

'Thrilling,  
evocative  
and witty'  
ZARA SEIDLER

'Set it for your  
book club and watch  
the sparks fly'  
BRI LEE

# GOOD INTENTIONS

Reading  
Group  
Notes

They  
thought  
nothing  
could come  
between  
them



JESSY WU

## Blurb

In the cramped basement office of their university newspaper, Jake and Nadia break a huge story that exposes a decade of institutional corruption. In the quieter hours, they also fall in love.

Then Nadia leaves.

A decade later, she returns from New York, once a fast-rising finance hotshot, now exiled after a deal gone wrong. Back in Sydney, Jake has forged a reputation as a crusading reporter whose by-line regularly brings down the rich and powerful.

Battlelines are drawn when they're each pulled into the orbit of a biotech visionary whose startup becomes Nadia's big break and the target of Jake's latest investigation. As old wounds flare, both must decide how far they'll go to come out on top.

Clear-eyed and taut, *Good Intentions* asks if it is possible to be a good person in a morally grey world, and what happens when someone you once loved with your whole heart threatens to topple everything you've built.

'Set it for your book club and watch the sparks fly'

BRI LEE

'Thrilling, evocative and witty'

ZARA SEIDLER

'Achingly beautiful'

JOSHUA HORTINELA

'Fans of Dolly Alderton and Diana Reid will delight in and welcome this new Australian voice'

BOOKS+PUBLISHING

## About the author

JESSY WU is a writer and entrepreneur based in Sydney.

She is the founder and Managing Director of Encour, a communications and video production agency that specialises in the tech sector. Previously, she was a venture capital investor in early-stage tech startups. She is a regular columnist for the *Australian Financial Review*, and her writing has appeared in *Forbes*, *Crikey*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *Inflection Points*. She is the founder of BROAD CHURCH, a creative communal space in Chippendale, Sydney. She has a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and English Literature from the Australian National University.

*Good Intentions* is her debut novel.



## Discussion questions

\* Please note: these contain spoilers \*

1. The title of the novel is *Good Intentions*. What are some examples of characters justifying actions with 'good intentions'? Do you think these justifications are valid?
2. Jake is immediately wary of Nadia's skill at 'making things sound reasonable'. Why do you think her ability arouses his suspicion?
3. The night they publish their big exposé, Jake and Nadia also kiss for the first time. How are work and love intertwined in the novel?
4. How does the novel animate the tension between doing the right thing and doing what it takes to survive?
5. Discuss Nadia's development throughout the novel. What are her major turning points?
6. Jake says, 'If I don't hold the line, who will?' Why do you think Jake feels like he must be the one to hold the line? How does his upbringing influence his choices and actions?
7. Nadia worries that Jake is 'not the kind of person [her parents] envisioned [she] would end up with'. What do you think Nadia's parents want for her?
8. In consoling Jake after the break-up, Helen Sullivan describes Darwin's orchid and its moth: two creatures that grew into each other's empty spaces until they fit perfectly. How well does the metaphor describe Nadia and Jake? How well does it describe first love?
9. Why are Nadia and Jake drawn to each other? Why do you think they both struggle to fully move on?
10. *Good Intentions* is set in the business world. The author has drawn from her own experience working in finance and technology to render this world. What did you find interesting about the description of the business world?
11. What did you find distinctive about the dialogue in the novel? How did dialogue enhance your understanding of the characters and the dynamics between them?
12. What effect is achieved through the descriptions of physical spaces: the university campus, Jake and Nadia's respective homes and workplaces, Marjorie's lab?
13. What are some images and symbols that recur throughout the novel? What is their effect?
14. What are ethical challenges faced by Nadia as an investor? How does she navigate these challenges? Would you have made the same decisions as her, or different ones?

15. What does the novel have to say about the cost of telling the truth?
16. How does the novel present the tension between personal ambition and social responsibility?
17. Discuss the chapters from Felicity and Caroline's perspectives. What did these secondary perspectives illuminate for you?
18. How do supporting characters influence Nadia's and Jake's big decisions?
19. Felicity says, 'Some people stay with us, even when we want to let them go, we can't—not entirely. Because of who we were when we met them. Because of how they changed us.' What does this observation reveal about Felicity?
20. In the novel, Panacea takes advantage of hospitality workers by paying them to stay silent about the side effects of its clinical trials. What are some other ways that corporates take advantage of vulnerable individuals? Who is complicit in this exploitation?
21. Reflect on the statement: 'Sometimes the only way to change the system is to get inside it first.' Do you agree?
22. In the last scene, Nadia says, 'Jake Sullivan does not have a monopoly on seeing clearly.' What do you think she means by this?
23. Jake leaves Nadia a coffee cup with an illustration of a 'small figure standing at a crossroad, face tilted up toward a sky filled with stars'. What do you think Jake was trying to convey to Nadia?
24. What do you think happens after the end of this novel, and why?
25. In the Author's Note, Jessy Wu writes, 'I now believe moral clarity isn't about choosing the right side—it's about understanding the cost of whichever side you choose.' Do you agree?

