

***Like Water for Chocolate***  
**Reading questions**

**January**

1. Who is narrating the story?
2. What happened to bring on Mama Elena's early delivery of Tita?
3. Where was Tita born?
4. How come it was not necessary to slap Tita on the bottom at birth?
5. Why did Tita feel a deep love for the kitchen?
6. Explain what happened to Tita when she was two days old.
7. Explain the relationship between Tita and Nacha. What made their relationship special?
8. What made it possible for Nacha to nourish Tita and impossible for Mama Elena?
9. Compare and contrast Tita's world to that of her sisters.
10. What was the reason given to prevent Tita from marrying Pedro?
11. What is the significance of the family tradition?
12. What issues does Tita bring up when she questions the family tradition?
13. What is Tita's punishment for having a headache?
14. What is the significance of the song, "The Eyes of Youth," that Gertrudis plays on the piano?

**February**

15. Explain how Tita's relationship with Mama Elena is different from her relationship with Nacha.
16. Explain and discuss the beginning of Tita's rebellion.
17. Explain the significance of Tita's bedspread.
18. Why does Pedro decide to marry Rosaura? What is the logic to his decision?
19. What is the significance of the color white?
20. Describe the elaborate banquet Tita prepared for Rosaura's wedding.
21. How was Mama Elena able to obtain the French silk for Rosaura's wedding sheet?
22. Who is the Chinaman? How was he able to become a millionaire during revolution?
23. What is your reaction to Mama Elena throwing such an elaborate wedding for Rosaura in the midst of the revolution? What conclusion can be made about Mama Elena?
24. What causes Nacha's death?
25. How is Tita's life similar to Nacha's?

## March

1. Why did Pedro give Tita a bouquet of roses?
2. Describe Mama Elena's reaction to Pedro giving Tita roses.
3. What did Tita do with the roses?
4. How does Tita kill the quail?
5. Compare Mama Elena's merciless killing to Tita's killing of the quail.
6. What inference (conclusion) can be made for the following passage? "She just pretended that each quail had a soft-boiled egg stuck in its crop and that she was delivering it from this suffering, mercifully, by giving its neck a good twist. As a child she would have chosen death over those soft-boiled eggs she was made to eat" (p.49-50).
7. Explain Mama Elena's reaction to both Tita and Rosaura's meals.
8. Compare and contrast Gertrudis and Juan's (the revolutionary) relationship with that of Tita and Pedro.
9. Compare and contrast Pedro with Juan, the revolutionary.
10. After Father Ignacio informs Mama Elena that Gertrudis is working in a brothel on the boarder, what is Mama Elena's reaction? Why?
11. What is the significance of the chile in walnut sauce?

## April

12. Describe Tita's feelings toward her nephew, Roberto. What causes these feelings?
13. Tita no longer feels that Pedro lied to her on his wedding day. What has occurred to change her mind?
14. What eases the feeling of loneliness Tita has from losing Nacha and Pedro?
15. Explain how Rosaura nearly dies while giving birth to Roberto.
16. What does Tita give to Nicholas to take to Gertrudis?
17. How was Tita able to feed Roberto?
18. What is your opinion on the comment that Mama Elena makes that "Children shouldn't be away from their mothers." (p.77) What does this comment say about Mama Elena?
19. Mama Elena tries to discourage Doctor Brown from coming to the house twice a day to check on Rosaura. Why?
20. Why does Mama Elena tell Father Ignacio that it will be best if Rosaura and Pedro go to live in San Antonio with Mama Elena's cousin?
21. Why does Mama Elena feel that she does not need a man?
22. How has the revolution touch the lives of the people on the ranch?

## May

1. Describe Mama Elena and Captain Juan Alejandrez's reactions to one another when they meet.
2. Why did Captain Juan Alejandrez bow to Mama Elena when he and his men left the ranch?
3. What secrets did Mama Elena and Captain Juan Alejandrez keep to themselves?
4. Describe Tita's reactions to Mama Elena after learning of the death of her nephew.
5. What animal did Tita substitute for Roberto? Why?
6. What was Mama Elena's one fear in life?
7. Doctor Brown finds Tita in the dovecote. Describe her condition.
8. Where did Mama Elena instruct Doctor Brown to take Tita? Did he follow Mama Elena's instructions? Why or why not?

## June

9. While at Doctor Brown's Tita realizes her own hands for the first time; she did not know what to do with her hands. Why?
10. What is the significance of Doctor Brown's phosphorus experiment?
11. Doctor Brown shares his grandmother's theory with Tita. What is the grandmother's theory?
12. Tita writes on the wall in phosphorescent letters: "Because I don't want to" (p. 118). The author tells us that this is the first step toward freedom. Discuss the significance of these five words and why they are a sign of Tita's first step toward freedom.

## July

1. What causes Tita to return to her senses?
2. Describe what takes place as Tita returns to her senses?
3. After Mama Elena's death, Tita goes through her things. What secret does Tita find out about her mother? Do Tita's feelings for her mother change? Why or why not?
4. Describe the conflicting feelings Tita has when she is with John and Pedro?
5. What causes Mama Elena's death?

## August

7. Describe Esperanza's birth.
8. Compare and contrast Esperanza's birth to that of Tita.
9. How did Esperanza come by her name?
10. How was Tita able to get Esperanza to sleep with her mother?
11. Describe the relationship between Esperanza and Rosaura.

12. Describe the rules that Pedro and John break.
13. Who does Alex want to marry?

### **September**

1. How is the King's Day bread symbolic of Tita's childhood?
2. As a child one Christmas, Tita receives a special gift that does not come from Mama Elena. Describe the gift and who gives it to her.
3. Why did Pedro and Rosaura sleep in separate rooms?
4. What item is placed inside of the King's Day bread?
5. What does Paquita Lobo suspect about Tita?
6. How does Tita save Gertrudis and Juan's marriage?
7. What is ironic about Mama Elena telling Tita that she has forgotten all morality, respect, and good behavior? "You are worthless, a good-for-nothing who doesn't respect even yourself" (p. 173).
8. Explain the significance of the title *Like Water for Chocolate* to the theme of the novel.
9. Tita reminisces about her childhood wishes on Kings Day. As an adult with this special day approaching, what wishes does she contemplate for Esperanza, Rosaura, Pedro, Mama Elena and herself?

### **October**

10. Compare and contrast Tita and Chenchu's feelings toward having Gertrudis and her men at the ranch.
11. Discuss the advice Gertrudis gave to Tita. What was her reasoning?
12. While Tita was talking to Pedro, whom did Gertrudis ask to help her with syrup for the fritters? Why did Chenchu refuse to help her?
13. What words did Tita speak to Mama Elena that finally made her disappear? What was Mama Elena's reaction (What was her last evil act upon her family)?
14. Both Gertrudis and Tita are caught up in a love triangle. Compare and contrast their individual situations.
15. John finally returns to the ranch. He has brought Tita a bouquet of flowers. Compare and contrast Tita's reactions to receiving the flowers from John to that of receiving her first bouquet of flowers from Pedro. Is she pleased to see John? Why or why not?

### **November**

1. "Tita couldn't understand Pedro's attitude; he was behaving like a child throwing a tantrum" (p. 211). Discuss the text and explain how Pedro is behaving like a child.
2. Explain Rosaura's weight-loss and what causes her to gain weight.
3. Discuss the confrontation that takes place between Rosaura and Tita. How are their values different? What power does Rosaura have over Tita?

4. Discuss how Rosaura was able to hurt Tita more deeply than before when she married Pedro, “she had known how to hurt Tita most deeply” (p.251).
5. Who is Jovita? What causes Tita to remember her? Why does Tita not want to be like her?
6. Discuss John’s reaction to Tita when she suggests that their wedding be postponed.
7. “What surprised her was that he knew without a doubt that his rival was Pedro.” (p. 223) Should John’s knowledge of Pedro as his rival surprise Tita? Were you surprised that John knew Pedro was the man that Tita spoke of? Why or why not?

### **December**

8. Why do you think Rosaura died?
9. What was the official diagnosis given for Rosaura’s death?
10. Discuss the pact among Rosaura, Tita and Pedro. What causes the pact to be broken?
11. Why did Pedro request the orchestra to play “The Eyes of Youth?”
12. How old was Tita when Pedro and Rosaura married?
13. How is the education Rosaura wants for Esperanza different from the education Tita wants for her?
14. Discuss how Esperanza is able to attend school.
15. Explain why Tita is pleased to see all the chilies disappear from the platter.
16. Why does Pedro die?
17. Why does Tita eat the candles?

