

Apples Never Fall by Liane Moriarty

Book Club Questions

1. In the prologue, we are introduced to the story by the vivid image of four apples in the road that have rolled out of the basket of an abandoned vintage bike.

What mood does this set for the rest of the story? What sense did you get of what the book might be about from just that first imagery?

2. We meet the Delaney children as they appear to a stranger (their waitress) observing them in a cafe as they discuss their mother's possible disappearance.

Why do you think the author chose to 'have a stranger's first impression of them also be the reader's first impression as well?

As a literary device, what are the benefits of a stranger's impression of a character vs. someone who knows them well?

3. Early on in the novel, Joy Delaney brings up the double standard of women in marriage.

She says this. *"If she thought about it too much and all it implied she could tap into a great well of rage, so she didn't think about it. That was the secret to a happy. Marriage: Step away from the rage."*

What does Joy mean by this? How does the theme of separating from rage (or any strong emotion) continue to come up in the book?

4. The competitive sport of tennis is almost an additional character in the book. Do you think what the sport was matters? Why?

In what way does tennis shape the story either directly or indirectly?

5. For much of the book Stan Delaney doesn't appear worried about Joy's disappearance or that he is the most obvious suspect. Did you think he was guilty at any point? Why or why not?

6. Joy talks about the unsung nature of motherhood a couple of times.

"When she thought of that long night, it was like remembering an extraordinarily tough match that she played. Except there was no trophy or applause."

The only recognition you got for surviving a night like that came from other mothers. Only they understood the epic nature of your trivial achievements."

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How true is this statement and why? Are there other trivial yet epic things we do in our lives that go unnoticed?

7. All of the upheavals in the book kick-off when a mysterious young woman named Savannah knocks on the door of the Delaney family home late one night.

How did that scene make you feel once you knew the characters were perfect strangers? Do you think you would have reacted the same way by inviting Savannah to stay? Why or why not?

8. Joy and Stan argue over the nature of the money Troy gives Savannah to keep quiet about Stan allegedly hitting her.

We learn it was all made up to get back at the family and their famed tennis academy, but do you think Stan is right to be mad at Troy for paying up without even speaking to him?

Or is Joy right that Troy is always trying to impress him and he sees it as protecting his father? Explain.

9. When the family discovers Savannah is the little sister of Harry Haddad and they learn about her family history, are their reactions what you would expect?

Do you feel more sympathy for her character after hearing about how the family unluckily treated her, the day she visited as a child? How does that change your perceptions of what she does to the family as an adult (if it does)?

10. Savannah creates a lot of family drama by revealing Joy's secret: she is the one who sent Harry Haddad away to be coached to tennis greatness by someone other than her husband.

After so many years of marriage, were you surprised by the reveal? Understand it? What might you have done in a similar situation with similar choices?

11. There is a moment when all the children start to believe their father killed their mother and need to decide if they will stand by him. None of them do, except Brooke.

Considering this is an understandably complicated situation when there is no firm evidence yet one way or the other, which way were you leaning for Stan's guilt?

How else does the theme of loyalty manifest in the book? What do you feel the author is trying to say with it?

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12. Stan and Joy somewhat parented their children through truisms about what happens on the tennis court.

"You can still fight back from match point down."

"If you want to overcome a losing streak, you reevaluate your game."

What are some examples of your own life of lessons you've learned about living that were meant for something else (for example, from sports, cooking, business, etc)?

13. Joy comes home alive and well, unaware of the mountain of trouble she caused by her garbled text message.

In what ways do you see the family grow from the experience of their mother having been missing? In what ways may they never recover?

14. The end of the book lays out a pretty happy ending and summary of what's next for Joy and Stan as they enter the golden years of their lives, as well as for all the grown Delaney siblings. Whose story do you wish you could continue to follow and why?

15. Does **Apples Never Fall** give you the urge to read more of Moriarty's books? Why or why not?