

Reading responses 4



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Reading responses The Management of Grief - This is the heartbreaking story of Mrs. Bhave, woman from India who moves with her family to Canada to escape religious persecution. Her husband and both her children are killed in a terrorist attack on a plane over Ireland and she, along with other Indians in Toronto, are left to grieve in a culture that is foreign to them. At first, she clings to hope that her family is still somehow alive, but gradually she comes to understand that they are gone and she must find a way to move on. What struck me most was how Mrs. Bhave felt trapped between Canada and India, and the living and the dead. She felt like she had nowhere to go, but standing still in her grief was not an option. "Two Kinds" - A young Chinese-American girl and her Chinese-born mother live together in America. The mother, who lost her first husband and children in China, seems to have pinned all her hopes on her stubborn daughter. Hopeful that her daughter will become a piano-playing genius, she forces her to take lessons - from a man who turns out to be deaf. The young girl fails miserably at the recital, she and her mother fight, before the young girl makes a mean comment about her mother's now dead family. They never speak of the piano again, but when her mother dies, she plays one last time. This story surprised me with its sense of humor, especially with the mother who would constantly test her daughter to see if she had some strange gift, like the ability to guess the weather. "House on Mango Street" - This is a very short story about a girl explaining how her family once moved every year from one awful apartment to another, all while dreaming of the great home they would someday own. The house on Mango Street they own, but it is a sad little house, not much better than the last, and one they hope to move from soon. The nun in this story made me angry the way she acted shocked at the

horrible condition of the girl's former home. "What Sally Said" - This is a quick story of a girl named Sally who is horribly abused by her father, yet she still seems to love him. I was upset by this one, since it was graphic in describing her bruises and the way Sally said that her father "just forgot he was her father between the buckle and the belt" (748). "Linoleum Roses" - Here we see what happened to Sally once she grows up. She marries a man a lot like her father who is controlling and sometimes angry. She rarely leaves her house, but takes comfort in seeing all the pretty things around her. The line that shocked me most was "And he doesn't let her look out the window" (479). She is his prisoner and that sounds horrible. "A House of My Own" - A very short story where a young woman is describing how much she loves living on her own, in her own home. The last line is beautiful, "Only a house quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as paper before the poem." (749) Her home is her creative space that no one can touch but her. "Fleur" - Fleur is an outcast in her Native American reservation town. She nearly drowned twice and both times, the men who saved her went on to die awful deaths. She works for a butcher in town, along with a young girl named Pauline, who thinks she is "invisible" (732) to the other men. Night after night, Fleur plays cards with the men and each time wins only a dollar, until one night she takes the men for a pile of money. The men attack Fleur and Pauline watches, hiding and afraid to help the woman. Days later a tornado rips through the reservation and the three attackers are found dead, playing cards in the freezer of the butcher's shop. Pauline stays in touch with Fleur, even helping to deliver her baby years later. And Pauline says the people in the town will never understand her or know what really happened. "Yellow Woman" - A Native American woman wakes up in the wilderness with a man

she met the day before near the river. He calls her “ Yellow Woman” and she starts to believe he is a mountain spirit; stories her grandfather used to tell her about two mythical spirits of the wilderness. She isn’t sure she can leave him, but at times he doesn’t act like she is his captive. He is kind to her and seems to be falling in love with her. She seems to love him, too, since she thinks of how her husband will remarry and her baby will be raised by her parents. At the end of the second day, the two ride into Mexico, where the man is wanted for stealing cattle. The woman flees and returns to her home and her family. She seems certain the man was not a spirit, but wishes her grandfather were still alive since “ it was the Yellow Woman stories he liked to tell the best” (600). “ Civil Peace” - This story takes place in an African town that recently saw civil war. The man in the story, Jonathan, is thankful that he and his family still have a home and only lost one child in the war. He says he is “ extra-ordinary lucky.” He is also grateful that he has a bicycle to get around the village on and find food for his family. He trades in rebel money one day and gets new currency for it - twenty pounds. That night, soldiers come to his house demanding 100 pounds or they will kill his family. Jonathan is shocked since the war is over, but the soldiers say it is the cost of “ civil peace.” Jonathan convinces them to take the 20 pounds and leave without hurting his family. The next day, he tells his neighbors that he doesn’t care about the money; only his family matters. This story was hard to read in many places because the dialogue is all written the way the people speak and not in proper English.