



# GOOD INTENTIONS

*Book Club Lit*

Obsession. Grief. Secrets.  
Can good people do bad things?

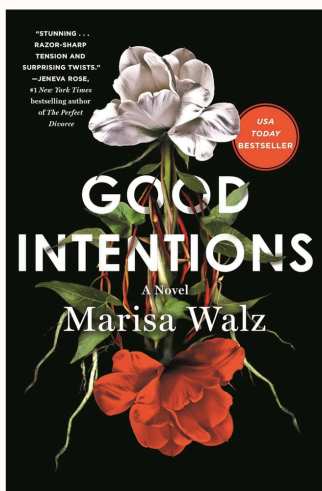


# About the Book

Cady has worked hard to have a good life. She has a thriving luxury event-planning business, the man she's loved since she was seventeen, and a social calendar she can barely keep up with. She also has Dana, her identical twin, her beyond best friend, her most trusted confidante. When Cady gets a call that Dana has been in a serious accident and arrives moments too late to say goodbye, her world falls apart.

But to Cady's family's growing concern and confusion, it's not Dana's death that consumes her. It's Morgan, a grieving mother Cady encountered in the hospital waiting room, the day her sister died. It can't be a coincidence, that they both experienced tragedy at the same moment, in the same place—Cady doesn't believe in coincidences. Instead, she is convinced that she must help this stranger overcome her tragedy, in order to come to terms with her own.

Or...is there more to it? Is it possible that Cady wants something else from Morgan? Something she can't even admit to herself?



**“A compulsive and chilling exploration of grief.”**  
—Jeneva Rose, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Perfect Divorce*

**“An absolute feat of a debut.”** —Stacy Willingham, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Forget Me Not*

**“Will leave readers stunned.”** —Mary Kubica, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Local Woman Missing*

**“Masterfully twisty.”** —Carola Lovering, bestselling author of *Tell Me Lies*

Key Themes: Grief, Obsession, Secrets, Guilt  
Trigger Warnings: Child Loss, Miscarriage, Infertility





# Meet the Author

Marisa Walz is a Federal Reserve executive who also writes novels about people behaving badly. She lives in the Chicago suburbs with her husband and two young children.

*Good Intentions* is her debut novel and was an instant *USA TODAY* bestseller.



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# Discussion Guide

- 1 Consider the title. After reading *Good Intentions*, how much weight do you think good intentions carry?

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- 2 What do you think the novel suggests about recognizing gray areas, rather than thinking purely in black and white?

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- 3 How did the second person point of view affect your reading experience? How does this approach shape the truthfulness of the narrative?

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- 4 In what ways does Cady lie to herself? Do you believe most people tell themselves lies at times?

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- 5 “Was I just seeing what I wanted to see? Was scared to see?” (page 128) Between Cady’s paranoia and guilt, and Morgan’s (grieving) eye for the color orange, what do you think this novel suggests about the power of our minds?

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- 6 To what extent did Cady’s insatiable desire for control, as well as her guilt, drive her actions? How do they affect all areas of her life?

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- 7 “No matter how careful you are with your social media and your passwords, it’s virtually impossible to hide from the internet.” (page 151) How did it make you feel to read about the ease with which Cady could find strangers’ personal information online, and pretend to be someone else? What role does technology play in her obsessive tendencies? Separately, why do you think the GPS’s persistent voice affected and influenced Cady the way it did?



- 8 Discuss the evolution of Cady and Matt’s relationship over the course of the novel. What role do lies and secrets play in their dynamic, and how do their respective intentions differ, if at all? How do they navigate the emotional impact of infertility challenges? What do you think their relationship could look like in the future?

# Discussion Guide

- 9** Describe Cady and Dana’s relationship. How do you think being labeled as “the intense one” affected their bond, and Cady’s self-image in general? (page 100) Do you think “people [might] have an inherent problem with sameness,” as Cady suggests, particularly when it comes to assessing twins? (page 100) If so, why do you think that is?
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- 10** As explored in *Good Intentions*, motherhood can take many forms and look very different for different women. How is this topic woven throughout the narrative?
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- 11** Based on the flashbacks of younger Cady, how do you think grieving affects her? “I was restless, caught in some kind of limbo between the old me and whoever I was becoming.” (page 299) How did her relationship with Jamie, Matt, Sean, her parents, and work shift as a result of the tragedy she suffered?
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- 12** Discuss how the characters experience grief, and the process of getting closure, on their own timelines in their own ways.
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- 13** How did the end of the novel, especially the final chapter, make you feel? How were you left thinking about the various relationships that evolved over the course of the story? Do you believe good people can do bad things? Alternatively, did the novel make you think about the concepts of “good” and “bad” differently? Explain.
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- 14** If you could find out only one detail about Cady’s life in the future, what would you want to know? What do you hope happens for Morgan?



# Trivia

Time to see who really read the book  
and who's just here for the wine.

1

What was the name of Matt's company?

2

Name one of Cady's parents.

3

What football team did Cady's dad root for at Thanksgiving?

4

What beer did Cady and Morgan drink on Cady's birthday?

5

What was the name of Cady's therapist?

6

Fill in the blank: "But I can't tell you that, Dana—I can't tell you anything—without telling you \_\_\_\_\_."

7

What make of car did Cady trade in her Range Rover for?

8

What was the name of the band on the t-shirt Moira was wearing when she came over to Cady's house?

9

What flavor of pie did Cady's mom make at Thanksgiving?

# Would You Rather ...

## *Good Intentions* Version

ruin your birthday lunch by  
fighting with your parents?



ruin your anniversary dinner  
with an old confession?

find out your spouse is  
talking to your coworkers/  
employees about you?



find out your friend created a  
fake dating profile for you?

lose your company?



lose your dog?

have Cady as your boss?



have Cady as your  
sister-in-law?

own a Birkin?



own a big white colonial at  
the end of a tree-lined street  
in the most desirable section  
of the most desirable suburb  
in northwestern Chicago?

# Food & Drink



## *Food*

- Matt's chicken tinga tacos
- Takeout apps, left in boxes "for authenticity"
- Dana's mini corndogs (with gold sticks + gourmet sauces)
- Christopher's birthday cupcakes
- Dana's Fruity Pebbles-inspired pastry

## *Blood Orange 75*

- 2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce freshly squeezed blood orange juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Champagne or sparkling wine
- Garnish: long thin blood-orange-peel spiral

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Shake gin, blood orange juice, and sugar in a cocktail shaker until well chilled, about 15 seconds. Strain into a champagne flute. Top with champagne. Garnish.

# Extras

## Playlist



Apple Music  
[tinyurl.com/GI-apple](https://tinyurl.com/GI-apple)



Spotify  
[tinyurl.com/spotify-GI](https://tinyurl.com/spotify-GI)

## Decor/Theme

In the spirit of Cady's last party for *Eventually*, invite guests to come dressed in black and/or white. Drape tables in red linens, adorn with gold candelabras. Champagne pyramid optional.

## Game/Raffle Prizes

Orchids!

## Signed Bookplates

If your book club chooses *Good Intentions*, Marisa will send signed bookplates for every member! Email [marisawalzauthor@gmail.com](mailto:marisawalzauthor@gmail.com) with the quantity needed. (Limited to U.S. residents.)



## Invite the Author

Interested in a virtual book club discussion with the author?

Email: [marisawalzauthor@gmail.com](mailto:marisawalzauthor@gmail.com)