Lessons in Chemistry

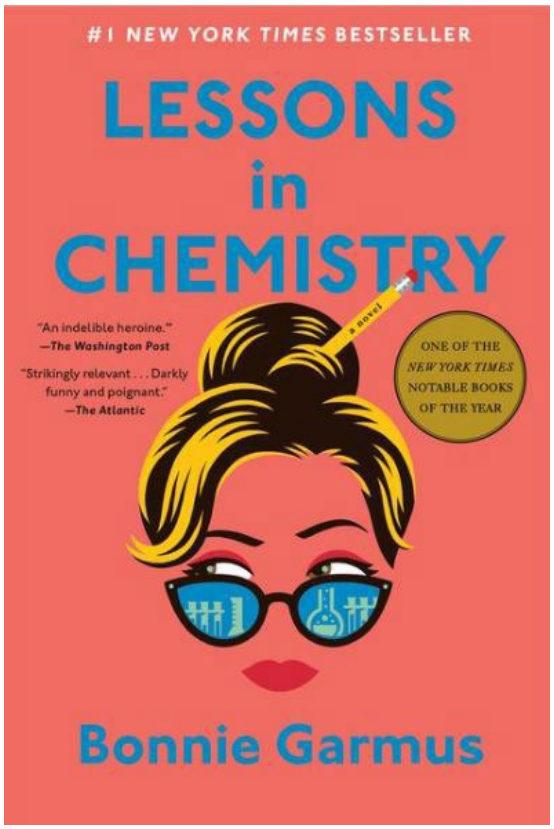
by Bonnie Garmus

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions



Book summary

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel–prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results.

But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show Supper at Six. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

also available to download from Libby

Lessons in Chemistry

by Bonnie Garmus

Laugh-out-loud funny, shrewdly observant, and studded with a dazzling cast of supporting characters, Lessons in Chemistry is as original and vibrant as its protagonist.

(Source: https://bonniegarmus.com/lessons-in-chemistry)

Meet the Author

Bonnie Garmus is a copywriter and creative director who has worked widely in the fields of technology, medicine, and education. She's an open-water swimmer, a rower, and mother to two pretty amazing daughters. Born in California and most recently from Seattle, she currently lives in London with her husband and her dog, 99.

(Source: https://bonniegarmus.com/about)



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Discussion Questions

1. What is your impression of Elizabeth as a protagonist? Why was chemistry the right career choice for her?
2. She enters a male-dominated field and it's a constant uphill battle. Have you ever worked in a field like that and/or been in a similar situation? Could you relate to what Elizabeth went through?
3. How did her unusual upbringing and violent relationship with her parents impact how she approached relationships as an adult?
4. What did you think about the eventual romance between Elizabeth and Calvin? Why were they a good fit, aka, full of 'true chemistry'?
5. Calvin proposes but Elizabeth says no. What was behind her reasoning for turning down the proposal?
6. Why do you suspect the author decided to include the viewpoint of their dog, Six-Thirty?
7. Let's talk about Calvin's death and how that changed everything for Elizabeth.
8. When Elizabeth finds out she's pregnant, she's less than thrilled. She never planned to become a mother and with Calvin's death, she's now all alone to raise their child. In what ways did motherhood surprise Elizabeth?
9. The story features a great supporting cast from the neighbor Harriet (who eventually becomes like an extended family member) to Elizabeth's producer Walter (who becomes her best friend). Who was your favorite supporting character and why?
10. Why did Elizabeth agree to host the cooking show? Why did the show resonate with women across the country?
11. Why did Elizabeth eventually leave the cooking show?
12. What are your thoughts about the reveal that Calvin's real life mother was the one behind the funds to Elizabeth's scientific research?
13. What did you think about the ending overall? What happens next for Elizabeth?
14. Did you feel like you learned any lessons or anything else from reading the novel? Do you have any favorite passages or scenes you would like to discuss?

(Source: https://bookclubchat.com/books/book-club-questions-for-lessons-in-chemistry-by-bonnie-garmus)

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Recipes

Color-Shifting Chemist-Tea



Ingredients:

- 1 Cup Butterfly Pea Flowers (Dry or Fresh)
- 1 Liter Drinking Water
- 1 Tablespoon Honey
- 2 Tablespoon Brown Sugar
- 2 Limes
- 1 Can Sprite
- 1 Bottle Soda Water

Directions:

Boil the water in a saucepan. If using fresh flowers: While waiting for the water to boil, prepare the Butterfly Pea Flowers by cutting the green bottoms off.

If using dried flowers you can use as they come. When the water has boiled, turn off the heat and tip in the flowers and put the lid on the saucepan. Allow to sit for 5 minutes without further heating. When your 5 minutes is up, strain the tea concentrate into a jug. While still warm add the honey and brown sugar and stir to dissolve.

When serving: Pour ice into glasses. Fill about 1/3 of each glass with tea concentrate. Add 2 teaspoons of lime juice to each. The color will change from blue to purple! Top up with soda, sprite, or water.

(Source: https://tastythais.com/butterfly-pea-tea-how-to-make-it)

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Recipes Continuation

Better Living Brownies

Ingredients:



- 1.5 sticks of butter
- 1 ¼ cups of sugar
- ¾ cup plus 2 tbsps of unsweetened cocoa
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup flour

Directions:

Pre-heat oven to 325° F and line an 8” square pan with parchment paper. Fill a large pot with about an inch of water. Bring to a simmer. Nest a smaller pot within the larger pot to create a double boiler. Add butter, sugar, salt, and cocoa powder. Stir until butter is melted and foamy. Remove from heat and let cool for a few minutes, then add vanilla. Add one egg at a time, making sure to fully mix each one. Then add flour and beat. Spatula the mix into the 8” square pan and bake for 20-25 minutes.

(Source: https://knopfdoubleday.com/marketing/pdf/LessonsinChemBookClubKit.pdf)