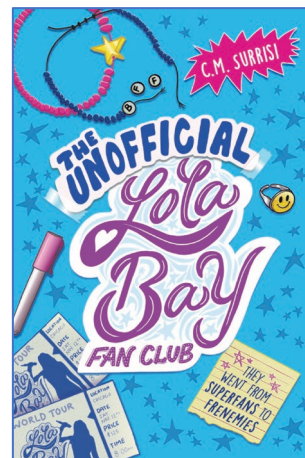


# *The Unofficial Lola Bay Fan Club*

## Discussion Questions

**Read through these questions to choose those your book club or discussion group will find intriguing.**



1. Iris and Leeza have been friends all their lives. They have a rich history together. Still, when they start middle school, something changes. Their interests begin to diverge. Do you think this is normal? How does a shift in interests affect a friendship?
2. When Iris and Leeza attend the first meeting of the Official Lola Bay Fan Club, they are shocked to find mean girls Melanie and her friends take over the club. Why did Melanie think she could take over the club? Is there anything Iris and Leeza could have done to prevent this?
3. While Iris and Leeza are reeling from the shock of Melanie taking over the club, Dana steps up in their defense. She confronts the haughty Melanie in a way that Iris has never seen before and offers to join with Iris and Leeza in an “Unofficial Lola Bay Fan Club.” If you had been in Iris and Leeza’s shoes, what would your reaction have been to Dana? Why?
4. Soon after Dana becomes part of the Unofficial Lola Bay Fan Club, Leeza begins to withdraw and switches to playing volleyball. How does Iris feel about this? Does Dana’s presence soften the blow of Leeza’s drifting away? If Leeza hadn’t left the Unofficial Lola Bay Fan Club, would Dana’s influence have been as strong on Iris? Why or why not?
5. As Iris spends more and more time with Dana, they are always at Iris’ house. Dana nominates Iris to be president of the club, which thrills Iris. What are some of the other things that Dana does that make Iris like her?

6. Dana is always on Iris' computer doing things that seem like hacking, such as her activities on the school library webpage where she checks out books in Melanie's name. How does Iris react to this? What does Dana say to put her mind at ease? Iris "secretly" wishes Dana had used her own password. Why doesn't she say something? What would your reaction have been if you had been Iris?
7. Dana frequently surfs to the Lola Bay merch paywall and tries to break through. Iris asks her why she does this and Dana replies that it's fun. Iris doesn't press her on whether it's right or not. Should she have? Or was it reasonable that Iris would remain silent?
8. Iris's mom starts asking a lot of questions about Dana. She doesn't appear to like her, which makes Iris mad. Why? Do moms and dads have a good reason for knowing about your friends? If so, how much? If not, why?
9. Iris takes an unplanned bike ride to Dana's house where, from the bushes, she observes an exchange between Dana and her mother that makes her shiver. Why did the conversation make Iris shiver? What did that exchange tell you about Dana and her mother?
10. Iris focuses her artwork on Lola Bay and Manga versions of Lola Bay. Her art teacher Ms. Wells questions what she's going for in her drawings and her deeper meanings in her work. She talks about how artists "Art it out." What do you think she means by this?
11. Both Ms. Wells and Dana talk about artists having influences. What do they mean by this? In what ways are you influenced by friends, music, social media? Which of these influences are positive and which are bad or questionable? How do you encourage good influences and shut out bad influences?
12. Iris finally questions Dana about her obsession with punking Melanie Fish Face. When she learns of Dana's reason, she is more accepting of it. Is Dana's reason a good reason? How does Dana's reason help to shape her character?
13. Iris presses Dana to take her to her house where she sees Dana's room, which is a shrine to Lola Bay. While they are there, Dana announces that they will have a secret snack and what it will be. Then she invents a lyrics game with an unusual penalty for losing. Does Dana's "makeover" penalty bring Iris more under Dana's control? How does Iris react to Dana's controlling behavior?

14. Leeza reaches out to Iris and invites her to attend a volleyball practice and go for pizza with a group. She tells Iris she can invite Dana to come along. Dana's reaction is harsh. She tells Iris, "You go have fun with Leeza," and she walks away. What kind of pressure is Iris under as she tries to manage these two conflicting friendships?
15. Ms. Wells urges Iris to paint something other than Lola Bay. Is it good to be pressed to do things out of your comfort zone? Is Ms. Wells a good influence on Iris? If so, in what way?
16. Iris goes to Leeza's practice and to pizza afterwards with a group of friends including Leeza's new friend Regina and a few boys, including one that Leeza is crushing on. How does Iris feel about the dynamics of this social event? What does it tell her about her evolving relationship with Leeza?
17. Iris' mom really doesn't like Leeza. She accuses her of being a bad influence and not a "nice" girl. What do you think her mother means by "nice girl." Why does Iris resist this and defend Dana? Is her mother's pressure raising Iris' awareness of Dana's negative traits or pushing her more towards Dana?
18. Iris finds solace in Lola Bay's music. She relates to the lyrics and is moved by the music. In what way do music and lyrics soothe her? Give some examples of lyrics that Iris relates to and how they help her. Do you listen to music that has a soothing affect on you? If so, What music and why does it have this affect?
19. Dana confronts Iris about going out with Leeza and her friends. She tells her she shouldn't talk to Leeza anymore, and that a person can't have two best friends. How does Iris react to this? What kind of pressure does this put on Iris? Do you agree that a person can't have more than one best friend? Why or why not?
20. Bethany, Paige, Callie, and Salima see Iris' manicure and learn about the lyrics game. They want to join the Unofficial Lola Bay Fan Club so they can get in on the fun. What happens when they all get together for a club meeting? Her mom tells her she has to learn to make healthy and safe choices for herself. What could Iris have done to avoid the problems that arose?

21. Rather than having a negative impact on the Unofficial Lola Bay fan Club, the episode at Iris' house causes all the girls (and more) to want to join the club. Dana tells Iris she won't agree to opening the membership beyond the two of them, and the next day Melanie's "Official" club is having a membership drive and Lola Bay Lyrics Contest. Iris' is furious with Melanie for stealing their game idea, but she's caught between wanting her club to get bigger and Dana not wanting more girls join the club. What would you have done? Would you have argued with Dana to open the club? What reasons would you give her?
22. When the new Lola Bay tour dates are announced, Dana talks Iris into using her mother's credit card to secure tickets on line. What were your thoughts about the conversation that led Iris to agree to do this? How did she justify it? If you found yourself in this situation, what do you think you would do?
23. After the new Lola Bay tour dates are announced, Melanie shows up at school with new Lola Bay flash and merch including washable tattoos. Dana talks Iris into agreeing to hack into the Official Lola Bay Fan Club website to get the same things for free. Iris is both resistant to this and eager to have what Melanie has. skilled enough to hack into a website to steal cool things, would you participate in the effort? Why or why not?
24. Dana takes a stack of magazines from the library donation box and Iris questions whether that is stealing from the library. What is Dana's explanation for why it is not. When Iris tries to vet this question with her mother, what is her mom's reaction? What is your reaction? Should this one isolated action by Dana be ignored or is it part of pattern of conduct that reflects her character? Why or why not?
25. When Dana and Iris disagree, Dana has a pattern of being distant and ignoring Iris until Iris longs for a reconciliation. Then Dana offers to forgive Iris and give another chance. What is your reaction to this method Dana uses to keep Iris in the relationship? How can a person break the cycle of being manipulated by a so-called friend?

26. Dana walks Iris down the path of signing up for the “What’s Your Dream” website in order to raise money for their trip to the Lola Concert in Chicago. What was your reaction to each step Iris took along the way at Dana’s urging. What were you feeling for Iris at the time you read the scene? Did you want her to refuse to do it? Why or why not?
27. Iris obsessively watches the money grow in the golden bucket to see if they will be able to pay her parents back and go to the concert in Chicago. She repeatedly asks Dana if her dad is going to go with them but Dana puts her off saying she hasn’t asked him but she’s sure he will. Does it bother Iris that Dana is not asking her dad? Is there anything she could have done about it?
28. Just when the golden bucket has reached the amount they need to fund their trip to the concert, Iris’s dad throws a wrench in the works by announcing the family is going to a Greek Festival that weekend. Iris reacts negatively but doesn’t tell them her reasons. Dana reassure her that they will be going to Chicago with her dad. What was your reaction to Iris not telling her parents about the concert?
29. Throughout Iris’ ups and downs, she listens to and hums various Lola Bay songs. She obviously connects to the music and lyrics and Lola’s persona. Leeza teases her about her fanning Lola Bay to the point it brings tears to Iris’ eyes. Is there a pop star whose work you connect with in this way? If so, can you describe the connection?
30. Dana enlists Iris in another prank involving sending false text messages to Melanie and causing her serious trouble with her friends. Iris “sort of” regrets it later. What was your reaction to the level of meanness in the text prank? Should Iris have refused to participate or was it just all in fun? Why or why not?
31. Iris enters the Stars in Cars contest to ride and sing with Lola Bay in Minneapolis on the morning of the concert. Dana argues that if Iris wins the contest, they will need airline tickets to get to the concert that night in Chicago. Iris resists charging the tickets to her parents credit card until they have the money in the golden bucket to cover it. Dana says, “Fine, We’ll have to think of a way to get those contributions coming in faster.” Is this the point at which Dana takes matters into her own hands? Should Iris have warned her not to do anything sketchy? Why or why not?

32. Iris' daydreams about making it to the concert are interrupted by a text telling her she has won the Stars in Cars contest. Her parents are happy for her and proud, and they agree to sign the waivers so she can do it. They also agree to skip their plans for the Greek Festival to go with her and support her. Is this the way you would expect parents to react? How does it show the strong bonds in Iris' family?
33. People start leaving gifts and casseroles at Iris' front door, and her parents receive condolences for some mysterious misfortune. Coincidentally the contributions to the golden bucket soar to over \$20,000. It's at this point that Iris learns Dana has changed her "What's Your Dream Page" to say that her dad has lost his job and the Underwoods will have to live in their car. Iris goes into a rage and demands Dana give her the password so she can take it down, but Dana says she doesn't have it, and begs Iris not to tell anyone she did it for fear of her own mother's harsh reaction. Do you believe Dana really doesn't have the password? Has Iris finally had enough of Dana, and can she see her for what she is? If a friend did this to you, what would you do?
34. Everyone at school is being nice to Iris and treating her with genuine sympathy. She doesn't say anything to correct them and just avoids the issue. How did you feel about her not telling them the truth? What would you have done if you were in her shoes?
35. When Iris gets home, she finds her parents are upset. They work with her to take the post down. The mess Iris is in compounds as it all comes out. Her parents are mad, but when they learn Dana put up the post, they have some sympathy for her anguish. They agree she can go to the Stars in Cars event the next day. How do you feel her parents handled the situation? In what way? How do you feel Iris handled it? In what way? She didn't keep Dana's secret. Was the right thing to do? Why or why not?
36. The next day, at the Stars in Cars event, Iris has to decide whether she will tell Lola Bay about the false website posting. Before she can do that, Lola Bay shows her a giant check that she is going to present to Iris' family and tells her about a song she wrote from her winning contest answer. Iris breaks down and tells her everything. How do you feel that conversation went? How did Lola Bay handle it? How did Iris handle it? Would you have done anything differently? If so, what?

37. After the Lola Bay conversation, Iris is confronted by Dana in the Ladies Room. What was your reaction to Dana's attacks on Iris? What did Iris do in response? Do you agree with her approach? Why or why not?
38. After the entire Lola Bay fiasco: Iris reconciles with Leeza, but still doesn't want to play volleyball; she goes back to school and the rest of the kids are sympathetic that she didn't get to take the Stars in Cars ride; and she's invited by Melanie to join the Official Lola Bay Fan club which she turns down. In the last scene, on the ride home on the bus, she ruminates about her situation and decides to give herself a second chance. How did you feel about the ending? Was it satisfying? If so, why? If not, why?