



Discussion Questions for *A Handful of Stars* by Cynthia Lord

When Lily's dog, Lucky, runs away across the blueberry barrens of Maine, it's Salma Santiago who manages to catch him. The daughter of migrant workers, Salma has accompanied her family to the small town for the blueberry-picking season. After their chance meeting and discovery of common bonds, Salma's friendship transforms Lily's summer. But when Salma decides to enter the upcoming Blueberry Queen pageant, the girls will have to face some tough truths about friendship and fitting in. Can an outsider like Salma ever truly belong?

1. How does Lucky help Lily make a new friend? What is the strangest way you've met a friend?
2. How does Salma feel about moving frequently? How do you think you would feel if your family moved a lot?
3. Lily believes that being brave is just feeling a little bit braver than you are scared. Discuss a time you felt scared but did something anyway.
4. How does Lily feel about Salma's birdhouses at first? How do her feelings change? (bee houses)
5. Salma's mother says that people can feel it when you think of them. Why does this idea make Lily feel happy?
6. Salma says, "It's scary to try something different when you don't know how it'll work out, but that's when the best things can happen." Do you think this is true?
7. Why is winning the Blueberry Queen contest so important to Salma?
8. Lily believes that Lucky only sees with his heart. How might the world be a better place if everyone saw things in the same way as Lucky?
9. What does Peperé say is the difference between giving up and letting go?
10. Why is the book called *A Handful of Stars*?