

**Book Club Questions for
Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus**

1. Elizabeth Zott is portrayed as a unique and determined woman in the field of chemistry. How did the author depict the challenges Elizabeth faced as a woman in STEM during the 1960s? Discuss her character's strengths and weaknesses.
2. In the early stages of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Dr. Mason expresses surprise at her continued rowing. How does this decision reflect Elizabeth's character and her commitment to her passions? In what ways does her dedication to rowing mirror her resilience in the face of adversity?
3. Calvin reveals to Elizabeth that he believes a wealthy man is his biological father. How does this revelation impact their relationship, and in what ways does it influence Calvin's perception of his own identity?
4. Walter initially proposes the cooking show as a way to keep his job, but over time, he becomes a supportive friend and ally to Elizabeth. Explore Walter's transformation and the pivotal moments that solidify his friendship with Elizabeth.
5. The novel is described as "the Catch-22 of early feminism." In what ways does Elizabeth Zott challenge societal norms, especially regarding women's roles? How does her journey reflect the broader issues of gender equality in the 1960s?
6. Harriet starts as Elizabeth's neighbor, providing support during difficult times. How does Harriet's character evolve, especially in her relationship with Walter, and what role does she play in Elizabeth's journey?
7. Explore the tension and resolution surrounding the bomb incident on the cooking show. How does Six-Thirty's role in detecting the threat contribute to the theme of loyalty and protection in the story?
8. Discuss Elizabeth's feelings of betrayal after Life magazine publishes a misleading article about her. How does this event impact her mental and emotional state, and in what ways does it shape her decisions moving forward?
9. Examine Frask's character development from being a source of conflict to a catalyst for change. How does her act of sending a letter to Life magazine contribute to Elizabeth's redemption in the eyes of the public?

10. Elizabeth's career takes unexpected turns, from groundbreaking research to hosting a cooking show. How does her professional journey impact her personal life? Discuss the choices she makes and the consequences she faces.
11. The novel boasts a "dazzling cast of supporting characters." Identify key supporting characters and discuss their roles in Elizabeth's life. How do they contribute to the overall narrative?
12. The book incorporates scientific elements, particularly in Elizabeth's unconventional approach to cooking. How does the author balance scientific concepts with storytelling? Did you find the scientific aspects engaging or challenging?
13. For those who have watched the Apple TV+ series, compare and contrast it with the book. How well do you think the adaptation captures the essence of the novel and its themes?
14. The novel is described as "laugh-out-loud funny" and "witty." Explore moments of humor in the story. How does the author use humor to address serious topics and keep the narrative engaging?
15. The book is inspired by the experiences of women in science during the 1960s. Discuss how the novel aligns with or diverges from real-life stories of women in STEM during that era.
16. Supper at Six becomes a platform for Elizabeth to empower women. Discuss the significance of her cooking show in challenging societal norms and promoting change. How does she use this unconventional platform to convey her message?
17. Some reviews mention the ending feeling like a "drop off a cliff." Without revealing spoilers, share your thoughts on the conclusion. Did the ending feel satisfying or leave you with unanswered questions?
18. The novel explores themes of resilience and empowerment. In what ways does Elizabeth embody these themes? Discuss specific instances where she overcomes challenges and empowers herself and others.
19. Considering the themes of gender equality and societal expectations, discuss the relevance of *Lessons in Chemistry* in today's context. How much progress has been made, and what challenges still persist?
20. What is the significance of Elizabeth always wearing a pencil in her hair? Is it a symbol of strength or a weapon?

21. Elizabeth challenges societal limits and encourages others to do the same. How do characters in the book rise to this challenge, and in what ways have you or others been restricted by societal norms?
22. Six-Thirty, the pet, highlights human communication issues. What does "smart" mean to you, and have you ever thought about the lessons your pet might be trying to teach you?
23. The book explores faith beyond religious doctrine. What role does religion play in the story? What is a Humanist? How does psychology explain the human desire to believe in something greater, and why do characters in the book emphasize personal responsibility?
24. Male characters in the book sympathize with Elizabeth but struggle to stand up for women and minorities in the workplace. Why do well-intentioned people find it challenging to speak up, and what are the consequences of remaining silent?
25. Despite facing challenges, Elizabeth remains resilient. What fuels her resilience, and why, even after achieving stardom, does she feel more miserable than ever?
26. Harriet Sloane is an avid magazine reader. How do magazines and media shape culture, and what did Harriet mean by advising Elizabeth to "recommit"? Is there a dream of yours that you wish to recommit to?
27. Friendship and family are central themes. Can friendships sometimes provide a better sense of family than biological connections? How do you define family?
28. Mad's family tree combines whimsy with truth. If humans are almost exactly the same, why do we treat each other so differently?
29. Today, do you believe that a man experiencing a day as a woman in America might face significant challenges, as suggested in the Life Magazine reporter's conversation with the audience members? Is there still a need for change in gender perceptions?
30. Elizabeth and Calvin faced jealousy and resentment from their colleagues at Hastings Research Institute. Why do you think their co-workers were so envious or resistant to their success, creating a Mean Girls-like atmosphere in the workplace?

31. Elizabeth and Calvin had significant gaps in what they shared with each other, yet their relationship remained remarkably close. Can a relationship thrive with such gaps, and have you experienced something similar in your own relationships?
32. Elizabeth's use of chemical calculations for cooking, such as determining the water molecules in biscuit batter, is unique. Have you ever used a scientific approach in your cooking, and do you consider your cooking more of a science or an art?
33. The book addresses sexism, unfair pay, sexual assault, and dismissive attitudes toward women's intellect, reflecting aspects of the 1950s. How do you see these issues persisting in today's culture, and what steps do you think can be taken to address them?
34. Elizabeth faces constant challenges in a male-dominated field. Have you ever encountered a similar situation in your career, and could you relate to Elizabeth's experiences?
35. How did Elizabeth's unconventional upbringing and strained relationship with her parents influence her approach to adult relationships?
36. The supporting cast, including neighbors like Harriet and producer Walter, plays a significant role. Who was your favorite supporting character, and why?
37. Discuss Madeline's exceptional intelligence, such as her reading abilities and intuitive understanding of people. How does Madeline's intelligence contribute to the dynamics within the Zott family, and how does it influence Elizabeth's choices as a mother?
38. Analyze the scenes where Elizabeth challenges societal expectations on her cooking show. How do her actions subvert traditional gender roles, and what impact does this have on the show's popularity?
39. Explore the significance of Avery Parker's revelation as Calvin's biological mother. How does this revelation tie together loose ends in the narrative, and in what ways does it contribute to Elizabeth's understanding of Calvin's past?
40. Analyze the closing scenes where Elizabeth returns to her abiogenesis research. How does this resolution tie back to the novel's overarching themes of scientific passion, justice, and personal growth?

41. Discuss your overall impressions of the ending and speculate on what might happen next for Elizabeth.
42. Did you feel like you gained any insights or lessons from reading the novel? Are there specific passages or scenes that stood out to you?
43. Is there anything else from the book that you would like to discuss or highlight as a favorite moment?