

Faith Lutheran Church Book Club  
*In the Unlikely Event* by Judy Blume  
November 19, 2024

1. What do you make of how the author introduces characters. Was it disorienting?
2. Comment on how the story unfolds: short chapter bursts, newspaper reports, scripted dialogue. Did they aid or hinder your comprehension?
3. Discuss the environment of Elizabeth, New Jersey, before the crashes occur. How would you describe the community? How does the community band together after the first crash?
4. Discuss Miri's relationship with her mother. How would you define the relationship between Miri and Rusty at the beginning of the novel? Are there special pressures on Miri because she is an only child? How do Irene and Henry reduce the mother-daughter disagreements between Miri and Rusty? Does the relationship change once Miri has her own children? If so, how?
5. Discuss the conspiracy theories that emerge after the crashes. For the teenagers in the novel, how do these rumors act as a means of coping?
6. At one point, we read that "Miri couldn't help wishing" she had a father like Dr. Osner. What does she desire in a relationship with a father? Discuss her reunion with her biological father. How does this experience change her? Does she ever find someone to fulfill the role of father in her life?
7. Historical fiction may include fictional characters, well-known historical figures or a mixture of the two. Authors of

historical fiction usually pay close attention to the details of their stories (settings, clothing, dialogue, etc.) to ensure that they fit the time periods in which the narratives take place. How is *In the Unlikely Event* historical fiction? Does it misrepresent a specific historical event?

8. Class and status play a role throughout *In the Unlikely Event*. How does Miri see herself in the socioeconomic structure of Elizabeth? When does she feel most uncomfortable with her family's position? How does her idea of relative wealth change once she meets Mason?

9. Discuss how working women are portrayed in the novel. What challenges do these women face? Can you point to any particular incidents in which the working women— particularly Rusty, Daisy, and Christina—face discrimination or judgment for their roles in the workplace?

10. Blume nails lots of 1950's details (wet bars, knotty-pine walls). What 1950's details do you know about?

11. There's a literary category called the "junior novel," in which the intended audience is a youthful one and/or which features youthful characters and events. Is this a junior novel? Would you recommend it to a teenager?