

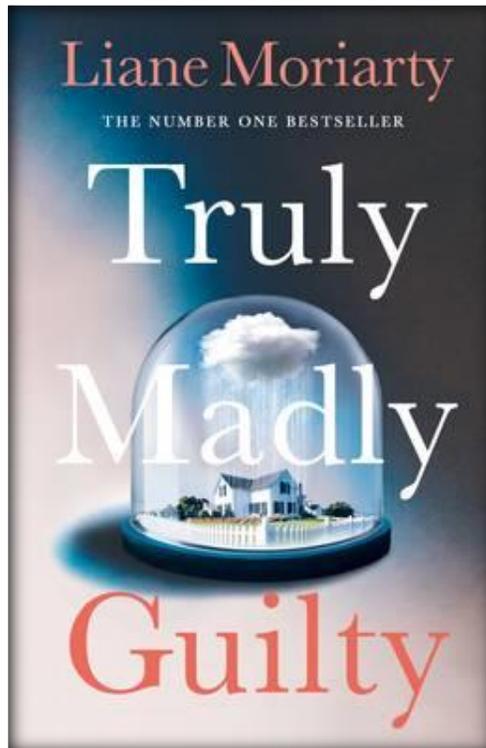


Helping you choose  
your next book

## LoveReading Reader reviews of **Truly Madly Guilty** by Liane Moriarty

PENGUIN  
MICHAEL  
JOSEPH

**Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.**



**Catherine Bryce**

*An excellent novel, which brings the reader into the story making them feel as if they are part of the drama as it unfolds. A truly powerful read!*

*A typical Australian suburb with neighbours and friends all going about their everyday lives with the story evolving around two friends Erika and Clementine but this story has undercurrents. On the surface life seems normal but there are undercurrents relating to not only Erica and Clementine but to all the characters in the novel.*

*The barbeque where an incident happens that changes all their lives and here the*

*book really opens up the undercurrents of misjudgement, fear, guilt, disbelief, blame, shame - a whole spectrum of human emotions affecting everyone*

*Liane writes in such a way that the reader is given a real descriptor of each of the characters and how they react with each other and to the situations that they encounter in the story and often I felt I knew someone in real life who could slip into a character easily. Liane takes you into the private thoughts of the characters which is a big part of the book and allows the reader a deeper understanding of the character leading up to, during and after the barbeque. A powerful novel especially describing the life-changing thoughts and events in the aftermath of the barbeque.*

*A well written novel which will keep the reader's interest as both the story and the characters develop, and this is a book that could take its place in many genres and thus interest a wide range of readers.*

## **Phylippa Smithson**

***Such was the familiarity of the story, I felt I had already read it but whilst recognisable with Tsiokas' The Slap, this stands on it's own as a psychological page-turner worth reading.***

*The characters are not well known to each other but are brought together for a BBQ by the gregarious and fun-loving Vid and Tiffany. Included in the gathering are their 12 year old daughter, Dakota, neighbours Erika and Oliver, who are accountants and whose personalities are perfectly suited to their chosen careers (and at total disconnect with the host) and Erika's best friend Clementine and her husband Sam who were due to be visiting with their two young children Holly and Ruby. So far so good.*

*However, the focus of the plot is the slow revealing of what occurred on the day of the BBQ that changes the relationships of everyone who participated – not all for the good.*

*Intrigue as to what occurred is perfectly generated by Moriarty as she picks on each and every character by cleverly throwing suspicion on each. Whilst it is obvious the incident is not a pleasurable one (it takes reading the book to find out what), the author intersperses the intensity of relationships being fractured and trust being lost, even the children are affected, by some wonderful ironic humour.*

*Having finished the book, I do believe whilst there were similarities with The Slap (location – Australia, venue of the incident – a social gathering at someone's home, style of delivery – switching between the day and actual event to the lives of the characters pre and post the BBQ), this has a comedy and edginess that makes it very easy to recommend.*

## **Humaira**

***It was different but I did indeed like it.***

*I was apprehensive about this book. I didn't really know what to expect or whether I'd like it. It was different but i did indeed like it. I started off with a rocky start and had me wondering if i was going to finish it. I pulled through and I'm glad I did so because Truly Madly Guilty is a read I won't forget in a long while.*

## **Angela Rhodes**

### ***Friends, close friends, best friends, old friends, but how well do you really know them?***

*Clementine and Erika, are all of this, best friends since childhood, they could depend on each other, have done for years; Erika is a smart business woman, married, no children and Clementine is happily married with children, and is also a famous Cellist, who is practising for the audition of a life time. Everything is going well, until some neighbours of Erika and Oliver invite them and Clem and Sam, to a barbecue...that's when things start to unravel very quickly, Friends and neighbours are not always what they seem to be on the outside, and you must NEVER judge a book by the cover, but is it the same with people, even ones you know? Liane will have you looking closely at your friends and neighbours...*

## **Vanessa Wild**

### ***An absorbing and compelling tale which had me avidly turning the pages.***

*A thought provoking story centring around a terrible incident at a barbecue. The tragedy does not happen at the beginning of the book, but about two thirds of the way through. So, it's a slow burner and as events unfold, the lives, thoughts and dreams of all those concerned are revealed little by little. It's very much a character-based tale and is about their reactions before, during and after the barbecue and the repercussions.*

*I thought this book was well written, intuitive and observant of human nature. No-one is perfect, everyone has their secrets and people are not always as they seem! The story deals with quite a few themes, including mental illness issues, alcoholism, loneliness, parenting and childlessness. It's cleverly plotted with a few surprises along the way and the ending is left on a happy note.*

*An absorbing and compelling tale about how we respond to what life throws at us. It's also about blame, self-reproach, and absolution. I very much enjoyed Truly Madly Guilty - it had me avidly turning the pages as I was anxious to find out how events transpired.*

@Butterfltbiblio

## **Melanie Chadwick**

*A terrible accident which could easily have ended in deep tragedy. Everyone feels guilty for letting it happen.*

*Three couples and three children have a neighbourly barbecue on a beautiful sunny afternoon. It ends abruptly with an incident. We don't find out what happened until way over half way through the book, but are skilfully teased with small details of the build up to the event. As the shock wave spreads out it causes one of the couples to fall apart and head for divorce, two best friends avoid each other and two children start suffering from behaviour problems. Through the book we slowly learn the history of each character's relationships to the others and the tensions and resentments involved. We slowly learn the whole story of the barbecue through the eyes of each character and the burden of regret and guilt they carry. I loved the extremely sociable, loud, care-free party couple, Vid and Tiffany and their book-reading quiet daughter Dakota the best. Then there are their socially inept but caring next door neighbours, Erika and Oliver who run marathons and love order and an Excel spreadsheet. Dependable Sam is very happily married to Erika's best friend, the cellist Clementine, and they have two adorable little daughters to complete their ideal lives. Things are not what they first appear as we slowly find out more about the nature of Erika and Clementine's friendship, Erika and Oliver's childhoods, and even the way the volumptuous Tiffany got her foot on the ladder of her career. **A delicious book - savour it; it's slow-cooked.***

## **Dana Captainino**

***If you read no other book in 2016 - read this one!***

*This is not a comfortable read as it scrapes deep beneath the surface of the everyday lives of its central characters.*

*Erika and Clementine have been best friends from childhood so when they and their partners go to a barbeque held by the larger than life Vid and Tiffany there is no reason to expect the fall out that unfolds. This event hails the harsh unravelling of friendships, hopes and dreams.*

*Liane Moriarty strips back the layers of all of the adults who are struggling to come to terms with their own childhoods and their relationship with their own families and with each other.*

*The main relationship between cellist and mother Clementine and organised and successful Erika is portrayed in a brutally real yet deeply touching way.*

*Many of us may recognise parts of ourselves in one of the roles being played out. Clementine's constant support of Erika through her chaotic upbringing masks a deep resentment and the latest request is the final straw.*

*The suspense of the incident central to the story is maintained throughout and keeps the reader guessing on what really happened that day.*

*There is so much to explore in this book that this short review cannot do it justice. There are some issues, such as hoarding that I have never read about before and this is a fascinating additional theme reflected in the book.*

*If you read no other book in 2016 - read this one!*

### **Sue Burton**

***Strong emotional book with different personality characters.***

***Another great book by a great author.*** *Story based on three couples, two you can warm to and the other one takes a while but once you start getting into the storyline you actually change your mind. This book is about how friendship is perceived by different people. I would recommend this book*

### **Kerry Bridges**

***This should have been an "easy read", but it wasn't because it was far too long.***

*Clementine and Erika have been friends since childhood but Clementine, a successful cellist, has always seen Erika as needing the friendship more than she does. One evening, Erika and her husband Oliver, invite Clementine and her husband and children, to join them at a barbecue next door. Suddenly, tragedy strikes and nobody is sure who is friends with who any more.*

*I found this story very predictable. The incident at the barbecue is built up to be something it definitely is not, and from "the reveal" which is about halfway through the novel, absolutely nothing more is accomplished until the second to last chapter.*

*The relationship between Erika and Clementine is a complicated one, and the "question" that Erika and Oliver ask Sam and Clementine a very interesting one which I think would actually make a much more interesting story. This novel, which is over 400 pages long, can really only sustain a story for about half of that time and is much the poorer for too many irrelevant and unrelated back stories.*

*I didn't really enjoy it and I can't say that I would recommend it, even as a holiday read.*

<http://iamalwaysreading.wordpress.com/>

## **Joy Isabella**

*When neighbours, friends and acquaintances meet up for a barbecue, lives are transformed. From childhood friends who no longer talk to each other, to a child who now won't let anyone in, a simple afternoon has devastating consequences. With the story being explored from before and after the event, eventually meeting in the middle, **'Truly Madly Guilty' explores the many different ways we process guilt, the foundations on which we build our relationships and the baggage we carry from our parents.***

*Liane Moriarty has, over the last couple of years, become one of my favourite authors, especially after the brilliance of 'Big Little Lies', so I was really excited about her latest novel. Perhaps it is because of the level of my anticipation that I felt disappointed. That's not to say that 'Truly Madly Guilty' isn't worth picking up. Moriarty creates very well-rounded characters whom you feel you could pick out at any identity parade. She also portrays mental health issues with sensitivity.*

*However, I felt holding off from exposing the "incident" for so long over-dramatised it, whilst the resultant relationship fall-out wasn't really proportional to what happened. In format, this was a novel similar to her last, but with a plot that hinged on little. With a more powerful core event, 'Truly Madly Guilty' would have had the makings of another gripping read.*

[www.joyisabella.com](http://www.joyisabella.com)

## **Evelyn Love- Gajardo**

*I have read and enjoyed all Liane Moriarty's books and this one is no exception. It has all the features you would expect from this author - a group of seemingly ordinary people whose lives are changed by one catastrophic event, which you only find out about very gradually, although there are plenty of clues along the way.*

*The characters are all flawed in some way and all the more credible for that-she really gets inside the skin of her characters and helps the reader understand*

*why they behave the way they do.*

***I couldn't put this book down- it kept me reading long after I should have been doing other things! Definitely one to recommend-I loved it!***

### **Katie Wright**

***Enjoyable family drama. 'Truly Madly Guilty' is another mystery by Liane Moriarty set in suburban Sydney.*** In classic Moriarty style, something mysterious happens which we are made aware of at the beginning, this time at a neighbourhood backyard barbeque. However the event is just referred to for the first half of the book and the three families concerned are fleshed out through further narrative from a range of perspectives. It isn't until over half way through the book that the mystery is revealed and although I enjoyed this family drama, I did think that the 'mystery' itself wasn't actually that mysterious and that the novel itself could have been a lot more concise. Still I would recommend this book to those who have enjoyed Moriarty's other work and would read more from this author in future.

### **Maureen Gourlay**

***A well-constructed story full of twists and turns after a simple family BBQ changes lives, and you find nothing is quite what you thought or expected. Loved it!***

Three diverse couples, (all with secrets and problems) are enjoying a BBQ one afternoon in Sydney. As we meet the characters we gradually realise that there is an "undercurrent" and that something terrible has happened during the afternoon, but we are halfway through the book before we find out what it is. The suspense is cleverly built and sustained throughout, as each chapter reveals another twist concerning that afternoon and the people involved. This is the first book I have read by Liane Moriarty but it will not be the last. I enjoyed her writing style and the short chapters certainly made it a page turner.

### **Barbara Goldie**

***A family barbecue, what can go wrong. Gripping storytelling from Liane Moriarty; a great summer read!***

*It all starts at the barbecue, a lovely day out to forget problems for a while, but*

*then it all spirals out of control. This is the first book by Liane Moriarty I have read but the storytelling is so compelling I do not think it will be the last.*

*It has only a few characters but they are well drawn, believable and each one has their own personality. You start to get to know them really quickly and are drawn into their lives from the first few pages. The plot is pulled out very slowly and is so well written it kept me guessing and turning pages. It has lots of threads going on, marriage, friendships, family relationships, alongside guilt, misunderstandings and so much more.*

*It has good scene setting, believable dialogue; what I also liked about Moriarty's style is the short chapter length which helps keep the readers interest. The language is good and an easy read.*

*A great summer read!*

### **Nicola Brennan**

***Truly Madly Guilty is a wonderful novel with intriguing characters that quickly draw you in. If you like dark humour and a good mystery, this is the book for you.***

*I was so excited when the opportunity arose to review this title by Liane Moriarty. Truly Madly Guilty is a wonderful novel with intriguing characters that draw you in from the start. I found this book to be a real page turner and I loved the short, engaging chapters.*

*Moriarty has a talent for writing novels that contain suspense in bucket loads. While I really did enjoy the book, I feel there may have been slightly too much emphasis on the suspense. We know from the beginning that there is a BBQ. The story centres around this day and each chapter alternates back and forth between the events on this fateful day and the aftermath and how it affected everyone who attended this social gathering.*

*There are so many references to the BBQ without telling us what happened that it is constantly on your mind and for me it was built up so much that it took away from other aspects of the reading experience. However, don't let this put you off.*

*There are a couple of great twists thrown into this book, one in particular that really threw me and evoked a lot of emotion. Overall, it was a lovely read. The author held my attention throughout and as with all of Moriarty's books, I found her writing style to be very therapeutic and her characters to be wonderfully flawed and real. If you like dark humour, great characterization*

*and a good mystery, this is the book for you.*

rustandstardustblog.com

### **Annette Woolfson**

***Truly madly infuriating more like!*** *I really was looking forward to reading this as I have enjoyed previous works by the author. However, this teasing tale of upper-middle class suburbia in Sydney didn't really work for me. A neighbourhood barbecue goes awry and all involved are left dealing with the aftermath. This event is slowly fed out to us from each protagonist's point-of-view both by relating back to the day itself and then jumping to how it has since affected them. For me, there were too many 'issues' being dealt with in this novel, infertility, difficult childhoods, social isolation, and they were all just neatly tied up at the end. Possibly I would have enjoyed it more if there were fewer strands to the story.*