***The House on Mango Street* Study Guide Questions**

**“House on Mango Street” pages 3-5**

1. Who tells the story?

Esperanza Cordero is telling the story.

1. Who are the people that live with the narrator?

The narrator lives with her mama, papa, her bothers Carlos & Kiki, and her little sister Nenny.

1. How does it feel to move? How does the storyteller feel about moving?

The family has moved around a lot since they moved to Mango Street. Their family had dreamed of a white house with lots of space and bathrooms, but the house on Mango Street has only one bedroom and bathroom. Esperanza shares that this is not the house she envisioned. Her parents tell her it’s only temporary, but she doubts they’ll move anytime soon.

1. Contrast the house on Mango Street with the narrator’s dream house?

The house on Mango Street is small and red with some crumbling bricks and tight steps out front. It has no front yard, but there are four Elm trees near the street and a small backyard. There is only one bathroom, and everyone shares a bedroom.

Esperanza’s dream house would be large and white with a big grassy yard full of trees. I t would have stairs inside, which might lead to a basement, there would be three bathrooms.

1. How long do the narrator’s parents plan to live in the house on Mango Street? How does the narrator feel about this?

Esperanza’s parents plan to live on Mango Street until they have enough money to move somewhere else. They rely on lottery money, but Esperanza does not believe they will ever move someplace new.

**“Hairs” pages 6-7**

1. Why does the storyteller tell about her family members’ hair?

This shows how the chapters flow- they are short and only connected sometimes. This only shows that Esperanza is showing discomfort in her life and has difficulty taming her own hair.

1. Describe each of the narrator’s family members according to his or her hair.

Her papa’s hair sticks up like a broom. Carlos’ hair is thick and so straight he doesn’t have to comb it. Kiki’s hair is like fur. Nenny’s hair is slippery, so it slides through the hand. Esperanza’s hair is lazy and doesn’t stay in hair bands or clips. Her mother’s hair is tightly curled and smells like bread.

1. What is “hair that smells like bread”?

Hair that smells like bread, which is considered a comfort food is how Esperanza describes her mother’s hair.

1. How does the narrator feel about her mother? Find evidence to support your decision.

Esperanza feels secure and loved by her mother. She writes “when she is holding you, holding you and you feel safe.” She also uses positive words like candy, curly, pretty, sweet, and warm to describe her mother’s hair.

**“Boys and Girls” pages 8-9**

1. Is the storyteller really a balloon as she says on page 9? Why is the balloon tied to an anchor a good description?

Esperanza describes herself as a red balloon before she has made any friends in her neighborhood. Until she has a best friends she can share her secrets with and who will understand her jokes, she believes she will be this balloon. The balloon suggests she is floating and feels isolated. The color red suggests she stands out in the neighborhood.

1. According to the narrator, can boys be friends with girls? What experience does she have to support her decision?

According to Esperanza, no, boys cannot be friends with girls in public. She says that her brothers Carlos and Kiki like to talk to her and Nenny inside the house, but they don’t talk to girls outside the house.

1. Why don’t Carlos and Kiki watch out for Nenny? Have you heard such differentiation between expectations for boys and girls?

The women in the family take care of children, not the men. In many cultures, women are expected to take care of the house and the children. Esperanza mentioned that her brothers cannot talk to her outside the house.

1. How does the narrator feel about her sister?

Esperanza feels that her sister, Nenny is her responsibility, nit her friend.

1. What does the narrator wish for? Why does she want one?

Esperanza wishes for a best friend. She wants a best friend to share her secrets with her and someone who will laugh at her jokes.

**“My Name” pages 10-11**

1. What is the narrators name and what does it mean?

Esperanza means hope in Spanish. In English it means too many letters.

1. How do most children feel about their names? How do you feel about your own name?

Personnel question.

1. Who is she named after? What was that woman like?

Esperanza is named after her great grandmother. She was a wild and strong woman. She was forced into marrying, and she spent the rest of her life looking out the window.

1. What is a woman’s role in Mexican society according to the narrator?

According to the narrator, women in Mexican society should be weak and controlled, and it is expected that they will marry.