



## **Book Club Questions**

### **Beth Is Dead by Katie Bernet**

1. While the reimagining of the March sisters in a contemporary setting draws heavily from Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, it introduces a significant, dark deviation from the original narrative. How does transforming the story into a contemporary mystery that offers a deep exploration of grief, family dynamics, and the impact of public perception bring a freshness to it?
2. Given Beth's demise in her father's fictional account of his daughters' stories, what impact does "dying" in *Little Women* have on Beth in particular? In what ways does she change, and how does this reality of the fictional Beth make her question her own vitality and purpose?
3. While it can be argued that Beth's reaction to the story about her is the one that is most profound, what role does Rob March's novel, *Little Women*, have on his other daughters? Do you believe it has directly influenced their real-life identities and how they are perceived by the public and one another? Share your insights with others.
4. How does the controversy surrounding Rob March's book lead to real-world threats for the family? Are there ways in which the Marches don't take these concerns as seriously as they should? Using textual examples, share your ideas.
5. In what ways did Beth's Teen Vogue interview lead to unintended negative consequences for her family?
6. What does Jo's initial impulse to write a book about Beth's real death, titled *Beth Is Dead*, reflect about her deep-seated need to process life through narrative?
7. Mrs. March explains that their father wrote his story about Beth's death out of his own terror after her car accident to process the fear of losing her. How does this perspective help her daughters with their need for reconciliation and understanding?
8. From your assessment, how does using a "Then" and "Now" timeline shift impact how the narrative moves forward? Do you like this dual timeline narration? Why or why not?
9. In *Beth Is Dead*, characters act out of a mix of love, jealousy, ambition, and fear. How do these complex motivations make it difficult to pinpoint a clear villain or a simple motive for Beth's death?
10. How does the secret Meg keeps from her family regarding Sallie Gardiner influence the investigation into Beth's death?
11. Discuss the concept of toxic relationships as explored in the novel. Analyze how the relationships between Amy and Fred Vaughn, Meg and Sallie Gardiner, and Beth and Henry Hummel exemplify different forms of manipulation, obsession, or exploitation.



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12. Do you have a favorite March sister, and did that change as you progressed through the novel? What was it about this particular character that you found most interesting or appealing?
13. The narrative repeatedly highlights how characters' perceptions and interpretations of events (and one another) can be skewed by personal biases, grief, and external influences like Mr. March's book or social media. From your perspective, how does this unreliability of perception impact the overall story?
14. Compare and contrast the coping mechanisms and motivations of Jo, Amy, and Meg in the aftermath of Beth's death. How do their individual struggles and secrets contribute to both the family's internal conflict and the police investigation?
15. Examine the role of societal expectations and public perception on the March sisters. How do external pressures, media attention, and the Little Women fandom shape their identities and influence their actions throughout the narrative?
16. After the traumatic events, as a way to bring some resolution, Jo decides to write a book about the "real, messy, imperfect Beth." How does this reflect the shift in Jo's character and her perspectives on both her sister and her own priorities?
17. In what ways does this modern retelling of Little Women showcase the differences of how parents see their children versus the complexities of who their children really are? Do you believe this is also the case with how children view their parents? In what ways do the March sisters misunderstand their parents?
18. Trace the evolution of Jo's understanding of herself as a writer and her ethical responsibilities. How does her initial desire for a hook for her book transform into a more profound and authentic purpose by the end of the story?
19. When asked to describe Beth Is Dead, readers might say, "This is a story about secrets." As you consider what elements you found most profound in the book, how else would you fill in the statement "This is a story about . . ." and why?
20. While considering the aftermath of the tremendous losses the Marches have endured, how do Henry's pleas as well as the memorials for their lost sister and father set the stage for a focus on new beginnings for the remaining family? How do the March sisters begin to heal and redefine their relationships with one another and their past, and what do you predict for their future?

Book Club questions by the [publisher](#)