about Chairman Mao when they saw this image?
3. Share with your partner which details the artist included in this image to get people to feel that way.

IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections

C

Think of a detail in the poster that you think the artist included for a specific reason. How do you think that detail might have shaped the way people felt when they saw this poster?

Be prepared to share your thoughts on the detail you noticed in the class discussion.

B

## Lesson 1 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.R.2.1, ELA.K12.EE.3.1

**Work Visually:** Students analyze a propaganda poster of Mao.

- Assign partners.

5 min

- Partners work together to complete Activities 1–3 on page 149 of the Student Edition to analyze the poster.

C

## Lesson 1 (continued)

**Discuss:** Students hear classmates' different ideas about the details in the poster.

- Project:** Poster of Mao as the Sun.

- Call on several students to come up to the board one at a time.

- Point to a detail, and tell us why you think the artist included it. How do you think that detail might have shaped the way people felt when they saw this poster?

5 min

- Let students know that artists include details to stir up specific feelings and have an impact on the viewer.

- Post Answers. Keep track of what students say in a T-chart with 2 headings: "Detail" and "Impact."

- Discuss responses.

## D Lesson 1 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.R.2.1, ELA.K12.EE.3.1

**Work Visually:** Students analyze a second poster of Chairman Mao to continue their practice in “close reading” an image.

- 4 min
- Partners work together to complete Activities 1–3 on page 150 of the Student Edition to analyze a second poster.

## E Lesson 1 (continued)

**Discuss Image II:** Students hear classmates’ varied observations about the details in the poster.

- 5 min
- Project:** Poster of Mao with the Young Pioneers.
  - Call on several students to come up to the board one at a time.
  - Point to a detail and tell us why you think the artist included it. How do you think that detail might have shaped the way people felt when they saw this poster?
  - Post Answers. Keep track of what students say in a T-chart with 2 headings: “Detail” and “Impact.”
  - Discuss responses.

D

## Lesson 1—The World of Red Scarf Girl (continued)

- Look carefully at the following poster.



- Tell your partner what you think the artist wanted people to feel about Chairman Mao when they looked at this image.
- Share with your partner which details did the artist included in this image to get people to feel that way.

Courtesy of Maopost.com

E

Think of a detail in the poster that you think the artist included for a specific reason. How do you think that detail might have shaped the way people felt when they saw this poster?

Be prepared to share your thoughts on the detail you noticed in the class discussion.

F

Watch the video of Ji-li reading her Prologue from her memoir. Discuss your impressions of the Prologue in the class discussion.



Written by Ji-Li Jiang, directed by Mel Metcalfe, produced by Mel Metcalfe, Elizabeth Sun, and Ji-Li Jiang

G

Review the Prologue on page 42 and highlight in paragraphs 1–7:

1. Two words or phrases Ji-li uses to describe how she feels.
2. A word or phrase that shows that Ji-li expects her life will get better or worse.



Respond to the Writing Prompt on page 38 of your Writing Journal.



### Differentiation: Step G

● **ELL(Dev):** Alternate Writing Prompt provides simplified language, step-by-step directions, a key definition, and sentence starters.

■ **Moderate:** Alternate Writing Prompt provides step-by-step directions and sentence starters.

F

## Lesson 1 (continued)

**Watch & Discuss:** Students hear the author read the Prologue to *Red Scarf Girl*.

💬 This is Ji-li Jiang reading the Prologue to her memoir, *Red Scarf Girl*. She's describing what her life was like when she was a middle school student, about the same age as you.

📺 **Project & Play:** Video of Ji-li Jiang's Prologue.

👤 Discuss the Prologue.

💬 What are your first impressions of Ji-li?

💬 What do you think is going to happen to her during her story? Why?

5 min

G

## Lesson 1 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.3, ELA.7.R.2.1, ELA.K12.EE.3.1

**Write & Share:** Students notice and describe the details in the text that reveal emotion.

📄 Students complete the highlighting activity on page 151 of Student Edition.

👤 Ask 2 or 3 students to share their highlights and point to those places in the projected text.

⚙️ **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

📄 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 38.

➕ **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

🕒 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

🗣️ **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

📺 **Wrap-Up:** Project.

📄 **Exit Ticket:** Project.

22 min

5 min

End of Lesson 1

## H Lesson 2: Ji-li's Troubles Begin

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.6.1

**Work Out Loud:** Students read a passage aloud, adapting their speech to the demands of the text and demonstrating a command of formal English.

We're going to read aloud a lot of *Red Scarf Girl*, so let's spend some time thinking about what a good reading should sound like.

Direct students to Activity 1 on page 152 in the Student Edition.

Here's an example of a professional reading of "Cinderella." Let's see what you think.

Note: Don't let students know ahead of time that this reading of "Cinderella" is awful; let it take them by surprise.

**Project & Play:** "Cinderella" audio.

Discuss briefly what it feels like to listen to a lifeless reading.

How long do you think you could listen to the previous reading? What was missing from it?

Reading aloud is more than just speaking the words. When people speak or read, you will hear that they use emphasis and intonation at different points.

Direct students to the passage on page 152 of the Student Edition.

Practice reading the passage using emphasis and intonation. Pay close attention to the words and what they tell you about the characters' feelings.

Assign pairs to read aloud.

Select 1 or 2 volunteers to read a portion or all of the passage.

What did the reader(s) do well?

What would you like to improve in your own reading?

6 min

H

## Lesson 2—Ji-li's Troubles Begin

1. Listen to the audio your teacher plays.
2. Follow along as your classmates read aloud the following passage:

### Cinderella

Cinderella was in a rush. After all, she only had until midnight before her coach would turn into a pumpkin. She raced up the palace steps in her delicate glass slippers. Prince Charming spotted her in the crowd of beautiful single women and knew instantly that she was special. He asked her to dance and, mesmerized by her beauty, fell madly in love with her. Just as he was about to kiss her, the clock struck twelve and Cinderella had to make a run for it.

"Wait," called the Prince, "I don't even know your name!" He darted down the steps after her, but Cinderella had already disappeared into the night. Devastated at having lost his one true love, the Prince turned to go back inside. But something caught his eye. There, on the last stair, shining in the black night, was a single glass slipper.

152 Red Scarf Girl & Narrative • Lesson 2

### Lesson 2 Materials

- Hopefulness Graph 1
- Hopefulness Graph 2
- Hopefulness Graph 3
- Cinderella
- Highlighted Script: "The Liberation Army Dancer"

### Differentiation: Step H

● *ELL(Dev)*: Plan how to assign pairs for this activity. ELL students should be assigned to work with non-ELL students or ELL students at a different level. Students who are reading below grade level should be paired with students who are reading on or above grade level.

● *ELL(Dev)*: For students who are reading below grade level, you may choose to reduce the amount of text and have them focus on the second paragraph only.

I

Find the detail you highlighted in the previous Solo reading.  
Share the detail you highlighted in the class discussion.

J

Read along as your teacher reads paragraphs 16–41 of “The Liberation Army Dancer” on pages 45–47. If you’re one of the actors, find the highlighted dialogue which you’ll be speaking in the script that your teacher gave you.




I

## Lesson 2 (continued)

**Discuss What You Noticed:**

Students share something they noticed when reading *Red Scarf Girl* in their Solo.

5 min

-  Find the detail you highlighted in the previous Solo reading.
-  Raise your hand if you want to share what you noticed.
-  Before you start reading, tell us which paragraph you’re reading from so that we can all read along.









J

## Lesson 2 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.6.1

**Performing the Scene:** Students act out the scene in which Ji-li delivers her good news, adapting their speech to the demands of the text.

10 min

-  Assign 6 students to play the following roles:
  - Speaking roles: Ji-li, Ji-li’s father, Ji-li’s mother, Ji-li’s grandmother
  - Non-speaking roles: Ji-yong (Ji-li’s brother), Ji-yun (Ji-li’s sister)
-  As the teacher, you’ll read the part of the narrator.
-  Hand out pre-highlighted scripts for students assigned a role.
-  Read paragraphs 16–41 on pages 45–47 aloud with expression as students follow along in the text.
-  If you are one of our actors, try to emphasize important words, and say your lines like the character would.
-  What were some of the emotions you noticed in the reading? What do you think the speaker should sound like when he or she is speaking with that emotion? In order to make your read aloud interesting and fun, you have to adapt your speech to what is happening in the text.
-  As you watch the performance, pay special attention to how Ji-li’s father reacts to Ji-li and how Ji-li’s emotions change based on his reaction.
-  Direct students to perform the scene.

**K Lesson 2** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Analyze and Discuss:** Students use the text to explain and discuss how hopeful Ji-li is at this moment.

**Students** review paragraphs 18–20 from, “The Liberation Army Dancer” on page 45.

**Project:** Poll 1 and have students indicate how hopeful they think Ji-li is at this moment.

**Call on students** to explain their ratings and point out the specific words in the passage that led to their assessment.

**Students** highlight text to support their answer in Activity 2 on page 154 of Student Edition.

**Project:** Project or draw the Hopefulness Graph on the board.

**Discuss** the graph.

Together, let's decide how hopeful we think Ji-li is at this moment. Is she very hopeful? Not very hopeful at all? Somewhere in between?

**Decide**, as a class, where to rate Ji-li's hopefulness at this moment.

**Mark** that point on the graph.

8 min

**L Lesson 2** (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Analyze the Scene 2:** Students use specific words from the text to explain what they think about Ji-li's hopefulness at this moment in this scene.

**Students** review paragraphs 34–38 from “The Liberation Army Dancer” on page 46.

**Project:** Poll 2 and have students indicate how hopeful they think Ji-li is at this moment.

**Call on students** to explain their ratings.

**Show us your thinking.** Which of the words in this passage make you think that this is what Ji-li is feeling right now?

**Students** highlight text to support their answer in Activity 2 on page 154 of Student Edition.

5 min

**Lesson 2—Ji-li's Troubles Begin** (continued)

1. Review paragraphs 18–20 from “The Liberation Army Dancer” on page 45. Then answer the questions on the poll your teacher will project.
2. Highlight a quote in these paragraphs to support the number you chose in the poll.

**Hopefulness Graph 1**



1. Review paragraphs 34–38 from “The Liberation Army Dancer” on page 46. Then answer the questions on the poll your teacher will project.
2. Highlight a quote in these paragraphs to support the number you chose in the poll.

**Differentiation: Step K**

● *ELL(Dev)*: If you have several ELL students in your class you may choose to project and discuss the definitions for hopeful and hopeless.

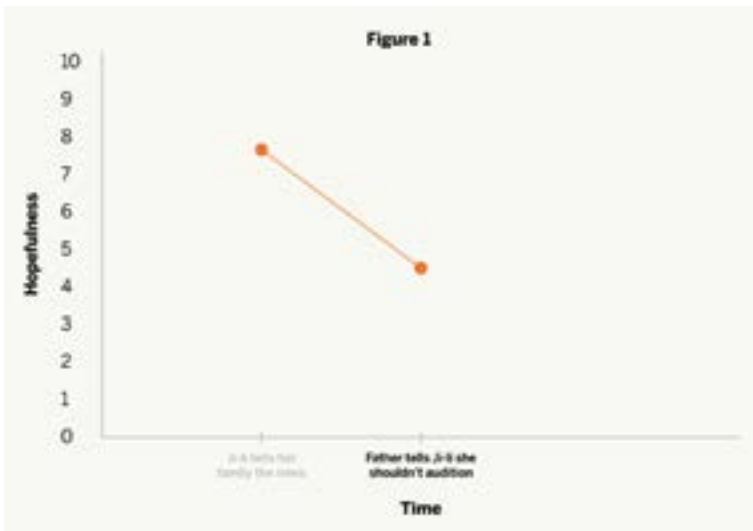
**Differentiation: Step L**

● *ELL(Dev)*: If you have several ELL students in your class you may choose to project and discuss the definitions for “hopeful” and “hopefulness.”

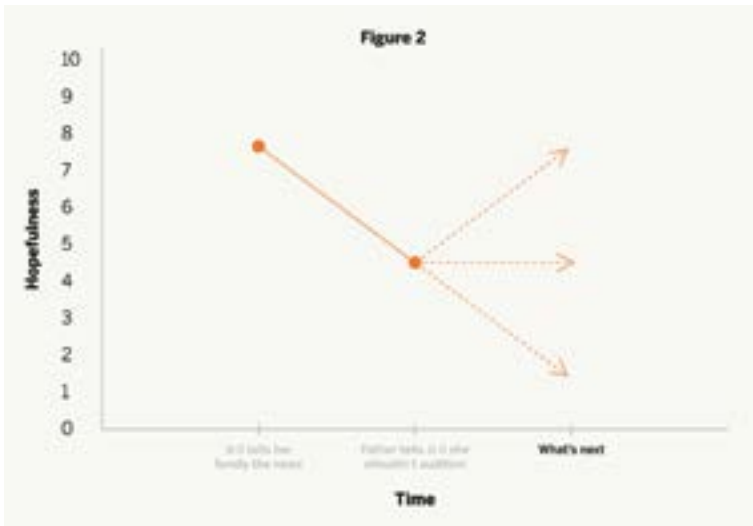


M

### Hopefulness Graph 2



### Hopefulness Graph 3



M

## Lesson 2 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

### Discuss Ji-li's Hopefulness:

Students try to come to a consensus of how hopeful Ji-li is at this moment and compare this to an earlier moment.

Return to the graph and add another moment to the horizontal axis, labeled: "Father tells Ji-li she shouldn't audition."

Decide as a class how to rate Ji-li's hopefulness at this moment in the scene.

Together, let's decide how hopeful we think Ji-li is now. Is she more hopeful than she was before? Less? About the same?

Mark that point on the graph, and draw a line between the 2 points.

Discuss graph.

Why, exactly, do you think Ji-li is so sad at this moment? What has she lost?

Where do you think the line of Ji-li's hopefulness will go next? Why?

6 min

5 min

**Wrap-Up:** Project.


**Exit Ticket:** Project.


**End of Lesson 2**


## N Lesson 3: Destroy the Four Olds!


Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.2.1


**Discuss:** Students read a description of the fourolds and examine how this concept has changed the atmosphere.


 Read aloud paragraph 8 from “Destroy the Four Olds!” on page 52.

 Students complete Activity 1 on page 156 of the Student Edition.


 Ask a few students to share what they highlighted.


 What do you think Chairman Mao meant by “old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits”?


 Why do you think he wanted to get rid of things that are considered “old”?


 Read paragraphs 9 and 10 aloud as students follow along.

 Assign partners.

 Partners complete Activity 2 on page 156 of Student Edition.

 Why do you think the feeling has changed so drastically?



 Read the last two sentences of paragraph 10 aloud as students follow along.

 What emotions do they seem to be feeling?

## N Lesson 3—Destroy the Four Olds!

1. Highlight any words and phrases that describe the Four Olds in paragraph 8 of “Destroy the Four Olds!” on page 52.
2. Determine what you think the Four Olds are. Share with a partner your thoughts on the following questions:
  - In paragraph 9, Jiang writes that Nanjing Road normally “bustled with activity” and was “so crowded with shoppers, they spilled off the sidewalk into the street.” What word *best* describes the feeling created by this description?
  - In paragraph 10, Jiang writes that the Great Prosperity Market’s windows are now “bare,” and the store is “deserted.” What word *best* describes the feeling created by this description?

### Lesson 3 Materials

-  Script for Acting
-  “Eliminating the Four Olds” image



O

Your teacher may assign you a role in acting out a scene.

### Actors, get ready!

Speaking roles:

- Crowd member 1
- Crowd member 2
- Man with an ax

Review your script to figure out how you want to speak your lines—and what you want to do while you're speaking.

### The crowd:

Remember to notice how the actors are speaking their lines and how they are moving. Get ready to cheer and stamp on the sign at the end!

P

There are a lot of strange things happening in this scene. What are you most curious about?

Share your responses in the class discussion.



### Differentiation: Step O

For students who are struggling to read this text, but would like to perform, assign them speaking roles of Crowd member 1, Crowd member 2, or Man with an ax. Point out their highlighted lines on the script.

If you have students who need to develop their fluency and would like to act in a role, allow them to practice their lines during vocabulary time.

O

### Lesson 3 (continued)

**Acting Out a Scene:** Students act out the scene in which townspeople destroy a fourolds shop sign.



Assign speaking roles.



Choose students who will act with feeling. Assign 7–10 other students to play people in the crowd.



Hand out scripts and have actors quickly review and make notes on their scripts about how they will perform. Give actors their props (the cardboard ax and sign).



We're going to act out the scene where a crowd of people destroy the sign over a grocery store because it's one of the fourolds. We'll figure out a little more about what fourolds were later on.



I'll be the narrator, and you'll play the characters. I'll start by setting the scene.



Read the beginning of the scene aloud. Then ask the students to start acting. Remind students to act out the scene physically.

8 min

P

### Lesson 3 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.2.1

**Discuss:** Students generate questions from the text and focus on what they need to understand going forward.



Instead of answering questions about this scene, I want you to ask some questions.



There are a lot of strange things happening here. What are you most curious about?



Call on students to share their questions.



Record their questions on the board, so that they can refer to them as they are reading.



Students may be able to answer some of each other's questions. Other questions will remain a mystery until they read more.

7 min

## Q Lesson 3 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.K12.EE.2.1,  
ELA.K12.EE.4.1

**Work Visually:** Students analyze a poster that portrays a scene similar to the one they just read.

**Project:** “Eliminating the Four Olds” image.

Which aspects of this poster seem similar to the story, and which seem different?

**Writing Journal:** Students answer question 1 on page 39.

Arrange students in groups of 3–5.

Assign each group a section of the poster to closely analyze:

- Section 1: The people in the middle
- Section 2: The people at the top right
- Section 3: The statue and books on the bottom left

Groups analyze the poster in Activities 1–3 on page 158 of Student Edition.

Ask students from each group to share their responses.

What do you see in the poster that is similar to the text?

**Writing Journal:** Students complete Activity 2 on page 39.

**Wrap-Up:** Project.

**Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 3

Destroy the Four Olds!

Q

## Lesson 3—Destroy the Four Olds! (continued)

Analyze the poster:



1. Look closely at the section of the poster your group was assigned.
2. Discuss what you see with your group.
3. Be prepared to share your finding with the class.

University of Michigan Library Digital Collections



### Differentiation: Step Q

● *ELL(Dev)*: Plan how you will group students for this activity. ELL students should be assigned to work with non-ELL students or ELL students at a different level.

R

## Lesson 4—The Pull of Compassion

1. Go to paragraphs 54–55 from “Destroy the Four Olds” on page 54. Highlight evidence that shows how Ji-li and her sister feel when they see the student inspectors.
2. In paragraphs 56–59, highlight evidence that shows how the man is feeling.
3. In paragraphs 61–71, highlight what the people in the crowd are doing. Highlight where in the text the students feel powerful.
4. In paragraphs 72–74, highlight the clues that show how Ji-li is feeling.

Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution • Lesson 4 **159**



### Lesson 4 Materials

No materials.



### Differentiation: Step R

If students find it difficult to keep track of the mix of emotions during the drama activity, use the Emotion Chart on page 22 of the Student Edition.

R

## Lesson 4: The Pull of Compassion

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.1.1

### Select Text and Read Closely:

Students reread to understand how different forces draw out Ji-li's emotions.



Read aloud paragraphs 54–55 from “Destroy the Four Olds” on page 54. Direct students to follow along in the text.



Students complete highlighting in Activity 1 on page 159 of Student Edition.



Ask students to explain what they think Ji-li and her sister are feeling, and provide evidence



What kind of new world is the Cultural Revolution creating?



Ask a student to read aloud paragraphs 56–59 on page 54. Direct students to follow along in the text as the student reads.



Students complete highlighting Activity 2 on page 159 of the Student Edition.



Ask a second student to read aloud paragraphs 61–71 on page 55. Direct students to follow along in the text as the student reads.



Students complete highlighting Activity 3.



What do you think the crowd is feeling?



Where does Ji-li stand? How do her feelings compare to those of the people around her?



Ask a third student to read aloud paragraphs 72–74 on page 56.



Students complete highlighting Activity 4 on page 159 of the Student Edition.



How does Ji-li feel about what just happened?




What emotions does Ji-li move through because of the events she encounters?


21 min

**S Lesson 4** (continued)


Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.4, ELA.K12.EE.1.1,  
ELA.K12.EE.4.1


**Write & Share:** Students clarify their understanding of Ji-li's reaction through writing.

 **Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

 **Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 40.

 **Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

 **On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

 **Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

 **Exit Ticket:** Project.

**End of Lesson 4**

**S****Lesson 4—The Pull of Compassion** (continued)

On page 40 in your Writing Journal, you will describe Ji-li's mix of emotions in the last moment of a scene:

"That poor guy," I finally said. "He should know better than to dress that way, but I'd just die if somebody cut my pants open in front of everybody like that." (74)



Go to page 40 of the Writing Journal to respond to the Writing Prompt.



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**Differentiation: Step S**

● *ELL(Dev)*: Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text and provides quotes from the text, a word bank, and sentence starters.

■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt directs students to a specific paragraph, and provides quotes from the text, a guiding question, and sentence starters.



**180** Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

T

## Lesson 5—Revolution in the Classroom

### Sharing a Highlight

1. Find the details you highlighted in the previous Solo.
2. Raise your hand if you'd like to share what you noticed about why Ji-li had trouble writing da-zi-bao against her teachers.
3. Before you start reading paragraphs 2–22 from “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 57–59, share which paragraph you're reading from so your classmates can read along.

U

Read the sentence below from paragraph 3.

“The classrooms buzzed with revolutionary fervor.”

1. Highlight two examples in the text that describe how the classrooms “buzzed.”
2. Describe to your partner how the atmosphere at Ji-li's school has changed.

Think about the following poll question and be prepared to share your answer in the class discussion.

**Poll:** What are *da-zi-baos*?

- A. Posters praising Chairman Mao
- B. Newspaper articles criticizing the schools
- C. Student posters attacking the school teachers
- D. Orders to suspend classes

T

## Lesson 5: Revolution in the Classroom

**Discuss:** Students practice drawing inferences from their observations.



Students review paragraphs 2–22 from “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 57–59.



Students complete Activities 1–3 on page 161 of the Student Edition.



Call on 3 students to share a place in the text they highlighted that shows why Ji-li had trouble writing *da-zi-bao* against her teachers.

3 min

U

## Lesson 5 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.1.1

**Select Text:** Students explore how the atmosphere inside Ji-li's school shifted as students gained the power.



**Project:** Da-zi-bao image.



Read paragraphs 2–9 from “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 57–58 aloud as students follow along in the text.



Assign partners.



Partners complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 161 of Student Edition.



Students look at the poll on page 161 of the Student Edition and indicate their responses in a class discussion.

7 min



### Lesson 5 Materials



Writing *Da-Zi-Bao* Video



*Da-zi-bao*



### Differentiation: Step U

Direct students who are struggling to read or understand this passage to focus on paragraph 3.

## V Lesson 5 (continued)

**Work Visually:** Students see what *da-zi-bao* looked like inside and outside schools.

1 min  
This is what it actually looked like when students were posting *da-zi-bao* for everyone to read.

**Project & Play:** Writing *Da-Zi-Bao* Video.

## W Lesson 5 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.1.1

**Select Text, Highlight, and Write:** Students explore how Ji-li's classmates used the new power they were given to criticize their teachers, and then write an objective summary of the text.

Read aloud paragraphs 10–22 from “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 58–59 of the Student Edition as students follow along.

Why does Yin Lan-lan describe herself as a “victim” of the educational system?

Students complete the highlighting activity on page 162 of the Student Edition.

Discuss Yin Lan-lan's explanation and how she decided to use her new power.

**Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 1 and 2 on page 41.

For question 2, write a paragraph that focuses on the central ideas from the passage. Consider what is most important in the reading, but do not include personal opinions or interpretations. Simply restate the information in your own words.

Discuss student responses.

What did you identify in your summaries as being the most significant changes in Ji-li's school?

## V Lesson 5—Revolution in the Classroom (continued)



Written by Ji-Li Jiang, directed by Mel Metcalfe, produced by Mel Metcalfe, Elizabeth Sun, and Ji-Li Jiang

W

In paragraphs 10–22 of “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*,” on pages 58–59, highlight four or five details that show what Ji-li and her friends thought about what Yin Lan-lan had written.



Answer questions 1 and 2 on page 41 of your Writing Journal.



Most of Ji-li's classmates had no trouble writing *da-zi-bao* that criticize their teachers, but Ji-li couldn't.

Why was it so hard for Ji-li? How did Ji-li's position differ from those around her?



Go to page 42 in your Writing Journal to write a summary that describes why some of her classmates were so eager to write *da-zi-bao*.



## Lesson 5 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.4, ELA.K12.EE.1.1

**Write & Share:** Students write about Ji-li's internal conflict.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 42.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.



**Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 5



## Y Lesson 6: Revising to Go Deeper

Benchmark: ELA.7.C.1.5

**Revise and Share:** Students include additional details to develop their ideas.

**S** Direct students to page 164 of the Student Edition.

In Lesson 5 you wrote about why Ji-li struggled to write *da-zi-bao* about her teachers. Today you're going to practice adding even more details from the book that help show why that was the case.

I didn't mark a place for you to revise. You're going to look at your own writing, then at the book, and decide what additional details you can add to make your idea from the last Writing Prompt even clearer.

If any students were absent or failed to hand in their work, tell them to select another recent writing prompt to work with.

**Writing Journal:** Students revise and extend Lesson 5's writing on page 41.

**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

20 min

Y

## Lesson 6—Revising to Go Deeper

1. Read your writing from Lesson 5 and highlight where you used details from the book to explain your idea.
2. Reread that part of the book and highlight one or two more details that connect to your idea.
3. Look at the details that you just highlighted in the book. Write three to five more sentences that use those details to explain your idea on page 41 of the Writing Journal.

Skip a few lines, and then write your sentences below what you wrote in the last lesson.



### Lesson 6 Materials

Audio of Trailer “The Red Successors”



### Differentiation: Step Y

For students who struggle to identify a place on their own to revise, highlight the place to revise for them.



Z

1. In the last lesson, we read that most of Ji-li's classmates were eager to write *da-zi-bao* about their teachers, while Ji-li was unable to write anything critical.
2. Highlight a phrase or sentence in paragraphs 23–36 of “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 59–61 where Ji-li is unable or unwilling to join the crowd.


Z


**Lesson 6** (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3


**Select Text: Reading Closely:**


Students closely read a scene where Ji-li is unwilling, or unable, to join in writing *da-zi-bao*.


 In Lesson 5 and 6, we explored how difficult it was for Ji-li to write *da-zi-bao* about her teachers. Now take a look at the next part of this chapter, and see if you can find a place where she faces a similar struggle.

 Read aloud paragraphs 23–36 of “Writing *Da-Zi-Bao*” on pages 59–61 as students follow along.

 Students complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 165 of Student Edition to highlight Ji-li's unwillingness to join the crowd.

 Have a few students share what they highlighted, and discuss their observations with the class.

 Ask students to compare and connect observations to infer some overall thoughts/feelings.

 **Wrap-Up:** Play Audio of Trailer “The Red Successors.”

 **Exit Ticket:** Project.

14 min

8 min

**End of Lesson 6****Differentiation: Step Z**

● *ELL(Dev)*: If you have several ELL students in your class you may need to explain terms from the reading in paragraph 22, including “my mind was blank,” “blouse,” “soaked,” and “sweat.”

**Before You Begin Lesson 7:**

In Lesson 7, use the Hope-o-Meter app in optional digital Activity 4 so students can refine and deepen their understanding of the text. If using digital activities, skip print activities accordingly.

## A<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7: The Election of the Red Successors

### Sharing What We Noticed:

Students hear observations and share responses to the text.

- 3 min
- Call on a few students to share their annotations from the previous Solo.
  - Remind them to point out the specific detail they noticed and to explain why that detail caught their attention.
  - Students read details they highlighted in paragraphs 1-45 of "The Red Successors."

## B<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7 (continued)

**Preparing to Act:** Students prepare to act out a scene.

- 2 min
- Assign speaking roles.
  - Hand out scripts and have actors quickly review them.
  - The rest of you will play Ji-li's other classmates.
  - Don't forget: Acting is physical work! Use your face and your body—as well as your words—to communicate what your character is feeling.

## A<sup>2</sup> Lesson 7—The Election of the Red Successors

- Find the detail you highlighted in the previous Solo. The details you highlighted were in paragraphs 1–45 of "The Red Successors."
- Raise your hand if you'd like to share what you noticed.
- Before you start reading the detail you highlighted, share which chapter you are reading from so that we can all read along.

### B<sup>2</sup> Actors, get ready!

Your teacher may assign you a role in acting out a scene.

Speaking roles:

- Yu Jian
- Ji-li
- Du Hai
- Yin Lan-lan
- Student who agrees with Yin Lan-lan

Review your script to figure out how you want to speak your lines—and what you want to do while you're speaking.

### Everyone else

You'll play Ji-li's classmates.

- Review paragraphs 29, 31, and 35 on page 68. Find the three places where you need to participate.
- Highlight what you'll do or say when you're acting.

### Lesson 7 Materials



Script for Acting



Hope-o-Meter app



## Lesson 7 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Acting Out a Scene:** Students are introduced to the Hope-o-Meter app and act out the election scene.



Direct student to act out the scene.



Let students know you'll be stopping their performance after each of the 4 parts indicated on their scripts.



At each break they will use the Hopefulness Graph on page 167 of the Student Edition to highlight and rate 1 or 2 sentences from this passage that help them understand Ji-li's level of hopefulness.



Students don't need to explain their rating in writing but should be ready to talk about their reasons when called on.



**Project & Review:** Hopefulness Graph.



Here is the Hopefulness Graph we worked with in Lesson 2. You will use this graph on page 167 of your Student Edition to rate Ji-li's level of hopefulness in 4 events from this chapter.



Ask students with speaking parts to stand with their scripts. You'll read the part of the narrator.



When you reach the end of a section ask students how hopeful Ji-li is at this moment.



Call on several students to share what they highlighted and how they rated it.



Mark that point on the Hopefulness Graph. Then get back to the acting as quickly as you can.



Students act out the scene, pausing to record levels on the Hopefulness Graph.

21 min

### Hopefulness Graph



How to use the Hopefulness Graph:

1. Highlight a moment when Ji-li felt especially hopeful (or especially hopeless).
2. Rate her hopefulness level at that moment.
3. Be ready to explain your rating.

D<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 7 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.3, ELA.7.R.2.3

**Write & Share:** Students write about how Du Hai's feelings change as he gains power over Ji-li.

**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.

**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 44.

**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.

**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

**Wrap-Up:** Project.

**Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 7

The Election of  
the Red Successors

D<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 7—The Election of the Red Successors (continued)

Use paragraphs 13–35 of “The Red Successors” on pages 67–68 for today’s writing.



Go to page 44 in your Writing Journal to write about what happens to Du Hai's feelings as he gains power over Ji-li.



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### Differentiation: Step D<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*: Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text and provides guiding questions and sentence starters.

■ *Moderate*: Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text and provides sentence starters.



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E<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8—Reading Ji-li's Thoughts

Compare the two versions of this comic.

### Version 1:



### Version 2:



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E<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8: Reading Ji-li's Thoughts

**Introduce:** Students compare 2 versions of a comic strip to explore how authors communicate point of view.

- Ask students to read the comic on page 169 of the Student Edition.
- What's happening here?
- Why do you think the boy is smiling?
- Have students read the second version of the same comic strip.
- How do these 2 versions compare? What difference does the change make?
- Discussion Points:
  - The second version lets us inside the boy's experience. This is called "internal narration."
  - Internal narration is a little like a voice-over in a movie. It's helpful because it tells us the character's point of view. We can learn exactly how they think and feel about their situation.

6 min

- How does our impression of a movie character change when we can hear his or her thoughts or feelings?
- Direct students to turn to paragraphs 16 and 17 in the "The Liberation Army Dancer" on page 45.
- Which part of the passage tells us what Ji-li is thinking or feeling?
- What does this part change or add to what we know about Ji-li's point of view?
- Read the passage aloud again, this time leaving out the internal narration.
- Without internal narration, what changes?

### Lesson 8 Materials

- "The Birthday Present" comic, version no.1
- "The Birthday Present" comic, version no. 2
- Script for Acting
- Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 3








### Differentiation: Step E<sup>2</sup>

For students struggling to read this text who would like to perform, assign them the roles of Teacher Gu or Ji-li. Point out their highlighted lines on the script.

**F<sup>2</sup>** Lesson 8 (continued)

**Acting Out a Scene:** Students act out a scene to encounter the tension between Ji-li's thoughts and actions.

5 min



-  Assign the speaking roles.
-  For the narrator's role, choose a strong reader who can "voice-over" Ji-li's thoughts dramatically.
-  Hand out scripts.
-  As the actors plan how they'll act out their parts, coach them.
-  Begin the acting.

**G<sup>2</sup>** Lesson 8 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.K12.EE.1.1

**Select Text:** Students analyze parts of the scene they acted out, paying attention to how Ji-li's internal narration reveals her point of view.

6 min

-  Ask students to review paragraphs 12–13 of "Graduation" on page 76, and complete the highlighting activities on page 170 of the Student Edition.
-  **Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 1 and 2 on page 45.

**F<sup>2</sup>** Lesson 8—Reading Ji-li's Thoughts (continued)**Actors, get ready!**

Speaking roles:

- Ji-li
- Teacher Gu
- Narrator

Review your script to figure out how you want to **speak** your lines—and what you want to **do** while you're speaking.

**G<sup>2</sup>**

Reread paragraphs 12 and 13 of "Graduation" on page 76 and highlight two or three details that clearly show Ji-li's point of view toward Teacher Gu.



Complete questions 1 and 2 on page 45 of your Writing Journal.

**Differentiation: Step G<sup>2</sup>**

● *ELL(Dev)*, ■ *Moderate*:  
Alternate Writing Prompt provides a definition of "voice breaking" and uses sentence starters.

H<sup>2</sup>

Use paragraphs 8–25 of “Graduation” on pages 76–77 for today’s writing. Ji-li’s voice broke when she looked at Teacher Gu. What do you think is happening in this moment? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.



Go to page 46 in your Writing Journal and write about why Ji-li’s voice broke when she looked in Teacher Gu’s eyes.

H<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 8 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.3, ELA.K12.EE.1.1

**Write & Share:** Students write a focused exploration of how a specific detail reveals Ji-li’s feelings.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 46.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Play *Red Scarf Girl* Audio Teaser 3.



**Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 8

## I<sup>2</sup> Lesson 9: The Revolution Hits Home

**Work Visually:** Students look at 2 images to see how the setting helps tell the story.



Students look at 2 images of the same classroom on pages 172–173 of the Student Edition to see how setting helps tell the story.



Ask 3 students to tell the class details they have noticed about the setting in the first image.



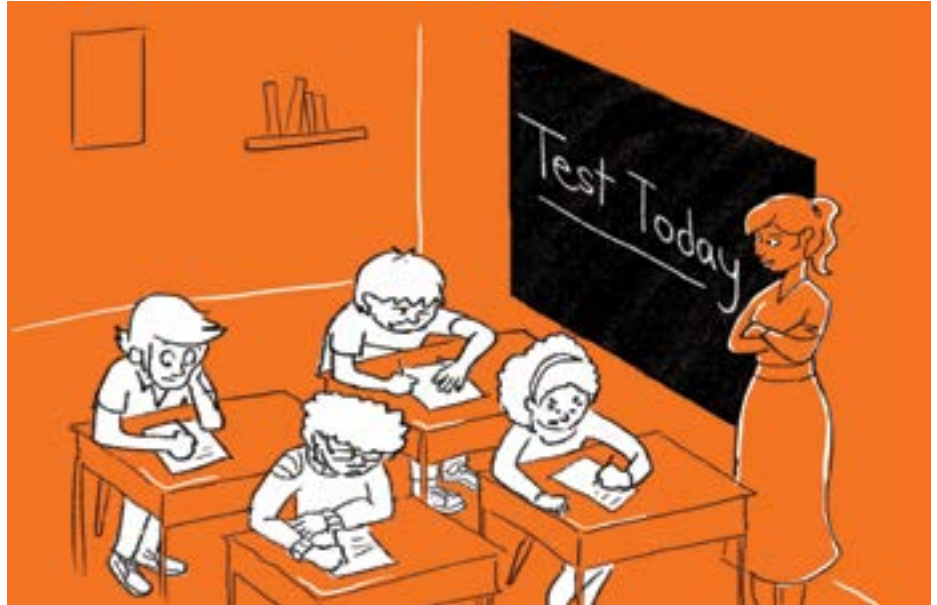
Compare the 2 settings. Make sure students identify how the setting is the same, but the “feel” of the place is different because the atmosphere and mood have changed.

4 min

I<sup>2</sup>

### Lesson 9—The Revolution Hits Home

What does this place feel like?  
What's the atmosphere?  
What's the mood?



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#### Lesson 9 Materials



Classroom Setting 1



Classroom Setting 2



Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 4



#### Differentiation: I<sup>2</sup>

If students struggle to identify the setting, consider allowing them to work in pairs as they highlight the details that describe the setting.



1

What does this place feel like now?

How is it similar to or different from the first time you saw it?








**J<sup>2</sup>** Lesson 9 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Select Text:** Students look closely at the way Ji-li describes her home at the beginning of her memoir.

5 min






-  A story's setting can show us a lot more than what the place looks like. It can communicate atmosphere and mood.
-  Let's look closely at the details that help us see what this setting feels like to Ji-li. Think about how the author's words convey what it feels like to be there.
-  Here's how Ji-li describes her home at the beginning of *Red Scarf Girl*.
-  Read aloud paragraphs 64–70 of “The Liberation Army Dancer” on pages 49–50 as students follow along.
-  Students highlight specific words (diction) that describe the setting in Activities 1 and 2 on page 174 of the Student Edition.

**K<sup>2</sup>** Lesson 9 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Select Text:** Students analyze a description of Ji-li's home after the search by the Red Guards.

5 min

-  Raise your hand if you remember from the last Solo, when the Red Guards searched Ji-li's house, a detail of the setting that caught your attention.
-  Let's take another look at the same scene.
-  Reread paragraphs 119–121 in “A Search in Passing” on pages 88–89. Direct students to follow along as you read.
-  Students highlight details that describe the setting in Activities 3 and 4 on page 174 of the Student Edition.
-  Ask students what specific words (diction) helped them picture the setting and understand Ji-li's feelings about her home.

**J<sup>2</sup>****Lesson 9—The Revolution Hits Home (continued)****How does Ji-li describe her home?**

1. Highlight the details that describe the setting in paragraphs 64–70 of “The Liberation Army Dancer” on pages 49–50.
2. Think about what those details tell us about how Ji-li feels when she's in her home at the beginning of the story.

**K<sup>2</sup>****How does Ji-li describe her home now?**

3. Highlight the details that describe the setting in paragraphs 119–121 of “A Search in Passing” on pages 88–89.
4. Look at those details and think about what they tell us about Ji-li's feelings for her home.

**Differentiation: Step J<sup>2</sup> and K<sup>2</sup>**

If students struggle to identify the setting, consider allowing them to work in pairs as they highlight the details that describe the setting.

L<sup>2</sup>

Compare how Ji-li felt in her home at the beginning of the story to how she felt after the Red Guards searched her home. Use details from the setting to support your ideas.



Go to page 47 in your Writing Journal and write about this comparison.

L<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 9 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.R.2.3, ELA.7.C.1.4

**Write & Share:** Students use details from the text to explore how Ji-li's experience reshaped her feelings about the world around her.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 47.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Play *Red Scarf Girl* Audio Teaser 4.



**Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 9



### Differentiation: Step L<sup>2</sup>

● **ELL(Dev):** Alternate Writing Prompt uses simpler language, breaks the prompt down into smaller chunks, and provides sentence starters.

■ **Moderate:** Alternate Writing Prompt uses simpler language and provides sentence starters.

## M<sup>2</sup> Lesson 10: The Moves a Writer Makes

Benchmark: ELA.7.V.1.3

**Select Text:** Students work with several passages to examine the impact of specific words and phrases on the mood of each passage and the meaning conveyed to the reader.

Today when we read *Red Scarf Girl*, I want you to be aware of when the author is using specific words and phrases to “push your buttons” and make you feel certain emotions.

Let’s consider this during a moment earlier in the book.

Read aloud paragraphs 44–52 of “Locked Up” on pages 104–105 as students follow along in the text.

Students complete Activities 1–3 on page 176 of Student Edition.

Discuss responses.

Read aloud paragraphs 53–54 of “Locked Up” as students follow along in the text.

Students complete Activities 4–6 on page 176 of the Student Edition.

Discuss responses.

Read aloud paragraphs 55–67 of “Locked Up” as students follow along in the text.

Students complete Activities 7–9 on page 176 of the Student Edition.

Discuss responses.

### The Moves a Writer Makes

M<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10—The Moves a Writer Makes

**Read paragraphs 44–52 of “Locked Up” on pages 104–105.**

1. Determine what mood or emotion Ji-li is trying to make the reader feel in this scene.
2. Highlight one detail Ji-li uses to make you feel that emotion.
3. Explain how the detail that you highlighted impacts the reader and creates this mood.

**Read paragraphs 53–54 of “Locked Up.”**

4. Determine what mood or emotion Ji-li is trying to make the reader feel in this scene.
5. Highlight one detail Ji-li uses to make you feel that emotion.
6. Explain how the detail that you highlighted impacts the reader and creates this mood.

**Read paragraphs 55–67 of “Locked Up.”**

7. Determine what mood or emotion Ji-li is trying to make the reader feel in this scene.
8. Highlight one detail Ji-li uses to make you feel that emotion.
9. Explain how the detail that you highlighted impacts the reader and creates this mood.

15 min

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### Lesson 10 Materials

 Red Scarf Girl Audio Teaser 5

### Differentiation: Step M<sup>2</sup>

● *ELL(Dev)*: “Push your buttons” is an idiomatic expression that may be unfamiliar to ELL students. You may want to explain that the phrase describes a situation in which someone knows exactly what to do to make someone else feel a specific way. For example, a younger sister might know just what to do to make her older sister upset—she knows how to push her older sister’s buttons.

N<sup>2</sup>

Use paragraphs 44–67 of “Locked Up” on pages 104–106 for today’s writing.



Go to page 48 in the Writing Journal to write about Ji-li’s birthday and the emotions it stirred up.

O<sup>2</sup>

Read your writing on the page 48 of your Writing Journal where you described Ji-li’s birthday. Find a place where you used details from the book to develop your idea.

Reread that part of the book and identify one or two additional details that connect to your overall feeling of Ji-li’s birthday.

Write 3–5 more sentences that use those details to explain your idea.



Go to page 49 in your Writing Journal to add details to your writing about Ji-li’s birthday.

N<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10 (continued)

**Write & Share:** Students write about how Ji-li’s description of her birthday makes them feel as readers.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 48.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

17 min

O<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 10 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.5, ELA.7.V.1.3

**Revise:** Students add details to their writing.



Think of how your peers commented on people’s writing. I imagine it gave you ideas about how to improve your own.



Direct students to add details to their writing to further develop their idea about Ji-li’s birthday.



**Writing Journal:** Students revise their writing in Activities 1–3 on page 49.



**Wrap-Up:** Play *Red Scarf Girl* Audio Teaser 5.



**Exit Ticket:** Project.

10 min

4 min

End of Lesson 10



### Differentiation: Step N<sup>2</sup>

● **ELL(Dev):** Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text, breaks down the prompt, and provides sentence starters.

■ **Moderate:** Alternate Writing Prompt breaks down the prompt into smaller chunks and provides sentence starters.




### Differentiation: Step O<sup>2</sup>


● **ELL(Dev):** Highlight the place to revise for ELL students or anyone struggling to identify a place on their own.


## P<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11: What's In a Name?


Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3


**Discuss:** Students determine what Ji-li's desire to rid herself of her family name means.


 Draw a line on the board with the word "Revolution" on one end and "family" on the other. Point out the line you created.


 Ji-li is pulled between the attraction of being part of Mao's Cultural Revolution and her love for her family. After we read the passage, I'll ask each of you to "take a stand," to choose a place on this Conflict Line that shows which of these 2 forces is pulling harder.

 Direct students to page 178 in the Student Edition.

 Read aloud paragraphs 35 and 36 of "Half-City Jiangs" on page 120 as students follow along in the text.

 Ask students to take a stand on the Conflict Line. Be sure that students understand that when they select a place on the line, they are standing where Ji-li would stand.

 Call on a few students to explain why they chose to stand where they did.


 **Writing Journal:** Students answer the question on page 50 to determine where Ji-li stands.


7 min


## Q<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11 (continued)


Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3


**Discuss:** Students consider the details of the scene where Ji-li reverses her decision to change her name.

 Read aloud paragraphs 37–42 of "Half-City Jiangs" on page 120 as students follow along in the text.

 Would you want to walk into this room? Why or why not?

 Share responses. Ask students to point to details in the passage that made the room seem inviting or not.

 Ask students to consider what feeling Ji-li was trying to create in her readers.

 If you were turning this book into a movie, what would you choose as the setting for this scene? What kinds of emotions would you try to get your audience to feel at this moment?

8 min

## P<sup>2</sup> Lesson 11—What's In a Name?

Read paragraphs 35 and 36 of "Half-City Jiangs" on page 120.

Ji-li is pulled between the attraction of being part of Mao's Cultural Revolution and her love for her family. After we read the passage, you will be asked to "take a stand."

Be prepared to choose a place on the Conflict Line your teacher has drawn at the front of the room to show which of these 2 forces you think is pulling harder.



Go to page 50 in your Writing Journal to write about where Ji-li stands between her family and the Cultural Revolution.

Q<sup>2</sup>

Follow along as your teacher reads aloud paragraphs 37–42 of "Half-City Jiangs" on page 120.

If you were turning this book into a movie, what would you choose as the setting for this scene? What kinds of emotions would you try to get your audience to feel at this moment? Share your thoughts in the class discussion.

### Lesson 11 Materials

No materials.

### Differentiation: Step Q<sup>2</sup>

If students are struggling to understand this passage, direct them to focus on paragraphs 53–64 for this activity.

R<sup>2</sup>

Read paragraphs 57–59 of “Half-City Jiangs” on page 121.



Answer the question on page 50 of your Writing Journal.

S<sup>2</sup>

Use paragraphs 35–64 of “Half-City Jiangs” on pages 120–122 for today’s writing.



Respond to the Writing Prompt on page 51 of your Writing Journal.



### Differentiation: Step S<sup>2</sup>

● **ELL(Dev):** Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text, breaks the prompt into smaller chunks, and provides sentence starters.

■ **Moderate:** Alternate Writing Prompt reduces the amount of text and provides sentence starters.

R<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 11 (continued)

Benchmark: ELA.7.R.2.3

**Select Text:** Students examine Ji-li’s encounter with Officer Ma.



Students individually read paragraphs 57–59 of “Half-City Jiangs” on page 121.



**Writing Journal:** Students answer the question on page 50.



Where does Ji-li stand now after meeting with Officer Ma? Show me what you think by choosing a place to stand on the Conflict Line.



Call on a few students to explain why they chose to stand where they did.

6 min

S<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 11 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.C.1.3, ELA.7.R.2.3

**Write & Share:** Students use evidence to explain why Ji-li abandoned her plan to change her name.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



**Writing Prompt:** Students complete the Writing Prompt on page 51.



**Differentiation:** Digital PDF.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.

17 min



**Wrap-Up:** Project.



**Exit Ticket:** Project.











7 min

End of Lesson 11

## T<sup>2</sup> Lesson 12 : A Dramatic Ending

**Select Text:** Students review passages from the Solo to determine how Ji-li's loyalties to the Revolution and her family are affected by the events at the end of the book.






10 min

-  Direct students to complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 180 of the Student Edition.
-  Discuss the passage to confirm student understanding.
-  Ask students to take a stand on the Conflict Line used in the previous lesson.
-  Why wasn't Ji-li allowed to present at the exhibition even though she did such an excellent job in the preview?
-  Which force do you think is pulling more strongly at Ji-li right now?
-  Call on a few students to explain why they chose to stand where they did.
-  Students complete Activities 3 and 4 in the Student Edition.
-  What's this letter about?
-  Why is Ji-li so scared?
-  Discuss responses.

## U<sup>2</sup> Lesson 12 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.R.2.2, ELA.K12.EE.4.1


**Discuss:** Students engage in a whole group discussion to enhance their understanding of the passage in which the Red Guards search Ji-li's home.

-  Read paragraphs 12–28 aloud in "The Incriminating Letter" on pages 130–131.
-  If Ji-li had explained why she decided to hide the letter, what do you think she would have said?
-  Choose a student to read paragraphs 42–67 on pages 133–135 aloud, dramatically.
-  **Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 1 and 2 on page 52.
-  Discuss student responses.


T<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 12—A Dramatic Ending

1. Review what happened to Ji-li in paragraphs 1–59 of "The Class Education Exhibition" on pages 123–128.
2. Be prepared to take a stand on the Conflict Line to represent your thoughts of what Ji-li is experiencing.
3. Review paragraphs 2–11 of "The Incriminating Letter" on pages 129–130.
4. Discuss your thoughts on this letter in the class discussion.

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### Lesson 12 Materials

 Hope-o-Meter app



### Differentiation: Step T<sup>2</sup>

If students are struggling to understand this passage, direct them to focus on paragraphs 9 and 10.



U<sup>1</sup>

Follow along as your teacher and classmates read aloud portions of “The Incriminating Letter” on pages 130–135 of the Student Edition.



Go to page 52 in your Writing Journal to answer questions 1 and 2.

V<sup>2</sup>

Follow along as a classmate reads aloud paragraphs 68–77 on page 135.



Go to page 52 in your Writing Journal to answer questions 3–5.

1. Read paragraphs 11–20 of “Sweeping” on pages 136–137 on your own. Highlight words that show how Ji-li feels.
2. With your partner, select 10 words from the reading that best capture how Ji-li feels.

Select:

- 10 individual words
- Words in phrases that add up to 10 words



Answer questions 1 and 2 on page 53 of your Writing Journal.

22 min

- Why did Thin-Face bring Ji-li's mother and grandmother into the room with Ji-li?
- Choose a student to read paragraphs 68–77 on page 135 aloud.
- Compare Thin-Face's motivations and understanding to Ji-li's when she hides the letter.
- Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 3–5 on page 52.
- Discuss responses.

V<sup>2</sup>

## Lesson 12 (continued)

Benchmarks: ELA.7.R.2.2, ELA.K12.EE.4.1

**Connect Text:** Student pairs discuss the changes in Ji-li's life and collaborate to determine the words that best capture her feelings.

16 min

- Sometimes when you discuss a text with a partner, you develop whole new ways of understanding the ideas you read about. Work with a partner to come up with the words that best describe how Ji-li feels at this point in her life.
- Students individually read paragraphs 11–20 of “Sweeping” on pages 136–137.
- Assign partners.
- Students complete Activities 1 and 2 on page 181 of the Student Edition.
- Writing Journal:** Students answer questions 1–2 on page 53.
- Discuss responses.
- Wrap-Up:** Project.
- Students can use the Hopefulness graph used in Lesson 7 on page 167 of the Student Edition to complete the Wrap-Up activity.
- Exit Ticket:** Project.

End of Lesson 12

# Write an Essay



Over the course of the next few lessons, students will draft an essay in stages. Essay lessons are unique in that each day's work builds toward a complete, polished piece of writing. The revision process in these lessons uses the same steps students have previously followed in Revision Assignments. However, during essay lessons, students are not just doing exercises to practice a skill; instead, they are trying to actually improve the final piece, as in traditional revising. At the same time, it is important to note that the quick editing process with which every series of essay lessons ends is intended to simply give students some practice editing. During this editing time, students will not be able to make their pieces perfect, and teachers do not need to try to convince them that perfectly correct writing is valuable. If you are going to publish these pieces, we recommend that you spend more time editing them.

The essay lessons early in the year start simply so that students can focus on integrating what they have learned in the unit while completing this multi-day task. Organizational challenges are so great during essay-writing that the quality of students' work will deteriorate if the task becomes too complex too quickly. While students will try to improve their pieces in revision, the writing in their final work will often not be better than it is in the low-stakes writing they do every day. Only over time, as they write many essays and work on writing in other ways, will students develop the organizational skills and effective revision habits that result in better, more polished essays.

The steps in these lesson sequences may differ from those your students have typically followed in writing essays. For example, the lessons usually start with a focus on the body of the essay before considering its other parts. As the year progresses, each essay assignment adds a new structural element on which students focus. By the end of the year, students are writing essays that flow from their internalized understanding of argumentative structure, rather than adhering to the rules of a formula. Each Lesson Overview for the first essay lesson explains the logic behind its sequencing of elements and provides details about writing an essay on each unit's text.

**Essay Prompt:** How does Ji-li change over the course of her story?

## Note:

**Each Print essay sub-unit follows the same developmental path as the digital lesson, although there are digital-only activities specific to each sub-unit's Essay Prompt and text(s). We recommend you prepare and project as needed as you work through the Print essay activities to get the most out of essay lessons.**

This sub-unit contains a group of digital lessons in which students are drafting a polished essay in clear stages. Therefore, if students do not have access to the digital lesson as they begin the essay, or will not have access during portions of the essay lessons, it is best to have them complete their writing for all lessons in print, rather than the digital writing space provided in the lesson.

However, as with other writing assignments, your students will need to copy their final essay into the corresponding digital writing space if you want that writing to be included in Productivity and other reports.

# Sub-Unit 4



Lesson 1



Lesson 2



Lesson 3



Lesson 4



Lesson 5

# Sub-Unit 4 at a Glance & Preparation Checklist

## Lesson Preparation

## Reading

### Lesson 1

- ❑ Please review the Essay Rubrics found in the Materials section of this Lesson Brief so you are aware of the skills that will be emphasized through the essay writing process in this sub-unit. You will also see these rubrics in your Gradebook when you assess each completed essay.
- ❑ Print the Essay Graphic Organizer PDF and the Red Scarf Girl Essay Sentence Starters PDF for students who would benefit from this support.

*Note that lesson Solos can be completed in the digital curriculum, through the Amplify Mobile Solos app, or in print. Solo Activities PDFs can be found in the Materials section of the digital Unit Guide, along with a Solo Answer Key.*

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- Prologue (1–7)

### Lesson 2

- ❑ Make sure that you have commented on students' writing and have marked places for Revision Assignments for struggling students, as described in Before Next Lesson, located at the end of the previous lesson.

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- Prologue (1–7)

### Lesson 3

*No additional prep.*

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- Prologue (1–7)

### Lesson 4

*No additional prep.*

### **Red Scarf Girl:**

- Prologue (1–7)

### **Solo:**

- *Red Scarf Girl:*  
Epilogue (1–21)

## Writing Prompt

## Benchmark Stack

**Essay Prompt:** How does Ji-li change over the course of her story?

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

ELA.K12.EE.5.1

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

The essay lessons use daily revision to organize and improve writing, enabling students to build up to the final, finished essay.

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

The essay lessons use daily revision to organize and improve writing, enabling students to build up to the final, finished essay.

**ELA.K12.EE.5.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

ELA.7.C.1.5

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

The essay lessons use daily revision to organize and improve writing, enabling students to build up to the final, finished essay.

**ELA.K12.EE.5.1**

**ELA.7.C.1.4**

**ELA.7.C.1.5**

**ELA.7.C.5.2**

ELA.K12.EE.6.1

ELA.7.C.3.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

**Lesson 5**

**Reading:** Students will view documentary footage from the Cultural Revolution and consider how Ji-li and Chinese citizens were brainwashed.

**Writing:** Students will read excerpts from the epilogue and write about Ji-li's purpose for writing *Red Scarf Girl*.

**Videos:**

 *Red Scarf Girl*, DVD Clip #1 - Struggle Meetings

 *Red Scarf Girl*, DVD Clip #2 - Sunflower Dance

 *Red Scarf Girl*, DVD Clip #3 - Brainwashing



This is a digital-only lesson. Save it for a day when your class has devices or project the videos and activities for students.

***Red Scarf Girl:***

- Epilogue (1–21)

## Writing Prompt

The essay lessons use daily revision to organize and improve writing, enabling students to build up to the final, finished essay.

## Benchmark Stack

**ELA.7.R.2.3**

**ELA.7.C.1.3**

ELA.K12.EE.4.1

ELA.7.R.2.2

ELA.7.V.1.1

ELA.7.V.1.3

# Sub-Unit 4 Essay Lessons

## Lesson 1: Gathering Evidence and Making a Claim

A

**Present:** Students review the Essay Prompt and the work they will do on the essay in this lesson.



Read aloud the Essay Prompt.



Use the calendar to preview the work students will complete in today's lesson on page 646 of the Student Edition.



Review the elements that students will include in their essays.



**Writing Journal:** Students can take notes on page 56.

7 min

B

**Select & Connect Text:** Students select evidence to prepare for drafting the essay.



Project the digital activity for students to gather evidence for their essay responses.



**Writing Journal:** Students collect evidence on page 57.

24 min

C

**Write:** Students draft a preliminary claim statement to clarify the characteristic they will examine in their essay.



**Writing Journal:** Students write a claim statement on page 58.



Lead a class discussion by asking students to share their claim statements. Record 2 or 3 claims on the board and discuss if the claims answer the prompt.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

9 min

End of Lesson 1

## Lesson 1 Materials:



Essay Rubric



Essay Graphic Organizer



Sentence Starters



Sample Essay 1

## Differentiation for Essay:

An Essay Graphic Organizer is provided in Materials to assist students who need support planning for their essay. The Essay Graphic Organizer can be utilized as a whole document, or different pages can be handed out to students based on their needs.

Sentence Starters are also provided to support students with language conventions and to help them get started with their essay. This will be especially helpful for ELLs or students below grade level in writing.

## Before You Begin Lesson 2:

Review the writing that students completed during the previous stage of the essay process to plan for needed supports, comment on places where students use a skill effectively, and create Spotlights as models for the skills you want students to practice during the essay lessons.



## Lesson 2: Writing Body Paragraphs

D

**Discuss:** Students identify details in the sample essay to see how the writer explains and describes evidence.

15 min



Project digital activity for students to consider Sample Essay 1.



Occasionally, essay sub-units skip this activity.

E

**Write & Share:** Students draft the body of their essays and give their classmates feedback about a specific place in their writing.

25 min



Read aloud the body paragraphs section of the Elements of a Response to Text Essay on page 646 of the Student Edition.



Clarify for students that the bullets within each part of the essay are not in any specific order.



**Warm-Up:** Use the digital lesson to make sure students have language to start writing.



Read aloud the Essay Prompt.



**Writing Journal:** Students write the two body paragraphs on page 60.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



Students can write a third body paragraph if they have used and described enough evidence to support their claims.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. Each volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

End of Lesson 2

## Lesson 2 Materials:



Sample Essay 1



## Lesson 3: Revising and Writing an Introduction

F

**Revise:** Students identify additional textual evidence and then use it to strengthen the body of their essays.

17 min



Assign partners.



Help students identify places where they still need to develop their evidence or reasoning about that evidence.



**Writing Journal:** Students complete activities 1–6 and add to their body paragraphs on pages 62–63.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.

G

**Present:** Students learn about the purpose and elements of an introduction to prepare for writing the introductions to their essays.

8 min



Review leads and the Elements of an Introduction on page 646 of the Student Edition.



**Project:** Digital activity.



Use Sample Essay 1 for students to compare essay introductions.



Occasionally, essay sub-units skip this activity.

## Lesson 3 (continued)

H

**Write & Share:** Students craft an introduction to draw in a reader, introduce their claim, and clearly reflect the ideas they develop in the body paragraphs.

15 min



Review How to Write a Lead on page 647 of the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students write their leads and introductions on page 65.



Students who finish early have the option of adding a counterargument and a reason for disagreeing with it to their introductions if they are writing an argumentative essay.



**On-the-Fly:** Circulate around the room to support students.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

End of Lesson 3

## Lesson 3 Materials:



Sample Essay 1

## Lesson 4: Concluding and Polishing the Essay

I

**Write:** Students experiment with ways to write a conclusion for their essay.

10 min



Review the Elements of a Conclusion on page 646 in the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students write their conclusions on page 67.

J

**Revise:** Students revise their essays to create transitions between and within body paragraphs and eliminate wordiness and redundancy.

7 min



Review Revising Transitions on page 646 of the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students write new transitions in Activities 1–3 on page 68.



Discuss responses and answer questions.



**Writing Journal:** Students revise their essays in Activities 4–6 on page 69.



Students can rewrite their draft during this step before writing the final essay.



Discuss responses and answer questions.

### Lesson 4 Materials:



Editing Process



Guidelines for Citing and Punctuating a Direct Quote



Essay Rubric

## Lesson 4 (continued)

K

**Revise & Write:** Students polish their essays—first by focusing on sentence flow, style consistency, and essay completeness, and then on proofreading issues.



Review the Editing Process on page 648 of the Student Edition.



**Writing Journal:** Students revise their essays and write their final drafts on pages 71–72.



Give students time to work independently to edit their writing. Support students who have a hard time locating errors or correcting them.



Remind students that their sentences should follow formal sentence rules, rather than sound like a conversation with a friend.



**Share:** Call on 2 or 3 volunteers to share their writing. The volunteer should call on 1–3 listeners to comment.



**Wrap-Up:** Project.

23 min

End of Lesson 4

### Before You Begin Lesson 5:

Review the writing that students complete. Lesson 5 is a digital-only lesson. It is a wrap-up lesson for the unit with 3 clips from a Ji-li Jiang documentary. If students do not have access to devices, you can project the 3 videos and lead discussions based on the activities. d during the previous stage of the essay process to plan for needed supports, comment on places where students use a skill effectively, and create Spotlights as models for the skills you want students to practice during the essay lessons.

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