

book club questions

LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

- A lot has been said about the cover art for this book (namely that it looks more like a modern romance book than feminist fiction). What are your thoughts on the cover art?
- Why do you think Garmus chose the era of the 1950s-1960s as the time period of this story?
- How may this story differ if it were not set in Southern California?
- Why do you think Garmus chose chemistry as Elizabeth Zott's profession?
- Was it significant that Elizabeth Zott was self-educated?
- Discuss the pencil as a symbol in Lessons in Chemistry.
- What issues did Elizabeth Zott face in her professional life?
- What issues do you think Elizabeth Zott would face in her professional life today?
- Discuss the end of Elizabeth Zott's career at the Hastings Research Institute.
- How may Elizabeth Zott's life have been different if she were a man?
- How is Elizabeth Zott similar to and different from other women?
- How is Calvin Evans similar to and different from his colleagues?
- What do Calvin and Elizabeth see in each other?
- How did Calvin's and Elizabeth's family backgrounds shape them?
- Why do you think Garmus incorporated rowing in Lessons in Chemistry?
- Discuss Elizabeth's and the other characters' reactions to her pregnancy.
- Were you surprised by the way in which Elizabeth Zott became a single mother?
- Describe Elizabeth Zott as a single mother.
- What challenges does Elizabeth Zott face as a working single mother?

- What challenges may Elizabeth Zott face as a working single mother today?
- The name "Six-Thirty" is so unique and memorable. What did you think of the name and the character?
- Discuss the roles of various friends in Elizabeth Zott's life.
- Discuss the role of faith and religion in Lessons in Chemistry.
- Discuss the significance of a cooking show being Elizabeth Zott's second career.
- Describe the similarities and differences between Elizabeth Zott's jobs.
- Why did "Supper at Six" become a hit?
- Discuss the role of the *Life* Magazine article in Elizabeth Zott's life.
- What are Elizabeth Zott's strengths?
- What are Elizabeth Zott's values?
- Discuss the specific acts of sexism in Lessons in Chemistry.
- Can you relate to Elizabeth Zott?
- Did any of the circumstances Elizabeth Zott faced surprise you?
- Did the ending surprise you?
- Why do you think Elizabeth Zott made the choices she did at the end?
- Discuss the choices Avery Parker made and why she made them.
- What do you think would happen next in Elizabeth Zott's life?
- Do you think Elizabeth Zott's story reflects reality?
- Why is Lessons in Chemistry so popular? (over one million copies sold to date)
- Bonnie Garmus created a Spotify playlist for Lessons in Chemistry. What do you think of her song choices?
- Just for fun, share your favorite recipes and/or cooking tips.
- What is the theme of Lessons in Chemistry?
- Did you take away anything specific about the theme of feminism from Lessons in Chemistry?
- Discuss the tv adaptation of Lessons in Chemistry.
- Discuss the significance of Bonnie Garmus's debut novel (Lessons in Chemistry) being published when she was age 64.
- Is Lessons in Chemistry worth reading?

