Introduction:

For twelve-year-old Lucy Crandall, the last week of August is the most perfect time in the world. It’s the week she gets to spend with Grams at the lake house, canoeing, baking cookies, and glazing pots in Grams’s potting shed. Grams has a way of making Lucy feel centered, like one of the pots on her kick wheel—perfect, steady, and completely at peace. But this summer, Grams doesn’t seem to be exactly the person she once was. And as the week turns into a roller coaster of surprises—some good, some awful—Lucy can’t help but wonder: Will things ever be centered again?

Discussion Questions

1. Look at the description in the first paragraph: “Lucy sat on the porch steps with her arms hugging her legs and a big black bag over her head.” The author goes on to explain that Lucy is in a funk. Discuss the description – did it make you feel Lucy’s funk? Try your hand at descriptive writing: What are some emotions you’ve felt and how would you describe them?

2. Discuss Lucy’s obligation to Eddie and Mrs. Munch. Was it okay for Lucy to lie to them about an appointment so she could go to the pool instead of staying with Eddie?

3. Megan says that Eddie is not normal. Lucy wants to defend him but doesn’t. Why does Lucy have conflicted feelings about Eddie?

4. What does Lucy like about Eddie?

5. Define “popular.” What does it mean to be popular at school? What do you think about Megan’s “Twelve Top Tips for How to be Popular”?

6. Why does Lucy admire her Grams?

7. Grams says, “It’s something to think about, isn’t it? Who we are and what we choose to call ourselves.” What does she mean? How does Grams help Lucy consider who she wants to be?
8. What does it mean to be an artist? Grams is an artist and, it turns out, Eddie is too. Why does Lucy want to be one?

9. Are there any other ways that Grams and Eddie are alike? Why does Gram’s condition frighten Lucy and make her sad? Yet Lucy is not frightened by Eddie’s condition. Why?

10. How does Lucy’s relationship with Eddie change by the end of the book?

11. Discuss how Lucy changes by the end of the book. Read again and compare the opening scene to the closing scene. Which Lucy do you like better?

About the Author
Valerie Hobbs is the author of several books, including Sheep and Defiance. She lives in Santa Barbara, California, with her husband.

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www.fsgkidsbooks.com
Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books.

http://www.valeriehobbs.com/
Contains more information about the author and her books.

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