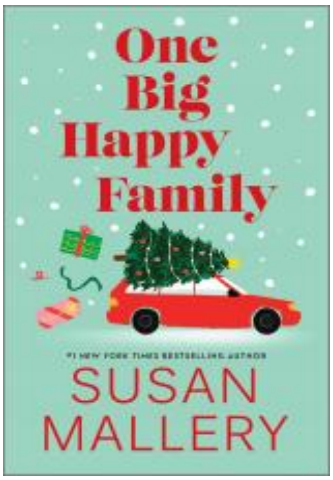
ReadingGroupGuides
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One Big Happy Family

by Susan Mallery



About the Book

Susan Mallery, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of THE BOARDWALK BOOKSHOP, returns with the joyful and utterly irresistible story of a mother who couldn't love her kids more but hopes that, just this once, they please don't come home for Christmas. Perfect for fans of Mary Kay Andrews and Julie Murphy!

Julie Parker?s kids are her greatest gift. Still, she?s not exactly heartbroken when they ask to skip a big Christmas. Her son, Nick, is taking a belated honeymoon with his bride, Blair, while her daughter, Dana, will purge every reminder of the guy who dumped her. Again. Julie feels practically giddy for one-on-one holiday time with Heath, the (much) younger man she?s secretly dating.

But her plans go from cozy to chaotic when Nick and Dana plead for Christmas at the family cabin in memory of their late father, Julie?s ex. She can?t refuse, even though she dreads their reactions to her new man when they realize she?s been hiding him for months.

As the guest list grows in surprising ways, from Blair?s estranged mom to Heath?s precocious children, Julie?s secret is one of many to be unwrapped. Over this delightfully complicated and very funny Christmas, she?ll discover that more really is merrier, and that a big, happy family can become bigger and happier, if they let go of old hurts and open their hearts to love.

Discussion Guide

We recommend that you wait to read these questions until after you have finished the book to avoid spoilers.

1. Julie is embarrassed that she?s dating a younger man. How did you feel about the age difference between her and Heath? Do you think it affected their relationship in the story? Why or why not? What complications might they face in

the future that wouldn?t exist if they were closer to the same age?

2. Discuss Blair's food restrictions, how the different characters reacted toward them, and how their reactions revealed their personalities.

3. Did your feelings about Gwen, Blair ?s mom, change as you read the story? If so, how so? Did the trauma she experienced make her treatment of Blair understandable or acceptable? Why or why not? Would you have been able to forgive her, if you were Blair? Why or why not?

4. In ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY, it seemed nearly everyone had a secret, and all those secrets came tumbling out during their time at the cabin. Chat about each character?s secret, and how its revelation impacted the story.

5. When Julie found out that her boyfriend?s ex-wife was going to be alone at Christmas, she didn?t hesitate to invite Tiffany to join them at the cabin. How did you feel about that? What would you have done in Julie?s shoes?

6. With which character did you relate the most? Why?

7. What emotions did you feel about the ending of the book?

8. What is your family?s holiday tradition? Do you get together as a big group? What do you eat? Do you do anything special to commemorate loved ones who have passed away?

Author Bio

Susan Mallery is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of novels about the relationships that shape women's lives --- family, friendship, romance.

Library Journal says, ?Mallery is the master of blending emotionally believable characters in realistic situations," and readers seem to agree --- 40 million copies of her books have sold worldwide. Her warm, humorous stories make the world a happier place to live. She?s passionate about animal welfare, which shows in the many quirky animal characters she has created.

Susan grew up in California and now lives in Seattle with her husband.

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