

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?