

***How Sweet It Is* Discussion Questions**

Have you ever wanted to leave a location and start over? If so, why? Where did you imagine you would go? If you have ever made a big move, did it solve any problems? Did it give you a new perspective?

Deena falls into the trap of focusing on outward appearances. Do you have any imperfections you try to hide? Have you ever wished you looked like someone else? Why do you think society places so much emphasis on people's outward appearance?

In an uncomfortable situation, Deena resorts to the familiar. Can you understand her need to make a velvet cake after her first day of teaching? Do you ever feel like you have to prove to yourself you still have what it takes when things don't go your way? What helps you feel better after a difficult day?

How does Deena handle the story of what has happened to Darren? Do you think her reaction is appropriate? Has child abuse impacted your life in any way?

Have you ever inherited something, big or small? What was it? Were you surprised to receive it? Did it affect the way you thought about the person who left it to you?

What did you think of Jonas? Do you know anyone like him? What was your favorite piece of "Jonas wisdom"?

A major theme of this novel is recognizing the need to forgive—and then following through. Have you ever found it difficult to forgive someone? Why are some people easier to forgive than others? Do you ever have trouble forgiving yourself?

Grandpa Ernest thought a lot of his granddaughter. Why do you think he left the cabin to Deena? Why did he ask that she teach at The Center? What did Deena learn from Charlotte, Darren, and the rest of the kids? If you were assigned to teach a group of middle-school students, would you welcome or dread the experience?

How has Deena's mother influenced the way Deena has turned out? What do you think Deena's personality was like before she met Lucas? Is Lucas really to blame for Deena's problems?

What did you think of Regena Lorraine, Marble Gray, and Chef B? What parts did

they play in Deena's recovery?

Are Deena and Zack a good match? Do you see a future for them? Do you think Deena will stay in Bryson City?

What's your favorite kind of cake? What are your favorite foods? Do you have any kitchen utensils or other objects you treasure because of how you received them?