



HIROSHIMA *in the* MORNING

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TEACHER'S GUIDE for Asian, Asian American, History, Current Events, Gender and Women's Studies, Writing and Memoir classes.

1. The author says "memory is not history." What did you know about the bombing of Hiroshima before you read the book? How has that changed?
2. "Forgiveness is forgetting, erasure, absence." When the author first goes to Hiroshima's Peace Museum she is confused and disconcerted that the US is not taken to task for dropping the bomb on Hiroshima. Why do you think the US dropped the bomb on Hiroshima? Do you think the US is to blame for what happened to Hiroshima?
3. In the Peace Museum, the author makes a comparison to the increasing loss of memory by her mother and the memory the author has of her mother. How does the author use "private" history to illuminate "public" history and vice versa?
4. At first, the author is surprised by how rote and unemotional the *hibakusha* stories she is told seem to be. Are you surprised by their stories and how they tell them?
5. After the attacks on the World Trade Towers on 9/11, the *hibakusha* stories take on a different tone and content. How would you describe them? Why do you think the survivors become more emotional?
6. The author makes comparisons between Hiroshima and the A-bomb and New York City on 9/11. What do you think the similarities are between these two situations? What are the differences?
7. After 9/11, the author believes there is a chance for empathy. Both her husband and her agent believe she is out of touch. Considering what the author has learned during her time in Hiroshima, what is your reaction to her response?

8. In times of crisis, we expect that couples and families will come together and find solidarity. What happens in this story? What were the factors that pulled the author and her husband apart? How did the author feel about her children before her trip to Japan? What changed during their visit to Japan?
9. The author writes that after 9/11 “Something is breaking open in the *hibakusha*, and everyone needs to know what is inside.” What does the author think we need to know? What do you want to know? What might you ask the *hibakusha*?
10. Later in the memoir, the author looks at her friend Jane as a substitute for her own mother. In Japan, the author recreates a family for herself that is different from her family back in the US. What role does the author play in this new “family”? What role do the others she meets in Hiroshima play?
11. Throughout the book, the author uses the image and metaphor of fire as both devastation and regeneration. How does she show that fire can be both a force of destruction as well as a force of regeneration?
12. When the author’s family arrives in Japan from the US, how does she telegraph to the reader the distance that has grown between them during her time away? How does the author reconcile this difference with her husband? With her children?
13. The author realizes that an interview is not just a series of questions. How does the author use the interviews to structure the memoir?
14. Throughout the memoir, the author thinks it very important to talk with Lily Onofrio and to hear her story. When she finally meets Lily what does she learn from her? Do you think that if the author met Lily earlier that she would have learned the same things? How does her own personal situation influence her experience with Lily?
15. At the end of the memoir, the author takes some familiar images from the book and transforms them into a poem. Is this similar to what the male *hibakusha* who paints the pikadon over and over does with his A-bomb experience? What is the author saying about the role of art in both cases?
16. The author goes to Hiroshima to do research for a novel. She ends up writing this memoir. What do you see as the relationship between a novel and a memoir? How does this relate to the author's belief that history is memory?
17. Considering the recent earthquake and tsunami damage to, and crisis at, Japan's Fukushima nuclear reactor, do the experiences of the *hibakusha* influence what you think about the use of nuclear energy today?
18. Is there a moral difference between using nuclear fission as a weapon during wartime and using nuclear fission to provide power for a society's needs?

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