



Nine perfect strangers

By Liane Moriarty

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Genre & subject

Australian fiction

Psychological fiction

Interpersonal relations

Health resorts

Synopsis

The retreat at health and wellness resort Tranquillum House promises total transformation. Nine stressed city dwellers are keen to drop their literal and mental baggage, and absorb the meditative ambience while enjoying their hot stone massages. Watching over them is the resort's director, a woman on a mission to reinvigorate their tired minds and bodies. These nine perfect strangers have no idea what is about to hit them.

Author biography

Liane Moriarty (born 15 November 1966) is an Australian author. She is the older sister of author Jaclyn Moriarty.

After leaving school, Moriarty worked in advertising and marketing at a legal publishing company. She then ran her own company for a while before taking work as a freelance advertising copywriter. In 2004, after obtaining a master's degree at Macquarie University in Sydney her first novel *Three Wishes*, written as part of the degree, was published.

Six further novels have been published.

Moriarty lives in Sydney with her husband, Adam, a former farmer from Tasmania who worked in agricultural marketing, and two children, George and Anna.

Discussion starters

- What did you think about the beginning with Yao and Masha? Let's talk about how much they changed when we meet them years later.
- We read Frances' viewpoint the most, why do you think she felt the need to go the health resort? What was she hoping to cure? Why do you think the author placed such an emphasis on her viewpoint?
- We meet the other "strangers": married and unhappy couple Ben and Jessica; athletic but sad Napoleon, Heather and Zoe; beautiful but quiet Lars; insecure Carmel and gruff Tony. Let's talk about why each person felt they needed to attend the health resort. What secrets were they not admitting to each other and themselves?
- What did you think about the health resort at first? Did you think there was going to be unusual and sinister behaviour behind everything?

- Masha believes instructing the guests to commit to silence for several days will expand their horizons and such. Why did she think this was necessary? Was this a form of manipulation so that the guests would do whatever she said next?
- After the code of silence, Masha and her assistants give everyone smoothies that are laced with LSD. Why did she think this would be a smart move? How did it force everyone to open up in ways they might not have? But did it change anything for the good?
- This one deals quite a bit with the suicide of Napoleon and Heather's son Zach. Each of the three family members blames themselves. Let's talk about this and how it impacted the three family member's relationships with each other.
- Why do you think Frances fell for the online scam? What do you think she was searching for?
- We learn that after winning the lottery, Jessica decided to have a bunch of plastic surgery. Why do you think she did this? What image was she trying to convey?
- Tony is pretty gruff to begin with but we start to get to know him better. Were you surprised that he and Frances got together or did you see it coming?
- Why do you think Lars goes to these health resorts?
- Masha and Yao seemingly trap the strangers together in the room with no way out. Why did Masha think this would be a good bonding experience? What does it say that the guests never thought to just try and open the door?
- Why would Masha pretend she put the house on fire? Was she simply high and out of her mind?
- Even though Masha's tactics were fairly insane, they kind of seemed to work on everyone, right? What do you think about that?
- What did you think about the ending?
- What do you think was the overall message of this story?
- Would you ever go to a health resort?

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