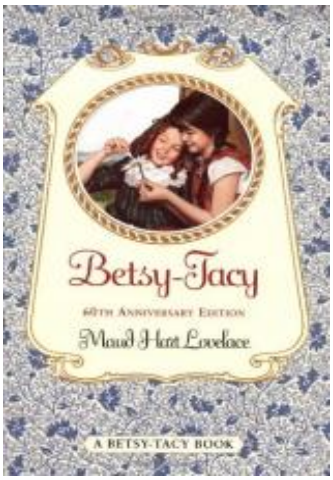
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Betsy-Tacy

by Maud Hart Lovelace



About the Book

Around 1897, in Mankato, Minnesota, Maud Hart Lovelace met two girls --- Bick Kenney and Midge Gerlach. The three soon formed a trio that would be inseparable in their youth and remain friendly throughout their adult lives. Many years later, Maud told her daughter, Merian, bedtime stories about her girlhood adventures with Bick and Midge. Soon, she developed these tales into a popular series of books that was first published in the 1940s. Mankato was transformed into Deep Valley, Minnesota, around the turn of the 20th century. Maud became friendly storyteller Betsy Ray, Bick became shy, redheaded Tacy Kelly, and Midge became the practical, yet fun-loving, Tib Muller.

The series begins with a fast friendship between Betsy and Tacy, who soon enjoy such fun as picnics on the bench on the Big Hill and dressing up and calling on neighbors. When Tib moves into the chocolate-colored house nearby, she quickly becomes Betsy and Tacy?s other best friend. Many of their fictional adventures are based on Maud?s real experiences with Bick and Midge.

As they grow older, Betsy?s, Tacy?s, and Tib?s world grows larger. They climb over the Big Hill that had always seemed so high and enjoy such downtown delights as riding in horseless carriages and going to the theater. High-school introduces them to a new social life, and many members of their Crowd are also based on real people in Maud?s life.

Even though the Betsy-Tacy books wree written so long ago, timeless themes of friendship, family, and love continue to teach us about our past and what we dream for our future. And they remain the perfect bedtime sotries to be shared by a mother and a daughter. The discussion topics, suggested reading list, and author biography in this reading group guide are intended to spark discussion about the wonderful characters and stirring adventures in this enchanting series.

Discussion Guide

1. Betsy, Tacy, and Tib spend a lot of time together. They hike up the Big Hill, make up stories, and go to dances

together. Which of their adventures sound like fun to both of you? Mothers, what do you like to do with your best friends now? What did you used to love doing when you were younger? Share your childhood adventures with your daughter. Ask her what her favorite activities with her friends are: playing a certain game, watching a movie together, drawing, acting, etc.

2. Betsy, Tacy, and Tib form the TCKC club in elementary school, and the Okto Delta sorority as high-school juniors. What do they do in each of these clubs? Why do they decide to end the Okto Delta sorority? Have either of you ever been in a club? If so, what are some of your memories of it? Did you enjoy it? If not, is there a reason you haven?t joined a club? What sounds appealing about clubs?

3. Betsy, Tacy, and Tib begin some traditions among themselves, as well as sharing in family traditions. For instance, Betsy and Tacy sing the Cat Duet at the school recital every year, and the Rays? Sunday Night Lunch is a tradition that draws many of Betsy?s high-school friends. What are some of the other traditions in the Betsy-Tacy books? What are some traditions that you and your family and friends have? Are there any you?d like to start?

4. The mothers of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib are all different. What do you think about how the mothers and daughters act with each other in the series? How are Mrs. Ray, Mrs. Kelly, and Mrs. Muller different? What do you like about them? Do they do some of the same things that your mother does or did? Tell each other what you like and sometimes find frustrating about your mother.

5. Maud Hart Lovelace based the Betsy-Tacy series on people from her life and experiences that she had. You can learn about some of the actual events and people from her life that appear in the books by reading the biographical section at the end of the books and looking at the pictures. Does reading about these people or places change what you think of the books? Which of these details do you find most interesting? If you were to write a book, which people, places, or experiences from your own life might you include?

6. In elementary school, Betsy, Tacy, and Tib loved to climb the Big Hill, and in high-school the Crowd spends much time at the ice cream parlor. Where are some of the other places the characters spend a lot of time? What was it about each of these places that continued to draw the characters back? What are some of your favorite places to go? What do each of you enjoy doing at these places? Do others accompany you?

7. Throughout the series, the characters witness many changes. Horse-drawn carriages are the primary mode of transportation at the beginning of the series. By the end, Betsy and her high-school friends are driving around in an automobile. What are some of the other inventions and changes that Betsy, Tacy, and Tib live through? How do those changes affect their lives? What are some objects that have been invented or become popular since both of you were born? What are some historical events that you have lived through? How do you think they have made you different?

8. Betsy spends a lot of time telling stories, and then writing them. She even sends some away to magazines. Do either of you enjoy writing or telling stories? If so, what are some that you are proud of, or that you have particularly enjoyed? If not, how do you prefer to share things with others?

9. When Margaret is born, Betsy gets upset because she isn?t the baby of the family anymore. She also gets made when Julia tries to be the Queen of Summer. Other times, the Ray sisters get along famously. Hat are some of the situations in which Betsy and her sisters see things differently? What are some happy times they have together? If you have siblings,

how do you act with them? If not, what are some things you like and don?t like about it?

10. In the later books of the series, Betsy, Tacy, and Tib attend high school and Betsy eventually marries, as do her friends. Mothers, what are some similarities between their high-school experiences and your own? Daughters, what are some of the things you liked about Deep Valley High School that you wish to occur when you are in high school?

Author Bio

Maud Hart Lovelace (1892-1980) is the beloved author of the *Betsy-Tacy* books, as well as many other books for adults and children.

In addition to illustrating the first four *Betsy-Tacy* books, Lois Lenski (1893-1974) was the Newbery Medal-winning author of Strawberry Girl.

Vera Neville illustrated six of the *Betsy-Tacy* books as well as three *Deep Valley Books*.

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