

A Diamond in the Desert
Discussion Questions

1. On page 12 when Tetsu's mother asks him to pack his things before they leave and tells him that he has two bags to fill, why does he hand her only his mother his Mel Ott mitt, even though he folds a pile of clothes?
2. Tetsu's family takes a bus to Tulare Assembly Center. When he is sitting on the bus, he notices a boy across the aisle from him. He says the boy was holding everything he still owned and cared about, but in his eyes, no one was there. What does this mean?
3. Kimi, Tetsu's younger sister, finds a lizard and puts it in a cardboard box as soon as she arrives in Gila River. Why does she do this? Why does she tell Tetsu that Yoshi is a lefty?
4. On page 23, Tetsu tells us that grief lives at Gila River. What does he mean when he says they "walked around it cautiously," and that they "didn't speak of its sharp thorns or its long roots anchored tight to nearby jagged rocks"?
5. After Tetsu pulls George out of the canal and they are walking back to camp, he says he knows George is now his friend, and that George won't spit in the dirt by his shoes anymore. Why does he say that knowing this, and that having a friend, makes him miss his father just a little less?
6. Tetsu helps Kyo, Ben, and their father build a baseball field. On page 77, what does he mean when he says that each morning when he walked off the field, he left the only part of Gila River he liked?
7. On page 87, Kimi celebrates her ninth birthday by having a tea party with her pets. What does she mean when she tells her mother that she has no choice but to keep her pets, that they were lost and someone had to feed them? Who is she really talking about?
8. What does Tetsu mean when he tells us about the first day of practice on the new field and he says, "Other players came, filling in the open spots, second and left and everything else, to form *one team*. It was like Christmas morning had come in April, and everyone got a new bike, and pancakes were cooking, and outside it was snowing. It was a feeling like that."
9. On page 121, Tetsu and George are walking beside Horse, who is carrying Kimi back from the desert. Tetsu says he saw what was behind George's eyes, and he had to look away. What does he mean by this?
10. Tetsu sees a pile of lumber that is meant to become baseball bleachers on page 133. He tells us that for a minute, that pile of lumber had a hold on him. But then in the next second he decides that he will use the wood for his sister's fish pond and that this is more

important than using it for part of a seat for someone who just wants to watch baseball. Why does he say this?

11. Why does the letter from Mr. Bobkin on page 139 cause Kimi to be able to sit up for entire afternoon?
12. What does Tetsu mean on page 140 when he says that Kyo fed him his recollection of the first home game in Gila River, like it was a bowl of soup or a tablet of aspirin he hoped was strong enough to make him come around?
13. Tetsu's father makes furniture from scrap wood when he returns. Tetsu tells us that his barrack filled with quiet wooden apologies. What does he mean by this?
14. During the winning streak at Heart Mountain, Tetsu says it felt like Papa throwing to him on the farm, and Kimi getting well, and Lefty finding Mr. Bobkin's food dish. Explain this.
15. On page 200, why does Tetsu take a long time telling his mother about the pop fly, even though she'd already heard the story before?
16. What does Kimi mean on page 220 when she tells Horse that her new fish can be a white fish but he'll never be a red-orange fish?
17. When Tetsu's team is practicing before the big game against the Arizona State champions on page 234, what does he mean when he says their championship title seemed to get bigger, and that it blew through the dust and the castor beans, making them strike out unexpectedly?
18. Have you ever won a big game? What did it feel like? What is the best thing about that memory?