

Welcome to the second month of Girls Leadership Girl & Grown-Up Book Club! This month, we're reading books that deal with allyship, which means using one's privilege to support a marginalized group or individual. In Jenny Lombard's novel *Drita, My Homegirl*, chapters alternate between the perspective of Maxie, an African-American in fourth grade, and Drita, a recent refugee from Kosovo.

Drita's family struggles to get used to living in America, and they miss the home they left behind. One of their biggest hurdles to connecting with people is not speaking English. Her difficulties with communicating make it especially hard for Drita to connect to the other girls in her class. Maxie doesn't want anything to do with her until their teacher assigns her the project of researching Drita's life and home country.

As you read, ask yourself how Maxie shows allyship to Drita, and in turn how Drita's life is affected? Also, notice how the girls start to connect on a deeper level and develop a friendship. Allyship and friendship aren't the same, but they can coexist between two people, and one can lead to the other.

On the following pages, you will find some suggestions for how your book club meeting might go. Feel free to use whichever of these questions and tips works for your club, and substitute as you wish. The best book discussions develop organically as people listen closely and respond to each other.

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

Before girls and grown-ups arrive, the hosts might consider whether nametags might be helpful. If any of the people in attendance might not know each other, think about what you can do to put people at ease, and set a warm tone. Leave a little time for a "soft start" during which people can arrive, snack, and catch up or meet each other.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

Since this is only the second meeting of the year, it might be worth discussing how the last meeting went. What was great? What would you like to change? It's absolutely fine to experiment with different meeting structures. For example, you might to ask a question and then leave room for organic discussion. Or, you might want to give everyone a chance to share in turn to make sure that you're creating space for all voices.

Everyone pair up with someone other than your girl or grown-up. If possible, try to pair with someone you don't know very well. Pairs take turns asking each other an icebreaker question. You could make up your own icebreaker or use one of our silly suggestions.

"If you could make up a new holiday and make everyone celebrate it, what would it be?"

"If you were a ghost, who would you haunt?"

After pairs have giggled over the question, take a few minutes for anyone who wants to share their answer with the group.

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.

- Why is Drita's family so unhappy when they arrive at their new home?
- What do you think they had been expecting when they came to America?
- Why do you think the teacher assigned Maxie the research project?

- The author tries to show how Drita hears English. Did this help you empathize with her? Have you ever been in a situation where it was hard to communicate? How did you manage?
- How does Maxie feel about her dad's friend Lisa? How can you tell?
- Drita's grandmother tells her that being friends with someone just like her would be "as interesting as looking in a mirror." Do you agree with this? Think of your closest friends - are they very similar to you, or different?
- Compare Maxie and Drita's relationships with their grandmothers. What roles do their grandmother play in their lives?
- What changes after Maxie presents her report on Drita?
- Talk about what being an ally means to you. How would you define it? How is it different from being a friend? Can someone be both? What would you say about Maxie - is she an ally to Drita? Why?
- How is allyship connected to leadership?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

One of the best ways to define allyship is to observe it in the wild! As you're going about your life, see if you can spot examples of people using their privilege to support and amplify marginalized groups and individuals, people taking on the struggles of others as if those struggles were their own.

Maybe you'll have an opportunity to be an ally to someone. Remember that being an ally doesn't mean taking over a situation. First and foremost, an ally's job is to listen to another's experience, and to what kind of support they need. Come to the next book club meeting ready to discuss.

Closing, 5 minutes

Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your January meeting (no meeting in December, unless your group plans its own event). Happy reading!

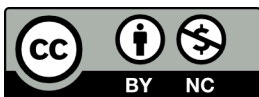
Further Reading

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.

Make Way for Dyamonde Daniels by Nikki Grimes - Dyamonde Daniels is full of confidence and personality. A new kid at her school seems rude and standoffish, but when he finally opens up the two discover potential for a deep friendship.

Upside-Down Magic by Sarah Mlynowski, Lauren Myracle, Emily Jenkins - Nory isn't like the rest of her super successful family. She simply can't get control her magic! When she fails her school entrance exam, she gets sent to a class just for kids with "wonky magic" like her.

My Name is María Isabel by Alma Flor Ada - María is the new girl in school. Her teacher informs her that she'll be called Mary because there are already two Mariás in the class. But María Isabel's name is a special part of her. She must find a way to let the teacher know how important her name is.



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