Like Water for Chocolate

Chapter 1, January, Christmas Rolls

**1. What does the reader find out about Tita, the narrator’s great aunt, which reveals a similarity between the two women?**

Tita is sensitive to onions. “especially sensitive to onions, like my great-aunt, Tita.” p.5

**2. What did Tita make when she and cook would be in the kitchen together when she was a child?**

Food and animal shapes out of sausages. “twisting long thin balloons into animal shapes, and they decided to do it with sausages.” p.8

**3. Why wasn't Tita upset about the frying of her little sausage creatures during the holiday season?**

Tita really likes Christmas Rolls. “when the sausage was intended for the Christmas rolls she loved so much…she not only allowed her animals to be dismantled, she watched them fry with glee.” p.9

**4. Why can't Tita be the daughter to marry Pedro, according to the rules of Mama Elena?**

Tita has to take care of Mama Elena till she dies because she is the youngest daughter. “You know perfectly well that being the youngest daughter means you have to take care of me until the day I die.” p.10

**5. Why is Tita concerned about the idea of taking care of her mother and not having a family?**

Tita is in love with Pedro. If she cannot have children, no one will take care of her. She wants to experience love. “who would take care of her when she got old?...what about women who marry and can’t have children, who will take care of them?...Had not the opinion of the daughter affected by the plan ever been taken into account? If she couldn’t marry, was she at least allowed to experience love?” p.10-11

**6. Why does Pedro agree to marry Tita's sister Rosaura, even though he wanted to marry Tita?**

Pedro wants to be close to Tita. “When you’re told there’s no way you can marry the women you love and your only hope of being near her is to marry her sister, wouldn’t you do the same?” p.15

Chapter 2, February, Chabela Wedding Cake

**7. Why won't the cake batter thicken as Tita is stirring it in preparation for the wedding of Pedro and Rosaura?**

Tita wouldn’t stop crying so the batter wouldn’t thicken. “The batter wouldn’t thicken because Tita kept crying.” p.30

**8. What are some of the features of the wedding cake Tita is making for Pedro's wedding?**

The cake has layers, fruit filling, and icing. “the cake…has previously been sliced into layers...several jars of preserves-apricot, fig, and camote with pineapple-were…the…filling.” p.31 “add a drop of red food color, and frost only the top part of the cake with the fondant icing.” p.35  
  
**9. What does Pedro share with Tita in a private moment before his wedding which makes her change her mood?**

Pedro told Tita that he loves her and only married her sister in order to be close to her. “Pedro…took advantage of this unique opportunity to whisper in Tita’s ear ‘I am sure I will be, since through this marriage I have gained what I really wanted: the chance to be near you, the woman I really love…’” p.38

**10. What are the guests' reactions after eating the wedding cake Tita has prepared?**

People cried over past loves and got sick. “the weeping was just the first symptom of a strange intoxication-an acute attack of pain and frustration-that seized the guests and scattered them across the patio and the grounds and in the bathrooms, all of them wailing over lost love...the collective vomiting that was going on all over the patio.” p.39

**11. What does Tita discover when she goes to tell Nacha about the conversation between her and Pedro?**

Tita finds Nacha dead. “she found Nacha lying dead” p.11

**12. What does Nacha tell Tita to do after her mother leaves the kitchen, even though her mother told her not to?**

Nacha tells Tita to cry. “don’t ever let me catch you with a single tear or even a long face, do you hear?” p.29 “’Now we’re alone in the kitchen, so go ahead and cry, my child, because I don’t want them to see you crying tomorrow. Especially no Rosaura.’” p.29

Chapter 3, March, Quail in Rose Petal Sauce

**13. What does Pedro bring to Tita as she is now the head cook at the ranch?**

Pedro brings Tita a bouquet of roses. “she was to get a bouquet of roses, and from Pedro besides.” p.47

**14. What does Tita decide to do with the roses that she has received?**

“All at once she seemed to hear Nacha’s voice dictating a recipe, a prehispanic recipe involving rose petals….they did have quail.” p.49 Tita decides to make quail in rose petal sauce.

**15. What happens when Gertrudis has a taste of the rose petal sauce that Tita prepares?**

Gertrudis had a strange reaction and felt the need to be with a man she saw in town. “the food seemed to ask as an aphrodisiac; she began to feel an intense heat pulsing through he limbs. An itch…kept her fron sitting properly in her chair. She began to sweat, imagining herself on horseback with her arms clasped around one of Pancho Villa’s men...” p.51-52

**16. Why does the solider initially go to see Gertrudis when she is out in the field?**

The soldier smells the rose petal smell from Gertrudis. “He was moved from a powerful urge…the aroma from Gertrudis’ body guided him.”p.55

**17. What does the solider do when he finally sees Gertrudis running naked in the field?**

He picked Gertrudis up on a horse and made love. “He leaned over…and lifted her onto the horse…they made love for the first time…”p.55-56

**18. Why does Mama Elena burn Gertrudis' birth certificate upon hearing news of her life?**

Mama Elena thinks it is shameful for Gertrudis to have run away and be working in a brothel. “Gertrudis was working in a brothel on the border. Mama Elena burned Gertrudis’ birth certificate…and she didn’t want to hear her name mentioned ever again.”p.58-59

Chapter 4, April, Turkey Mole with Almonds and Sesame Seeds

**19. How does Tita plan to fatten up the turkeys for the meal she wishes to prepare?**

Tita plans to feed it corn, water, and walnuts. “Fifteen days before the turkey is to be killed, begin feeding it small walnuts. Start with one the first day, the next day put two in its beak, and keep increasing the number this way…regardless how much corn it eats voluntarily during this period.” p.65

**20. What is the occasion Tita is preparing the turkeys for?**

Tita is preparing turkeys for the baptism of Rosaura and Pedro’s first son. “the ranch was celebrating an important event: the baptism of her nephew, first son of Pedro and Rosaura.”p.65  
  
**21. Why do Pedro and Tita's eyes meet for an eternity in the kitchen as she is cooking another meal?**

Pedro and Tita’s eyes do not meet for an eternity in the kitchen as she is cooking Turkey Mole for the baptism of Roberto. “Pedro couldn’t resist the smells from the kitchen and was heading toward them…their passionate glances fused so perfectly that whoever saw them would have seen but a single look…they stayed…until Pedro lowered his eyes.” p.67

**22. What does Pedro do after he announces that Rosaura has gone into labor?**

Pedro left to get the family doctor and asked Tita to take care of Rosaura. “He had to go to Eagle Pass for Dr. Brown, the family doctor, and he hadn’t been able to find her anywhere…Pedro asked Tita to please take care of her while he was gone.” P.70-71

**23. Why is Tita the only person who can help Rosaura deliver her baby on her own?**

Other people were unable to make it due to a shooting breaking out in the village. “Pedro…captured by federales…Mama Elena and Chencha being unable to return because of shooting…” p.71

**24. What does Tita do for the child of Rosaura and Pedro which shows her love for the child?**

Tita breastfed the child. “When she saw the boy’s face slowly grow peaceful and when she heard the way he was swallowing, she began to suspect that something extraordinary had happened…she was feeding the baby” p.76

Chapter 5, May, Northern-Style Chorizo

**25. What is Tita doing in the garden at the opening of this chapter instead of working in the kitchen?**

Tita was feeding a pigeon. “Tita had lost all interest in life, except for her interest in feeding worms to a helpless pigeon.” p.87

**26. Why has Tita lost her interest in cooking at this time of the book, causing her to avoid her kitchen duties?**

Pedro, Rosaura, and Roberto (their son) left. “Pedro, Rosaura, and Roberto had gone to live in San Antonio.” p.87

**27. Why are Chechna and Tita supposed to be making as many sausages as possible?**

They had to use up the animals that survived when the revolutionary army visited. “Sausage…it’s one of the best ways to use the meat from the pig economically…without risk of spoiling…They had to get every possible use from this pig, one of the few animals that survived the visit the revolutionary army had made to the ranch a few days before.” p.89

**28. What do the rebels take from the ranch, which greatly upsets Tita as they were a part of her childhood?**

They took the pigeons and doves from the dovecote. “They were impressed by the dovecote’s size…They closed the door and the windows so none of them could get away and set about trapping the pigeons and doves.” p.91

**29. Why does Tita eventually scream, sending her running up into the dovecote?**

Tita learns of Roberto’s death and blames it on Mama Elena. “’You did it, you killed Roberto!’ screamed Tita… She took the pigeon and a pail full of worms and climed up to the dovecote.” p.99

**30. What is the state of Tita when the doctor arrives to take her away per Mama's orders?**

Tita was in shock and was not acting normally. She seems to be acting insane. “She didn’t seem to realize it [the pigeon] was dead…Tita looked up, her eyes vacant, and stared at Chencha as if she had never seen her before.” p.100

Chapter 6, June, A Recipe for Making Matches

**31. Where does John the doctor end up taking Tita after bringing her from her home?**

John took her to his house. “John, ignoring Mama Elena’s order had not put Tita in a madhouse but had taken her to live with him.” p.108

**32. Why can the old Indian women and Tita speak without saying any words aloud?**

They are both cooks. “The woman didn’t speak either, but it wasn’t necessary. From the first, they had established a communication that went far beyond words.” p.110

**33. What happened when the Indian women went to the bedside of John's great great grandfather?**

She stopped his bleeding and cured him. “As soon as she went to the sick man and placed one of her hands on his wounds, the bleeding stopped.” p.113

**34. What does a person need in order to make matches for themselves?**

A person needs potassium nitrate, minimum, powdered gum arabic, phosphorus, saffron, and cardboard “INGREDIENTS: 1 ounce powdered potassium nitrate 1/2 ounce minium 1/2 ounce powdered gum arabic 1 dram phosphorus saffron cardboard” p.106

**35. What had John's grandmother told him about people and what it meant that they had a box of matches inside?**

John’s grandmother told him that people are born with a box of matches inside, and people are dazzled with intense emotion when one is lit. “Each of us is born with a box of matches inside us but we can’t strike them all by ourselves…each person as to discover what will set off those explosions in order to live..” p.115

**36. What does John ask Tita to do in order to answer the question of why she does not speak?**

He asks Tita to play a game with a cloth. She writes a sentence on a wall with an invisible substance to say why she doesn’t want to speak. “She would write a sentence on the wall, using some invisible substance, without my seeing. When I looked at the wall at night, I would find out what she had written…I’m going to ask you to write the reason you won’t talk on that wall over there as soon as I leave” p.117

Chapter 7, July, Ox-Tail Soup

**37. What does the letter from Gertrudis say to Tita besides that she hopes to see her again?**

She says she is grateful for the clothes that Tita gave her. The letter says that she does not belong where she is and will leave. She explains why she went to work at a brothel. “…grateful I am that you sent me my clothes…I will be leaving this place, which is not where I belong…” p.125-126

**38. What does Tita ask Chechna to do for her in order to keep her at John's house?**

Tita asks Chencha to tell Mama Elena that she would never go back to the ranch again. “As they were saying good-bye, Tita told Chencha her decision never to go back to the ranch again; she asked her to tell Mama Elena.” p.126

**39. What does Chechna say she will tell Mama about Tita's idea about not coming home?**

Chencha says she will tell Mama Elena that Tita escaped from the lunatic asylum, she had become a beggar, Chencha invited her back home, and she said didn’t want to because she was paying for her crime of insulting her mother. “…the beggar was Tita. She had escaped form the lunatic asylum and was roaming the world to pay for the crime of having insulted her mother. Chencha had invited her to come back home, but Tita refused. She didn’t feel she deserved…” p129

**40. Why can't Chechna deliver the message from Tita to Mama Elena as she promised to do?**

Chencha can’t deliver the message because she was raped. “They raped Chencha. Mama Elena…was in no condition to hear this type of news” p129

Chapter 8, August, Champandongo

**41. Why is Tita frantic as she is preparing the meal for the evening when John is coming over?**

Tita dropped the pan full of mole for the champandongo and had to redo for hours of work. “Going down the stairs for the eighth time, Tita tripped and the pan full of mole for the champandongo rolled down the steps. And with it went four hours of hard work cutting and grinding ingredients.” p.148

**42. What does Tita do in order to trick the child into sleeping in her own room instead of in the kitchen?**

The child wanted to be in the kitchen; Tita would bring up food for Esperanza to smell it. “Tita had to carry the stew she was cooking up to the bedroom, so they could fool the child, who was lulled to sleep by the smell and sensation of warmth from the pan Tita was using for cooking.” p.148

**43. What does Pedro do when he sees Tita sitting on the steps, covered in mole?**

He tries to convince her that she shouldn’t marry John. “seeing her on the stiars, apparently resting, he went over to try to convince her that she shouldn’t marry John.” p.148

**44. What does Tita tell Pedro after he expressed his displeasure in her marriage choice?**

She tells him that he shouldn’t be telling her what she should or shouldn’t do. When she was married, she didn’t say anything. “You have your life, now leave me in peace to have mine!” p149

Chapter 9, September, Chocolate and Three Kings' Day Bread

**45. What does Rosaura ask Tita to help her with after the birth of her child?**

She asks Tita for advice about her relationship. “she begged TIta not to harbor bad feelings about her marriage to Pedro. She asked Tita’s advice how to save it…He practically avoided her…his frank rejection of her.” p.170

**46. What is Rosaura's health problem since giving birth to her baby girl?**

Rosaura has bad breath and is overweight. “her fatness, her flatulence, and her foul breath were driving Pedro farther way every day…” p.170

**47. What happens when a strong cold gust of air blows into the room as Tita is preparing bread?**

Mama Elena appeared in the room, insulted Tita, and “cursed” Tita and her “baby.” “She turned around and was stunned to find herself face to face with Mama Elena, who was giving her a fierce look…‘…I curse it! It and you, forever!’” p.173

**48. Why does Tita tell Chechna about all of the things happening in her mind?**

Tita does not tell Chencha about all the things in her mind because Tita is afraid that the whole village would know because Chencha is a gossip. “But she couldn’t say that to Chencha. She was such a gossip that if Tita told her the next day the whole village would know.” p.173

Chapter 10, October, Cream Fritters

**49. What does Gertrudis do on purpose so that Pedro overhears her conversation with Tita?**

Gertrudis tells Tita she should tell Pedro about the child. “Gertrudis…made a strategic estimate of the time it would take Pedro to step over the threshold of the door, so that at that precise moment she could fire these words: ‘I think you should tell Pedro you’re expecting his child.’” p.191

**50. What is Pedro's reaction to Tita's news about her pregnancy?**

Pedro falls to the floor and feels his love for Tita. “Pedro, struck down, let the sack fall to the floor. He was dying of love for Tita. Startled, she turned to discover that Pedro was looking at her, almost in tears.” p.191

**51. Why do Pedro and Tita leave together when they first speak about it?**

There were too many people be able to privately talk about something like that. “A noise behind them made them jump. Someone was coming up behind them…they decided to postpone the conversation until another time. There were too many people all around the house; it was risky to talk about such matters” p.193

**52. What happens when Tita screams at her mother's ghost, letting out all of her rage?**

The figure of Mama Elena became a light; Tita was no longer pregnant; the light of Mama Elena’s image burned Pedro “Tita had said the magic words that would make Mama Elena disappear forever…She gave a deep peaceful sigh. She wasn’t pregnant…The little light…began to spin feverishly. It went through the window and shot out onto the patio, like a firecracker…” p.199-200

Chapter 11, November, Beans with Chile Tezcucana-Style

**53. Why is the pantry at the ranch suddenly severely depleted in its stock?**

Gertrudis’s visit left very little food as the soldiers took food. “there really wasn’t a thing. Gertrudis’s visit to the ranch had laid waste to the larder.” p.210

**54. What does Pedro say when Tita tells him that she is actually not pregnant, as she once believed.**

Pedro complains that Tita doesn’t want to be with him because he is injured now. “You aren’t tied to me anymore, a poor sick man.” p.211

**55. What has happened to Rosaura, as Tita sees after coming back from Pedro's room?**

Rosaura lost weight. “Tita was astonished at the sight of her. She was as thin as she had been when she was single.” p.212

**56. When Tita tells Rosaura that she married her boyfriend, what is Rosaura's response to this?**

Rosaura says she didn’t have the right to have a boyfriend. “your wrongful claim to a boyfriend. You had no right to have a boyfriend…according to family tradition” p.213

Chapter 12, December, Chiles in Walnut Sauce

**57. Why does Tita wish her mother was at the wedding preparations she is working on?**

Tita does not wish her mother was at the wedding preparations she is working on. Mama Elena was very good at cracking nuts without getting tired. “The only person she knew who could do it without any sign of fatigue was Mama Elena…she seemed to take great pleasure in doing it.” p.230

**58. What happened to Rosaura with her health condition a year before this wedding day?**

Rosaura was upstairs in her room when she died. “he opened the door: there she found Rosaura, her lips purple, body deflated, eyes wild, with a distant look, sighing out her last flatulent breath.” p.233

**59. What does Pedro say to Tita when they are dancing together, making her cry?**

Pedro asks to marry Tita and suggests having a child. “I would ask you to be my wife…I’d like to have a child with you…The tears slowly rolled down her cheeks. Her first tears of joy.” p.236-237

**60. Whose wedding are Tita and Pedro at during the last chapter of the book?**

Tita and Pedro are at Alex’s and Esperanza’s wedding. “Having brought off the wedding between Alex and Esperanza was Tita’s greatest triumph.” p.240