



Joy Again

by Molly Krause

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Joyce Becker appears to have moved on after the unexpected, mysterious death of her husband Andy a year ago. With her sister Maggie, she continues to run the restaurant she and Andy opened decades earlier. But keeping the secret of the details of his death is taking a toll on her relationships with her daughter Cassie and Maggie. When Cassie announces her engagement to her boyfriend Jacob, a series of unforeseen events unfold.

The unlikely intersections of the two families threaten Cassie's engagement plans, Dan and Laura's marriage, and Joyce's ability to maintain her sense of equilibrium about Andy's death. But the bonds of family prevail as they grapple with secrets, forgiveness, and what it means for a person to move on with their life.

From the author

Years ago while I was working with my husband in our restaurant he asked me what I would do with our business if he died unexpectedly. "Lock the door and never return!" was my answer. So in *Joy Again*, I started with a woman who made the opposite choice of what I would have done. I wanted to explore the weight of family secrets and how people can both fulfill their obligations and move forward toward healing, loving one another even when it's hard.

Discussion Questions

1. Joyce and Cassie train for a marathon together. How is a marathon a fitting metaphor for their relationship and shared experiences? How do you think they ended up doing in the marathon in San Diego?
2. Andy's Café was a family business. Why do you think Joyce continued to operate the restaurant without Andy?
3. How did the shifting character narrator perspectives contribute to the unfolding story? Why do you think the author chose to tell it in this way?
4. Sexual secrets are central to *Joy Again*. How are the weight of sexual secrets different from other ones?
5. Why do you think Joyce revealed what happened to Andy in the way she did?
6. Getting married or staying married occupies several of the characters actions. Discuss how marriage is portrayed and if it's realistic.
7. How do you think that what happened to Maggie last year affected her current situation?
8. How do you think the future looks for Dan and Laura? Why?
9. Do you think that Cassie should know the truth of how her dad died?



10. Much of the action happens around eating meals together. How does this contribute to the unfolding events?

11. Discuss the nature of disclosure and how it contributes to healing. How do the characters in Joy Again experience this, or how could they?

About the author

Molly Krause graduated from The University of Kansas with a degree in Social Welfare but spent the last twenty years as a restaurateur. She co-authored *The Flavorful Kitchen Cookbook*. Her essays have been published in *Front Porch Review*, *Ragazine*, and *Brain, Child*. Reliving her youth in adult ballet class is a highlight of her week. She and her husband Robert live in Lawrence, Kansas with their two daughters.