

## Discussion Questions for *God of Luck*

1. What pictures of slavery did you have before reading *God of Luck*? Where did those pictures come from? What new pictures of slavery does *God of Luck* offer? How do these differ from those already held?
2. The relationship between the two main characters is central. Describe the nature of their bond. Are they like other married couples? If not, what sets them apart?
3. Bo See is not generally liked in the village. Why not? Describe her character.
4. We expect main characters in novels to change. Who changes in this book? Who does not?
5. Ah Lung is not only close to his wife but to his twin. What roles does Moongirl play economically and psychologically?
6. In her lament, Moongirl sends her brother the message that careful planning is needed. And, in what seems like an almost hopeless situation, Ah Lung does “turn the situation around” through careful planning. What are the stages of his plan? What personal qualities are necessary to make the plan a success?
7. Bo See also comes up with a daring plan. What are the qualities needed for her plan? What is her risk?
8. We see two different kinds of work in the book. The silkworm industry is central to Strongworm village. We see several descriptions of the difficult and sometimes painful labor required. How does it compare to the kind of labor the enslaved men must perform on the Peruvian islands half way across the world?
9. We see in Ah Lung’s experience a complete portrayal of slavery, from capture to labor. At different times he contemplates escape. What are these possibilities? Why can he not take advantage of them?
10. The book also shows men responding to their capture in different ways. What are the physical and psychological dangers? Why doesn’t Ah Lung succumb to them?
11. Both the title and the first epigraph call attention to the notion of luck. How would you define luck? In the tale of the emperor and the little people, what is luck? Is Ah Lung lucky? Are Bo See and Moongirl? If so, in what sense?
12. The first epigraph also repeats something often said—that only the strong survive. How would you define strong? Which characters in the book do you think are strong? In what sense?

13. The epigraph from Toni Morrison defines the purpose of freedom. Do we see her definition enacted in the story of the book?
14. We often read in textbooks the narratives of explorers describing their first vision of the “New World,” but we don’t usually imagine the reactions of those brought to this hemisphere as slaves. In *God of Luck*, we see South America and the coast of Peru through Ah Lung’s eyes. What does he describe? What are his emotions?
15. The book ends at a particular point—not with the reunion of Bo See and Ah Lung, but with the arrival of a rescuer in a small boat while Ah Lung is still in the sea cave. Why do you think the book ends here? What is the effect of this ending?