



1. In their work on *Gut It!*, Caroline and Jamie MacAfee reinvent old homes, giving new life to tradition. What does this say about their respective outlooks? How does this theme develop throughout the book?
2. As carpenter and architect, Caroline and Jamie have succeeded in what could be considered traditionally male jobs. Has this success in any way colored their personal relationships?
3. “I do commitment better than anyone I know,” Jamie says. And yet, she’s reluctant to commit to Brad. Why do you think that is?
4. The slogan of MacAfee Homes is “Family Builds.” Do you think it appropriate?
5. Jamie favors tailored clothing and the sophisticated neutrals of a young architect, while her mother is known for wearing jeans and tanks in bright colors. How do these outward choices reflect each woman’s personality?
6. Despite being twenty-nine and financially independent, Jamie is introduced as a “little girl” driven by a need to please her parents. Do you think that’s true? If so, how do you think this changes throughout the book?
7. Caroline tells Dean that “sex is so overrated,” and rebuffs his advances. Do you really think she believes this? If not, why does she turn him down?
8. How does the book address the issue of women’s sexuality at different ages?

## Discussion Questions



9. Jamie, the “enumerator in the family,” has a habit of organizing her thoughts in a pattern of (A), (B), and (C). Why do you think she does this?
10. Caroline accuses Jamie of undermining her and says that “confrontation is what happens when you are less than honest and you get caught.” What do you think she means here? Do you agree?
11. “Motherhood was a lifelong commitment.” When Jamie assumes the role of Taddy’s mother, her role with Caroline ultimately changes. Why do you think that is?
12. Caroline says that her job on *Gut It!* is her identity and asks, “If that’s gone, where am I?” Do you think she’d have those same fears if she were thirty-six and not fifty-six?
13. Caroline says that Jamie was “born with an instinct for knowing how things work and what to do when they fall apart.” Do you think this is true of both mother and daughter?