

## **Book Club Questions for Summer Sisters by Judy Blume**

1. Which character, Victoria ("Vix") or Caitlin, do you relate to more in terms of personality? Are there similarities between your friendships and theirs? Have you ever encountered someone like "Caitlin"? Reflect on your own best friends and their significance in your life.
2. What draws Caitlin to befriend Vix initially? How does their friendship thrive? Consider what each of them gains from the relationship. What does Vix receive from Caitlin, and vice versa? How do these exchanges shape their bond?
3. Social class disparities are evident when Vix and Caitlin attend the Cotillion together. How does Caitlin's candid remark about the event highlight the divide between their backgrounds: "I could practically hear Caitlin saying, 'I thought this was going to be fun. A Cotillion. I've seen them on TV. Rich people with daughters in white dresses.'" Discuss how their differing socioeconomic statuses impact their attitudes and actions throughout the novel.
4. The enduring connection between Vix and Caitlin remains even as their paths diverge. What do you think sustains their closeness through the years and despite their evolving lives? How do their expectations of each other shift over time, and does this resonate with your own long-term friendships? How have your own enduring relationships transformed?
5. When Caitlin discusses Phoebe with Vix, Vix contemplates the idea that individuals might not always belong with the parents they have. Do you believe Vix is referring to her parents or Caitlin's? What does this reveal about Vix's sentiments toward both sets of parents? Do you agree with her perspective?
6. Martha's Vineyard serves as a sanctuary for Caitlin and Vix, but it also mirrors their inner conflicts. Explore the symbolism of the island, especially during the beach bonfire scene: "She looked out at the ocean, the moon's reflection shimmering on the water. This was the night, she thought. She could feel it." How does the island's serene beauty juxtapose with the emotional turmoil the characters experience?
7. How does Vix's relationship with Abby and Lamb influence her dynamics with her own family? To what extent does her strong bond with Caitlin's family shape her life differently? Could Vix have forged her own path independently of her friendship with Caitlin?
8. Consider the impact of Vix and Caitlin's respective backgrounds on their personalities. Would their core traits have remained unchanged if their circumstances were reversed? How do you envision their behavior in a world with reversed situations?

9. Judy Blume employs a non-linear narrative to explore the characters' past and present. Analyze how the shifting timelines reveal crucial moments in Caitlin and Vix's lives, such as Caitlin's wedding: "'Do you, Caitlin Somers, take this man...?' 'I do,' she said, her voice strong and sure." How does this narrative technique enhance your understanding of the characters' motivations and the development of their individual stories
10. Could a future between Vix and Bru ever have materialized? Was their breakup inevitable, or could she have pursued her fulfillment while being with him? Can you draw any parallels between their relationship and your own experiences with first love?
11. What prompts Caitlin's decision to pursue a relationship with Bru and eventually marry him? What aspects of a settled life and motherhood appeal to her? Was this a conscious choice on her part, or did circumstances lead her down this path?
12. The characters in the book often make choices that lead to both positive and negative consequences. Can you identify instances where decisions made by Vix, Caitlin, or other characters shaped their destinies? How do these choices reflect their values and priorities
13. How does Vix find it in herself to forgive Caitlin for her marriage to Bru, her abandonment of her daughter, and her subsequent disappearances? Why does Vix avoid probing into Caitlin's life beyond their friendship? Do you think Vix should have considered ending the friendship due to any of these critical junctures?
14. Judy Blume employs a unique narrative technique in the novel by providing insights into the thoughts of various characters, but deliberately excluding Caitlin. What might be the author's purpose behind this narrative choice?
15. What specific qualities captured your interest in each character? Which characters did you empathize with the most, and were there any you struggled to connect with? Share your reasons for these emotional responses.
16. The theme of unfulfilled dreams is prevalent in the novel. Which characters have dreams that go unrealized, and how do these unfulfilled aspirations impact their lives and relationships? What commentary might the author be making about the nature of ambition and desire
17. Did you perceive the ending as an inevitable outcome or a tragedy? Can you find common ground in your interpretation of the events? How do you respond to the deliberate ambiguity of the conclusion?