



## Discussion Questions for **YASMIN'S HAMMER**

by **Ann Malaspina**  
illustrated by **Doug Chayka**

1. At the beginning of the story, why can't Yasmin go to school? When Yasmin first says she wants to go to school, what does Abba tell her?
2. Why do Yasmin and her family move to the city?
3. How does Yasmin feel about moving from the country to the city? Have you ever moved? If you have, how did it make you feel? Why?
4. What does Yasmin think of the city of Dhaka? Find parts in the story that support your answer.
5. What job do Yasmin and Mita have? What is Amma's job? What is Abba's job?
6. Why does the boss give Yasmin extra coins? What does Yasmin plan to do with these extra coins?
7. Yasmin works extra hard in the brickyard once she hatches her plan. Have you ever had to work extra hard for something you wanted? What was it and what did you do to earn it?
8. How do you think Yasmin feels when she sees signs, newspapers, and books that she cannot read? How would you feel if you could not read? What are some ways in which your life might be different?
9. Why is owning a book so important to Yasmin, even when she can't read it?
10. How might knowing how to read help Yasmin become a shopkeeper, a teacher, a doctor, or the governor? Has reading ever helped you in a special way? What happened?

11. Do you think Yasmin really had enough money to buy the book? What makes you think so? If you think she did not have enough, why do you think the shopkeeper sold her the book? And why did he sell it to her instead of giving it to her?
12. What emotions do you think Yasmin and her family experience while looking through her book?
13. Why do Abba and Amma finally decide that Yasmin and Mita should go to school?
14. What do Abba and Amma do so that the girls may go to school? Why do they need to earn more money?
15. Yasmin and Mita bring a box of *khichuri*, a rice and lentil dish, for lunch every day. What foods do you like to eat for lunch?
16. How old do you think Yasmin and Mita are? Why do children in Bangladesh sometimes work instead of going to school? How is this different from life in the United States?
17. On the last page of the book there is information about organizations that are helping children in Bangladesh and around the world. Why is the work these organizations do important?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Ann Malaspina** is the author of more than fifteen nonfiction books for young people. Her interest in equal rights and social change often leads her to write about people struggling on the margins of society to improve their quality of life. She was inspired to write *Yasmin's Hammer* after traveling in South Asia and reading news reports about young workers in Bangladesh. Malaspina lives with her family in northern New Jersey. Her Web site is [annmalaspina.com](http://annmalaspina.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Doug Chayka** has illustrated several picture books, including *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, chosen as a Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People and a Notable Book for a Global Society. Chayka has taught illustration at Pratt Institute and currently teaches at Ringling College of Art. His work has also been displayed in the Society of Illustrators Best of Children's Book Art exhibit. Chayka and his wife live in Sarasota, Florida. His Web site is [doughchayka.com](http://doughchayka.com).

### Book Information

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(Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula)

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Themes: Asian/Asian American Interest, Dreams & Aspirations, Education, Family Traditions, Overcoming Obstacles, Poverty

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