

Name:

Date:

Reading Companion and Questions

Literary Work: “Rules of the Game”

Author: Amy Tan

About the Author: When she was young, Amy Tan had a hard time relating to her mother. "We got into terrible battles by the time I reached my teens," says Tan. "It wasn't until my twenties that we began to get along...Now we're very close." As a first-generation Chinese American, Tan had problems accepting her Chinese background. Writing about her cultural conflicts helped her understand her heritage. Her first work of fiction, *The Joy Luck Club*, was published in 1989 and became a best seller. Now, says Tan, "I enjoy the freedom to write whatever I feel like writing."

Time and Place: The Narrator in this story reflects on her childhood in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1950's and 1960's

Did you know? Chess has been played for more than 500 years, making it one of the oldest known board games. Chess is a two-person game played on a board of light and dark squares. The object of the game is to checkmate, or capture, the opponent's king. Chess players, like athletes, work their way up through the ranks by winning first local, then regional, then national, then international tournaments, until finally reaching grand master status.

As you read...

Read to learn how the generation gap affects a mother and daughter.

Analyzing Literature

1. What useful life lesson did Meimei's mother teach her when she was six years old?
2. How did she learn it?
3. When does Meimei first become interested in chess?
4. Through what means (HOW) does she learn to play the game?

5. As a first-generation Chinese immigrant, what challenges does the mother face?
6. Explain her attitude toward "American Rules."
7. What special treatment does Meimei receive in her home?
8. What **conflict** arises when the mother and daughter go shopping?
9. Explain how Meimei applies her mother's strategy to "winning arguments, respect for others and...chess games."
10. In your opinion, why does the narrator enjoy chess so much? Support your answer with evidence from the story.
11. How does Meimei trick her mother into letting her play in her first chess tournament?
12. How does this scene reveal that she can "see the endgame before the game begins?"
13. How does the mother feel about her daughter's success? How can you tell?
14. What are Meimei and her mother *really* arguing about when they are shopping? Explain.
15. Do you think the mother is justified in being angry? Is Meimei? Support your opinion with examples from your own experience or details from the story.
16. At the end of the story, Meimei considers her "next move." What move would you make if you were Meimei?
17. How is MeiMei's relationship with her mother like a game of chess?