**Reflection handout**

For all questions, please offer at least five-sentence answers that include details/examples from Chapters 1-3.

1. Chapter One is rife with foreshadowing. Tell me what you think it means that when Tita was born, she “was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor.”
2. “The only time [Tita] was willing to take [the animal-shaped sausage] apart was when the sausage was intended for the Christmas rolls she loved so much. Then she not only allowed her animals to be dismantled, she watched them fry with glee.” Interpret this food-based metaphor in terms of plot, character and setting/time developments in the first three chapters.
3. In the opening pages of Chapter Two, we learn of the incredible work required to assemble Rosaura’s wedding cake. This work is symbolic of what?
4. Chapters Two and Three are highly metaphysical, suggesting that each of us imparts something of ourselves in what we do. Cite two examples of this phenomenon and describe the symbolic meaning of each.
5. “There was just one thing Tita didn’t like: The soft-boiled eggs mama Elena tried to make her eat.” What does this suggest about Tita’s character?
6. This novel takes place during the Mexican Revolution: What importance does this setting have to the novel thus far?

For the following questions, please offer at least five-sentence answers that include details/examples from Chapters 4-6.

1. Why does Chapter Four’s recipe, for “Turkey Mole with Almonds and Sesame Seeds,” contain so many ingredients?
2. What is the significance of the fact that the chorizo made in Chapter Five is “northern-style,” and why would vinegar and chiles be the first two ingredients in the recipe?
3. Comment on this section from the narrative: “Mama Elena was a specialist in cutting the watermelon: taking a sharp knife, she would drive the point in so it penetrated just to the end of the green part of the rind, without touching the heart of the watermelon.”
4. Why did Tita overfeed the pigeon, and what purpose does the baby pigeon have, alive and in its death, in the novel?
5. Comment on the following statement by John; be sure to reference love, combustion and food: “'Each person has to discover what will set off those explosions in order to live, since the combustion that occurs when one of them is ignited is what nourishes the soul. That fire, in short, is its food.’”
6. These chapters also include the metaphysical. Cite two examples of this phenomenon and describe the symbolic meaning of each.

For the following questions, please offer at least five-sentence answers that include details/examples from Chapters 7-9.

1. What is the significance of onion as an ingredient in the Ox-tail Soup that Chencha brings to Tita?
2. When Chencha visits Tita at John’s house, she imagines things for Tita future with images of fire and dampening. What relevance does this have to the novel at this point?
3. When Tita returns to the ranch, she cooks a meal for Mama Elena, who tastes bitterness in the food. What does this symbolize, both in reference to Tita and to the contents of the box that Tita finds?
4. Why would Esquivel begin Chapter Eight with onions, just as she began Chapter One? Cite specifics from Chapter Eight.
5. In Chapter Eight, we learn the significance of the phrase “like water for chocolate.” What does it suggest about the plot thus far and what may be to come?
6. The dough for Three Kings’ Bread, the recipe from Chapter Nine, must rise three times. What does this food metaphor represent?

For the following questions, please offer at least five-sentence answers that include details/examples from Chapters 10-12.

1. In your view, what is truth? Reference Gertrudis’ notion of truth in your response.
2. In Chapter Ten, what does the clarifying of the syrup symbolize? What meaning is there in that it is not Tita that clarifies the syrup?
3. In Chapter Eleven, Tita and Rosaura have an argument about the notion of a “decent family.” How is the De la Garza family decent and indecent, in your view?
4. What is the significance of the passage about Tita’s teacher in Chapter Eleven?
5. Chapter Twelve begins with shelling the nuts, “a big job, to which many hours must be devoted.” Given that this is the final chapter, to what is this metaphorical?
6. “[Tita] got up and went running to the enormous bedspread that she had woven through night after night of solitude and insomnia, and she threw it over her. It covered the whole ranch, all three hectacres.” Given that Tita began knitting this bedspread the night of Pedro and Rosaura’s wedding, what does it represent at the novel’s conclusion?