English II: World Literature
Summer Assignment 2023: *The Woman Warrior*

Name:_____

Instructions

Read *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* by Maxine Hong-Kingston, and then answer the following questions. Use complete sentences. Answer as thoroughly as possible in the space provided.

This reader response packet will be due on the first day of class.

Section I: "No Name Woman"

1. What was the mother's purpose in telling her daughter the story of her aunt?

2. What do you suppose the author means by writing that "to be a woman, to have a daughter in starvation time was a waste enough"?

3. How does the author see how women fit into the time and culture she describes? Consider especially the importance of appearance and usefulness. Provide examples from the book to support your claims.

4. Why does the aunt give birth in the pigsty?

5. How has the author "participated" in her aunt's punishment?

Section II: "White Tigers"

6. The author begins this section discussing the "talk stories" her mother would tell her as she fell asleep. How do these stories seem to have impacted her as she grew up?

7. What lessons that Fa Mu Lan learns before she takes her father's place in battle stood out to you?

8. What are your impressions after reading the author's retelling of Fa Mu Lan? Do you believe that Mu Lan believes the sayings about women that the author's parents retell later in the chapter?

9. In what ways has the author's American life been "a disappointment"?

10. What parallels do you see in the life of Fa Mu Lan and the author?

Section III: "Shaman"

11. Describe the importance of the diploma the author's mother earns. What does it mean to her?

12. Ghosts recur frequently throughout this chapter and throughout the entire book. Who are they? And what is their importance?

13. Why does the author envy her mother's slave?

14. What do you think is the meaning behind the story of the "crazy" woman who the villagers stoned to death?

15. Toward the end of the chapter, the author says that "we belong to the planet now." What did she mean by that? Do you agree with her?

Section IV: "At the Western Palace"

16. How is Brave Orchid different from her sister Moon Orchid?

17. As you read this chapter, with which sister—Brave Orchid or Moon Orchid—do you find yourself sympathizing more? Why?

18. How did you feel toward Moon Orchid's husband in the events leading up to their meeting him? How did you feel after they met him?

19. What do you make of Moon Orchid's cognitive decline? Do you see any parallels between Moon Orchid and the aunt in "No Name Woman"? If so, how?

20. How does it seem that Brave Orchid's children were impacted by these women as evidenced by what the children decided to study in college?

Section V: "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe"

21. What seems to be the significance of voiceless women in this chapter (and throughout the entire book)?

22. What do you make of the story of the author bullying the silent girl? What motivated her to try to force the girl to speak?

23. How does the author clarify how her perspective differs from other Chinese immigrants and the mainland Chinese?

24. What is the significance of the argument between the author and her mother when the author confesses all she has bottled up over the years?

25. How do you think the final story in this chapter connects to the themes throughout this book?