***The House on Mango Street***

**Study Guide Questions 6 Novellas 32-37**

***Four Skinny Trees* pages 74-75**

1. What are three things Esperanza has in common with the trees?

1. Trees are the only ones who understand her

2. Trees & Esperanza have skinny necks and pointy elbows

3. They both belong, but don’t belong on Mango Street

4. They both strive for growth in a place that does not encourage it

2. Compare the tone of this vignette with the mention of the trees in the first one, The House on Mango Street. How have Esperanza’s feelings changed about the trees?

Esperanza dismisses the trees in the first vignette since she is disappointed about the House on Mango Street. In this vignette, she still admits are ‘raggedy excuses’ for trees, she also sees their determination and strength. She seems to admire trees in this vignette.

3. What does Esperanza learn from the trees?

The trees teach Esperanza to keep reaching for what she wants, and they show her it is possible to grow.

***No Speak English* pages 76-78**

1. Why does Mamacita move to Mango Street? How does she adjust to the move?

Mamacita moves to Mango Street against her will because her husband works and saves money to bring her and their son to live there.

1. Which English phrases can Mamacita use? Why are each of these phrases useful for her?

Mamacita knows how to say “he is not here,” “no speak English,” and “holy smokes.” If someone comes to the apartment, she could use the first two to end the conversation and avoid learning English or taking care of the home she does not like. She can use “holy smokes” to pretend she is reacting to someone’s long story, since she does not understand English.

1. What breaks Mamacita’s heart? Why?

Mamacita feels like her heart is breaking when her toddler son starts singing along in English to a Pepsi commercial on TV. She has resisted to adjusting to living in the US partially by not learning English, and she probably feels like her son will leave her behind if he learns to speak English.

***Rafaela Who Drinks Coconut & Papaya Juice on Tuesdays* pages 79-80**

1. Explain the title: who is Rafaela, why does she drink those juices and why on Fridays?

Rafaela is one of Esperanza’s neighbors. She is beautiful, so her husband locks her in the apartment when he goes to play dominos with friends on Tuesday night. So she throws money down for the kids to buy her coconut or papaya juice while she listens to the music down the street and thinks of dancing in her tropical homeland.

1. What do Rafaela and Mamacita have in common? How are they different?

Rafaela and Mamacita are both prisoners in their own home, listening to music and looking out the window. The both have husbands who are controlling, and they both wish they could move back to their own homes. Mamacita can leave the apartment if she wanted, but she does not seem to want to talk to anyone. Rafaela cannot leave because she is locked in. A second difference is Mamacita has her son as company and Rafaela is all alone.

1. What does Rafaela dream of?

Rafaela dreams of joining the people dancing at the bar on the corner, and maybe having a good time by flirting with some of the men before she gets too old. She also dreams of being Rapunzel, so she can climb down her own hair and escape the apartment.

***Sally* pages 81-83**

1. Who is Sally and how does Esperanza feel about her?

Sally is a girl at school that the boys like to talk about because she may be promiscuous. Esperanza observes her, but they do not seem to be good friends, and Esperanza notices that she does not have any friends at the moment. Esperanza envies Sally for her beauty, her experience with boys, and her sense of fashion.

1. What is Sally’s relationship with her father?

Sally’s father controls her. His sisters had some wild times, and he does not want that to happen to his daughter. He expects Sally to be a good religious girl who dresses modestly, does not dance, and comes right home from school. He will not let Sally go out after school.

1. How does Sally change when she walks home from school?

When Sally walks home from school, she moves faster and becomes more serious. She pulls her skirt down, takes her makeup off, and begins looking down at her feet, showing she is shy and not bold.

1. What does Esperanza think Sally wants? Do you agree? Why?

Esperanza thinks Sally wants her own house full of her own things, where she can be the person she believes she is and not worry about other people’s opinions of her. In her nice house, she would only feel comfort and love, which is what Esperanza longs for too.

***Minerva Writes Poems* pages 84-85**

1. What are some things that make Minerva sad?

Minerva is sad because she is a single mother raising two kids, she feels she is unlucky, and she has a terrible relationship with her husband.

1. Describe Minerva’s relationship with her husband.

Minerva’s husband is not loving at all. He leaves her alone with the kids, so she thinks she is a single mom, but sometimes he comes back. She has thrown him and his belongings out of the house and locked him out, but she lets him in if he apologizes. He beats her, and Esperanza sees the bruises.

1. Why does Esperanza feel helpless to assist Minerva?

Esperanza feel helpless to assist Minerva because Minerva does not feel she can stand up to the man and permanently leave him. Minerva is only a few years older than Esperanza, and Esperanza may feel that she is not experienced enough to deal with such an adult situation.

***Bums in the Attic* pages 86-87**

1. What does Esperanza’s father do for a living?

Esperanza’s father is a gardener for rich people who live on the hill.

1. What does the family do together on Sundays? Why does Esperanza stop going?

On Sunday, her family goes to the homes he works at to look inside the windows and see the way rich people live. Esperanza stops going with them because she is uncomfortable with how much it reminds her of the things her family does not have.

1. What does Esperanza hope to do with her home in the future?

Esperanza hopes to have a big house she can live in by herself when she gets older. She will ask bums to come in and live in the attic, so she can show that she remembers the life she came from. She also wants to be able to help them and get them a place to live, since she remembers not feeling like she had a true home.