

# MORSELS FOR THE MIND BOOK GROUP

**Date:** 03/16/2015

**Hostess:** Laura Lewakowski

**Book Title:** Ice Cream Queen of Orchard Street

**Author:** Susan Jane Gilman

**Book Synopsis:** Set in the early 1900s in NYC, the story of little Russian Malka who is crippled by an Italian icee vendor's horse. He takes her in and raises her, where she learns about making ice cream. She is an ambitious woman, and transforms herself into the "Ice Cream Queen" Lillian Dunkle. She is an astute business woman, although not always an ethical one, and her past eventually catches up with her.

## **Our Review:**

We all enjoyed Malka/Lillian's style. Her spunk, her ambition, her drive to succeed! "So SUE me! I Worry!" Loved how she enjoyed her grandson's company and her eagerness to share his music (and his pot). A real "sweet" rags to riches story! We also found the author's story to be quite entertaining as well. She too (like Lillian) is known for her straight-forwardness, big mouth, and ability to overcome obstacles. A real mensch!

**Food Served:** Oh gosh. We had a variety of Jewish food - knish, matzo ball soup, challah bread and kosher dills. Smoked salmon spread with veggies and bagel chips. Icees! (Luigi's frozen push up ices) and "fountain soda pop" (Root beer, cream soda, and ginger beer); Manashevitz grape wine; and also Arancini (Italian rice balls stuffed with mozzarella) with marinara. For dessert we had fun making homemade ice cream using Laura's ice cream machine. We also made Chunky Monkey "ice cream" in the food processor using only sliced frozen bananas, walnuts and mini chocolate chips. Delish!

## **Highlights of Discussion:**

We were very interested in the historical tie-ins: how they thought polio was caused by ice cream; the ice cream barges and WWII accounts; living in the tenement housing in NYC; and also how little Jewish Malka/Lillian was raised as an Italian Catholic. Nancy S brought 3 books – Yiddish with Dick and Jane, and two others about basic Yiddish. Nancy M brought along her Candy Land board – a family heirloom! We learned about the history of the game and how it tied into the book – created in 1949 who designed it while recovering from polio!

**Attendance:** Anne S, Nancy D, M and S, Sandy, Julie and Laura

**Business/Suggestions:** Next month we are meeting at Nancy D's to discuss Tell the Wolves I am Home.

Nancy S brought up the possibility of the group attending a weekend seminar about Hemingway in Petosky in October.