

DEAR CANADA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Ribbon of Shining Steel **The Railway Diary of Kate Cameron** By Julie Lawson

1. What are “social graces”? Given what we know about Kate, do you think she has them?
2. Why is it so important to Kate that she have a best friend?
3. Why is Anne so hateful to the Chinese workers? Should Kate have responded differently to her? What might you have done?
4. After reading the newspaper clipping about the difficulties of being a woman, think about the differences between Kate’s life and the lives of her brothers. Are they treated differently? Do they have different responsibilities? Expectations? Why or why not? How are these responsibilities and expectations different today?
5. Why does Mr. Hagan tell Kate the Chinese folk tale? What is the moral of the story?
6. By the end of the diary, in what ways is Kate like the piece of jade she treasures — “cut and polished”?