

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

REBECCA CHAN

The following story is told by Rebecca Chan, who was born in 1942 Tianjin. (Tianjin is a city in northern China and one of the five national central cities of the People's Republic of China.) She was six years old at the time of this incident took place. She and her family lived in Tianjin's British Concession during the war.

My parents never actually talked about the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and the GMD (Guomindang) in front of us children. When I try to remember those years I have a hard time figuring out if I just don't remember because its been many years, or if my memories are so few because my father tried so hard to shield us from these things.

I do remember that in preparation for the fighting between the CCP and the GMD in Tianjin, our father asked all of us to help paste strips of newspaper using homemade flour paste to cover all the windows. This would prevent glass from flying when shattered. All of us children and our parents and the house staff crowded into our basement every night. My father did not allow us to turn on any light or use our candles. We sat and slept in darkness.

I wasn't scared at all because there were so many of us in the basement. In fact, it was like playing a game and we got to do something – sleep in the basement – that we normally never got to do. Our basement was not the finished basement like in American houses. It had a dirt floor, low ceiling, and was dark, cold, and damp. It was where we normally stored our vegetables for the entire winter – vegetables like daikon and cabbage. These were the only vegetables that grew in the north and could be stored for long periods of time, such as during the winter months.

I think people were not allowed to be on the streets after 9 pm, but we could hear the fighting on the streets – the gunshots and especially the bombs were very loud. One time, my brother Alfred took my sister Roberta and me up to the roof of our three-story house to watch the CCP airplanes flying over the city and dropping bombs. We only saw one when our father found out. He got us down in a hurry and my brother got a good scolding.

Identify three traumas experienced by Rebecca:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which trauma do you think probably was the hardest for her to experience and why?

How is Rebecca's recollection different from your **Roll Play - Memory Exercise** in the following ways?

Details:

Emotion:

Facts:

What surprised you about Rebecca's actual account?