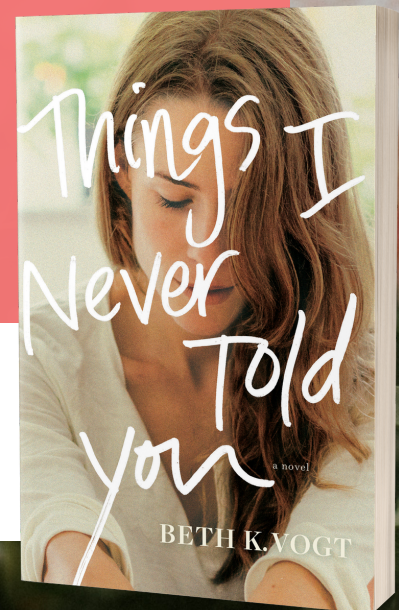


# Things I Never Told you

Book Club Kit

"An engaging and eloquent tale about sisterly bonds  
and the delicate balance of family dynamics."

***Library Journal***



# Praise for Things I Never Told You

"Filled with flashbacks, twists, and secrets, Vogt's family drama forcefully portrays the lasting effect of brash, youthful choices."

*Publishers Weekly*

"Sharply drawn characters and intense emotional scenes put Vogt at the top of her game."

*CBA Christian MARKET*

"A skillful first step into the women's fiction genre."

*Romantic Times*

# About Beth K. Vogt

Beth K. Vogt is a nonfiction author and editor who said she'd never write fiction. She's the wife of an Air Force family physician (now in solo practice) who said she'd never marry a doctor—or anyone in the military. She's a mom of four who said she'd never have kids. Now Beth believes God's best often waits behind doors marked *Never*.

Beth is a 2016 Christy Award winner, a 2016 ACFW Carol Award winner, and a 2015 RITA Award finalist. Her 2014 novel, *Somebody Like You*, was one of *Publishers Weekly's* Best Books of 2014. *A November Bride* was part of the Year of Weddings series by Zondervan. Having authored nine contemporary romance novels or novellas, Beth believes there's more to happily ever after than the fairy tales tell us.

An established magazine writer and former editor of the leadership magazine for MOPS International, Beth blogs for Novel Academy and The Write Conversation and also enjoys speaking to writers' groups and mentoring other writers. She lives in Colorado with her husband, Rob, who has adjusted to discussing the lives of imaginary people. Connect with Beth at [bethvogt.com](http://bethvogt.com)

Beth K. Vogt



# The Family Connection in *Things I Never Told You*

By Beth K. Vogt

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My books are often sparked by a question that captures both my heart and my mind. For *Things I Never Told You*, that question was *Is family worth fighting for?*

And oh, what a family you meet when you're introduced to the Thatcher sisters: Johanna, Jillian, and Payton and Pepper, the identical twins.

As I wrote the manuscript, I discovered more and more intriguing aspects about these fictional women as I neglected my real life in the process. It's what writers on deadlines do.

Laundry and grocery shopping and cooking dinner? Sorry. Someone else has to deal with the normal aspects of life.

Guess what? I missed the Thatcher sisters when I wrote "the end" to the manuscript and sent it off to my editors. And I hope my readers connect to my heroines and my subplot characters, too, because they are true-to-life. I imagine people wondering, "Would I do what Payton did? What Jillian did?" as they read the book.



I might have crafted imaginary characters, but I wove a lot of real life into my novel. Things like

- dealing with complicated sister relationships
- facing a diagnosis of breast cancer
- being a “twinless-twin”—when one twin survives the death of their twin
- coping with delayed grief
- battling anxiety attacks
- questioning faith

The Thatcher sisters are anything but a perfect family. They’re not the kind of sisters who text each other every day to check in on each other or who meet on a regular basis to go shopping and have lunch. They have a history together, yes, but it’s interwoven with misunderstandings and secrets and silence.

One especially intriguing aspect of the Thatcher sisters is their faith journey. I purposefully chose to have my heroines not believe in God. Of course, there is a spiritual thread in my book because I’m a woman of faith and there will always be that element in any book I write. But I experience both in the world I live in: belief and unbelief. Faith and doubt. And I wanted to incorporate that in *Things I Never Told You*. It was interesting to write about women who were struggling . . . who were hurting . . . and didn’t have a strong faith in God to lean into.

Readers have families. Sisters. Or sisters-of-the-heart. Or daughters. Every reader at some point in their life wrestles with the question Is family worth fighting for? Within the pages of *Things I Never Told You*, readers can process what’s happening to the Thatcher family. I also hope that this fictional story helps them work through some of the things happening in their own lives.

Things I Never Told You



“Sometimes you just have to forget all the other stuff and remember we’re sisters.”

Letter from Pepper in *Things I Never Told You*

# Discussion Questions

- 1 Which sister did you most identify with in *Things I Never Told You*: Payton, Pepper, Jillian, or Johanna? Why? If you have a sister or sisters, how would you describe your relationship(s): supportive or competitive—or a blend of both?
- 2 Were you an athlete in high school or college or part of another group or organization that influenced your identity? Did you have a coach, teacher, or other mentor who had a significant impact on your life? How did those experiences shape who you are today?
- 3 If you've ever grieved the death of a family member or close friend, what helped you deal with the pain? Was there something—a book or a Scripture verse or a song—that ministered to you?
- 4 Jillian is closer to Harper than she is to her sisters, Johanna and Payton. How has a good friend made a difference in your life when you've faced a trial?
- 5 What did you think of the “positive thoughts” jar that Harper made for Jillian? Would something like that be helpful to you during a tough time? What thought would you add to the jar?
- 6 Payton and Jillian both see examples of times when Johanna means well but causes hurt in the way she tries to take charge or impose her own solutions. How do you handle a loved one—a friend, a sister, or other relative—who is more strong-willed or opinionated than you and, while attempting to help, hurts you or overlooks your feelings or desires? Have you ever been a “Johanna” to someone? What was the result?

Continued on next page →



# Discussion Questions

**7** After Pepper's death, Payton gave up many of her goals for the future and chose a different path for her life. What dreams did you have when you were younger that changed or were lost along the way? If you had the chance, would you pursue those dreams now? Why or why not?

**8** Zach Gaines struggles to share his faith with Payton. How and when do you talk to others about what you believe about God? When someone talks to you about their faith, how does that make you feel?

**9** Payton kept a secret from her family for ten years. How do you feel about secrets—are they necessary or are they destructive? When do you think a person should keep a secret?

**10** As identical twins, Payton and Pepper shared a unique bond, but they began to grow apart when Pepper started exploring ideas of God and faith. Have you ever felt betrayed, as Payton did, by a change in someone you love? Were you able to navigate that change to keep the relationship? If so, what helped you?

## My book group questions

Jot down questions you'd like to ask your group:

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# Follow Beth K. Vogt Online

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