

Questions to help you understand *The Life List*

Chapter 1

Page 11 – What is Brett’s expectation upon her mother’s death? What does she think she will inherit?

Page 17 – What are Brett’s mom’s requirements for her home? Who can live there? How long can any of her children live in her home?

Why is Joad surprised and unhappy about his mother’s directives (rules and conditions) about her home? (pg 17)

Chapter 2 (pages 20+)

What does Brett have to do in order to receive her inheritance? (pg 23-24) Is there a deadline? (pg 30) Explain the process.

Which of Brett’s life goals do you think will be the hardest for Brett to achieve?

Chapter 3 (pages 31+)

Why do you think Brett has not told Andrew about her current situation? (The fact that she is not CEO of Bohlinger Cosmetics?)

Catherine requests a meeting with Brett. Why? (the end of chapter 3)

Chapter 4 (pages 40+)

What kind of person is Brett’s boyfriend, Andrew? Describe him. What is his background?

Brett goes to visit Shelley, her sister-in-law. Shelley has news – what is it? (pg 43)

At the end of this chapter, after Brett’s lunch with Shelley and Megan, describe Brett’s attitude toward her life list requirements.

Chapter 5 (page 48+)

1. Read the paragraph at the bottom of page 50 that begins with “I do”. What does this tell you about Brett and Andrew’s relationship?
2. Brett claims to have completed #17 on her life list – fall in love. What is Brett’s mom’s response?
3. Brett’s mom suggests that she start with #18 – perform live on stage. What is Brett’s reaction to the idea of doing stand-up comedy?
4. Page 53 gives us some insight into Brett’s relationship with her dad. What can you tell us about that relationship?

Chapter 6 (page 57+)

5. Why doesn't Brett tell Andrew about her upcoming stand-up comedy performance?
6. How does her performance go? (Pages 61-64)
7. Why did Brett's mom want her to complete this task? (pages 64-65)
8. What do you think about Eleanor Roosevelt's quote: Do something every day that scares you? (page 65)

Chapter 7 (page 66+)

9. Brett tries to re-connect with her childhood friend, Carrie Newsome. Why is Brett afraid to contact Carrie?
10. Read the paragraph that begins with "I shake my head." In the middle of page 68. What does this tell us about Carrie? And about Megan?
11. What's happening in Megan's life? (pages 69-70)
12. What does Megan tell Brett about Brad (pages 70, bottom, and 71, top)
13. What does Brett do to try to reconnect with her father? Does it work? Does she end up feeling closer to him? Why or why not? (pages 72-73)
14. Where does Brett bump into the mysterious Burberry man?

Chapter 8 (page 75+)

15. What does Brett find at Joad and Catherine's house?
16. What does Brett learn by reading her mom's journal? (pg 78)
17. What is Joad's reaction to finding that Brett has taken the journal?
18. Carrie responds to Brett's Facebook message. Is she happy to reconnect with Brett? What is her nickname for Brett?

Chapter 9 (page 82+)

19. Does Brad have a girlfriend? (very beginning of the chapter)
20. What is the name of the man Brett believes to be her birth father?
21. Are Brad and Brett able to locate her birth father on the internet?
22. What is the name of the private detective Brett hires to find her father?
23. Andre and Brett are at home together. Does Brett tell Andrew about her inheritance, her job, etc.?
24. What does Andrew ask Brett to do for him as CEO of Bohlinger Cosmetics? (page 88)
25. Describe Brett's first day of substitute teaching. What is a substitute teacher? Does this turn into a long-term job for Brett? Why or why not?
26. Brett goes to see Brad – why? What is Brad's attitude toward Brett at this meeting (at the end of the chapter)?

Chapter 10 (page 97+)

1. What is Andrew's reaction when Brett tells him about the Life List she has to complete?

2. Why did Brett end her friendship with Carrie when they were in high school? (pages 100-101)
3. How does Brett get coffee on her coat? Who is responsible? (pages 102-103)
4. How is the detective doing on finding Brett's father? (pages 104-105)
5. What is Brett's new job? Why is Megan worried about it? (page 106)
6. Why did Andrew hire Megan? (page 106) Describe the difference between what Andrew wants in a house and what Brett wants.
7. Are Andrew and Brett getting married? (page 107)

Chapter 11 (page 109+)

1. Why does Brett call Dr. Garrett Taylor?
2. Brett's first student is Amina Adawe. How does this visit go? (pages 114-115)
3. Brett's next student is Sanquita Bell. What do we learn about her? (pages 116-119)
4. How does Brett's visit to Peter's house go? (pages 120-121)
5. Brett has another call with Dr. Taylor. Does she enjoy these calls? Brett calculates that Dr. Taylor is in his early sixties (his age). How does she know this? (page 123)
6. When Brett gets in her car and looks at her phone, she is disappointed in Andrew. Why? (page 124)
7. At the very end of this chapter, Brett becomes very angry at herself. Why?

Chapter 12 (page 125+)

1. Do Brett and Carrie get together that night as planned? Is Carrie angry?
2. Brett and Andrew are talking about Thanksgiving and Brett mentions children. Why does Andrew get angry? (pages 128-9)
3. What happens when Brett visits Peter and tries to have a math lesson? How does Peter humiliate Brett? (pages 129-130)
4. Brett stops by Jay and Shelley's house. Why is Shelley sad and/or angry? (pages 132-33)
5. At the end, what does Brett find out about the Thanksgiving dinner she is planning?

Chapter 13 (page 135+)

1. The night before Thanksgiving, Andrew is again angry for two reasons. What are they? (one on page 135, one on page 136)
2. As Andrew is looking online for houses, he and Brett again argue. Why do you think Andrew has agreed to help Brett with her life list?
3. Brett is desperate for Andrew to help her with her life list and have a baby, yet she denies him the one thing he asks of her. What does she deny him and why? (page 138) What is the result of her denial?
4. Brett takes a walk and sees a jogger (runner). Why does she chase him? (pages 141-142)
5. Brett makes a complete Thanksgiving dinner in tears for herself, but then has another idea. What is it? (pages 142-143)
6. Brett does something nice for Miss Jean at Joshua House. What does she do for her? Why is Miss Jean skeptical (doubting) about Brett's motives?

Chapter 14 (page 147+)

1. Brad gives Brett an update on Pohlonski's progress in finding her dad. What is his update? What does Brad decide to do as a result? Does Brett agree? (pages 147-149)
2. How is Brett paying for Pohlonski's services?
3. Brett tells Brad about her experiences, and her Thanksgiving, at Joshua House (page 151). What does Brad do in response? (same page)
4. Do you agree with Brett's mom's letter about happiness? (page 152) What are your personal experiences with "doing good" and what effect did those experiences have on you?
5. Brett has some physical symptoms that lead her to what conclusion? (page 152, bottom)
6. As Brett is moving her personal belongings out of Andrew's loft, she realizes that most of the stuff (furniture, etc) is actually hers (page 153, bottom). Why doesn't she take it?
7. As Brett is about to leave the loft (page 154) Andrew returns home. Why does Brett hide? What does she find out? What does she do the next day?
8. Brett goes to the Newsome's (Carrie's) house for a special Christmas brunch gathering. What is Carrie's reaction to seeing Brett again? (pages 156)
9. Carrie's dad starts showing old movies he's taken many years ago. What does Brett learn through watching these movies? (pages 158-159)

Chapter 15 (page 160+)

1. Brett watches movies of her dad and talks to Mr. Newsome about him. What new information does she learn? (page 162)
2. Brad invites Brett to his place for dinner after she returns from Wisconsin. What news does he give her when she arrives? (page 164)

Chapter 16 (page 167+)

1. Brett and Megan talk on the phone. What is Brett's attitude? What is Megan's? How does the call end? (pages 167-69)
2. How does Brett get more money? How does Brett help Sanquita? (pages 169-170)
3. Brett adopts a dog, Rudy. What other animal does Brad want Brett to adopt? (pages 171-173)
4. Brad drives Brett and Rudy home to Brett's house. They have a glass of wine and are relaxed. Describe what happens. (pages 179-182)
5. What is the meaning of the "bright red stain" on her sheets on Christmas morning? (last page)

Chapter 17 (page 183+)

1. Why is Brett sad/depressed on Christmas Day? What happens at the end of the chapter to change her mood?

Chapter 18 (page 186+)

1. Why does Brett's father call her when he doesn't have time to talk? (page 187)
2. What does Brett conclude after the phone call with her father? What does she conclude about her father? (page 187)
3. What does Joad question Brett about as he's leaving? (pages 189-90)
4. Brett starts looking for her own place to live. What problems does she encounter? How does she solve her problem? (pages 190-191)

Chapter 19 (page 192+)

1. What do we learn about Sanquita from her conversation with Brett at the hospital? (pages 192-3) What does the doctor advise Sanquita to do? (page 195)
2. Brett and Carrie talk on the phone (pages 197-199). Why is Brett sad? What does Carrie suggest that suddenly makes Brett happy?
3. Because of Carrie's suggestion (above), what does Brett do? (pages 199-200) What happens as a result? (rest of chapter)

Chapter 20 (page 203+)

1. Who does Brett share her bad Christmas experiences with? (pages 204-206)
2. At Brett's session with Peter, she gives him a gift. What is it? What does he do with it? (pages 207-208)
3. Brett calls Garrett to tell him about her session with Peter. She suggests they meet for coffee or a drink. Why doesn't their meeting take place (happen)? (pages 208-210)
4. Brett covers for Jean at Joshua House. Describe the fight between Julonia and Tanya. Why are they angry at each other and how does Brett resolve it? (pages 210-13)
5. What does Brett realize at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 21 (page 214+)

1. Sanquita comes home from the hospital. How is she? (pages 214-216)
2. Brett finally connects with Garrett and apologizes for missing their get together. Is he angry? How does he respond? (pages 217-218)
3. Brett and Brad have dinner together and they discuss their romantic evening. What do they say to each other? (pages 219)
4. What envelope does Brett earn? (page 221)
5. Johnny calls Brett – why? (end of chapter)

Chapter 22 (page 224+)

1. Who are Selina and Blanca Ruiz? What do you know about them? How will Brett be connected to them? (pages 224-228)

2. Brett visit Shelley. What changes are happening in Shelley's life? (pages 230) Jay and Shelley suggest a blind date for Brett. What is Brett's reaction? What do we know about her blind date? (pages 231-233)

Chapter 23 (page 235+)

1. On her way to Jay and Shelley's, who does Brett see? (beginning of chapter)
3. Brett has her blind date with Herbert. How does their date go? What do we learn about Herbert? (pages 237-239)
4. What is the result of this blind date? (pages 239-241)
5. Why does Brett's professional relationship with Garrett end? (pages 241-243)

Chapter 24 page 244+)

1. Brett finally goes to Seattle to meet Johnny and Zoe. Tell me about their meeting. What does she learn about Zoe? Does Zoe like Brett? Does Brett like Johnny? (pages 244-249)
2. What does Brett learn about her mom and Johnny's relationship? About why Johnny didn't marry her mom? How did Charles Bohlinger influence Johnny's decision to leave Brett's mom? (pages 250-253)
3. Brett gives Johnny a gift before she leaves. What does she give him? (pages 254)
4. Herbert surprises Brett at the airport when she returns from Seattle. (Page 255-56) Does Brett go home with Herbert or does she go to her own house/apartment? Why does she make her decision? (pages 257-58)

Chapter 25 (page 259+)

1. Sanquita goes into labor before her baby is due to be born. It is very small and in intensive care, as is Sanquita. What does Miss Jean tell Brett about Sanquita's wish? (page 261) What does Miss Jean think when Brett says no? (page 262)
2. Brett spends every spare minute she has at the hospital with Sanquita and Austin. How does Herbert respond? Is he angry? Jealous of the baby? Of Sanquita? Supportive?
3. Sanquita wakes up for just a moment. What does she tell Brett? (page 271)

Chapter 26 (page 272+)

1. Whose funeral is Brett at in the beginning of the chapter? (page 272)
2. Who is Austin's mom now? (page 273+)
3. Who appears at the hospital when Brett arrives to see Austin? (page 278)

Chapter 27 (page 280+)

1. Why is Sanquita in Chicago? What are her plans? (pages 280-81)
2. Why does the nurse think Sanquita's mom wants to adopt Austin? (page 281)
3. What does Joad think about Brett's hopes to adopt Austin? (page 283)
4. What does Kirsten Schirtzing, the hospital social worker, tell Brett and Brad? (pages 286-88)

Chapter 28 (page 289+)

1. What does Miss Jean say when Brett tells her about Sanquita's mom's plans for Austin? (page 291)
2. What is Sanquita's mom's lawyer's argument about Sanquita asking Brett to take (adopt) her baby? (pages 292-3)
3. What does Brett learn about Sanquita's life in Detroit? Why did Sanquita leave Detroit? (pages 294-5)
4. Just before the end of Austin's court case, Miss Jean arrives. Why? (pages 296-7) Do you think the notarized (official) paper is real? Or did Miss Jean fake it?
5. What does Herbert tell Brett at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 29 (page 301+)

1. Brad tells Brett she has earned two envelopes – fall in love, and have a baby. Why do you think Brett only opens the baby one? (page 302)
2. What does Brett notice about the letter from her mom about having a baby? (pg 303)
3. Baby Austin gets to go home! How does Brett treat Herbert? (pages 305-6)
4. What does Brad do when Brett insists he read the "fall in love" envelope? (page 311)
5. Why do you think the author includes Brett's memory of her and her mom taking a vacation in Puerto Vallarta? (pages 312-313)
6. What does Brett think when Herbert responds in anger to breaking up? (page 315)

Chapter 30 (page 316+)

1. Who does Brett run into at the dry cleaners? (pages 320-22)
2. Why doesn't Garret come to Brett's party? (page 323)
3. How does Brett fulfill her requirement to buy a horse? (page 324)
4. Do you think Austin should count as Brett's requirement to fall in love? (page 325)
5. Who do Brett & Jay think is at the door during the rain? Who is it really? (page 327-8)

Epilogue (page 330+)

1. What is Brett getting ready for? What is a "ribbon cutting ceremony?"