



1. In the opening chapter of the novel, Lucy describes feeling a “little niggle” in the pit of her stomach when the police showed up – a warning of oncoming danger. Are you familiar with the feeling she’s describing? When have you felt it? How do you think this ominous tone serves to set up the rest of the book?
2. *The Mother-in-Law* is told in dual timelines and dual narratives – Lucy and her mother-in-law, Diana. How does this structure affect your reading experience? Did you feel more sympathetic towards one narrator or the other?
3. What was your initial impression of Diana, both through the lens of Lucy and through hearing Diana’s own voice? How did your understanding of her and her motivations evolve throughout the book?
4. Diana and Lucy have very different definitions of what makes a “good” mother-in-law. What do you think makes for a good mother-in-law? How universal do you think your opinion is, or how personal? How do you think you would react in Lucy’s position?
5. What did you think when you first learned about Diana’s Orchard House past? Did it make sense to you, or come totally out of the blue? How do you think it fits in to Diana’s character, and why she acts the way she does in the present timeline?
6. Before you learned about what happened on Thanksgiving, what did you think the “incident” was? What were the clues throughout the first half of the novel that make you think that way?
7. On page 133, Diana thinks, “When left to their own devices, bitter people can do bad things.” Do you think she’s right to assess Hakem this way? Where are the other place in the narrative where you think that this same quote applies?

## Discussion Questions



8. Tom and Diana have very different philosophies about giving their children money. Is either of them correct? Or is there more of a middle ground that neither of them have considered? Do you think it's cruel for them to let Nettie suffer when they could help pay for her treatments?
9. On page 219, Ghezala says to Lucy, "Maybe [Diana] was so busy looking at the problems in the world, she forgot to give chances to those right under her nose." What do you think about that statement? Do you think she's correct, or is there something more at play?
10. Before you learned the truth of Diana's death, did you think that Lucy did it? What made you think that?