



Read the first few pages of this book. Then brainstorm in your group:

Make a list of the characters that you have met so far and add a few keywords. What do you know about them?

Where does the story play?

What is going to happen?

Print 2 pages on 1 sheet for this pre-reading activity.

<b>Who is who?</b> Write the names of the characters here.	<b>What do you know about them?</b>

Would you like to find out more? Read the book... 😊



‘Adam?’ My voice sounded funny as I gathered the courage to say what I had decided. “I’m going to try to stay a Blue.”

Adam’s silence frightened me. “Do you mind terribly? I just want to find out what it’s like,” I went on hurriedly. “And really, it won’t change me. I mean, I’m not going on a power trip or anything. ...”

“Amy, do you realize what that means? We won’t be able to be together for weeks!”

“I know, I know ... and worse, you’ll have to bow to me and pretend to be subservient ... and I’ll hate that ... but you’ll know I don’t mean anything by it, that it’s just a role I have to play for a while.”

“Why? You just said you didn’t like having people bow to you!”

“I don’t! But ... but ... it’s hard to explain!” I pushed my hair back with nervous fingers. “Everyone says that the rich don’t care about anyone else; all they care about is getting richer. Well, maybe that’s not true. I want to see if I can’t ... do something.”

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Butterflies. That's how I felt inside, like there were thousands of butterflies leaping and fluttering inside my chest. Tonight was the dance, the luau, and I was going with Adam! He always says I seem so at peace with myself; if he only knew!

I pinned a red hibiscus behind one ear and feathered my long, straight hair out over my shoulders. No sign of the inner turmoil in the mirror. All I saw was a slight flush on my cheeks and an extra brightness in my almond-shaped eyes.

"Emiko!" Mama called. "Your *friend* is here."

Emiko, never *Amy*, as my friends at school call me.

"Coming!" I gathered up a small red purse and glanced once again in the mirror. The flowered sarong exposed my shoulders and clung to me so that I seemed taller and even more slender than I was. Did I look "too" Oriental tonight?

But, wasn't that what Adam liked?

Lifting the ginger lei from its box, I lowered it carefully over my head. Adam had sent it. I closed my eyes and breathed in its rich fragrance, smiling. The flowers had come with his note: To my exotic, inscrutable Amy ... Reading it for the tenth time I felt the same rush of pleasure. And doubt. Pleasure that he'd singled me out. And doubt as to why exactly. Oh, yes, I was bright and popular and even pretty in my way. But so were a lot of other girls. It was my differentness that intrigued him, my quietness, for I often kept thoughts to myself. In truth, I was a puzzle to him and a novelty. He hadn't come to realize yet that I live in two very different worlds—the world of today at school and with him—the world of yesterday at home with my parents. Sometimes even I wasn't sure where I truly belonged.

The mumble of voices downstairs reminded me that Adam would be trying to make small talk with Mama and Papa, which wouldn't be easy. Even though they meant to be polite, my parents had a way of making strangers feel uncomfortable, closing the shutters behind their eyes.

I hurried down the stairs, glimpsing Adam before he saw me. Seated in a straight-backed chair opposite my parents, he leaned forward, chatting in that easy way that seems so natural to him.

He turned just as I reached the last step, and seeing me, jumped

up. “Amy!” He seemed to draw in his breath as he reached me and held out a hand. “You look—wonderful!”

“Thanks,” I said softly, and the butterflies began swarming again. Adam did that to me, took my breath away, turned me shy. Wearing white chinos and a blue shirt the color of his eyes, he seemed to glow. When I’d first seen him I’d almost stopped breathing. To me he was beautiful—tall, built like statues I’d seen of young Greeks. I smiled to myself at the thought that my fingers had ruffled that head of golden hair, had traced the strong jaw, that my lips had kissed his. Even at this moment his fingers, entwined in mine, sent electric charges through me.

“Emiko, you will not be home late,” Mama said.

I’d forgotten my parents in the excitement and now turned in surprise to them. “The dance ends at one, Mama.”

“Some of the kids will be going out afterward for coffee and pizza, Mrs. Sumoto,” Adam said.

“You will be home as soon as the dance is over, Emiko,” Papa said.

Adam’s hand tightened in mine. I hesitated only an instant, swallowing disappointment, then said, “Yes, Papa.” The flatness of my father’s statement left no room for discussion.

“Well, good night, Mr. and Mrs. Sumoto,” Adam said. “We’ll be home right after the dance. Thanks for lending me your beautiful daughter.”

Mama smiled and her face softened. “Have a good time and drive carefully.” The door closed behind us but not before I glimpsed Papa’s face, so unbending and stubborn that it took some of the joy of the evening away.

As Adam eased the car out into the road I wondered if he ever noticed where I lived. Ours was a modest neighborhood of middle-class homes built in the fifties. A pleasant block of neatly kept lawns and crepe-myrtle trees at the curb. We were one of two Japanese families in the block, along with a black and a Latino family; the rest were *hakujin*—white. I would never have given this any thought were it not for the knowledge of where Adam lived. The homes on Valley Vista were huge, with fourteen or more rooms and land around them so that you couldn’t hear the neighbor’s television or his dog barking. When I first saw his home I thought of a castle on a hill away from the noise, the worries, the poverty, and the crowds.

As far as I knew only white people lived on the Vista. Early each weekday morning buses lumbered up the hill to unload the cleaning ladies who scattered through the streets and disappeared into the houses. During the day the only nonwhites likely to be seen were the

gardeners, Latinos and Asians and blacks. Then, late in the afternoon, the doors of the big houses opened again and the cleaning ladies spilled out, making their tired way back to the buses, back down the hills to their own neighborhoods.

"I'm sorry about the curfew," I said, glancing anxiously at Adam's profile in the darkness, and moved closer to him. "Maybe we can leave the dance a little early so we can have time alone together."

"Is he always so strict?"

"Only since Hideo married without his permission. Papa wanted him to marry a Japanese girl, but my brother was in love with Sue. The only thing he could do was what he did, marry her and then tell Papa." I folded my hands tightly in my lap. "Papa worries that I'll do the same thing now. He's afraid he's losing control of the family."

"You'd think he'd be pleased, if she's a nice girl and makes Hideo happy."

"Yes, you'd think so. But Papa doesn't trust ... no, not that so much. It's that he's proud of who he is. And besides ..." I hesitated, not sure I knew Adam well enough yet to share the family history, the *shame* of the internment camps, and hoped he wouldn't ask me to go on. But we were close to the school now and his attention was taken by other cars arriving, by friends on motorcycles waving to us, by the search for a parking space.

We followed the tiki torches to the school courtyard, where the lunch tables and chairs, which normally filled the space, were set up in a circle around a large wooden dance floor and band platform. "Oh, Adam ... it's magical!" I exclaimed at everything. Colored lights were strung high over the yard between buildings. They blinked lazily in the warm, dry breeze. The air felt like silk to my skin and the band played a sensual rhythm that made my hands want to talk and my body to sway.

Adam tightened an arm around my waist and moved me along. "Justin promised to come early and hold a table for the gang." He waved to one of the girls who always seemed to be watching for him.

"Wait, Adam," I said, tugging at his arm. "There's Carol and Juan. Let's stop and say hi." I used to see a lot of Carol before I began dating Adam, and realized I missed her.

"Hi, guys," I greeted. "Carol, you look great!" She wore a full, fiesta-style skirt and white lace blouse which emphasized her satin-smooth olive skin.

Carol smiled and looked down at herself. "It's not quite a luau dress but it's the only thing close I've got. You look smashing, Amy. Doesn't she, Juan?"

Juan growled appreciatively and made a playful lunge at me.

“Down, fella, down!” Adam said, laughing. I stepped back, touched hands together, and bowed in traditional Oriental fashion.

“Hey, how about joining us? You can see we've got plenty of room.” Juan indicated the six empty seats at their table.

“Thanks, but no. We just stopped to say hi.” Adam pressed my back. “Besides, Amy promised to teach me the hula.” He held up a hand in parting.

“See you in class Monday!” Carol called after us, and I waved back. Something about the way they looked—disappointed, subdued—made me wonder why I hadn't thought to ask *them* to join us. Would Adam have minded? Or was it because I had my own misgivings? Being the only nonwhite in his crowd, I didn't always feel entirely comfortable. Sometimes I swallowed things I wanted to say, like at home where I couldn't always speak my mind and where Papa's word was law.

I thought of the day I'd told Adam's friends about how Juan had chased me around the fountain, picked me up, and thrown me in. Most of the gang laughed, but a few of them got strange, condescending looks on their faces, which made me sorry I'd spoken. Sometimes I wondered if Adam's friends really liked me, or if they accepted me only because I was his girl.

“Come on, you guys!” Adam said in greeting as soon as we reached the table Justin had saved. “On your feet. Everybody, up up! Amy's gonna teach us the hula.”

“Adam,” I cried. “They probably already know how!”

“Those klutzes? Unlikely.”

The good-natured responses and jokes that followed while each of the couples made its way to the dance floor made me a little less uncomfortable. But as I began to demonstrate how to stand, how to move the hips and slide the feet, and especially how to use the hands, a little crowd gathered.

“Do it, Amy! Come on, show us!” someone cried as the band started a hula. A chant went up, echoing the idea.

“Her grandmother lived in Hawaii,” Adam told everyone with a voice full of pride. “Go to it, Amy! Show ‘em!”

Slowly, I let the music take over my body. In moments I forgot where I was and who was watching. I danced for Adam, swaying my hips in languid movements while my hands and fingers spoke of raindrops falling and wind blowing ripples on the sea, and of two people very much in love. All the time I danced my eyes stayed locked on Adam's and told him of feelings Pd never put into words.