

Love Must Not Be Forgotten

By
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Honor Sophomore/Senior Levels Literature Class
A Five to Seven Day Unit
Includes Survey, Discussion Questions and Answers, Vocabulary
Assignment, Writing Assignment and Short Stories

Context

This lesson plan was specifically designed for the *honor sophomore level*, however; it can also be adapted for the *studies/remedial sophomore level* and the *senior world literature class* as well. For the purpose of this lesson plan, I will concentrate on the honor sophomore students because this particular short story appears in the anthology. Also their reading list consists of “cultures in crisis” literature, such as: *Fahrenheit 451*, *Lord of the Flies*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Night*, *Tale of Two Cities*, etc. Usually about 20 to 25 students make up our honor level classes.

Our high school of 1800 students is very diverse. About 40 ethnic groups are represented in our school; however, we have very few Asian students. Our biggest Caucasian group is Eastern European, with a growing Hispanic, Arabic, and Palestinian groups. The number of African-American students has remained at about 18% of our student body. The high school is a one-school district located in a primarily residential neighborhood with very little remaining industry. Our students come from what used to be the “blue collar workers” and many are the first generation to graduate high school or to go on to college. The number of students designated as living at the “poverty level” has gradually increased to about 8%. For the first time last year three families were identified as “homeless”. The challenge becomes helping these students from such diverse backgrounds recognize the universal desires, problems, and tragedies common to all mankind.

Summary

As the story begins, Shanshan, the 30-year-old narrator is questioning her own identity and her reluctance to marry her handsome boyfriend. Her mother, who she describes as her “closest friend”, has recently died having left instructions to destroy her complete set of Chekov stories and her diary along with her body. According to her mother’s wishes, Shanshan did burn the books, but could not part with the diary. As she reads her mother’s words, one of the many things she discovers is that her mother had had a secret love. Although set with the Cultural Revolution in China as a backdrop, this story presents universal questions, such as: Why do people marry? What is “true love”? What patriotic demands might conflict with individual fulfillment? How is one generation responsible to the next? What constitutes a “cultural revolution”?

The Big Picture

According to the 2000 edition of the sophomore anthology, *The Language of Literature* published by McDougal Littell, Zhang Jie suffered both poverty and government control within the Communist system. After being forced to study statistics and work in a factory, she was finally able to begin her writing career in Beijing in 1976. Jie was one of the first Chinese writers to address the subjects of romantic love, marriage and the role of women. By the 1980s she had become a best-selling author in her homeland.

Professor Sarah Stevens, an expert lecturer at the Teaching East Asian Literature in the High School Summer Workshop of 2005, placed Zhang Jie as a prominent Post-Maoist fiction writer. Because of the “unabashed” approach to the controversial topics of romance and gender in this short story, it caused quite a stir in the Chinese society (Stevens p. 19).

Many general characteristics of the writing during this period appear in Jie's story. Writing about a woman's writing along with references to female sexuality, gender issues and Western contact were all popular devices during this movement. Her writing can also be seen as representative of the "Wound" and "Roots" Post-Maoist literature. Even though her criticism of Maoist policies might have been mostly inferred, they were presented through the love story, which Shanshan read in her mother's diary or memoir, both characteristics of the "Wound" literature. The narrator is obviously searching for her place in the world and questioning traditional ways and morals as reflected in the "Root" literature of this same period (Stevens p. 15).

Discussion Questions and Answers and Activities

In preparation of all unit/lesson plans, I use **Blank's** following four-question method to guide my choices of questions, activities, and evaluations:

1. What *facts* do I want the students to know?
 - a. Zhang Jie's biographical information (See Big Picture)
 - b. Definition of the following terms: renounce, atonement, heretic, revolution, culture
2. What *ideas* do I want the students to understand?
 - a. The causes and effects of social change as well as the benefits and losses
 - b. Individual choices and actions are affected by their society
 - c. Often there is a counter revolution
(Possible answers found on the Student Cultural Revolution Chart)
3. What *skills* do I want the students to demonstrate?
 - a. The ability to participate in effective discussion—oral and written
 - b. The ability to read and understand the text
 - c. The ability to thoughtfully complete the chart
 - d. The ability to write an effective answer for an essay question
(Specific discussion and essay questions and answers follow)
4. What *moral and/or values* do I want the students to develop?
 - a. Begin to understand the complexities of modern cultures
 - b. Begin to understand the conflict between the individual and society
 - c. Begin to understand the similarities among people rather than concentrating on the differences
 - d. Begin to recognize the importance of literature in understanding ourselves and others

This *introductory activity* will encourage interest and discussion before and after reading the story. Students are asked to read *The Pre-and Post-Reading Survey* and respond quickly with the assurance that they will have an opportunity for discussion later. Their choices are: strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree or somewhat disagree. The statements are:

1. A woman can be completely successful without husband or children.
2. A sense of duty should never be a reason for marriage.
3. A sexual relationship is always part of true love.
4. Marriage is a social contract.
5. Citizens must always support the government during times of crisis.
6. Citizens owe their government obedience and service.
7. All revolutions have something to do with government.

8. Your greatest duty is to yourself.
9. Parents' values always become the children's.
10. Face-to-face conversation is always most effective.

After students have read and responded to the statements, take a tally of the number of students who answered either strongly agree or strongly disagree for each statement. Choose a student from each group to support his or her answer. Give all students the option to change their answers after each debate. Continue through the ten statements and answers. Remind the students to keep these ideas in mind as they read because they will respond to the same statements after reading the story. Students are instructed to keep their completed survey in their notebooks along with the other activities connected to this literature. This activity should take about 5 minutes for the students to complete survey. The length of the discussion will depend on the interest of the students and their ability to articulate ideas and time available to the teacher. (See *Appendix A* for student handout)

The *vocabulary activity* will follow the Pre-and Post-Reading Survey. Students may wish to work together as a class or in small groups or as individuals. Even though the text identifies and defines 10 vocabulary words from the story, only three are included in the activity in addition to two of my own. The students are given a graphic organizer to be completed for each of the following words: renounce, atonement, heretic, revolution, culture. Their assignment is to provide a definition and to answer the following questions for each word: what is it like? (three things or ideas), what is its opposite?(one thing or idea), what category does it belong to?(object/thing/idea/emotion/behavior,etc), and what is a specific example?(name of person, movie, event, etc). (See *Appendix B* for graphic organizer). Students should keep their completed vocabulary activities in their notebooks along with their surveys to be referred to later. This vocabulary activity lends itself to the discussion of important ideas and events in the story, particularly the universal idea of a “cultural revolution”. This vocabulary activity and discussion should take about 25 minutes depending on the students’ ability to find and write definitions and to identify the other qualities of the terms.

The teacher should then lead a discussion about political revolutions—their causes, effects, the possible benefits and losses and the possibility of a counter-revolution. Possible responses for the causes might include general or specific dissatisfaction of the people and the effects might include violence, fear, excitement, improvement or decline of quality of life. The possible benefits and losses might include more jobs and education and the loss of traditional values and class structures. Examples of a counter revolution might be the French Revolution when the “revolutionaries” eventually turned their violence upon themselves and the “Hippies” came of age and became part of the “establishment”.

Now guide the discussion toward cultural revolutions—their causes, effects, possible benefits and losses. Help the students recognize the similarities of the causes, effects, possible benefits and losses between these two types of revolutions. Then present the idea that they are in the midst of a “cultural revolution” of their own. There should be a level of discomfort and disbelief among the students. *Our Cultural Revolution Chart* should help them understand this idea and improve their understanding of the story. (*Appendix C*)

After the students have completed the chart either working individually or in small groups, lead a discussion about what they may have learned or come to understand about their culture compared to the “old traditions”. Now, to help them understand the Chinese Cultural Revolution in particular, ask them to imagine that their age group from about 18-23 has been given official sanction to use whatever means they feel necessary to get the changes they want. As a class discuss their responses to the following questions: How would you use the media—movies, TV, advertisements, Internet, etc—to promote your ideas? What laws would you put into effect? How would you punish those who did not agree with your ideas or follow your laws? How would you reward those who helped “the cause”? Explain that this is exactly what happened during China’s Cultural Revolution. Point out also that there was a counter-revolution to counteract some of the extremes of the Cultural Revolution.

Now as the students read the story they will not only better understand the Cultural Revolution in China, but they will also be able to understand the idea as it applies to their own culture.

The amount of time required for these pre-reading activities and discussions will depend on many variables such as time, number and level of students, etc. Two to three class periods would seem reasonable, however.

Students will now read the short story *Love Must Not Be Forgotten (Appendix D)*. As an informal evaluation and a source for important discussion, students will return to the *Pre-and Post-Reading Survey* and make changes. Hopefully, the students will now have a better understanding of the circumstantial and cultural nature of the questions and answers. As a more formal writing evaluation, students must now read Chinua Achebe’s short story *Marriage is a Private Affair (Appendix E)* and write an essay comparing the “cultural revolutions” and “counter-revolutions” in both short stories and their own “cultural revolution” and the possibility of a counter-revolution in the next generation. They must use specifics from each story and their own society to support their ideas. They must also use some of their vocabulary words.

Connections to Other Literary Works

This story and the related activities are connected to much of the honor sophomore curriculum, such as: *Fahrenheit 451*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Night*, *Tale of Two Cities*, etc. All of this literature, in some way or another, represents what I refer to as “cultures in crisis” in which a “cultural revolution” of some sort takes place. Often the revolution turns violent and becomes oppressive—at least to some part of the society. Also these changes provide some benefits and also cause some suffering. In addition, *1984*, *Night*, and *Tale of Two Cities* also have diaries or memoirs as part of the plot.

Resources

The Language of Literature, published by McDougal Littell in 2000 p. 188-210

Teaching East Asian Literature in the High School Summer Workshop 2005,
Professors Sarah Stevens and Jeff Wasserstrom, lectures and handouts

Word Works: Cracking Vocabulary’s CODE, published by Thoughtful Education Press,
LLC, Silver Strong & Associates, LLC. 2004

**APPENDIX A
PRE-AND POST READING
SURVEY**

Love Must Not Be Forgotten
Pre-and Post-Reading Survey

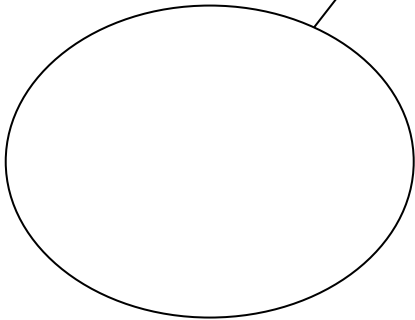
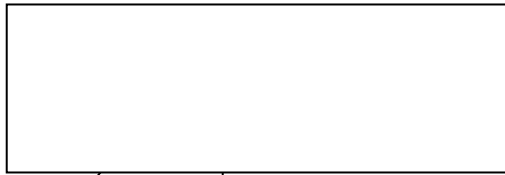
Quickly read the following statements and mark your answers. Please keep this survey so that you can refer to it again after you have read the literature.

- 1. Strongly Agree**
- 2. Somewhat Agree**
- 3. Somewhat Disagree**
- 4. Strongly Disagree**

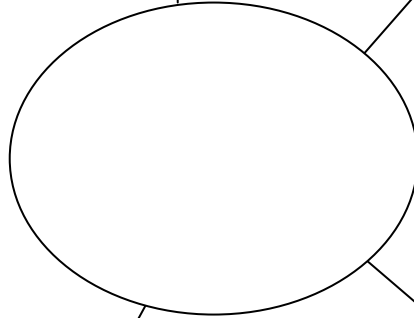
- _____ 1. A woman can be completely successful without husband or children.
- _____ 2. A sense of duty should never be a reason for marriage.
- _____ 3. A sexual relationship is always part of true love.
- _____ 4. Marriage is a social contract.
- _____ 5. Citizens must always support the government during times of crisis.
- _____ 6. Citizens owe their government obedience and service.
- _____ 7. All revolutions have something to do with government.
- _____ 8. Your greatest duty is to yourself.
- _____ 9. Parents' values always become the children's.
- _____ 10. Face-to-face conversation is always most effect.

APPENDIX B
VOCABULARY GRAPHIC
ORGANIZER

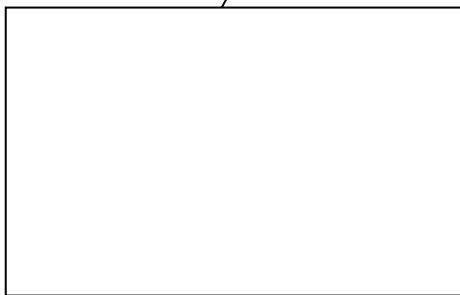
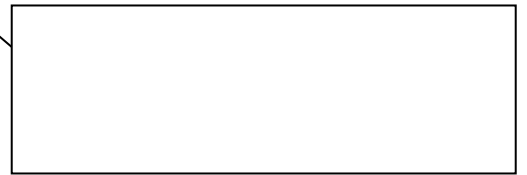

Category



Comparisons



Properties



Examples

APPENDIX C
CULTURAL REVOLUTION CHART

Cultural Revolution Chart

What Questions begin to be ask? Why?

Who become the leaders? Why?

Who begins to ask the questions? Why?

Who become the distracters? Why?

Explain how the following parts of the culture change:

Family Structure

Jobs

Gender Roles

Arts/Entertainment

Schools/Education

Social Behavior

Religion

Class Structure

Who benefits? Why?

Who suffers? Why?

Describe what sort of Counter-Revolution may occur. Why?

Write a one-sentence conclusion.

APPENDIX D
LOVE MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN
BY
ZHANG JIE

Found in *The Language of Literature*, published by McDougal Littell in 2000 p. 197-208.

APPENDIX E
MARRIAGE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR
BY
CHINUA ACHEBE
Translated by Gladys Yang

Found in *The Language of Literature*, published by McDougal Littell in 2000 p. 189-193.