The House on Mango Street Part Six Comprehension and Analysis

Directions: To help you understand all aspects of the novel, respond to the following questions or statements. Write your responses on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

“What Sally Said”

1. What does Sally say about her father? What does Esperanza know?
   Sally says that her father never hits her hard, and she lies when she says her bruises come from falling down the stairs. Esperanza knows that Sally’s father beats her.

2. What does Sally’s father fear?
   Sally’s father is afraid that Sally will run away like his sisters did and bring more shame to the family. He also may be afraid that she will get involved with a boy.

3. How do you think Esperanza feels about the situation? Why do you think that?
   Esperanza feels protective of Sally because she asks Sally to stay with her for a few days. However, when Sally’s father comes for her and takes her home, Esperanza may feel powerless to help.

“The Monkey Garden”

1. How does the Monkey Garden change over time?
   Originally, when the first family moved, the garden was colorful and natural, with big sunflowers and sweet peach trees, bees and fruit flies pollinating, and a welcome smell of wood and dampness. However, it became too wild and overgrown, and people started dumping their garbage and their broken-down vehicles there.

2. What game do the kids play there? What game does Sally play there?
   The kids play chasing, jumping, and hiding games in the monkey garden. They like to pretend it was the original garden or that pirates and dinosaurs were buried there. However, Sally thought those games were too childish and dirty. In the game Sally plays, she agrees to kiss Tito and several other boys behind the pickup truck in the garden in return for the keys Tito stole from Sally.

3. How does Esperanza try to help Sally? Does she succeed?
   Esperanza thinks Sally is in a dangerous situation with Tito and his friends, so she runs up three flights of stairs to tell Tito’s mother about it. However, Tito’s mother does nothing about it, so Esperanza gathers a brick and some sticks to throw at the boys. It does not matter, though, because Sally tells Esperanza to go away.

4. Why does Esperanza never return to the Monkey Garden?
   Esperanza feels ashamed after trying to help Sally, but she does not know why. Going to the garden would remind her of those feelings, so she never returns.

“Linoleum Roses”

1. How does Sally escape her father’s home?
   Sally escapes her father’s home by marrying a marshmallow salesman she met at the school carnival. Even though she is still in seventh grade, they get married in another state where it is legal for an adult to marry someone so young.

   Sally appears happy in her home, surrounded by all the material things that a housewife would want. Sally says she is in love.

3. What is Esperanza’s opinion of Sally’s new life? What details suggest this?
Esperanza does not think Sally’s new life is very good. Although Sally used to be very energetic, strong, and outgoing, now she is required to stay away from the window and cannot talk to her friends from her pre-marriage life. Sally has exchanged the control of her father for the control of her husband.

“The Three Sisters”
1. Where does Esperanza meet the three sisters?
Esperanza meets the three sisters at Lucy and Rachel’s baby sister’s funeral, which is held in their home.

2. What are three details about the sisters that make them mysterious?
The sisters appear mysterious because their arrival is described as being related to the wind and the moon. They also speak in riddles and incomplete statements, which they finish for each other. Additionally, the sister with the marble hands guesses that Esperanza wants to leave Mango Street, which Esperanza never says aloud to her. Finally, they wave when Esperanza looks back, but she never sees them again.

3. What do the sisters predict for Esperanza? What advice do the sisters urge her to follow?
The three sisters predict that Esperanza will go far, but they urge her to come back to Mango Street for the people who cannot leave as easily as she can.

“Alicia & I Talking on Edna’s Steps”
1. What do Alicia and Esperanza disagree about?
Alicia believes that Esperanza will always have Mango Street inside her because this is her home, but Esperanza does not feel that she belongs on Mango Street and doubts she will ever return.

2. What does Alicia predict for Esperanza’s future?
Alicia predicts that Esperanza will come back to Mango Street.

3. Why do the girls talk about the mayor? What does it suggest about their neighborhood?
The girls talk about the mayor because they do not believe the mayor will ever try to make Mango Street a better place to live. This suggests that Mango Street is in a poor area that has been forgotten by the people in charge of the city. The neighborhood will only improve if the people who live there make the changes themselves.

“A House of My Own”
1. What will Esperanza’s house not be? What does this say about Esperanza?
Esperanza says her future home will not be a small apartment or a flat. She will own her nice big house herself, and this shows that Esperanza plans to retain control of her life and not let a man into it.

2. What type of person is Esperanza? Is she an introvert or an extrovert? How do you know?
Esperanza seems to be an introvert because she wants to live by herself, with her own things around, no one to clean up after, and the quiet she needs to write. However, she makes friends easily and plans to allow strangers (bums) to live in the attic of her home, too, so she may be slightly extroverted.

“Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes”
1. What does Esperanza do to get through each day?
Esperanza makes up stories in her head to get through the day, and she feels better when she writes them down.

2. What are Esperanza’s goals for her future? Does she plan on following the three sisters’ advice?
One day, Esperanza plans to pack up her books and her papers and move away from Mango Street.

3. How does this vignette come full circle from the first vignette in the novella?
This vignette comes full circle from the first one because it has some of the same wording as the first vignette does related to Esperanza’s homes in the past. However, Esperanza is not the same person as she was at the beginning because she has a better idea of her future, plus she is more aware of how important her roots on Mango Street are.