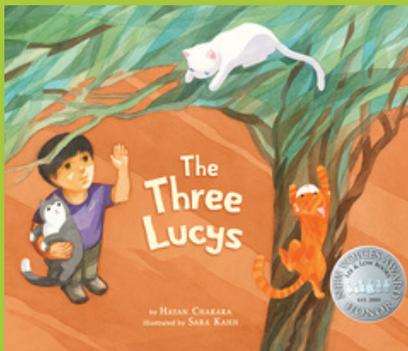


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

# The Three Lucys

written by *Hayan Charara*  
illustrated by *Sara Kahn*

## About the Book

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**\*Reading Level:** Grade 3

**Interest Level:** Grades 2–7

**Guided Reading Level:** P

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:** N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** Family, Pets, War, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Coping with Death, Courage, Cultural Diversity, Empathy and Compassion, World History, Home, Kindness and Caring, Multiethnic Interest, Muslim/Muslim American Interest, Middle Eastern/Arab American Interest, Overcoming Obstacles, Peace, Tolerance/Acceptance

## SYNOPSIS

All summer long, Luli likes to sit in the shade of an olive tree with his beloved cats: Lucy the Fat, Lucy the Skinny, and Lucy Lucy. But when Luli and his parents go to the city to see his aunt and uncle one weekend, the cats must stay behind at home.

After a fun visit with family, Luli is looking forward to going home and seeing the three Lucys again. But as the family nears home, their town comes under attack. Seeking safety and refuge back at his aunt and uncle's house, Luli doesn't understand what is happening and worries about his pets. Who will feed them? Who will keep the three Lucys safe? And when will he and his family be able to return home?

Recipient of Lee & Low's New Voices Honor award, *The Three Lucys* is inspired by real events of the July War in Lebanon. This tender story of loss, rebuilding, and healing is a tribute to the sustaining love of family, and to the power of the human spirit to hope for a peaceful future.

### Awards and honors for *The Three Lucys* include:

Junior Library Guild Selection



## BACKGROUND

**From the Author's Note:** The story of Luli and the three Lucys is based on true events. In the summer of 2006 war broke out on the border between Lebanon and Israel, an area with a long history of violence. On July 12, members of a Lebanese militia, Hezbollah, fired rockets into Israel. Three Israeli soldiers were killed and two others were captured. The Israeli armed forces responded with air strikes. Each day for just over a month, Israel launched between 3,000 and 6,000 bombs, rockets, and artillery rounds into Lebanon, devastating the country.

The short but destructive conflict is called the July War by the Lebanese. Parts of Lebanon, including the city where my family lived, were reduced to heaps of rubble. About 150 Israeli soldiers and citizens died, and the lives of more than 1,000 Lebanese were lost, most of them civilians. My grandfather was one of these civilians, as were a number of relatives and friends. Eventually a cease-fire was declared, and very slowly and painfully people began to rebuild their homes and their lives.

During this time, my little brother, whose nickname is Luli, was living in Lebanon. He was six years old, too young to have to experience the grief of war. This story is for him and for all the children of the world who, in the midst of larger conflicts, have lost people, places, and animals they love.—*Hayan Charara*

**Pets during wartime:** Unfortunately, many animals are left behind when people must flee their homes due to the dangers of war. These animals often face a slow death due to starvation, dehydration, injury or illness. There are a few organizations, such as World Animal Protection, who care for animals in disaster situations (<https://www.worldanimalprotection.org/our-work/animals-disasters>), but it can be hard for aid workers to bring the necessary veterinary supplies to war torn locations to help abandoned pets and livestock. Abandoned animals can become dangerous; they might attack when hungry or spread rabies or other diseases. Additional background information for teachers can be found in this article: <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/12/25/abandoned-house-cats-aleppo-405528.html>.

### Additional titles to teach about loss and healing:

***Bird*** written by Zetta Elliott, illustrated by Shadra Strickland

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2516>

***DeShawn Days*** written by Tony Medina, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2383>

***A House by the River*** written by William Miller, illustrated by Ying-Hwa Hu and Cornelius Van Wright

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2932>

***Janna and the Kings*** written by Patricia Smith, illustrated by Aaron Boyd

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2409>

***Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*** written by William Miller, illustrated by Ying-Hwa Hu and Cornelius Van Wright

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2478>

***A Song for Cambodia*** written by Michelle Lord, illustrated by Shino Arihara

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2510>

***Brothers in Hope: The Lost Boys of Sudan*** written by Mary Williams, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2368>

***Calling the Water Drum*** written by LaTisha Redding, illustrated by Aaron Boyd

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2940>

***Grandma's Purple Flowers*** written and illustrated by Adjoa J. Burrowes

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2400>

***The Wishing Tree*** written by Roseanne Thong, illustrated by Connie McLennan

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2889>



## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

olive tree, snow-peaked mountain, valley, Arabic, belly flop, hummus, street vendors, falafel, prayer beads, fig tree, horizon, bomb, “stomach in knots,” siren, cease-fire, crawl space

### Academic

lush, attack, huddle, blame, howl, crumbled, shattered, relieved, recognize, rebuild, peace

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Where is Lebanon? Can you find it on a map? What other countries are nearby? What might happen when two countries disagree with each other?
2. Do you have a cat? Do you know anyone who does? What do pet owners need to do to take care of cats? What would a cat owner need to think about if s/he was going away on vacation?
3. What helps you when you are scared or sad? Does anyone in your family help you?
4. How long is a weekend? How long is a month? What has happened in your life in the past month?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, illustrations, and author's note.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out about:

- about the three Lucys and what happens to them when Luli's family goes on vacation
- how Luli and his family cope with a scary and difficult situation

Encourage students to consider why the author, Hayan Charara, would want to share this story with young people. Draw their attention again to the author's dedication and author's note.



## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses.

**To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Who are the three Lucys? What do they like to do?
2. What information does the text give about Lebanon?
3. What does Luli do when he gets home from school?
4. Where do Luli and his parents go on their trip? What's it like? What do the Lucys do for the weekend?
5. What happens on the drive home from Beirut? What do Mama and Baba say? What does Luli think? What happens when they get back to Beirut?
6. What do the adults do in the basement? What does Luli do? What does he dream?
7. How does the family spend their days during the war? What does Luli say that makes everyone laugh?
8. What does Luli think about in the basement at night?
9. What happens on day thirty-four?
10. What does Luli see on the drive home? What happened to Luli's school? What do he and his parents see when they reach their house?
11. What does Luli notice about Lucy the Fat when she comes out of the crawl space? What about Lucy the Skinny?

12. How does Luli react when Lucy Lucy doesn't come out of the crawl space right away? When she doesn't return at all?
13. What does Luli see when he walks past his school?
14. What does Luli remember about Lucy Lucy?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does Luli love about the Lucys? How are people's relationships with their pets different than human relationships?
2. When the bombs start to fall, how can Luli tell, "Something awful is happening" even though Mama says not to worry? How do the adults respond to the bombing? How do their actions make Luli feel?
3. What's different about Luli's family's stay in Beirut during the war than their weekend trip there?
4. Luli thinks a lot about the Lucys during the war but doesn't talk about them. Why not? Why might someone keep their fears to themselves?
5. How do Luli and his family respond to the news of the cease-fire? How does the mood change as they made their way home? What does the author mean when he describes all the people as looking "lost"?
6. Why is Baba relieved when they see their house even though there was damage?
7. Why is it hard for Luli to accept that Lucy Lucy isn't coming back?
8. When Luli returns to his olive tree, what's the same? What has changed?
9. What does Luli mean when he says, "Little by little, our town is coming back to life?" Why do the construction workers work carefully around the one remaining fig tree in the schoolyard? What does this tree represent?
10. How does Luli's grief about losing Lucy Lucy change over time? How does living through the July War change Luli?



“Lebanese-American [Hayan] Charara deftly maneuvers through a child’s view of war. . . . Sadness is turned to hope and tragedy is turned to strength in this sensitive treatment.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

“. . . a frank, child’s eye view of the toll that war inflicts. . . . The evident destruction wrought by the bombing offers a somber, though not hopeless, entry point for discussions of loss and the consequences of war.”

–*Publishers Weekly*

“. . . the author has crafted a war story writ small for young readers. . . . VERDICT This book provides appropriate context for difficult topics, making it a good choice to spark discussion in libraries.”

–*School Library Journal*

### Reader’s Response

(*Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6*)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader’s response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Describe a character in the book that you think was brave. How did that person demonstrate bravery? Describe a person in your life that you consider brave. Give specific examples of how this person has demonstrated bravery.
2. Reflect on how Luli’s family supported one other during and after the July War. Give examples of how family members contributed to each other’s physical and emotional wellbeing.
3. How did the Lucys help Luli cope with the war? How did they help him heal afterwards? What are some other examples of how pets can be a positive influence on peoples’ lives?
4. This story begins and ends under the olive tree at Luli’s house. Why do you think Luli likes it there? What makes this a good place for him to reflect and remember? Describe a place where you like to go to think. Include the characteristics of this place that make it a good reflection spot for you.
5. How do Luli’s dreams comfort him in this story? Write about a dream of yours. How was it the same

or different than your real life? How did the dream make you feel?

6. Revisit the author’s dedication at the start of the book and the last paragraph of the author’s note. Why do you think Hayan Charara felt it was important to tell this story? How is this story sad? How is it hopeful?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(*Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6*)  
(*Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6*)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to



write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.

- Have students give a short talk about pets or a time they were brave.
- The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

- In this interview with Lee & Low, Hayan Charara says, “without imagery... *The Three Lucys* simply couldn't exist” (<http://blog.leeandlow.com/2016/07/14/shaping-voice-and-tackling-heavy-themes-in-childrens-stories/>). List examples of imagery in the book. Discuss how the book's figurative language brings the story to life. Later in the same interview, Charara says the image “My heart feels as heavy as an apple falling from a tree” took him a long time to compose. Ask students to

write and illustrate their own images to describe grief. You might also discuss possible images to convey feeling happy or at peace.

- Discuss the concept of “peace.” Read various dictionary definitions and agree upon a working definition of the word to be used in your class. Brainstorm characteristics of a “peaceful” classroom or school and ask students to make posters promoting peaceful actions. Teaching Tolerance offers valuable free resources for teachers to promote peaceful classrooms (<http://www.tolerance.org/kit/starting-small>).

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production and Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

- Practice using cardinal directions on a map and discuss geographical features. Using Luli's description of what lies in various directions from his spot under the olive tree, make guesses as to the location of his town on a map of Lebanon.
- Explore some of the Middle Eastern food mentioned in the book. For instance, bring in olives and poll the class about who likes them and who doesn't. Or, try making hummus and tasting it as a class. A simple recipe can be found here (<http://www.100daysofrealfood.com/2010/08/04/recipe-traditional-hummus/>).
- As a class, read about various organizations that support children affected by war (e.g., WarChild (<http://www.warchild.org/vision>), Save the Children ([http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMG1p14E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official\\_USA\\_Site.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMG1p14E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official_USA_Site.htm))). Discuss the various ways war can impact children, using examples from the book as a starting point. Choose an organization and plan a way to raise money to contribute as a class.
- Contact a local animal shelter and find out how your students could support efforts to place pets with families (e.g., students could make posters advertising an adoption event.).



### Art

(Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

Discuss how an olive tree (or olive branch) can symbolize peace. Have your students research other symbols of peace. Create collages or drawings to make a classroom display promoting peace.

### School-Home Connection

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Have your students ask family members what peace means to them. Compile a list of responses in your classroom.
2. Have your students share with their families their answers to Readers' Response Question 2 above about how Luli's family members supported one another in the story. Ask them to discuss together examples of how their family supports one another and write a list to share with the class.

### Additional titles to teach about children experiencing/coping with war:

***Sharing Our Homeland: Palestinian and Jewish Children at Summer Peace Camp*** written by Trish Marx, photographed by Cindy Karp  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2717>

***When the Horses Ride By: Children in the Times of War*** written by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Jan Gilchrist  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2473>

***Baseball Saved Us*** written by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2359>

***First Come the Zebra*** written and illustrated by Lynne Barasch  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2707>

***Heroes*** written by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2403>

***The Road to Santiago*** written by D. H. Figueredo, illustrated by Pablo Torrecilla  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2442>

***A Place Where Sunflowers Grow*** written by Amy Lee-Tai, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2770>

***Crazy Horse's Vision*** written by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by S. D. Nelson  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2380>

***Dia's Story Cloth*** written by Dia Cha, illustrated by Chue and Nhia Thao Cha  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2385>

***Flowers From Mariko*** written by Rick Noguchi and Deneen Jenks, illustrated by Michelle Reiko Kumata  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2392>



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Hayan Charara** makes his picture book debut with *The Three Lucys*, which is based on his family's experiences in Lebanon. He decided to write the story based on the encouragement of a friend to pursue LEE & LOW's New Voices Award. He is also the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellowship, author of three poetry collections, and editor of *Inclined to Speak: an Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry*, which garnered glowing reviews from *American Book Review*, *Booklist*, and *Library Journal*. Born in Detroit, Michigan, to immigrant parents, Charara currently lives with his family and a cat in Houston, Texas. His website is <http://www.hayancharara.com>.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Sara Kahn** is known for her emotive, transparent watercolor paintings, which have received numerous awards from painting and illustration competitions. Having lived in Iran during war and revolution, Kahn was moved by this story's tender portrayal of love and care for pets, family, and homeland. Her research for *The Three Lucys* included traveling to Lebanon and interviewing Lebanese families. She lives in San Francisco, California, with her husband and their cats. Find her online at <http://sarakahn.info/>.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

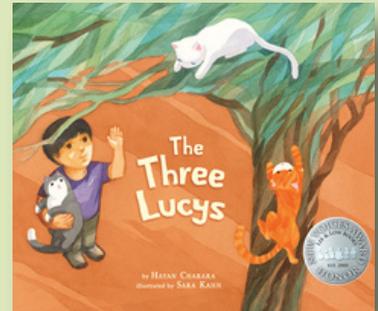
[www.leeandlow.com/books/2935](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/2935) (secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for *The Three Lucys*



\$18.95, HARDCOVER

978-1-60060-998-5

40 pages, 10-1/2 x 8-3/8

\*Reading Level: Grade 3

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 2–7

Guided Reading Level: P

Accelerated Reader® Level/  
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

**THEMES:** Family, Pets, War, Coping with Death, Courage, Empathy and Compassion, World History, Home, Kindness/Caring, Multiethnic Interest, Overcoming Obstacles, Peace, Sharing and Giving, Tolerance and Acceptance

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2935>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.