

I hope you've had a festive and relaxing break, and lots of time with your loved ones. Now that we're back to book club meetings, we'll be reading and talking about the people in our lives who make up our families, communities, and support networks.

In Uma Krishnaswami's *Book Uncle and Me*, Yasmin leads a campaign to save the Book Uncle's lending library. At first, Yasmin thinks she's too young to make a difference but then she remembers a folk tale that Book Uncle told her, about a flock of birds working together to escape from a net. The tale inspires her to reach out to others in her community so that they can combine their ideas and energy to save the lending library.

As you read, you could think and talk about some of the ways that you've asked others for help to accomplish more than you could have done alone. Or, do you think asking for help might be a way to reach some of your current goals? How do friends or community members come together to work towards shared goals?

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 in the Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook group! [bit.ly/GLbookFB](https://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

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.

What's your favorite type of weather and why?

Describe your current mood as if it was a kind of cake.

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 do you think Book Uncle's lending library is so important to Yasmin? Is there a place in your community that you think about this way?
- How does Yasmin feel when she finds out that the lending stall is going to close? How can you tell what she's feeling?
- Yasmin doesn't think that she can do anything to help the Book Uncle because she's so young, and she's just one person. Can you relate to this? Do you ever feel like it's hard for one young person to make a difference in the world? Can you think of any examples in the world that would disprove this?

- What does the folk tale about the flock of birds working together mean? How does it apply to this situation?
- Yasmin works hard to save the lending library because she feels so strongly about it. What are some issues that you feel strongly enough about to take action?

### Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Yasmin has a goal to read one book a day for the rest of her life. Think about a goal that you have (or maybe make one up right now!). This could be a life-long goal like Yasmin's, or a New Year's resolution, or simply something you want to accomplish in the near future. Who ever feels comfortable doing so can take a turn sharing the goal. Then, identify one or two first steps you could take to work toward that goal, and think about whether there's asking someone for support could help you reach that goal. See if you can take at least one step toward your goal before the next meeting.

### Closing, 5 minutes

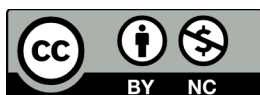
Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your February meeting. Happy reading!

### 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](https://bit.ly/GLbookFB) so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

*Betty Before X* by Ilyasah Shabazz and Renée Watson - Betty Shabazz would grow up to marry Malcolm X, but she was an activist long before she meet him. This is the story - told by her daughter - about Betty as a child, finding her purpose in the world through her work for social change and justice.

*Lola Levine is Not Mean* by Monica Brown - When Lola accidentally hurts her classmate during a recess soccer game, everyone calls her mean. Lola feels awful, but she knows that making a mistake doesn't make her mean. How can she make amends while also standing up for herself?



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