

The Bomber Jacket
by K.M. King
Discussion Guide for Book Clubs

The Bomber Jacket takes place in two time periods and tells two stories: that of college student Beth in 1996-1997, and that of Colin, the Scottish pilot and his friends during World War II. *The Bomber Jacket* is a story of devastating heartbreak, soul-wrenching loss, and secrets and lies which transcend time.

1997: Beth and Robbie

The main characters in Beth's story are her grandparents, Henry and Naomi, and Robbie, the young Scottish professor. Minor but important characters are Iain, the Canadian college student; Bertie, the host of the hostel on Skye; Mrs. Gordon (Colin's sister Mairi) and her daughter, Mrs. McIntyre at the Achiltibuie B&B.

1. Which of the characters are your favorite? Why? How did your favorite characters influence Beth's decisions and choices in this story?
2. Beth and Robbie have a complicated relationship, made more challenging by their roles as student and professor. What do you think of her need to choose between Robbie and Colin? Did Robbie violate the college's code of conduct in his relationship with Beth?
3. Beth is "haunted" by Colin, first in her dreams, then in her days in Scotland. Do you think her growing ability to sense his presence, hear his voice, then actually see him a figment of her imagination or an experience she was really having? How would you react if you had those kinds of dreams and visions?
4. Beth had a troubled relationship with her grandmother, Naomi. Now that you know the story of why Naomi was so angry, does that explain her behavior? Make you feel empathy for Naomi? For more background on Naomi's story, read the "lost chapters" found on my website: www.kmkingauthor.com
5. What was your "emotional relationship" with Beth? Did you care about her? Like her? Find her unstable or too unpredictable? Want a different ending for her?

1939-1945: Henry, Gretchen, Colin and Fiona

Although all four characters feature prominently in this section of the book, it is really the story of Henry, Gretchen and Colin. Fiona plays an important role as Gretchen's friend who's secretly in love with Henry, but we do not hear her thoughts.

1. How did the friendship among the four friends impact their willingness to be honest about their feelings? Would things have worked out differently or with less heartbreak if each of them had been truthful from the beginning?
2. In what ways were their relationships impacted by living in the midst of a war? Do people live more recklessly or impulsively when faced with a completely uncertain future and faced with death and destruction?
3. Whose relationship were you "rooting for?" Henry and Gretchen? Gretchen and Colin? Fiona and Henry? Why? Were you surprised at how their relationships worked out?
4. What was your reaction to Henry's claiming Gretchen and Colin's daughter as his own? What did you think about his decision to ask Fiona and then Naomi to marry him? In what ways did his decisions impact his life in positive and negative ways?

General questions

1. What was the most unexpected event in the book? How did you react to it?
2. What was your overall impression of the story? The writing style?
3. If you could change anything about the story, what would it be? Why?
4. If you could ask the writer anything, what would that be?

If you are interested in the backstory of how *The Bomber Jacket* came to be, read *The Story of a Book: The Bomber Jacket from First Page to Finally, Published!* on the author's website: <https://www.kmkingauthor.com>