

FORBIDDEN CITY:
A NOVEL OF MODERN CHINA

WILLIAM BELL

LIVING
LITERATURE
SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY DEBRA MATIER

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SYNOPSIS

Chap. 1: Alexander, a 17-year old military history buff in Toronto, Canada, is asked by his father, Ted Jackson, a cameraman for the Canadian Broadcasting Company, to accompany him on an assignment to Beijing. Alex jumps at the chance to visit the historic sites about which he's read so much.

Chap. 2: On the plane, Alex explains his interest in military history, which started when he was twelve, at the time his mom left him and his dad. At first he blamed himself, then his dad for being too sloppy or too much of a fanatic about his work. After witnessing his dad sobbing one night over her picture, he realized it was no one's fault, that she had just decided she wanted to leave, and that he and his dad were both suffering from the loss. Alex threw himself into reading plans, reconstructing military battles and armies. He likes the feeling of control and losing himself in "a world that made sense." This foreshadows the real battle scenes and human chess game he will witness in Beijing, which will leave him horrified and detesting war.

Chap. 3: Landing in Beijing, Alex first notices how few and dim the nighttime lights are for a city three times the population of his own Toronto. Chinese customs officials require a list of the camera and electronic equipment they have, the first indication of the Chinese government's control of the media. They are greeted by Lao Xu, a history professor assigned by the government to arrange interviews and visits for Alex's father and CBC correspondent Edward "Eddie" Nowlan. Lao Xu nicknames six-foot-tall Alex "Shan Da" (tall tree). He takes him all over the city, teaching him Chinese language, history and politics.

Chap. 4: There is something about Eddie Alex doesn't like, he finds him bossy and pretentious and "just a voice" without his dad. Lao Xu, whom Alex terms "amazing" with his knowledge of history and funny stories, arranges a special welcome banquet with all sorts of foods, different from the Chinese restaurants at home. Mr. Xu explains that it is tradition to serve guests more than they can eat to show generosity.

Chap. 5: Alex learns that Lao Xu considers his father a hero. He survived the Long March in which 100,000 Communists battled Nationalist and local warlords for a year until only 10,000 Communists remained. The current Chinese Communist Party and government are still run by men who had been on this March and continue to rule although in their eighties, underlining the outdatedness of the Chinese government, despite their claiming a "modernization" has been achieved.

Chap. 6: Alex feels homesick. He notices that there are few programs in English on TV. He hopes his dad will not go back on their deal to stay for only a few months.

Chap. 7: Alex enjoys the city, spending his time studying maps and touring by bike. He videotapes everything he sees from a camera placed inside the bike basket.

Chap. 8: Alex learns Chinese. Lao Xu uses his connections to get him into an elite school. Being pale-skinned, blond and blue-eyed, Alex feels embarrassed by the stares, so he buys a Mao coat, a blue hat with a red star, and trendy sunglasses to fit in with the Chinese youths.

Chaps. 9-10: Hu Yao-bang, a prominent Communist Party official whom Deng Xiao-Ping, the premier or "big boss," ousted from government a few years before for being too lenient on student demonstrations, dies. On April 14, the first student demonstration had taken place in the Square to mourn Hu's death.

Alex draws a map of the Square and its surroundings for his Dad to photograph the student demonstration, under the pretext of preparing for Gorbachev's visit. The journalists' interest slowly shifts from Gorbachev's visit to the student demonstration and Chinese politics.

Chap. 11: Alex is fascinated with the teahouse where Lao Xu takes him. Older men gather here to smoke, drink tea or beer, play Chinese chess and listen to stories from classical Chinese literature told by neighborhood story tellers, a tradition from before people could read, now dying out with television and radio, although carried on, as seen later, by the biking news-spreaders.

Chap. 12: Alex finds school in China to be very different from what he knew in Canada. They go six days a week, sit in the same seat all morning with a ten minute break, when Chinese children have to do exercises. There is no discussion in class: teachers are revered and their opinions are never challenged.

Lao Xu understands the strategy of the government and the escalation of the conflict with the students. He is worried by an editorial in the *People's Daily* newspaper, the official publication of the Chinese Communist Party, saying that students were "promoting chaos".

Chap. 13: A million people protest the editorial. All Beijing University students are on strike from classes demanding that the government agree to talk to them as equals, apologize for violence against the students the week before, and stop lying about students on TV and in the newspapers. They want the Communist Party and socialism to continue, but want the government to listen to the people and to stop corruption on the part of high up officials. If the students' demands are not met, they plan a bigger demonstration for May 4, a very important day for Chinese, when students from Beijing University began a movement seventy years ago that led to the Communist Revolution.

Chap. 14: The day after the May 4 demonstration, Alex returns to the Square to speak with more students, one he nicknames "Hong" (red) for the red baseball cap he wore (a Western symbol) and the other "Lan" (blue) for her blue one.

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Despite Lan's protests, Hong agrees to let Alex tape him talking about how the meeting between students and the government was phony, because it was only the government student unions which participated. Alex realizes that the students are right in the middle of the government's game.

Chap. 15: On May 13, thousands of students begin a hunger strike until the government meets with them and begins reforms. May 15 is Gorbachev's visit; Alex realizes that the students have timed their demonstration to put pressure on the government to meet their demands. He comes to understand the political battle behind the demonstrations. Zhao Zi-yang, chairman of the Communist Party of China, who is sympathetic to the students, goes to the Square to meet them and attempts to calm the situation. Deng Xiao Ping ousts Zi-yang. The hard-liners, led by Li Peng, put Beijing under martial law, declare it illegal to be in the Square and to demonstrate and to "spread rumors" (spread news), and suspend the constitution.

Chap. 16: The PLA takes over all radio and TV stations and newspapers. Eddie and Ted are determined to remain in Beijing to cover the big story. Lao Xu, however, is very worried.

Chap. 17: The satellite feed to North America and Europe is shut down. News and tapes must be smuggled out of China to Hong Kong or Japan.

Chap. 18: The students remain in the Square, being fed by local residents. They all know the soldiers will come. "Little bottles" hung around banners mock Deng Xiao-Ping with a play on his name. Lao Xu denounces these "rude" signs and warns that such displays are dangerous.

Chap. 19: Alex's feelings of dread and nightmares foreshadow trouble to come. There are always people in the streets at any time, anywhere.

Chaps. 20-26: On May 25, the government labels the students "bad elements" and "hooligans." This means the students are being condemned as counter-revolutionaries, which is commensurate with treason, being enemies of the state. They can be shot if arrested.

Li Peng's plot to seize power becomes more apparent. The Army surrounds Beijing and brings in tanks and armored trucks. Alex, with his knowledge of military strategy, realizes that the trains are being used to ship soldiers in from the country-side and they set up camp at the stations. He can foresee their tactics and movements. The students hold-out nevertheless.

Chap. 27: Eddie and Ted make Alex stay behind in the hotel under the pretext of manning the 2-way radio to write down their reports. Lao Xu comes at noon and teaches Alex to play Chinese chess. At 2 p. m. soldiers, armed with long truncheons launch tear gas into the crowd. The crowd surges toward the troops, throwing rocks and bricks. The crowd gives way only a little bit.

For five hours, the truncheons and tear gas continue, then everything quiets down. Eddie and Ted return. Lao Xu is shocked and saddened. The Beijing troops have been pulled back due to their failure to clear the Square and replaced with the 27th Field Army from another province. These are veteran troops, fanatically loyal to their leader, the son-in-law of the President. The hard-liners are clearly trying to take over.

Chap. 28: The day begins with Alex and Lao Xu in the office again. Reports from Eddie and Ted in the Square said

the mood was tense and everyone is waiting for the army to come.

At 1 a.m., red and white flares fill the sky. A molotov cocktail ignites the carrier. Fifty trucks filled with troops arrive. Alex rushes out to bring back his dad, Lao Xu accompanies him, radio and camera in tow. Ted reports that troops are coming toward him. The radio goes dead.

The crowd screams with rage as the PLA opens fire. Lao Xu tries to get Alex to leave, but Alex begins videotaping the soldiers. Lao Xu runs toward the soldiers, shouting for them to stop. He is killed. Tanks move into the square, slaughtering people with their machine guns.

Alex runs down a side street, the only way out of the square. A PLA squad comes down the street and opens fire. Students pull Alex away but, as they run, he is hit in the leg and loses consciousness as he is carried away.

Alex awakens a few hours later in the home of Wang Xinhua, a student. She explains that she and other students brought him there and took care of his leg. They also brought the backpack with the video camera and everything intact.

The students tell Alex that the shooting continued through the night. At 4 a.m. the lights in the Square were turned off and most students began to leave. Those students who stayed were shot. Their bodies were burned in the Square. This news makes Alex all the more determined to show the world what happened by getting his tapes to Canada. There is no way for him to get back to the hotel, however.

Chap. 29: A student who has been secretly taking pictures gives Alex the film. The Chinese Red Cross estimates that 2,600 civilians and students are dead. Embassies advise foreigners to evacuate. The PLA has blocked every intersection and tanks fill the square.

Chap. 30: Alex is trapped, traumatized, worried and homesick. Alex wants to leave and the students plan to help him. He agrees to smuggle all the notes, film and tapes out of the country. Xinhua will take him to the Canadian Embassy, a day's journey by delivery bicycle.

Chap. 31: Alex is disguised in his Chinese outfit with his hair painted black with shoe polish. He pretends to sleep while Xinhua pedals. Troops are everywhere. Xinhua manages to talk their way through the soldiers at the road-blocks. They film it all. They take refuge from the rain for the night in the grounds of a temple defaced by soldiers during the Cultural Revolution to stop the worship of old customs.

Chap. 32: They set out again at dawn. He suggests they go to the airport. They dump the camcorder and batteries. Xinhua insists on staying with Alex. At a roadblock, two soldiers identify him as a foreigner, then her as a student. They lead her away into the trees and shoot her. Alex is shoved into a taxi with other foreigners and taken to the airport. Alex finds his father sitting in a chair by the window, disheveled, his face haggard, eyes dull. He doesn't recognize Alex at first in his disguise, then sees his face and eyes, stands up and hugs him and begins to sob.

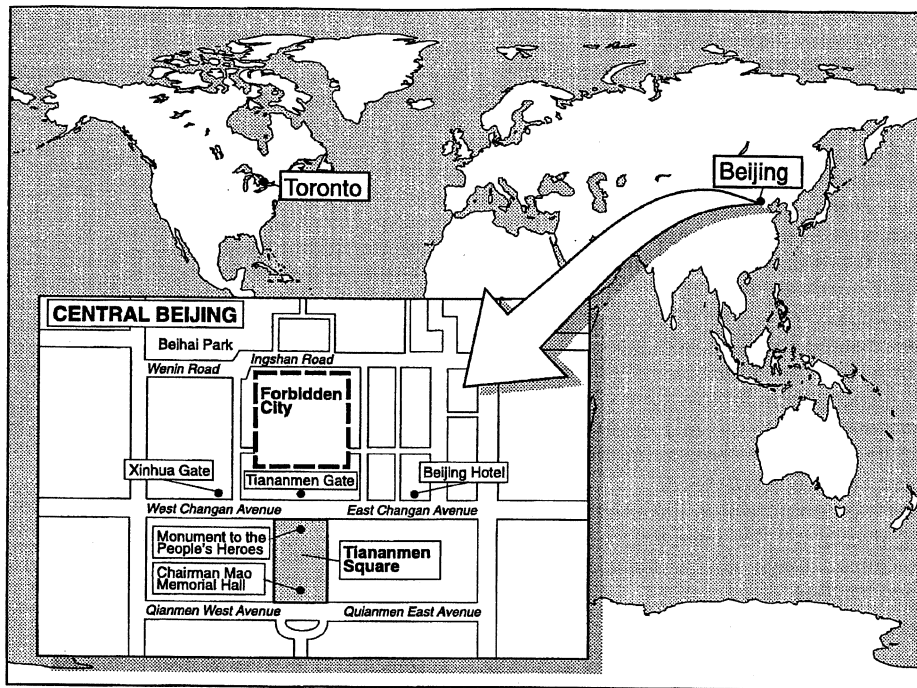
Chap. 33: Alex and his father return home on June 10. His mother picks them up in Toronto. Eddie, still at the Beijing Hotel, sends Alex his journals and notes. Alex realizes his real heroes do not always wear uniforms.

TIME LINE

1989

April 14 Students plan a demonstration in Tian An Men Square on April 15 to honor the death of a prominent

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Chinese Communist Party leader, Hu Yaobang, who'd been ousted from government for being sympathetic to the students.

- April 15** Police use truncheons to control the crowd. Students denounce the violence and demand that the government apologize.
- April 26** Chinese leader Deng Xiao-Ping accuses the students of "promoting chaos."
- April 27** One million people protest Deng's statements; Beijing students strike from classes. They demand that government speak with them, apologize for violence against them, and stop the corruption among high officials.
- May 4** Another demonstration takes place to protest the government having met only with the official government student unions and to commemorate the day students started a movement for Communism in 1919.
- May 13** Thousands of students continue to occupy the Square and begin a two-week hunger strike demanding that the government meet with them and begin reforms. The protest is planned to coincide with Gorbachev's visit in order to pressure the government to meet their demands quickly.
- May 15** Gorbachev visits Beijing. Chinese leaders do not show him the Square or Forbidden City and only government officials are present at meetings. No mention is made of the demonstrations. After meeting students in the Square, moderate leader Zhao Zi-yang is ousted from government.
- May 20** Hard-line Premier Li Peng labels the student movement a "riot" and declares martial law in Beijing. Troops are brought in from the countryside.
- May 21** The PLA has takes over all TV and radio stations and newspapers in Beijing.
- May 22** Over one million people gather in the Square; peo-

ple erected barricades against the army on all major routes. The Chinese government shuts down the satellite feed to North America and Europe

- May 23** The student demonstration continues. The PLA enters the Square for the first time, unarmed, but is blocked by the people who offer the soldiers food and drink, which they refuse.
- May 24** Large numbers of soldiers arrive in Beijing. Six of the seven military regions in China (excluding Beijing) support Li Peng's moves.
- May 25-29** The government labels the students "bad elements" and "hooligans," meaning they are considered counter revolutionaries and can be arrested and shot. Deng Xiao-Ping is still rumored to be dying. Armored personnel carriers and tanks as well as soldiers from the countryside are being brought in, setting up in train stations and strategic points surrounding Beijing.
- May 30** Students erect the Goddess of Democracy statue facing Mao's poster in the Square.
- June 1** An attempt is made to kidnap a number of student leaders, but is stopped by the crowd. The Beijing troops refuse to clear the students out. The government sends in troops, but they do not attack.
- June 2** Over 200,000 soldiers are in and around Beijing.
- June 3 early morning** Crowds stop trucks and find machine guns inside. Plainclothes military men have been walking throughout the city reconnoitering. The PLA moves in from the train stations
noon Soldiers enter the Square carrying truncheons and begin hitting people and throwing tear gas to disperse the crowd. The crowd throws rocks, bottles, bricks. Soldiers slash people with their belts. The Beijing troops are replaced with soldiers from the provinces. Barricades are erected by the students and people of Beijing.

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6 p. m. The government broadcasts a warning that it has "the right to deal forcefully" with the "riot."

10 p. m. People are told to stay indoors.

June 4 2 a.m. The 27th Field Army surrounds the Square.

4 a.m. The soldiers open fire on the protesters. Tanks move in.

dawn Heaps of bodies lie on the ground; they are burned in bonfires or carried away by helicopters.

June 5 The Chinese Red Cross estimates that 2,600 civilians and students were killed in the massacre.

Wang Weilin (or Wei-an), blocks a column of tanks. He is pulled away and eventually executed.

June 6 Beijing is completely controlled by the Army, the Square has been cleared and filled with tanks.

There are an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 dead and 30,000 injured. A spokesman for the State Council says that 400 soldiers and only 23 civilians have been killed and 5,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians injured. Foreign embassies advise their citizens to leave.

June 9 Deng Xiao-Ping congratulates the troops for their role in imposing martial law. He calls the PLA "truly the people's army, China's Great Wall of steel. They have stood and passed this test."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Bell combines his personal experiences in China as an English teacher for several years, in Toronto growing up and currently as a high school English teacher and department head in Ontario, Canada to write this story of a high school boy's growing up through his journalistic witnessing and emotional experiencing of the development and suppression of the student democracy movement of spring 1989 in Beijing. Bell was born in Toronto in 1945 and has a Master's in Literature from the University of Toronto (1968) and a Master's in Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1984), so he has an insider's grasp of both literary and high school teaching techniques. Many of Bell's anecdotes about everyday life in China, Chinese students' knowledge of English and their way of thinking, for example, as well as about China's political governmental affairs are taken from his two visits to China as an English instructor, first at the Harbin University of Science and Technology from 1982 to 1983, then at the Foreign Affairs College of China in Beijing from 1985 to 1986, and as companion to a Chinese writer, Ting Xing Ye. The father-son relationship between Ted and Alex can be related to Bell's having three children of his own, two sons and a daughter.

Forbidden City, Bell's best-known novel, is his only novel on China, although he has recently begun writing children's illustrated books on China and the relationship between Chinese language and symbols from nature: *The Golden Disk* (1995) and *River, My Friend* (1996). Canada is home for his other works. Like *Forbidden City*, however, most of his novels are written for and focus on the concerns of young adults. His first published book, *Crabbe* (or *Crabbe's Journey* in the U.S.) in 1986 also used the technique of first-person narration of the story through journal entries. His 1992 novel, *No Signature*, is also told from the perspective of the young, male protagonist, who, faced with a broken family and a sense of betrayal by his mother, as well as encountering social issues of illiteracy and prejudice, learns humility and understanding. Another social problem, destruction of the environment, is exposed in Bell's most recent 1994 novel,

Speak to the Earth. William Bell, again bringing together his literary interests and his social concerns, is also a member of the environmental protection organization Greenpeace.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Forbidden City: A Novel of Modern China is the daily journal of the 17-year old son of a photo-journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Company from Toronto, Canada. Often in news report style, Alexander Jackson recounts his observations and experiences over the course of the adventure which would change their lives, accompanying his father on assignment to cover Gorbachev's visit to Beijing, China in the spring of 1989. The main show, however, would prove to be the student demonstrations against the Chinese government demanding a voice and an end to government corruption in the context of the imminent death of the Chinese leader, Deng Xiao-Ping, and a deadly, militarized power-game by his successors leading to the siege of Beijing by the most ruthless unit of the Chinese Army.

The journalistic point of view in the book was probably inevitable due to the way in which the Beijing events of 1989 were reported, the only information available being "as it happens" accounts from journalists on the scene at the time and the media playing such an important role in both the government's control inside China and foreigners' getting the truth outside. One commentator nicknamed the effort "Truth from fax," an ironic play on Deng Xiao Ping's 1977 slogan that the Chinese should "seek the truth from facts." Bell himself provided the photograph on the book cover, which has been widely published.

The Spring 1989 events in Beijing served as the symbolic marker of China's situation on the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. As Eddie had recognized in May, there was a lot more going on than just some student demonstrations. The events of spring 1989 were deeply rooted in the history and politics of the past forty years. The Forbidden City, in the heart of the "forbidden" city which all of Beijing became, which Bell chose for the title of his novel, has been the Communist Party's headquarters and leaders' residence since 1949. The "chess game" leading up to the events in Beijing was already being set up throughout the 1980s, when Bell was in China.

The longest period of economic reform in Communist China, from 1979 to 1989, was coming to an end. The legal, military and political wheels of the Beijing tragedy had already been set in motion and continue today. Bell is a member of the international human rights organization, Amnesty International, which has been active in fighting for human rights and in exposing truth in China.

Through flashes of images, sounds and pieces of news reports and portraits of the characters Alex meets, we learn about the joys and horrible realities of life in modern China during one of the worst periods of its history. Although the characters themselves are fictitious, description of the escalation of the conflict and the roles of the Chinese political leaders are eerily true-to-life. Bell drew these images from actual news reports and eye witness accounts of the tragedies and combined them with his own knowledge of Chinese history, customs, politics, language and treatment of foreigners and the city of Beijing, its layout and monuments gained during his years as an English teacher in China. To these images, Bell adds the psychological emotional evolution of the boy who, along with his father, becomes a man in the

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course of the trauma, learning to recognize what is truly important in life, that reporters are part of what they cover, not just spectators, that war is not glorious and that real heroes aren't necessarily famous and don't wear uniforms.

Bell has received numerous international and Canadian awards for excellence for *Forbidden City*. The book has also received numerous rave reviews describing it as a "taut, direct and challenging" piece of fiction exposing "duplicity, intrigue and cruelty" (Margery Fisher, *Grow Point*, 29:5435, Nov. 1990). It "gives young readers a sense of the heroism and tragedy of Beijing's Tian An Men Square" and "not only a gripping yarn, it challenges our Western assumptions and values with a power one associates with the best works of documentary fiction" (Peter Carver, *Quill Quire*, 56:16, June 1990). John Philbrook in *School Library Journal* (37:21, March 1991) describes *Forbidden City* as "an excellent tale, well told, and a historical novel of note."

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the realities of war
2. To expose the crimes a government can commit against its people
3. To demonstrate the importance of freedom of expression and of the press
4. To explore the building of trust and the pain of betrayal
5. To contrast China and the West
6. To illustrate heroism
7. To set out strategy and counter-strategy
8. To detail the inhumanities and irrationality of military oppression
9. To display ancient traditions pervading modern life
10. To chart a struggle for freedom and survival

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain why Alex agrees to go to China
2. To evaluate Alex's relationship with his parents
3. To test Alex's fascination with strategy and military history
4. To illustrate the role of symbols and stories in national culture
5. To trace Alex's open-mindedness
6. To show Alex's evolution from student to reporter
7. To describe Alex through his relationships with Eddie, Lao Xu, Nai-nai, Xin-hua
8. To contrast day-to-day life with civil war in Beijing
9. To demonstrate the quiet, tragic heroism of Lao Xu and Xin-hua
10. To compare standards of living in North America and China
11. To analyze the motives of the Chinese government leaders
12. To examine the role of the media in democracy

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of William Bell's style, present the following terms and applications:

allusion an indirect or passing reference to some event, person, place, artistic work, myth, story, landmark or historic figure as a means of heightening a description or character. The nature and relevance of the image are not explained by the author, as it is assumed the reader will recognize the sig-

nificance. An allusion is used to call upon the history, literature and/or culture that the author and reader are assumed to share. Bell uses topical allusions to recent events about which the reader already has some knowledge from the news and history: the Tian An Men Square massacre, the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Long March, the 1979 Chinese invasion of Vietnam, prominent Chinese leaders (Mao, Deng Xiao-Ping), VOA (= Voice of America, set up by the U.S. government during World War II to broadcast American radio in foreign countries).

symbol a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene or action having some further significance associated with it. A symbol differs from a metaphor in that a metaphor specifically mentions the quality the symbol is meant to convey and is expressed in a phrase— e.g. "strong as an ox" is a metaphor, whereas a symbol, such as the crushed bicycle, conveys all its meaning within the image itself. For example, the chess game and the walled Forbidden City represent the strategy game played by the Chinese leaders with the students as "pawns" and the besieged city of Beijing. The images of the Goddess of Democracy facing Mao's poster in questioning and defiance in front of the Great Hall of the People, site of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and its being torn down by the People's Liberation Army which turns against the people of Beijing, symbolize the students' quest for democracy, modernity and change being crushed by oppression, totalitarianism and ancient patriarchy. The people of Beijing are loyal to the ideals of rule by the people, while being betrayed by their own fellow Chinese. The story of Cao Cao capturing his opponent's arrows and using them to trade for his territory illustrates the students' and government's strategy of trying to use the enemy's strength against it, as well as the government's breaking of its agreement to talk with the students.

bildungsroman a novel which follows the development of the protagonist (hero) from childhood/adolescence to adulthood through a process of learning his/her identity; a coming-of-age novel; from the German for: "bildung" meaning maturation and "roman" meaning novel. Bell's novel shows the maturation process of both Alex and, ironically, his father, an "adult" teen at the start of the story who comes to realize he has "finally grown up." A well-known example of another bildungsroman is Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

irony a perception, often humorous, but not always, of inconsistency involving showing a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant; sarcasm. Bell's novel uses numerous different forms of irony: verbal irony is seen often in Alex's and Eddie's sarcastic comments; structural irony is seen in Alex's naive view of war when he begins the story contrasted with the realities he confronts in Beijing; dramatic, or tragic, irony is seen in that the reader, already familiar with the Tian An Men Square massacre from the news, knows more than the characters and can predict what will happen, knows the tragedy is inevitable; and cosmic irony is seen in that the students and the people of Beijing were doomed to their fate, as the people of China have repeatedly fallen prey to militaristic, oppressive governments and restricted human rights. Again, the reader knows that the tragedy is inevitable.

suspense a state of rising action in which the reader feels curiosity, anxiousness, anticipation as to what is going to happen in the story. Bell uses suspense masterfully in his novel, as the reader feels suspense along with the characters

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as they also wait to see what will happen. We wonder how long Ted and Alex will stay in China, what they will experience there, what Lao Xu is up to, what will happen to the students in the Square, whether and how Alex will find his father again safely, just as Alex wonders the same.

first-person limited point of view a story told by the person watching and participating in the action of the story, limited to what is seen through his/her eyes, as opposed to omniscient, where the narrator is all-knowing. Alex's story is told the way a journalist would report events, gathering together all the pieces of information he gets from various sources — what he himself experiences, what he hears over the two-way radio, what he learns from Lao Xu, Xin-hua, his father and Eddie, the students in the Square, on TV in Canada — and putting them together as he comes to understand what's happening. He also leaves much of the interpretation up to the reader, particularly concerning his psychological and relational development. Alex and his father realize, however, that they are not mere observers, but participants in the news they report.

SETTINGS

The milieu of *Forbidden City: A Novel of Modern China* comes from reports and eye-witness accounts of actual events from April to June 1989 in China's capital city, Beijing. The public figures mentioned are real persons, but the main characters and their names are fictitious. The locations, symbols, stories, background and comparison with Canada are described by the author who taught English in China for a number of years and teaches high school in Ontario. The student demonstrations in Tian An Men Square began on April 15, 1989 until the massacre in the Square, the night of June 4, 1989, with martial law, executions and fighting in the streets continuing through the summer. Prisoners are still being held for their involvement in the movement to this day. The time-span of the novel, Alex's journal entries, parallels the evolution of the near civil war in Beijing and begins at the end of March 1989, a few months into the period during which foreign journalists were allowed into China until they were finally thrown out at the time of the massacre in early June.

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues, situations and events in William Bell's *Forbidden City* should include the following themes and motifs:

Themes

- heroism
- courage
- strategy
- trust and betrayal
- war
- freedom
- peaceful resistance
- democracy
- intuition
- living with loss

Motifs

- adapting to a new culture
- handling homesickness
- seeing things from others' perspectives
- becoming an adult
- dealing with divorce
- thinking before acting

- dedicating oneself to a meaningful career
- learning how to read people
- living with less wealth

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences or thought units that have a particular meaning in this novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. Pacifists are just simpletons as far as I'm concerned. (Chap. 2, March 30-31, p. 11)
(Alex begins the story, on his way to China, very self-assured, a bit of a know-it-all, explaining how: "There's nothing I like better than a war movie with lots of battle scenes, noise and smoke, explosions that shake the ground, and the wicked chatter of machine-gun fire. Or a tank battle." (Chap. 2, March 30-31, p. 11) War is a game, like chess or bridge, he thinks. But by the end of the story, he comes to see the difference between movies and the real thing, seeing there is nothing glorious about war. Although his knowledge of military strategy and ability to map-out Beijing in his head would prove crucial to the CBC team's coverage of the events and to his own survival, he would cringe in fear and pain at the sound of gun-fire, rage with dread at the sight of tanks, feel the eeriness of smoke and fires, be tormented by the sounds of battle and the witnessing of executions. Civilian pacifists like Lao Xu, Xin-hua and the man on the news who stops the tank become the true heroes and soldiers become enemies, as Alex destroys all his military models back at home.)
2. Yep, Lao Xu is the nicest spy you'd ever want to meet. (Chap. 5, April 6, p. 28)
(Assigned by the government to "help" the CBC news team, Eddie knows that, while Lao Xu is useful to them, he is also there to report back to the government on what they do. Alex comes to find he is a friend, however, and is angered by such cynicism, although he also, ashamedly, doubts Lao Xu's sincerity at times. Alex learns the sense of mistrust pervasive in a totalitarian regime in which people report on each other and the government controls every aspect of people's lives, what they say and what they do. But he realizes that Lao Xu is a victim of this system, that he has been taught to really believe in the foundations of the system, that his father had been on the Long March and was a hero to him, that the PLA is the "people's army," everyone's heroes, and he is incredulous to see the government he worked for and the PLA which had helped people out of emergencies turn against the people, the whole world he had believed in proven to be a farce. Alex fully sees the true hero in Lao Xu only when he steps out to try to stop the shooting, sacrificing his own life trying to save others'. Like Alex, the reader also feels shame at ever having doubted him.)
3. In the *People's Daily*, only the date is the truth. (Chap. 5, April 6, p. 30)
(This common Chinese saying, repeated with cynical humor, refers to the official government newspaper, the mouth-piece of the Communist Party of China, in which the government tells the news according to what it wants the people to know, often lying. The people know this, even before the paper condemns the demonstrators as

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"hooligans" and "bad elements," even before it claims that no one was killed in the Tian An Men Square massacre. The paper is the only newspaper allowed under martial law and parallels the reports given on the one TV and radio stations, all controlled by the army. Foreign news sources, even broadcasts, are banned and the people of Beijing must resort to spreading the real news by mouth, riding around the city with loudspeakers, at the risk of being shot. This shows the extent to which the people may circumvent the government to get at the truth and how ancient traditions of story-telling and news-spreading can overcome modern technological control of information. Alex realizes the full value of the freedom of the press and of expression in North America and Europe, reporters from which continue at personal risk to convey the truth of what is happening to the outside world.)

4. How delighted I am to be in China and witness the Four Modernizations and great progress of the Motherland (Chap. 7, April 14, p. 37)

(These first phrases Alex learns in Chinese, and repeats sarcastically, show the extent to which government propaganda pervades every aspect of life in China, from what they learn in school to what is discussed in the street to what is taught to foreigners about the country. In school and talking with Chinese students, he comes to see that: "Everything is controlled. These students were being told how to run every part of their lives. For example, they weren't supposed to date. They couldn't get married. And if they stepped out of line, there were hundreds of thousands of others waiting to take their spots." (Chap. 13, May 5, p. 65) No wonder they were so adamantly demonstrating in the Square, Alex realizes. The students no longer believe the propaganda that China has really modernized or made great progress. The Chinese government was clearly very aware of the power of words, strictly controlling every aspect of education was a key way of indoctrinating the people and preventing them from describing their oppression to the outside world. Hearing Xin-hua try to describe to him what was happening, Alex realizes that: "Probably she didn't have words like murder, blood, bullet, tank and armoured personnel carrier in her English textbooks." (Chap. 19, June 6, p. 139)

5. I was beginning to learn that the Chinese often speak in a sort of code so that they don't have to say things straight out. (Chap. 13, May 5, p. 65)

(As Alex observes the vast differences between Canada and China in customs and language, he realizes the political ramifications, that both the government and the people use roundabout ways of saying things to each other in order to avoid direct implication. He comes to see that words and symbols can have great power and that: "Propaganda labels mean a lot" (May 25, Chap. 18, p. 87), as Lao Xu explains to him, for example, that the government labeling the students "hooligans" and "bad elements" means they are being condemned as committing treason, being counter-revolutionaries conspiring against the government, for which they can be arrested and killed, without this being said outright — which would get bad press for the leaders and for China abroad. The soldiers hitting people with their belts was to

punish them for their betrayal of the founding fathers of Communism on the Long March. The Goddess of Democracy statue facing the poster of Mao was the students' way of showing that they questioned the real manifestations of the Communist system Mao had set up and wanted change, while still wishing to preserve socialism. This was reflected also in their banners and headbands. The Cao Cao story was the storyteller's way of warning the people in the teahouse about how the government was building its strategy to use the demonstrations against the people to bolster the power of the hardline wing. The Chinese chess game was Lao Xu's way of demonstrating to Alex the government's strategy of setting up the game, having its moves planned out and using the students as pawns in their power struggle.)

6. I began taping the machine-like advance of the soldiers, not thinking, possessed by the idea that I had to get this on tape, thinking, people have to see this, people have to know this happened. (Chap. 18, June 4, p. 113)

(At this moment, Alex becomes a true journalist, dedicated to the cause of freedom of the press and expression, realizing the importance of the truth, the perils of military control and totalitarianism. He also finds a common point with his dad, understanding his "fanatical" interest in his work, why he swears: "my dad sees the whole world through a lens" (Chap. 5, April 6, p. 27), and forms an unbreakable bond with him through their common experience. This mission to make the truth known, for Lao Xu, for Xin-hua, for all the students he met in the Square and who saved his life, for the Chinese people, keeps Alex alive and thinking clearly, ironically, as it could also have meant his being executed by the army if discovered with the camera and tapes. This made Alex a hero in his own right.)

7. I struggled to get free, but the iron hands held me. (June 4, Chap. 18, p. 119)

(This is how Alex felt as he was being carried away, he thought by soldiers, after having been shot the night of the massacre. It symbolizes the feeling of oppression and the struggle for freedom, the iron hands being the army, the totalitarian government, from which he could not, the Chinese people could not, escape. The image expresses all the fear, chills, desperation, disappointment, frustration, and submission that Alex and the people of Beijing feel through the tragedy of the massacre, which Alex is finally able to flee, but which the Chinese people must continue to live. In English, "iron" is often used to describe totalitarian dictatorships, authoritarian rule, as in the expression "ruling with an iron fist," as it is rigid, inflexible and heavy.)

8. What kind of world did those guys think we were living in, anyway? (Chap. 19, June 6, p. 134)

("Many of the men who run China now, the men high up in the Communist Party, are men who were on the Long March." These eighty-year-old men (Chap. 5, April 6, p. 25) of the original old guard of Chinese Communists still controlled the government and refused to retire and accept the need for changes required in a new era. The old and the young were clearly juxtaposed in the confrontation between the government and the students. These government leaders' outdated way of thinking, still

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based largely on militarism, totalitarianism and provincialism overlooked the modern advances in information technology and the inevitable infiltration of ideas and pressures from abroad. They tried to suppress and brush off the freethinking of the new generation of Chinese who did not live through the Communist or Cultural Revolutions and were questioning the contradictions of current government and social organization, full of corruption, elitism, materialism and hierarchization, versus the ideals of Communism of equality, non-materialism and unity of purpose.)

9. To me, she was a hero. A strong woman with more character than most of the kids I knew, male or female, put together. Including me. (June 8, Chap. 21, p. 167)
(Alex realizes what heroism and feminism really are as he sits next to Xin-hua in the shelter, developing feelings for her. Imagining how Xin-hua would react to Canada, he tells how amazed she would be at the wealth (all the kids their age driving, with nice houses, pools, color TVs and VCRs, good paying jobs), the freedom. He contrasts her with the girls in his high school in Canada: "Their idea of a tragedy was running out of mousse or breaking a fingernail. They were a lot like the woman I had seen this morning on the movie billboard. They were almost all heavily into feminism and talked about being taken seriously as persons while they put on purple lipstick." The woman on the billboard was elegantly-clad and made-up, afraid, submissive, shallow, helpless, excited. Xin-hua was simply dressed, physically strong, natural, courageous, a leader, intelligent, generous, self-dependent, cool and rational — a hero. She saved his life and tried to save her people. Alex knew there would be a gap between himself and the other youths back home as he realized what true heroism was, the real priorities in life.)
10. They killed everybody. (Chap. 22, June 9, 187)
(Alex was traumatized by the horrors he had experienced. The best friends he had ever known, who saved his life, had been killed before his eyes, he'd believed his father might have been too. He'd seen people run over by trucks, mowed down in hundreds like grain in a field, and shot off bicycles and balconies while the soldiers laughed. The Chinese Red Cross estimated 2,600 civilians and students were killed the night of June 4, foreign reports have since estimated the number of deaths during the whole conflict at around 10,000. The Mayor of Beijing, however, officially reported to the Communist Party of China that "no one was killed" and no official death toll was ever cited in the Chinese media and Deng Xiao-Ping congratulated the PLA. Alex saw that this was war.)
11. You know, Alex, I think I've finally started to grow up. (Chap. 23, June 28, p. 196)
(Alex's dad, who had always felt he was somehow outside of the scenes he filmed for the news, realized that he was part of it all and had responsibility for what he was doing, when he thought he had lost his son. Alex also became an adult in the process, ironically becoming dedicated to his father's profession, but also with the sense of responsibility Ted had come to know. From contrasting himself in so many ways with his father at the beginning of the story, Alex came to follow the same path to adulthood, to know a similar struggle and feeling

of loss, as he had when he realized neither he nor his father was responsible for his mother's leaving. Perhaps there was an element of hope in Alex's mother being with them in the bathroom at the end. As Alex and his dad both knew that nothing would be the same anymore, that: "Everything will be different, and we will too" (Chap. 23, June 28, p. 197), there was also a positive sense in that he and his dad were brought closer together in their suffering.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the novel.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. List and explain aspects of setting, mood and character in Beijing.
(When his dad is sent on a photo-journalism assignment to cover Gorbachev's visit to Beijing, Alex decides to accompany him so that he can visit the ancient monuments he's studied so much, and he doesn't want to stay in Canada with his mom. The rather pretentious, famous correspondent, Eddie, with whom Alex's dad has been sent to work, sets up their newsroom in their room at the central foreigners' hotel which becomes their base over the next two months for covering the student democracy movement in the adjacent Tiananmen Square. The Square and streets of Beijing become both the site of their career advancement, enlightenment and path to refuge and escape as well as of their near death. The rustic one-room house protected by a courtyard and wall in old Beijing of a kind old woman and her brave granddaughter-student provide Alex's hospital and shelter when he cannot return to the hotel and his heroic-tragic delivery to the airport. The reader is already familiar with the tragedies of the Beijing Spring of 1989 through the real news reports provided by people like Alex, his father and Eddie. The mood is of suspense, mainly, waiting, wondering, curiosity, anxiety before the unknown, but also of dread before the inevitable and tragedy, cruelty, suffering, frustration and fear which leave Alex, and the reader, ridden with trauma, horror and anger by the time he and his father are reunited and return home, forever changed.)
2. What point of view guides the novel?
(The story is told through day-by-day journal entries through Alex's eyes, ears and journalistic nose as he experiences his adventure, comes to realize his journalistic talents and commonalities with his father, the horrors of war, what it is to be an adult (along with his dad) and the meaning of true heroism. He is apprehensive at first that his dad will become too absorbed in his work and remain in China for a whole year, but little did either of them know that they would become separated and have to flee for their lives within a few months. Alex also becomes absorbed in interviewing students and taping and filming the amazing and horrifying events of the student protests, the Tiananmen Square massacre and Beijing besieged, becoming a journalist. We also see him become a hero himself, and an adult, in his commitment to getting the truth out to the world and in his loyalty to his heroic friends who taught him so much and even give

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their lives to save his, although he feels ashamed of his fear, his thoughts of abandoning the tapes and his doubt of Lao Xu's integrity.

The story is told through Alex's more-or-less daily written reports, sometimes written a number of days later, describing and reflecting upon life, politics and horror in Beijing as well as upon his own relationship with his dad and mom, his life in Canada and his perception of the military and human nature. Alex proves a good reader of character and is lucky to fall in with kind, noble people, like Lao Xu, Nai-nai, Xin-hua and "Hong," juxtaposed against the cruelty of the PLA soldiers and military government. Upon returning to Canada and seeing his footage used on the news, Alex does not feel Eddie's self-congratulation and distance from his reports, but shares with his dad the sense of responsibility to and shared suffering with the people of Beijing whom they filmed. Added to the loss they both felt from Alex's mother's having left them, they felt the loss of the people dear to them in China and the loss of each other while they were separated. These losses ironically brought Alex and his dad closer together, and perhaps his mother had also felt the loss, as the whole family talks together in the bathroom at the end of the story.)

3. How is Alex wounded?

(Having climbed atop a bus in the Square with a group of student demonstrators, Alex films the scene of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, the soldiers firing their machine guns at the crowd, bodies lying on the ground, bicycles crushed under armored truck wheels, students continuing to wave banners calling for democracy, linked arm-in-arm on the buses in the night lit only by red and white flares and the flames of burning buses and molotov cocktails. He then sees the soldiers line up facing him, to shoot all the students atop buses around the Square and scrambles down. Students fall dead against him, knocking him over. Using his knowledge of military strategy, he knows to escape from the Square and hide down a side street, but soldiers turn down the street and open fire on the students there. As he runs with the others, Alex is struck in the calf by what feels like a baseball bat and falls, hitting his head on the ground, but he is picked up by a group of people he fears are soldiers and carried away. The next thing he knows, he awakes in a brick building, taking a few hours to fully realize he is safe in someone's house in old Beijing, in a great deal of pain, but conscious and protected. He had been taken there by students whom he had interviewed before in the Square, one of whom, "Hong," was a medical student who took care of his leg. Alex would have to remain there for several days to heal and would remain lame until he left China, dependent on Xin-hua to deliver him to the airport.)

4. What experiences make Alex and his dad grow up?

(When a clash between demonstrators and police becomes imminent on June 3, Ted makes Alex and Lao Xu stay behind in the hotel to man the phones and two-way radio while Eddie and he go out to cover events in the Square. Through ABC reports over the two-way radio, the information Lao Xu receives by phone and their personal insights, Alex's knowledge of military strategy and Lao Xu's explanations of government tactics

and politics, Alex realizes that his father is in danger as the PLA is preparing to invade and surround the Square using armed force.

Too "fanatical" about his camera-work and the "great" footage he's getting, Ted downplays the danger and remains taping, so Alex goes out to find him, accompanied by Lao Xu. Thus began the worst three days of their lives, when Ted and Alex would desperately suffer their loss of each other, Lao Xu's brutal murder, the cruel inhumanity and physical affronts of the soldiers, the bravery of Lao Xu, of Xin-hua, of all the unarmed residents of Beijing standing up to the army, and an odyssey of flight for their lives and attempts to find each other again. They come to realize their priorities in life, what true heroism is and what the real implications of their respective "fanaticisms" are, both positive and negative, that what they do is not "a game". Ted sees that he is part of the events he films and that in jeopardizing himself, he jeopardizes his family. Alex learns that real war is not like in the movies, not a game, and that real life is not what he has learned in school.)

5. What is Alex's reaction when he returns home?

(Sedated during the entire flight home, Alex remains numb with trauma when his mother picks them up in her fancy car and drives them home to their big, suburban house, still in his bloody, dirty Chinese clothes. While taking a bath, remembering the tapes (to his dad's amazement) he'd hidden in his underwear only as he undressed, Alex briefly tells his mother about Lao Xu's and Xin-hua's murders causing his mother to cry in disbelief. He then hears his father's story of what happened to him and to Eddie during the time they'd been separated. Alex's footage, which he attributes to Xin-hua, is shown often on the news. Eddie, still reporting horrible stories from the Hotel Beijing, sends Alex's journals and notes. Ted is afraid to leave Alex to go out. Alex, his hair buzz-cut to remove the shoe polish and diagnosed as traumatized by the doctor, finally breaks down watching an American broadcast of a single young man who'd stopped a row of tanks on the main avenue on June 6 and was executed a few weeks later, another of Alex's heroes killed. The word "executed" resonating in his head, Alex runs screaming to his room and destroys all his military models, then to the basement to dismantle the exhibits: "All the soldiers from all the wars melted down together into lead again." (196) His dad finds him, also trying to work things out in his mind, and, over a cup of tea as Alex had comfortably drunk in Nai-nai's house, they realize everything had changed and that they'd both grown up through tragedy and loss.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. How does Bell enhance description with suspense?

(Instead of simply describing the events of spring 1989 in Beijing, Bell builds a story of intrigue in which the reader is led to feel the anticipation, worry, anxiety, frustration and fear along with Alex, his father and Eddie, Lao Xu, Xin-hua and the students and residents of Beijing. Even though the reader already knows from the news the tragic outcome of the Tian An Men Square events, the story remains gripping and is personalized through the characters Bell develops. Bell drops hints as

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to what will happen through symbols such as the Cao Cao story, Lao Xu's chess lessons and interpretation of the meaning of government actions such as the editorial or Zang Zhou-yi's visit to the Square and statement that there would be "no chaos," heightening the suspense.

Varying the passage of time throughout the novel is another method Bell uses to build suspense. The chapters are of varying length and varying regularity, at first entered daily, then irregularly as things start to happen. For example, the very short paragraphs in the days just prior to June 3 and 4 indicate the sense of waiting, of something about to happen, but not happening yet and a sense of anxiety on Alex's part, keeping the entries short in anticipation of more exciting things to report in the next days. The entries for June 3 and 4 are then very long, although actually covering only that night. These chapters include not only Alex's accounts of what has happened but also his interpretation of prior events which he came to see led up to the events of these fateful days. There is a very long description of the preparation for and of Xin-hua and Alex's journey to the embassy/airport, even though it actually lasted only one day and night, prolonging Alex's and our fears, making us appreciate Xin-hua's courage, effort and determination.

Comments by individual characters also add to the sense that something big is going to happen. Even the ousted Party Secretary, Zang Zhou-yi, indicated that tragedy was imminent when he apologized to the students for the government's having done "too little, too late". Early into the student demonstrations, Lao Xu pessimistically predicted their doom as he had seen this kind of thing before. This sense of inevitability of the tragedy, as well as of Ted and Alex's involvement in it, permeate the novel and plays with our desire for hope and optimism that all would somehow lead to a happy ending.)

7. How do the people Alex meets reflect his own personality and character?

(A lot can be learned about a person from what he/she says about and how he/she relates to other people. Alex's descriptions of and reactions to the various characters he meets tell us a lot about Alex himself. He first contrasts himself from his father in numerous ways: organized versus chaotic, likes to dress up sometimes versus uncomfortable in anything but jeans and a t-shirt, pragmatic versus fanatical, loves to fly versus hates flying. But he also describes how he came to understand that he and his father both felt betrayed by his mother and that they had both incorrectly blamed themselves. Upon meeting Eddie, Alex new he was very famous and instantly perceived his pretentiousness and conceit and found him condescending. His overt self-confidence, cynicism and criticism of Lao Xu bothered, even angered, Alex, but at the same time he learned from Eddie's journalistic intuition, even though Alex in the end proved the more competent journalist in covering the Tiananmen Square massacre while Eddie had unprofessionally switched off his two-way radio while lighting his pipe. Again, Alex found a common point with his dad in appreciating the irony of this when Ted shook his head with a smile thinking of this. Eddie proved to be a friend, how-

ever, in the end, sending Alex his journal and notes with a nice letter for his dad, showing Alex was perhaps a bit hasty in his initial judgment. Alex's faith in Lao Xu, although tested by the reality of his government assignment, proved correct as Lao Xu became one the "true heroes" in his life. He admired him for his intellect without pretense, his knowledge and carefulness, his sense of humor, his kindness and, in the end, his passion, sincerity, bravery and commitment to the truth. All these qualities, Alex aspired to have.)

8. Discuss how irony permeates Alex's observations. (Bell's novel is full of contradictions and irony. Alex himself, a great appreciator of sense of humor, along with his father, often expresses his observations in ironic ways. Bell's novel uses numerous different forms of irony: verbal irony is seen in Alex's and Eddie's sarcastic comments. For example, Alex notes Eddie's comment that Lao Xu is "the nicest spy you could ever meet" (p. 28) and comments on the girls back home whose idea of a tragedy is breaking a nail. Situational irony is used to heighten the suspense when Alex's Chinese disguise, meant to protect his life on their journey to the embassy, actually comes to work against him when trying to convince the soldiers he is really Canadian. Structural irony is seen in Alex's naive view of war when he begins the story contrasted with the realities he confronts in Beijing. The fact that Alex and his dad are actually brought closer together, a positive outcome, through the horrible experiences and separation they went through is ironic too. Dramatic, or tragic, irony is seen in that the reader, already familiar with the Tian An Men Square massacre from the news, knows more than the characters and can predict what will happen, knows the tragedy is inevitable. Also, Lao Xu's view of the PLA as a true people's army that helps people out during emergencies and would never turn against the people strikes the reader as overly optimistic and naive when he first states it, and events tragically prove Lao Xu wrong in this feeling. Cosmic irony is seen in that the students and the people of Beijing were doomed to their fate, as the people of China have repeatedly fallen prey to militaristic, oppressive governments and restricted human rights, again, the reader knows that the tragedy is inevitable. Even when, at the end of the story, Alex's dad declares that he has finally grown up, he still jumps on the tapes that fall out of Alex's clothes in his usual fanatical excitement about good news stories, indicating that he perhaps has not changed that much. Bell uses all these forms of irony to enhance his description through Alex's observations and to heighten the reader's identification with the humor of the characters juxtaposed against the contradictions of the situation and the tragedy of the story.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. What is Bell's concept of man? (Bell paints man at the height of his glory and in the lowest of his baseness. He depicts man, through the institutions of politics and the military, as a victim of his own vices — corruption and greed, hunger for power, pride — and weaknesses — cowardice, fear and prejudice. Even some of the students who are demonstrating fall prey to the temptation to use violence against the soldiers, throwing rocks, bricks, molotov cocktails. But in

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times of great tragedy, we also see instances of tremendous heroism. Man is shown as able to overcome this baseness through intellect, compassion, generosity, strength of character and determination, honesty and sincerity, commitment to ideals of equality and democracy. We see Alex and his dad able to learn from terrible experiences and to go on, to do what's right and work for the betterment of humanity, rather than simply become embittered and hostile. We see the majority of people to be kind and peaceful, while a minority are cruel, power-hungry and hypocritical. Overall, Bell seems to portray man in an optimistic light, imperfect, but capable of improvement, learning and self-criticism, while at the same time warning us of the dangers of human weakness when it takes the form of authoritarianism, dishonesty, manipulation and armed violence.)

10. What is the purpose of Bell's novel?

(Bell's novel serves a number of purposes. It is a social-political commentary on the importance of freedom of speech and expression and of democratically-elected and -controlled government. It is an exploration of the importance of culture and customs on human behavior through the comparison of Chinese and Canadian lifestyles and societies. It is also a study of the relationship between a young adult and his father in a broken family as well as of the young man's coming-of-age, realizing what the "real world" is like, gaining new perspectives on human nature and his own world. Bell seems to want to give a warning against the danger of institutionalizing human cruelty and greed while at the same time giving a message of hope that things can change, cruelty can be checked, people can learn, life goes on and with the moral that there is much more to life than material comforts and what first meets the eye.)

Questions 11 and 12 Creative Level

11. Prepare a video-taped TV news report or write a news article recounting the events of the Tian An Men Square massacre using Alex's time-line, but adding additional information from newspapers, magazines, TV and radio reports, books (see bibliographies) and reference materials. Use visual and audio aids such as published photos, audio- and video-taped news reports. Have students discuss the reliability of the sources and contrast these reports with the Chinese government's version, as well as the day-by-day evolution of the world's understanding of the real events.
12. Show real TV news reports of the Tian An Men Square events and have students write a description of what they see as if they had been there in the scene like Alex. Have students read their descriptions aloud and discuss the literary terms of: point of view, protagonist, antagonist, motivation, irony, suspense, intrigue, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, denouement, climax, language, style, mood, setting, theme, motif, fiction, realism.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Economics

1. Compile lists of characteristics which compare and contrast the Chinese and North American economies as seen through Alex's description. Supplement the images in the novel with macro-economic statistics from the

United States/Canada and China, such as inflation rates, GNP per capita, household disposable income, work force composition (for example, percentages in agriculture vs. services). Discuss how such figures relate to images depicted in the novel, for example, the food rations, the washing machine as a "status symbol," bicycle-use contrasted with the Audis, VCRs, large houses in Toronto.

2. Discuss the concept of standard of living. Compare this with the concept of quality of life. List examples of differences in quality of life between Beijing and Toronto. Were Alex's views of life in China all negative? What down sides did Alex see in the way of life in Toronto upon returning? Suggest ways in which quality of life might be improved in each place and how such improvements might be achieved.

Social Studies, Law and Government

1. Read to the class the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. List and describe cases in which the Supreme Court has decided upon this Amendment and discuss their meaning to Americans today. How does the American judicial system help to guarantee Americans' rights to free speech and expression?
2. Present the fact that in September 1983, the Chinese government enacted legislation: the "Decision of the National People's Congress Standing Committee on the Procedure to Swiftly Try Criminals Who Seriously Jeopardize Public Security," allowing these "criminals" to be sentenced to death and executed within a few days of arrest. Discuss how the single-party government's control of the legislative and judicial process allowed it to set up the martial law situation six years later. Contrast this with the system of checks and balances in the United States system. In May 1989, Li Peng suspended the Chinese constitution. What would it mean if such happened in the United States. Could such a thing happen?

Language

1. In class, have students compile a list of Chinese terms and phrases presented in *Forbidden City*. Discuss the significance of these terms in Chinese culture. Have students suggest similar terms and expressions in American English and how they relate to American culture. How was the way the Chinese spoke English a reflection of what the government wanted them to know, as well as of the students' own desire to visit and emulate the West?
2. Present the differences in spelling and terminology between American English and the British English used by Bell in the book, such as: rumor vs. rumour, humor vs. humour, labeling vs. labelling, loud-speaker vs. loud-hailer. Give other examples of differences. Discuss why Canadians use British spellings.

History

Read debates on the First Amendment of the Constitution at the time it was being discussed during the Constitutional Convention. Compare the American Revolutionary period with the uprisings in China and discuss the importance of the freedom of expression and of the press in the history of American democracy. Why was it such an important point of discussion during the writing

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of the U.S. Constitution? Discuss how the government in China was able to institute its control of information.

Geography

1. Display a map of China showing the location of Beijing within China and in relation to the other provinces from which the armies came, particularly the 27th Field Army from Hebei Province. Show how Beijing was besieged, the strategy of the PLA, relating the map of Beijing provided by Alex in the book, showing railroads, main roads, etc. leading in. Indicate the route of the Long March. Also discuss the recent problem of migration to the cities in China, its still relatively high level of ruralization compared to industrialized countries and its population control policies.
2. Display maps of Southeast Asia to show China in relation to its neighboring countries: Vietnam, Russia, Japan and maps of the world to show its relation to the West. Discuss China's traditional politico-geographic enemies and reasons for the government's concern for controlling movement into and out of China.

Journalism

1. Through a speech presenting Alex the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for journalism, explain what he has contributed to world news and to humanity. Include praise for his courage, dedication, intelligence, open-mindedness, integrity, professionalism, journalistic instinct and promise. Explain that he was awarded the prize for his valiant effort to protect the freedom of the press and why.
2. Write a letter from Alex to the Canadian Broadcasting Company explaining how he got his information and footage, discussing his sources and their reliability and his own motivation and inspiration. Describe how Alex would like to work in journalism for his career and his reasons for this choice, both personal and social.
3. Organize a debate on the responsibility of journalists to the subjects of their stories. How free should the press be? Is it okay for the government to restrict press coverage of certain situations, as in war-times? How are journalists part of the stories they cover? How might the press affect the outcome of certain events? For example, introduce the themes of press access to confidential government information, press coverage of trials, televising violence and suffering. How may government officials, politicians, generals, lawyers, for example, use the press? How is news censored even in the United States? What would students suggest for ensuring free, but responsible coverage of news?

Art

1. Display and discuss prints of Chinese paintings (if possible, inviting a person knowledgeable on Chinese art to help) to describe the symbolism in them. Discuss how the headbands the students wore in the book, for example, relate to such artwork. In particular, explain the use of hand-writing within the picture in China.
2. Show how culture is pervaded with symbols which everyone within that culture understands. Have students bring in and present pictures of American art explaining the symbols in terms of American culture. What common symbols can students pick out in both Chinese and

Western cultures? How does Chinese artwork differ from American? You may use illustrated children's books such as Bell's with Chinese symbolism and compare them with symbols in children's books about the United States, for instance.

Music

Research the costumes, colors, sounds, instruments and themes common in Chinese lyric theater. Suggest how certain sounds are used to express characters' different emotions and personalities and identify the instruments. Show pictures of the instruments describing their significance in Chinese culture. Compile a list of instruments common in American culture and discuss their significance and the emotions their sounds convey.

Mathematics and Computer Science

1. Explain how statistics on the Tiananmen Square massacre were compiled, by whom, and how they conflicted with Chinese government reports. Demonstrate how actuaries compile numbers for killed, wounded and arrested. Discuss how governments may prevent such measurements during war and ways in which the truth may be safeguarded.
2. Using desktop publishing, compile a time line of the spring 1989 events in Beijing outlined in the book chapters. Add in additional news information from other sources to fill in during this period and to describe events in the summer after June 4. Include statistical figures where possible.
3. Use a spreadsheet to chart the build-up of students in the Square as a graph. Put each day described by Alex, from April 1 to June 5, along the x-axis and the number of students present at each demonstration on the y-axis. Add another line to the same graph charting the military build-up for each day with the number of soldiers present in the city mentioned by Alex (these may have to be derived from, for example, the number of trucks multiplied by the number of soldiers per truck or from information from other sources).

Psychology

1. Discuss the mass psychological control techniques employed by the Chinese government and the PLA against the people of Beijing. What psychological tactics did they use and how did the demonstrators try to counter-act them? Include mention of the role of media control and propaganda, labels, threats, apparent retreat and cruelty on the part of the government and army versus the students' passive resistance attempt. How did the army provoke students to become violent in order to justify its use of armed force?
2. Apply the theme of fanaticism to Alex's family. How do Alex, his father and his mother each display traits of fanatical behavior? How do Alex and his father come to feel about their behavior? In what instances was fanatical behavior shown to be heroic? Define what it is to be a martyr and the psychological significance.

Science and Health

1. Discuss the medical methods described in the novel, how "Hong" took care of Alex's wound. Compare contrast these methods with North American practices. Dis-

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these methods with North American practices. Discuss the interplay of ancient, traditional and modern medical practices in both cases.

2. Research the causes and origins of hepatitis and discuss how the photo-journalist Ted was sent to replace may have contracted the disease while in China. Compare the incidence of this disease and the different types of it in North America versus developing countries and come up with ways in which the spread of hepatitis may be controlled. Shed light on the fact that Alex was always drinking bottled drinks or boiled teas.

Literature

1. Compile with the class lists of factual events and characters described in the novel and fictional elements in the novel. Discuss how Bell made his own contrasts between fact and fiction in juxtaposing eye-witness accounts of what happened against government reports. Organize a debate over the validity of presenting factual information in a fictional story.
2. Have students keep their own journal for five days describing some aspect of their activities in which they include the following elements: character descriptions, the student's own relationships to these persons, setting, mood, dialogue, imagery and emotion.

Film

1. Show a fictional film about China and have students pick out, present and interpret symbols they find in the film. Discuss similarities and differences they see in the film with symbols in North American culture and relate these to the society and politics of each. Look for symbols mentioned in the novel in particular.
2. Show a documentary or news clips of the Tian An Men Square democracy movement events. Compare the use of visual images and sound to the literary description in the book. Discuss how outside sources and narration are used to complement and enhance the images. Have students develop a fictional story based on the news clips.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Dramatize in short skits events in the streets of Beijing and Tian An Men Square in May-June 1989, such as the memorial demonstration in April, the hunger-strikes, the peaceful surrounding of the truck of soldiers, the burning of the armored car and rescue of the soldiers, the massacre in the Square, executions and arrests in the streets, the old streets with the news-spreaders, etc.
2. Reenact the events in Tiananmen Square the night of June 4, 1989. Begin with Alex in the hotel, then his move to the Square. Include all the main characters in their respective places and radio communications and follow the same routes they followed. Show the lineup of the students and soldiers.
3. Reenact dramatic moments in the novel, such as when students climb onto the burning tank to help the soldiers out, when Lao Xu jumps out and yells at the soldiers, when Alex and Xin-hua are stopped on the road, when Xin-hua is led away into the trees. Find ways to display, for instance, the spears of fire, the movement of tanks over bicycles, people's movements and reactions. Include elements of suspense, irony and tragedy.
4. Write a scene in which Alex would try to return to the Bei-

jing Hotel to find his father. Describe not only what he would see, but also the sounds, emotions, obstacles. Use metaphors, symbols, imagery, onomatopoeia, dialogue and first person-participant point of view.

5. Write a speech by Alex to his high school class back in Toronto in which he presents what he experienced in Beijing, including description of photos he might show. Describe differences between schooling and students in China and North America. Write questions Alex's classmates and teacher might ask him about his experience. Include the introduction Alex receives (from the teacher or principal?) and the setting in which Alex gives the speech (to the whole school in an assembly? or to a particular class — which subject?) and tailor the speech accordingly.
6. Write an essay dedicated by Alex to his heroes. In it, define heroism, giving both specific and general examples of heroic acts. Describe the mindset of a hero and what separates a hero from others. Discuss how a hero confronts adversity, encounters risk and his/her goals. Mention how Alex came to see his dad as a hero. Also describe why Alex would have preferred for his friends not to have been heroes.
7. Present the map of Beijing drawn by Alex in the book on an overhead and, playing the role of Li Peng, detail the strategy for moving in troops and surrounding the city as if he were briefing the soldiers. He designates different groups as the different armies: the Beijing troops, the 27th Field Army, plain-clothed soldiers. Show where the troops come from, how they move into the city and how they set up there. Demonstrate how they are to enter the Square at the various times during the buildup and how they line up to fire upon the crowd. Discuss other tactics, such as occupying the train stations, taking over broadcasting stations, jamming foreign radio transmissions, searching buildings, blocking roads to embassies, airport, foreign hotels and major intersections and show how these actions relate to Li Peng's goals. How might he deceive the troops?
8. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating how Alex's interest in military strategy, history and equipment help him and his father get the story and stay alive. Describe how what Lao Xu teaches him adds to this knowledge, including the chess game, the visit to the teahouse and what he tells Alex about the government's strategy. Include how Alex uses journalistic equipment and savvy as well as his status as a student to complement his military knowledge and build his understanding of Chinese culture.
9. Create a student web page on the Tian An Men Square massacre. Add a chronology or time-line of the events. Include photographs from other books (using a scanner) as well as the one on the cover and the maps in Bell's novel with eyewitness accounts quoted from students in the book and in other sources. Make a list of sources for more information and names and addresses of organizations concerned with human rights in China.
10. In a theme, discuss how military oppression became a personal experience for Alex. List the people and his relationship to them who personalized the conflict for him,

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both his friends and people he knew only in passing or observed. Contrast Alex's perception of war before and after his stay in Beijing. Suggest possible attitudes and actions Alex might take from now on regarding war, militarization, human rights and democracy. If Alex were to become an adviser to a political leader, what might he advise regarding use of the military?

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of heroic acts and qualities described by Alex. Contrast these with a list of cruel, cowardly acts witnessed by Alex.
2. From a photo of the events in the Square, describe the scene in the style of Alex's description, from an eye-witness perspective, and relate to details given in the book.
3. Compose a scene of the route from where the students pick Alex up after he is shot to Nai-nai's house, as if it were made by Xin-hua or one of the other students who rescue him.
4. Make a character list and explain the behavior of each described by Alex.

OTHER WORKS BY WILLIAM BELL

Crabbe (1986)
Metal Head (1987)
The Cripples' Club (1991)
Death Wind (1989)
Five Days of the Ghost (1989)
No Signature (1992)
Speak to the Earth (1994)
The Golden Disk (1995)
River, My Friend (1996)

RELATED READING

Translated Chinese Works:

Eugene Chen Eoyang's 1982 *Selected Poems of Ai Qing*
Robert Friend's 1982 translation of Chi'ing Ni's *The Black Eel* (poetry)
David Kwan's 1989 translation of Cheng I's *Old Well*
David Kwan's 1991 translation of Liu Heng's *The Obsessed*
H.Y. Lowe's 1983 *The Adventures of Wu: The Life Cycle of a Peking Man*
Moss Roberts' 1991 translation of Kuan-chung Lo's classic *Three Kingdoms*
Shen Ts'ung-wen's 1986 *A Girl from Hunan*
Ch'ing-hsiang Wang's 1986 *China's Last Emperor as an Ordinary Citizen*
Rae Yang's *Spider Eaters: A Memoir* (personal narratives of a family during the Cultural Revolution)

Fictional Works about China

Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*
Jung Chang's *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*
Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*
C.Y. Lee's *Gate of Rage*
Emily Cheney Neville's *The China Year*
Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Kitchen God's Wife*, and *The Moon Lady*
Liang Heng's 1983 *Son of the Revolution*

Fictional works on related themes

Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*
Albert Camus' *The Stranger*
Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*
Howard Fast's *April Morning*

Esther Forbes' *Johnny Tremain*
Robert Heinlein's *Between Planets* and *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*
Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*
Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Bette Bao Lord's *The Middle Heart*
Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*
George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and 1984
Ayn Rand's *Anthem*, *The Fountainhead*, and *We the Living*
Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the Tian An Men Square massacre, current Chinese politics and government, Chinese history, and Western relations with and Westerners' experiences in China, consult these sources:

On China in general:

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (1996)
Lois B. Muehl, *Trading Cultures in the Classroom: Two American Teachers in China* (1993)
Robert K.G. Temple, *The Genius of China: 3,000 Years of Science, Discovery and Invention* (1986)

Tian An Men Square and the student movement:

Amnesty International, *Death in Beijing* (1989)
Gail Copeland, *Spring Winds of Beijing* (1993)
Harrison Evans, *Tiananmen Diary* (1989)
John K. Fairbank, et al., *Children of the Dragon: The Story of Tiananmen Square* (1990)
David S.G. Goodman, *Beijing Street Voices: the Poetry and Politics of China's Democracy Movement* (1981)
Michel Oksenberg, et al., *Beijing Spring, 1989*
David Rice, *The Dragon's Brood: Conversations with the Young Chinese* (1992)

On the city and monuments of Beijing:

Gilles Beguin, *The Forbidden City: Center of Imperial China* (1997)
Feng-huan Hsueh, *Beijing: The Nature and Planning of a Chinese Capital City* (1995)
Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Forbidden City* (1972)
Jeffrey F. Meyer, *The Dragons of Tiananmen: Beijing as a Sacred City* (1991)
Victor F.S. Sit, *Chinese Cities: The Growth of the Metropolis Since 1949* (1989)
Viking Press' *Palaces of the Forbidden City* (1984)

Video recordings:

Kino International, *The Blue Kite* (1994, 138 min.)
Voyager, *The First Emperor of China*, Project Emperor 1 by Ching Chih-Chen ((1994: with sound-card)

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Baldick, Chris, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990.
Calhoun, Craig C., *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994.
Carver, Peter, *Quill Quire*, June 1990, p. 56.
Duke, Michael S., *The Iron House: A Memoir of the Chinese Democratic Movement and the Tiananmen Massacre*, Layton, Utah: Gibbs-Smith, 1990.

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Fathers, Michael and Andrew Higgins, *Tiananmen: The Rape of Peiking*, Ontario: Doubleday, 1989.

Fisher, Margery, *Grow Point*, November 1990, p. 29

Hedblad, Alan, ed., "William Bell," *Something About the Author*, Vol. 90, Detroit: Gale, 1990, p. 15.

Lin, Nan, *The Struggle for Tiananmen: Anatomy of the 1989 Movement*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992.

Philbrook, John, *School Library Journal*, March 1991, p. 37.

Rice, David, *The Dragon's Brood*. London: Harper Collins, 1992.

Simmie, Scott and Bob Nixon, *Tiananmen Square: An Eyewitness Account of the Chinese People's Passionate Quest for Democracy*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1989.

Smith, Candace, *Booklist*, Jan. 15, 1991, p. 87.

Zi, Jin and Qin Zhou. *1989 June Four: A Chronicle of the Chinese Democratic Uprising*. Fayetteville, Ark.: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 1989.

TEACHER'S NOTES

FORBIDDEN CITY

VOCABULARY TEST

In the lines that follow, underline a word to complete each sentence.

1. Remember the (celebration, editorial, commitment, gratuity) on April 26, Eddie? It came from Deng and it said that the students were promoting chaos.
2. That night on the news we heard that Zhao Zi-yang had made a speech later in the afternoon and said that he thought the situation would calm down and that there would be no more (trepidation, taxes, treachery, turmoil).
3. The (determination, congregation, citation, pining) was back in those black eyes of hers.
4. The more I read about these (satirical, embalmed, terra cotta, emblematic) soldiers, the more fascinated I got.
5. The suite of rooms consisted of a small (vestibule, canape, balcony, portal) with four doorways.
6. Between me and my dad were thousands of people and a barricade of burning buses lighting up the western (beaches, breezes, images, reaches) of the square.
7. Eddie frowned. He didn't like being (evicted, convicted, addicted, contradicted).
8. The (principle, emissary, correspondent, premier) was talking. He looked stern, even angry, but he had a look on his face that seemed to say, 'I'm the boss now.'
9. We expected to find a (disparate, dislocated, pursuant, desolate) and messy expanse of concrete. But we didn't. It soon became clear that a lot of students were coming back.
10. Then I remembered that, during the Cultural Revolution that ended about ten years ago, gangs of Red Guards would swarm into temples, museums, and other historical monuments, smashing things up and (defacing, effacing, trading, noticing) everything they could reach.
11. The PLA soldiers stationed at the doors, with their wrinkled green uniforms and green running shoes and old bolt-action rifles, didn't look too (estimating, propitious, intimidating, aggregating) to me.
12. 'Needles for the (quilting, conifer, intervention, acupuncture),' he explained. 'It will ease your pain and help the swell to go away.'
13. Eddie said he figured the students started the hunger strike when they did to (perpetrate, expedite, embarrass, fortify) the government.
14. He's in his element, buzzing around, humming to himself like he was totally (daunted, lamenting, determining, demented), having a great time.
15. After a few moments my father looked up and the flat light from the window fell across his pale, (haggard, jagged, dogged, bulwark) features.

FORBIDDEN CITY

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with characters. Choose your answers from the list of characters below. You may use some of the answers more than once and some not at all.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ___ 1. is shot and killed in Tian An Men Square. | A. Alexander |
| ___ 2. forgets to turn on recorder while lighting a pipe. | B. student in red baseball cap |
| ___ 3. takes care of friend's wounded leg. | C. Lao Xu |
| ___ 4. peddles a delivery bicycle carrying an empty refrigerator box. | D. girl in blue baseball cap |
| ___ 5. recites the story of Cao Cao and his historic victory and strategy. | E. news-teller |
| ___ 6. prepares steamed rice and vegetables, hot noodles and tea. | F. Eddie |
| ___ 7. needs to find his father. | G. Xin-Hua |
| ___ 8. comes to the Square to negotiate with the students. | H. PLA captain |
| ___ 9. names Alexander "Shan Da." | I. Deng Xiao-Ping |
| ___ 10. questions Xin-Hua and orders her to be taken away. | J. Zhao Zi-Yang |
| ___ 11. is rumored to be sick and dying, or already dead. | K. Nai-nai |
| ___ 12. led the Long March. | L. Ted Jackson |
| ___ 13. has a fanatical devotion to his career as camera-man. | M. the old storyteller |
| ___ 14. risks being shot when stopping to give updates by loud-speaker. | N. Mao Ze-dong |
| ___ 15. is very interested in military history. | O. Cao Cao |

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill in the paired blanks with answers that complete each statement.

1. _____ are just simpletons as far as I'm concerned. There's nothing I like better than a _____ movie.
2. I swear my _____ sees the whole world through a _____.
3. Yep, _____ is the nicest _____ you'd ever want to meet.
4. He pointed as he translated. 'Long live _____. That one, 'Down with _____'.
5. His _____ had been an army man who had survived the Long March.
A _____.

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Part III: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Finish each of these statements.

1. Alexander has reason to appreciate pacifists because _____

2. The students in Tian An Men Square want to talk with Alexander because _____

3. Eddie is suspicious of Lao Xu because _____

4. Alexander was not taken to the hospital because _____

5. The army surrounds the city because _____

6. Alexander dislikes Eddie because _____

7. Alexander does not live with his mother because _____

8. Xin Hua helps Alexander because _____

9. The Americans stop transmitting over the radio because _____

10. Lao Xu jumps in front of and yells out at the soldiers because _____

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Discuss Alexander's relationships with his mother and father.
2. Describe the escalation of the Tian An Men Square massacre.
3. Explain the significance of Cao Cao and the story of the arrows.
4. Account for Alexander's destroying his military displays.
5. Explain Alexander's contribution to the students' cause.

FORBIDDEN CITY

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Settings (20 points)

Identify a setting that fits each of the following descriptions. Select your answers from the list that follows.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Beijing | D. Toronto | G. the hotel restaurant | J. Nai-nai's house |
| B. hu tang | E. the newsroom | H. the airplane | K. Alexander's basement |
| C. the Forbidden City | F. Beijing airport | I. Tian An Men Square | L. The Great Wall |

- ___ 1. The home of the model of the soldiers guarding the ancient Chinese tomb.
- ___ 2. Alexander finds safety and his father.
- ___ 3. Alexander awakes, hearing gunshots outside, on a brick bed.
- ___ 4. Students demonstrating for democracy are shot down by soldiers.
- ___ 5. Alexander senses something happening when empty.
- ___ 6. Lao Xu and Alexander are grounded here in the hotel.
- ___ 7. Alexander and Ted's destination for adventure, history and news filming.
- ___ 8. Alexander feels safe within its walls and gates.
- ___ 9. The emperor's residence until the nineteenth century (and what all of Beijing became).
- ___ 10. The starting- and end-point of the journey.

Part II: Short Answer (10 points)

Explain the significance of the following details:

- 1. the chess game
- 2. the storyteller
- 3. the Goddess of Democracy statue
- 4. the hu tangs (residential alley-ways with high walls and gates)
- 5. the Mao coat

Part III: Identification (30 points)

Place an X by statements that refer to Alexander.

- ___ 1. Doesn't want to stay with his mother.
- ___ 2. Falls shot by soldiers.
- ___ 3. American.
- ___ 4. Saves Xin-hua.
- ___ 5. Learns to speak Chinese.
- ___ 6. Has his camera smashed by soldiers.
- ___ 7. Wins awards for military history exhibits.
- ___ 8. Openly confronts soldiers in Tian An Men Square.
- ___ 9. Expresses the ambition to write a book.
- ___ 10. Considers Lao Xu a friend.
- ___ 11. Risks life to smuggle tapes out of China.
- ___ 12. Believes Mao Ze-dong is a hero.
- ___ 13. Enjoys playing chess.
- ___ 14. Forgets about his experiences.
- ___ 15. Desires to remain in China for a year.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Discuss what you learned about freedom of the press.
- 2. Describe the sights and sounds of the night of June 4, 1989, in Tian An Men Square.
- 3. Comment on Bell's use of suspense and irony from the perspective of a journalist's instincts.
- 4. Outline the political struggle behind the military build-up.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. editorial | 9. desolate |
| 2. turmoil | 10. defacing |
| 3. determination | 11. intimidating |
| 4. terra cotta | 12. acupuncture |
| 5. vestibule | 13. embarrass |
| 6. reaches | 14. demented |
| 7. contradicted | 15. haggard |
| 8. premier | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. J | 11. H |
| 2. E | 7. A | 12. M |
| 3. B | 8. I | 13. K |
| 4. F | 9. C | 14. E |
| 5. L | 10. F | 15. A |

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

1. Pacifists, war
2. dad, lens
3. Lao Xu, spy
4. democracy, Dictatorship
5. dad, hero

Part III: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Answers will vary.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Settings (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. K | 6. E |
| 2. F | 7. A |
| 3. J | 8. B |
| 4. I | 9. C |
| 5. G | 10. D |

Part II: Short Answer (10 points)

1. The students are pawns in the game between moderate and conservative factions in the Communist Party, either Deng Xiao-Ping was still alive and using the demonstration as a cover to purge the Party of the moderates, or if he was dying, the conservative leader, Li Peng, was using the situation to move himself into line to take-over. Each move has been carefully calculated and the moves of the opposition foreseen, as chess players do.

2. The storyteller symbolizes the link between old China and new China, telling stories of military strategy and politics in the old-fashioned way, before radio and t.v., but telling of strategies and thinking which are still followed today. He also underlines the irony, echoed in the biking news-spreaders, of the people, with their rustic way of spreading news in person, circumventing the modern government's military technology and control of broadcasting.
3. The statue, resembling the American Statue of Liberty, is erected by the students protesting in Tian An Men Square and placed staring directly into the face of Mao Ze-dong displayed on a giant poster, symbolizing the students' questioning of the old Chinese Communist Party's ways, their desire for change, modernization, and democratization, but their commitment to Communist-Maoist principles.
4. The hu tangs (residential alley-ways with high walls and gates) are located in old Beijing and represent the interweaving of the old and the new in modern China, continuing to serve both practical and tactical purposes, providing common infrastructure to the residents, while protecting them by making it easier to defend the city against attack and siege. They provide protection to Alexander, the students and the news-spreaders against the soldiers hunting them and are a source of community unity of the residents.
5. Alexander wears the Mao coat to fit in, at first to avoid people staring, then to protect his life when the soldiers begin to hunt foreigners. It indicates the uniformity, the rigor, the suppression of individualism in China initiated by Mao.

Part III: Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. X | 6. | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. X | 12. |
| 3. | 8. | 13. X |
| 4. | 9. | 14. |
| 5. X | 10. X | 15. |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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