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SYNOPSIS

The Baseball Glove: Manny Hernandez's older brother Nardo works at various jobs. While catering a party, he dances with a guest. Mr. Baxter fires him. In summer, Nardo refuses to work. His father, who is out of a job, drinks beer. Manny shares his grandpa Ignacio's "useful blood." He hustles fruit with cousins until his uncle takes the panel truck away.

To earn money for a baseball mitt, Manny persuades Nardo to join him in picking chili peppers. After two hours, Nardo turns in his harvest and buys a soda. At noon, vans and a labor bus approach, scaring away workers that entered the country illegally. Nardo claims an abandoned sack, from which they earn enough for Manny's baseball glove.

Rico's Pool Hall: Manny's father, Mano Hernandez, who lives in the projects, likes Rico's Pool Hall, where he can dream up money-making schemes. The day after picking peppers, Manny goes with his mother to bring his father home. Mano disdains the Garcia brothers, who destroyed his croquet set, and sneers at people on welfare who also live in the projects.

When his parents argue, Manny flees to the Big Lawn, where the Garcias rough him up. Manny returns home to find his father drinking tequila and his mother, Rebecca Hernandez, cleaning and watching movies on television. His father stomps out.

Charity: The next day, Rebecca sends Manny with a note asking for his grades so he can move to Hawthorne, a better school in a higher class neighborhood. Manny encounters Mr. Hart, his history teacher, who encourages him to excel. Hart takes him to his office and gives him \$20 for school supplies. He drives Manny to Nestle Avenue to introduce him to the neighborhood of Hawthorne school. When they arrive at the projects, Mr. Hart nods to Mano and tries to shake hands. His father takes the money.

The Bullet: For the next two days, Mano goes on a binge with the money. Manny and Rebecca try to retrieve him from the pool hall. Mano calls his son *perico* (parrot) because he is too trusting. Rebecca hurries home and sends her older daughter Magda away because Mano may be angry when he returns.

In anger that Rebecca has gone to get a permanent from Sophie, Mano grabs his .22 rifle. Manny stashes a bullet in his pocket. Mano stalks to Sophie's house, from which his wife escapes. She dodges behind trees while Mano tries to free a bullet lodged in the chamber. When the police come, she hides the rifle. Hernandez denies the incident. The police confiscate the rifle and haul him away in handcuffs. His wife has no money for bail. Manny gives her the bullet.

The Garden: Rebecca cleans on the day her husband returns from jail. They talk about finding a job. Rebecca

promises not to embarrass him again. The next morning, the family drives to Grandma's clapboard house, where the boys rake and hoe the yard.

The last of homeowners in the area, Grandma Rosa clings to land the city wants for a freeway. A few months later, she dies. Rebecca is too poor to buy a black dress. She uses the last \$7.28 to buy Mexican sweet bread and sweet potatoes and to fry cinnamon tortillas. Mano tells Uncle Joe that he must sell Rosa's house because he can't afford to keep it up. At the wake, Manny touches her hand.

The Rifle: Magda works at the laundry with Linda. While the Hernandezes empty Rosa's house, Magda secretly visits her unidentified boyfriend and leaves Manny to watch their little sister Pedi. Manny helps her build a domino house.

After Pedi falls asleep, out of curiosity, Manny slides his bullet into his father's rifle and unintentionally fires toward Pedi. Magda threatens Manny if he tells their mother about the boyfriend. Rebecca fears Magda will ruin her life by marrying too young. Magda threatens to leave, withdrawing her money from the family. That afternoon, Manny thinks about how he endangered Pedi.

The Boxing Match: When school starts, Manny returns to his old school, J. Edgar Hoover High, and sits with Albert Sosa at lunch. The boys admire Miss Van der Meer, an attractive English teacher bussed in from Alemany High. Lencho ridicules them. He asks if Nardo would join the boxing team. Albert yells at the teacher when she appears. Lencho recruits Chico and Albert, who admire him for belonging to the Berets.

For three weeks, Manny hangs out with boxers. One day, Miss Van der Meer wishes Lencho luck. Manny wants to be transferred to her class. In the first match against Rochel Johnson, Albert trips and bloodies his nose. In the second match, Chico drives Malcolm from the ring, but is knocked down in the third round. Miguel, the Berets' leader, takes Manny's place at the contender's corner. Boise overwhelms Chico. The Berets decide to oust Lencho from the gang. Manny helps him remove his gloves.

Family Affair: Magda comes home crying with pain. Rebecca suspects a miscarriage and helps deliver a tiny fetus in the bathroom. She and Manny take Magda to the hospital on the bus. In the emergency room, the receptionist makes them wait. Manny and his mother guide Magda into the men's restroom by mistake. Magda faints. The receptionist refuses to get a wheelchair and lectures the family on responsibility. Rebecca weeps.

When they return home, Magda runs a fever. Manny urges his mother to get the car keys and drive Magda back to the hospital. Rebecca smacks Manny and reminds him that they have no money. He blames his father for neglecting the family. Mano awakens and puts Magda in the bathtub to break the fever.

Dying of Love: Mano finds a job in construction; Nardo

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

delivers for a pharmacy. He thinks he conceals from Mr. Giddens that Manny helps with the deliveries. Giddens invites Manny to his daughter Dorothy's party. Dorothy objects. Nardo surmises that the Giddens want Manny to spy on the party because they will be out of town.

Days later, after much concern, Manny arrives at the party. Dorothy whispers to the other guests. He dances with Gloria and insults her by hugging too close. When other boys grab him, Manny departs to the back yard. A red-haired boy dislikes Manny for bothering Dorothy.

A Test of Courage: Manny steers clear of girls. Frankie agrees that girls are hard to talk to. They visit Mondo's house at Callaway Projects and meet Rita and Patty. Manny has to undergo a test of courage to become a member of the Callaway Projects gang. Mondo has served time for car theft; Manny has no record to boast about. The girls watch the initiation; Rita joins in torturing Manny. Frankie comforts his friend.

Going Home: The next day, Manny awakens with bruises. He goes with the gang to hang around Long's Drugstore. Gody and Mondo discuss purse snatching. Frankie argues with Mondo. When a woman comes out of Guarantee Savings Bank, Eddie grabs her purse.

As he runs across the street, Manny recognizes him as Magda's boyfriend. Manny gives chase. Because of a tip from the newspaper seller, the police assume that Manny is pursuing a thief. Manny walks home and sits at peace with his two sisters in the home that his mother cleans.

TIME LINE

summer	Nardo refuses to work. His father, who is out of a job, drinks beer. Manny hustles fruit with his cousins.
later noon	Manny and Nardo pick chili peppers. Immigration officials scare away illegal aliens. Nardo claims an abandoned sack.
next day	Manny goes with his mother to bring his father home from Rico's Pool Room.
next day	Rebecca sends Manny with a note asking for his grades so he can move to Hawthorne, a better school. Mr. Hart gives him \$20 for school supplies. Mano seizes the money from Manny's pocket.
2 days later	Manny and his mother try to retrieve Mano from a binge. Police arrest him for aiming a rifle at his wife.
days later	After Mano returns from jail, Rebecca promises not to embarrass him again.
next morning	The family drives to Grandma Rosa's clapboard house, where the boys rake and hoe the yard.
months later later	Grandma dies. While the Hernandezes empty Grandma's house, Magda secretly visits her boyfriend. Manny fires the rifle toward Padi.
fall	Lencho recruits Chico and Albert for the boxing team.
3 weeks later at the match	Manny hangs out with boxers. The Berets decide to oust Lencho from the Berets for his poor showing against Boise.
later	Rebecca helps deliver Magda's tiny fetus in the bathroom. She and Manny take Magda to the hospital on the bus.

that night Because Magda runs a fever, Mano puts her in the bathtub.

later Mano finds a job in construction; Nardo delivers for a pharmacy. Mr. Giddens invites Manny to his daughter Dorothy's party.

days later Manny arrives at the party, where he feels unwelcome. He departs under a cloud of accusation and mistrust.

later Frankie and Manny visit Mondo's house at Callaway Projects, where Manny undergoes initiation into the gang.

next day Manny hangs out with the gang at Long's Drugstore. Eddie grabs a woman's purse. When Manny gives chase, police assume that he is pursuing a thief.

AUTHOR SKETCH

Victor Martinez, winner of the 1996 National Book Award for young adult fiction, declared to interviewers, "I wanted to be an American writer, not just a Chicano writer. A lot of Chicanos disagree with me violently over that. My parents were born here. I was born here." One of twelve children of stoop laborers in the clapboard field camps of the San Joaquin Valley, he was born in 1954. His troubled family advanced from farm work to public housing, where his two older sisters taught him to read.

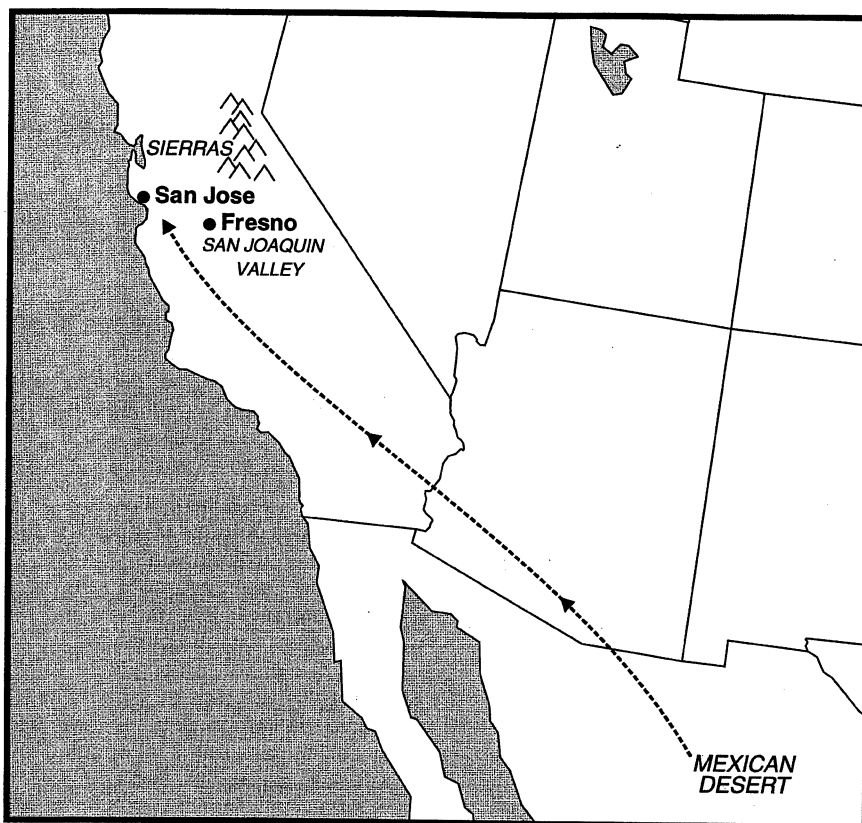
The children's father aimed Martinez toward vocational training in welding, but he chose reading the classic fiction of Twain, Verne, and Wells. He learned to value reading from observing his grandfather's bookish habits, even after long hours of field labor. Martinez abandoned farm work to attend California State University at Fresno through an affirmative action program for Chicanos. By taking such diverse subjects as astronomy, semiotics, and Chinese history to prepare him for writing, he became the first of 14 family members to graduate from college. His nine brothers and sisters followed him to higher education. In all, his family produced a writer, a doctor, a chemical engineer, and a painter.

Martinez won a fellowship to attend a writing program at Stanford University and resettled in San Francisco's Mission district. While composing at night, he worked as a truck driver, technical writer, clerk in a bookstore, welder, and teacher of poetry in public schools. He married Tina Alvarez, who supported him while he struggled to write full time. In 1992, he published a volume of verse and followed with a volume of art criticism.

Martinez spent much of twenty years as a freelance poet and short fiction writer restricted to the literary ghetto of Chicano publications, despite the fact that he chooses to write in English and evaluates his work as part of a broad literary tradition. In the mid-1990s, he broke free of racial labeling and wrote his first novel in English. He profited from the poetic portraits of Philip Levine, mentor to both Martinez and Gary Soto. Soto helped Martinez find a publisher for his novel. Upon receipt of a national award, he finally earned approval of his father, who thought higher education and writing were a waste of time.

Martinez enjoys talking to students about the value of literacy. He recommends books about adolescent experience, such as *Black Boy*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Barrio Boy*, *No-No Boy*, and *Catcher in the Rye*.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA



CRITIC'S CORNER

Part of the charm of *Parrot in the Oven* is the unusual title that Martinez chose from a Mexican decho he heard his mother-in-law quote. In addition to a \$10,000 purse for the National Book Award, he garnered the 1998 Pura Belpre Award, an American Library Association honor to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. He also earned honorable mention for the Americas award for Children's and Young Adult Literature.

Martinez achieved acclaim for a first novel because of lush, fluid, evocative prose infused with personal experience. His fiction describes semi-autobiographical memories of coming of age and the first flowering of love at an age when young Chicanos often crack under strain and quit school to join gangs. Laura Tillotson of *Booklist* lauded the book for the theme of survival and for skillful vignettes of members of a fictional family that resemble Martinez's parents and siblings. *Horn Book* commented on the eccentricity of the alcoholic father and the protagonist's push for achievement against overwhelming discrimination and poverty.

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PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the impact of gangs on a ghetto
2. To account for investigation, handcuffing, arrest, and incarceration
3. To interpret the effect of alcoholism on a family
4. To contrast the motivation of authority figures
5. To discuss the interlinking themes of fear and challenge
6. To explain the main events in time order
7. To typify a declining neighborhood
8. To describe attitudes toward unemployment, harassment, and crime
9. To describe elements that delineate atmosphere and tone
10. To analyze the roles of sibling, friend, gang member, and rescuer
11. To summarize the importance of parents
12. To account for the absence of home leadership

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain how Manny shows initiative
2. To analyze the importance of racial identity to Latinos
3. To account for Manny's reputation among family members and teachers
4. To characterize the family's response to Grandma Rosa's death
5. To justify membership in the Callaway Projects gang
6. To predict how Manny will face Eddie
7. To summarize the behaviors of emergency room personnel
8. To discuss the implications of arguments at the Hernandez home
9. To describe the roles of Nardo, Pedi, Magda, Ignacio, and Rosa
10. To list events caused by racism, suspicion, boredom, and meanness
11. To note the effect of the shooting incident
12. To predict how Manny's family will function after they get jobs

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Victor Martinez's fiction, present the following terms and applications:

antagonist the villain or aggressor, a major participant in the action who torments, manipulates, or threatens the protagonist. One of the villains of the novel is Mano, who neglects, chastises, and abuses his family while indulging his need for alcohol. In a broader interpretation, however, racism and exclusion victimize the whole family.

dynamic character a participant in the action who alters in attitude and behavior as a consequence of the action. Mano presents a span of responses ranging from spouse abuser and derelict and greedy heir (to Grandma Rosa's

property) to caregiver (for Magda). By the novel's end, he has returned to work and has less opportunity to binge on alcohol or dream up schemes for earning money.

flat character a stereotype or one-dimensional person who performs a single function or represents a quality, but reveals no depth of feeling, involvement, intent, or emotional growth. Characters like Dorothy and Red-Hair display little more than self-absorption and antagonism toward non-white peers. At the party, Manny withdraws from the Giddens house without coming to know the guests as anything but snobs and racists.

motivation justification or explanation of character behavior and attitudes or the reasons for choices in a dilemma, for example, Rebecca's persistent house-cleaning, display of religious art, and her addiction to romantic movies on television as an escape from drudgery and poverty. When she isn't responding to her family's needs, she appears to embrace screen fantasy as an antidote to despair.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of Victor Martinez's *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida* specifies no particular California city, although the Sierra and Bonnevill Lakes are both real places. Rather, the story names elements common to the state and much of the Southwestern United States. Manny and his family live in an unattractive project among other Latinos. To earn money, he and Nardo take jobs as pickers in a chili pepper field and observe the flight of illegal workers from the approach of official-looking vans and a labor bus. The discomfort caused by heat, dust, pesticides, and cramped muscles could apply to any area where farm supervision depends on an underclass.

When Manny shares the pharmacy job with Nardo, he looks forward to lunch at Chinatown, another feature of California cities. At home in a multicultural environment, he anticipates a meal of chow mein and sweet and sour pork. The menu at the wake for Grandma Rosa—sweet potatoes and cinnamon tortillas—and the fruit tree and nopal cactus in the back yard are more suited to his own cultural heritage. Martinez intensifies the California setting with the Medi-Cal card and the fact that Rosa leaves valuable property to Rebecca and that California authorities want the land for the construction of a freeway, a local term for a highway.

Less identifiable are isolated elements of the city. Manny's project home is on Chandler Avenue; Hawthorne school is in the rich district near Nestle Avenue. The city is near San Jose and contains the Kern Museum, Rico's Pool Hall, the Callaway Project, J. Edgar Hoover High School, Giddens Pharmacy, Long's Drugstore, and the Guarantee Savings Bank. Martinez appears to make up the setting to suit no particular city.

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PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

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THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida* should include these aspects:

Themes

- poverty
- family

- racism
- challenge
- belonging
- first love
- survival
- loss
- maturity

Motifs

- coping with a dysfunctional family
- gang mentality
- discovering individuality
- assuming the role of rescuer

MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Chapter, vignette title, and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. "They're wetbacks," my brother explained; "they pick like their goddamned lives depended on it." (Chap. 1, "The Baseball Glove," p. 13)
(Nardo identifies illegal Mexican aliens by a slang term that echoes the common method of entering the United States. By crossing border rivers, particularly the Rio Grande, Mexicans often arrive by night soaking wet only to be rounded up and bused back across the border.)
2. "Hey Joe, you're not a wetback. You're a bracero." (Chap. 1, "The Baseball Glove," p. 17)
(Bracero is an English word of Spanish origin meaning "laborer." It applies to Mexican workers who come to the United States under seasonal contract to remain for a limited term and return home.)
3. He was chuckling under his breath when he pulled up in front of our house, made of Sheetrock and a gravel-tile roof. (Chap. 2, "Rico's Pool Hall," p. 24)
(The Hernandez residence in the projects is flat-roofed and ungainly from gravel overhead and walls made of Sheetrock, a trademark for plasterboard, which is cheap and easily installed in large sheets. Manny concludes, "Shaped like box hotels in a Monopoly set, the houses weren't pretty or stylish.")
4. Who in the hell does your sister think she is anyways . . . the Queen of Sheba?" (Chap. 2, "Rico's Pool Hall," p. 31)
(The Queen of Sheba was a member of African royalty mentioned in Sura 31 of the Koran and in the Bible in I Kings 10. She visited King Solomon to admire his opulent home and wealth. According to legend, he sired a son by Sheba.)
5. He was wild about General McClellan, who he swore was a military genius and only needed a chance to put his sophisticated designs of warfare to work. (Chap. 3, "Charity," p. 39)
(A Philadelphia native and West Point salutarian, George Brinton McClellan fought in the Mexican War, taught at West Point, and skillfully reorganized Union forces in the first year of the American Civil War. He failed to press advantages over Confederate troops and lost the confidence of Union backers. After resigning his commission, McClellan entered the railroad business.)
6. Searching for words—mostly to keep his eyes away from my shoes—I told him we went to San Jose, but that was

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

to pick figs, and only for a week. (Chap. 3, "Charity," p. 41)

(In front of his history teacher, Manny is embarrassed to be wearing his father's shoes, which dogs had chewed. He explains how he went northwest to San Jose, a city in the San Francisco area, where he harvested figs.)

- The frame of the Last Supper, with its gold-colored flange and cherub angels, looked as gray as a plastic-model battleship. (Chap. 4, "The Bullet," p. 68)
(A common adornment in a Catholic home is a copy of Leonardo di Vinci's "The Last Supper," a depiction of Jesus and his twelve disciples celebrating Passover with a communal meal served at one long table. The artist executed the work in fresco on the wall of a church that was bombed in World War II. Miraculously, the wall with the painting was the only one to survive intact.)
- The bigger shoots over by the nopal cactus had to be pulled. (Chap. 5, "The Garden," p. 76)
(Derived from a Nahuatl word, the nopal cactus of Mexico and Central America is a member of the prickly pear family that blossoms with red flowers. It is deeply rooted, like the Hernandez family, and, when young and tender, can be stripped of prickles and cooked in soup, fried, added to burritos, or eaten raw in salads.)
- Long ago Grandpa had chopped off limbs and grafted saplings of different fruit. (Chap. 5, "The Garden," p. 77)
(The symbolic cherry tree that sprouts plums, almonds, and peaches suggests the bicultural Hernandez family, which retains its original Latino background with a heavy overlay of American culture. Grandpa Ignacio, Manny's hero, grafted the tree by one of two methods: inserting a stem from another tree into the split end of a cherry tree limb or slipping it into a slit in the bark of the cherry tree.)
- She liked to see the singer Flor Silvestre cradled in her costumes of spun radiance, and watch westerns from Mexico, with brick-red sunsets and a ribbon of blue mountains in the distance. (Chap. 6, "The Rifle," p. 109)
(Actress-singer Flor Silvestre, wife of actor Antonio Aguilar, is a veteran of 30 musical films in the mariachi genre.)

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 with quotations from the novel.

Motivation

- What causes Manny to join a gang?
(Because of the fiasco at Dorothy Giddens's party, Manny confesses to Frankie that he is not smooth with girls. Frankie promises to help him at Mondo's house in the Callaway Projects. Manny goes along and finds Mondo, his half-brother Eddie, Gody, Rita, and Patty. Manny decides to "join the gang because Frankie promised that I could kiss and make out with one of the girls when I passed the initiation."
The thought of kissing Rita "clawed at Manny's throat," as did the use of "little chicks" as a descriptive for the girls. He allows himself to be hustled of 18¢ dues and agrees "to pass the Test of Courage to become a member of the Callaway Projects gang." In the presence of tough guys, Manny is embarrassed to admit that he has never gone to juvenile detention.

The initiation begins, raising "a rash of alarm" on Manny's skin. Patty and Rita watch as Mondo and Eddie circle and attack Manny. In the midst of body blows, he realizes that Rita is "grinding her heel into my hand." Manny endures the punishment in the hope that "I would hug a girl full in my arms, smell the mustiness of her breath brooding deep inside my nose, feel her lips smashing, like a kick against my mouth."

Setting

- Describe stoop labor.
(Nardo drives the family Plymouth to a chili field, where the wind is warm and the sky "beginning to hollow out, the clouds rushing toward the rim of the horizon as if even they knew the sun would soon be the center of a boiling pot." Armed with a huge lunch bag, he and Manny wheedle their way past a crusty foreman, who considers them too young. He offers "a scrawny row next to the road no one wanted," where they encounter "limp branches leaning away from the road." The withered plant is spare and shriveled and coated with "white pesticide dust and exhaust fumes."

For two hours, the boys endure scalding sun on the backs of their hands and crawling heat inside their shirts. Manny's fingers get rubbery. Nardo collects enough in his can to exchange for cash for a soda, which the vendor hikes from normal price to 85¢. After weighing peppers on a scale, Nardo passes them on to women and girls masked with handkerchiefs. They sift peppers from dirt and leaves and push them through a chute to the foreman, who fills sacks and sews them shut. The sacks go to a truck for delivery.

The picking process takes on drama as the boys, coughing and choking, halt to watch a cortege of vans and a labor bus approach, terrifying illegal pickers from the field. The Mexican man in the next row, who had energetically filled three bags, leaves in the first sweep that rounded up wetbacks and placed them in custody. Nardo quickly claims one of the man's bags, which pay enough to end the boys' labor.)

Character Development

- What does Manny learn from his encounter with Dorothy?
(Manny gets his first glimpse of Dorothy at Mr. Giddens's drugstore, where she selects cards and smiles at Manny. After Mr. Giddens introduces her, Manny looks closely at her clothes and hair and smells a peach orchard fragrance that suits "a sort of mushy softness to her face." Dorothy is obviously not interested in Manny, but her smile "would tumble around inside my brain for days."

The family realizes that Manny is out of place at a party for white teens, but, for days, he stokes the "joy and terror of wanting to go." The reality of the party is a shock. Dorothy pretends to be courteous at the door, but her friends wonder about him. Silently, they signal the fact that he doesn't belong. As Dorothy spreads whispers around the room, Manny knows "that something about me was being exchanged."

Manny's decision to dance with Gloria rapidly ends his illusions about having a good time. He hugs Gloria too tightly and mishandles a simple error in dancing, for which he should have apologized. The uproar over Gloria's

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

complaint causes Red-Hair and four other guys to join ranks. Manny's flight to the back yard is a dead end. He paces by the glass door and sees "the reflection of a ridiculous boy, a clumsy boy . . . someone ghostly and strange." When hospitality turns to hostility, Manny is glad to get out without a fight.)

Historical Milieu

4. How does Manny's coming of age elucidate the problems faced by Latinos in the late twentieth century?

(Manny's story takes on national significance when viewed as a microcosm of Latino lifestyle in the United States. Beyond the usual traumas of growing up, getting a job, completing an education, and getting along with family, he demonstrates the life of teens living in a government project. The bristling relationships with other Latino boys and extremes of alcoholism in his father keep Manny in a state of unrest. Unemployment exacerbates his father's decline. His theft of money that Manny's teacher offers for school supplies suggests the desperation of a rootless adult who is incapable of fighting forces of racism and exclusion.)

Manny's encounter with the emergency room receptionist attests to the daily insults and belittling that force Hispanic-Americans to grovel for service and to accept second best for no other reason than their race and identity as the poor underclass. Even the inheritance of Grandma Rosa's house fails to relieve poverty for a family too poor to keep up the property. Manny's mother hopes that he can attend Hawthorne, a better school in the white section, but he makes no change and returns to J. Edgar Hoover High. In the end, the family rises to full employment, yet, they make no great surge upward from poverty and ghetto life.)

Theme

5. What does the author reveal about teen thinking?

(Manny attempts to think logically, but manages to commit some serious errors. His attendance at Dorothy's party is the result of wishful thinking that he can have a good time and be accepted among white teens. The decision to join the Callaway Projects gang is another faulty line of reasoning. He intends to become a member to gain access to girls like Patty and Rita. The pain of initiation and individual gang members' criminal activity threaten his reputation. If the "newspaper guy" had not spoken up, Manny might have been taken into custody as an accessory to strong-arm robbery.)

The most serious flaw in Manny's thinking occurs during a moment of boredom. After Pede falls asleep, he eases his curiosity about Mano's .22 rifle, which the family retrieved from the police station without removing the bullet jammed in the firing mechanism. Almost without thought of the consequences, he shoots toward Pede. The incident passes without family notice. Manny is "relieved that Mom hadn't found out about me almost shooting Pede." Later, he thinks over the lives of members of the family and prays that no one will notice the bullet "buried inside the cooler shaft.")

Interpretation

6. What does Manny learn from his association with the gang?

(Manny's first outing with the Callaway Projects gang the day after initiation is revealing, both to him and the reader.)

The five Latino boys intend to gather at Long's Drugstore and ponder stealing flashlight batteries, lotion, and aspirin to sell to bargain hunters. A lie to Rebecca gets Manny out of the house with his baseball mitt, a cover for his meeting with the gang. When he arrives, he witnesses Mondo guffawing at a woman holding her skirt down in heavy wind and Eddie eyeing a black man selling newspapers.

Crime arises nonchalantly in the gang's plans. Gody's suggestion of snatching an old woman's purse suits Mondo, who considers the elderly worthy targets. The idea does not immediately take hold. In an icy wind, Frankie and Gody feud over a match; Frankie proposes sneaking into the latest horror movie at the Azteca Theater. Manny has no suggestions. Mondo and Eddie fake an assault on an elderly man who is getting into a car.

Frankie acknowledges the paucity of purpose in the gang when he complains, "We've just been talking for an hour about what we're gonna do, and now you want to go down the mall?" When the purse snatching takes place at the Guarantee Savings Bank, Eddie suddenly grabs it and runs across the street. The disorganized response of his gang is obvious to Manny, who is too sore from the beating the night before to run. At an epiphany, he admits, "Everything changed. It was like I'd finally seen my own face and recognized myself; recognized who I really should be. Then I didn't feel like catching up to Eddie anymore. Instead, I wanted to grab him, and scold him about how to treat people, how to be somebody who knows how to treat people: like my sister; like that lady.")

Conflict

7. What conflicts disorganize the Hernandez family?

(The dynamics of the family are constantly shifting, constantly victimizing or destabilizing members. His father is an unprincipled, self-centered man who takes out his spite for joblessness on a hard-working wife and four children. He blames Manny and his mother for embarrassing him after a two-day binge at Rico's Pool Hall on money he swiped from Manny. The mother is torn between factions and must negotiate daily with her husband as though he were a fifth child in the family.)

Manny and his siblings function as best they can in a dysfunctional situation. Magda ignores her mother's warnings about teen pregnancy and causes consternation and worry for a miscarriage that takes her to the hospital. Nardo, an alcohol abuser like his father, retreats from involvement in the family circle and struts around like a free agent, refusing to work or be disciplined. Pede, the youngest, shows signs of brattish behavior.

For Manny, conflict is a daily event. He and the other children know to leave home as soon as trouble starts between his parents. He observes his mother's deep despair and hypercriticism as a means of keeping her children clean, safe, educated, and reasonably centered on a decent future. For Manny, the best place to look for guidance is to the past generation and grandpa Ignacio, who "worked like a man trying to fill all his tomorrows with one solid day's work.")

Atmosphere

8. How does the project influence the Hernandez family?

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

(Living closely packed in a substandard dwelling influences the outlook and behavior of members of the family. To brighten an otherwise dreary home, Rebecca Hernandez grows roses and decorates her home with religious art. Out of a sense of inferiority, her husband denigrates her work by pretending that the house is too filthy for him to come home to. On entering and departing, he and Manny have words with the Garcias, a trio of mouthy project ne'er-do-wells who irritate, harass, and destroy Mano's croquet set by stealing a wicket and tossing a mallet into a tree.

Another aspect of project life is the lack of privacy. For example, locals know who is receiving welfare and whom social service officials are questioning. The Hernandez family's tensions spill over to neighbors. When his father chases his wife with a rifle, she dodges from tree to tree on her way back from Sophie's. The apparent interest of neighbors is obvious in the speedy response of police, who quickly disarm Mano, arrest him, and confiscate his weapon.

Also a problem of project life is the formation of gangs. When Manny goes to Mondo's residence at the Callaway Project to join a group of delinquent boys, he intends to gain access to girls. He finds a yard devoid of grass and stained with oil from people working on cars. The area is squalid: "Along the backyard was an alley with a gapped-out wooden fence. Broken boards dangled from rusted nails." The setting suits the unsavory purposes of half-brothers Mondo and Eddie, who run the gang to suit their questionable values. Other boys join the gang for protection and as a form of group solidarity and belonging in a fractious, racist, and undependable environment.)

Author Purpose

9. Why does Martinez write about the people and places of his youth?

(First novels generally contain autobiographical elements. In interviews, Martinez admits that he turns to his family and home town to express the squalor of a childhood in Fresno, California, and a background of farm labor in the San Joaquin Valley. He wants to describe projects, stoop labor, racism, gangs, and splintered families as an outlet for personal regrets. He chooses a hero who is capable of rehabilitation. The cadencing of events in the novel expresses coming to knowledge and an awareness of faults that Manny is capable of correcting or avoiding in future incidents.

Since becoming famous for the awards his novel has earned, Martinez continues to write and takes time to talk with school students. These one-on-one appearances allow him to steer children away from bad choices so they can avoid the lifestyle that clearly cost him self-esteem and hope for the future. One of his emphases is the use of writing as a sublimation of strong negative emotion. He declares that he had no choice but to write about the past, both in poetry and prose.)

Structure

10. How does Martinez organize events in Manny's life?

(One of the weaknesses that critics mention in reviews of Parrot in the Oven is Martinez's choice of loosely strung-together vignettes. Although he orders them chronologically as though they were interconnected, he

allows the main character to move in and out of family, school, and community situations without tying events into a unified plot. The fact that Manny observes the round-up of illegal Mexican farm laborers in "The Baseball Glove" is separate from his father's binge drinking at Rico's Pool Hall and from Manny's receipt of \$20 from his history teacher to buy school supplies. In the fourth vignette, "The Bullet," the events of his father's assault on his wife and subsequent arrest impact Manny's carelessness with the rifle.

The flow of changes in the Hernandez family's lives alters in "The Garden," where Manny thinks about his grandparents' sacrifices to establish themselves in the United States. From losing his grandmother Rosa, he moves on in "The Boxing Match" to an isolated sports event with schoolmates. The sudden immersion in Magda's failed pregnancy in "Family Affair" returns to the inner workings of the Hernandez family and the mother's empathy with her daughter's miscarriage.

After the story of Manny's infatuation with Dorothy and two chapters about gang involvement, the novel ends with Manny's coming to knowledge about his family's hardships. Of his home, he concludes, "it was wondrous, like a place I was meant to be. A place, I felt, that I had come back to after a long journey of being away." Thus, Martinez establishes that Manny's forays into the community bring him back to an appreciation of his sisters and mother, the strength that bonds his family into a cohesive unit.)

HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

Like most novelists, Victor Martinez uses narration as a means of revealing character types and traits.

1. In the second chapter, the author turns from lengthy passages of description and second-hand reporting of events to the parents' comments about poverty. Mano Hernandez remarks, "But you know how the Welfare is." He complains about social service's denigration of the poor and the public display of investigation and categorizing poor families. In self-defense, he declares, "I have never done anything in my whole life that would make me beg." Rebecca Hernandez says little, but packs her words with meaning. She counters "Would you rather let the kids starve?"
2. In neighborhood repartee, Manny exchanges insults with the three Garcia brothers. Stinky asks, "Hey, Manny, . . . why don't you fix me a date with your sister, si?" Manny tries to push him aside, causing Stinky to bristle, "What? Does she think she's too good for me? . . . Who in the hell does your sister think she is anyways . . . the Queen of Sheba?"
3. Manny's conversation with Mr. Hart is guarded. After his history teacher asks, "How much money did you make for school?," Manny reveals only the fact that "we made enough." Hart takes the standard teacher line, "Did you ever stop to think, Manuel, that maybe you have to go places, experience things?"
4. The lack of trust between Latino family and white teacher continues at the project, where Manny's father offers only a nod to Mr. Hart's greeting and departure. Trying to maintain self-respect in front of his son, Mano offers steely eye contact and a quick theft of the \$20 Mr.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

Hart offers for school supplies. Without explaining his crassness, Manny's father asks, "Don't you think I know people like this?"

5. The same non-verbal estimation of person and value occurs at the emergency room, where the receptionist uses body language to imply that the Hernandez family doesn't deserve quick professional response to Magda's loss of blood. Martinez avoids reporting the conversation directly, but follows up with the words of a woman also waiting for treatment for her family. She summarizes, "These people . . . I can't stand them, either. It's like they care more about the gavachos than they do about us." The unspoken drama compels Manny to pressure his mother to get the car keys and return to the hospital as Magda's fever mounts. In anguish, the mother verbalizes the source of tension: "We don't have any money!"

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Design a jacket or cap logo for the Berets and Callaway Projects gang. Stress positive imagery of pride and accomplishment over violence, sex, and crime.
2. Using incidents from the book, create a collage illustrating gradual changes in Manny. Add captions showing how growing up produces an awareness of meaning and purpose, for example, getting a temporary job to pay for a baseball mitt, rescuing Magda, or attending Dorothy's party.

Business and Economics

1. Explain why immigration officials pursue illegal aliens. Describe the rationale for the tactics they use.
2. Compose a job description for a boxing coach, English teacher, laundry worker, pharmacy owner or delivery boy, emergency room receptionist, farm supervisor, police officer, immigration officer, construction worker, or operator of a pool hall.

Cinema

1. View films with teenage characters and police confrontations, such as *The Cross and the Switchblade*, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*, and *Boyz 'n the Hood*. Compare the movies' settings, themes, and dialogue to those of *Parrot in the Oven*. Comment on the interplay of people of different ethnic, social, educational, and professional backgrounds.
2. Propose a movie of *Parrot in the Oven: mi vida*. Select actors for important roles, particularly the Berets, Mr. Giddens, Magda, Grandma, Mano and Rebecca, Manny, Mr. Hart, Dorothy, and Nardo.

Drama

1. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of recruiting for the boxing team, claiming abandoned chili peppers, showing Rebecca the bullet, arriving at Rico's Pool Hall, and observing Magda with her boyfriend. Supply sketches of costumes and props.
2. Create a storyboard account of the family's response to Grandma Rosa's death. Explain why Rebecca chooses to use her limited funds for dessert foods.

Education

1. Explain in a brief report why an American community would choose J. Edgar Hoover as the name for a high school.

2. Outline an education program and posters in English and Spanish to warn farm workers of the dangers of pesticides on vegetables and fruit.
3. Propose curriculum, charts, and posters for a first aid class studying treatment of cuts, abrasions, unconsciousness, and drunkenness. Summarize the causes of miscarriage. List first aid procedures to stop bleeding and shock and control fever.
4. Brainstorm ways of preparing Manny for the return to school in the fall. Discuss areas of his education that need extra work. Suggest ways that he can overcome ghetto handicaps, develop self-esteem, avoid criminals, and graduate from poverty to higher ambitions.

Geography

1. Use topographical maps to describe the terrain the story covers, particularly the area around the San Joaquin Valley and San Jose, California. Explain why California's cities often have a section called Chinatown.
2. Draw a map of the route from Mexico across the desert to the San Joaquin Valley. Include data concerning the number of legal and illegal Latino workers in the area and their impact on California's economy.

History and Social Studies

1. Compose an extended definition of Latino. Contrast the adjective to Chicano, Mexicano, Hispanic, and Mexican-American.
2. Contrast male and female characters and their attitudes toward family loyalty. Account for Rebecca's protection of her husband and his kind treatment of Magda the night she returns from the hospital.
3. Join a panel to discuss the function of gangs. Account for Manny's decision to join the Callaway Projects gang and the importance of concealing pain during his initiation.
4. Discuss with a small group family patterns of behavior and expectations after Mano's binge, arrest, and jailing. Explain why Rebecca cleans the house in expectation of his return and promises not to embarrass him again in front of his friends.
5. Report orally on the physical and psychological effects of living in the projects in a minority ghetto. Account for crude epithets, harassment, gangs, hangouts, vandalism, promiscuity, petty theft, and other evidence of animosity. Discuss why Rebecca's roses are an important boost to family pride.
6. Divide the class into small groups to brainstorm ways to improve Manny's lifestyle. Suggest ways of involving him in community life, perhaps through shop class, sports, clubs, music training, or foster care. Discuss how work and hobbies can bring out positive traits and attitudes.
7. Based on your understanding of the novel, lead a panel discussion of the effects of crime, projects, theft, neglect, incarceration, poverty, sexual promiscuity, and violence on families. Support your opinions with facts from census reports, sociological surveys, and statistics obtained from almanacs and economic and health surveys.

Language Arts

1. List phrases that underscore themes of conflict, rejection, alienation, loyalty, family cohesion, poverty, loss, and compassion.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

2. Compose an extended definition of bilingualism. Explain how Martinez displays Manny's ability to think and speak in two languages.
3. Record aloud descriptive passages from *Parrot in the Oven*. Consider the touch on Grandma Rosa's hand, Magda's faint in the emergency room, Manny's work in the chili pepper fields, Lencho's boxing match, quarreling with the Garcia brothers, thinking about Dorothy, Rebecca's home chores, chopping out cactus roots, grafting the cherry tree, and nearly shooting Pedi.
4. Pantomime symbolic or dynamic episodes, for instance, Manny's request for his grades.
5. List sense impressions from the novel that give immediacy and force to the action..
6. Characterize the moral strength and influence of Rebecca on her family. Summarize personal traits that help her cope with drunkenness, unemployment, sarcasm, and threats of violence. Explain why Manny looks up to her.
7. Write an encyclopedia entry on juvenile delinquency. Add details that explain why gun control is one method of stemming random violence and gangs.
8. Read aloud from works that describe coming of age and racism, such as Ernesto Galarza's *Barrio Boy*, Kaye Gibbons's *Ellen Foster*, and Richard Wright's *Black Boy*.
9. Explain in a theme the significance of the title, particularly as it applies to Manny's outlook on family and social problems. What aspect of his life is the oven? Why does Martinez split the title into English and Spanish?
10. Write a theme in which you explain the role of a minor character, such as the receptionist, eyewitness to the purse snatching, Rita, Eddie, Grandpa, the newspaper guy, Mr. Hart, Red-Hair, Albert Sosa, wetbacks, Mrs. Kingsley, and Miss Van der Meer. Determine which characters interact effectively with Manny.
11. Make a web site or bulletin board that translates and explains important words and phrases from the novel.

Law

1. Read aloud state laws governing the penalties for auto theft, simple assault, assault with a deadly weapon, battery, vandalism, and purse snatching. Determine appropriate sentences for each crime.
2. Make a chart of advice to Manny about testifying against Eddie for snatching a purse. Comment on Manny's guilt for abetting the crime.
3. Discuss the purpose of arresting Mano, confiscating his rifle, and holding him in jail. Account for the return of his weapon, which is unregistered.

Psychology and Health

1. Demonstrate with diagrams the pressures that cause Mano to lose his job, distrust the Garcia brothers, denigrate people on welfare, binge drink, neglect his family, quarrel, complain about cleanliness, aim the rifle at his wife, and call his son a *perico*.
2. Outline a lecture on emotional maturity. List behaviors in Manny that suggest his entry into manhood. Cite examples of childish narcissism in Mano.
3. Write a theme explaining why society mistreats Latinos like Manny and his family through exclusion, denigration, segregation, and gossip. Summarize his attempts to

maintain self-esteem.

Speech

1. Organize a discussion of racism and other forms of persecution and exclusion. Answer these basic questions: What makes people belittle identifiable groups, especially members of a minority race? How does Manny survive tense situations? How do speeches, books, plays, monuments, music, murals, and other forms of creativity help quell hatred and prejudice?
2. Compose a speech to deliver to parents of the Berets. Balance the dangers of fighting and crime with the benefits of wholesome endeavors, such as sports, dances, family activities, hobbies, jobs, church activities, and school.
3. Contrast news releases for radio or television announcing the opening of the school year, boxing matches, search for a purse snatcher, Grandma Rosa's death, the building of a freeway, and arrest of Mano for pointing a rifle at his wife. Indicate public reaction to each event.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of poor judgment in various characters, for example, Manny's carelessness with the rifle, Lencho's failure in the ring, Eddie's purse snatching, Mr. Giddens's offer of an invitation to the party, Magda's pregnancy, Mano's use of the rifle, Joe's flight from the field, and the gang's search for something to do.
2. Compile a list of events that demonstrate racism, for example, Dorothy's rudeness to Manny, better education at Hawthorne, the coach's dislike of Latinos, Red-Hair's confrontation with Manny in the back yard, and Mr. Hernandez's surliness to Mr. Hart.
3. Compose a scene in which the Hernandez family moves to Grandma Rosa's house.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each.
5. Account for the recurrence of the motif of challenge and failure in the lives of Manny, his father, Lencho, and Magda.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

VOCABULARY TEST

Complete each of the following sentences with an appropriate word from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

A. blubbering
B. sloth
C. cubicle
D. castanets
E. talon

F. grafted
G. raucous
H. geezers
I. churning
J. pompadour

K. confiscate
L. ballad
M. lurched
N. brilliantined
O. clapboard

- _____ 1. Both officers studied her curiously and exchanged glances, the one in back still alert, his hand stiff on his holster and thumb cocked like a _____ over the gun hammer.
- _____ 2. I don't want to have to tell you this, but I'm sorry, we're going to have to _____ this rifle.
- _____ 3. If I grew a bit too _____, he'd put a vise grip on my shoulder and whisper hot breath inside my ear.
- _____ 4. When caught in the bushes, they scabbled noisily around like _____ before shooting out again stiff as shotgun blasts.
- _____ 5. Then she bursts into a sudden _____, but stopped right away, staring numb at Eddie as he shoveled back what spilled out of her purse.
- _____ 6. He raised a finger in the direction Eddie had gone, and the car, as if pushed by the magic of his pointed finger, _____ backward, cranked into gear and gunned across the parking lot, spraying through the puddles.
- _____ 7. For as long as I remember, especially when in a good mood, he sang this Mexican _____ that I never could figure out the words to.
- _____ 8. She came out from behind the _____ and crept over to whisper in my ear.
- _____ 9. Nardo would keep the engine running while I bolted for the cash, or Medi-Cal card, whichever arrangement these old retired _____ had with the pharmacy.
- _____ 10. He had his hair combed in a _____ and had the look of a finicky barber.
- _____ 11. In the light of the pool hall, the waves of his _____ hair shone like glints of tar.
- _____ 12. Her lips were twisting funny and _____ on words I couldn't hear above the hum of car tires.
- _____ 13. Grandma lived in a _____ house at the corner of two old gray roads that the city, after scrimping for years, finally paved over with asphalt.
- _____ 14. He moved like a ground _____, and kept gulping water from the garden hose.
- _____ 15. Long ago Grandpa had chopped off limbs and _____ saplings of different fruit.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions from the novel with a character name. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| _____ | 1. eats lunch with Manny and hopes to see Miss Van der Meer | A. Joe |
| _____ | 2. notices Manny's dog-chewed shoes | B. Dorothy |
| _____ | 3. joins the gang in initiating Manny | C. Albert |
| _____ | 4. forgets he is a bracero | D. Berets |
| _____ | 5. creeps in the window drunk | E. Mrs. Hernandez |
| _____ | 6. whispers to Red-Hair | F. Grandpa |
| _____ | 7. convinces the police that Manny chased the purse thief | G. Rogers |
| _____ | 8. grafted limbs to the cherry tree | H. Mr. Hart |
| _____ | 9. can't afford a black dress | I. newspaper guy |
| _____ | 10. takes \$20 from Manny's pocket | J. Magda |
| _____ | 11. slips out to see Eddie | K. Grandma |
| _____ | 12. is prejudiced against Latino athletes | L. Nardo |
| _____ | 13. leaves a house to Mrs. Hernandez | M. Mr. Giddens |
| _____ | 14. invites Manny to a party | N. Mr. Hernandez |
| _____ | 15. want Lencho voted out | O. Rita |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Shame-faced at mishandling a rifle, Manny hands the bullet to Pedi.
- _____ 2. Mr. Hart takes Manny to examine the neighborhood around J. Edgar Hoover High.
- _____ 3. Nardo takes an abandoned bag of chili peppers to pay for Manny's baseball mitt.
- _____ 4. Linda works with Magda at the laundry and flirts with the supervisor.
- _____ 5. The Garcia brothers harass Manny and ruin Mr. Hernandez's croquet set.
- _____ 6. At the party, Manny gets into trouble with Red-Hair for dancing too close with Dorothy.
- _____ 7. The parrot in the oven is a folk tale that Grandpa Ignacio uses to describe Manny.
- _____ 8. Boise moves in against Chico and bloodies his nose.
- _____ 9. The receptionist refuses to bring a wheelchair for Magda.
- _____ 10. Grandma Rosa's lot lies on land where a freeway will pass.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the blanks below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence. Place your answers in the space provided at left.

1. At noon, _____ approach, scaring away _____ who entered the country illegally.
2. In anger that his wife has gone to get a permanent from _____, Hernandez grabs his _____.
3. While the Hernandezes empty _____'s house, Manny helps Pedi build a _____ house.
4. For three weeks, Manny hangs out with _____; Miss Van der Meer wishes Lencho _____.
5. _____ and Manny visit Mondo's house at Callaway projects and meet _____ and Patty.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how Manny behaves when there is trouble at home.
2. Explain how Mrs. Hernandez meets the needs of her children.
3. Discuss Nardo's faults.
4. Account for the family's poverty.
5. Summarize events that lead to an initiation.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. Manny seems not to mind that
A. Nardo gives him a knuckle burn. B. Mano calls him perico.
C. \$7.28 is not enough to buy a black dress. D. Lencho wins the bout.
- _____ 2. Mr. Giddens is aware that
A. Dorothy will be chaperoned. B. Red-Hair is rude to Manny.
C. Nardo gets help on deliveries. D. Dorothy takes more cards than she needs.
- _____ 3. After Mr. Vuksanivich's death,
A. the city buys his land. B. Grandpa buys his wife a rocking chair.
C. the nopal grows deeper and thornier. D. the family holds a wake.
- _____ 4. After Padi falls asleep,
A. Magda slips out on a secret date. B. Rebecca returns with fig newtons for dinner.
C. her sister becomes feverish. D. Manny gets curious about the rifle.
- _____ 5. Rebecca helps
A. Magda deliver a tiny fetus. B. Manny get ready for the tournament.
C. Mano find money for bail. D. her sons get into Hawthorne school.
- _____ 6. Chico forgets
A. his part in the purse snatching. B. the left hook.
C. to watch for the immigration official's vans and bus. D. that Eddie has a half-brother.
- _____ 7. Mondo meant nothing by
A. standing on Manny's hand. B. stealing a car.
C. flirting with Miss Van der Meer. D. throwing the mallet into the tree.
- _____ 8. Rico lets Manny
A. call an ambulance. B. take a copy of his grades.
C. help his father home from a binge. D. stay at the pool hall.
- _____ 9. Mano gets angry that
A. Nardo must earn money for the family. B. Magda conceals the miscarriage.
C. Rebecca likes the Tony Curtis movie. D. Manny endangers his little sister.
- _____ 10. Mano tells uncle Joe that
A. he can't keep up Grandma's house. B. Manny wants to join the Berets.
C. the Garcias have been to "juvy." D. the cherry tree also bears almonds.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following actions with places from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| _____ 1. the brothers dig nopal roots | A. Mexico |
| _____ 2. Grandpa Ignacio intends to leave and cross the desert to a better life | B. San Jose |
| _____ 3. Mr. Giddens offers Dorothy more cards | C. fields |
| _____ 4. Mr. Hart thinks Manny has the grades to do well at Hawthorne | D. office |
| _____ 5. Lencho wonders how he will remove the gloves | E. Sophie's house |
| _____ 6. a soda costs 85¢ | F. Grandma's house |
| _____ 7. a lady sits sprawled in the parking lot | G. ring |
| _____ 8. Manny and his mother unintentionally enter the men's restroom | H. Chinatown |
| _____ 9. Manny goes through sliding glass doors into the yard | I. picnic table |
| _____ 10. Rebecca gets a permanent | J. Callaway Project |
| _____ 11. Magda earns money for the family | K. Guarantee Savings Bank |
| _____ 12. Manny picks figs | L. Giddens's house |
| _____ 13. Manny conceals the pain of initiation | M. laundry |
| _____ 14. Lencho insults Manny and Albert | N. drugstore |
| _____ 15. Manny and Nardo eat lunch | O. hospital |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Whom does Manny recognize at the scene of the purse snatching?
- _____ 2. Who tells the police that Manny chased the thief?
- _____ 3. Who makes cinnamon tortillas?
- _____ 4. Whom does Lencho want for the boxing team?
- _____ 5. Who is prejudiced since a Mexican frisked his daughter?
- _____ 6. Who was pregnant and married at sixteen?
- _____ 7. With whom does Magda want to rent her own place?
- _____ 8. Who releases the rifle?
- _____ 9. Who takes Manny's place in Lencho's corner?
- _____ 10. What does Manny place between his mother's fingers?

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Rebecca wants Manny to pick up a copy of his grades.
2. Contrast Mano's relationship with Rico, the Garcias, Mr. Hart, and police.
3. Account for Manny's decision to go to Mondo's home.
4. Summarize evidence that Manny's parents love and respect each other.
5. Describe relationships between Manny and Dorothy and between Magda and Eddie.

PARROT IN THE OVEN: MI VIDA

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

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

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

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

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

1. vans, workers
2. Sophie, rifle
3. Grandma Rosa, domino
4. boxers, luck
5. Frankie, Rita

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. B |
| 2. C | 7. B |
| 3. A | 8. D |
| 4. D | 9. C |
| 5. A | 10. A |

Part II: Matching (30 points)

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

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. Eddie | 6. Rebecca |
| 2. newspaper guy | 7. Linda |
| 3. Rebecca | 8. police |
| 4. Nardo | 9. Miguel |
| 5. Coach Rogers | 10. bullet |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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