

American Born Chinese

Chapter 1

1. What were the four major heavenly disciplines that the Monkey King was studying? Why were they important to him?
2. Why did the Monkey King have to study kung fu if he already had special powers?
3. Why was he going to a dinner and with whom was he trying to have dinner with?
4. What was the dragon in front of the Monkey King saying to the guard (13)?
5. Given the Monkey King's discipline, why would he let a little insult get the better of him? Why does the Monkey King get so easily frustrated?
6. When the Monkey King goes to the party, although he is a master at martial arts, why wouldn't they let him in for being a monkey, when some of the other attendees were types of animals, too?
7. Why did the Monkey King beat everyone up? Why does the Monkey King react in a violent way when not able to enter into the event?
8. What do the Chinese characters mean that the Monkey King said in some of the panels during the fight scenes?
9. Why must the Monkey King wear shoes?
10. The Monkey King was ridiculed at a dinner party and was denied entrance due to the failure of not having shoes. Why did he return to his kingdom to order his subjects to wear shoes?

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Chapter 2

1. What did the old Chinese parable that his mother tells at the beginning of the chapter have to do with Jin Wang's story?
2. What was the true meaning behind Jin's mother's parable?
3. How did Jin meet the other boys in the apartment building?
4. Why does Jin Wang want to be a transformer?
5. Why did Jin's mother see an herbalist? And what does an herbalist do?
6. What did the herbalist mean when she said, "So long as you're willing to forfeit your soul"? Why did the herbalist make that comment to Jin Wang? (29)
7. Jin and his family relocated from San Francisco to a new, unfamiliar neighborhood. Why wasn't it stated which city they have moved to?
8. Why did the teacher get Jin's name and where he came from wrong on the first day of school? What does this say about the teacher?
9. Why doesn't Jin Wang stand up for himself at school?
10. Why was Jin Wang mean to Wei-Chen Sun at first?

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Chapter 3

1. Why is there audience applause and laughter throughout “Everyone Ruvs Chin-Kee”?
2. Are Danny and Chin-Kee actually cousins?
3. If not, how is Chin-Kee related to Danny?
4. How does Chin-Kee react when he sees Melanie? Why does he react this way?
5. How did the night end with Melanie after Chin-Kee met her at Danny’s house?
6. Why doesn’t Danny like his cousin Chin-Kee and why doesn’t he want to hang out with him?
7. If Chin-Kee was such a nuisance to Danny, why couldn’t Danny ignore his cousin?
8. Why do his cousin’s actions embarrass him?
9. Why did the author choose “Chin-Kee” as a name?
10. Why did the author make Chin-Kee so stereotypical?

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Chapter 4

1. Why does the Monkey King make all the monkeys wear shoes when he gets back from the party? What does he think it will accomplish?
2. How did the Monkey King supposedly “trespass upon Heaven”? (59).
3. Why isn’t the Monkey King accepting that he is a monkey?
4. Why did the Monkey King make himself look more human after years of training?
5. Why does the Monkey King keep on practicing kung fu, and why does he end up fighting against everyone? What is he trying to prove?
6. How did the pillars of Tze-Yo-Tzuh affect the Monkey King?
7. The Monkey King defied Tze-Yo-Tzuh when he claimed to be his creator. Why didn’t the Monkey King succumb to Tze-Yo-Tzuh, even after he wasn’t able to surpass his reach? Why didn’t the Monkey King accept what Tze-Yo-Tzuh was saying?
8. Did the Monkey King think he was lying?
9. Did Tze-Yo-Tzuh put the Monkey King in a pile of rocks as a lesson for him? What did he hope the Monkey King would learn?
10. What is the point of the Monkey King’s story?

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Chapter 5

1. Why does Jin begin to like Amelia Harris?
2. What made Jin Wang so focused on everyone else having girlfriends or talking to girls?
3. Was Wei-Chen Sun making stuff up about Jin Wang just to impress Amelia?
4. Why did Wei-Chen picture Jin Wang as a turtle hiding in his shell? (93) Why did it take Jin so long to talk to Amelia?
5. Why didn't Jin Wang just volunteer to watch the animals after class with the girl he likes?
6. Why do the animals in the science class have lipstick on?
7. Why is the monkey reaching out to Wei-Chen? (99)
8. Why are "nippy" and "gook" (96) offensive words for Chinese people?
9. Jin Wang had a permanent wave done to his hair, after taking notice of Greg's curly locks. What persuaded Jin to get a perm? Does he think having curly hair will eliminate any association to his Chinese ethnicity?
10. How did Jin turn into Danny?

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Chapter 6

1. Why are there “ha-ha’s” on some slides?
2. Is Danny embarrassed by his cousin when he attends the same class as him?
3. What did Chin-Kee do to Steve’s can of soda?
4. Why did Chin-Kee pee in the Coke?
5. If Chin-Kee is only visiting America for two weeks, why does he attend school for that short period of time?
6. What made Chin-Kee go to school with his cousin Danny and why does Chin-Kee like to embarrass Danny?
7. How is Chin-Kee so smart? How did Chin-Kee know more stuff than his cousin in America?
8. Why does Chin-Kee embarrass Danny so badly when they are at the school answering all of the teachers’ questions?
9. What happened to Chin-Kee after Danny left him?
10. Students make fun of Chin-Kee, which made Danny awkwardly uncomfortable. His cousin was making a fool of himself, but why did this make Danny so insecure about his self-image?

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Chapter 7

1. Who is Tze-Yo-Tzuh?
2. Why did Wong Lai-Tsao aid the vagrants even though they disrespect him?
What is the significance of his story?
3. The Monkey King was imprisoned under a mountain of rocks for 500 years before Wong Lai-Tsao approached him and offered to grant his freedom. Why did the Monkey King profusely decline to accept his independence? Wasn't 500 years of solitude enough?
4. Why was the Monkey King so stubborn that he couldn't help a monk?
5. Why is the Monkey King so opposed to helping out another being?
6. Why didn't the Monkey King help the monk from the start?
7. Why did the Monkey King let the monk get attacked?
8. Why didn't the monk die after he got stabbed?
9. How did the monk survive the attack?
10. Why doesn't the Monkey King need shoes for the rest of the mission? Why doesn't this journey require shoes?

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Chapter 8

1. Why did Jin become so nervous on his date with Amelia?
2. Why was Jin Wang having a hard time with his date?
3. What happened between Amelia and Jin Wang?
4. Why was Wei-Chen asking Amelia so many questions about the date she went on with Jin Wang?
5. Why did Greg not want Jin to go out with Amelia?
6. What was the relationship between Amelia and the other boy, Greg?
7. What made Jin kiss Wei-Chen's girlfriend Suzy Nakamura?
8. Why is Jin rude to his best friend about it afterwards?
9. How did Jin Wang turn American?
10. Why did Jin change his name to Danny?

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Chapter 9

1. Why was Danny so angry at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Why do Danny and Chin-Kee end up fighting each other?
3. Why was the Monkey King disguised at Chin-Kee?
4. If the Monkey King was in disguise, why did he finally reveal himself as he did?
5. Why was Wei-Chen sent to earth?
6. What effect did Wei-Chen have on Jin's life?
7. Wei-Chen lost his desire to be an emissary to Tze-Yo-Tzuh after the downfall of his friendship to Jin. Now that Jin and Wei-Chen have reconciled, will Wei-Chen continue to pursue his test of virtue to become an emissary?
8. Why do all three characters end up fighting with the people who are fighting them out or are related to them?
9. Do Jin and Wei-Chen become friends again?
10. Why does the author wait until the end of the book to expose the relationship between all the characters?