

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Nine Perfect Strangers*

Liane Moriarty

BOOK
CLUB
KIT

Apples Never Fall



WELCOME TO THE BOOK CLUB KIT FOR *APPLES NEVER FALL*.

Please note: In order to provide book clubs with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal aspects of the plot of this novel—as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *Apples Never Fall*, you may want to wait before reviewing this guide.



THEMES

Marriage and relationships

1. What do the marriages and relationships in the novel have in common, and where do they differ? Why do you think each marriage works (or doesn't), and where might each crumble? What is "the secret of a happy marriage," as Joy once calls it?
2. Did you relate to Joy's rage about the housework, or to Christina's mother's anger? What long-standing social currents run through many modern marriages and relationships, even now? Have things changed?
3. How has your view of your own parents' marriage evolved over the years since your childhood? Have you ever spoken to your parents about their relationship and perhaps been surprised by new revelations?

Parenthood

4. Joy felt that much was compromised by trying to run the business and be a mother to four children. This is a story we hear more often than ever from women today. Do you think it's really possible to "have it all"? If so, under what circumstances?
5. What does Joy mean when she says the children have "all the power now" as adults? Is it true? How does the balance of power shift as children grow up, and when does the power reversal become evident?
6. Joy and Stan parent their children in very different ways. Discuss some of these ways and their effectiveness or lack thereof. How much influence do you think social norms had on the roles Stan and Joy played in their children's youth?

Domestic violence and abuse

7. Do you agree with Moriarty that it's universal for women to fear domestic violence? Discuss some of the fears typically ingrained in women that men may not have or that they may be unaware of.





8. Savannah uses a story about domestic violence to engender sympathy and pity in Joy and Stan, and then invents a story about sexual harassment to blackmail Troy. What do you think about this? Why do you think this strategy works for Savannah, even though neither story is true?
9. Stan's father is "kicked to the curb" after he throws his wife across the room in a clear case of domestic violence. However, it could be said that Stan's mother is also guilty of domestic abuse. In what ways were her relationships with Stan's father and Stan himself abusive?

Childhood/youth

10. Do you think it's better for children to have experienced success and failure, the way the Delaney children did with tennis, or do you think it sets them up for disappointment? How has their childhood experience affected the four Delaney children?

Gender issues

11. Stan is often referred to as the head of the tennis school, even though Joy actually co-ran it, reinforcing the idea that Stan is the breadwinner. A similar attitude is evident with Brooke and Grant when Brooke offers to give up her practice to help their marriage. Why do you think women often cede professional dominance to men? Has this changed between generations?

Human nature and social norms

12. Do you agree with Joy that social media plays a part in the reconstruction of memories these days? If so, how do these reimagined memories cause ripple effects?
13. Joy describes Stan and herself as being entirely different people from who they were in 1974, and yet also exactly the same. Do you think this is possible/true? In what ways?
14. COVID-19 had a profound, global effect on society in 2020 and beyond. How does it influence this story, and Joy's thinking in the later chapters? Is it just human nature to assume bad things won't happen to you?

Forgiveness

15. How would you react if you found yourself in the same position as the Delaney children, with a parent who went missing? Would you think either of your parents was capable of murder? Could you forgive, or are some actions so terrible they are simple unforgivable? Would it be different, for example, if it were your child rather than your parent?





CHARACTERS

Joy Delaney

16. Much of Joy's anger, regret, and resentment stems from the conflict between her personal and professional lives, throughout her life. Savannah's arrival allows Joy to see the past from a new perspective for the first time. What, specifically, sparks this? In general, are expectations different for women and men? If yes, in what ways? And do you think that is changing?
17. What effect did retirement have on Joy? Do you think this happens often when people retire? Do you think this altered state of being made Joy more susceptible to Savannah's scheme? What was it about the situation with Savannah and the off-grid challenge that really made Joy stop?

Stan Delaney

18. When Joy tries to talk to Stan about his strategy of "leaving"—walking away from conflict, especially as instances become more extreme—he rebuffs her. What do you think about Stan's actions? How, if at all, does your reaction to Stan's coping mechanism change over the course of the novel?

Savannah

19. Do your feelings towards Savannah change throughout the book? How does knowledge of her childhood trauma color your view of her actions as an adult? Do you think Savannah's childhood experiences explain or even justify her behavior as an adult?
20. Why do you think Joy continues to feel sympathy for Savannah even when she knows what Savannah has done to her family? What qualities does Savannah have that appeal to Joy?

Amy, Logan, Troy and Brooke

21. How has Logan and Troy's childhood rivalry shaped the men they have become? How has their birth order influenced this? How has your position in your own family influenced your personality and life choices?
22. Why do you think sibling rivalry and relationships are so resistant to change? Is the on-again, off-again loyalty of the Delaney siblings characteristic of most siblings? What is your experience with your siblings, if you have any?
23. Amy is the only one of the Delaney children to show a degree of sympathy and understanding towards Savannah. What is it about Amy's personality and life experiences that might explain this kinder approach?



24. What does Logan do to deal with conflict? Is there a pattern playing out through the generations, from Stan to Logan? And if so, what does it all stem back to?
25. Why do you think Troy sabotaged his marriage to Claire? He claims not to understand why he did it, but do you think there were signs in the child he was and the upbringing he had?

SETTING

26. The present-day events in the novel take place in Sydney during the bushfires of 2019-2020 and the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In what ways does Moriarty use this time period as a backdrop to the novel?

WRITING STYLE

27. Liane Moriarty tells this story in the third person, through the eyes of all the major characters in turn, while switching between the events of September/October 2019 and “now,” which is approximately February and March 2020. What is the effect of this writing style? How does it shape the reader’s understanding of the characters as we piece together what happened six months ago, and what is happening now?
28. What techniques does Liane Moriarty use to distinguish between the different character voices in the novel? How does this influence how we feel about and relate to those characters?

