

The Why We Came

- What does the narrator mean when he says “Been scared so long / Don’t know any other normal”?
- What is the narrator talking about when he refers to “the stomping of boots / And the banging at the door / In the middle of the night”? What inferences can you make?
- Why would the narrator feel guilty that he and his family escaped from Iraq?

When We First Came

- What words would you use to describe how the narrator is feeling in this section? Why does he feel these emotions?

Who We Are

- What clues in this chapter suggest that the narrator is having trouble adjusting to life in his new country?
- The narrator reads the “big fat book” to make it look like he’s not jealous. What is he jealous of? Why? Do you think he chooses a good strategy for dealing with this situation? Why or why not?

Carlos and Marley

- In this chapter, where do you see the narrator successfully coping with challenges? What does he do to cope with each challenge?

Bacon and Weirdness

- What events and situations cause the narrator to feel stress in this section? How does he try to cope with each one?
- On page 18, the narrator says, “if you try to give / Any sort of explanation / They think you’re on the side of the terrorists.” Why would people think this?

In the TV Store

- The shoppers don't realize that the narrator and his family are laughing at the cartoon. What might be another reason why the shoppers think the narrator and his family are laughing at the attack?
- The narrator copes with his anger by writing a poem for Carlos and Marley. What do you predict he wants to tell them? Why do you think so?

Not Guilty

- This section presents the poem the narrator writes to Carlos and Marley. What emotions did you feel while reading this poem? Why did you feel those emotions?

Done

- After the bombing at the race, Carlos and Marley react very differently to the narrator than the shoppers did earlier. How would you explain these two very different reactions?