

Circle Games

Frank Brennan

Before reading

1. Look at the front cover. What can you see? What do you think this book is about?
2. Read the first phrase of the blurb on the back cover. What are you going to read in this book?
3. Read the rest of the blurb. What is the connection between the stories and the title of the book?

Check your reading

Quick Man Tan

1. Where does this story take place?
2. Who are the four main named characters?
3. Read pages 4–6. True or false? Caleb Tan . . .
 - a is seventy years old now.
 - b used to be a great lion dancer.
 - c used to fight a lot.
 - d talked too much in the café.
 - e and May May were rich.
4. Read pages 6–7.
 - a What was Henry's job in the café?
 - b What did Henry dream of?
 - c Why was Chinese New Year important for the café?
 - d Why was May May angry with Caleb?
5. Read pages 7–10.
 - a What was the tradition at Chinese New Year?
 - b Put these events in the correct order.
 - 1 The customer shouts, and the young man takes out a knife.
 - 2 It starts raining and lots of people come into the café.
 - 3 Caleb kicks the knife out of the man's hand.
 - 4 Caleb is telling his stories to a man with children.
 - 5 The police come and take the young man away.
 - 6 A large young man pushes a customer's table.
 - 7 Caleb fights the young man to the ground.
6. Read pages 10–11.
 - a Complete the sentences with one word.
 - 1 The story about Caleb Tan was in the
 - 2 The young man was a
 - 3 The father said Caleb was
 - 4 Caleb and May May got lots of *hong bao* with
 - b Name three changes that happened to the Tan family after that.

The Wheel on the Wall

Read pages 12–24.

1. Where do Earl and Candy Cooper live? Where are they staying?
2. Who . . .
 - a was an English sailor?
 - b was in Europe in the First World War?
 - c listened to stories about old England?
3. Why does Earl want the wheel on the pub wall?

Read pages 14–16.

4. Put the events in the correct order.
 - a Earl asks to see Tony Thatcher.
 - b Earl and Candy have a good dinner with beer.
 - c Tony agrees to sell the wheel.
 - d Tony doesn't want to sell the wheel at first.
 - e At breakfast Earl tells Candy that he wants the wheel.
 5. What does Earl tell Tony he can buy with the money from the wheel?
- Read page 16.
6. Where are Earl and Candy a month later? What have they got?
 7. What has Tony Thatcher bought a month later?
 8. Look at the picture. What can you see by the wall?
 9. What do you understand about the wheel that Earl bought?

Special Clay

1. Who are these people?
 - a Emilio Lopez, b Mrs McFee, c Grover Jackson
2. What are Emilio's 'difficulties'?
3. What does Emilio like about Mrs McFee's drama classes?
4. What is Mrs McFee's 'special clay' and what do the students do with it?
5. Describe Emilio's pottery.
6. Why does Mrs McFee take Emilio to meet Grover Jackson?
7. What causes the car accident, and what happens in it?
8. How does the 'special clay' help Emilio help Mrs McFee and the other driver?

The Trishaw Man

Read pages 27–29.

1. Who are . . . a Gregory, b Thomas, c Anita?
2. a What is a trishaw? b Who uses trishaws now?
3. Henry is a good student at school but he isn't happy. Why not?
4. Where does this story take place?

Read pages 29–31.

5. True or false?
 - a The streets were busy because it was National Day.
 - b The tourists in the trishaw were staying at Raffles Hotel.
 - c Dianne Troy was a famous singer.
 - d It was harder to get to Raffles Hotel that day in the trishaw than in a taxi.
 - e There was a large crowd outside the hotel waiting to see Dianne Troy.
 - f Hornets are very dangerous insects.
6. What do the woman and her daughter need to do?

Read page 32.

7. Match the beginnings and endings.

- 1 The story about Thomas Lim
- 2 The hornet sting
- 3 Melvin Yip said Tracey was well
- 4 A taxi couldn't get to hospital
- 5 Dianne Troy, the actress,
 - a had made Tracey Kinsella very ill.
 - b because of the crowds in the streets.
 - c was in *The Straits Times* newspaper.
 - d also saw what happened.
 - e because of Thomas Lim's quick thinking.

8. How did Gregory feel at school, and why?

Beautiful Thing

1. What do you find out about Polly Hopkins?
2. Describe the beautiful thing that Polly Hopkins finds.
3. Who are Dr Janet Collins and Dr Danny Fellows?
4. Who said what to whom?
 - a 'How did this beautiful thing find *you*?'
 - b 'Maybe it's some kind of CD or something.'
 - c 'Do you mind if we take some DNA from the inside of your mouth?'
 - d 'We haven't ever seen anything like it before.'
 - e 'I'm going home now and nobody is going to stop me.'
5. What happens to the disc?
6. What was the disc? What does Polly think?

After reading.

1. Which of the stories is about ...
 - a a 'difficult' boy in the USA?
 - b a clever boy in Singapore?
 - c American tourists in England?
 - d an archaeology student in the UK?
 - e a story-teller in a café?
2. What are their names?
 - a a drama teacher in Cleveland, Ohio
 - b a fish-shop worker in Singapore
 - c an archaeology professor in Britain
 - d a male cook in a Singapore café
 - e a pub owner in Portsmouth
3. Which two stories ...
 - a had something like magic in them?
 - b happened in Singapore?
 - c were about schoolboys?
 - d happened in Britain?
4. Which story did you like best, and why?
5. Which character did you like best, and why?
6. Choose one of the stories and continue it.
7. You are going to make a film out of one of the stories. Decide which actors will play the main characters.
8. Do you prefer reading several short stories or one longer one? Why/why not?
9. Make a quiz for another student who has read *Circle Games*. Write a few details about each story and ask them to decide which one it is.