

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



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**Are you reading *All Four Stars* with your book club or class?  
These questions can help you kick off a delicious discussion.**

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## **Chapters 1 through 5**

1. After setting the kitchen curtains on fire while making crème brûlée, Gladys's parents punish her. Do you think their punishment fits her crime?
2. In Chapter 2, Gladys thinks back to the times she has tried to cook with her parents . . . and how it's always been a disaster. Are there any activities or projects that always tend to go wrong in your family? What kinds of changes might make them work better?
3. When the new teacher, Ms. Quincy, threatens to move any kids caught talking to each other, it makes Gladys like her more. Why do you think she feels that way? Do you prefer strict teachers, or more permissive ones?
4. "My Future" is the topic of the *New York Standard* Student Essay Contest. What would you write about if you entered? And what would you do with the \$500 if you won?

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## **Chapters 6 through 10**

1. These chapters introduce some new characters: picky Parm Singh and eats-anything Sandy Anderson. Which one are you more like?
2. When Gladys gets brave enough to share her food reviews with Sandy, he surprises her by asking for more. Have you ever shared something personal with someone else and been surprised by their reaction? How so?
3. When Gladys realizes that Ms. Quincy is about to read her essay out loud to the class, her heart pounds. Why do you think she feels so nervous?



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## Chapters 11 through 15

1. Anastasia the Intern plays an important role in getting Gladys's essay into the hands of the *New York Standard* Dining Section editor Fiona Inglethorpe. Do you think she is good at her job? Why or why not?
2. After Gladys finds out that she has lost the *New York Standard* contest, she throws a sandwich during the food fight. What leads to this action? Do you think Gladys makes a good choice?
3. Imagine yourself in the middle of the food fight that takes place in Gladys's school cafeteria. Would you be right in the thick of things throwing food, or hiding under the table? (*Author's note from Tara Dairman: "I would be hiding under the table!"*)

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## Chapters 16 through 20

1. In her first set of e-mails with editor Fiona Inglethorpe, Gladys fails to mention her age. Why do you think she makes that choice? Would you reveal your age in a similar situation?
2. In Chapter 16, Sandy's mom makes hot chocolate "the old-fashioned way." Also, Gladys has to find a paper copy of the newspaper instead of reading articles on the Internet. Can you think of some other examples in the story where the "old-fashioned way" works best? What about in real life?
3. At the end of Chapter 18, Sandy asks "And anyway, what are friends for?" How has he shown himself to be a true friend to Gladys?



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## Chapters 21 through 25

1. All of the chapter titles in *All Four Stars* refer to food in some way. Consider the titles of chapters 20 and 21: “Easy as Tiramisu” and “Like a Pie to the Face.” What do they mean to you? How does each one set up your expectations for the chapter to come?
2. Charissa creates a competition of sorts to decide who will get to join her on her birthday outing to New York City. What is fair about this plan? What is unfair about it?
3. In these chapters, Gladys prepares desserts from Malaysia and India. Have you ever eaten any dishes from these countries? What is your favorite food from another country, and what food or cuisine would you most like to try?

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## Chapters 26 through 30

1. To win—and keep—her trip into New York City with Charissa, Gladys has to do certain things she doesn’t enjoy (like wear a purple dress and listen to the *Glossy Girl* CD). Do you think Gladys compromises too much? Is achieving her goal of becoming a published restaurant critic worth these sacrifices?
2. Compare and contrast Gladys’s first solo visit to Classy Cakes with her second visit, accompanied by the Bentleys. Which one is more exciting? Which one is more productive?
3. Back at school after their outing to Classy Cakes, Charissa and Gladys make “a date for a date” to get together and cook. Do you think that they’ll be true friends from now on? Why or why not?
4. Is the ending of this book satisfying? Do you like to imagine what will happen next for Gladys, or do you think the author should have spelled things out more clearly?

(Bonus question: How do you think Gladys will explain the \$1000 check to her parents?)



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## After Reading

1. You've probably spent some time thinking about what kind of career you might like to have when you're finished with school. If, like Gladys, you were given a chance to try that career out early, would you take it? How would you handle challenges like the ones Gladys faces in finishing her review? What choices might you make differently?
2. At the beginning of *All Four Stars*, Gladys's "whole secret cooking life flashed before her eyes." If, at the end of the book, her **future** life as a foodie flashed before her eyes, what do you think she would see?
3. Many characters undergo changes over the course of *All Four Stars*—Gladys's parents, Charissa, and even Gladys herself. Who do you think has changed the most? Why?
4. Do you think Gladys should have told her parents about her assignment for the *New York Standard*? What about her editor? How do you think things would have been different if she had been completely honest from the beginning?



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## BOOK INFORMATION



Eleven-year-old Gladys Gatsby has been cooking gourmet dishes since the age of seven, only her fast food loving parents have no idea. Her dream is to become a restaurant critic—but with parents who won't cook unless they are microwaving, and friends who would laugh at her if they knew how much she loved crème brûlée and arugula, she's never even come close to eating a real four-star meal.

But everything changes when Gladys gets an e-mail from the world-famous *New York Standard* newspaper. After reading Gladys's food writing in an essay contest, they think she's a professional writer and want her to review New York's hottest new dessert bistro. Gladys can't believe her luck! But to keep her dream job, she'll have to cook her way into the heart of her sixth-grade nemesis and sneak into the city without her parents knowing—all while keeping her identity a secret. Easy as pie, right?

**Hardcover:** 978-0-399-16252-7 • July 10, 2014 • Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

**Paperback:** 978-0-142-42636-4 • April 7, 2015 • Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

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## DON'T MISS GLADYS GATSBY'S NEXT FOODIE ADVENTURE!



**Hardcover:** 978-0-399-17069-0 • May 5, 2015 • Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7



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## AUTHOR BIO:



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Tara Dairman is the author of *All Four Stars*, *The Stars of Summer*, and *Stars So Sweet*, as well as a playwright and recovering world traveler. She grew up in New York and received a B.A. in Creative Writing from Dartmouth College. After surviving the world's longest honeymoon (two years, seventy-four countries!), she now lives with her husband in Colorado.

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