



In the Event of Death:

Questions/Themes to Discuss in Book Club

1. Liz and Gabbi live and work in Silicon Valley, and yet they don't enjoy the lavish lifestyle of those who work in big tech—or who invest in it. Do you think this feeling of being an outsider gives rise to their entrepreneurial spirit?
2. Because of the early tragedy in Liz's life, she is reluctant to produce funeral and memorial events. But she is desperate to make money for her family. Have you ever worked in a job you disliked but did it anyway to pay your bills?
3. The death of Liz's younger sister, Maggie, results in a kind of undiagnosed PTSD for Liz. Death is a very scary concept for most children. Do you remember when you first realized that you and your loved ones are mortal?
4. Liz is something of a perfectionist who strives to control her children's behavior and ensure their safety. How did the circumstances of her childhood contribute to Liz's anxiety and need for control?
5. In chapter nine, Liz wonders if the trauma she experienced as a child has been passed on to her son, Jamie. What else might contribute to Jamie's depression? Academic pressure? Too much screen time? Feelings of being the "lesser" twin?
6. Secrets play a big role in this novel. Ben keeps his brother's depression and pot smoking a secret from their mother. Joanie keeps her role in her daughter's death hidden from her older children. Little secrets abound too. Gabbi sells Tony's suits on

eBay and doesn't tell Liz. How do these secrets (and others) damage family dynamics and friendships? Do the confessions help—or harm—these relationships?

7. Liz appears to have traditional views of sex. At first, she was judgmental about Tony's affair and subsequent divorce, and she was worried about Ben and Maddy going "too far" in his room. Later, Liz finds herself in bed with her old boyfriend. Is this a double standard, or has she changed in some fundamental way?
8. When Liz meets Peter at the hotel for dinner, Peter's intentions are unclear. Do you think he planned to seduce Liz—to take advantage of her vulnerable psychological state? Or do you think he succumbed to old feelings before his conscience got the better of him?
9. Gabbi and Liz are partners who attended high school together, but they come from different economic backgrounds. As Gabbi reminds Liz, "I can't afford to be thin skinned. I grew up on the *other* side of this town." How does this difference impact their partnership and friendship?
10. Death is seen from many perspectives in this novel. Liz fears death. Tony tries to prepare for and control it. Gabbi wants to build a business around it. Liz's ailing mother longs to die, and Liz's father and brother don't like to discuss the end of life. Which character do you relate to the most?
11. Over the course of the book, relationships bloom in unexpected ways. Liz and Tony become confidantes. Jamie and Maddy become mutual support systems. And Gabbi and Ned become lovers. Does surviving hardships bring them together?
12. Liz and Dusty's marriage is tested on all fronts. Do you think their reconciliation at the end of the book is believable? Why or why not?
13. The setting for this novel is during the Great Recession of 2008. Since then, the world has endured a global pandemic and political upheaval. But what elements seem unchanged as they relate to parenting, the "sandwich generation," and financial insecurity?