



The First Love Cookie Club

By **Lori Wilde**
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1. This novel explores the 'wounds' that hold people back in life. Are Sarah's emotional wounds understandable? How does her physical wound complicate her emotional healing?
2. What are some of Travis's wounds? How do his wounds differ from Sarah's? In what ways are his coping mechanisms more effective than hers?
3. The community is a strong influence in this story. What do the members of *The First Love Cookie Club* teach Sarah? What do they offer Sarah that her own family did not?
4. The annual Dickens Christmas event is very important to the town of Twilight. Why do you think the author chose Dickensian symbolism? In what way is it a metaphor for Sarah's emotional journey?

5. Secrets are an important theme in this novel. Sarah has a secret scar. Travis's Aunt Raylene has a dark secret. Even Travis's ex-wife Crystal has a secret. How common are secrets in families? Have secrets been kept in your family?

6. Sarah grew up isolated from her brilliant heart surgeon parents. She learned to live in her own head and spun stories to comfort herself. These stories led her to be an author of children's books, but her coping mechanism of withdrawing has kept her from fully embracing life. Do you believe Sarah has learned better coping skills?

7. In order to deal with his grief over his wife's death, Travis's father isolated himself from others. How is Sarah's isolation different from that of Travis's father? What important lessons did she learn that Travis's father did not?

8. Christmas cookies are an important element in *The First Love Cookie Club*. Cookie swaps are a popular holiday activity. What is it that the cookies offer to Sarah and the ladies of the Cookie Club? What do the cookies really represent?

9. Travis tells Sarah that 'Scars are just evidence of where you've been, they're not markers of where you're going.' What are some examples of this throughout the story? How have people allowed scars to hold them back? Who is the one person who doesn't let anything hold her back?

10. Raylene has a dark secret that once it's exposed damages her marriage. Did the secret change your feelings about Raylene? The author purposely chose not to resolve Raylene's story line. Would you have liked more closure for that character? Or do you appreciate that life is more fluid and things can't always be tied up with a pretty bow?

11. Finding out Crystal's secret makes it easier to understand her behavior. Still, she is a mother who abandoned her child. Does she deserve a second chance at being Jazzy's mother? Or are there some actions that can never be redeemed?

12. *The First Love Cookie Club* teaches us that it is possible to heal old wounds. Through loving Jazzy, Sarah comes to understand her parents better and they are able to take steps toward bridging the gap between them. What has this novel shown us about love, belonging, community, forgiveness, and healing?