Study Questions for Each Chapter:

Chapter 1: Phnom Penh

1. How could you describe the relationship between Loung and her Ma and Pa?
2. How old is Loung? What kind of child is Loung? Describe her personality. Is this typical for a young Cambodian girl?
3. In the form of a picture or drawing, illustrate the setting. Include customs and aspects of Cambodian culture.
4. Draw map of southeast Asia with the following labeled on it:
   - Cambodia
   - Laos
   - China
   - Vietnam
   - Thailand
   - Cambodia
   - Phnom Penh
   - Ho Chi Minh City
   - Bangkok
   - South China Sea
   - Gulf of Thailand
5. Draw a map of Cambodia and label the following on it:
   - Siem Reap
   - Phnom Penh
   - Battambang
   - Angkor
   - Mekong River
   - Tonle Sap

Vocab:

- sweltering
- translucent
- homely
- congested
- impurities
- stern
- elope

Chapter 2: The Ung Family

1. What are Ma and Pa's jobs? How does Pa feel about his job?
2. In Cambodia, how do you distinguish between upper, middle and lower class families?

Vocab:

- amenities
- lackluster
- havoc
- impoverished
- facade
- conscript
- makeshift
- juxtapose
- suave
Chapter 3: Takeover

1. Something very important has taken place at the beginning of this chapter. What is it? What is the people’s reaction?
2. How would you describe the mood at the end of the chapter? Why is the mood so different from the beginning? What has caused the change?

Vocab: cinched elation oblivious
jittery monsoon jarring
stifling riddled

Chapter 4: Evacuation

1. What does Ma tell Loung to do with the money? What does this tell about the situation the Ung family is in?
2. The Ung family is forced to leave behind their truck and give up their watches to the Khmer Rouge guards. Symbolically, what are they leaving behind as they do this?

Vocab: wince burrow disperse
encamp delicacy silhouette
submission

Chapter 5: Seven Day Walk

1. When the family arrived at the Kom Baul base, they stood in line with peasant families? Why was Pa afraid to declare his affiliation with the Lon Nol Democratic Government? What happened later to those who did?
2. Why is it significant that Loung dreams about a celebration in the color Red? What does red now symbolize?
3. Who does the Ung family meet on the road? What does Loung not quite understand about the family’s situation?

Vocab: monks quiver makeshift
comrade curtly putrid
innards prodding toddler
Chapter 6: Krang Troup

1. Why is Loung unhappy with her new life in Krang Troup?
2. What sorts of luxuries does the government forbid?

Vocab: obedient cadre sternness
prosper(ed) cyclo monotony
thatched rigidly

Chapter 7: Waiting station

1. Describe what Loung saw at the Waiting Station. How did the family leave so quickly?

Vocab: admonishes tranquil rendezvous
fatigued sarong clamber

Chapter 8: Anlungthmor

1. What are the conditions of the new village?
2. How does the family fair once the rainy flood season comes?
3. Why does Pa say the family needs to leave the village?
4. In what way is the family’s condition portrayed in the end of the chapter?
5. Describe the mood of Ung family.

Vocab: jut searing remedies
congeal scapegoat protrude

Chapter 9: Ro Leap

1. Who do the Ung family meet when they get to this new village? What happens to them once the village chief comes?
2. Why is it ironic that there are no social divisions in communism, Cambodia’s new government?
3. How is the family able to get more food than others? Would you allow someone in your family to make this sacrifice also?
4. What does the government believe about religion?

Vocab: uncorrupted capitalists capitalism
communal lurches sheared
emaciated reap heinous
traversing
Chapter 10: Labor Camps

1. Why is it necessary for Khouy to marry at a young age? What is happening to the young girls in Ro Leap?
2. Where are Khouy and Meng sent? Where is Keav sent?
3. Why do the new people of the village starve while they are growing plenty of food? Where does the food go?

Vocab: skittish, anguished, contorted, convenience, sauntered, distraught, gloat, avail, incantation

Chapter 11: New Year's

1. Compare and contrast Loung's sixth birthday with past birthday celebrations.
2. How is Loung's dream on New Year's Eve foreshadow what she does a night or so later?
3. What is the physical condition of Loung? Of the people of Ro Leap?

Vocab: distorted, porcelain, urgency, gorge, relish, grit, probe, ajar, treason, amends

Chapter 12: Keav

1. What were the conditions that Keav had to work and live in?
2. What happened to Keav? How would you react if this were one of your family members?

Vocab: envision, bloated, clenching, protruding, backbreaking, dissipates, infirmary, contempt, denigrated, makeshift, decrepit, disproportional, dysentery, eternity, profusely, headstrong, reincarnated, temperamental
Chapter 13: Pa

1. What happens to Pa?
2. How does Loung replace her father?
3. What is growing inside of Loung as a result of all the hardship and torment she has endured so far?
4. What small incident changes the way Loung views her mother?

Vocab:

- impending
- rigid
- taunt
- convulse
- tousle
- gaunt
- etch

Chapter 14: Ma’s Little Monkey

1. As the new head of the house, what does Kim do to prevent his family from starving to death? Is he always successful?
2. How does this event with Kim impact the growth of Loung’s hatred of the Khmer, the soldiers, and Pol Pot?
3. Why might Loung describe Cambodian rain as a friend?

Vocab:

- omnipotent
- aroma
- moonbeams
- protruding
- lest
- cringes
- avenge

Chapter 15: Leaving Home

1. What is happening at Ro Leap that causes Ma to send Kim, Chou, and Loung away?
2. Describe the labor camp where Chou and Loung stay.
3. Why do the others hate Chou and Loung? How does each girl react to the taunts and hatred?

Vocab:

- famine
- resentment
- calluses
- adulation
- speculates
- dispensable
- intimidating
- liberator
- endures
- scorching
- propaganda
- incubates
Chapter 16: Child Soldiers

1. What “reward” has Loung earned for being a strong girl?
2. Describe what her new camp life is like. How would you feel if you were sent there, without your sister?
3. Why do the girls all avoid friendships?
4. How do changes in the war between the Youns and the Khmer Rouge affect the girls at the camp? How does it affect Loung specifically?

Vocab: elation zealous sinewy
        obligatory furor infiltrated
depicting inevitably

Chapter 17: Gold for Chicken

1. How does Loung react to seeing Geak? Why does she feel such shame?
2. Why is the chapter called “Gold for Chicken”? Would you put others first as Ma does? Why or why not?

Vocab: writhing foothills brittle
        pangs shuddered brimming
        frail

Chapter 18: The Last Gathering

1. In this chapter, almost the entire Ung family is reunited at the infirmary. Does it seem likely that this would happen to many families? Describe how you would feel if you had been separated and now were together again.

Vocab: troupe bloated granulated
        somberly illuminated staggering
        envision

Chapter 19: The Walls Crumble

1. Describe how Loung knows to go visit Ma and Geak. What is it that she knows?
2. What happens to Loung once she accepts what has taken place?
3. What might you do if you experienced this terror?

Vocab: infirmary repetitive manifest
        extrasensory frantically palpitates
        circulate elicitation recesses
        puncture
Chapter 20: The Youn Invasion

1. What happens that allows Kim, Chou and Loung to be reunited?
2. Despite being together, why are the children so sad?
3. What does Loung learn about the war from the adults in the camp?

Vocab: shrapnel debris engulf
scavenge vehemently paranoid
implicit labyrinth influx

Chapter 21: The First Foster Family

1. What are the Ung children looking for? When they find it, what does Loung expect? What does she receive instead?
2. Describe what happens between Paof, the Youn soldier and Loung. Do you believe this happened to many young girls at the camp?
3. What gives Loung the courage and strength to continue, knowing she is loved?

Vocab: hyperventilate haze impending
lingering surge quizzically
whimper bewildered indignantly

Chapter 22: Flying Bullets

1. What happens to the grandmother in this chapter?
2. Why is Loung not surprised that the family will not take care of them anymore?
3. Describe the Ung’s new foster family. Do you believe they are better caretakers or not? Why or why not?
4. What is the physical condition of Kim, Chou and Loung?

Vocab: frantically neglecting repetitive
briskly dribble luscious
superstitious mundane
Chapter 23: Khmer Rouge Attack

1. What do Loung and Chou lose in the attack on the refugee village?
2. What is the condition of the village after the attack?
3. Near the end of the chapter, the Ung children finally find their brothers. How does this make Loung feel? How would you feel in this situation?

Vocab: rhythmical, shrilling, engulfed, mortars, bayonet, mutilated, maiming, wiry, bleaker, transfixed, tattered

Chapter 24: The Execution

1. Why does Loung feel she needs to attend the execution of the Khmer soldier?
2. Do you believe that in executing the soldier, the Cambodian people made up for all the pain, suffering, and torment they endured? Would you choose to participate in the execution?

Vocab: revenge, vengeful, scorching, bloodthirsty, mutter, angular, seethe, devoid, feasting

Chapter 25: Back to Bat Deng

1. Should Loung expect to return to Bat Deng and her family and experience wealth and no more hardship?
2. Outline the course of events that brought Loung from Cambodia to Vietnam. How does Loung feel about leaving Chou and the others?

Vocab: indoctrination, resilient, monetary, abettor

Chapter 26: From Cambodia to Vietnam

1. How does the destruction of Phnom Penh mirror the destruction Loung’s and other Cambodian children’s innocence?
3. Describe what happens on the boat ride from Vietnam to Thailand.

Vocab: cavernous, derogatory, charred, lustrous, imminent, mannequins, putrid, ransack, meekly
Chapter 27: Lam Sing Refugee Camp

1. What must they obtain before they can leave for America? Does this happen instantly?
2. What item does Loung finally replace? Is she satisfied with the replacement? Why or why not?
3. What is the mood of Meng, Eang and Loung as they leave for America? Do you agree with where Loung ended her story? Why or why not?

Vocab: 
refugee 
adapt 
prolong 
gasp 
voluptuous 
ration 
malnutrition 
linger