



Finding Miracles Discussion Questions

1. In the novel's opening chapter, Milly claims to be allergic to herself. What does she mean by this? Give some examples of moments when this allergic reaction occurs and explain what causes it.
2. Early in the novel, Milly confesses, "The point is: I totally pass as 100 percent American, and as un-PC as this is going to sound, I'm really glad." Why do you think Milly is so afraid to reveal that she's adopted? How would you react to such news from a classmate?
3. When the Kaufmans go to the Bolivars' apartment to watch the election results, Pablo is noticeably troubled, leading Milly to comment that she's never seen anyone her own age so distraught over politics. The most important election in her life so far is the one for Ralston's student government. Do you feel similarly shielded from political worries? Do you follow elections: locally, nationally, or globally? Are there political issues that affect your daily life?
4. In chapter five, Happy reveals to Milly that she, too, is a kind of orphan. What does she mean by this? Is Happy making a valid comparison?
5. During her stay with the Bolivars in her birth country, Milly gets a vision of family life – especially in terms of extended family – that is very different from her own. The easy affection of Tia Dulce, for example, is a far cry from Happy's reserve. What other differences do you notice in the family routines and attitudes?
6. Why is Kate so negative about Milly's trip with the Bolivars? Are her concerns justified?

7. The importance of names – both the ones we are given and the ones we choose – is central to the novel. How is this theme reflected in the stories of both Milly and Happy?
8. At one point, Pablo tells Milly, “Some say let us forget the past and build the future. Others say we cannot build the future without knowing the past.” Kate – and to some degree, Milly’s parents – seem to advocate the former strategy, but Milly isn’t convinced. What do you think? Is it always better to know the historical truth, or does a focus on the past keep us from moving forward? Does Milly find what she’s looking for in her birth country? Is it worth the worry it causes her family in Vermont?
9. What do you think Dona Gloria means when she tells Milly and Pablo that she’s counting on them to “bring more light”? Do they fulfill this request? How?

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