**Finding Miracles**  
by Julia Alvarez

**Reading Schedule**

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How much does your family affect who you become?
Getting Started

What If?

You are getting ready to apply to colleges. You have many different options, but you are feeling pressured by your family. Your father wants you to be a doctor. He thinks you should try to go to the best medical school in the country. Your mother is a lawyer, and she wants you to go to the college she attended. Your sister is three years older than you and wants you to go live with her at yet another school.

You aren’t sure where you want to go, but you want it to be your choice. You feel guilty, however, about not attending the different schools your family members are suggesting.

Make notes about how this would affect you.

- What would you do in this situation?
- How could your choice affect who you become?
- What would influence your decision the most?

Connect to The Exchange Question Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: How much does your family affect who you become? Summarize your discussion.

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Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 9–11 in *Finding Miracles*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- the main character of the book, Milly
- adoption and adopted children
- conflicts in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s
- the significance of the word *milagros*

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. What are some questions that many adopted children have?

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2. Why were Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s dangerous?

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3. What does the Spanish word *milagro* mean? What is the significance of a *milagro* in Latin American countries?

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Introduction: Key Concepts

Word Web

Study the Word Web for orphan. What words does orphan make you think of? Write a sentence using the word orphan.

_______________________________________________________________
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Key Concepts
adopt
conflict
culture
milagros
orphan

Word Web

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar Word Web for each of the Key Concept words. Write a sentence for each one.
Respond to Chapters 1–3

1. **Personal Response**  Milly starts avoiding everyone when she feels sad and confused. How do you react when you are upset? How does your reaction help you or hurt you?

2. **Character’s Motive**  After Milly learns about Pablo’s culture, she avoids spending time with her friends at Jake’s house. Why? Use the word *culture* in your response.

3. **Irony**  What is ironic about Grandma being called Happy?

4. **Generate Questions**  Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
Respond to Chapters 1–3, continued

5. **Comparisons** In Chapters 1–2, we learn a lot about Milly and her grandmother, Happy. Complete the Venn Diagram with details that tell how Milly and Happy feel about and treat their family.

**Venn Diagram**

| Happy | Both | Milly |

How are Milly and Happy the same? How can these similarities hurt both of them in the future?

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Respond to Chapters 4–5

1. **Personal Response** Milly has two names, Mildred and Milagros. Milagros means “miracles” in Spanish. Does your name have a special meaning? What do you know about your name?

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2. **Flashback** Milly remembers when her parents gave her The Box. How does the flashback show how her feelings about being an orphan have changed over time? Use the word *orphan* in your response.

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3. **Allusion** At the beginning of Chapter 4, Milagros compares The Box to Pandora’s Box. How does this reference to the story from Greek mythology make the section more powerful?

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4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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5. **Plot** Write examples that show how Milly is becoming more comfortable about her adoption.

**Details Web**

Why does the author have Milly accept her adoption? What events might follow now that Milly has changed?

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Respond to Chapters 6–7

1. **Personal Response** When Milly arrives in her home country, she becomes shy and quiet because she is scared. How do you react when you find yourself in an unknown situation?

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2. **Summarize** How was Milly’s visit to the orphanage filled with *milagros*, or miracles? Use the word *milagros* in your response.

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3. **Opinion** On pages 152–153, Pablo says that some people believe we must forget the past to build the future while others say we cannot go into the future without remembering our past. Which of these ideas do you agree with? Why?

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4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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5. **Character**  Chapter 7 is titled “a cradle and a grave.” Think about the country Milly is visiting. Write how it is like a cradle and like a grave in the **T Chart**.

<table>
<thead>
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What can Milly learn by seeing her home country as both a cradle and a grave? How can this information help her in the future?

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Respond to Chapters 8–9

1. **Personal Response** Doña Gloria says she is depending on Pablo and Milagros to “bring more light.” How could you “bring more light” to your school, family, or community?

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2. **Cause and Effect** Why does talking to Doña Gloria cause Milagros to understand why she was adopted? Use the word *adopt* in your answer.

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3. **Opinion** Which of the three couples do you believe is probably Milagros’s parents? Why?

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4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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Respond to Chapters 8–9, continued

5. **Setting** Milagros wants to learn as much as possible about her birth parents and her original home. Use the **Cluster** to describe the places she visits while searching for answers.

**Cluster**

- village square
- graveyard
- Doña Gloria's
- Los Luceros

Why does seeing Los Luceros help Milagros understand her past better?

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Respond to Chapter 10—Epilogue

1. **Personal Response**  The Bolivars and the Kaufmans have become as close as blood relatives. Describe someone who is not related to you but is like a blood relative. Why are you close to this person?

2. **Paraphrase**  On page 287, Kate says to Milagros “I’m really sick of you disowning us!” Describe the conflict this sentence shows. Use the word *conflict* in your response.

3. **Summarize**  What are some of the *milagritos* that happen at the end of the story?

4. **Connect**  Look at your notes on *Student Journal, page 2*. Think about how your family influences your decisions. Compare this to *Finding Miracles*. How do Milly’s adoptive and birth families affect her life?
5. Conclusions  Milly loves her country but wants her family to understand and appreciate it, too. Write the events that lead to the outcome of Milly’s goal in the Goal and Outcome Chart.

Goal and Outcome Chart

Goal

Milly wants her family to understand her birthplace.

Events

Outcome

If Milly’s family had not traveled to el paisito, would Milly have been able to reach her goal? Why or why not?

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