

***The Pretty One* by Lucinda Rosenfeld**

**Questions and topics for discussion**

1. Olympia is supposed to be “the pretty one” in her family, as well as “the flaky one,” “the chronically late one,” and “the artistic one.” To what extent do you think the labels are accurate? How do you think they’ve hindered or encouraged her progress in life? If you are a sister (or brother), what is your reputation in the family, and how do you think it has affected you as an adult?
2. Characterize the dynamic among the three Hellinger sisters when we first encounter them together on New Year’s Day. Do you think they treat one another fairly? Unfairly? Explain.
3. What do you think of Olympia’s having sought out information about the anonymous sperm donor she used to father a baby? In her circumstances, would you have done the same thing?
4. How does the Hellinger family dynamic seem to change after the sisters’ mother, Carol, is struck by a falling streetlamp bulb? More generally, what do you think of the way Carol has raised her daughters?
5. Speaking of motherhood, what do you think of Perri’s approach to raising kids? Do you think she’s too uptight? What about Olympia’s approach? In what ways are Perri and Olympia trying to do things differently from how Carol did them?
6. Do you think Perri is justified in walking out on Mike? How so?

7. How does the arrival of Jennifer Yu affect the Hellinger sisters? Do you think Olympia is right to forgive her father for what he did? Do you think Perri is right to be critical of Jennifer Yu for showing up at the house without an invitation?

8. Do you think Gus is meddling or acting out of love in going behind Olympia's back and trying to find out who Lola's father is?