

Despite her best intentions, Mia makes one mistake after another. Sometimes her mistakes have serious consequences, like when she drops a stack of plates and her mother gets fired from her restaurant job, or when she under-charges guests at the motel.

Mia never opts out. She never decides she's no good, or that there's no point in trying.

When it comes to entering the contest to win a motel in Vermont, Mia knows her chances of winning are low, but she puts everything she's got into her entry, including the money from the lucky coins she's collected with her father.

The more she forces herself out of her comfort zone, the more confident she becomes. Later in the book, she's writing letters to everyone she can think of, persuading them to become a part of her dream. She's worried that her English isn't good enough, but she writes the letters anyway. She even writes to the organizers of the motel competition, asking them to forward her letter to all the other losing entrants! Like her dad says, sometimes "a mistake is actually an opportunity."

It's worth asking ourselves how we can push ourselves a little out of our comfort zones. It's not necessary to "conquer our fears" before being brave. It's just necessary to decide not to let fear and nerves get in our way. What is fear stopping you or your girl from doing? Raising a hand in class? Giving a presentation? Starting up a new club? Introducing yourself to someone new?

How might you do the thing that excites and interests you, anyway? How might you support your girl taking bold, brave action? The more we practice taking actions that scare us, the more our confidence grows, and the easier it is to be brave next time!

I hope you enjoy this month's book and that your club's conversation takes you in many interesting directions. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook page! bit.ly/GLbookFB

Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes

As grown-ups and girls arrive, allow some time for snacking and catching up.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

In this month's book, Mia becomes known for her diligence, her dreams, and her thoughtfulness with the motel customers.

How do you want to be known? If you could be famous for something, what would it be? Your artistic talent? Your sense of humor? Your love of animals?

Everyone pair up and tell your partner the one thing you would most like to be famous for and why. Then, if there's time, go around the group and give an opportunity for each person to "introduce" her partner and their famous trait. For example, you could say something like,

"Everyone, I'd like to introduce you to Shannon, the famous storyteller. Shannon is famous the world over for her stories, especially the ones for kids!"

Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

You might decide to start the discussion with every member saying her favorite part of the book before reading discussion questions. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups will pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to come up with your own discussion questions, or bring up any ideas that came up while you were reading.

- How is being in America different from what Mia expected?
- What is Mia's response to messing up? For example, when she drops the plates at the diner, doesn't place the wake up call correctly, or makes a bad room key, how does she deal with it?

- Why does Mia lie about her life when she goes to school?
- Mia thinks working in the motel is fun, and doesn't understand why Americans think kids should always be playing. What kind of work is fun for you?
- How does keeping secrets affect Mia's ability to develop friendships? What happens when she and Lupe are honest with each other?
- Why do Mia and her parents put up with Mr. Yao's awful treatment? Have you ever put up with someone treating you badly? Why?
- Lupe and Mia discuss what it means to be successful. What do you think "successful" means?
- Why does Mia's mom discourage her from writing? And what is Mia's response?
- Do you think Mia goes too far when she changes Hank's letters? Do you agree with Mia when she says, "You have to be creative to get what you want?"
- What does winning the story contest in her class mean to Mia?
- How do Mia's mistakes and losses pay off at the end?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Since this month's book is about a girl with big dreams, it seems a good opportunity for book club members to share their big dreams with each other! What is *your* dream? Is it to learn how to sail? Write stories? Hike in every national park? Become a doctor?

This is a choose-your-own-adventure sort of activity. Here are some options:

- Pair up and share your dream. Be as specific as possible. Don't hold back! If there's time, everyone could tell the group about their partner's dream.
- Take five minutes and write a six-word story about you living your dream. Try to make it a complete sentence rather than a list of words.
- Draw a sketch of what it will look like when you live your dream. Leave the sketches out so everyone can go around and check out the "gallery."

Closing, 5 minutes

Since this is the last official Girls Leadership Book Club meeting of the year, it would be nice to say good-bye in a more ceremonial way. Everyone could say the best thing about being in book club this year, or name her favorite book from the year. You might want to make a circle and say a little cheer that features your club's name. Let the girls lead the way.

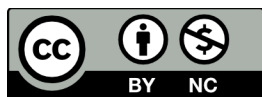
Further Reading

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more books like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd love to hear them! Please share them on our **Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook Group** bit.ly/GLbookFB so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

The Confidence Code for Girls by Katy Kay and Claire Shipman - This book has a friendly tone, fun graphics, and lots of activities and information for girls about growing their confidence. Confidence isn't something that a person or doesn't have. It's a muscle that can be developed, and this book has practical advice for how to do that.

Stella Diaz Has Something to Say by Angela Dominguez - Stella Diaz has lots to say, but she gets nervous at school. Sometimes, she accidentally speaks Spanish instead of English. How embarrassing! But, between making new friends and giving a class presentation, Stella Diaz has to learn to use her voice.

Unidentified Suburban Object by Mike Jung - Chloe feels like she doesn't fit in. Not at school, where no one knows the difference between being Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. And not at home, where her parents don't have any interest in discussing their Korean heritage. When she gets a Korean-American teacher, Chloe finally has the chance to explore her family's history.



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