

## **The Joy Luck Club: its structure**

*The Joy Luck Club* contains 16 interwoven stories about conflicts between Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-raised daughters.

**PROLOGUE:** After her mother's death, Jing-Mei has taken her mother's place playing mahjong in a weekly gathering her mother had organized in China and revived in San Francisco: the Joy Luck Club. The club's other members—Lindo, Ying-Ying, and An-Mei—are three of her mother's oldest friends and fellow immigrants.

The book hinges on Jing-mei's trip to China to meet her half-sisters, twins Chwun Yu and Chwun Hwa. The half-sisters remained behind in China because Jing-mei's mother, Suyuan, was forced to leave them on the roadside during her desperate flight from Japan's invasion of Kweilin during World War II. Jing-mei was born to a different father years later, in America. Suyuan intended to return to China for her other daughters, but failed to find them before her death.

The novel is composed of four sections, each of which contains four separate narratives. Every section is introduced by a VIGNETTE/short prologue which highlights the themes of the stories to follow

**1. The Mothers** [speaking in turn, they recall with astonishing clarity their relationships with their own mothers, and they worry that their daughters' recollections of them will never possess the same intensity]

### **FEATHERS FROM A THOUSAND LI AWAY**

**Jing-Mei Woo<sup>1</sup>: The Joy Luck Club**

**An-Mei Hsu: Scar**

**Lindo Jong: The Red Candle**

**Ying-Ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady**

**2. The Daughters** [relate their recollections of their childhood relationships with their mothers; the great lucidity and force with which they tell their stories proves their mothers' fears at least partially unfounded]

### **THE TWENTY-SIX MALIGNANT GATES**

**Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game**

**Lena St. Clair: The Voice from the Wall**

**Rose Hsu Jordan: Half and Half**

**Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds**

**3. The Daughters** [the four daughters narrate their adult dilemmas—troubles in marriage and with their careers]

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<sup>1</sup> Speaking for her mother since she has died

## **AMERICAN TRANSLATION**

**Lena St. Clair: Rice Husband**

**Waverly Jong: Four Directions**

**Rose Hsu Jordan: Without Wood**

**Jing-Mei Woo: Best Quality**

**4. The Mothers** [the mothers struggle to offer solutions and support to their daughters, in the process learning more about themselves]

## **QUEEN MOTHER OF THE WESTERN SKIES**

**An-Mei Hsu: Magpies**

**Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between the Trees**

**Lindo Jong: Double Face**

**Jing-Mei Woo<sup>2</sup>: a Pair of Tickets**

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<sup>2</sup> Speaking for her mother since she has died.