

Susan Reynolds

Eighth Grade Summer Work

Students entering eighth grade must read *Towers Falling* by Jewell Parker Rhodes. The comprehension questions must be completed by restating the question and answering using complete sentences. This assignment must be hand-written neatly in ink. The packet is due on the first day of school during your first ELA period. Late work will not be accepted.

Towers Falling Question Guide

New School

1. "Pop groans. He's having bad dreams again" (Rhodes 1). What do you think is causing Pop's bad dreams? How do you think this will impact the plot/narrator's life?

2. Describe the narrator's life. How do you think this conflict will impact the plot? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. "What I see makes me angry" (Rhodes 3). Why do "sad-looking people" make the narrator angry? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Homeroom

1. Why does Dèja get nervous about having to write about her summer vacation?

2. "Cowboy boots. I can't believe it. Who wears cowboy boots?" (Rhodes 7). Why do you think Dèja judges Ben before she even gets to know him (especially since she is afraid of being judged)? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. On page 8, the number 1 is bolded two different times. Why do you think this number is bolded? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Miss Garcia

1. Why does Dèja not say her last name? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. "Most of us have been friends since first grade" (Rhodes 14). Will this be a good or a bad thing for Dèja? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. "It's September. What's so important about that?" (Rhodes 15). Why does Miss Garcia say that it is an important week? Why do you think Dèja does not know about this?

Lunch

1. Describe the world map in the hall at Dèja's school. Why do you think this map is here? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. How do you think Ben and Sabeen will impact the plot? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Avalon

1. In this chapter, we learn about Dèja's life. Describe what her life is like.

Friday

1. "I take the eraser" (Rhodes 28). Why does Dèja decide to take the eraser from Ben? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. "They all just look at me. Scared. Respectful. Sabeen, though, just looks sad" (Rhodes 29). Why do her classmates look at her this way? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. How did the majority of the class act when Miss Garcia holds the poster picture by the current outline of the city? What did the class realize about the poster and their current skyline?

4. "Everyone's chattering. Everybody knows something different. I don't know anything" (Rhodes 34). Why does Dèja not know anything about 9/11?

5. Why is Dèja nervous about her new homework assignment? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. "That's our journey this month. Figuring it all out. Home is our starting point for connecting to the past" (Rhodes 39). In your own words, what does Miss Garcia mean when she says this?

Ruined Weekend

1. "The neatest thing in the whole room is a locked suitcase" (Rhodes 42). What do you think is in the suitcase?

2. Why does Dèja lie about enjoying school?

3. How do Ma and Pop react when they hear about Dèja's school project? Why do they act this way? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Small Groups

1. "I don't know why Sabeen likes to be with Ben and me. We're the new kids, outsiders" (Rhodes 48). Why do you think Sabeen wants to be friends with Dèja and Ben?

2. "What does home mean? How do you show home?" (Rhodes 49). How do you define home?

3. How does Sabeen define home? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. How does Ben define home? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

5. Why is Dèja sent to the principal's office?

Principal's Office

1. "She makes me nervous" (Rhodes 54). Why does Miss Garcia make Dèja nervous? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What does Dèja discover after talking with Miss Garcia about home/her project? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. What does Dèja realize about Sabeen at the end of the chapter? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Homeroom

1. Why does Dèja's class all join hands like the paper dolls Ray made?

2. What is the significance with Miss Garcia's question about social units? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. "For some reason, I'm remembering Pop mad. Would this schoolwork make him mad, too?" (Rhodes 67). Why do you think Pop would be upset about this assignment?

4. "The ones looking at me know the answer. Know something I don't know" (Rhodes 69). Why are Dèja's classmates looking at her like this? Support your answer. With evidence from the text.

5. Why does the class decide they are connected to the folks who died in the towers? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. How does Dèja feel about learning about the past? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Recent Past, Far Past

1. "How come Pop never gets well?" (Rhodes 76). Do you think there is anything odd about Pop's illness? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. "Anxious is the only word Ma ever says about Pop" (Rhodes 77). In your own words, what does this mean? What does it mean to be anxious?

3. What does Dèja learn about Ben's family?

4. "Ben isn't poor, but I still feel sad for him" (Rhodes 83). Why does Dèja feel sorry for Ben? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

5. "America welcomed my family. I welcome you" (Rhodes 86). How does Dèja feel when Sabeen says this? Why does she feel this way? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. Why does Sabeen get so upset and leave Ben's house? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. What does Ben show Dèja at the end of the chapter? Do you think this was a good idea for her to see? Why or why not? Use evidence to support your answer.

Stuck Inside My Head

1. "Before the words were flat. Now I hear them- understand in a new way" (Rhodes 100). What does Dèja suddenly understand?

2. " Why would I need to know? It's history " (Rhodes 100). Why is it important to know your history?

3. "Worried, Ma looks at me. I shrug. She doesn't ask" (Rhodes 103). Why do you think Dèja's Ma does not ask more about her being upset?

4. How does Pop react when he hears what happened at Ben's house? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Bogeyman Dreams

1. "Was Sabeen crying because she thought me and Ben would think less of her?" (Rhodes 108). Do you think this is why Sabeen was so upset? Use evidence to support your answer.

2. Dèja draws a picture on page 108. What surprises you about her drawing? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Sabeen

1. "They're still trying to teach us about 9/11. Not directly, but coming at it sideways, up and down, around, not head-on, direct" (Rhodes 110). Why are they not being direct? Explain your answer with specific details.

2. Why did Dèja invite herself to Sabeen's house? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. Describe Sabeen's family. Why do you think the author made Sabeen's family this way? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. "Her name fits, I think..." (Rhodes 117). Why does Sabeen's name fit her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

5. "How even in America, folks can live different. Ben's ranch; Sabeen's home; how even Brooklyn, one part to the next, is different" (Rhodes 120). How do you think Dèja's realization will impact the plot? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

School

1. "Crowds make him nervous. That's all New York is" (Rhodes 121). Why do you think Ma and Pop have not moved? Explain your thinking.

2. "But it's like each step is swamp mud sucking him down and he's got to lift extra hard to get to the next step" (Rhodes 123). Why does the author use this description to describe Pop?

3. Describe Pop's actions when he walked into Miss Garcia's classroom.

4. Summarize Dèja's essay titled "Being American." What stands out to you about this essay?

5. "The tall towers need a strong foundation" (Rhodes 131). How is the way the towers were built metaphorical? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. "They saw, Dèja, Pop whimpers. They saw. Through the windows. Everybody saw" (Rhodes 138). What is Pop so upset about?

7. "When do kids get old enough?" (Rhodes 139). When do you think kids are old enough to see the videos of the Twin Towers? Why?

8. What does Dèja discover at the end of the chapter? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Suitcase

1. What do you think Pop was doing on the day the towers fell? Explain your answer.

Secrets

1. What items does Dèja find in the suitcase?

2. Why do you think Pop saved the items he did? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Sour

1. How has Sabeen's life been different since 9/11? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What are some historical facts from 9/11 that Jewell Parker Rhodes included in this chapter?

3. How does Dèja feel after she saw the video from 9/11? How do you think this will impact the plot? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. Why has Ben seen the Twin Towers video before?

5. "I wish I could talk with Mā and Pop" (Rhodes 154). Do you think Dèja will talk to her Pop about this? Why or why not?

History

1. Why does Mr. Schmidt write "Attacks on American Soil" on the board? What does he want his students to know? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. "Mr. Schmidt isn't answering Angel's question" (Rhodes 160). Do you think there is a right or a wrong way to answer Mr. Schmidt's question? Explain your thinking.

Pact

1. Why did Ben's dad join the Marines?

2. "He's thin, a cross between a sidekick cowboy and a weak soldier. But he's strong inside" (Rhodes 167). Why does Dèja describe Ben in this way?

3. Why is this chapter titled Pact ?

Field Trip

1. "Like they shared something" (Rhodes 170). What did Pop and Miss Garcia share?

2. Why do you think the author decided for Dèja to see a mourning dove? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. "As I move toward him, I wonder- maybe Ben has a reason, too?" (Rodes 173). What would Ben's reason be? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Subway

1. How did 9/11 change Ben's life? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. "All of us on the subway are part of a circle" (Rhodes 182). Why does Dèja connect her subway ride to Miss Garcia's lesson? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. Why did Ben never think about his grandma about being brave?

4. Why are Ben and Dèja scared about seeing the World Trade Center?

Our Story

1. "I can't explain- the water *calls* me" (Rhodes 191). Why is the word *calls* italicized?

2. How does Dèja feel about the memorial? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. How is the water in the memorial a metaphor? Explain your thinking.

4. What do the roses represent at the memorial? Why does this surprise Dèja?

5. It begins snowing at the memorial. Why does Dèja think it starts snowing?

6. "...I realize I still don't understand Pop" (Rhodes 199). Do you think she will ever understand Pop? Why or why not?

Subway Home

1. "The footprints were horrible beautiful" (Rhodes 202). Why does the author use this oxymoron to describe the memorial?

Pop

1. How does Pop act when he finds out what Dèja and Ben did? Why do you think he acted this way?

The Talk

1. Who were the men in the picture from the suitcase?

2. "But ever since that day, I feel stupid" (Rhodes 207). Why do you think he feels stupid?

3. What was Pop's job at the World Trade Center? How do you think his job impacted him and 9/11? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. What happened to Luis and Kelly on 9/11?

5. Why did Pop keep the bag of dust/ashes?

6. How has Dèja's life changed after starting her new school and learning about 9/11?

The End

1. Summarize Dèja's final essay. What stands out to you in the essay?

Field Trip

1. Why do you think this chapter only contains a picture?

Author's Note

1. Why did the author decide to write this book?

2. What was the author's purpose in writing Towers Falling ?
