

## RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

### *Shu-Li and Tamara* Grades 1 - 3

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#### 1. Story Summary

11-year-old Shu-Li's family came from China two years ago and settled in Vancouver's Commercial Drive area, a district known for its diverse cultures. Tamara Richardson just moved there. The two girls become friends, and Tamara helps at Shu-Li's family's Chinese deli. But Tamara is haunted by an ugly rumour that she steals money. Then, during the school fair, twenty dollars goes missing from the girls' fund-raising table. In front of a police officer, Tamara is accused of stealing.

#### 2. Themes of the Story

- 2.1 Making Friends: Children want and need friends. It isn't always easy to make friends, especially for children who arrive at a new school.
- 2.2 Making Mistakes: If you make a mistake and still want to have friends, then you should admit you're wrong and say you're sorry.
- 2.3 Newcomers: Sometimes it is harder to trust newcomers because you don't know anything about them.
- 2.4 Themes around Immigration
  - 2.4.1 After moving from one country to another, making new friends is important.
  - 2.4.2 Compared to children, immigrant adults often find it harder to learn a new language.
  - 2.4.3 In a new homeland, immigrants often seek out other immigrants because they share a common history. But immigrants also need to make new friends.

### 3. Comprehension: Questions and Answers

#### 3.1 Chapter One

##### 3.1.1 Why does Shu-li dislike working in her family's deli?

She would rather go play in the park.  
She is ashamed of her mother's poor English.  
Children from school laugh at her mother.  
Shu-li doesn't have time to go explore her new neighbourhood.

##### 3.1.2 Is the family's deli doing well? How do we know?

Yes, there is a lunch rush on Saturdays.  
Yes, people ask her father to cook food for parties.  
Yes, some deli foods are sold out quickly.  
Yes, even children from the school come to buy treats.

##### 3.1.3 Why do you think the *Nah-Nah* girls use that nickname for themselves?

The names of all three girls end with a 'nah' sound: Hannah, Shona and Jenna.  
'*Nah-nah*' sounds 'cool' because pop songs use these words in the chorus.

##### 3.1.4 When Ma says, "I like green colour," the *Nah-Nah* girls laugh. Why does Ma make this mistake?

Ma is translating words directly from the Chinese language. In the Chinese language, all names of colours are followed by the word for 'colour.' For examples, green is lu-se, red is hong-se and white is bai-se.

#### 3.2 Chapter Two

##### 3.2.1 Why doesn't Shu-li have many friends?

She started at this school halfway through the term.  
The popular girls sit among themselves.  
She is quiet.  
She is afraid to speak out.

##### 3.2.2 What makes Mr. Ortega a good teacher?

He asks his students for suggestions.  
He listens to all his students.  
When the students start shouting, he holds up his hands and silences them.  
He tells Shu-li it is okay to be wrong because that is how people learn things.

#### 3.3 Chapter Three

##### 3.3.1 How do we know that Shu-Li speaks better English than her mother?

3.3.2 Is Joey a polite person? How do we know?  
No, because Joey talks on and only about himself and how well he does at sports.  
No, Joey says hello to Shu-Li's mother only because she gives him snacks.  
No, because Shu-Li's mother has to tell Joey to say hello to Constable Rooney.

3.3.3 Why doesn't Shu-Li believe that Tamara steals money?  
Shu-Li doesn't like Joey much.  
Joey has no proof.  
Shu-Li wants a friend.

### 3.4. Chapter Four

3.4.1 In this chapter, how do Shu-Li and Tamara become friends?  
Shu-Li tells Tamara not to worry about making Ba break a dish.  
They both do not like boys.  
They both have strong opinions about food.  
They laugh together at Joey.

### 3.5 Chapter Five

3.5.1 How does Tamara help Shu-Li at the deli?  
She plucks parsley leaves from the stalks.  
She makes wontons.  
She takes the shells and skins off of peanuts.

3.5.2 Is Commercial Drive a good place to visit? Why?  
Yes, there are many shops.  
Yes, the Drive is crowded with shoppers.  
Yes, there are good smells: chocolates, coffee, pastries.  
Yes, children can go into shops and try on shoes and sunglasses.  
Yes, children can buy ice cream and pizza there.

3.5.3 What does Shu-Li learn from her visit to Tamara's home?  
Tamara lives in a small space.  
Tamara's parents are divorced.  
Tamara's mother is a good cook.  
Tamara's mother is poor.

### 3.6 Chapter Six

3.6.1. How do the children at Shu-Li's school prepare for the school fair?  
They paint signs.

They bake treats to sell.  
They make lanterns from bamboo and paper.  
They practice break-dancing.

- 3.6.2 Why do the girls want to make the almond cookies themselves?  
Because *children* made all the other treats they are selling.  
Because their project is about *children* helping the village in Africa.  
Because they want to learn something new.

- 3.6.3 How do we know that Tamara doesn't like to get her hands sticky with dough?

She says "Yuck! This is gross!"  
She put her hands into the dough slowly.  
She squeezes the mixture carefully.  
It takes a little bit of time before she relaxes and smiles.

### 3.7 Chapter Seven

- 3.7.1 What do Shu-Li and Tamara have to do before they start selling their treats?  
Make sure all the treats are defrosted.  
Draw up a list of prices  
Wrap the sweets in plastic.  
Set up the table.  
Bring the trays of food from the staff room.

## 4. Activities

### 4.1 Activities: Writing

- 4.1.1 You are Shu-li or Tamara. Write a letter telling about your first meeting with each other. How did you feel? What did the other girl look like?
- 4.1.2 You are Joey Zhao. Write a letter to your grandparents about what happened at the school fair. What was the best part of the day? What was the worst part of the day.
- 4.1.3 You are Mr. Ortega the teacher. Choose a place to go to for a field trip. Then, write the letter you will send home with all your students, asking the adults for permission to take students on the field trip. Explain why it is important for everyone in the class to go.

## 4.2 Individual Activities

- 4.2.1 Draw pictures of the animals from the story: goat, dragon, crab, grasshopper, fish, eagle.
- 4.2.2 Make a list of ways in which your class could help needy children in Africa.
- 4.2.3 Make a list of places you would like your class to visit on a field trip, and say why each place is important.

## 4.3 Discussion Activities

- 4.3.1 What would you do if you went shopping and got to the cash register and found you didn't have enough money to pay?

Take out a few items.

Leave everything at the cash register and not buy anything.

Offer to put everything back on the shelf and not buy anything.

Tell the cashier to hold your purchases while you go get enough money to pay.

- 4.3.2 What would you do if other people said your best friend had stolen money from them?

Tell them they are wrong because you know your friend does not steal money.

Ask them why they think your friend stole the money.

Ask them for proof. Did they see your friend take the money?

Ask them if there is another explanation for the missing money.

Ask your best friend to tell the truth.