

# Community Matters Family Book Club

## Discussion Guide

### Monthly Book Pick:

Strange Birds  
by Celia C. Pérez



### Season Dates and Times

Thursday, June 10th @ 6 pm CST

Thursday, July 8th @ 6 pm CST



## This Month's Theme: Environmentalism

This year's summer reading theme is Tales and Tails. And what better way to celebrate and explore than by reading Celia C. Pérez's book *Strange Birds*? Use this guide to explore concepts like friendship, identity, and standing up for what's right. Like any book club, please navigate these conversations with patience and kindness. Our intent is to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Sincerely,

Sam, Jenny, Mary, Tiffany, Christina  
The Community Matters Planning Team

**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
KANSAS

**Library**



Photo of Author Celia C. Pérez

# Conversation Starters

What surprised you about this book?

What was your favorite part?

Cat, Aster, Ofelia and Lane are activists and take action to change things they believe are wrong. What are some important issues you would like to change?

What skills or talents could you use and what sort of action could you take?

## Themes

- Making Friends
- Activism
- Ownership
- Redlining
- Civil Disobedience
- Divorce
- Family Structure
- Primary Sources

## Discussion Questions

1. Ida B Wells, Nellie Bly, and Ida Tarbell were all famous muckrakers mentioned in *Strange Birds*. What is a muckraker and why were they important?
2. Lane says “marriage is just a financial arrangement...a contract”. What do you think? How do you see marriage?

# Discussion Questions: Continued...

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3. Ofelia and Aster talk about a wall. What is the wall? Why do you think Lane does not know about the wall but the other girls do?
  
4. Before she meets Mrs. DiSanti Aster is a little afraid of her. What does Aster learn about Mrs. DiSanti after meeting her in person?
  
5. Ofelia's parents escaped from Cuba when they were very young and survived without adults to help them the United States. Why do you think they are so protective of Ofelia when they were able to manage by themselves when they were young?
  
6. Lane's father keeps trying to call her but she will not talk to him. Why do you think it is hard for Lane to talk to her parents?
  
7. Cat cares so much about pleasing her mother she does not tell her mom when she stops going to the Miss Floras meetings. How would it be easier and safer if Cat could be honest with her mom?
  
8. Aster thinks about ownership and wonders how one family can own all the property the DiSanti's own. What do you think about ownership? Should everything be shared equally? Should people who work hard and save more own more? Do hard work and saving work equally for all people? Why? Why not?
  
9. Aster's grandfather wants to know the truth about whether his family brought the winter sun orange to Sabal Palms. Why do you think this matters so much to him? How does your family history affect you?

# Discussion Questions: Continued...

10. The birds that were killed to make the Miss Floras hat died a long time ago and even if the hat is not used anymore it won't change what happened in the past. Why does it still matter?

11. The Floras are supposed to care about the environment but an important symbol of the group (the hat) was made by killing birds. What sort of message are the Floras sending others by using the hat as a symbol of their group?

## Additional Resources

### 12 kids who are changing their communities and our world

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/kidspost/2020/04/11/12-kids-who-are-changing-their-communities-our-world/>

### Want to be a youth activist? Here are some tips | CBC Kids News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1Fx3m2oPC4>

### Roots and Shoots

<https://www.rootsandshoots.org/>

### Alliance for Climate Education

<https://acespace.org/>



Art By Angie Quintanilla Coates