

Little Deaths: Reading Group Guide

- 1) How would you describe the sense of place in *Little Deaths* and how does the novel present the world of 1960s New York?
- 2) What were your first impressions of Ruth, and how did your opinion of her evolve throughout the book? Did you like her? How much did you sympathise with her?
- 3) To what extent did you feel Ruth was in control of her life? What pressures did you feel she was under from the other characters and – as a woman, and as a mother – from society as a whole?
- 4) What did you make of Pete Wonicke and his obsession with Ruth? How did you feel his version of events differed from that reported by the wider media?
- 5) Ruth struggles in her relationship with her mother and the other women in her neighbourhood. What did you think about the relationships between the various female characters?
- 6) What did you think about the portrayal of Devlin and the police force? Do you feel the case was investigated fairly or unfairly, and why?
- 7) The novel explores love in many forms, from parental to romantic to obsessive. How far did you feel the characters and their actions were affected by love?
- 8) *Little Deaths* is set in the 1960s, so news and gossip play out person to person and in the newspapers. How different do you think this would be today, with social media and 24-hour news coverage?
- 9) How much did you feel that Ruth was trapped by her social circumstances or the era in which she lived? Did her story feel of its time, or could you see parallels with more recent cases?
- 10) Were you surprised by the ending? Did you feel that *Little Deaths* was ultimately a tragedy, or did you find some hope and redemption in its final pages?