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Each member, what chapter did you read, what did you learn from this (write your name next to your comment).

Caitlin Ree:

I read chapter one about an Armenian immigrant named Nara and her mother, Oktiabrina. Nara's grandmother lived through the Armenian genocide, Oktiabrina lived through World War II and Stalin's regime, and Nara lived first through the Soviet Union's reign and then through Armenia's independence from the Soviet Union. Nara and her husband moved to the United States after the new Armenian government became too corrupt, and Oktiabrina followed because she did not want to live in Armenia without Nara. I learned about the hardships that immigrants face when they leave their beloved homes and the ways that they sometimes regret ever leaving.

Shane Remo:

Ana perspective - They moved because of the civil war. It was not a safe place to live in El Salvador as there would be dead bodies left outside. Every day they were practically praying for their life as they constantly lived in fear and nervousness. Ana never regretted her decision of immigrating to America as it has given her and her family stability.

Juanita perspective - In El Salvador, whenever her parents left the house, she had to pray that they would come back safe. She felt safe in America. She enjoyed the freedom and opportunity in the United States. Even though she lives in America, she still has a sentimental attachment to El Salvador.

I learned about the cruel living conditions that immigrants face and that they move to America for an opportunity to change their lives for the better.

Meiyi Ye:

I read Chapter 5: immigrant from Vietnam. I learned about the gruesome environment and the hardships Thuynga and her family endured during the Vietnam War and her treacherous journey to reach the United States. In South Vietnam, where Thuynga and her family were living at the time fell to North Vietnam, their lives and everyone else who was living in South Vietnam had become a nightmare. The new government changed the currency so that all the money Thuynga and her family had been saving was useless. The government also sent her husband away for a "reeducation" camp where he had to do forced labor because he worked for the previous regime. Thuynga and her daughter were also imprisoned because of her husband's ties to the late government. Like Thuynga, many women whose husbands had worked for South Vietnam were

thrown into prison and refused work which meant they could not earn money for their families. Wanting a better life for her children, Thuyngha and her husband tried numerous times to escape from Vietnam, but they all failed. Eventually, they were able to escape by boat and land in Malaysia, and later, they were able to move to the United States.

Ashley Munayco:

I read the chapter about Maria and Michelle. I learned the unique perspective of immigrants. I was born and raised in the U.S and never had the experience of being torn between two countries. Maria first went to the U.S when she was 10 years old. Growing up I lived in a very hispanic community and many of my friends in middle school and high school had only come to America a few years ago. I think Maria's story gave me more perspective on what those kids (and my friends) had to go through. I also learned that many children of immigrants have similar stories and it felt nice to relate to Michelle. All of my cousins and in general members of my family that are around my age still live in Mexico and Peru. Reading Michelle's story and her view taught me that the (sometimes) confused feeling of being a part of two different cultures is normal.

Cherry Li:

I read chapter 2 with the story about Xidan. I found it to be a very emotional story. Having lived through the Cultural Revolution, Xidan had a difficult childhood. She struggled a lot with coming to terms with her family background. Because her parents came from wealthy families, under Mao's ideologies, they were grouped into the so-called "black" category and forced to reflect on how they had exploited the poor, even though they never had. Xidan was loyal to Mao, and as such, she and her brother often joined the Red Guard in humiliating and criticizing their parents in order to prove that they were revolutionaries. She noted how she stopped calling her parents "mother" and "father" and instead called them antirevolutionaries. At one point, she even thought about killing her father herself, which she deeply regretted many years later. After growing up, Xidan did not have an easy life either. Due to traditional Chinese culture, she was forced to marry and have her own family, but her husband did not respect her nor her values. Xidan was someone who strongly valued her career. Even after divorcing and moving to the U.S. with her second husband, she felt even more prisoned and at a lack of support from her husband. From Xidan's story, I learned that not all immigrant stories are about finding freedom and happiness in their new lives. For Xidan, it was much of the opposite; she lost her career, her friends, and her language, but in any case, she was not one to give up on her dreams.

Whole group: Did reading the chapter and listening to Ms. Philips change your attitude or future behavior in any way?

We think that as a whole it did change our attitude. Especially, watching the video and listening to the discussion in class with Ms. Phillips and the students. We got to hear the stories of different immigrants and the perspective of our fellow classmates. Hearing the tough stories of other people coming to America and how even some of our classmates related to their stories was eye opening. We think it changed our attitude to always remember to be open and that people come from different walks of life. You never know what you can learn from someone else if you just listen.