## Study of *Onion Tears*

This is your booklet for assessment. Please answer in full sentence answers. Your final copy must be in blue or black pen.

**Before reading**

1. Who is the author of *Onion Tears*?

The author of Onion Tears is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

1. Who is the illustrator of *Onion Tears*?

The illustrator of Onion Tears is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

1. Look at the Acknowledgements page where the author writes to thank all the people who have helped her research and write this story. Use it to help you guess the country in which this story is set.

I think that *Onion Tears* is set\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Pages 7-14**

1. Nam-Huong is the main character in this story. Can you guess her birth country?

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2. Make a list of the characters mentioned from Nam-Huong’s past and her present.

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| --- | --- |
| **Past** | **Present** |
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3. Why does Nam-Huong hate chopping smelly onions? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. We don’t know yet what Nam-Huong means, only that it was special to her mother. What meanings do her schoolmates try to guess? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .
2. We learn that Nam-Huong doesn’t speak. What **three** reasons are suggested for this by the children at school?

The three reasons that the children suggest why Nam-Huong doesn’t speak are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Nam-Huong uses a simile to describe herself.

“I can never tell them why *I am like the wooden bird* that Grandpa carved for me so long ago.” What does she mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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8. How does this image compare to the little yellow canary Nan-Huong describes in her letter?

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## Study of *Onion Tears*

**Pages 15-23**

1. Who makes Nam-Huong smile inside? Why? What does the expression “smile inside” mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Nam-Huong cries onion tears. What are onion tears? Why do you think she can’t cry real tears?

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3. Danny described Nam-Huong’s food as “funny”. What did she have for lunch? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Where are the ghosts supposed to live in Nam-Huong’s present life? Where did she think they lived in her past life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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5. Who did Nam-Huong want to be like? Why?

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6. What do you think happened to Nam-Huong’s birth family? (Use the picture on page 24 to help you.) Why do you think they don’t reply to her letters and the letters written by her new aunty in Australia?

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## Study of *Onion Tears*

**Pages 25-29**

1. How does Aunty show she cares about Chu Minh?

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2. In the letter she writes to the little duck Nam-Huong uses an example of **onomatopoeia (a word that imitates the sound to which it refers).** What is it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Pages 29-30**

1. Nam-Huong starts to connect with Miss Lily. Why is this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Pages 31-39**

1. Why do you think Nam-Huong doesn’t want to go to the beach with the other children? (The picture of the boat will give you a clue.)

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2. The author uses a simile to describe how Aunty would feel if Chu Minh does not finish the soup on time. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why does Chu Minh use this expression? (Clue: Compare the colour of the uncooked creature with the colour of the cooked creature.)

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4. Why does Nam-Huong run away from Miss Lily's garden?

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5. What is a tip? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_What did Chu Minh find there? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. What did Chu Minh give Nam-Huong as a gift? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. What did it remind her of? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. What did Miss Lily ask Nam-Huong to help her do?

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9. What did Miss Lily give to Nam-Huong to take to her Aunty and what did Chu Minh do with it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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10. In her letter to the little yellow canary Nam-Huong explains what happened the day she said goodbye to her family. Explain *in your own words* how Nam-Huong’s family are separated because of the war.

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## Study of *Onion Tears*

**Pages 40-48**

1. How does the note Tessa wrote about Nam-Huong's name made her feel?

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2. Nam-Huong describes seeing ghosts everywhere in the house. Who or what are the ghosts she is referring to? (Use the picture on page 43 to help you answer this question.)

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3a. Re-read the descriptions of Nam-Huong’s bike on pages 35 and 41 and then match the following:

(a) Tyres ( ) like buffalo horns / little painted dragon

(b) Handlebars ( ) painted butterfly

(c) Mudguard ( ) fat

3b. How does it compare to the other children’s bikes?

(a) Mary’s ( ) ten gears

(b) Danny’s ( ) skinny tyres

(c) Tessa’s ( ) silver

3c. Now write a description of Nam-Huong’s bike, comparing it to the bikes belonging to the other children. Use words which indicate comparisons such as ‘whereas’, ‘however’, ‘similarly’ and ‘in contrast with’. Include the **two** similes Diana Kidd uses to describe how Nam-Huong feels about it (see page 45).

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4. How does Danny describe her bike? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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5. What do the other children do to it?

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6. How does Nam-Huong react and how do you think she feels?

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7. What else do we learn about Chu Minh when he fixes Nam-Huong’s bike?

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8. Why did Nam-Huong want to stay on her bike forever when she went to the park with Aunty and the Ngoc family?

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9. What else do we learn about Nam-Huong’s journey with her grandfather to escape the war in her letter to the little duck?

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## Study of *Onion Tears*

**Pages 49-57**

1. Write the simile that describes Miss Lily’s appearance and tells us she is sick.

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2. Chu Minh speaks in quite ‘flowery’ language. What is the **hyperbole (exaggerating a point for effect)** he uses in the note he attaches to his *dim sims* for Miss Lily?

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3. Why do you think Nam-Huong doesn’t cry real tears on the outside?

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**Pages 57-62**

1. Nam-Huong climbs to the top of Miss Lily’s palm tree and sees the sea which brings back memories for her. What else do we learn about her journey from Vietnam to Australia with her grandfather in this letter she wrote to the little yellow canary?

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2. List all the similes and metaphors Nam-Huong used in this letter.

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**Pages 63-71**

1. On the day Miss Lily comes home from hospital Nam-Huong follows Samson to the beach. Her memories of her boat journey flood back…

*‘And for a moment I was on the boat again, and the water was gold around the silent bodies I saw floating there – floating on the saffron sea, staring at the saffron sun – and I saw my Grandpa there, silently floating away.’*

(a) Saffron is a spice which is yellow or orange in colour. Why would the sea have been saffron in colour? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. ‘*And all the world was crying…’* (page 63)

(a)Who is Nam-Huong thinking of? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(b) What is the Vietnamese name for grandfather? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(c) What happens next which causes Nam-Huong to cry real tears and speak again?

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3. “My tears poured out like monsoon rains.” (page 64) What is the meaning **and** effect of this simile? (You will need to know what a monsoon is.)

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4. Who does Nam-Huong cry for?

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5. Miss Lily comforts Nam-Huong. What does Nam-Huong tell her?

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6. At the top of the tree Nam-Huong remembers the little yellow canary and wishes it was with her, singing. How is Nam-Huong feeling now? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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7. List the things Nam-Huong does on her camping trip with Miss Lily, Mary, Tessa and Danny. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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8. How do you think putting flowers on the river and watching them float away helped Nam-Huong?

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9. At the very end of the novel, what happens that tells us Nam-Huong has accepted what happened to her family. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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