

Incoming 7th Grade Summer Reading

All incoming 7th graders should read the book *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang.

The book can be purchased at a bookstore or Amazon. It is also available to purchase for Kindle and Nook. Additionally, the Houston Public Library has both books and e-books available to check out with a valid library card.

Attached are the discussion guide questions pertaining to the book. You should answer each question thoroughly as you are reading the book. You may handwrite or type the assignment. Include the chapter number, then write the question, then write your answer. The assignment will be due the second week of the new school year.

Discussion Guide

Chapter 3

Mia recalls how “My mom says it’s important to take pictures of the nice moments in life, even if it’s just in your head.” Why do you think the mom believes this?

Before Mia arrives at Dale Elementary School, she has gone to four different schools for five different grades. Have you ever had to move schools? What was it like? What must it have been like for Mia to move so much?

Chapter 4

Mia’s mom says to the school principal that they just moved here from China, and later explains that she did so hoping the principal would cut Mia some slack. Why isn’t Mia happy about that?

Chapter 5

One of the customers at the motel doesn’t want to listen to Mia, because she’s a kid. Has that ever happened to you before, where an adult didn’t want to listen to you or believe you, because you were a kid?

Chapter 8

Mia walks into her classroom for the first time and sees no one who looks like her. What do you think that felt like?

Throughout the story, Mia comes up with a number of creative ideas to improve business at the motel. Customer feedback cards, putting out flyers for local establishments,

collecting addresses, tip jars, and so on. Have you ever had to come up with a creative idea in your own life?

Chapter 11

Mia has the opportunity to write about Uncle Ming and the loan sharks, and she feels a great urge to. But instead she writes about puppies and houses. Why do you think she did that?

When Lupe and Mia first meet, they're not entirely honest with one another. What does that do to a friendship? Why are they so happy and become better friends when they *do* become honest?

Chapter 15

Mia's mom says that "We're immigrants. . . . Our lives are never fair." What are some of the ways that statement is proven true in the book?

Chapter 16

Mia's dad says "a mistake isn't always a mistake. . . . Sometimes a mistake is actually an opportunity, but we just can't see it right then and there." What are some of the ways this statement holds true in the book? Can you think of any examples in your own life where this is true?

Throughout the story, Mia's mom presses her to focus on Math rather than English. Why does she do this?

Racism and prejudice can come in many different forms. Can you give an example in the story of a racist/

prejudiced action or statement? Can you give an example of a racist/prejudiced action or statement that might not be as obvious, but is still harmful all the same?

Chapter 27

Lupe gives Mia a note that says "You can't win if you don't play." What does she mean by this?

Mia uses many wonderful metaphors throughout the book, in her writing, speech, and thoughts. Can you identify a few? Can you use a metaphor to describe your feelings about this book or something in it?

Chapter 35

Mia writes up a list of American Phrases and Customs. Can you think of anything to add to that list, for America or another place?

Throughout the book there are many examples of people judging others purely based on their appearance. Mr. Yao and the Topaz Inn guard not wanting to rent to people solely because they are black. The customers who don't want to listen to Mia because she's a kid. The department store people who accept Mia's mom only because she has shopping bags. And so on. What are the dangers of this sort of perspective?

Mia often thinks about how it's every person for themselves in America and that relationships revolve

around money. What are some examples in the story that back up this thinking? What are some examples that say otherwise? How do Mia's feelings on the matter evolve?

In the Author's Note, Kelly Yang describes her personal connection to Mia's story and the real history behind it. How does reading this note change and/or add to your reading experience of the novel?