# Summer Sisters

by Judy Blume




## About the Book

In the summer of 1977, Victoria Leonard?s world changes forever when Caitlin Somers chooses her as a friend. Dazzling, reckless Caitlin welcomes Vix into the heart of her sprawling, eccentric family, opening doors to a world of unimaginable privilege, sweeping her away to vacations on Martha?s Vineyard, an enchanting place where the two friends become ?summer sisters.?

Now, years later, Vix is working in New York City. Caitlin is getting married on the Vineyard. And the early magic of their long, complicated friendship has faded. But Caitlin begs Vix to come to her wedding, to be her maid of honor. And Vix knows that she will go --- because she wants to understand what happened during that last shattering summer. And, after all these years, she needs to know why her best friend --- her summer sister --- still has the power to break her heart.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** Do you see more of your personality in the character of Victoria ("Vix&") or Caitlin? Why? Do you see parallels in your relationships with your friends? Have you ever known a "Caitlin?" You might start by remembering best friends and what they?ve meant to you.

**2.** What is it about Vix that leads Caitlin to befriend her in the first place? That allows the friendship to flourish? What does Vix get from her friendship with Caitlin? What does Caitlin get from Vix? And what do each of them give?

**3.** What do you see as the source of the lasting bond between Vix and Cailtin? Why and how do they remain so close even as they grow apart and lead different lives? How do their expectations of each other change? Do you see similarities in your own long-term friendships? In what ways have they changed over time?

**4.** After Caitlin talks to Vix about Phoebe, Vix thinks, "You weren?t always born to the right parents. And parents didn?t

necessarily get the kids they were meant to raise" (p. 98). Do you think Vix was thinking of her own parents, or Caitlin?s? What does this say about how she feels about both sets of parents? Do you agree?

**5.** How did Vix?s relationship with Abby and Lamb affect her relationship with her own family? How much different would her life have been if she hadn?t developed such a strong bond with Caitlin?s family? Would Vix have broken away from her background on her own, without her friendship with Caitlin?

**6.** How much do you think their respective backgrounds shaped Vix and Caitlin? Do you think their essential characters would have been the same if their situations had been reversed? How do you think each would have operated in the world under reversed circumstances?

**7.** Could there ever have been a future for Vix and Bru? Was their breakup inevitable? Could she have married him and still fulfilled herself? Do you see any parallels between their relationship and your own first love?

**8.** Why does Caitlin pursue and marry Bru? What attracts her to the idea of settling down and having a child? Is this something you think she deliberately set out to do, or did it just happen?

**9.** How can Vix forgive Caitlin for marrying Bru? When Caitlin abandons her daughter? When she disappears from their lives? Why doesn?t Vix ask more questions about Caitlin?s life away from her? Do you think she should have ended the friendship because of any of these events?

**10.** Judy Blume uses an unusual technique in her novel, allowing readers to get into the minds of many characters, yet she never allows us inside Caitlin. Why?

**11.** What drew you to each character? With which characters did you most sympathize? Which did you find less sympathetic? Why?

**12.** Was the ending inevitable or tragic? Are you able to agree on what really happened? How do you feel about the ambiguity of the ending?

## Author Bio

Judy Blume spent her childhood in Elizabeth, New Jersey, making up stories inside her head. She has spent her adult years in many places doing the same thing, only now she writes her stories down on paper. Adults as well as children will recognize such Blume titles as ARE YOU THERE GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET; BLUBBER; JUST AS LONG AS WE'RE TOGETHER; and the five-book series about the irrepressible Fudge. She has also written four novels for adults: IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT, SUMMER SISTERS, SMART WOMEN and WIFEY, all of them *New York Times* bestsellers. More than 80 million copies of her books have been sold, and her work has been translated into 31 languages. She receives thousands of letters a year from readers of all ages who share their feelings and concerns with her.

## Critical Praise

"As warm as a summer breeze blowing through your hair, as nostalgic as James Taylor singing ?How Sweet It Is.? You remember. So does Judy Blume. How sweet it was."

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