

# Digital Book Club Kit

## The Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Adult Themes: Racism, brief descriptions of drunkenness, brief violence/threats of violence  
Book Length: 287 pages, 6 hour audiobook

A book club is a great way to extend the magic of a book! The team behind the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution has put together a DIY book club kit so as a classroom or a family, you can continue to make reading fun while children are learning from home.

### 1. Decide how and when you want to meet

In our digital world, your options for how to meet are endless! If you would like to meet in real time, Zoom or Google Hangouts can be used to discuss your reading. If it's easier for children to think about what they've read on their own time, you could use a free survey tool like Survey Monkey or Wufoo to poll children on their thoughts. Social media tools like Facebook are also a great place to host your club if you would like to invite friends or neighbors to join in on the fun!

### 2. Read the book in sections, as big or small as you'd like.

Ask children to read *The Front Desk* independently, as a family or group.

### 3. Meet to discuss the questions below

We've put together questions for every ~5 chapters of the book to guide your club. Author Kelly Yang has a great website with lots of videos about this book that you might also consider incorporating.

<https://www.frontdeskthebook.com/for-teachers/>

## Discussion Questions/Activities:

### Chapters 1-5

- Foreshadowing is when an author gives us a hint about what might happen later in the story. Can you think of any examples of foreshadowing?
- How does Mia feel when her mother tells the principal of her new school that Mia had just arrived from China? Why does she feel that way?

- Mia didn't agree with Hank about Mr. Yao. What do you think about Mr. Yao? Will he be nice?
- What do you think about Mia's character? What words would you use to describe her?
- Mia's family has a special kind of tea that they drink when something good happens. Does your family have a special food or drink that you only have on special occasions? Talk to your family about how that became a tradition!

## Chapters 6-11

- Why do you think Mr. Lewis forgives Mia?
- Why do you think Mia helps Jason when he is getting bullied? How do you think she was feeling in that moment?
- Think about a time when you made the most of a bad situation, like Mia's family did washing towels. Did changing your attitude make a difference in how you felt?
- Why do you think Mia hides the truth about her life when she talks to her class and her friend Lupe?
- With help from your family, try washing a towel or an article of clothing in the sink or tub. Washing one might be fun, but imagine washing **hundreds** of them!

## Chapters 12 - 17

- Mr. Yao tells Mia that a good employee is one that "knows their place." What do you think Mr. Yao means? Was it nice of him to say that?
- On page 68, Mia's mom says, "We're immigrants... our lives are never fair." What do you think she means?
- On page 72, Mia's mom suggests that Mia isn't very good at English or Chinese. Why might that be upsetting to Mia?

- On page 76, Mia’s dad tells her that sometimes “a mistake is worth more” than doing something correctly. What does he mean? Can you think of a time when you made a mistake and it turned out for the best?
- How do you think it feels when Mia and Lupe finally tell each other the truth?
- Mia makes an emotional connection with music when she is playing the piano. Are there any songs that bring up a memory of a certain time or place when you hear them? Play the song for a family member or friend and talk about what it means to you.

## **Chapters 18 - 23**

- Lupe and Mia think about what it means to be successful. What do you think it means to be successful?
- When Mia’s class learns about China, her classmates make slanted eyes at her when her teacher isn’t looking. How do you think that makes her feel? Is it nice of them to do that?
- How do you think Jason feels when his father gets upset with him for having a hard time checking a customer in?
- On page 100, when the police think Hank stole the car, even though Mia insists that he didn’t, Hank says that kind of thing happens to him all the time. Why do you think that is? Do you think it is right to assume anyone is bad based on the way they look?
- Mia gets upset when various characters assume that certain people are bad because they are black. Choose and research a black person who has done great things and discuss their accomplishments with your group.

## **Chapters 24 - 29**

- On page 113, Aunt Ling says that the customers at the nail salon where she worked “didn’t even see” her. What do you think she means?
- On page 124, Lupe tells Mia that she hopes Mia wins the essay contest for the motel in Vermont. Why does this make Mia so happy?

- On page 131, when Jason is teasing Mia about her pants, Lupe tells her to ignore them. Do you think that is good advice? Why or why not?
- Mia is so happy to receive a tip from a customer! Think about a time someone surprised you with something nice. How did it make you feel? Surprise someone with a random act of kindness to brighten their day!

## **Chapters 30 - 34**

- If you were Mia, what would you do about the bullies that are teasing her clothes? How would you respond?
- Do you think it is fair that Mr. Yao is taking Hank's rent out of Mia's family's paycheck?
- On page 145, Mia tells her mother that she likes English, and her mom says, "You know what you are in English? You're a bicycle, and the other kids are cars." What do you think she means?
- Why do you think Mia's dad buys her a fancy new pack of pencils? Why was that so important to Mia? Has anyone ever given you a gift that was very special to you? Write them a letter or call them on the phone (with your parents' permission) to tell them!

## **Chapters 35 - 39**

- What surprised you on Mia's list of American phrases for Uncle Fung?
- Why do you think Mia's mom is so fond of her shopping bags? Why do you think she rips them up?
- On page 162, in class, when Mrs. Douglas assigns Jason to represent the maquiladoras, why do you think Mia takes the opportunity to ask him such hard questions?
- Mia is hiding her tip money from her parents. Do you think she should tell them about it?
- Mia and Lupe go trick-or-treating and talk about how they didn't celebrate Halloween when they lived in Mexico and China. What unique holiday traditions does your family have?

## **Chapters 40 - 45**

- How do you think Mia’s parents felt when Mia paid for her mom’s visit to the hospital?
- What do you think about Mia writing Hank a reference letter and changing his letters to say he worked at the Calivista? Was that right of her? Why or why not?
- Mia writes the doctor who treated her mom a letter to thank him. Write a letter to thank someone who did something kind for you.

## **Chapters 46 - 50**

- Uncle Zhang and Mia’s mom were engineers in China, but not in America. Why do you think that is? Is it fair?
- How do you think Hank felt when the officer apologized for accusing him of stealing the car?
- Mia’s parents tell her that they moved to America because America is free. What do you think they mean?
- At Thanksgiving, Mia’s family and the weeklies go around and say what they’re thankful for. What are you thankful for?

## **Chapters 51 - 55**

- Mia writes a letter to the businesses near her motel telling them that the list of bad customers is discriminatory. What does the word discriminatory mean? What are some examples of discrimination?
- Why do you think Mia is so nervous to tell her classmates the truth about her life?
- How do you think Mia felt when Polly came back for her jeans? Watch this video of author Kelly Yang to see how it really happened!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvgFGIOyY98&feature=youtu.be>
- Why don’t you think Jason told his dad about the immigrants hiding in the motel? What does this say about him as a person?

- What kind of motel would you run if you had one? Draw a picture of how it might look!

## **Chapters 56 - 60**

- How do you think Mia feels when her mom suggests that the contest to win the motel might be rigged?
- Do you think it was right for Mia to have sold the lucky pennies?
- When Mia reads her story to the class, she reveals all of her secrets. How do you think that feels? Why do you think her classmates react the way they do?
- Mia, her family, and Lupe are so grateful to be eating pizza at a restaurant! Ask your family to try making pizza at home and think about how it must feel for Mia to have earned such a special treat!

## **Chapters 61 - 67**

- Mia feels envious of Shen's family's success. Have you ever felt envious of someone who had more than you? What did you do?
- Why do you think Mia's aunt decides she doesn't want to help them buy the motel? Was it okay for her to say no?
- Why do you think Jason tells Mia that there are no other buyers for the motel?
- How do you think it felt for all of the immigrants when they signed the papers for the motel and jumped into the pool?
- What kind of business might you buy if lots of people would pitch in to help you buy it? Why?
- Mia and the weeklies love to play Monopoly. Do you have a Monopoly game at your house? Play it (or any other board game) with your family to celebrate finishing the book!