

Name

Period

Guiding Questions: Pages 1-20

1. What is significant about the way the book starts? Why does it begin in New York and what do we learn about the main character and his American friends?
2. How is American culture portrayed on page 5? Why might this be important?
3. How does Music play a role in Ishmael's life before the war? What was its importance?
4. Why do you think the sounds of "birds and crickets" is described as music on page 7? Is this music functioning the same as American rap music?
5. What does Beah take with him the last time he leaves home?
6. Using evidence from the text discuss what life was like for Ishmael and his friends before the war (pages 7-9).

7. Describe Beah's grandma.

8. On page 9, the teachers describe the attack on Beah's village. How are the victims described? Is there a connection between the nouns used to describe them? Why is it significant?

9. On page 10, Beah says there is something usual about the day of the attack. What was it? How does he specifically describe the birds and the trees? What is it showing the reader about the role of music?

10. Once the boys decide to go back and look for their families, what is the memory Beah flashes back to? What is unusual about that encounter?

11. Describe the relationship between Beah and his father.

12. On page 11 Beah stands on the wharf, what does he visualize?

13. On page 12, what replaces the "songs of crickets and birds?" Why is that significant? What does it suggest about role of music?

14. On page 12-13 many victims of the violence are described. What do these victims share in common?

15. What did adults say about the war? How does Beah feel about that suggestion?

16. On page 14-15 Beah is dreaming. Why specifically is Beah afraid when he wakes up?

17. On page 15 Junior says, "I do not think this madness will last." Talloi says, "It will probably last for only a month or two." What can you infer from the boys' body language?

18. On the bottom of page 15, the boys listened to rap music, and tried to memorize the lyrics. What is the function of music in this paragraph?

19. Why does Beah relate the adage of the moon? What purpose does it serve?

20. Why might it be significant that in the dream Beah is carrying his own dead body, and that the Adam's apple has been smashed?

21. What wakes Beah from his bad dream? After the dream, Beah does what?

22. What are the three worlds in which Beah exists?