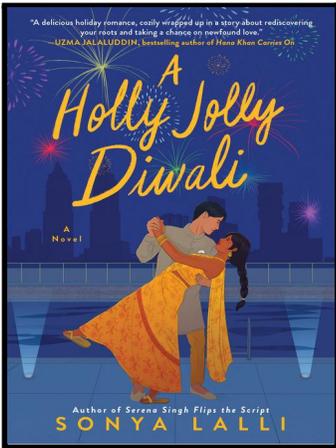




A Holly Jolly Diwali Reader's Guide

BOOK BUZZ



A Holly Jolly Diwali

By Sonya Lalli

Berkley

An Imprint of Penguin Random House

[A Penguin Random House Reading Group Guide](#)

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Niki agrees to being set up with Raj?
2. What do you think pushes Niki to throw caution to the wind and book the last-minute trip to Diya's wedding in Mumbai?
3. When they meet on Diwali, Sam teases Niki that it was fate that brought them together; Niki was meant to lose her job so she could come to India. What do you think of this? Have you ever experienced a setback in life, only for it to lead you somewhere better?
4. Why doesn't Niki stand up to the "sour-faced auntie" in the restroom who comments on Niki's caste and skin color? And why do you think the interaction affected her so much?
5. Niki and Sam were drawn to each other the first moment they laid eyes on each other. Do you believe in love—or lust—at first sight?
6. Aasha Auntie is a modern auntie who revels in defying stereotypes about "auntie culture," which often portrays South Asian middle-aged and older women in a negative light. Did anything surprise you about her character?
7. As a child, Niki is teased by her peers for mispronouncing jeera, leading her to wonder why her parents never bothered to teach her to speak their language. Why do you think Niki's mom and dad made the choices they made?



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8. What do you think about Niki’s impulsive decision to look for a job in London, and why do you think Sam reacted so poorly to the news?
9. Sam has a complicated relationship with his father, who never supported Sam’s musical ambitions. In what ways did this affect Sam’s decision-making, when it came to both his career and romantic life?
10. Niki often doesn’t tell her parents the whole truth in order to protect the image they have of her as the “good daughter.” Could you relate to anything about Niki’s relationship with her mom and dad? Did you enjoy how it evolves over the course of the novel?
11. Sam followed his dreams, while Niki played it safe and chose a stable career. What did you think about where each of them ended up? Is there a right and a wrong choice?
12. Niki often wrestles with her self-identity and the expectations that come with the labels “American” or “Indian.” How do you think her trip to India helped or hindered her personal growth over the course of the book?
13. In India, Niki discovers there are so many ways to celebrate and experience Diwali—both religious and secular. Can you relate with any unique holiday traditions in your own life?



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