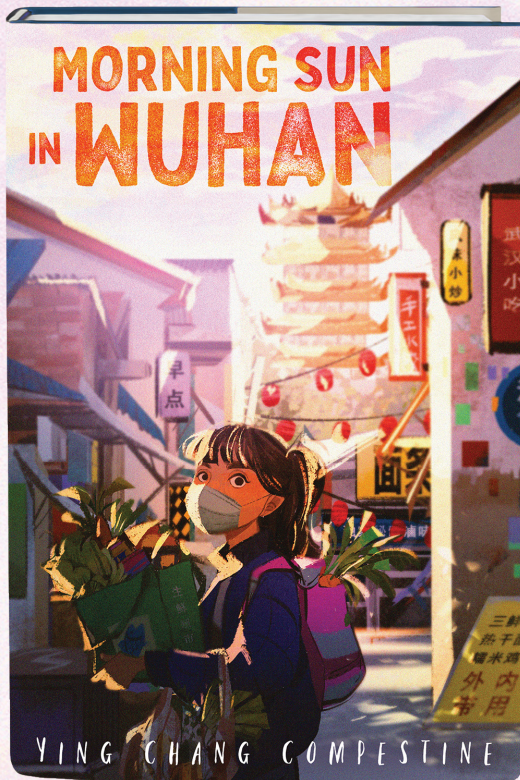


MORNING SUN IN WUHAN

EDUCATORS' GUIDE



YING CHANG COMPESTINE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Nothing has been right for Mei since her mother's death. Her father is constantly working at his respiratory clinic, her aunt hasn't spoken to her since the funeral, and she's begun standing out at school in the worst ways. Mei's only respite is food. She dreams of being a chef, is obsessed with an online cooking game (with zombies!), and adores cooking for real with all the amazing ingredients Wuhan has to offer. But while Mei is struggling to balance her passion, her isolation, and her grief, cases of a strange new illness begin cropping up across the city, throwing Mei and her entire community into frightening chaos. As Mei's dad and aunt are called to take on vital leadership roles during the crisis, Mei wants to contribute as well. But can a middle schooler who would rather cook than study really make a difference—for her city and also herself?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ying Chang Compestine is the multi-talented author of 20 books including fiction, picture books, and five cookbooks. Her keen interest in cuisine has led her to weave food into all of her writing—including cookbooks, novels, and picture books for young readers. Her highly acclaimed novel about her life growing up in China during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party*, has received over 30 national awards, and has been included in school syllabi globally. It was also selected for the One Book/One County reading program in Santa Clara California.

Ying grew up in Wuhan, China during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. She uses these experiences, as well as her passion for food, in all her writing. Ying graduated from Central China Normal University with a degree in English, then earned her Master's in Sociology from the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she met her husband shortly before completing the degree. She has taught writing and sociology in both the U.S. and China, receiving education awards in both countries.



QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe Mei as a character in your own words. What do you think are her most important traits and why?
2. From the moment we meet Mei, she is surrounded by food. What do food and cooking mean to Mei? How does she use cooking food as a way to express herself and how she's feeling?
3. Mei gets a little hung up on comparing herself to what she sees as other people's perfections—in school, at home, and even in the kitchen. How do Mei's ideas about perfection change over the course of the novel?
4. Take a look at the recipes included for some of the dishes Mei makes for herself or others. Which ones are you familiar with and which are new? If you were going to show Mei your skills in the kitchen, what's a favorite recipe you know by heart?
5. Mei's visit to the hospital where her dad works is a disaster, but her dad's main concern is why Mei went against his instruction to stay away from the hospital. Mei answers without thinking that she hasn't seen him in days, but immediately regrets it—why? Why might Mei think missing her father makes her sound “needy?” Do you agree with her?
6. As cases erupt across Wuhan, what do you notice about how information about the virus and necessary precautions is being shared? What sources do different characters seem to trust or distrust and why? Write down some examples of wrong information or misinformation being shared. What are some of the consequences of misinformation in the text?
7. Write down examples of community care in the novel. Why do you think that, during a time when staying away from others can help protect you, people still choose to come together (safely) and offer support?
8. Throughout the entire novel, Mei is grieving the loss of her mother. How does her grief affect her and her choices at the start of the story? In the middle? At the end? How do you see the upheaval and uncertainty caused by the viral outbreak as a parallel for Mei's experience coping with her mother's death, her father's absence, and her aunt's distance?
9. If Mei and her awesome Chop Chop team are the heroes of the story, what makes them heroic? Who else is a hero (big or small) in the novel? Who are some heroes and helpers from your real life? What makes them heroic?
10. What do you think the author wants readers to think about or remember most from this story? Use the text and Author's Note to support your thinking.
11. What's something new you learned while reading Mei's story? About Wuhan? About COVID-19? About Chinese food culture? About cooking or online games? What are some ways you can find out even more?



Guide prepared by Anastasia Collins,
MA, MLIS, librarian, youth literature
scholar, anti-oppression educator.