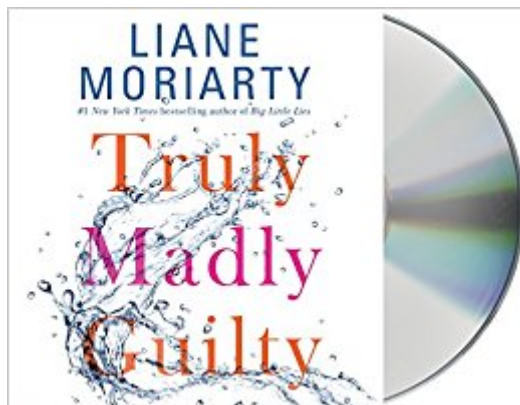


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Truly Madly Guilty



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "Here's the best news you've heard all year: Not a single page disappoints....The only difficulty with Truly Madly Guilty? Putting it down." •Miami Herald "Captivating, suspenseful & tantalizing." •People Magazine The new novel from Liane Moriarty, the #1 New York Times bestselling author of The Husband's Secret, Big Little Lies, and What Alice Forgot, about how sometimes we don't appreciate how extraordinary our ordinary lives are until it's too late. Six responsible adults. Three cute kids. One small dog. It's just a normal weekend. What could possibly go wrong? In Truly Madly Guilty, Liane Moriarty turns her unique, razor-sharp eye towards three seemingly happy families. Sam and Clementine have a wonderful, albeit, busy life: they have two little girls, Sam has just started a new dream job, and Clementine, a cellist, is busy preparing for the audition of a lifetime. If there's anything they can count on, it's each other. Clementine and Erika are each other's oldest friends. A single look between them can convey an entire conversation. But theirs is a complicated relationship, so when Erika mentions a last minute invitation to a barbecue with her neighbors, Tiffany and Vid, Clementine and Sam don't hesitate. Having Tiffany and Vid's larger than life personalities there will be a welcome respite. Two months later, it won't stop raining, and Clementine and Sam can't stop asking themselves the question: What if we hadn't gone? In Truly Madly Guilty, Liane Moriarty takes on the foundations of our lives: marriage, sex, parenthood, and friendship. She shows how guilt can expose the fault lines in the most seemingly strong relationships, how what we don't say can be more powerful than what we do, and how sometimes it is the most innocent of moments that can do the greatest harm.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Macmillan Audio; Unabridged edition (July 26, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1427275823

ISBN-13: 978-1427275820

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.5 x 0.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 3,430 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of August 2016: Many writers have trouble plumbing the depths of a single character's soul. Moriarty effortlessly dives deep in six different characters—the three married couples at a backyard barbecue in Sydney that goes horribly wrong. Chapters jump in time between the day of the barbecue and its aftereffects in the present, with the ripples of that evening disrupting and destroying relationships. The exact nature of the shock isn't revealed until midway through the novel, and I admit, I kept thinking to myself, "Given the buildup, this better be a wonderfully awful revelation." Moriarty comes through, fitting the seemingly unrelated puzzle pieces together into a tight and harrowing picture. She even wraps up a long-ago tragedy that befell a crotchety neighbor in what is perhaps a too-neat moment that adds an unnecessary bow on top. While it would do the book a disservice to call it "light," it's so briskly paced that the pages flash by, aiming the reader, ultimately, toward a gleam of hope at the end. --Adrian Liang, The Book Review --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Entertainment Weekly's "Best Beach Bet," Summer 2016 USA Today Hot Books for Summer Selection A Miami Herald Summer Reads Pick "Caroline Lee with Liane Moriarty makes one of the great pairings in audio publishing. Moriarty constructs a plot the way God builds an onion...Before you know it, Lee and Moriarty have you hopelessly hooked until you reach the dense, intricately interlocked heart of this wholly satisfying listen." --AudioFile, Earphones Award Winner "Liane Moriarty is one of the few writers I'll drop anything for. Her books are wise, honest, beautifully observed, and unusually—I can never tell where they're going to go." —Jojo Moyes "Moriarty's fans will rejoice at her latest title as she tackles marriage, parenthood, friendship, and sex, in this provocative and gripping read...This novel sheds light on the truths that we all fear as parents, spouses, and friends. It's perfect for those long summer days, but readers will have to pace themselves to not devour it in one sitting." —Library Journal (starred review) "Perhaps the most anticipated release this summer, Moriarty is at her finest in this keep you guessing multi-family drama surrounding a tragic event at a casual neighborhood barbecue. You will not soon forget this cast of troubled yet very likable characters, and the relationships that both bind and nearly destroy them." —Huffington Post "The author of Big Little Lies doing what she does best: unraveling people's public selves with an urgency that keeps you reading." —Glamour Magazine "[A] brilliant story of love, marriage, parenthood and, of course, guilt" It's

wonderfully suspenseful, slyly sentimental, sometimes outright sad • and also truly, madly, amazingly funny. • • Forth Worth Star-Telegram • Liane Moriarty has done it again. Truly Madly Guilty has it all • suspense, drama, humor, and a cracking story cleverly told. • • Fabulous Magazine (UK) "[Liane] Moriarty is back with a story full of neighborhood secrets, indiscretions, and twists. Like her other best-sellers, this story centers around a fateful event, and details are doled out to readers in small, tantalizing bits and pieces. [Caroline] Lee's narration sets the pace with just the right amount of suspense and delicious anticipation for those wanting to know what happened in this suburban backyard gathering. Lee draws listeners into Moriarty's puzzle, skillfully distinguishing among characters and providing them with authentic accents and emotional resonance; even the children's shrill yells add to the neighborhood soundscape." Booklist

"This is a story that begins with a barbeque". So begins Truly Madly Guilty. Erika and Clementine have been friends since school. Erika had a difficult childhood and Clementine's home and family became something of a refuge for her. Now, years later, both are married. Clementine is a cellist, married to Sam, with two young daughters. Erika and her husband Oliver are childless and fanatically tidy and orderly. They invite Clementine and her husband Sam over for afternoon tea, but it evolves into a BBQ at their neighbour's house. And at that BBQ, something will happen. An event which will be extremely traumatic for everyone who is there. That's the premise for this book. From the start we know that something significant has happened. We know that Erika has problems remembering it, that Clementine doesn't want to think about it, that their husbands are struggling with their feelings. But it will take until over the halfway mark - a looong time - before we find out what happened and after all that build up and suspense the truth is more than a little anticlimatic. Even then, Moriarty teases us with the idea that there is more to be revealed, and while this is true, it's not enough and not sufficiently important. Essentially, it's a book that's structured on a flimsy base. There are glimpses here and there of Moriarty's trademark humor and relatable characters but somehow I didn't warm to the story as I have to others that she's written.

This is the first novel by Liane Moriarty I haven't loved and rewarded with five stars; and boy, did it fall short of all her others! How the plot is revealed to the reader is perhaps the most frustrating and insulting tease I've ever encountered in fiction. There are scads of super short chapters swinging from "the day of the barbecue" to the depressed present, with everyone unnerved and raw from the horrible event that is tauntingly kept from us, inching forward microscopically like an itch we can't scratch. The big reveal, three-fourths of the way through, has already been figured out by, I'm

guessing, most of the readers; and the feeling is having been duped to keep reading to "find out" what has become obvious a fourth of the way through. And who cares? The big horrible event was incidental to the relationships, which in themselves were barely engaging enough to follow. I knew I was being duped by the technique of tiny little wisps of "barbecue day" offered with no new information to edge the plot forward; but I let myself be led along for no reward in terms of human interest..

I find novels like this manipulative: a big mystery is introduced, the narrative skips from the present action to the details of the fateful event, but the reveal happens SO slowly that it's irritating. Do what I did: start reading at page 190, read only the chapters titled "The day of the barbecue," stop reading at page 290, and then go back and read from the beginning. I'm also tired of the writing style that ends chapters with a cliffhanger that isn't resolved for a couple more chapters. For instance, a chapter ends with someone screaming someone's name, but the next chapter is about a totally different scene that you have to wade through before you get the resolution of the cliffhanger. I enjoy an author slowly building characters and relationships, but not when there are so many references to someone not being able to forget that barbecue without saying why, or someone who wishes they'd never gone to that barbecue, but not saying why. Moriarty lays the foreboding on thick, but teases her readers for over two hundred pages before letting us in on the secret! Two hundred pages is fine for a plot twist, but not for the central theme that motivates every character for the whole novel. Do you want to know what the tragedy is? Because I think the book reads better if you know it from the beginning. Three couples attend a barbecue at which one of their small children has a serious accident and they all blame themselves and each other. They go through various levels of self-recrimination and resentment for enjoying the party and not paying enough attention to the children. It's not such a tragedy that it really merits the 250-page build-up and I wonder if Moriarty's draft wasn't more linear and her publisher rearranged it to make it more tantalizing. Moriarty's an excellent writer. Her story doesn't need a gimmicky hook to keep us reading, but this novel is structured as if it does. Other books by this author have more integrity than this. Read those.

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